



# **The Seattle Worker Magazine**

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Official publication of the  
**RAIN CITY WOBBLIES**

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

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## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

News from the Northwest by James Smith

The United Auto Workers have been trying for years to crack the notoriously anti-union South by organizing at a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In 2014, after a ridiculously strong and blatantly illegal anti-union campaign which saw the participation of federal and local politicians, the UAW narrowly lost a union election. Afterward, the plant's 150 or so maintenance workers voted overwhelmingly to organize with UAW Local 42. VW claimed the smaller election was illegitimate, and refused to recognize the smaller union. They claimed, however, they would bargain in good faith with a union that represented the entire workforce, so the UAW filed for another plant-wide election, which they are now sure they can win. VW then promptly changed their position on the smaller union, and asked the National Labor Relations Board to cancel the plant-wide election because, there is already a union representing the maintenance workers which needs to be decertified before a plant-wide election can be held. The NLRB consented to VW's request.

In 2017 the largest corporate tax cut in history was voted into law, which gave corporations a \$150 billion windfall. Of that money, the bosses decided to pass about 6% on to workers, which increased the average weekly paycheck by about \$6.21. Nearly all the rest of the \$141 billion they kept for themselves, netting the top 10% of the population more than \$3,500 each on average.

In 2018, the Portland IWW made history when they helped organize the country's first fast food union at Burgerville. This year, the same group of Wobblies decided to put on an encore. They added two more Burgerville locations to the union, and helped the workers at Little Big Burger in Portland to organize the country's second fast food union.

The Protecting Right to Organize Act has been recently introduced into Congress by Democratic representative Bobby Scott of Virginia. The bill, if passed into law, would, among other things, allow workers to sue their employers if they are illegally fired for organizing efforts and overturn all the state's right-to-work laws that have been passed over the last several years. While it is great to see a federal politician trying to pass pro-union laws, I would suggest not waiting for the politicians to save you. There is no way this bill can pass into law while the Republicans are in power, and ten years ago when the Democrats were in power, they refused to pass pro-union legislation. The only people who are going to dig us out of the crappy wage system are us.

Ridingsharing (aka unlicensed cab) juggernaut Uber sold itself to Wall Street for a breathtaking amount of money. The company now has a market value of around 70 billion dollars and paid its executives 145 million in total compensation last year. Meanwhile, the drivers that work for Uber organized a strike against poor pay and working conditions. Let's hope the drivers eventually manage to organize, because despite all the money they have to throw around, Uber's management stated in their recent federal filings, "...as we aim to reduce Driver incentives to improve our financial performance, we expect Driver dissatisfaction will generally increase." At least they're honest, unlike every other corporation in the country who, let's face it, obviously believe the same thing.



Ever wonder why the corporate media doesn't cover labor strikes? The things are contagious! Nearly a year and a half after the teachers in West Virginia went on strike and won, the teachers' strikes are *still* going, and they're *still* winning. Recently teachers in Denver struck and won an 11.7% pay raise. Teachers in Oakland struck and won an 11% pay increase and 3% bonuses. 20,000 teachers in Oregon participated in a walk-out to push their representative to support a pro-education bill, which they did. In Kentucky, teachers staged a sickout, and are threatening more actions if the politicians don't abandon their anti-education bills. In New Haven, California teachers are currently on strike. And in New Zealand (yes, it has gone international), nearly 50,000 teachers are preparing to strike, which will shut down nearly every school in the country. The Netherlands, Poland, India, Iran, Mexico, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe have also experienced teachers strikes in recent months. Nearly all of these actions have resulted in wins for teachers.

The educators of the world clearly have something to teach us all: Direct action gets the goods. Now get out there, and practice the lesson!

#### Recent Washington State Union Election Results:

Midmountain Contractors, Kirkland, Washington and Northern Idaho District Council of Laborers: WON

VR Holdings NW, Inc., Skykomish, Communication Workers of America: WON

Durham D&M, LLC, Everett, Teamsters Local 38: WON

Northwest Hospital and Medical Center, Seattle, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW: WON

Lister Chain and Forge, Inc., Blaine, United Steelworkers: LOST

A. Harold & Associates, LLC, Oak Harbor, Pacific Northwest Staff Union: WON

MM Comfort Systems, LLC, Redmond, SMART Local 66: LOST

Zenetex, LLC, Oak Harbor, IAM District 751: WON

Wapato Point Management Company, Manson, Laborers International Union of North America Local 292: WON



## An Interview with Heather Mayer

By Hannah Hopkins

Heather Mayer is an instructor of History at Portland Community College and a scholar of American social justice movements. She received a PhD from Simon Fraser University. Her book *Beyond the Rebel Girl: Women and the Industrial Workers of the World in the Pacific Northwest, 1905-1924*, published by Oregon State University Press in 2018, attracted the attention of union supporters across the country. She agreed to do a short interview with me by email.

#### What is the one main takeaway you want readers to get from *Beyond the Rebel Girl*?

The community of radicals and people connected to the IWW in the Northwest in the early twentieth century included more than just single, male itinerant workers. Women, children, and husband-and-wife organizing teams all played an integral role in the Wobblies' success. And that activism wasn't always as big and visible as a leading a free speech fight or a strike. There were a lot of ways to support the union that were much smaller but still vitally important.

#### What made the IWW different, and why were so many women involved and prominent members in the early twentieth century?

While women still made up a small percentage of membership in the northwest, there were a few things that I think drew them to the IWW in this period: first, that they had freedom to focus on issues that interested them, such as birth control, antiwar activism, and freedom from restrictive middle-class ideals about sex and marriage, in addition to workplace issues of wages, hours, and conditions. Second, that it was an avenue for activism that did not focus primarily on getting women the right to vote. While the Wobblies weren't against women's suffrage, they focused more on direct action than political activism. These were women who saw that they had more in common with working class men than with upper class women.

#### What do you think of the state of the IWW these days especially with regards to women?

I think people are fond of the Wobblies because, unlike other unions in the early twentieth century, they advocated organizing all workers, regardless of sex, race, or skill. But not being exclusive is not exactly the same as being inclusive. The Wobblies of the early twentieth century lamented the lack of female membership, but didn't examine the structures or practices that made it sometimes difficult for women to join and take part. From an outsider's perspective, I think the Wobblies of today do a much better job of actually being inclusive and understanding the needs of a variety of workers, but there's always more work that can be done.

#### What other books by women do you see as invaluable to anyone trying to rebuild a radical labor movement here in the US?

Two recent ones I would recommend are Lane Windham's *Knocking on Labor's Door: Union Organizing in the 1970s and the Roots of a New Economic Divide* and Annelise Orleck's *"We are all Fast-Food Workers Now": The Global Uprising Against Poverty Wages*. Although not a book, I'm really enjoying the articles by Kim Kelly (@grimkim) in *Teen Vogue* and other places.

# Official Coroner's Report

Examiner: **Frank Tonsi**

Decedent: **Game Industry Organizing Campaign**

Residence: **Seattle WA**

Occupation: **Games Development**

Cause of Death: **Mass Layoffs**

Date: **2019**

RECEIVED

This is the story of my first attempt at organizing in the game industry. Ultimately, it was a failed attempt. No direct action was taken and we never went public. But things were tried that worked and didn't work, and I'd like to pass those lessons along. This story starts in the spring of 2018 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco.

There has been a growing interest in bringing collective bargaining to the games industry, an industry that has never seen it and consequently has some of the worst exploitation of white-collar workers. 100-hour weeks with no paid overtime are not as uncommon as they should be. This came to a head at a panel put on by the International Game Developers Association (IGDA), an outfit that's ostensibly a worker advocacy group but is staffed and headed by executives, meant to talk about the pros and cons of unionizing. The IGDA seemed to mostly want to talk about the drawbacks. Thanks in part to the work of some self-selected labor activists in the industry who would later take the name Game Workers Unite (GWU), the panel turned into a pro-unionization rally. Lots of workers who left that discussion were excited to bring unions to their studios and the industry at large, myself among them.

Wanting something and knowing how to get it are two different things. Back in Seattle, months go by and I'm mostly idle waiting for someone to tell me what to do to get a union. Then, due in part to the misogyny that is rampant in the

there was lots of talk about what the problems were without a concrete plan on how to fix them. This was incredibly demoralizing.

game industry, a coworker is fired. The reasons for the firing were as cowardly as they were inane. That's when I learned that waiting for someone else to come along and fight for workers who weren't fighting for themselves was a losing prospect. I reached out to a local socialist organization that was teaching the basics of workplace organizing.

We started organizing by taking coworkers (many who were as mad about the firing as I was) out for lunch at a nearby restaurant, and eventually formed a core of like-

minded coworkers. We all agreed the bosses held too much unilateral power at our studio. Unfortunately, it was immediately clear that despite how unjust the firing was, folks weren't willing to stick their necks out to try to demand a rehiring. Instead roughly twice a month we brought six coworkers out to talk about what could be run better at the studio and what should change. The problem was there was lots of talk about what the problems were without a concrete plan on how to fix them. This was incredibly demoralizing. The company also did a series of "listening sessions" where they let people vent their feelings about what had happened, after which the company would do next to nothing in response to our feedback.

After a few of these lunches, it becomes pretty clear that I was in over my head. Folks started to lose interest. What tasks I did assign to people were rarely carried out except by one person who was pretty dedicated. Then the Seattle chapter of GWU invited the IWW to one of its meetings. The IWW offered the resources our campaign needed the most: expertise and training. I joined the union and signed up for the next Organizer Training 101. A month later, I returned to the campaign with new energy.

I joined the union and signed up for the next Organizer Training 101. A month later, I returned to the campaign with new energy.

After a number of earlier false starts, an organizing committee was formed. It was composed of myself, the person who consistently helped out, and two other folks who seemed the most interested in bringing a union to the studio. We start doing one-on-ones--intentional organizing conversations with coworkers to gauge their support for unionizing and to try and help them see that collective action can address their grievances. After a few one-on-ones, a picture started to form around a grievance we could take action on: the gender pay gap.

The strategy was simple: write a letter asking for a pay audit, so we would know if there was a gender pay gap. The letter we wrote was polite and agreeable. We'd ask folks to

sign the letter if they agreed with the sentiment. Talking to coworkers about this also let us search for folks who might be good candidates to join the organizing committee. If someone signed, we asked them if they'd be interested in gathering signatures with us. This petitioning also came with a logical escalation strategy. If the bosses said yes to the audit, we'd teach the workers they could achieve things together. If the bosses said no, we could use the network of folks who had signed to do our own pay audit. This would teach folks that they don't need the bosses to take action to make things better in the workplace.

It's a shame we never got to put the plan into action. Layoffs hit the company. Most of the organizing committee was swept away in them. While it is unlikely we could have prevented mass layoffs, there were things that could have been done differently:

1. Start early: Had the campaign started the day I got back from GDC I might have identified what resources the campaign needed much earlier. Waiting for a crisis to occur actually left me playing catch up to the situation.

2. Get training: It is nearly impossible to start organizing until one has an idea of where they're going and how to get

there. The more training the better, but one can at least get started if they are taught:

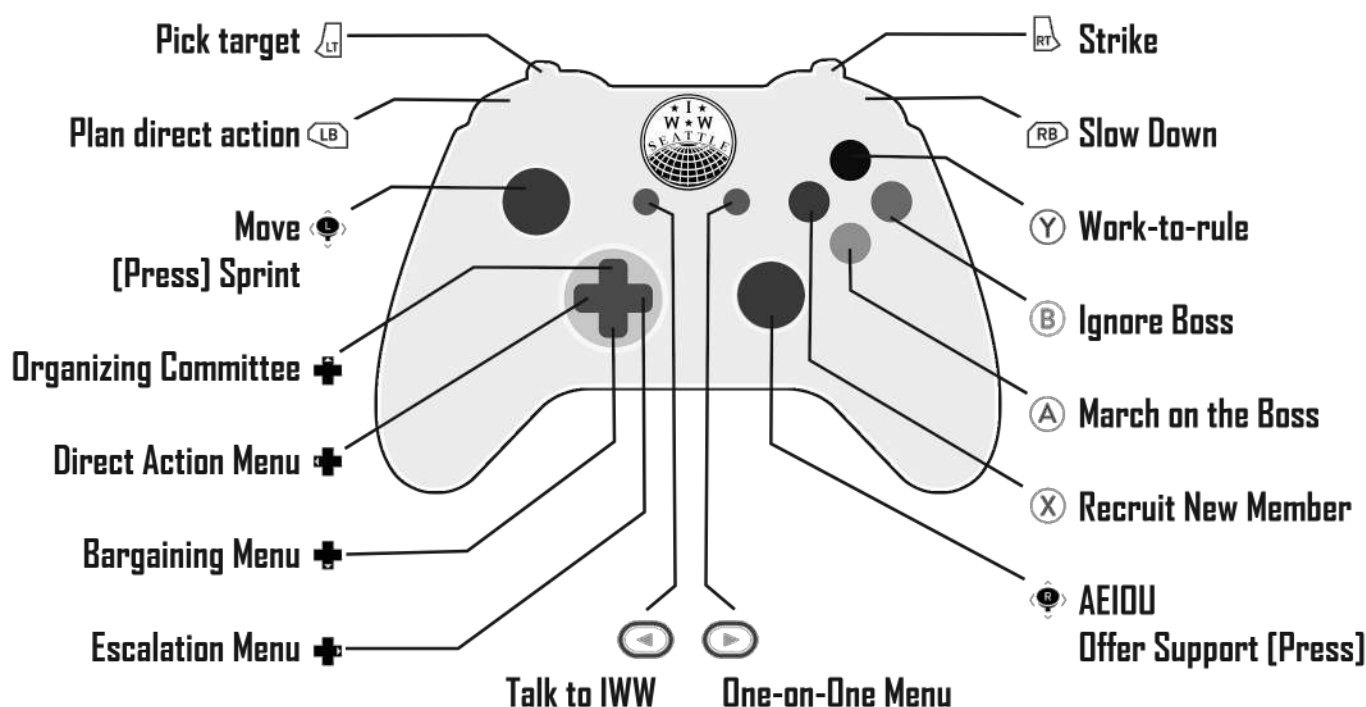
- How to have an organizing one-on-one conversation.
- What the steps of a union campaign are
- What is and isn't protected activity under labor law

3. Get a co-organizer: It is by definition impossible to organize alone. At minimum a co-organizer can help develop a strategy for the campaign and do one-on-ones (including with you to help you practice). I had at least one person who consistently helped drive people to and from lunches and who completed delegated tasks. But I didn't treat them like the equal they were. Had I asked for their help on the big stuff when I needed it we might have done much better.

The last lesson I'd like to impart, more important than those last three combined is that anyone can start organizing at their workplace, even you. Organizers don't need to read Marx, Lenin, or Chomsky to start making small but real changes in their own work place. The only thing an organizer needs is a desire for better conditions in their shop. If you're a worker, and especially if you're a game worker, this is your invitation to get started. Ask yourself "what's one thing that would make the work day easier to get through," find the answer and congratulations: you've taken the first step.

# GAMEWORKERS, TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR WORKPLACE

EMAIL THE SEATTLE IWW GAME WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE: [SEATTLE.IWW.GWOC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SEATTLE.IWW.GWOC@GMAIL.COM)





# Let's Roll: An RPG Guide

## AN ORGANIZER RECRUITING STRATEGY PRIMER FOR

In a roleplaying game, we get to choose the kind of character we want to be, like a fighter, a mage, or a bard. We decide our character's defining traits. And we get to work with other players to decide on the makeup of our party--characters who are good at lockpicking, healing, stealth, combat. We make these choices based on a certain strategy. Is workplace organizing much different? Organizing campaigns have characters, each with their own personality traits, and each person plays a role (or multiple roles). But inexperienced organizers don't take these traits into consideration when recruiting workers to the union. This guide is to help newer organizers navigate the personalities they may come across. Like in *Dungeons & Dragons*, we should think about how a party functions, works together, comes into conflict, and pushes the effort forward. You should be thinking about your membership strategy. Before beginning a union campaign, we should ask, What is our plan? First, we must understand the workplace: who works there, how can we get in contact with them, what are their relationships with each other. Then we use this info to recruit social leaders, the most effective and important parts in pushing the organizing effort forward. The following "character classes" are the kinds of people who you will have to recruit, along with some notes on the strategic considerations you'll need to make before bringing them onboard.



### Character Class: Superhero

**Strengths:** Motivation, endless energy, commitment, usually well-respected by coworkers

**Weaknesses:** Prone to burnout, creates over-reliance, hoards tasks, may be intimidating

Because the Superhero is hardworking and usually well-liked, you need to recruit them. They are probably a social leader in the shop and others will follow them. These social leaders are most likely to have effective encounters with many different workers. They take the initiative and bring people along with them. If you recruit a Superhero (or if you are one yourself) then you know how effective they can be at single-handedly pushing a campaign forward. But the Superhero tries to do everything themselves: they become the chokepoint for all organizing activity, they accidentally or consciously hoard information and decision-making power, they are likely to burn out, and they leave the campaign vulnerable if they quit or get fired. They take all the work for themselves and rarely build up other workers and spread tasks and development around.



### Character Class: Martyr

**Strengths:** Willingness to take action, commitment, works hard

**Weaknesses:** Big ego, sometimes disliked by coworkers, works hard for their own benefit

Union campaigns--real union campaigns that build solidarity between workers and a rebellious spirit to take on the bosses--take a long time. We want to build stable and sustainable campaigns. They take patience

and strategic outlook. The Martyr can be a great organizer because they put the campaign ahead of themselves. They desperately want to succeed. But the Martyr also wants to take the shortcut of relying on token actions to push the campaign forward. If things aren't going their way, they perform some kind of self-sacrifice to try and save things. They take risky or petulant actions with little chance of success, sometimes to guilt other workers into helping or to boost their own ego. We know that winning isn't built on action. It's built on solidarity. Trust, mutual support, caring, and collective decision-making win campaigns, and it takes a long time to build those things. Be aware of the Martyr's instinct to act impulsively.



### Character Class: Lifelong Leftist

**Strengths:** Familiar with history and theory, believes in class struggle, probably hates the big boss

**Weaknesses:** Finds ways to justify dislike of unions, unwillingness to take action, talks a good game, maybe unpopular with coworkers

The Lifelong Leftist is another character who has the capability to be a great organizer if they can be convinced to take on the work. They also want to win, they want to see capitalism destroyed. But Lifelong Leftists are why we can't just sign up people on the Left and win. So many self-proclaimed revolutionaries do not want to take action for one reason or another (be they ideological, like many Leftist parties opposed to unionism, or be they self-interested, like not wanting to risk their job). Their identity might revolve around "hating capitalism" and griping. They might be friends with the boss or want power for themselves, even if they do talk a good game. They may be unpopular because of their cynicism, and they may attract unwanted attention for their outspokenness. But they may also be a useful supporter if they see the union gaining traction and if they can be sufficiently agitated to do something.



### Character Class: Big Talker

**Strengths:** People listen when they speak and generally believe what they say

**Weaknesses:** People listen when they speak and generally believe what they say

Often funny, loud, friendly, and well-liked, the Big Talker can be a great person for the Organizing Committee. The downside is they might accidentally tip off the bosses or hostile coworkers. People trust the Big Talker to be honest and forthright, and so they often have the (sometimes grudging) respect of their coworkers. Early on, clue the Big Talker in to strategy so they know to help you stay under the radar.



### Character Class: Rebel

**Strengths:** Cool, is generally a social leader, and is rebellious

# to Organizing Characters

## YOUR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE BY LEXI OWENS

**Weaknesses:** Hard to recruit, may be unaccountable to the group, may shirk tasks

The Rebel is cool. They show an open disdain for the bosses and for rules. They are rebellious and they know the system is bullshit. Some people are drawn to the Rebel because they are charismatic or manifest what people wish they had the guts to do. But just as they won't follow all the boss' rules, the Rebel may show disdain for the union's structure, leadership, policies, and procedures. They hate boring meetings. If you hold a vote they disagree with, you can't count on them to be accountable. With the right agitation towards the bosses, the Rebel will be an invaluable part of the Organizing Committee.



### Character Class: Sage

**Strengths:** Institutional knowledge, respect, large social network

**Weaknesses:** Institutional inertia, conservative

The Sage has worked there a long time. They know everybody, they know the history, and everybody knows them. They've been through years or decades of crap. People go to them for advice, and if they think the union is a good idea a lot of other people will believe it too. But they may also be close to retirement, or dependent on healthcare, or afraid of losing what they have. They probably have kids to take care of. They have a lot to lose. They may not want a big change because they're somewhat comfortable and have a lot of seniority. This causes them to be more conservative and much less rebellious, and they may not want to participate in a union that is actively confronting the bosses.



### Character Class: Apprentice

**Strengths:** Knowledgeable, friendly, administrative tasks, wants to be helpful

**Weaknesses:** Not very outgoing, may have trouble making social connections

The Apprentice will become a Sage over time. They are great at administrative tasks and other "boring" things. They work hard and they take pride in their work, so they should be recruited to work for the union. But they may have trouble with the social aspect of recruiting new members. Their skills can be developed easily because they like to learn, but they may also be shy and lack confidence. They are probably not a social leader.



### Character Class: Careerist

**Strengths:** Wants to have a good job, works hard and is respected

**Weaknesses:** Social climber may sacrifice the campaign for their own advancement, overly cautious due to risks of organizing and getting fired, friendly to bosses

The Careerist can be extremely helpful with the right agitation/education. They want to have a good job and they want to turn their current job into a lifelong career. A union could really help them achieve those things. But they are probably friendly with bosses, and they want to advance up the chain of command. They may see the union as a threat to their career.



### Character Class: Warrior

**Strengths:** Willingness to take action, commitment, motivation, energy

**Weaknesses:** Lacks strategic outlook, may take reckless actions, may be unaccountable to the group

The Warrior wants to fight, and they want to fight now. They are a great person to coordinate direct actions. They may already be extremely agitated, which can cause them to make mistakes. A Warrior might act alone or too quickly, and they might make snap decisions without group input. The committee should balance their willingness to fight with a request for them to be patient and pick their battles strategically.



### Character Class: Zealous Rookie

**Strengths:** Willingness to take action, motivation and possible zealotry

**Weaknesses:** Inexperience working with others, headstrong and stubborn, can act like a know-it-all

The 20-something Zealous Rookie will put in the work to grow the union. They have boundless energy and motivation because their identity is based on activism. They are probably "woke" and ready to fight. The organizer's job is to channel this effervescence into productive tasks. But sometimes they get impatient and mistake the action for the results--they'd rather do something than win. Activism beyond the workplace can be spontaneous and flashy, and can provide instant gratification. Workplace organizing is slow, often with long gaps between actions. And because they are new to the movement, this person probably doesn't have experience in democratic decision-making and accountability.

The various personalities in every shop demonstrate why it's important to lay out strategic goals and stick to them. Strategy takes into account long-term outcomes, obstacles, and a plan to win. It should change over time depending on various factors, but overall the goal of unionizing a shop is generally the same: build a significant supermajority of workers willing to take action to win demands. We have found, through experiences at myriad campaigns, that the only way to reach that level of support is through organic, face-to-face, time-intensive organizing to create a culture of solidarity. Strategy must reflect that and should take into account who should be recruited and when, how they should be recruited, what actions to take, and a series of ideal timelines. If we are going to defeat the big boss, we need to have a clear strategy, the will to fight, and the support to win.

# **Worker Management is the Only Ethically Justified Management CHANGE MY MIND.**



**T**he only way to ensure the economy works for the majority of the people is to allow the people to manage the economy democratically. We in the IWW believe this is what unions are for: Gaining democratic control of the economy by gaining democratic control of the individual workplaces that make up the economy. Of course, the capitalist oligarchs that run our economy would like us to believe the owners of businesses should be able to manage their businesses however they like with no interference from the community and no interference from their own employees via unionization. Like all other economic arguments, the justification for this view breaks down to an ethical argument: The owner took a risk when they created their business (and hence jobs), so the owner is rightfully entitled to have full control over the business (and hence the jobs. And, by extension, at least partial control of the community itself).

Here is one example of this type of thinking from the conservative news site *The Daily Wire*:

"Being an entrepreneur is a risky endeavor... Tons of time, money, and effort can be loaded into a business and at the same time be not guaranteed to succeed... Meanwhile, the low skill employees of these entrepreneurs risk nothing to very little... they [politicians] undercut the extreme risks and hardships the owners may have gone through in order to get a higher wage, while the employees get to cash in on their employer's back."

Everything about this argument is wrong.

First of all, the author is clearly mixing up the terms "owner" and "entrepreneur." Most owners are not entrepreneurs. Take General Electric for example. As is true of all companies that issue shares (whether they are publicly traded or not) the owners of GE are the shareholders, and they get to collectively decide how the company is managed via the board

of directors that they choose. There is no person on Earth that was alive when GE was founded. So it should go without saying that not a single GE shareholder can count themselves among the group of entrepreneurs that risked "time, money, and effort" to organize the company, so the argument falls apart for old companies. The argument also fails for many new companies.

Jeff Bezos started Amazon and still works there, so it's safe to say he did invest "time, money, and effort." But Jeff Bezos only owns about 16% of Amazon. Most of the rest of the other 84% is owned by people that put in little or no effort to get the company started. Furthermore, the next two largest shareholders are Vanguard and Blackrock. Little if any of the money invested by Vanguard and Blackrock is owned by the capitalists at those companies. So they are risking nothing to be owners.

It's clear, at the very least, *The Daily Wire's* argument only applies to owners that started the businesses they own using only their own money and labor, thereby taking on all the risk themselves. This, however, is not possible.

No business is started without financial and other help from the community (the community that is, at least theoretically, represented by the politicians the author is complaining about). The roads and airports that the owner, employees, and customers use are maintained by the community. The employees the owner hires (who need to be able to read and write to work effectively) were educated by the community. The business's property is protected from fire, theft, and vandalism by a fire department and law enforcement that is paid for by the community. If the business enters into a contract with another business, the contract may be enforced in a court system that is paid for by the community. Even the money earned by the owner to start the business would have no value if the US government didn't give it value. The owner, even if they used their own rightly-earned money, did not start the business with no help from the community in which they operate. If starting a business is like scoring the



winning touchdown in the NFL, the community spent the whole game moving the ball all the way to the one yard line. At which point, the owner simply walked it into the endzone and claimed a solo victory.

This alone should call the exclusive management claims of owners into question. If the community does most of the work necessary to allow a business to thrive, the community should retain most of the management rights. But there is more wrong with *The Daily Wire's* argument.

It is obviously false that most business owners go through "hardships" to become owners. Owners that are shareholders and outside investors just plunk down money, which doesn't entail much effort, much less any hardship. For dividend paying companies, becoming an owner even one day before the ex-dividend date (the day which determines who gets paid dividends) entitles the new owner to the exact proportional amount of compensation as anyone that has been an owner their whole life, so they wait an even shorter amount of time for their first payday (and hence experience less hardship) than the actual employees of the company they are investing in. The owners that are also operators and not just outside shareholders are not necessarily risking any money either.

US businesses operate with limited liability for their owners. This means that if a business is started with debt financing, and the owners that started the business did not personally cosign on the loans or put any of their personal property up as collateral, then they did not risk their own money. They risked someone else's money. Should the business go bankrupt, they can safely walk away with no obligations. This same thing is true if the owner started the company with other forms of outside investment.

Even owners that start businesses with their own labor and put their own money at risk don't necessarily suffer anything that might be called a hardship. Many new business owners pay themselves a salary out of operating income from the beginning because they start as consulting or service enterprises that don't require a lot of capital expenditures. As the workload grows, the owners divert some of the work to employees they hire. At no time are the owners earning zero dollars per year. And businesses that do not start with a ready cash flow often have outside financing that allows the owners to get paid from the start.

It is true that any capital expenditures the founders had to pay up front with their own money are a financial risk to the owner, but that risk goes down with each dollar they earn back on the business. Once the owner's original investment is earned back, there is nothing further at risk. So while it might be true in the beginning that the owners should have management rights to protect the money they have invested, if the business goes forward as planned, that argument fades. And this doesn't even touch on the fact that if someone with one hundred million dollars puts one million into a new business and the business fails, their lifestyle and purchasing decisions will almost certainly remain unaffected. Therefore while it is strictly true that they risked a million dollars, they didn't risk their future standard of living, so they didn't really risk much.

Turning to the treatment of employees in *The Daily Wire* argument, the claim that the employees risk "nothing to very little" is almost laughable. Nearly all employees that accept a job at a given company are risking something. If the employee is fortunate enough to be able to

choose between competing offers at more than one employer, they risk choosing to work at the worse company. Starting a new job also often entails spending by the employee. They might have to relocate, buy a new car or new clothes. They might only have gotten the job because they invested in a degree or certificate program, which they expect to make a good return on. They risk having to put up with abusive bosses, unexpected pay cuts or changes to health insurance, unpredictable labor markets, and managerial changes totally beyond their control.

If they get fired, they will not lose just a paycheck. They may be saddled with even more debt in the form of fees because of missed debt payments. They may lose their housing, car, or worse. Business closures have been known to cause (former) employee suicide. It is in fact common, especially in cases where a business owner is wealthy and the employees are poor or in debt, that the employees in a business are actually taking on more risk than the owner when they accept employment. Communities, likewise, take on enormous risks when they allow businesses to operate within them, a fact the author completely leaves out while complaining about the politicians that are supposed to keep our communities safe and functional.

Several years ago, a business on Capitol Hill (it was never revealed which one) was hacked, which resulted in hundreds of people from the community having their identities stolen. Jeff Bezos was allowed to start Amazon in Seattle, and then went on to directly and indirectly exacerbate Seattle's homelessness crisis. There have been many companies over the years that have collectively turned the Lower Duwamish into a superfund site. And let's not forget Boeing, which is one of the world's foremost war profiteers. Their lobbying for more war has led to suffering on a truly grand scale. Anytime a community grants permission to form a business they risk allowing these kinds of abuses and many more. These abuses are so common, the field of economics has a name for them. They are called "externalities."

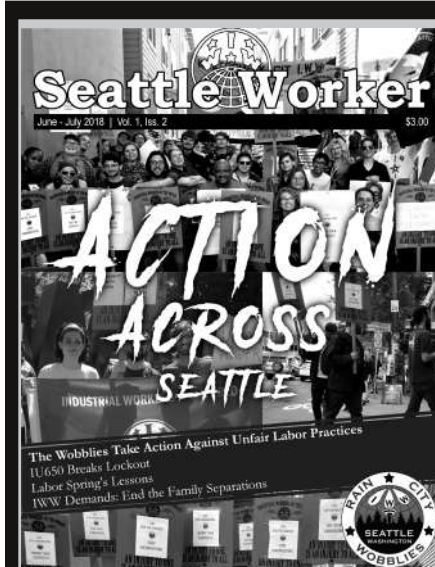
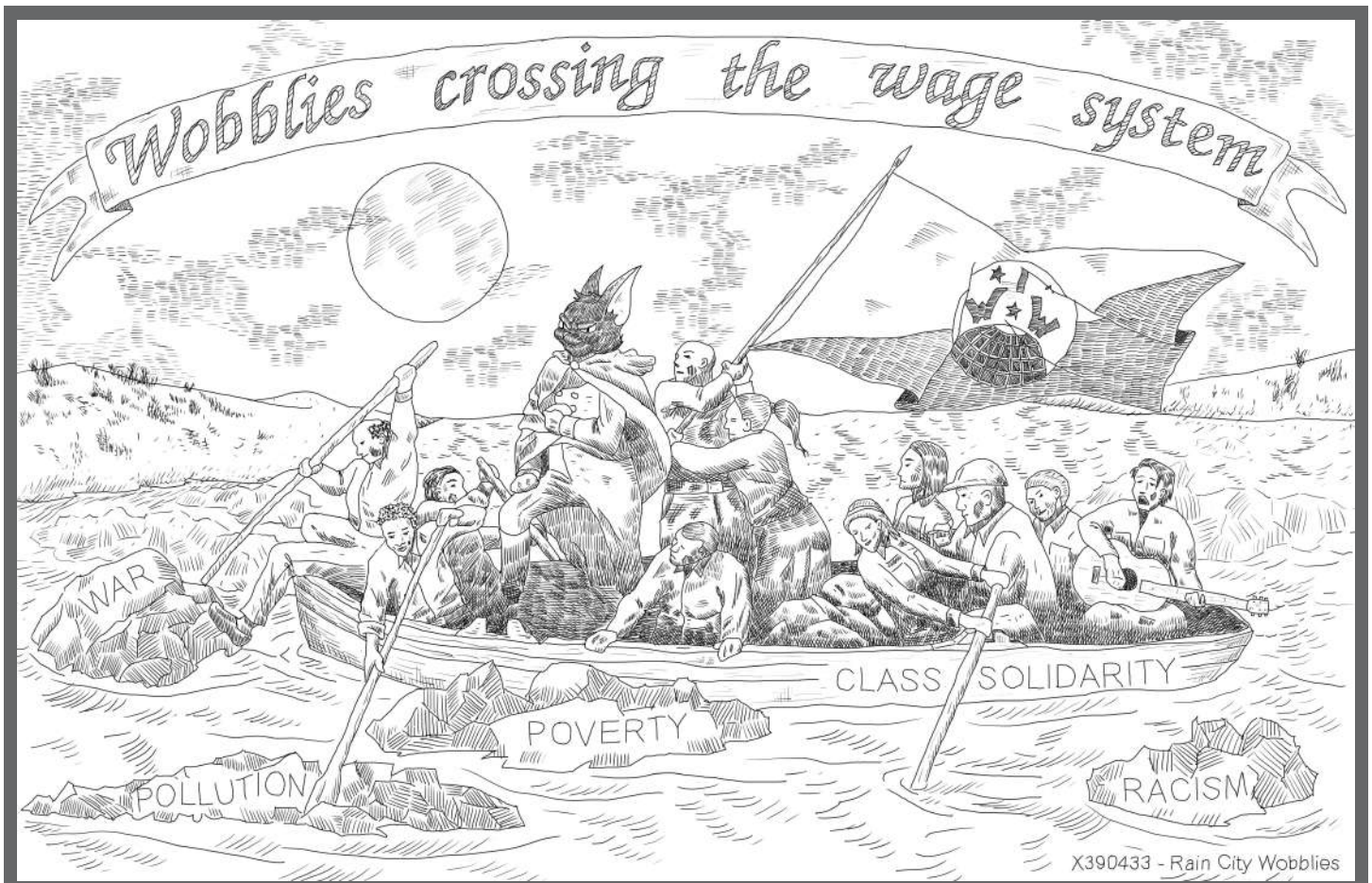
It is clear that if management rights in a business are made on the basis of which stakeholders took on the most risk to start the business, then the employees and the communities they are members of should at least share management of businesses, if not manage them outright. There seems to be one other common claim on management rights the author is making. At the end of the quote, the author adds the almost offensive line, "the employees get to cash in on their employer's back." This seems to be hinting at the idea that the employees (and I assume the wider community) owe the owners and not the other way around, presumably because the owner created the jobs the employees now hold. This is completely backward and displays an amazing lack of understanding of our current, mostly capitalist, economy.

First of all, no particular business (or even type of business) is required to exist for unemployment rates to change. This is why unemployment rates under capitalism have always fluctuated, and will continue to do so, no matter what companies are in operation. Secondly, businesses are not charities. Business owners do not hire employees in order to help the employees or their community. Owners use employees to create goods and services. The goods and services are then sold to the community for a profit (that is, for more than they are really worth), so the owners can enrich themselves. The owners are cashing in on the backs of their employees and the wider community, not the other way around.

In summary, when it comes to established companies that are majority owned by outside shareholders, the shareholders (that is, the legal owners) have no justified claim to management rights. Their claims to such rights are based on the financial risk they are allegedly taking when they purchase shares, but their potential hardships are absolutely dwarfed by what the employees and the wider community are facing should the company misstep.

In all other cases, the community the company operates in should have at least some amount of say in the management of the company to keep a lid on externalities. There are, however, a

lot of complicating factors that come into play when determining who should manage a company and what privileges they should receive. Those things should be determined on a case by case basis, and they should be determined democratically by those community members that are most affected and in the best position to do so: the employees of the company. The organizations that put employees in a position to make those determinations are radical labor unions like the Industrial Workers of the World.



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# Seattle IWW Upcoming Meetings

- June 5 General Organizing  
Committee Meeting
- June 19 General Membership  
Branch Meeting
- July 3 General Organizing  
Committee Meeting
- July 17 General Membership  
Branch Meeting

## WHAT WORKERS HAVE SAID ABOUT SEATTLE IWW'S OT101 "I learned empowering ways of thinking."

"It gave me more insight and helped me really understand what we can do as a union with solidarity."

"I have been to several OT101s and it just gets better."

"I learned valuable lessons I already know I'll apply to my own campaign."

"I feel like I have a much clearer picture of what organizing looks like and how to do it."

ORGANIZER TRAINING 101 GIVES  
YOU THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO  
UNIONIZE YOUR JOB

[seattleiww.org/ot101registration](http://seattleiww.org/ot101registration)

### Preamble of the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

## Submissions welcome!

All Seattle Worker content is written by workers who volunteer their time and energy to help us spread news about our branch, our union, and our communities.

Our Editorial Committee welcomes essays, articles, photographs, art, cartoons, and announcements.

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

North American  
Regional Administration  
Annual Convention  
Labor Day Weekend 2019  
Winnipeg, Canada



Seattle GMB member LM holds his OBU sign made for the UAW strike at the University of Washington in May 2018.



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

What is the IWW?

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

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

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

## Application for Membership Aplicación para Membresía

☐ I affirm that I am a worker and that I am not an employer. [Afirmar que soy trabajador/a y no soy empleador.]

☐ I agree to abide by the constitution and regulations of this organization, and will study its principles and acquaint myself with its purposes. [Pacto de obedecer a la constitución y las reglas de esta organización, y estudiaré sus principios, y me informaré de sus objetivos.]

Name/Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Dirección: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Ciudad: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Estado: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Country/ País: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Teléfono: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/Empleador: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Ocupación: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would prefer to receive copies of the IWW's General Organization Bulletin in paper form, by mail (Default is electronic, by email).

[Prefiero recibir copias del Boletín General por correo. (No sobre e-mail)]

☐ I would like information about the IWW's General Defense Committee. [Me gustaría recibir más información sobre el Comité de Defensa General.]

### Dues Rate Based on Monthly Income

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

### Cuota Dependiente de Paga Manual

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

### TO BE FILLED IN BY DELEGATE [PARA LLENAR POR DELEGADOS]

Date/Fecha:        
month / mes day / día year / año

Member No. / Número de Miembro/a: X

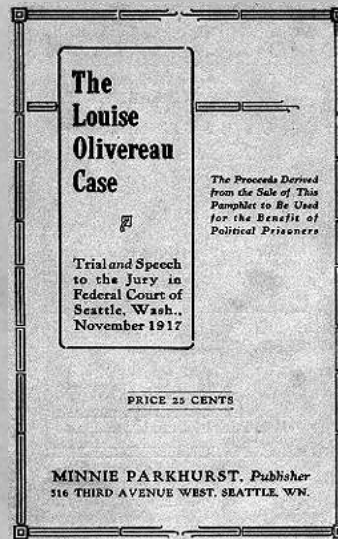
Industrial Union No. / Número de Sindicato Industrial:

Delegate/ Delegado/a: \_\_\_\_\_

Delegate No. / Número de Delegado/a:   -

Initiation/Iniciación: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Dues/Cuota: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Ass'ts/Tasa: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Tracy K., Hannah H., Ty U., Eric, and Iain D.