

VOICES OF WORKING PEOPLE'S HISTORY
Thursday, May 1, 2008
Unitarian Universalist Society of Northampton & Florence, Western Massachusetts

{1} [“THE INTERNATIONALE” (1871)]

Arise, you prisoners of starvation!
Arise, you wretched of the earth!
For justice thunders condemnation.
A better world's in birth.

No more tradition's chains shall bind us.
Arise you slaves, no more in thrall!
The earth shall rise on new foundations.
We have been naught, we shall be all.

'Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The international working class
Shall be the human race.

'Tis the final conflict;
Let each stand in his place.
The international working class
Shall be the human race.

{2} [MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION ~ JULIA WARD HOWE]

NARRATOR 1: *Julia Ward Howe, of Boston, is famous for writing the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” for the crusade to abolish slavery. She's less well known as the mother of Mother's Day. And it is even less well known that her Mother's Day Proclamation, issued in 1870 with the appalling carnage of the Civil War still fresh in the nation's memory, was not a greeting-card sentiment but an appeal to end all war.*

Today, the proclamation is a Unitarian Universalist hymn.

HOWE: Arise then, women of this day! Arise all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be of water or of tears. Say firmly: “We shall not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy, and

patience. We, the women of one country, will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons be trained to injure theirs.” From the bosom of a devastated Earth, a voice cries out with our own. It says: “Disarm, disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice.”

{3} [“GOD WEPT” ~ W.E.B. DU BOIS]

NARRATOR 2: *The Civil War gave birth to modern mechanized warfare. It also gave birth to the ferocity of modern industrialized class warfare. At stake in the titanic struggle between the agrarian south and the industrial north was the role of the nation state in protecting Capital and defending a new political economy: An economy based on wage labor, not slave labor; producers who could also become consumers; and a new working class surrounded by a desperate, impoverished mass and divided by appeals to racism and nationalism.*

The sociologist, activist, and socialist W. E. B. Du Bois, born and raised in Great Barrington, wrote:

DU BOIS: God wept; but that mattered little to an unbelieving age; what mattered most was that the world wept and still is weeping and blind with tears and blood. For there began to rise in America in 1876 a new capitalism and a new enslavement of labor. The immense profit from this new exploitation and world-wide commerce enabled a guild of millionaires to engage the greatest engineers, the wisest men of science, as well as pay high wages to the more intelligent labor, and at the same time to have left enough surplus to make more thorough the dictatorship of capital over the state and over the popular vote, not only in Europe and America but in Asia and Africa.

{4} [“STORM THE FORT”]

NARRATOR 1: *The working class was not slow to respond to this new world order, and the response was largely radical, seeking its overthrow. The first significant labor federation in America was the Knights of Labor, formed in 1869, and reaching its peak in the late 19th century. Their motto was:*

KNIGHT: An injury to one is an injury to all.

NARRATOR 1: *The Knights organized workers on an equal basis, including African Americans, women, and unskilled laborers. Membership was open to –*

KNIGHT: All working-class people over the age of 16, except bankers, lawyers, and gamblers.

NARRATOR 1: *They rewrote the gospel song “Hold the Fort,” and started singing.*

Toiling millions now are waking;
See them marching on.
All the tyrants now are shaking
Ere their power is gone.

Storm the fort, ye Knights of Labor!
Battle for your cause.
Equal rights for every neighbor.
Down with tyrant laws!

Lazy drones steal all the honey
From hard labor’s hives.
Banks control the nation’s money
And destroy your lives.

Storm the fort, ye Knights of Labor!
Battle for your cause.
Equal rights for every neighbor.
Down with tyrant laws!

{5} [1870s]

NARRATOR 1: *The severe world-wide depression of the 1870s was caused by private businesses overextending production in order to increase their already swollen profits. There were runs on the banks and demonstrations by unemployed people, but by 1877 less than one fifth of the workforce was working regularly and fulltime. Many people migrated far and wide for what work existed. Those who were working had their wages cut significantly.*

NARRATOR 2: *This was the backdrop for the great railroad strike of 1877, the first national strike in US history. The immediate cause was another 10% pay cut. It was a spontaneous strike that quickly spread from Baltimore to all around the country. It drew militant support from farmers, miners, steel workers, and others. Women were particularly valiant, hurling stones as they stood against the fire of army troops. After two and a half weeks, the strike was smashed by the armed might of the National Guard. No effective national labor union existed, and the 8-hour day and 5-day week were dreams of the future.*

{6} [EIGHT HOUR “LAW” ~ PETER McGUIRE]

NARRATOR 1: *On November 15, 1881, a number of labor unions and chapters of the Knights of Labor formed the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, which, five years later, became the American Federation of Labor, which today is the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations – the AFL-CIO. A driving force behind the new Federation was the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, formed just a few months earlier. And the driving force behind the Carpenters Union was Peter McGuire. McGuire convinced skeptical, locally minded union activists around the country that a national labor federation was not only necessary but also possible.*

McGUIRE: My parents emigrated from Ireland. I was born in New York City in 1852. The neighborhood where I grew up was a living grave.

I quit school at 11 to work when Dad went off to fight in the Union Army. But I paid attention. I met Samuel Gompers and other young firebrands at free night classes at Cooper Union. I was convinced of the futility of reformist measures. In the late 1870s, when I was organizing for the socialist party here in New England, I walked from city to city. And when my feet gave out, I hopped freights. New England, the West, the Southwest, the Midwest, wherever I went, I urged workers to organize themselves, abolish the wage system, and institute a universal system of cooperative production and distribution.

NARRATOR 2: *Peter McGuire is often called the father of May Day. Congress had passed an eight-hour law in 1868 that President Chester Arthur refused to enforce. Employers largely ignored it. McGuire concluded that there was only one way for workers to get an effective eight-hour law:*

McGUIRE: ... an enactment by the workingmen themselves that on a given day eight hours shall constitute a day’s work, and they ought to enforce it themselves.

NARRATOR 2: *In 1884, the Carpenters delegation to the Federation convention introduced a resolution that:*

McGUIRE: Eight hours shall constitute a legal day’s labor from and after May 1, 1886.

NARRATOR 2: *And the working class took up the cause as a freedom movement.*

{7} [“EIGHT HOURS”]

We mean to make things over.
We are tired of toil for naught,
With but bare enough to live upon
And ne'er an hour for thought.

We want to feel the sunshine,
And we want to smell the flow'rs.
We are sure that God has willed it,
And we mean to have eight hours.

We're summoning our forces
From the shipyard, shop, and mill.
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,
Eight hours for what we will;
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest,
Eight hours for what we will.

NARRATOR 1: *The united national campaign to win a shorter work day inspired local activists throughout the country. Workers rushed into unions and joined strikes. Union membership almost tripled in 1886, including new unions among African-American sugar workers in Louisiana, migrant timber workers of the Pacific Northwest, and female office clerks in the urban Northeast.*

{8} [1880s]

NARRATOR 2: *During the 1880s, 5 million people migrated to the United States, many dying on the way. Many settled in Chicago, a city of industrial smog and crowded tenements. Sewage was pumped into Lake Michigan, and drinking water was pumped out. Hospitals were horrible.*

NARRATOR 1: *Chicago was a crowded city with a strong and growing labor movement, led by a group of anarchists and socialists, agitating through newspapers in different languages. Anarchists believed that government should not stand above the people, that workers organizing themselves could run society. Socialists wanted capitalism replaced by a system with collective ownership.*

NARRATOR 2: *Although it may be hard to believe today, tens of thousands of working people were anarchists, socialists, or communists. This revolutionary influence dominated the American trade union movement.*

{9} [MAY 1, 1886]

NARRATOR 1: *On May 1, 1886, a hundred and twenty-two years ago today, half a million workers across the country laid down their tools, vowing not to pick them up until they had won the eight-hour workday. The nationwide coordination of strikes, rallies, and parades was unheard of anywhere in the world! Many employers conceded defeat and agreed to grant the 8-hour day. Nowhere were the workers better organized than in Chicago, where 80,000 workers struck and the city was nearly closed by the strikes.*

{10} [MAY 3-4, 1886]

NARRATOR 2: *Then, on May 3rd, at the McCormick Harvester Works in Chicago, where 300 scabs were being brought in past locked out lumber workers, the police attacked the picket line. According to a witness,*

WITNESS: The police opened fire into their backs. Boys and men were killed as they ran.

NARRATOR 2: *Police killed six strikers. In response, the anarchists called for a protest in Haymarket Square the next day. One of the speakers was Albert Parsons, a radical activist, central labor union leader, and editor of the labor newspaper The Alarm.*

NARRATOR 1: *The rally was largely over. Just as protesters were heading home, the police moved in. A bomb exploded in their ranks; seven policemen died. Coming in the midst of the largest national strike Americans had ever seen, the bombing created mass hysteria, the nation's first "Red Scare."*

The ruling class, hoping this could discredit the labor movement, quickly indicted Albert Parsons and other activists. Most were arrested, but Parsons was not to be found. On the first day of the trial, Parsons suddenly appeared.

PARSONS: I have come to stand trial, your honor, with my innocent comrades.

{11} ["CAESAR KEPT ME AWAKE" ~ ALBERT PARSONS]

NARRATOR 2: *Albert Parsons had been a confederate soldier, but he later changed his mind about which side was right. His wife, Lucy Gonzalez Parsons, a black working class woman, was born in Texas, the descendant of slaves and Mexican Indians. He and Lucy were forced to leave Texas by the Ku Klux Klan.*

From his cell, on the morning of his hanging, Parsons wrote to his friend Dyer Lum:

PARSONS: The guard has just awakened me. I have washed my face and drank a cup of coffee. The doctor asked me if I wanted stimulants. I said no. The dear boys, Engel, Fischer, and Spies, saluted me with firm voices. Well, my dear old comrade, the hour draws near. Caesar [*aside*] – the government, that is – kept me awake last night with the noise, the music of the hammer and saw erecting his throne – my scaffold.

**{12} [THE GREAT TRIAL OF THE CHICAGO ANARCHISTS IN 1886 ~
Dyer Lum]**

NARRATOR 1: *Dyer Lum was a Civil War veteran and member of the Knights of Labor. He settled in Northampton in 1873 and is buried in the Bridge Street cemetery here. In 1877 he ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts on a fusion Greenback Party and Labor Reform Party ticket. After the Haymarket incident, he befriended the defendants and may have plotted to rescue the martyrs from jail. Lum wrote a defense of the Haymarket martyrs before their execution, demonstrating that they were convicted for their beliefs, not for any actual conspiracy:*

LUM: A bomb! A dynamite bomb! Such was the startling intelligence which went over the wires from the city of Chicago on the night of May 4th, 1886. Who threw it? After a long and protracted trial the question remains unanswered. Whether thrown by someone indignant at the raid by the police on a peaceable meeting or thrown by some hireling to break the great eight-hour movement, the trial did not reveal.

Yet, eight men were placed on trial for their lives, their houses searched without process of law. They were subjected to personal abuse by city officials, denounced and virtually tried and condemned by a press whose existence, as caterers to capitalists, lay in creating a scarecrow and imparting to it some semblance of reality.

Capital and Labor were asserted to be pitted against each other in a new “irrepressible conflict.” A reign of terror set in. Property trembled for its existence before a phantom; fear paralyzed reason, and force – arbitrary and illegal – held full sway. Labor Unions found their doors closed by the police. “Suspects” were arrested, imprisoned, and their homes searched by detectives without warrants.

Upon what evidence were they convicted? After carefully reading hundreds of pages of testimony, and carefully weighing all the facts in the case, I am at a loss to

account for the verdict upon other grounds than that of *class prejudice*.

The eight social heretics of Chicago who dared to defend their beliefs when tried for an act, of which it was *openly admitted* they were not personally guilty, have challenged the attention of the world and the admiration of the oppressed of all lands. Though John Brown's body has long been at rest – still, more than ever can it be said, his soul is marching on!

{13} [“IT IS A SUBTERRANEAN FIRE” ~ AUGUST SPIES]

NARRATOR 2: *One of the Haymarket defendants was August Spies, a German immigrant. At his trial, he made this statement:*

SPIES: I am a socialist! Now strike me. But hear me before you strike. What do I stand for? Briefly stated, it is the right of the toiler to have the free and equal use of the tools of production, and the right of the producers to their product. Had I chosen another path in life, I might now be up on the Avenue of the City of Chicago today, living in a beautiful home, surrounded by my family with luxury and ease, with slaves to do my bidding. But I chose the other road, and I stand here today upon the scaffold. This is my crime.

If you think that by hanging us, you stamp out the labor movement from which the downtrodden millions, the millions who toil in want and misery expect salvation – if this is your opinion, then hang us! Here you will tread upon a spark, but here and there, behind you and in front of you, and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out.

NARRATOR 2: *On November 11, 1887, August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, and George Engel were hanged. The following year, the young American Federation of Labor voted to continue the 8-hour movement and set May First as the time for action. In 1890, the International Socialist Congress, meeting in Paris, made it a worldwide movement by setting May First 1890 as an international day of struggle in solidarity with their American comrades.*

{14} [REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK (HOLYOKE TRANSCRIPT)]

REPORTER: Reporter's Notebook ... *Holyoke Transcript* ... May 1891:

I asked two little girls who attend the Chestnut School why they were not running and jumping with their mates. The elder one blushed at this pointed question and with a shout of reluctance said:

GIRL: My papa is out of work now and momma says we must be very careful not to wear out our shoes, so we keep still.

REPORTER: A whole sermon on economy and self-sacrifice is contained in that brief answer, and a splendid argument for socialism.

{15} [“THE PARABLE OF THE COACH” ~ EDWARD BELLAMY]

NARRATOR 1: *One reaction to the poverty and violence of capitalism in the nineteenth century was to envision a different kind of world. One of the visionaries was Edward Bellamy, a newspaperman from Chicopee Falls, who wrote for the Springfield Union in the 1870s, and in 1880 co-founded, with his brother Charles, the Springfield Daily News, a working-class-focused “penny paper”.*

NARRATOR 2: *Bellamy’s novel Looking Backward, published in 1887, imagined a man waking up in the year 2000 in a socialist America based on equality and justice and looking back on the world as it was in the late 19th century.*

BELLAMY: By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare society as it then was to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road.

The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team.

Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself, and to leave it to his child after him.

Commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the

crippled and injured.

{16} [“THE FUTURE AMERICA”]

NARRATOR 2: *Edward Bellamy’s Looking Backward was second only to Karl Marx’s Capital as the most influential book of the age. “Bellamy Clubs” were formed around the world. Here’s one of their songs:*

My country, ’tis of Thee,
Land of lost Liberty,
Of Thee we sing.
Land which the Millionaires,
Who govern our affairs,
Own for themselves and heirs.
Hail, to thy King.

Land where the wealthy few
Can make the many do
Their royal will,
And tax for selfish greed
The toilers till they bleed;
And those, not yet weak-kneed,
Crush down and kill.

My country, ’tis of Thee,
Betrayed by bribery,
Of Thee we sing.
We might have saved Thee long
Had we, when proud and strong,
Put down the cursed wrong
That makes a king.

{17} [“MY FIRST LESSON IN UNIONISM” ~ TOM MOONEY]

NARRATOR 1: *Union organizer Tom Mooney was raised in Holyoke. His father, an Indiana coal miner, was one of the first organizers of the Knights of Labor. He died at 36 from tuberculosis when Tom was 10. His mother became a rag sorter in a Holyoke paper mill. Tom helped her as a rag picker in the paper mill by day and a laundry worker at night.*

MOONEY: I suppose the urge to serve the labor movement was born in me.

NARRATOR 1: *From prison in 1934, Mooney recalled that his lifelong commitment to unionism started with an experience in a Holyoke factory.*

MOONEY: I served my apprenticeship as a coremaker in the Dean Steam Pump Company, where the Iron Molders Union had a closed shop. The Coremakers had an open shop, working for anything they could get. They were weak, numerically and otherwise. The Molders Union and the Coremakers Union acted separately, and in strikes each union worked with scabs of the opposite craft.

When I completed my apprenticeship and joined the Coremakers, I was receiving \$1 a day for ten hours' work. I immediately asked for the standard scale of \$2.25. The boss said to me, "If you will increase the amount of work that you are doing at present, I will raise you to \$1.80 a day." But I was turning out the same amount and brand of work that those making \$2.25 were turning out. I said nothing, went back to the bench to work, determined *not* to increase my output.

{18} [IWW PREAMBLE]

NARRATOR 2: *AFL President Sam Gompers' insistence **against** political affiliation and radicalism in the AFL, combined with its catering to skilled labor over unskilled, led to the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World, the Wobblies. Two hundred socialists, anarchists, and radical trade unionists from all over the United States founded the IWW in Chicago in June 1905. Its first leaders included Big Bill Haywood, Lucy Parsons, Eugene V. Debs, and Mary Harris Jones, commonly known as "Mother Jones." The Preamble to the IWW Constitution begins:*

HEYWOOD: The working class and the employing class have nothing in common.

PARSONS: There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people

DEBS: and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

JONES: Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class

HEYWOOD: take possession of the means of production

DEBS: abolish the wage system

JONES: and live in harmony with the Earth!

{19} [ADDRESS TO IWW CONVENTION ~ LUCY PARSONS]

NARRATOR 1: *Lucy Parsons, the widow of Haymarket Martyr Albert Parsons, addressed the IWW founding convention on two occasions. Her speeches touched on issues close to her heart, like the oppression of women:*

PARSONS: We women are the slaves of slaves. We are exploited more ruthlessly than men. Whenever wages are to be reduced, the capitalist class use women to reduce them, and if there is anything that you men should do in the future, it is to organize the women.

NARRATOR 1: *She also advocated developing radical new tactics to win strikes, like the sit-in, which became so potent during the Great Depression:*

PARSONS: My conception of the strike of the future is not to strike and go out and starve, but to strike and remain in and take possession of the necessary property of production.

NARRATOR 1: *Like her late husband, Lucy Parsons was a revolutionary socialist.*

PARSONS: Now, what do we mean when we say revolutionary socialist? We mean that the land shall belong to the landless, the tools to the toiler, and the products to the producers. I believe that if every man and every woman who works, or who toils in the mines, the mills, the workshops, the fields, the factories, and the farms of our broad America should decide in their minds that they shall have that which of right belongs to them, and that no idler shall live upon their toil, then there is no army that is large enough to overcome you, for you yourselves constitute the army.

NARRATOR 1: *Until her death in 1942, Lucy Parsons lived a life of continuing revolutionary struggle.*

PARSONS: What is the revolution? Why, it is the very breath of life, the stupendous struggle for relief.

{20} [HIGH SCHOOL REBEL GIRL ~ ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN]

FLYNN: Wednesday, January 31, 1906, is a date engraved on my memory, the

occasion of my first public speech – on the topic of “What Socialism Will Do for Women.” I was not yet 16.

NARRATOR 2: *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was only 14 when the Wobblies convened in 1905, but within two years she had become a high energy organizer and speaker for the IWW.*

FLYNN: I labored to write my speech and had stubbornly resisted all attempts of my father and others to tell me what to say or to actually write it for me. Good or bad, I felt it had to be my own.

I began to quake inwardly at the start, facing an adult audience for the first time. But they were sympathetic and I was soon sailing along serenely. When I concluded, I asked for questions, as I had heard other speakers do. None were forthcoming.

The audience apparently sensed that I was nervous. How they laughed when I said resentfully: “Just because I’m young and a girl, is no reason you shouldn’t ask me questions!”

In August 1906, I was arrested with my father and several others for “speaking without a permit” and “blocking traffic” at 38th Street and Broadway, then the heart of the theatrical district. When the police officer ordered us to stop, we refused and the reserves were called. Our arrests followed.

The charges were dropped, with the judge advising me to go back to school that fall and be a student a while longer before I become a teacher. The *New York Times* editorialized in a humorous, patronizing style about “the ferocious Socialist haranguer, Miss Flynn, who will graduate at school in two years, who tells us what to think, which is just what she thinks.”

NARRATOR 2: *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn went on to be arrested at least ten times in her lifetime. In every instance, the denial of the Bill of Rights was involved, usually in Wobbly Free Speech Fights. For instance, Spokane, Washington outlawed street meetings and arrested Flynn for breaking this ordinance. The response was simple but effective: large numbers of Wobblies descended on the town and forced the authorities to arrest over 500 of them, until it became too expensive and they were released.*

FLYNN: All charges dropped! The Bill of Rights defended!

{21} [DANCING REVOLUTIONARY ~ EMMA GOLDMAN]

NARRATOR 1: *Emma Goldman, orator, agitator, organizer, also waged Free Speech Fights, often in alliance with the IWW. She was also jailed many times for inflammatory speeches and daring lectures – given in English and her native Yiddish – on topics ranging from anarchism and syndicalism to free love and homosexual rights. As an immigrant factory worker in Rochester, New York, Goldman had been radicalized by the trial and hanging of the Haymarket Martyrs. In the early 1890s, she also lived communally and ran an ice cream parlor in Worcester.*

GOLDMAN: At the dances I was one of the most untiring and gayest. One evening a young boy took me aside. With a grave face, as if he were about to announce the death of a dear comrade, he whispered to me that it did not behoove an agitator to dance. Certainly not with such reckless abandon, anyway. It was undignified for one who was on the way to become a force in the anarchist movement. My frivolity would only hurt the Cause.

I grew furious at his impudent interference. I told him to mind his own business; I was tired of having the Cause constantly thrown into my face. I did not believe that a Cause which stood for a beautiful ideal, for anarchism, for release and freedom from conventions and prejudice, should demand the denial of life and joy. I insisted that our Cause could not expect me to become a nun and that the movement should not be turned into a cloister. If it meant that, I did not want it.

{22} [“MEAN THINGS HAPPENING IN THIS LAND”]

There is mean things happening in this land;
There is mean things happening in this land.
Oh, the rich man boasts and brags,
While the poor man goes in rags,
There is mean things happening in this land.

There is mean things happening in this land;
Mean things happening in this land.
Children crying in the street.
They ain't got no food to eat.
There is mean things happening in this land.

There is mean things happening in this land;
Mean things happening in this land.
Send our boys all off to war.
Now tell me what was it all for?

There is mean things happening in this land.

There is mean things happening in this land;
Mean things happening in this land.

If you're black or brown or tan,
You're in trouble with the man.

There is mean things happening in this land.

{23} [THE RED SPECIAL ~ EUGENE DEBS]

NARRATOR 2: *Railroad labor leader Eugene Debs was greatly influenced by Looking Backward by Edward Bellamy. He ran five times as the Socialist candidate for President. The third time, in 1908, he campaigned from a train called the Red Special. Decorated with red flags, bunting, and streamers, carrying a combination sleeper and diner, a baggage car stuffed with socialist literature, and a brass band, it visited over 300 communities in 33 states, including Holyoke, accompanied by Tom Mooney:*

DEBS: Capitalism is a *thing* – a system. It's the organization of society under which we all live. And it's wrong! It forces the individual to be selfish, and rewards him for beating and abusing his fellow man.

Profit is made the aim of all human effort – not use, not service. The competitive system sets man against man, class against class; it puts a premium on hate; and love is abnormal and all but impossible.

We do not preach hate; we preach love. We do not teach class; we are opposed to classes. That is Capitalism again. We teach the worker not to strive to rise out of his class; not to want to be an employer, but to stay with his fellow workers, and by striving all together, industrially, financially, politically, learn to cooperate for the common good. Then we should have no class at all, should we? Only men, and women, and children.

{24} [“AND YOU, EXPLOITING MONSTER, BEWARE” ~ LUISA CAPETILLO]

NARRATOR 1: *What W.E.B. Du Bois described as the “thorough dictatorship of capital” around the world was keenly felt in Puerto Rico. After the U.S. occupation of the island in 1898, the economy was transformed into capitalist agriculture. The anarchist socialist Luisa Capetillo echoed Du Bois:*

CAPETILLO: Wage slavery is the slavery of today, the oppressor that has made

and will make more hungry people and criminals than the slavery of race and of feudalism.

NARRATOR 1: *Luisa Capetillo is a legend of working-class history. Besides being the first Puerto Rican woman to wear trousers and to defend free love, she was a journalist and labor organizer.*

CAPETILLO: Three comrades left with their suitcases on the sacred mission of the “Crusade for the Ideal,” to spread its redemptive labor ideals through towns, cities, fields, and villages. On bad horses and under burning sun, they went from community to community bearing the good news. They continued far into the night, sounding the alert to the workers from the Red platform.

Ah, you honest propagandists! You who have never studied in fine schools, never coveted titles or distinctions: you know how to speak the truth!

NARRATOR 1: *Capetillo organized and participated in several strikes in Puerto Rico, including the massive Sugar Cane Strike of over 40,000 workers in 1916, during the most intense period of strike activity in Puerto Rico’s history. She also organized and supported Cuban and Puerto Rican tobacco workers in New York City, Tampa, and Cuba.*

CAPETILLO: I saw a child with one hand holding up her poor little skirt as a pocket for seed, scattering it with the other hand in the open furrows. Ah, beautiful symbol of toil and perseverance, I salute you in the name of universal brotherhood!

And you, exploiting monster, beware lest you fall into the precipice of your vanities, the abyss of your errors. Tremble! Shiver with dread at the terrible end awaiting you for your indifference toward your brothers, the human sacrifices whom you plunge into the deepest degradations of poverty!

{25} [300 HOMELESS ~ LUDLOW MILLS STRIKER]

NARRATOR 2: *In the early 20th century, the Western Mass. mill town of Ludlow was a so-called “model manufacturing community” where the employer engaged in “welfare work” like schooling and recreation, building the high school, library, hospital, and, of course, housing. But even the model employer is still an employer. In 1909, the mill workers in Ludlow went out on strike.*

LUDLOW STRIKER: Thirty-six bobbin boys refused to accept a cut of 50 cents a week from their meager pittance of 5 dollars. They retaliated by submitting a request for 50 cents a week more! Their employers refused and they immediately

struck work.

Their work was then handed over to the weavers. These workers, being on the piece system, then found it impossible to make a living, and 200 weavers followed the example of the boys and quit their looms.

The Ludlow Manufacturing Associates began importing strike breakers. This raised the ire of the remainder of the employees, and they went out in sympathy. French-Canadian, Scotch, and Polish were now involved, and the management changed tactics and sent away the strike breakers.

Instead, they started evictions, rendering some 300 of us homeless. Our stove was removed from the house while we were still cooking!

The streets rapidly took on the appearance of a camp. People improvised tents from bed clothing and erected their cooking stoves underneath. A walk down the streets where we were herded together revealed thirty mothers with infants clasped to their breasts, many of the women barefoot and half of them insufficiently clad, hardly proof against the sharp air of a November morning.

These tactics in no way helped the mill owners and sympathy rapidly accumulated for the strikers. Even the Mayor of Springfield and the Lieutenant Governor got involved.

NARRATOR 2: *So did the Springfield Central Labor Union, which had formed in 1887. The CLU had no jurisdiction in Ludlow, but was compelled to act, as its official history says, “from motives of humanity.” The CLU built a labor-community-religious coalition that fed the strikers and helped settle the strike, and gave birth to Textile Workers Local 720 at the Ludlow Mills.*

{26} [“BREAD & ROSES”]

As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: “Bread and roses! Bread and roses!”

NARRATOR 2: *Lawrence, Massachusetts – 1912. What a story!*

NARRATOR 1: *The great textile strike by immigrants, fighting such horrid living conditions that the mortality rate for children was 50% by age six, and 36 out of every 100 men and women who worked in the mill died before the age of 25.*

NARRATOR 2: *The creative leadership of the IWW, uniting 20,000 native-born workers of English, Irish, and German descent, and French-Canadian, Italian, Slavic, Hungarian, Portuguese, and Syrian immigrants.*

NARRATOR 1: *The nation-wide fund-raising.*

NARRATOR 2: *The efficient system of translation, relief committees, soup kitchens, food distribution, and medical care by volunteer doctors.*

NARRATOR 1: *The dramatic trip by several hundred children to homes in New York City for the duration of the strike.*

NARRATOR 2: *Police and militia detaining the children and arresting their parents, when city authorities tried to prevent another hundred from going to Philadelphia.*

NARRATOR 1: *Police clubbing both the children and their mothers.*

NARRATOR 2: *The press photographing it all.*

NARRATOR 1: *And Big Bill Haywood thundering,*

HAYWOOD: There is no foreigner here except the capitalists. Do not let them divide you by sex, color, creed, or nationality.

NARRATOR 2: *The rising of the women and the parades where one banner read*

EVERYONE (including NARRATORS): *Give Us Bread and Give Us Roses!*

[“BREAD & ROSES” continued:]

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.
Art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for – but we fight for roses, too!

{27} [“I DIDN’T RAISE MY SON TO BE A SOLDIER”]

NARRATOR 1: *The nations of Europe went to war in 1914. In the U. S., class conflict was intense. Strong opposition to military and economic “preparedness” for war came from isolationists, socialists, pacifists, many Protestant ministers,*

German Americans, and Irish Americans. A hit song of 1915 captured widespread skepticism about joining the European war.

Ten million soldiers to the war have gone,
Who may never return again.
Ten million mothers' hearts must break,
For the ones who died in vain.
Head bowed down in sorrow in her lonely years,
I heard a mother murmur thro' her tears:
 I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier,
 I brought him up to be my pride and joy,
 Who dares to place a musket on his shoulder
 To shoot some other mother's darling boy?
 Let nations arbitrate their future troubles,
 It's time to lay the sword and gun away,
 There'd be no war today,
 If mothers all would say,
 I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier.

NARRATOR 2: *In the summer of 1916, during a Preparedness Day parade in San Francisco, a bomb exploded, killing nine people. Labor organizer Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, a shoe worker, were framed by business and government interests and convicted. They spent 23 years in prison before being pardoned. Eugene Debs, Emma Goldman, and others were imprisoned during World War I for agitating against it and against the draft. Goldman was deported after the war.*

{28} [“DOERS IN THE FIELD IN WHICH WE THINK” ~ FRANCES PERKINS]

NARRATOR 1: *In 1902, at age 20, Frances Perkins graduated from Mount Holyoke College, where she listed herself as ... “not saved.” Her economics class visited textile mills along the Connecticut River. The working conditions and lack of safeguards for the workers so appalled her that she championed the rights of industrial workers the rest of her life. When she spoke about the need for child labor laws, she would end her speeches with a verse:*

PERKINS: The golf links lie so near the mills,
 That nearly every day,
 The laboring children can look out
 And see the men at play.

NARRATOR 1: *On March 25, 1911, Perkins, a young social worker, witnessed the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire, the second deadliest workplace disaster in American history, exceeded only by the World Trade Center in 2001.*

PERKINS: I felt I must sear it not only on my mind but on my heart as a never-to-be-forgotten reminder of why I had to spend my life fighting conditions that could permit such a tragedy.

NARRATOR 1: *Perkins joined Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal government in 1933 as his Secretary of Labor, the first woman to hold a U.S. cabinet position. She led the creation of the Social Security Act of 1935.*

PERKINS: I find that many young people are simply astonished when you say, "Oh, yes; people used to get their arms pulled out in a laundry mangle."

YOUNG WOMAN: Didn't they get ...?

PERKINS: No, they didn't get any money.

YOUNG WOMAN: Didn't they get anything?

PERKINS: No; nothing.

YOUNG WOMAN: Well, what did they do?

PERKINS: I don't know what they did. Somewhere or other they buried themselves away in the general population.

Girls got scalped in the textile machinery, even in the sewing machines of the dress industry. You'd get down under the machine to pick up a bobbin that had fallen and the wheel would cut your head off. Men fell into the molten iron pots in the Pittsburgh district and, of course, were never seen again.

These things were commonly accepted, and it took the efforts of thousands to start the movement toward making a systematic recompense for injury and disability arising out of an accident in the course of employment.

Problems of unemployment, education, and health can be solved only when the ideals of a humane mind are translated into concrete terms of action.

In theory, the desire of the whole American people is for unity, for brotherhood. The trouble is that too many people are content to emotionalize about it and that

too many intelligent believers are content to talk about it. The challenge is to be doers in the field in which we think.

{29} [“UNION MAID”]

There once was a union maid; she never was afraid
Of goons and ginks and company finks and the deputy sheriffs who made
the raid.

She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called,
And when the company boys came 'round
She always stood her ground.

Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union.
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union 'til the day I die.

This union maid was wise to the tricks of company spies,
She couldn't be fooled by a company stool, she'd always organize the guys.
She always got her way when she struck for better pay.
She'd show her card to the National Guard
And this is what she'd say

Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union, I'm sticking to the union.
Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union,
I'm sticking to the union 'til the day I die.

{30} [ORGANIZING THE TEXTILE MILLS ~ ANNA SULLIVAN]

NARRATOR 2: *Anna Burns Sullivan started working in a textile mill in Holyoke in 1918, at the age of fourteen.*

SULLIVAN: My mother didn't like the idea when I had to go to work, me going into a mill. But that was the only thing you could get into. We needed the money.

NARRATOR 2: *She worked in the mills through the 1930s. In 1936 she organized the Skinner Mill in Holyoke for the Textile Workers Union of America and went on to become the first manager of the union's Western Massachusetts Joint Board. She was also active in Democratic Party politics, running unsuccessfully for Congress in 1950.*

SULLIVAN: The first real organizing I ever did was with my own group at the Skinner mill. We got one of the first contracts that was ever signed in textile at the time.

Organizing you had to do by personal contact at the plant. So you'd get down and hand out leaflets. We had leaflets in Polish, French, and English. Every time I went to pass out leaflets, the cops would come down and run me right out of town. They knew it as soon as you came over the bridge in Ludlow. In Easthampton, you had to go over the mountain.

Finally, Roosevelt, the New Deal, and the CIO made the law that we had the right to pass out leaflets. We had the right to organize. That was the Wagner Act. We'd organize a place within a few days. They had to hold elections within thirty days in those days, not stalling like you get today. And contracts signed within a short period after that.

I got to know a good number of the CIO organizers and some of the friendly professors at Smith and Amherst. They helped when Margaret Sanger came to Holyoke in 1940 and tried to speak on birth control. The Roman Catholic Church was against Sanger and against birth control. They were up in arms against her! They wanted large families.

No one would let Sanger speak anywhere in Holyoke. That was when I let her use our union hall. Birth control was an important issue for our members, but this was also a free speech issue. The church wasn't too happy with me, but a lot of Catholic women later told me they were glad that we did what we did.

{31} [“WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?”]

Come all of you good workers.
Good news to you I'll tell,
Of how that good old union
Has come in here to dwell.

Which side are you on? Which side are you on?
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

They say in Harlan County
There are no neutrals there.
You're either with the union
Or a thug for J.H. Blair.

Which side are you on? Which side are you on?
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

Don't scab for the bosses,
Don't listen to their lies.
Us poor folks haven't got a chance
Unless we organize.

Which side are you on? Which side are you on?
Which side are you on? Which side are you on?

{32} [POSTWAR WAITRESS ~ YURI KOCHIYAMA]

NARRATOR 1: *For working people in the U.S., the post-World War 2 period of rising expectations often clashed with racist and capitalist reality. Civil rights activist Yuri Kochiyama was one of the 120,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast who were rounded up in the wave of anti-Japanese hysteria after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and interred in prison camps on American soil.*

KOCHIYAMA: Historically, Americans have always been putting people behind walls. First there were the American Indians put on reservations, Africans in slavery, Chicanos doing migratory work, and the kinds of camps they lived in, and the Chinese when they worked on the railroad camps, where they were isolated, dispossessed people. And I feel those are the things we should fight against so they won't happen again.

NARRATOR 1: *Released at war's end, she tried to find work.*

KOCHIYAMA: The first weeks were the worst. I would take night jobs starting six in the evening until three or four in the morning because that's all that was available. They were hard up for waitresses for those hours, but they'd say, "Okay, you can stay until we get too many complaints." Or "Until someone throws a cup of coffee at you." That would happen.

The first job that I got I was so excited! I rushed home to tell my mother and get a uniform together. And I made it through the first night. I felt so proud. But when I finished, the boss said, "Don't come back, you made me lose two of my regular waitresses." They absolutely refused to work with a *Jap*. I was so busy. I hadn't even noticed.

{33} [WALLACE CAMPAIGN ~ PEGGY & SAM FREEDMAN]

NARRATOR 1: *Post-war rising expectations included expectations of human rights and peace and democracy. In Western Massachusetts, many progressives turned to independent political action. They included a young Springfield couple, Sam and Peggy Freedman.*

SAM: We started as the Independent Citizens' League, to run a liberal for the Springfield School Board and break the hold of the entrenched conservative Republicans.

PEGGY: In the spring of 1947, Sam and I went to a meeting of major labor leaders in New York City. They strongly disliked Truman and indicated they would not support him in the '48 election. We returned to Springfield very encouraged.

SAM: In the meanwhile, Henry Wallace had broken with Truman. He was FDR's Vice President until FDR picked Truman in 1944, and he was Commerce Secretary until Truman fired him in 1946.

Our group invited Wallace to Springfield. He came in October, accompanied by Paul Robeson. We filled the auditorium, with paid admission. Wallace was not a very dynamic speaker, but we raised a good deal of money. There was great enthusiasm.

PEGGY: Wallace also spoke at Smith College, where the girls filled John M. Greene Hall, even sitting on the window sills. In January 1948, Wallace declared his candidacy for President.

SAM: Our group went to work to get the thousands of signatures necessary to get him on the ballot, under the banner of the Progressive Party. We enlisted the help of college students, one of whom was Max Pepper, who went door knocking in Chicopee. We got the signatures.

PEGGY: However, the great disappointment was that all but one of the national labor union leaders backed away from that initial enthusiasm and refused to leave the Democratic Party.

SAM: Truman did all he could to undermine the new party, and in the final weeks of the campaign he turned *left!* He had talks with major labor leaders. It was a strange contradiction—he was making peaceful overtures to the Soviets while attacking the Progressive Party as communist dominated.

PEGGY: In Springfield, Charles Mackey, who was chairman of the Wallace for

President Committee and a leading piano teacher, lost all of his pupils because of the red baiting. Some of our supporters ran for cover. We had planned to run a candidate for Congress too, but she was forced to withdraw.

SAM: The election was a disaster for the progressive movement in Western Massachusetts. We were wiped out. It was a mistake for Wallace to run without the support of the unions, but it also would have been wrong to vote for Truman. We probably should have sat out that election.

{34} [“BANKS OF MARBLE”]

I've traveled 'round this country,
from shore to shining shore.
It really made me wonder,
the things I heard and saw.
I saw the weary farmer
plowing sod and loam.
I heard the auction hammer
just a-knocking down his home.

But the banks are made of marble
with a guard at every door,
and the vaults are stuffed with silver
that the farmer sweated for.

I've seen the weary miner
scrubbing coal dust from his back.
I heard his children cryin'
“Got no coal to heat the shack.”

But the banks are made of marble
with a guard at every door,
and the vaults are stuffed with silver
that the miner sweated for.

I've seen good people working
throughout this mighty land.
I prayed we'd get together
and together make a stand.

Then we'd own those banks of marble
with no guard at any door,

and we'd share those vaults of silver
that we have sweated for!

{35} [“FORGE NEGRO-LABOR UNITY FOR PEACE AND JOBS” ~ PAUL ROBESON]

NARRATOR 2: *Social and economic progress in the post-war period gave rise to expectations of equal social and economic rights for African-Americans. The great singer Paul Robeson, once a resident of nearby Enfield, Connecticut, expressed this to the 900 delegates at the National Labor Conference for Negro Rights in Chicago in June 1950.*

ROBESON: As the Black worker takes his place upon the stage of history – not for a bit part, but to play his full role with dignity in the very center of the action – a new day dawns in human affairs. The determination of the Negro workers, supported by the whole Negro people, and joined with the mass of progressive white working men and women, can save the labor movement. This alliance can beat back the attacks against the living standards and the very lives of the Negro people. It can stop the drive toward fascism. It can halt the chariot of war in its tracks.

And it can help to bring to pass in America and in the world the dream our father dreamed – of a land that's free, of a people growing in friendship, in love, in cooperation and peace. This is history's challenge to you. I know you will not fail.

NARRATOR 1: *The world's post-war split into a US-led capitalist West and a Soviet Union-led East reached deep into our domestic politics. Witch hunts of “un-Americans” equated dissent with disloyalty and infected all sectors of American life, including labor. When the House Committee on Un-American Activities (known as HUAC) targeted Paul Robeson, he noted the irony:*

ROBESON: It is a sad and bitter commentary on the state of civil liberties in America that the very forces of reaction who have denied me access to the lecture podium, the concert hall, the opera house, and the dramatic stage, now hale me before a committee of inquisition in order to hear what I have to say.

{36} [“THE HOUSE I LIVE IN” ~ EARL ROBINSON, PAUL ROBESON]

NARRATOR 2: *In 1957, the House Committee on Un-American Activities called Earl Robinson to testify. Among his many musical works, “The House I Live In” is possibly his best-known song.*

NARRATOR 1: *The words to the song were written in 1943 by Abel Meeropol under the pen name Lewis Allan. After the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Abel and Ann Meeropol adopted their sons. Michael and Robert Meeropol both moved to Western Mass. in the '70s and brought Abel here toward the end of his life.*

NARRATOR 2: *At the HUAC hearing, Earl Robinson was challenged to cite something he'd written encouraging schoolchildren to "support the Constitution." He recited the lyrics from "The House I Live In."*

ROBINSON:

What is America to me ...
A name, a map, the flag I see,
A certain word, "Democracy,"
What is America to me?

The house I live in, a plot of earth, a street,
The grocer and the butcher and the people that I meet;
The children in the playground, the faces that I see;
All races, all religions, that's America to me.

The place I work in, the worker at my side ...
The little town or city where my people lived and died ...
The "howdy" and the handshake, the air of feeling free,
The right to speak my mind out, that's America to me.

ROBESON [singing]:

The house I live in, my neighbors, white and black,
The people who just came here, or from generations back,
The town hall and the soap box, the torch of Liberty,
A home for all God's children, that's America to me.

The words of old Abe Lincoln, of Jefferson and Paine,
Of Washington and Jackson, and the tasks that still remain,
A house that we call Freedom, the home of Liberty,
And a promise for tomorrow, that's America to me.

{37} ["POST TRIAL BRIEF" ~ AFRICAN AMERICAN PLAINTIFFS]

NARRATOR 1: *In the '50s and '60s, civil-rights activists organized and demonstrated for an equal place in “the house that we call Freedom, the home of Liberty.” They were frequently beaten and jailed by the forces of law and order. And it was not only in the South. On July 16, 1965, police in Springfield made an unprovoked attack on African-American patrons of the Octagon Lounge.*

NARRATOR 2: *Leaders of the city’s civil rights organizations, including Ben Swan, came together to appeal to the mayor and other city officials – to no avail. Numerous non-violent demonstrations at City Hall and in Court Square that summer led to dozens of unlawful arrests. This description of the August 14 arrests is from the plaintiffs’ post-trial brief.*

PLAINTIFF: Only 44 persons remained in the park. Officers stormed in upon them, grabbing and hustling them indiscriminately. Miss Betty Belton, who has a congenital hip ailment, had been seated on a bench holding her cane; she managed to stand, and tried to walk away. Two officers grabbed her under the armpits and dragged her away: another officer snatched the cane. Her clothes were torn and stained and the skin ripped off her heels.

Her sister, Pearl, broke away from a policeman and tried to run to her sister. But a policeman kicked her in the ankles, knocking her down. When Betty Belton reached the waiting paddy wagon, screaming in agony, she was flung “like a bag of dirt” into it. Pearl was in turn pushed into the paddy wagon, after which the police attempted to close the doors but could not until they had removed Betty Belton’s leg upon which the door had first been slammed.

Twenty-seven men were also pushed, shoved, kicked, and thrown into this wagon built to accommodate approximately 14 persons!

The garage of the city jail was filled with police officers pushing and shoving to get at the prisoners. On either side of the stairway leading to the main body of the jail, were 10 to 15 police officers equipped with billy clubs.

People were pulled, tugged, and jerked out of the paddy wagon and struck by officers as they struggled through the gauntlet and up the steps. Every witness who was arrested that night and who testified at trial related that while passing through the gauntlet, she or he was punched, beaten, and hit on various parts of the body.

Many of the demonstrators were never informed at any time what they had been arrested for. When they asked, the police told them that their lawyer would find out soon enough.

{38} [“THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND”]

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Island.
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

As I go walking this ribbon of highway,
I see above me the endless skyway,
And all around me the wind keeps saying:
This land is made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Island.
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

{39} [REPORTER’S NOTEBOOK (NEW UNITY)]

REPORTER: Reporter’s Notebook ... *New Unity, Springfield area labor paper*

August 1971: Nixon’s wage and price controls are imposed. Bosses grow bolder. We respond. Strikes. Walk-outs. Boycotts. Informational pickets.

1972: Titeflex. Savage Arms.

’73: Sterling Radiator. Fountain Plating. Columbia. Springfield Cast Products. Lechmere. Ornamental Iron Shop. Dearden Iron Works. Haarmann Steel. Boyle Iron Works. Elwell Iron Works. Forest Park Ambulance. Two Guys stores. Technicolor. Vincent’s Steak House. Premoid paper. Springfield Gas Light. Uniroyal. the Welfare office.

’74: Moore Drop Forge. Ramada Inn. Food Mart. Stop & Shop. Finast. New England Bindery. Palmer Nursing Home. Chapman Valve. A&P. Big Y. Continental Trailways. Monsanto. Titeflex again. Baystate Gas (that’s Springfield Gas Light again).

NARRATOR 2: *Two-point-seven million workers in the U.S. started 5,900 strikes in 1974—the largest number the Bureau of Labor Statistics has ever recorded.*

{40} [“THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND”]

I roam and I ramble and I follow my footsteps
Till I come to the sands of her mineral desert.
The mist is lifting and the voice is saying:
This land is made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Island.
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

{41} [“TRYING TO BREAK MY UNION”]

NARRATOR 1: *Capital responded to the strike waves of the 1970s with a determination to break Labor. Just a few months after the Reagan administration fired striking air traffic controllers and replaced them with scabs in 1981, private companies started following suit.*

*In Westfield, 68 members of United Auto Workers Local 430 struck the Sterling Radiator plant in what would have been a typical contract dispute. But owner John Reed hired permanent replacements. The workers’ response included a dramatic act of civil disobedience, in which 91 union members and community supporters were arrested for blockading a bus delivering strikebreakers to the plant. As the longest strike in Massachusetts history, the events at Sterling Radiator came to be a national symbol for unions fighting for **survival**.*

NARRATOR 2: *And it gave us a prophetic song by Western Mass. labor troubadour Tom Juravich. In “Trying To Break My Union” he told the Sterling Radiator story and warned:*

So, listen to me union folks, it’s time to take a stand.
You may think that it won’t happen to you, you’d better look again.
All that labor’s worked for, they’re trying to take away.
I don’t know about you, but I won’t be moved, and my union’s here to stay.

I won’t let them break my union, I won’t let ’em bust my life
Or take all that I’ve worked for from my kids and my wife.
Let’s get back again to where things are going our way.
No high-priced lawyers or lousy scabs can take our jobs away,
And if we all can stick together we’ll see a better day.

{42} [“THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND”]

NARRATOR 2: *With Labor weakened, Ronald Reagan’s administration began an attack on aid to single mothers, on food stamps, on health care for the poor. The attack culminated during the Clinton administration with the ending of federal guarantees to families with dependent children.*

[somberly]

In the squares of the city, in the shadow of a steeple;
By the relief office, I’d seen my people.
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking,
Is this land made for you and me?

{43} [MOTHER ON AFDC]

NARRATOR 3: *In the early ’80s, during the Reagan years, a mother wrote to her local newspaper, responding to the claim that government was not needed, that private enterprise – the so-called free market – would take care of poverty. This is what she wrote:*

I am on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and both my children are in school. I have graduated from college with distinction, 128th in a class of over 1000, with a B.A. in English and sociology. I have experience in library work, child care, social work, and counseling.

The employment office has nothing for me. I go every week to the library to scour the newspaper Help Wanted ads. I have kept a copy of every cover letter that I have sent out with my resume: the stack is inches thick. I work part-time in a library for \$3.50 an hour. Welfare reduces my allotment to compensate.

We have employment offices that can’t employ, governments that can’t govern, and an economic system that can’t produce jobs for people ready to work.

Last week I sold my bed to pay for the insurance on my car, which, in the absence of mass transportation, I need in order to go job hunting. I sleep on a piece of rubber foam somebody gave me.

So this is the great American dream my parents came to this country for: Work hard, get a good education, follow the rules, and you will be rich. I don’t want to be rich. I just want to be able to feed my children and live with some semblance of dignity.

NARRATOR 1: *No anti-poverty program in US history has been as successful as unionization – unionization of workers, tenants, sharecroppers, the unemployed, service recipients, consumers, even students!*

{44} [“THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND”]

Nobody living can ever stop me
As I go walking my freedom highway.
Nobody living can make me turn back.
This land is made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Island.
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

As I went walking, I saw a sign there;
And on the sign there, it said, “Private Property”.
But on the other side, it didn’t say nothing.
That side was made for you and me.

This land is your land, this land is my land,
From California to the New York Island.
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land is made for you and me.

{45} [“THIS IS A MORAL ISSUE” ~ CESAR CHAVEZ]

NARRATOR 2: *On February 6, 1991, Cesar Chavez, President of the UFW – the United Farm Workers of America, came to Springfield to open a Grape Boycott office at Western New England College, staffed by Luis Vera. He was accompanied by his good friend and supporter, Father Brian Boland, pastor of St Patrick’s Church in South Hadley Falls. They died within a year of each other a few years later.*

CHAVEZ: The water is polluted with pesticides, so is the air, and so is the ground, and so are the grapes that come into the market. We’re boycotting to let the consumers know that while eating grapes is not going to kill you immediately, it has a cumulative effect. There is pesticide residue in the grapes, the same pesticides that are causing damage in the workers and their families.

The boycott is a powerful tool, a nonviolent tool, and we are not boycotting to destroy those farms. We are just boycotting to get the farm owners to come to the table and deal with those issues they must deal with. It's a boycott that can be called off at any time the grower comes and meets and deals with the issues on the basis of social justice.

This is a moral issue because it deals with human beings and because it deals with justice.

{46} ["DE COLORES"]

NARRATOR 2: *The UFW is a "singing union," including songs from the labor and civil rights movements, many original tunes, and Mexican folk songs like De Colores, sung at nearly every union meeting.*

De colores, de colores se visten los campos en la primavera
De colores, de colores son los pajaritos que vienen de fuera
De colores, de colores es el arco iris que vemos lucir
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mí
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mí

De colores, de colores brillantes y finos se viste la aurora
De colores, de colores son los mil reflejos que el sol atesora
De colores, de colores se viste el diamante que vemos lucir
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mí
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mí
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan a mí

{47} [WESTERN MASS. FARMWORKER]

FEDERICO: My name is Federico. I come from a small village in Mexico just outside of Guanajuato. We are famous for our mummies. A long time ago the cemetery was overcrowded and poor families had their relatives removed to make room for rich ones, but because of the dry weather the bodies turned into mummies. So our village became famous for displaying poor dead people.

It is a nice village. It is small, maybe 3,000 people. Not counting the mummies. My family has always lived there. My grandfather and my father and I have always worked the land.

Life can be very hard in our village. There are no jobs. Only farming and that is hard to make a living. You can always tell who had a bad crop or whose father

went norte, by their clothes. Ever since I can remember I wanted to go norte, so I could have new clothes. Now all of the men from our village go norte, except the drunks and the very old. I always knew I'd come norte.

It's a crazy process. They send you back even though they know you just want to work and you do jobs that no one will do, jobs that need to be done. They are just biting the hands that feed them.

When you first arrive, all you think about is working. If you dwell on missing your family you will make yourself crazy. We try not to think about it.

I work six months every year on this farm near Amherst Massachusetts, for a family whose name I cannot even pronounce. The work is hard and constant, but the gringos they don't want to do it. Every year we see these young kids, they last maybe a week or so and then they say, "Hey, I can get more doing a lot less somewhere else."

The family here respects us; they know we will work hard. But often other people on the farm and in the town, they act like I am a mute. I speak every day, but the fact that they can't understand me makes me an unheard voice. One of many unheard voices. I only wish someday our voices will be heard for what they are, the voices that make this country what it is.

{48} [WESTERN MASS. PCA]

NARRATOR 1: *Unions make working voices heard. In November 2007, ninety-four per cent of Massachusetts personal care attendants (PCAs) – who care for the elderly and people with disabilities – voted to join Service Employees International Union Local 1199 in what was the largest union election in New England history! That's twenty two thousand new union members in Massachusetts! This came after consumers, advocates, and senior and disability rights groups were pivotal in pushing historic legislation that allowed PCAs to form a statewide union.*

PCA: I got up too early this morning. My employer is more of a night owl than a morning person. She writes at night; says the muse visits more frequently in the dark, quiet hours. I sleep while she writes and she wakes me up when she needs something – to pee, to drink, to take medicine. When she finally goes to bed it's midnight or one AM. I take her to the bathroom, help her transfer into her bed, undress her, plug in her wheelchair and cell phone, which she sleeps with, so she can call me if she needs me in the night, which she always does.

Once her lights are out, I hope that she'll sleep for three hours at least. A few weeks ago, she had a urinary tract infection and was going to the bathroom every hour or so. I only get paid for three hours between midnight and 8 AM, because the state says my employer is asleep for part of the night. That may be true, but she can't stay by herself. What if there was a fire? It doesn't matter if she's sick or not. They won't give me extra hours even if she's sick.

My employer gets 16 paid hours of care for a 24 hour period. To save gas, I stay with her for two and a half days straight. I work 56 hours a week. I get paid for 37! But if I went home to Plainfield each day and drove back and forth to Belchertown, I wouldn't make any money.

On April 1, 2008, my employer and I got up at 7 in the morning to catch a van from her house to Boston to attend a rally, sponsored by SEIU 1199. There were hundreds of seniors, people with disabilities, and their PCAs at the State House. We delivered over 5,000 messages of support from people across the state.

I feel like PCAs really need a union. We get paid badly, but we keep people alive and functioning well. I administer my employer's daily medicine, but have no healthcare to go to the doctor myself. I can't afford to stay in this job with no benefits and no healthcare no matter how much I would like to.

NARRATOR 1: *In Massachusetts, 22,000 personal care attendants currently work for no benefits whatsoever, including no health insurance, no sick days, no holidays, and no paid vacation. They receive a flat wage rate of \$10.84, regardless of how many years they have been on the job. So about half of them leave the job every year. The extreme turnover makes it difficult for seniors and people with disabilities to find and keep the care they need. We need to pressure Governor Patrick to allocate funding for a home care labor contract.*

{49} [STRIKING WRITER]

NARRATOR 2: *Unions make working voices heard. Last fall we heard from twelve thousand writers who joined the one hundred days writers' strike called by the Writers Guild of America East and the Writers Guild of America West. These labor unions represent film, television, and radio writers working in the United States.*

STRIKING WRITER: We needed to stand up for ourselves as writers. The companies always try to short us on residuals, from reruns of shows, which are a major way a television writer earns money, not necessarily upfront but over the

course of years. And we're very tired of always being told we need to "wait and see" with any new media.

I used to live in Western Massachusetts around mountains and trees but this was my dream job in Manhattan. I'd graduated from Hampshire College in May, I got a job here in September, and the strikes started on November 5, 2007. I thought about not joining, but my old Massachusetts labor roots wouldn't allow that. I'm 23 but I still believe in Solidarity Forever. I'm a proud member of the Writers Guild of America East.

I have a friend who works for Letterman. So he was back at work sooner because Letterman agreed to negotiate with his writers separately. He felt a little guilty. I think he shouldn't. It's not like he abandoned us to be a scab; he just has a better boss than most of us. The Letterman writers contributed to those still on strike. They picketed. They donated to a strike fund. They also bought pizza and coffee and doughnuts for us.

I'm grateful for the strike fund. My roommate and I pay \$1,080 per month for our one-bedroom, and I didn't see a paycheck for over three months.

I decided I was in it for the long haul. I wasn't going to be a scab, even for my "dream job." I didn't cross that picket line and my better angels are glad of it.

{50} ["THE INTERNATIONALE"]

NARRATOR 1: *British singer/songwriter Billy Bragg complained that the traditional lyrics to "The Internationale" were somewhat dated. Pete Seeger said, "Why don't you write new ones?" So he did:*

Stand up, all victims of oppression,
For the tyrants fear your might.
Don't cling so hard to your possessions,
For you have nothing if you have no rights.

Let racist ignorance be ended,
For respect makes the empires fall.
Freedom is merely privilege extended,
Unless enjoyed by one and all.

So come brothers and sisters,
For the struggle carries on.
The Internationale

Unites the world in song.

So comrades come rally,
For this is the time and place.
The international ideal
Unites the human race.

{51}["SOLIDARITY FOREVER"]

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!

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

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they trade;
Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles of railroad laid.
Now we stand outcast and starving, 'midst the wonders we have made.
But the union makes us strong.

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

They have taken untold billions that they never toiled to earn.
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn
That the union makes us strong.

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

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth a new world in the ashes of the old,

For the union makes us strong.

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

Solidarity forever!

For the union makes us strong.