

Industrial Unionism – Firing the bosses and abolishing wages

Presentation by Samuel Wade, Vienna

“ ...

All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone,
We shall lay a new foundation built it skywards stone by stone,
All the world was made by workers not to slave in but to own,
And our union makes us strong!
In our hands we hold a power greater than their horded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a million-fold,
We shall bring to birth a new world in the ashes of the old,
And our union makes us strong!

Extracts from Solidarity Forever 'Battle Hymn' of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W)

Abstract:

Any strategy designed to relieve the human race from its current imprisoning state of affairs must address the activity most fundamental to the world of capitalism: work. We will all spend most of our lives, the vast majority of our time, working. Even when we are not, our lives will be defined by it. Work will dictate our “free-time” as much as it does our “slave –time” telling us what to eat or how much to drink, which activities we can take part in and when we must go to bed. It will make us wake when we are tired and labor when we are sick. When we do not have it we will be made outcasts and punished for our idleness; and when we do, we will have the praise of our masters and the privilege of working ourselves to exhaustion. We will, most of us, devote our lives to work, whether willingly or through necessity and eventually work will kill most of us too.

Organising in the workplace is about more than fighting for day to day survival, it's about building networks of solidarity and communication, the basis of a new democratic-economic paradigm. Not only are radical industrial unions our best weapon in the industrial struggle, they are critical for the moment of our victory.