

Comradery, Class, and Consciousness: A Case Study in Comradery

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ABSTRACT

Recent attempts to save the US labor movement from declining relevancy and membership through social unionism have met with limited results. This work identifies this failure with social unionism's lack of interest in helping members create a robust class consciousness. To this end, I develop the idea of a comrade social bond through engagement with a diverse set of theorists and an intensive comparative case study of two unions during the period of the First Red Scare (1919-1920). I argue that comradery as a strong, disciplined, relationship oriented towards a revolutionary goal can create an environment in which members of unions understand their short-term efforts as part of the class struggle and thus build their class consciousness. My case studies test this theory by carefully demonstrating that a union with this social bond was able to retain members during a period of political repression, whereas a union without this social bond lost considerable membership, which indicates a strong class consciousness in the union with this social bond. Developing this theory holds direct implications for the ongoing struggle of labor unions to retain members, as well as vast potential for further theoretical development of the comrade bond as a method of organizing workers into sturdier unions ready to face the challenges of increasingly authoritarian capitalist systems of rule.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how unions can help keep members in the organization during periods where governments and/or vigilante forces are trying to cease its activities. I argue that comradery, a type of relationship experienced by members of workers' movements of the past and present, can help unions keep members in the organization through these difficult times. Comradery can do this because it allows workers to build their awareness of their position as workers and the fact that workers win political goals when they fight together as a whole class against the capitalist class (class consciousness). To test my theory, I look at two unions during a period of intense government and vigilante action against labor unions (the First Red Scare of 1919-1920). One of these unions had comradery and was able to keep members in the organization and, in fact, grew its membership. The other union did not have comradery and lost a significant portion of its membership in the same period

For all those comrades who have lived and died in the struggle for liberty, equality, and solidarity of all humankind. May your souls go marching on.

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List of Abbreviations

AFL - American Federation of Labor

AFL-CIO - American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial Organizations

AWIU - Agricultural Workers Industrial Union 400

BRS - The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen

CIO - Congress of Industrial Organizations

HERE - Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union (sometimes written in full as the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Alliance and the Bartenders' International League of America)

IABSORIW - The International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers

IFW - International Federation of Workers in the Hotel and Restaurant Industry

IU - Industrial Union

IU 1100 - Industrial Union 1100 - Hotel, Restaurant, and Domestic Workers (IWW)

IWW - Industrial Workers of the World

M&S – *Mixer and Server* (HERE's official publication)

MMWIU- Metal Machinery Workers Industry Union 300

OBUM – *One Big Union Monthly* (IWW official publication)

RWIU - Railroad Workers' Industrial Union 600

SEIU – Service Employees International Union

SLP - Socialist Labor Party

SPA - Socialist Party of America

STLA - Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance

SWIU - Shipbuilding Workers' Industrial Union 325

UAW – United Auto Workers

Introduction: “Listen, Comrade, Perhaps You Would be Interested”

Jurgis Rudkus, the protagonist of Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, is at his lowest point when he hears the words that set him on the path to hope. “And then suddenly came a voice in his ear, a woman’s voice, gentle and sweet, ‘If you would try to listen, comrade, perhaps you would be interested.’”¹ After getting over his initial shock at the term of address, he notes how the woman had “a look of excitement upon her face, of tense effort, as of one struggling mightily, or witnessing a struggle,” and concludes that whatever made the woman address him as a comrade must have something to do with the speaker he had been using as background noise for a nap.² Jurgis sits up and listens, as the speaker address him in all but name:

[M]y words will come like a sudden flash of lightning to one who travels in darkness—revealing the way before him, the perils and the obstacles— solving all problems, making all difficulties clear! The scales will fall from his eyes, the shackles will be torn from his limbs— he will leap up with a cry of thankfulness, he will stride forth a free man at last! A man delivered from his self-created slavery! A man who will never more be trapped—whom no blandishments will cajole, whom no threats will frighten; who from tonight on will move forward, and not backward, who will study and understand, who will gird on his sword and take his place in the army of his comrades and brothers.³

At that moment, Jurgis begins his journey to becoming a comrade and a paragon of class solidarity.

Upton Sinclair, through Jurgis, expressed the power of comradeship, something he knew from his time in the socialist movement. The comrade relationship is transformative. It names the comrade as included in the ranks of “the army of [their] comrades and brothers.” For Jurgis, comradeship takes him from a scabbing criminal abuser to the most devoted advocate of his class.

¹ Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (G&D Media, 2020), 225.

² Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 224–25.

³ Sinclair, *The Jungle*, 225–27.; The unnamed speaker is a clear insert for Sinclair’s friend Eugene V. Debs, long-time labor organizer, IWW founder, and perennial Socialist Party presidential candidate.

What comradery does for Jurgis on a personal level, I believe it can do for labor. I argue that (re)introducing comradery as a core feature of the working-class movement can save it from the extinction-level event it now faces in the US in what is being called by many a new Red Scare.⁴

Comradery, as I define it, is a network of strong social bonds found within several working-class movements both historic and contemporary. Comradery can keep members in a union despite overwhelming reasons to leave, such as a lack of material benefits and danger associated with membership. To test this, I look back to the First Red Scare to see how two unions fared through significant threats to their organizations presented by government crackdowns and vigilante violence. As you will read, the union that had comradery not only retained its membership through this acute period of repression, it grew nearly five-fold. In comparison, the union without comradery lost a great number of members across the same period. We are not merely seeing membership retention as we would in a social club. In the opening chapter of this work, I argue that the reason comradery retains members in labor unions is that it helps workers to build their class consciousness. If my argument is correct, comradery is not only a lifeboat, but an engine for the labor movement to go further still in the fight for the working class.

The project begins with an examination of the current state of the labor movement in the US. I focus on the role of social unionism (sometimes called social movement unionism), the

⁴ Zack Beauchamp, “The Third Red Scare,” Vox, September 17, 2025, <https://www.vox.com/on-the-right-newsletter/461722/charlie-kirk-killing-trump-vance-miller-free-speech-cancel>; Kelly Bellin, “American State Terror: Charlie Kirk & A New Red Scare,” US Politics, *Socialist Alternative*, October 18, 2025, <https://www.socialistalternative.org/2025/10/18/american-state-terror-charlie-kirk-a-new-red-scare/>; Chauncey DeVega, “A New Red Scare? This Could Be Much Worse,” Salon.Com, October 5, 2025, https://www.salon.com/2025/10/05/a-new-red-scare-this-could-be-much-worse/?utm_source=website&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=ogshare&utm_content=og; Benjamin Balthaser, “The Red Scare Is American Past and Present,” October 19, 2025, <https://jacobin.com/2025/10/mccarthyism-trump-red-scare-roberson-cpusa-khalil>.

current dominant philosophy of labor organizing, in the stalling of the labor movement. In critiquing social unionism, I argue alongside prominent critics of social unionism that the building of class consciousness is the key to the health of the labor movement. I further address why I believe comradery will help build class consciousness through engagement with Wilhelm Reich's reconceptualization of class consciousness. From there I move onto examining the theories of comradery in the Marxists-Feminist tradition by critically engaging with Alexandra Kollontai and Jodi Dean, before spelling out a refined theory of comradery by putting this theory into conversation with the work of sociologist Charles Tilly on trust networks.

The second chapter moves from theory to empirical analysis. I spell out the case study method I am employing to test the ideas I present in Chapter 1, and briefly introduce the cases of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)'s Hotel, Restaurant, and Domestic Workers Industrial Union 1100 (IU 1100). Next, I further engage with Tilly's work to bring out some detectable features and actions we should see from such a network. Finally, I outline the coding method I mobilized in this project to help me detect these features and actions.

Chapter 3 is a historical overview of the US labor movement from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the First Red Scare (1919). I begin with a general overview of the entire movement, exploring the unique challenges and flaws of the labor movement in the US. In this, I also examine the differences between the mainstream labor movement of the Knights of Labor and then the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to the more radical labor organizers of the IWW and those associated with various socialist parties. In particular, I examine the background of racial and sex-based discrimination that plagued mainstream labor and the challenge to these discriminations offered by more radical elements of the labor movement. I conclude with a closer

look at the history of HERE up to 1919 and, after examining the IWW as a whole, examine the brief history of the IU 1100 before 1919.

Chapters 4 and 5 are the case study reports for HERE and IU 1100, where I examine the particular features of each union as they relate to the criteria I established in Chapter 2. Chapter 6 is the cross-case report. In that report, I clarify a few points of difference and similarity before summarizing my findings from the individual case reports side by side for ease of comparison. Also in this section, I report the final results of membership retention for the unions, discuss other variables which might have affected the result, and clarify why I believe we can only explain the increased membership retention of IU 1100 through the presence of comradery in that union and its absence in HERE.

My theory of comradery is unique, as the first chapter will show. However, I am only attempting to describe a bond long observed in social movements, but little theorized in its capacity to work at building class consciousness. Even at this early stage of development in the theory of comradery, the workers' movement of today needs comradery more than ever before. It is with understanding with which I submit this work to the reader's attention.

Chapter I: What is a Comrade? Why are They Needed?

Despite some recent waves of enthusiasm, the labor movement in the US lingers on the brink of irrelevance. A combination of steadily decreasing membership density and enthusiasm has been the story of organized labor in the US for nearly a century. Since a peak union density in 1945 of 34.2%, the labor movement has steadily declined to a meager 9.9% union density in 2024.⁵ The business unionism⁶ of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations), the dominant labor organization of the country, made the goal of the labor movement getting from contract to contract, avoiding class conflict altogether. In recent months, the threat to organized labor in the US has grown existential. With nearly half of union members in the public sector, the current federal administration’s funding cuts and attacks on agencies pose a dire threat to their already slim membership.

This desperate situation has not inspired the major reform one might expect from a movement nearing a major loss of already fleeting momentum, if not outright destruction. Slowly attempting to move away from business unionism, labor unions in the US have continued an ineffectual move towards social unionism.⁷ Adopting the tactics of the social movements of the 1950s-1990s, social unionism decenters class struggle in favor of vague concepts of community activism and social justice. Since 1995, when the AFL-CIO first adopted the social union model on a national scale, there has been little in the way of tangible results in terms of membership or large-scale increases in enthusiasm for the movement.

⁵ “A Brief Examination of Union Membership Data,” with Paul D. Romer and Julie M. Whittaker, June 2023, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47596>.

⁶ Unionism that developed in the early US labor movement which focuses on getting contracts for employees and on consoling the needs of labor and capital rather than class conflict.

⁷ This idea has used various names, see Stephanie Ross, “Varieties Of Social Unionism: Towards a Framework for Comparison,” *Just Labour*, ahead of print, October 1, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.25071/1705-1436.84>.

The failure of social unionism lies in a fundamental misunderstanding of why the labor movement exists and persists. *All organized labor is a result of class consciousness.* Long-term membership in unions is only explicable through the presence of robust class consciousness,⁸ especially in periods when unions are unable to provide direct material benefits. In line with prominent labor scholars Jane McAlevey, Staughton Lynd, and Joe Burns, as well as more broadly fitting within the Marxist tradition, I argue that instead of decentering class struggle as social unionism does, the way to create a sturdy labor movement is to center the creation of class consciousness. This leaves us with an obvious problem. How can the labor movement best create and develop class consciousness in its members?

Despite the best efforts of several generations of socialists and communists, there is no example of a highly industrialized workforce developing robust class consciousness on mass. Even in workforces with high union density, there is a lack of robust class consciousness. Neither class-based political propaganda nor mere union membership suffices to develop robust class consciousness in unionized workers.⁹ My approach charts a new path forward. I argue unions can develop a kind of scaffolding, in the form of a particular social bond, for the construction of class consciousness. If my contention is true, we will see a union with this social bond retain membership during periods of political repression, when a union cannot provide material benefits and is putting its members in danger. In this same situation, we should see a union

⁸ A note on language: I will use robust class consciousness here to indicate a class consciousness that would be considered “mature.” This is different from revolutionary class consciousness in that revolutionary class consciousness is inclusive of theoretical understanding (i.e., reading one’s Marx and Lenin), but a robust class consciousness may be just as strong in terms of producing political action as a revolutionary class consciousness and is either way sufficient to get workers to understand on a fundamental level that their interests are opposite the interests of capital, and that only through a change in economic systems can they actually reconcile their differences.

⁹ A further note on language: For our purposes worker(s) is the same as proletariat, despite some minor differences in meaning in theory which concern societies in which more than one “working-class” exist (such as transitional feudal societies on the brink of capitalism).

without such a social bond fails to retain membership. Through the exploration of this, I will develop a new strategy for union organizing and develop a theory of the social bond that is needed to maintain the labor movement. This bond is called comradeship.

Understanding comradeship and its effect on class consciousness requires us to engage with several distinct literatures, from the disciplines of political theory, sociology, and history, from both various Marxist tendencies and non-Marxist scholars. In understanding class consciousness, I provide a general overview of the evolution of Marxist understandings of class consciousness and put forward Marxist-Freudian Wilhelm Reich's understanding of class consciousness as an ongoing project of construction within the masses of workers. I relate this back to the class struggle centered unionism proposed by the critics of social unionism and draw out the conclusion of these authors that unions must help workers build their own class consciousness in the class struggle in order to create a labor movement resistant to membership loss. I further develop this argument by examining the comrade bond as developed through the work of early twentieth-century Marxist-feminist Alexandra Kollontai and contemporary Marxist-feminist Jodi Dean. To provide a more grounded explanation of its functions, we will compare the comrade bond's network of trust to the idea of trust networks developed by Charles Tilly. This developed argument concludes that a disciplined political relationship of trust called comradeship helps workers construct their own class consciousness in labor unions, which increases membership retention in those unions.

1.1 Social Unionism

This work on comradery is one salvo in a long line of critiques of social unionism. Therefore, to better understand it, we have to understand this line of critique and the object of critique itself. Social unionism, as we have briefly described, was a reaction to the business unionism¹⁰ that dominated US labor history until the late twentieth century. While this term includes a wide set of beliefs and goals, in general, social unionists have several key points of reform to awaken the power of labor.¹¹ The first is to organize unorganized workers, particularly in those professions where there had been limited union membership.¹² The next is to employ the tactics of social movement protest to win goals traditionally achieved through union action alone. This centers on the cooperate campaign, whereby a group attacks a corporation on several fronts, turning the community as a whole against it, and convincing the business leaders to make a change in the interest of the entire community, including the business itself.¹³ Last, they transform unions to be part of larger battles on identity-based struggle to both aid those in the surrounding community struggling for rights and to create solidarity between the community and members.¹⁴

¹⁰ While I hold this to be a major factor, there is some need for clarification. Stephanie Ross argues that there is not a strict dichotomy between social unionism and business unionism. While social unionists often frame their ideas as counter to business unionism, which is why I argue as I do in the above, in practice they end up creating many of the same results and outcomes as business unionism, albeit with a veneer of identity-politics driven progressivism. See Ross, “Varieties of Social Unionism.”

¹¹ Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement* (University of California Press, 2004); Ross, “Varieties Of Social Unionism.”

¹² Peter Fairbrother, “Social Movement Unionism or Trade Unions as Social Movements,” *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 20, no. 3 (2008): 213–20, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-008-9080-4>; Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*; Ruth Milkman and Kim Voss, eds., *Rebuilding Labor: Organizing and Organizers in the New Union Movement* (Cornell University Press, 2004); Ross, “Varieties Of Social Unionism”; Richard Sullivan, “Why the Labor Movement Is Not a Movement,” *New Labor Forum* 19, no. 2 (2010): 53–58, <https://doi.org/10.4179/NLF.192.0000008>; Maite Tapia and Gabriella Alberti, “Social Movement Unionism: A Toolkit of Tactics or a Strategic Orientation? A Critical Assessment in the Field of Migrant Workers Campaigns,” in *Social Movements and Organized Labour: Passion and Interests*, ed. Jürgen R. Grote and Claudius Wagemann, The Mobilization Series on Social Movements, Protest, and Culture, ed. Hank Johnston, vol. 5 (Routledge, 2019).

¹³ Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, 128–29.

¹⁴ Fantasia and Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement*, 129–30.

Social unionism's hope is that interlocking with social movements and adopting their strategies will increase union membership and participation, in part, by mobilizing communities to aid them. At the same time, they hope to challenge the seclusion of unions from social issues and the narrow focus by previous generations of labor leaders on sections of the workforce they had already organized. By reframing the union's struggle as one social movement among many, social unionists attempt to create a passionate, diverse membership willing to fight on several fronts of struggle.

Despite the earnest efforts of the social unionists, these changes have not saved the US labor movement. Union density kept on its steady rate of decline, untouched by the introduction of social unionism into the mainstream of union activism in the US.¹⁵ This had led to strenuous critiques of the social unionism by some of the most prominent labor activists and scholars of the past three decades. Most notable among these is the critique of the late labor organizer and scholar Jane McAlevey.¹⁶ Her first major critique is that social unionism, while noble in attempting to aid in other social struggles, has moved unions "away from workers and the workplace."¹⁷ She critiques a general lack of ideological commitment and top-down organizing strategies where union leaders push members into action instead of members developing into leaders through struggle.¹⁸ She demonstrates this by using a comparative case study of two unions, one practicing a form of social unionism, the other focused on developing members into

¹⁵ "A Brief Examination of Union Membership Data."

¹⁶ As discussed in a previous footnote, social unionism goes by several names. McAlevey used the term "New Labor" (which is confusing because this is a name for several historical reform campaigns within the broader labor movement). However, even under a different name, McAlevey is speaking of social unionism. However, Voss, in a response, confirms that McAlevey is speaking of Social Movement Unionism, which is definitively a synonym of social unionism. See Voss, "Same as It Ever Was?"

¹⁷ Jane McAlevey, "The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy: Revisiting the Role of the Organic Grassroots Leaders in Building Powerful Organizations and Movements*," *Politics & Society* 43, no. 3 (2015): 415–41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329215584767>.

¹⁸ Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (Random House, 1971); McAlevey, "The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy."

leaders through class struggle. She finds that the latter union won more concessions (higher wages, retirement funds, and more sick-leave), did not have to accept no-strike clauses in their contracts and had set itself up for long-term success.¹⁹ While proponents of social unionism take issue with McAlevey's emphasis on famed community organizer Saul Alinsky's influence and what they claim is her failure to account for the changing nature of capitalism on the effectiveness of social union tactics, these rebuttals miss what sits at the core of McAlevey's critique:²⁰ Social union tactics focus on how organizers and experts can move unions with the help of the surrounding community instead of focusing on developing a fighting, committed membership.²¹

Stoughton Lynd's perspective on Solidarity Unionism and the labor activist and lawyer Joe Burns' Class Struggle Unionism echo McAlevey's critique. Lynd proposes that instead of the top-down model of social unionism and a reliance on experts, unions should adopt structures and cultures that allow for the emergence of leaders from the rank-and-file and primarily rely on the principles of working-class solidarity to win battles. To defend this idea, he cites a long historical precedent of effective and resilient unions employing this model.²² Both Lynd and Burns reject the social unionist notion that unions should attempt to make management see that they and the workers share common interests. They have no common *material* interests. Burns argues unions

¹⁹ McAlevey, "The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy."

²⁰ Stuart Eimer, "Commentary: The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy: Some Questions, Comments, and Problems," *Politics & Society* 43, no. 4 (2015): 443–46, <https://doi.org/DOI:%252010.1177/0032329215584771>; Paul Osterman, "Building Progressive Organizations: An Alternative View*," *Politics & Society* 43, no. 3 (2015): 447–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329215584776>; Kim Voss, "Same as It Ever Was? New Labor, the CIO Organizing Model, and the Future of American Unions*," *Politics & Society* 43, no. 3 (2015): 453–57.

²¹ McAlevey, "The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky's Legacy"; Jane McAlevey, "Put Workers Back at the Center of Organizing," *New Labor Forum* 25, no. 3 (2016): 87–89.

²² Staughton Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism: Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below*, with PM Press (Oakland, California: PM Press, 2015), http://archive.org/details/Solidarity_Unionism_9781629631288; Staughton Lynd and Daniel Gross, *Labor Law for the Rank & Filer: Building Solidarity While Staying Clear of the Law*, Second Edition, Second edition (PM Press, 2011).

must constantly remind workers that their interests are the opposite of the interests of management and thus keep them ready for class-based action against management.²³ Social unionism has failed because it did not adopt radical class struggle; instead, it turned organizing into “staff-driven projects” of compromise.²⁴ Myself, McAlevey, Lynd, and Burns all see social unionism’s failure to create class consciousness as central to its failure to revitalize organized labor.²⁵ To advance labor organizing efforts beyond the limited results of social unionism, we have to advance our understanding of class consciousness.

1.2 Class Consciousness and Unions

For the early Marxists, including Marx²⁶ and Engels themselves, class consciousness was a “natural” or “spontaneous” result of the conditions of production under capitalism.²⁷ In this understanding, workers join unions, become loyal members, and then eventually the unions become a vehicle for the workers’ revolutionary struggle as their class consciousness further develops in a more or less linear progression. They conceived of this as a “natural” process resulting from capitalism and then struggle within unions. Despite the hopes and efforts of these early Marxists, the workers hardly lived up to their radical expectations. This was doubly true of the workers of Europe and the US, on whom they had placed the bulk of their hope for a world-

²³ Joe Burns, *Class Struggle Unionism* (Haymarket Books, 2022); Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*.

²⁴ Burns, *Class Struggle Unionism*, 57–58.

²⁵ Burns, *Class Struggle Unionism*; Alice Lynd and Staughton Lynd, *The New Rank and File*, 1st ed. (Cornell University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501728341>; Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*; McAlevey, “The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky’s Legacy”; Jane McAlevey, *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age* (Oxford University Press, 2016).; they do not always employ this language, of they often do, and either way the indication is clear that if class consciousness exist, it is this which they all wish to build.

²⁶ I acknowledge that Marx famously said he was not a Marxist, but I do not believe him.

²⁷ Friedrich Engels, “Engels to Plekhanov,” in *Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels - Collected Works*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, vol. 50 (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), <http://archive.org/details/MarxEngelsCollectedWorksVolume10MKarlMarx>.

wide workers' revolution. Union membership in the core capitalist nations has rarely emerged as a revolutionary force and never without a mix of exceptional circumstances and considerable outside socialist agitation.²⁸ The First World War confirmed to most Marxists that the workers of the world were more likely to kill each other to please their nation's leaders than unite to break their chains. This made reexaminations to the early Marxist conception of class consciousness necessary.

The reconsideration of class consciousness began with a renewed understanding of what it meant to be class conscious. Class consciousness is not *only* a yes or no question. Rather, it is a question of what degree of class consciousness the worker had developed. For V.I. Lenin, there are two categories of class consciousness a worker could possess: trade union class consciousness (where workers know it benefits them to join unions) and revolutionary class consciousness (where workers realize their organizing efforts must lead to the abolition of capitalism). Lenin doubts workers can go beyond trade union class consciousness without the push of a vanguard of socialists with pre-existing revolutionary class consciousness. In the same manner, Georg Lukács describes that there is a “dialectical cleavage in the consciousness of the proletariat” between the “momentary interest and ultimate goal” (the economic interests of trade unions and the conquest of political power). For Lukács, this is unique among all other classes that have risen to power, whose immediate aims and end goal were always one and the same.²⁹ Resolving this “dialectical cleavage” requires that workers come to “ideological maturity” and combine their immediate purposes with the larger aspiration of liberty from the wage system.³⁰

²⁸ For more see Vivek Chibber, *The Class Matrix: Social Theory after the Cultural Turn* (Harvard University Press, 2024).

²⁹ Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Merlin Press, 1971), 73.

³⁰ Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, 70–71.

Lukács believes that this connection is innate in the class consciousness of the workers and needs only to be brought out through teaching them their place in the progress of history.

While I agree with Lukács that working-class consciousness is uniquely divided, I see the problem as one of missing connections in the mind of the worker. The key to resolving this is not education, but the construction of the workers' experiences from an incoherent series of unrelated episodes, needs, and reactions into a systemic understanding of capitalism, and thereby of class. This is a process of *feeling* class consciousness in action. To put it bluntly, the workers have to learn they are a class of and for themselves the hard way.

This understanding is further developed in the work of Marxist-Freudian Wilhelm Reich. Reich shared a similar view to both Lenin and Lukács on the distinction between the two kinds of workers' class consciousness, which he differentiates as "*that of the leadership and that of the masses*."³¹ However, for Reich, these are two fundamentally different concepts. The masses' class consciousness is "something like a class consciousness" and "fundamentally different from that of the revolutionary leadership."³² Reich argues that the masses' class consciousness is "entirely personal," whereas the leaderships' class consciousness "is filled with the knowledge of the contradictions of the capitalist economic system" and "the need for social revolution."³³ In making this distinction, Reich does not return to categories. Rather, Reich contends that the masses' class consciousness is "present as a number of concrete elements, which in themselves do not yet constitute class consciousness."³⁴ Reich describes these elements of class

³¹ Wilhelm Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," in *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929-1934*, by Wilhelm Reich, ed. Lee Baxandall, trans. Anna Bostock et al., with Bertel Ollman (Random House Inc, 1972), 289.

³² Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," 289.

³³ Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," 290.

³⁴ Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," 289.

consciousness as bricks to a house.³⁵ Where other Marxists see class consciousness developing from the conditions of capitalist production alone, or needing only a push from above to fully develop, Reich sees that the *elements* of class consciousness naturally occur, but only come together through structured struggle into a whole. Therefore, class consciousness is not a natural product of capitalism any more than a sword is the natural product of iron ore.

These elements of class consciousness are understandings of the workers' own "vital necessities" and the obstacles to the satisfaction of these needs.³⁶ No one can teach workers these elements. They have to be encountered. However, even possession of these elements does not make for class consciousness that can lead to sustained union activity or (more to Reich's point) socialist revolution. Reich warns that the Nazi party mobilized these same elements to rally working people to their ranks. In Reich's view, it was not a lack of class consciousness that caused the workers to join the Nazis; it was an incomplete and incorrect construction of class consciousness that made the Nazi's "Socialism of Fools"³⁷ appear more desirable than the real thing. So, the masses' class consciousness is not the sum of its parts. It is an assembly of these elements in such a way that ensures that the workers see the unification of their class on an international scale as the only way to satisfy their "vital necessities."

In line with the critiques of social unionism we have already encountered, Reich proposes that workers' organizations can create class consciousness, which inspires "revolutionary heroism," by tying each short-term economic goal to the long-term goal of a workers'

³⁵ Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," 294.

³⁶ Reich, "What Is Class Consciousness?," 358.

³⁷ A phrase commonly used in the German Socialist movement to describe antisemitism. It is not clear who originated the saying. I use it here to refer to all such hates that take real complaints of the working class, such as low pay and lack of power, and attribute these wrongs to a totally innocent group.

democracy.³⁸ However, they cannot do this with education or propaganda alone. Workers need something to help them build it themselves so that it can flourish as robust class consciousness, impenetrable to any “socialism of fools.”³⁹ Those with leaders’ class consciousness then become “engineers, stonemasons, [and] carpenters” in the construction project of the masses’ class consciousness.⁴⁰ It is the job of those with leadership class consciousness to be an advisor and director of this process, but they *cannot* lecture it into the workers.⁴¹ In short, workers’ organizations must demonstrate their politics, not teach it.

This makes the construction of class consciousness a most difficult, if urgent, task. Workers rarely acquire class consciousness in a single skirmish of the class struggle. Most workers build a complete class consciousness after they are already veterans of class war.⁴² Reich is absolutely correct when, in discussing the reform of the labor movement, he summarizes his position:

Class consciousness is not something to be taught to the masses like a lesson in school - as a set of doctrines. Rather, it is to be elicited, drawn out of the masses’ own experience. ... Demonstrate clearly that when the proletariat acts in its own interests, it represents at the same time the interests of all employed persons. ... Politicize the trivial doings, wherever folks gather. [...] The energy of the revolution is collected in the little things of everyday!⁴³

Workers build their class consciousness slowly and through *constant* political and collective action; in making life itself class struggle.

³⁸ Reich, “What Is Class Consciousness?,” 294.

³⁹ Reich, “What Is Class Consciousness?,” 288.

⁴⁰ Reich, “What Is Class Consciousness?,” 294.

⁴¹ Reich, “What Is Class Consciousness?,” 291.

⁴² Although we do not have the proper space to bring in and sufficiently critique the work of Lois Althusser here, I would note the similarity of this concept to his idea for how ideology invest itself in the subject through repeated participation. Pascal’s “eat, kneel, pray” method of faith. See Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: (Notes towards an Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, with Fredric Jameson (Monthly Review Press, 2001).

⁴³ Wilhelm Reich, “Reforming the Labor Movement,” in *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929-1934*, by Wilhelm Reich, ed. Lee Baxandall, trans. Anna Bostock et al., with Bertel Ollman (Random House Inc, 1972), 363–64.

Labor unions have a unique opportunity to build robust class consciousness.⁴⁴ Workers can engage in class struggle in labor unions more directly than any other organization. However, as we have seen, union membership alone does not build class consciousness. Having union members engage in a broadly defined *social* struggle instead of an explicitly defined *class* struggle, as social unionists do, cannot build class consciousness in most workers. Worse, it could very well facilitate workers mislaying the elements of class consciousness.⁴⁵

This brings us back to our critique of social unionism and its failures. Although not all using the same wording McAlevey, Lynd, and Burns see the primary objective of unions as taking workers who enter unions with trade union class consciousness and developing it through struggle into robust class consciousness that will make them lifelong, active, militant members of their unions.⁴⁶ It is the struggle that reveals to workers their shared problems and their collective power.⁴⁷ While I agree with McAlevey and company, there is reason for pause. As Reich warns, and I have repeated, an insufficiently built class consciousness is still only its elements. Right-wing movements, especially fascist movements, can mobilize these elements as easily as working-class forces.⁴⁸ It is almost inevitable that in the course of the struggle, there will be efforts that do not produce immediate results. This risks interrupting the construction of class consciousness because workers do not see class solidarity as effective. On a more day-to-day

⁴⁴ Organizations that require revolutionary class consciousness, such as vanguard parties, are only useful to this struggle insofar as they can provide the “engineers, stonemasons, [and] carpenters” to organizations developing mass class consciousness. A role that they should fulfil at the same time they fulfill the general leadership of the class in the political struggle as Lenin spells out.

⁴⁵ The ways it does this beside simply confusing workers by moving away from class, is that it would tie any victories won through community struggle to struggles of identity.

⁴⁶ Burns, *Class Struggle Unionism*; Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*; McAlevey, “The Crisis of New Labor and Alinsky’s Legacy”; Jane McAlevey, *A Collective Bargain: Unions, Organizing, and the Fight for Democracy*, Illustrated edition (Ecco, 2020).

⁴⁷ Burns, *Class Struggle Unionism*; Lynd, *Solidarity Unionism*; McAlevey, *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age*.

⁴⁸ Reich, “What Is Class Consciousness?”; Reich, “Reforming the Labor Movement.”; Perhaps the above should read “...easier than working-class movements.” But this is a debate best left for another project.

level, a union has many tasks that, while benefiting the entire union, are individual in nature. So, beyond explicitly stating they are engaged in class struggle, how would a union aid in the construction of class consciousness more so than they already do?⁴⁹ To lie out the question more completely: How does a union keep members constantly involved in class struggle meaningfully so that the construction of class consciousness can occur? At the same time, how does a union make sure workers do this while preventing the elements of class consciousness from being mobilized by reactionary forces? The answer lay in having something in place for members that directs them to a proper construction.

1.3 Comradery: Scaffolding for Class Consciousness

Keeping with Reich's evocative construction metaphor for class consciousness, we can understand exactly what workers need: scaffolding. It is only action taken collectively by members of a class in the interest of that class which can build the class consciousness of the participants. However, most actions a union might require for its day-to-day existence, such as the crucial practice of one-on-ones,⁵⁰ are not collective. A union cannot wait to go on strike to take collective action. As Reich has argued, they have to make collective struggle an everyday occurrence for it to have the desired effect. I argue that all actions, even those which are necessarily individual, must occur within a network of strong social bonds, which sets each action as one taken together and for all.

⁴⁹ Besides, of course, abandoning social unionism.

⁵⁰ The practice in union organizing of getting a worker alone to discuss the possibility of forming a union (during early stages of organizing), following up on actions, gaining an understanding of the members desires, and generally making sure that members feel good about the union.

The comrade bond sets the meaning of every action in the collective. Even when acting alone, comrades understand their actions benefit the collective and come to understand that the victory of the struggle is only possible through the collective efforts of their comrades. Comradery accomplishes this in three ways. Comradery names the comrade as included in the collective and equal in the struggle. Further, comradery makes the struggle held in common through expectations of shared work and solidarity. Finally, Comradery prevents “mislaidd” bricks in the construction through a rejection of individual identity struggles. In this, the bond does not *teach* that equality among the workers is essential to victory; it *proves* it in every action. Because of this bond, comrades do not need to hear the classic refrain: “Workers of the world unite!” They live it.

The scaffolding begins at the moment of initiation into the comrade social bond. At this moment, comrades include their new fellow comrade with an equal entitlement to the title “comrade.”⁵¹ In this, every comrade is immediately equal to the other. This not only requires an absence of discrimination but efforts at inclusion of all comrades in the organization's life and the struggle.

This is an understanding that is immediately implemented, but also develops over time through experience. The experienced equal-inclusion is two-fold: comrades see all other comrades as equally entitled to their solidarity, and they are equally responsible for participation in the struggle. This allows a flourishing of trust in that each comrade experiences the solidarity of their fellow comrades as they conduct their work.⁵² Further, the expectation of shared work

⁵¹ The word itself does not have to be “comrade,” but must be a common form of address.

⁵² This may be experienced when comrades stand up for one another against discrimination from outside, or comrades have to revoke another comrade’s status for violating the standards of solidarity. Further, it is experienced constantly in that comrades can ask for help they need for anything related to the struggle and it is expected that they will receive it.

not only ensures that their efforts are never alone in that each comrade works equally with them. It also ensures that they are entitled to the pride in every victory won by the comrade network as they played an equal part in that struggle.

Comradery not only creates this equality among comrades of any identity. Rather, the comrade is universal.⁵³ Anyone who can demonstrate equal solidarity and work can be a comrade, without exception. Although we must examine this closer in a moment, for now it suffices to say that comradery is anti-identitarian. One cannot identify as a comrade, but can only demonstrate solidarity and participation in the struggle. Further, no identity can affect comradery status. As with long-term class struggle, comrades struggle and win together, regardless of identity.

So far, we have taken the comrade bond as a given, describing its effects rather than its existence. To discover why comradery functions in the way described, we must describe what it is. Further, since we have up to now only described comradery's effects as it relates to scaffolding, we must determine how we might detect it apart from its effects. To determine this, we will have to not only examine what comradery is, but we must know it by its outward expressions more so than its functions as they relate to class consciousness.

1.4 Comradery: Bonds that Tie

What I am describing as comradery is a particular social bond found within various workers' organizations. It builds on the theories of the twentieth century Marxist-feminist Alexandra

⁵³ The comrade is universal in the same way Marx and Marxist-Humanism considers the workers a universal class. The working class cannot truly liberate itself without (at the same time) destroying all forms of oppression including discrimination based on identities.

Kollontai and the contemporary Marxist-feminist Jodi Dean. Kollontai's work explores the comrade bond (what she calls love-comradeship or comradely solidarity) itself. Particularly, she is interested in its potential as both a tool of organizing and as the democratic social bond of the post-capitalist order. Dean is more focused on the relationship itself, what it does to the individual invested with comradeship, and gives us some indications as to the outward expressions of the comradeship. In a similar vein to Kollontai, my comradeship is much more focused on the social bond itself. Dean's work is indispensable in its description of several of the traits of the comrade. However, in this section, with Kollontai's help, I hope to take Dean's ideas out of the high-flung realm of post-Marxist theory with a heavy Lacanian slant and return comradeship to the practices of the relationship which produce the results we just discussed.

Kollontai developed a conception of comradeship in trying to work out what the new post-capitalist social bond would be in the Soviet Union if it could maintain the democratic elements so central to the Bolshevik's early leadership of the revolution. For a socialist collective to function, Kollontai believed that the individualism of capitalism needed to be swept away for collectivist priorities.⁵⁴ Kollontai believed that a workers' ideology could modify the sort of bond we see in families under capitalism into a generalized, democratic social bond for a political community. This bond is what Kollontai refers to as "love-comradeship."⁵⁵ For Kollontai, this bonds members of the movement together during the struggle and after the workers' victory over capitalism.⁵⁶ It is collective, familiar, and democratic bond that is,

⁵⁴ Alexandra Kollontai, "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, by Alexandra Kollontai, trans. Alix Holt (Lawence Hill & Co., 1977), 230.

⁵⁵ Alexandra Kollontai, "Make Way for Winged Eros: A Letter to Working Youth," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, by Alexandra Kollontai, trans. Alix Holt (Lawence Hill & Co., 1977), 285–92.

⁵⁶ Alexandra Kollontai, "Prostitution and Ways of Fighting It," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, by Alexandra Kollontai, trans. Alix Holt (Lawence Hill & Co., 1977), 268.

essentially, a more personal and localized expression of class solidarity, as she focused on it primarily within the context of individual communes.⁵⁷

Whereas Kollontai was attempting to develop a theory of a social bond as it emerged at the end of capitalist rule, Dean encounters comradeship at what she considers the deepest depths of capitalist rule. Her most concrete points are that comradeship is a relationship of discipline, solidarity, shared work, equality, universality, and common purpose. While these are by far the most important, they sometimes need to be dug out of a pit of postmodern meanings. In engaging with Dean, I will attempt to highlight her point without following her away from a material analysis of social bonds that exist in the real world.

Beginning with Dean's most practicable and clear point, Dean emphasizes the discipline of the comrade relationship. Generated in struggle, this discipline is not authoritarian or the antonym of freedom. It does not force a comrade into anything they do not wish to do. Rather, it maintains the fire of desire within the comrade long enough for that desire to come into reality.⁵⁸ Dean writes that: "Discipline and joy are two sides of the same coin."⁵⁹ Discipline, like joy, pushes political actors forward towards a goal. The comrade relationship builds discipline into the shared struggle as it "expands possibilities for action and intensifies the sense of its necessity."⁶⁰ Further, Dean writes, that discipline "is a challenge."⁶¹ It encourages comrades to say, "*We must do more!*" and this produces "reliable, consistent, practical action."⁶² Discipline is

⁵⁷ Kollontai, "Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations"; Kollontai, "Make Way for Winged Eros: A Letter to Working Youth"; Alexandra Kollontai, "Soon (In 48 Years' Time)," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, by Alexandra Kollontai, trans. Alix Holt (Lawrence Hill & Co., 1977).

⁵⁸ Jodi Dean, *Comrade: An Essay on Political Belonging* (Verso, 2019), 85.

⁵⁹ Dean, *Comrade*, 10.

⁶⁰ Dean, *Comrade*, 8.

⁶¹ Dean, *Comrade*, 93–95.

⁶² Dean, *Comrade*, 93–95.

not a restraint to the comrade,⁶³ but the attitude that drives the collective struggle, which, as we have already discussed, is the key to comradeship's ability to build class consciousness.

In this disciplined activity, comrades "look together toward a common horizon."⁶⁴ Their activities are aspirational, aimed at eliminating the capitalist system. Dean argues that this "work must be in common" at the same time it is aimed at larger shared goals.⁶⁵ Comrades clearly demarcates work as taken in the revolution's interest.⁶⁶ In this work, the workers build the world they want to see, rather than theorize about it. In this, they quickly develop in the struggle and (as we have said above) build class consciousness.

The construction of class consciousness would be impossible without solidarity. Comrades hold each other to the strictest standards of solidarity. While "comrades give each other a chance" to live up to solidarity, there is no tolerance for outright breaches of solidarity.⁶⁷ Comrades who cannot live up to the solidarity the struggle demands cease to be comrades until they can demonstrate they have learned solidarity. This, Dean dramatically declares, "is a kind of social death where a worker becomes an outsider to his own movement, a person as bad as or worse than the capitalist themselves."⁶⁸ In short, comrades are definitionally in universal solidarity with one another with no regard for any particularist identity of that comrade.

⁶³ However, it is worth noting that this discipline does also hold back unplanned individual action. The discipline here is the discipline of the picket line holding against attempts to bring in scabs.

⁶⁴ Dean, *Comrade*, 35.

⁶⁵ Dean, *Comrade*, 85.

⁶⁶ Here is one of the few points that it matters that Dean is speaking about Communist Parties, not unions. For Dean the belief in the revolution is already there in knowledge and comradeship is helping to build it into the subject. However, I argue that it actually matters very little what the workers profess before they join, rather in the work itself, being told by those with class consciousness of the leaders, they come to believe it far more tangibly than if they had come in with the collected works of Marx already memorized. To put it simply, as long as the union is making clear that the action is taken for the revolution, it has the same effect that Dean is speaking about in the above.

⁶⁷ Dean, *Comrade*, 103.

⁶⁸ Dean, *Comrade*, 109.

Dean rejects identity politics by describing the comrade as “generic” and a symbolic figure.⁶⁹ While we must parse through Dean’s meaning to get at the core material analysis, what Dean is trying to get at with these claims are two important points about the comrade, which we have already touched on regarding their direct role in the building of class consciousness. The comrade is universal. Anyone who lives up to the standards of comrades can be a comrade. No identity matters to comrades. Once one is a comrade, and is living up to the standards of comradeship, comrades are equal. Every comrade invests every other comrade with the same level of trust, devotion, and solidarity. The name, race, gender, religion and so on of a comrade are as irrelevant to each other comrade as the color of their socks. *A comrade is a comrade.*

In this same respect, Dean makes an important point relevant to our discussion of social unionism. Social unionism adopts an allyship model of politics. Allies help with a struggle but are fundamentally separate from that struggle.⁷⁰ On the other hand, the comrade relationship is the antithesis of this model. The comrade is not an identity at all. While Dean’s language at times obscures this, she still clearly states that: “Comrade designates a relation, not an individual identity.”⁷¹ In this way, being a comrade is like being a doctor in that one is not a doctor until other doctors recognize you as such. One cannot identify as a doctor or a comrade. They must earn those titles from others who already have them. Simply, comrades need comradeship. This makes the address of comrades with a common title⁷² crucial. In this title, one is not simply

⁶⁹ Dean, *Comrade*, 4–5. An ego ideal, according to Freud is the image of oneself that “constantly watches the actual ego and measures it by that ideal.” See Sigmund Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” in *The Freud Reader*, by Sigmund Freud, ed. Peter Gay (W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 559.; I do not contest that the idea of the comrade might act as a ego ideal, I simply have no way to prove that, and either way, as I discuss here, we can understand comradeship without it.

⁷⁰ In the same way social unionism tries to leverage community support as a means to victory. These community members are allies of the workers’ struggle at that particular business, not party to it.

⁷¹ Dean, *Comrade*, 77.

⁷² The title does not always have to “comrade” as long as it is a title which is clearly meant to express a commonality in the struggle.

showing a kind of political intimacy; they are showing a continually earned inclusion in a network of trusted individuals devoted to fighting for each other. Importantly, because of this relationship, comrades are involved in the struggle of all comrades. This is the core of comradeship.

Now that we have seen what Kollontai and Dean have said about comradeship, it is worth synthesizing and clarifying what comradeship we are examining in this project. The comrade is universal. No identity can prevent someone from entering the comrade relationship.⁷³ This is not only a matter of entry, but a matter of treatment once in the comrade relationship. If the comrade is universal, no comrade differs from another. There is total equality among comrades. Part of the inclusion and equality is a common title for comrades. Another part of this inclusion is equal participation in shared work. As we have discussed this at length, but must clarify here, the work requirement of a comrade is key in that they all must shoulder the burden of the struggle, and it is these actions that directly build class consciousness. As comrades must equally share in work, they are held accountable both on this and, more crucially, to the concept of solidarity with comrades. A comrade who violates the solidarity of the group violates the group's trust and ceases to be a comrade. In this and in a more general sense, comrades discipline themselves in their actions and in pursuing their shared long-term, revolutionary goal. In short, comradeship is a disciplined relationship of solidarity and trust among equal members in a shared universal struggle with the long-term goal of ending exploitation.

Further, it is crucial to note that comradeship can only exist in the class struggle. Since the class struggle is constant, this means that comrades can be forged in any moment of the struggle. However, these bonds prove themselves most important at crisis points of the class struggle; such

⁷³ Class, to be absolutely clear, is not an identity. It is a position in class struggle. To be against the workers to be anti-universalist, because, as we have said, the working class is the universal class.

points help solidify these bonds. These points may arise in a revolutionary situation or in the face of political reaction. They would also arise in the smaller-scale moments of crisis when, for example, employees go out on strike. Without crisis points, the comrade bond would be unlikely to emerge. Without struggle in general, it would never emerge. There must be constant participation in struggle even outside of crises *and* energetic participation in struggle is most essential during crises. To survive these crises, comrades must learn to place an immense amount of trust in each other. This trust is built through consistent collective participation in the struggle at the same time it allows for participation in consistent collective struggle.

1.5 “In Comrade We Trust”

At this point we have established that comradery is a political, disciplined relationship with a fundamental orientation towards a revolutionary goal. As Kollontai has emphasized, this bond would feel like familiar bonds today, with sets of expectations and requirements for solidarity. With a comparison to the feeling and strength of a family bond, we get a step closer to an understanding of this bond. However, this is hardly enough to get us any closer to being able to find this social bond in a group, or understanding if it has any precedent outside of the family, which is hardly as outwardly a political relationship as I contend comradery to be. For a better understanding of how this bond works, and to give us some idea of similarly politicized networks of bonds, we must leave the Marxist tradition and move towards a theory of social bonds within organizations.

Charles Tilly, the eminent sociologist, developed a theory of trust networks within some organizations and groups, which allows them to undertake joint activity. These trust networks, Tilly writes, “consist of ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties,

within which people set-valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others.”⁷⁴ Examples of trust networks include: “kinship groups, religious sects, *revolutionary conspiracies*,” fraternal orders, nationalist groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and crucially for us, labor unions.⁷⁵ For Tilly, trust networks allow individuals within the bond to place incredible faith in other members to keep secrets and otherwise maintain the safety of the group as they engage in long-term activities.⁷⁶ For Tilly, trust networks explain how some groups have carried on enterprises across countries and seas, how some groups manage trust between members who never meet until their most desperate hour, and why some groups are able to resist powerful enemies while others fall to infighting and disaster. Comradery would fall well within this definition, bringing us to Tilly.⁷⁷

Comradery as a long-term political relationship of trust among otherwise unacquainted members is certainly a trust network. While we take some liberties with Tilly’s concept, it is extremely helpful for our next step of analysis to have Tilly’s roadmap to analysis of social networks of this sort.⁷⁸ Where striking similarities drew my attention to Tilly, it is the fact that

⁷⁴ Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511618185>.

⁷⁵ Charles Tilly, “Democratization and De-Democratization,” in *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change: A Charles Tilly Reader*, ed. Ernesto Castañeda and Cathy Schneider (Routledge, 2017), 204, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315205021>; Charles Tilly, “Trust and Democratic Rule,” in *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change: A Charles Tilly Reader*, ed. Ernesto Castañeda and Cathy Schneider (Routledge, 2017), 208, 210, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315205021>. All emphasis added.

⁷⁶ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*.

⁷⁷ Although it falls well without of the breadth of this study to explore further, I am also engaging Tilly because of his focus on the way trust networks are integrated into or resist systems of rule. If, as Kollontai contends, the comrade bond is to be the dominant social bond, we have to understand how local instances of it (in Kollontai’s understanding, the individual communes) would be integrated and interact with other local comrades social bonds while still maintain a democratic society overall, not just within the individual trust networks. Tilly work is the only kind of work that would help us address this matter in future research I have ever encountered. So, in addition to the reasons listed in the main text, this is another key reason to bring in Tilly here. Again, if comradery exist in the way I (or Kollontai and Dean) describe, it has to be a trust network.

⁷⁸ For example, Tilly says that the relationships within the trust network “depend more heavily on particularized knowledge [...] not widely available to third parties” (*Trust and Rule*, 44). While we could argue that the comrade network require a good deal of knowledge of socialism and at least a tacit knowledge of other members (which would often be kept secret for sake of safety), it would more difficult to argue that this is central to the comrade relationship. Further, he argues that exiting from trust networks is “rare and costly” (*ibid*, 42), which is difficult to

Tilly has the clearest explanation of how such a relationship exist and gives us a clear criterion of how we can further assess trust networks complete with other historical examples to which we can compare the comrade relationship, makes it necessary to put the comrade network of trust into conversation with trust network theory. While bringing Tilly into the conversation here is only to introduce him. In the next chapter, we will utilize Tilly's criteria and characteristics of trust networks to see what we should be able to detect to indicate that comradery is present. However, what we have accomplished already is to show that the high-minded, even self-described "utopian" ideas of comradery from Dean and Kollontai are something that is preceded in more grounded analysis.⁷⁹

1.6 A Theoretical Conclusion

Before we can move the project forward to this next stage of observation, it is worth reviewing the several branches of theory we have combined in this chapter. We have examined that class consciousness is not only a matter of having or not having, but of degrees and kind. Contrary to prevailing early Marxist opinion, class consciousness does not develop "naturally" in the process of production. Rather, workers have elements of class consciousness already within them, pulled

argue for many unions. However, Tilly himself identifies that many unions would be trust networks, so this factor is an odd discrepancy (*ibid*, 4, 7). Some traits Tilly list are more easily contested. For example, Tilly argues that trust networks have to be rigid and "do not adjust their sizes, membership, major activities, or organizational strategy flexibly or rapidly" (*ibid*, 44). I do not contest these last two traits. However, there is little reason cited for why he believes that the size and membership changes slowly, except that you have to integrate members in carefully to preserve trust. I am not convinced of this because it ignores the fact that one of his examples of a trust network is a workers' mutual aid societies, which expand membership as rapidly as they can accommodate as do many underground religions, which is one of his most consistently referenced example of trust networks. All things considered, my critiques are relatively minor, and either way do not directly affect our analysis, or the main reason we are bringing Tilly in here, namely that we need to have some firmer analysis of a relationship like comradery to use as a basis for our research rather than trying to "reinvent the wheel" in analyzing a network that is so close to his trust networks. His work still provides a firmer more empirically grounded mode of analysis of a network like this than we have seen in any other work, and certainly firmer than either Kollontai or Dean.

⁷⁹ Alexandra Kollontai, "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle," in *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, by Alexandra Kollontai, trans. Alix Holt (Lawence Hill & Co., 1977), 245; Dean, *Comrade*, 62.

from thousands of daily observations of life. However, those elements do not appear in full formed class consciousness. It is only through constant participation in structured class struggle that workers can form these experiences into class consciousness. The constant struggle is the construction, but the structure is important as well, because it prevents misplacement of materials in such a way that reactionary movements can mobilize.

Comradery, which is a relationship bearing a bond similar to that of the family, can allow for constant work in the construction of class consciousness in the proper direction because it acts as scaffolding. It names comrades as equals, and in this, it requires the equality and solidarity needed for the struggle on a class basis, combating divisions within the workers. To understand it better, I argue we must understand comradery as a relationship within an organization as a trust network, which is a web of bonds allowing members to undertake risky endeavors and call upon each other in times of need. The task of our study becomes to detect and understand these comrade trust networks and examine whether they build class consciousness. The clearest way we can assess this is if membership in a workers' organization remains once material benefits cease to be a motivating factor for members and there is a higher risk associated with retaining membership than with ceasing to be members. To determine this, we have to develop a method to first see if an organization has comradery and then examine cases of a comrade organization and a non-comrade organization to see if their membership retention numbers bear out our theoretical conclusions.

Chapter II: Methods of Detecting Comradery

2.1 Case Study Design

Methodologist Robert K. Yin emphasizes that case studies “allow you to focus in-depth on a ‘case’ and to retain a holistic and real-world perspective.”⁸⁰ This is exactly what we need for this study in order to advance our understanding of comradery. As Yin is careful to spell out, case studies have a long history in social sciences and have produced widely respected results, including the exceptionally influential *Union Democracy: the Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* by Seymour Martin Lipset, Martin Trow, and James S. Coleman.⁸¹ In that line, this project employs a case study research design to allow us to determine qualitatively the presence of a comrade network within a union and its effects.

I deploy a multi-case design following the theoretical replication logic. The reason most often cited for the deployment of this logic is to test a theory against a clear alternative. While there is no clear alternative to the comrade social bond, I have set my theory up against other modes of union organizing, namely social unionism, that do not emphasize social bonding or class struggle with a revolutionary aim. I chose the theoretical replication logic in this project because I believe it produces robust results through direct comparison for cases that are as similar as possible except for the presence of the comrade bond. Membership retention requires a comparison, which would only be possible through a comparison of cases with a “bad” and

⁸⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (SAGE Publications, Incorporated, 2017), 5, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vt/detail.action?docID=7106962>.

⁸¹ Yin, *Case Study*, 50; Seymour Martin Lipset et al., *Union Democracy: The Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union* (Anchor Books, 1956).; I would also add here, the influential study we cited in the previous chapter by Jane McAlevey

“good” outcome for membership retention. Therefore, I have employed this logic and believe it is the best logic to produce a valid result as to the effect of comradeship on membership retention.

In this logic, I have picked two cases that have different predicted outcomes based on the theory we have just discussed. One case should have low membership retention, the other high membership retention depending on the presence or absence of comradeship. In following this method of case study research, I essentially conducted two case studies. I gave each case careful attention and the amount of research to be expected of a single case, while holding them in relative isolation from each other. After I had thoroughly explored each case, I brought them into comparison and wrote the cross-case report.

The first major step in this process was case selection. I selected cases to be as similar as possible, while differing on the presence or absence of a comrade social bond among members.⁸² The first major choice in case selection was narrowing the population of cases to a single time period to eliminate different eras as a factor in cases. I chose the First Red Scare (roughly January 1919-April 1920)⁸³ because it was a period of clear political repression focused on labor in the US. It was also an acute period, as opposed to the Second Red Scare, for example, which was a roughly ten-year period (1947-1957). This made a before-and-after approach more

⁸² While I could only conduct preliminary research to determine if a case had the comrade social bond, after completing this project, I have confirmed that one case did indeed have the comrade social bond and the other did not. After discussing case selection, I will speak to the method I employed to confirm this.

⁸³ This date here is somewhat contentious. Some date the start of the First Red Scare as early as the Bolshevik Revolution (November 1917) and end it when a leader of anti-labor police action, A. Mitchell Palmer was proven wrong about a supposed plot to overthrow the government to take place on May 1, 1920. However, I have dated it here to the Seattle General Strike of January 1919, which was the first time actual Soviet Style councils emerged in the US and led to the extension of the Senate’s Overman Committee’s power to investigate supposed German sabotage to countering potential Russian inspired revolution the following month (February 1919). My logic is that this was a definitive shift in emphasis from anti-German sentiment being used to cover anti-radical persecution to explicit anti-radical persecution, which then intensified, despite the fact that the war in Europe was at an end. The end date I have selected is connected to the expulsion of several duly elected Socialists representatives to the New York State Assembly on April 1, 1920 as this was the last major event of the Red Scare that actually came to pass (as opposed to Palmer’s imaginary, and widely mocked, May Day Plot).

practical for two reasons: records were much more likely to be reliable throughout the shorter period, and it minimized the chance that other factors would affect membership retention.

With a clear time period in mind, I assembled other criteria that would need to be present in cases. The most obvious, and unfortunately, the most restrictive, was that the cases needed to have enough information available for analysis. Most importantly, the cases had to have reliable information on membership.⁸⁴ This also required that the union had (at least) semi-regular publications that were available to the whole organization (i.e., not regional). Last, the organization had to continue to exist throughout the whole period of study. After screening cases for these factors, only eight (8) cases were eligible to continue to the next stage of screening.

Taking this significantly smaller population of cases, I focused on cases suited to the logic of replication. I determined the unions must be in the same industry, as industry-by-industry variation could affect membership. Unfortunately, I could not fully account for factors such as size and budget for several reasons. The first and most readily apparent reason is that there were only two or three national unions in each industry, and these unions were often of vastly different sizes. However, I am justified in using unions of different sizes because the overall size of the union has little relevancy to the condition of the social bond as members would experience it on a day-to-day level. The size of locals would be relatively similar in size regardless of the size of the national. Thus, the experience would be similar regardless of national size. To account for differences in these factors that might actually affect membership, I have calculated the ratio of the amount of money the union had on hand to the members it had at

⁸⁴ Which can be gained either through direct records of membership or reconstructed from financial records. However, as we will discuss at length, this proved much more difficult than it seemed, even in early phases of research.

that same time (\$/1 member) This ratio expresses the amount of resources a union could deploy relative to their size, thus equalizing the unions, regardless of the union's size.⁸⁵

With these factors in mind, my case selection left me with two cases that are well suited to the task at hand. The comrade union is the IWW's Hotel, Restaurant, and Domestic Workers Industrial Union 1100 (henceforth IU 1100), and the non-comrade union is the AFL-associated Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE). I selected these cases because they were the only cases in the same industry operating in the period we are examining (First Red Scare) with similar (although not identical) membership bases.⁸⁶

These cases were especially conducive to our study because of the additional strain of the various prohibition measures taking effect across the country during the period we are studying. The ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in January 1919 was only the best-known of the various attacks against the right to buy and sell alcohol, with various states and localities passing

⁸⁵The overall size of unions is not listed as a reason for membership retention or departure in any study that I have encountered and is generally not factored into consideration of reasons unions gain or lose membership as there is very little cause to attribute membership retention rates to overall size, except for some considerations that smaller unions would have less overall resources to throw at a given situation. However, as our comrade union is the union lacking overall membership in comparison to our non-comrade case, any marginal effect of this would be a disadvantage to the union we should see outperform the other.

⁸⁶ I rejected the other cases that passed screening for several reasons. Among potential comrade unions the Railroad Workers' Industrial Union 600 (RWIU), the Metal Machinery Workers Industry Union 300 (MMWIU), the Agricultural Workers Industrial Union 400 (AWIU), and the Shipbuilding Workers' Industrial Union 325 (SWIU) made it pass screening.⁸⁶ However, I did not choose RWIU because the government had nationalized railroads in this period as part of the war effort, and the issues around denationalizing or continuing their nationalization dominated the unions' activities. They would undoubtedly have a significant effect on membership, but initial research indicated that it would be very difficult to discern how this would influence membership.⁸⁶ I did not choose MMWIU or SWIU because I could not locate a corresponding non-comrade union with enough information available for the needs of this study. Similarly, AWIU did not have a non-comrade equivalent. Several non-comrade unions also made it through screening. The Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS) was a strong candidate, but I eliminated it for the same reason as the RWIU. The International Longshoremen's Association was another strong candidate. However, the corresponding comrade union had job control at its major site of employment (Philadelphia, PA), which would seriously affect membership retention. I also considered the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental, and Reinforcing Iron Workers (IABSORIW), but could not find enough data on membership numbers for this period.

measures earlier.⁸⁷ This impacted the servers, cooks, and bartenders covered by both unions. Many bartenders found themselves without a profession, and servers found their tip-based work greatly affected by the lack of wine, beer, and spirits if their employer was fortunate to weather the loss of profit. We would expect membership to decrease given these challenges, so if a union could retain members through these difficulties, we can be doubly sure of their members' loyalty. With these cases selected, I then moved to analysis.

2.2 Sources and Data

While in case selection, a preliminary assessment of the unions to determine if they were likely to have the comrade social bond was sufficient, I needed to get a firmer grasp of the organization to properly determine the presence of a comrade social bond. Fortunately for our study, both unions (IU 1100 and HERE) had an interest in keeping records of both official business and open dialogue between members in public forums. Both had nationally distributed monthlies during this period, which were published as complete volumes, unabridged and unedited. This gave me ample evidence of the social bonds within these organizations, as we shall see.

In our period, the monthly publication for the whole of the IWW was the *One Big Union Monthly*, which ran from March 1919 until January 1921 (23 issues). While the IU 1100 did not have a publication of its own, the monthly for the whole union featured significant contributions from IU 1100 members. In addition, members of all the IWW's industrial unions, including members of IU 1100, appeared to have read this publication frequently. However, to supplement this monthly with specific information about IU 1100, we have the collection of IWW pamphlets

⁸⁷ For more, see timeline given in Historical Background.

Starving Amidst Too Much: & Other IWW Writings On the Food Industry (2005), edited by Peter Rachleff, which contains the pamphlet *Hotel, Restaurant & Domestic Workers: How They Live & How They Live* by the prominent IU 1100 organizer L.S. Chumley, who was also a repeat contributor to *One Big Union Monthly*, speaking on behalf of IU 1100 (in a seemingly unofficial capacity). To understand the organization within the period we are studying, we are using the *One Big Monthly* issues from March 1919 to April 1920. In addition, I also consulted the governing documents of the IWW at this time.⁸⁸ In all, we had ample documentation of the feelings of union members during this period.

HERE did not have as much interest in other material as the IWW. However, their expansive and detailed monthly *Mixer and Server*, which began running in 1891, provides more than enough information on the union during this period for our purposes. HERE does not appear to have published any other nationally available information about itself during our period. The *Mixer and Server* also contains detailed records of all conventions, including the one that occurred during our period (August 1919). This included reports from officials and organizers. It also contains letters from rank-and-file members. In a particularly interesting insight into the politics of the membership, the *Mixer and Server* republished⁸⁹ opinion pieces and other articles from other publications (some having to do with labor, but mostly unrelated) in a recurring section entitled “I See by the Papers.” However, the *Mixer and Server* are not our only source for

⁸⁸ In the interest of clarity, I only coded the monthlies for the IWW (see information on coding below). While interesting, the pamphlets were more about the conditions of workers they were trying to unionize, and any information relevant to IU 1100’s operation was repeated in the monthlies. They informed my analysis, and were carefully analyzed, but did not get the same coding scheme (this was also due to the fact that there were several technical difficulties in uploading the file to the coding software, which simply proved impossible without scanning the original documents, which proved, impractical).

⁸⁹ These articles do appear to be republished, not syndicated as they are sometimes abridged, contain the name of the original publication but not the author, and there is no indication that this was an official practice rather than a kind of clipping exercise of the editors.

HERE during this period. I elected to include the *Book of Membership and Constitution of* HERE (1911 revision, which is the revision nearest to our period, which I can access). Further, the *Book of Membership* is especially of note as every single member of the union used it as a record of paying dues (by placing “Green Triangle Stamps” on every month of the year) and it summarizes membership expectations.⁹⁰

With this material, focused on such a specific period in the life of these organizations, I had a good basis to make assessments of the membership’s feelings and relations to one another. While I can confidently say that these sources provide more than enough information to determine the nature of members’ relation to each other, I have to discuss exactly what I hoped to find evidence of in these records and how I knew it when I found it. For this, I had to operationalize comradery, a process that brought me back to Tilly’s analysis.

2.3 Discovering Comradery

Comradery, as we discussed, is a particular social bond. Now that I am empirically testing whether its presence has an effect on membership, I have to make comradery a firmer concept than my previous theoretical discussion has done. To accomplish this, I am putting my comrade network of trust into conversation with Tilly’s trust networks. Using Tilly’s study of strikingly similar sorts of social networks, I got a road map for my study. I remind the reader here that trust networks: “consist of ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set-valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the

⁹⁰ All documents listed in this paragraph were coded according to the methodology below.

malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others.”⁹¹ Compare this to how I define the comrade network as a net of strong social bonds consisting of a disciplined political relationship of workers sharing the long-term goal of revolutionary change, who expect each other to abide by the highest form of solidarity as they carry on a (inherently dangerous) political struggle. Thus, we are justified in following along with Tilly’s analysis to get some insight into how we should look at (and for) comrades.

More specifically, Tilly has a simple way to see trust. “Trust,” Tilly writes, is “an attitude or relationship with practices attached.”⁹² This is simple enough. However, this is just the first clue Tilly gives us. Tilly gives six central features of a trust network that apply to our trust network and can be determined through practices. (1) There are several people tied together by a similar bond, forming a network.⁹³ (2) Since, “the sheer existence of such a tie gives one member significant claims on the attention or aid of another,” we should see members helping each other and caring for each other even if they do not personally know each other.⁹⁴ (3) We would also see “that members of the network are collectively carrying on major long-term enterprises such as procreation, long-distance trade, workers’ mutual aid or practice of an underground religion.”⁹⁵ (4) Further, members can put other members “at risk [of] malfeasance, mistakes, and failures.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511618185>.

⁹² Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 12.

⁹³ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 4.

⁹⁴ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 4.

⁹⁵ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 4.

⁹⁶ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 4.; There are some other features Tilly gives us that go beyond these core criteria, but are nonetheless present in Tilly’s trust networks and in our network of trust, but that fall well outside this project and would serve to only weigh down the reader in further theoretical considerations. However, they are worth noting here. Trust networks can come into larger systems of rule, which is actually Tilly main interest in exploring these networks. Inversely, trust networks are also in competition with regimes for loyalty and resources (in our case, labor power). In this competition with regimes, trust networks develop a mixture of methods of avoiding destruction, including “concealment, clientage, and dissimulation” (*Trust and Rule*, 83). A trust network can hide itself, be a protection racket, or make just enough concessions to regimes to be allowed to carry on in a relatively public manner while still carrying on their venture, or they can meet the threats of outsiders through being threatening

(5) Trust network identify a clear “boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’” and those in the network have “a name mutually know to its participants,” as well as a “means of communicating and representing their shared membership.”⁹⁷ (6) Members of trust networks must have “some minimum of commitment” to the network that does not rely on “coercion or capital.”⁹⁸

Where does that leave us as far as operationalizing comradeship? It leaves us with six sets of practices we should see if our network of trust actually exists in an organization. To make the matter easier to follow, here is a list of the traits we have learned from Tilly so far.

1. Does this network consist of more than three members?⁹⁹
2. Do members expect and receive aid from other members of the network without appealing to other shared identities or ties not included as the core character of the network (e.g., a union can say “fellow workers” in appeals because being a worker is a prerequisite, but could not say “fellow Christians” as this is not a prerequisite to the trust network)?

themselves (*ibid*). Trust networks that are not integrated into regimes must survive in some combination of these methods. In a liberal-democratic regime (such as the US), we should suspect that a comrade trust network outside of the ruling system would carry on through dissimulation. For instance, registering as a legal entity despite a stated belief that they do not recognize the legitimacy of the regime. Comrade trust networks would also operate under some level of concealment under liberal-democratic regimes (for instance, not publishing the membership list or announcing strikes ahead of time), but under more repressive regimes, we should see that comrade trust networks can only survive through concealment. During a violent revolution, when the barricades are up, we would expect a comrade network to function through violence, keeping off the regime through organized violence of its own (although elements of concealment would also certainly exist). However, as we would only expect a union operating partly outside the law (such as the IWW) to operate through official compliance, but careful non-compliance it is a difficult matter to prove from printed records, does not directly pertain to the bond we need to know more about to understand comradeship, we are leaving it to the side for this project, to be picked up in further research.

⁹⁷ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 6, 44.

⁹⁸ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 41.

⁹⁹ We do not spare much attention to this point in the case studies because all of our cases obviously have more than three members. Suffice to say, this is satisfied by any case we would examine since I am unaware of any union which has had less than 3 members for an extended period.

3. Does the group hold a definite goal that is not something that could reasonably be achieved within a year's time?¹⁰⁰
 - a. Is that goal something that can be had by all (e.g., change of regime, group enrichment, construction of a community) but cannot be had by only a few members (e.g., college degrees, personal riches, construction of a single home)?
4. Can one member's actions risk other members? We should see:
 - a. Actions or inactions of one member putting other at risk of violence or economic hardship (such as termination of employment).
 - b. Members have secret information about each other that, if revealed, could damage the other members' reputations or put them in harm's way.
 - c. Members taking part in a collective, risky acute activity (such as battle, strikes, protests against violent regimes, or rioting).
5. There is a clear inside and outside of the network indicated by a name and/or symbol for those in the network, resistance to outsiders entering without adopting key characteristic, or a clear definition for membership.
6. Members are committed to the trust network, as demonstrated through required activities. This is done primarily without compulsion or material reward.

With this list, we can easily determine if there are the kind of strong bonds we would expect from the sort of network of trust which consist of comradery. To get at what we need to know, we

¹⁰⁰ 1 year here is, I fully admit, not fully justified by Tilly. However, the number is selected because I want to exclude networks which are, in fact, short term coalitions, designed only to survive an oncoming storm or winning an upcoming election, as these are not the sort of goals which Tilly describes trust networks having and would not fulfill the function which the long-term goals serve in unifying the members.

only need to further specify how a trust network satisfies these requirements with our criteria for comradeship in mind.

For a trust network to be a comrade trust network, we need to add some more specific requirements. We should first add (1) a class requirement as we are discussing a working-class bond. In addition, whereas some of the trust networks Tilly examines have genealogical, religious, or other identity-based requirements, (2) a comrade need only be a worker. Pertaining to the idea of aid to all members, we should see solidarity not only as a core value, we should also see that it is a qualifier. (3) Those who fail to demonstrate sufficient solidarity are expelled by their fellow comrades. (4) The definite goal of a comrade network should be the ascendancy of one class over another (i.e., revolution). We should not only see members using a name for each other exclusive to their movement, but since we are looking for an egalitarian network, (5) comrades should primarily use this title for all members regardless of their rank, seniority, or any other factor. Touching on several points of trust networks, we should see comrades display discipline in action, especially acute, risky action. (6) We should see discipline not only practiced, but explicitly valued by the organization. Last, we should see (7) the commitment to the network demonstrated through shared work requirements or expectations that are set and met by members. Spelled out again, here is a list of traits we should find in a comrade network of trust:

1. A trust network in which all members are of the toiling class.
2. A trust network in which members may be of any race, nationality, sex, creed, or ability while still being equal to all other members of the network.
 - a. This necessitates that membership cannot be restricted based on any character other than class.

- b. This also necessitates that the organization should make some significant efforts to embrace members who speak other languages or otherwise require special attention to be included, to get them equally involved in the network.
3. A trust network in which members can be expelled for breaches of solidarity.
4. A trust network in which the long-term goal is the ascendancy of one class over another (i.e., revolution).
5. A trust network in which the shared name is the same for all members, regardless of rank in the organization, seniority, or other factors.¹⁰¹
6. A trust network in which discipline of action is emphasized as a major feature of the network's members and practiced by members.
 - a. This should be found in the rules or code of conduct.
 - b. We should also see members demonstrating this discipline in the face of acute risk, such as risk of assault, capture, or murder.
7. A trust network in which membership requires shared work as their particular expression of commitment to the trust network.

Determining these features were tasks of differing difficulties. Making sure all members are working-class or otherwise worker-focused was a mere matter of examining the rules of the organization and insuring there were no anomalies in the execution of membership restrictions.¹⁰² The long-term goal of class ascendancy I again verify through mentions in key

¹⁰¹ This excludes limited use of titles based on elected or democratically-appointed positions in official context (such as a convection or a petition of members to a particular officer) as this would exclude organizations which simply need to address certain forms of communications for practical purposes. This would also exclude limited use of education based titles such as doctor, as long as it is not used as a primary form of address (e.g., introducing a member as "Dr. John Smith" would be acceptable, but not if the only way he was referred to in the following article was "Dr. Smith." However, these exceptions would be invalidated if the position is based only on seniority or an inherited positions as this is not capturing the kind of equality which comradery demands.

¹⁰² We mean class in the classical Marxist sense, which is to say relations to the means of production.

documents.¹⁰³ Expulsion is a matter of mere demonstration that such laws existed for enforcing solidarity, although we would also hope to see some indication that the rule was mobilized.

It is equal-inclusive membership, shared work, and discipline, which required more work to determine. Many institutions and organizations claim to have equality of membership. Ideally, I wanted to see evidence that the organization not only claimed to practice this, but that the organization followed through on this claim by taking pains to include members and prevent discrimination. Similarly, for shared work, I wanted to know more about the day-to-day expectations of the membership, accounts of members staying committed to shared work, and some information on how members expected each other to participate in the union's business. I also clarified what is meant by work. Is showing up to meetings enough? Not for our purposes. Members expect each other to attend meetings in most organizations. This rarely requires more work than presenting oneself. However, if I found at meetings that members expected each other to debate with or give reports to the other members, I would classify this as shared work, as they are contributing actively to the organization, instead of more passive attendance.

Discipline was perhaps the most difficult to determine, as I needed to see both the kind of “check-mark” certification in that I wanted to see mentions of discipline, but also that it was a key value practiced by members. I wanted to see mentions of discipline from the leadership and the membership. Moreover, I wanted to see tasks completed on time and without complaint. If I saw tasks (especially relatively low-effort tasks) neglected, I could safely say that the organization lacked discipline.

¹⁰³ although again, we will work to verify this through repetition and shows of commitment to the ideas.

With these traits in mind, I had to develop a method for determining these traits. While in the early stages, I used the same clues Tilly cites in his cases to determine if a union was likely to have a comrade network (histories and limited first-hand accounts). This did not give me all the proof I wanted in determining the presence and *quality* of the bond. This makes sense, as Tilly's cases are limited to less than ten pages and are of an organization over several years or decades. However, I see this as expanding off the principle he establishes in his case studies¹⁰⁴ and adding an element of more critical analysis of material written by members of the organizations and direct observers to further ensure accuracy.¹⁰⁵

3.4 Coding for Comradery

Using the criteria I have outlined above, I developed a method for spotting the presence of comradery from archival sources. To get at many of the features, I had to get to know the networks I chose quite intimately. I worked out a method of detecting if the networks had equal-inclusive membership, whether members had an expectation of aid (what I call solidarity), the expectation of shared work, and the centrality of discipline to the network. Given my requirements, coding was the obvious choice of methodology.

To begin, coding encourages adaptive methods, which allowed me to better get inside these organizations through the printed material they produced. In this I mean, I wanted to view the material at once as a researcher, but also as a participant might have viewed it. Thus, I employed *in vivo* coding techniques. I knew what information I needed, but to get it, I had to live with the documents that potentially had the evidence I needed and worked with them towards

¹⁰⁴ Especially the case of pirates used in chapter 4 of *Trust and Rule*.

¹⁰⁵ Tilly, *Trust and Rule*, 79–99.

finding answers on these features. *In vivo* coding is free form, with the most useful metric for coding a given piece of text being “when something appears to stand out, apply it as a code.”¹⁰⁶

While I had some general themes in mind, since I had already worked out my theory, during first cycle coding I kept an open mind. I highlighted everything that seemed particularly indicative of major themes within the texts itself or otherwise seemed important even if I knew at the moment of coding it was unlikely to fall within any of the major themes I was looking to code.¹⁰⁷

However, this was only the first cycle of coding, which prepared me for further and deeper analysis. I passed from the first cycle of coding into theoretical (or selective) coding. Theoretical coding began with elaborating the concepts I was trying to get at through my analysis.¹⁰⁸ These formed our core categories.¹⁰⁹ For our study, the core categories were class, discipline, shared address, shared work, requirements of solidarity, equal-inclusive membership,¹¹⁰ and a shared vision (particularly the nature of this shared vision). Where in the first cycle, I was attempting to “feel” out the organizations, in this second cycle I went back to our theoretical basis and related what I had found to the categories.

¹⁰⁶ Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Fourth edition (SAGE Publications Ltd, 2021), 93.

¹⁰⁷ I used the Atlas.Ti software for this process, which proved immensely helpful. Atlas.Ti has an in-system option for *in vivo* coding that allowed me to highlight a passage and immediately generate it as code. Sometimes, if the coded passage was too large to be a code, I would highlight the whole passage and then edit down the *in vivo* code. Codes that had an obviously applicable theme were immediately assigned to categories (folders) of code. For example, I immediately assigned the code (that became) “comrade/fellow worker” to the category of “shared form of address” as that was the most obvious application of this code. However, for the majority of codes I waited until the end of the first cycle to assign them to a category. Atlas.Ti also allowed me to code on mass as well, even in the first cycle. With the example above of code “comrade/fellow worker,” I was able to use the Regular Expression Search to find all the cases in several of the documents at a time. It produces a list of instances with the surrounding context, allowing me to ensure that all the code applied. This proved immensely helpful in the second cycle of coding to ensure I had not missed any clearly indicated instances of codes.

For coded segments of text that did not fit into the major themes, I had a miscellaneous category for codes I thought interest enough to preserve. This does not appear in the code book.

¹⁰⁸ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 223.

¹⁰⁹ Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 223.

¹¹⁰ I am including in this a category for universalism which is instances equal membership with the addition of some understanding of comrades as not being particularist, embodying that (per Dean) “everyone, but not everyone, can be a comrade.”

The *in vivo* coding cycle produced a surplus of codes. Besides a large number of codes, I also gathered a large amount of coded passages using the existing *in vivo* coding (where I identified passages that were paraphrasing or totally repeating already coded material). For theoretical coding I took the *in vivo* code produced, merged similar codes, and categorized all code under the umbrellas I discussed above that related directly to my theoretical framework. At the end of the second coding cycle, I consolidated any code that was too similar to be separated for the purpose of my analysis. I then refined the coding process further by starting at the beginning again. Now with set codes, I went back through the material to make sure I had missed nothing.¹¹¹

As I was working in this manner, I developed a codebook (see Appendix A). This codebook features the codes, ordered by how they relate to the key concepts we are attempting to observe, with brief “analytical memos” which describe how I deployed the code. These analytical memos are short, but clear and have explicit metrics by which I included or excluded passages from the code. For example, one of the more prominent codes deployed in the coding process was “Continue on our road,” which I developed in the first cycle from the IWW’s *One Big Union Monthly*. In the second cycle, I tied it directly to discipline. The analytical memo describes why:

This code indicates a passage in which perseverance is present, but particularly, perseverance on a specific path, agreed upon together, for victory. For example, striking despite police brutalization would be the ideal example of this code. This code does not cover passages that are simply discussing continuing to a shared goal (such as saying “we will win”/ “the revolution will come,” which would be covered by various codes under shared vision).

¹¹¹ In course of this project I ended up doing this twice, since I had to go back to add the universalist category as separate from the equal membership after coming to understand it as important enough to remark upon in particular. In the process of going back through, I used *in vivo* coding somewhat unorthodoxly as a matter of necessity. I had the category in mind, specific requirements for what would qualify and then went out to find how the organizations talked about these concepts.

Each code has a similar entry included in the codebook.

2.5 Overall Comparison

The full case reports that follow are the full results of completing the methodology outlined in this chapter. However, for the ease of comparison and to orient the reader to what follows, I am including here two tables summarizing the qualitative and quantitative comparisons which will be discussed in detail below.

Table 1 Qualitative Comparison Summary

	IU 1100 (IWW)	HERE
Class	Organization was for and of the working-class, exclusively.	Organization was for and of the working-class, exclusively.
Equality	All members regardless of race, creed, color, language, sex, citizenship status, or nation of origin were equal to each other in every respect after a set period of membership.	Members had to be legal citizens of the US. Evidence of rampant racism and at least passive sexism. Members were formally equal, but practically there was a level of inequality present.
Universalism	Believed that they are representatives of the whole of humanity, and thus have a duty and interested in organizing workers of all backgrounds and trades towards making an universal democratic order.	Some press given to the idea of a “brotherhood of man” but very limited, and not expressed by leadership.
Shared Address	Fellow Worker/Comrade (used almost ubiquitously for members of movement)	Brother/sister (used almost ubiquitously for members of the union)
Shared Work	Members were expected to be working constantly for the union together with the other members.	Besides paying dues, and attending some meetings, no shared work was expected of members.
Expulsion for Breaches of Solidarity	Evidence of rules for expelling members who breach solidarity.	No direct evidence of expulsion for solidarity or rule in place for such event.
Long Term Goal	Members had a commonly held belief and hope of a socialist revolution in the near future.	Members did not have a clear long term goal, and long-term goals put forward by the union leadership were not revolutionary.
Discipline	Members were disciplined, took careful considerate action, and generally avoided spontaneity of action.	Members and officers had to be threatened and constantly prodded for basic functions to be carried out.
Overall	The IWW’s IU 1100 had a clear idea of what it wanted, members appear to have shared work together as equal partners in service of the long term goal and stood side by side despite overwhelming odds for a universal emancipation of all humankind.	HERE lacked any direction that all members shared. The union struggled to complete tasks, and generally did not value equality of members and showed little interest in maintaining a collective spirit of the organization or striving for anything other than the particular (immediate) interests of members.

Table 2 Quantitative Comparison Summary

	Membership Change 1918-1920	Resources Per Member¹¹²	Resource/Member Adjusted for Inflation¹¹³
IU 1100 (IWW)	+ 497.6%	\$0.26 ¹¹⁴	\$5.18
HERE	-18.8%	\$1.27	\$25.33

2.6 Summary of Methodology

This project is a comparative case study designed to test and adjust the theory of the comrade trust network, particularly as it relates to its potential as a path to membership retention during periods of political repression. Using two cases that share important similarities but vastly different outcomes, I pose that the most important difference between these two unions is a comrade network in one and its absence in the other. We used Tilly to help us find more definitive activities we should see if people hold the relationship, which comradeship is and which we can see from our position as outside observers. To confirm these traits, I employed coding methods. I used a two-cycle coding style to first get an idea of the organizations' language and then applied the way they discussed themselves back to the predetermined themes established through our theory. The remainder of the study is the product of this methodology. It comprises two separate individual case reports for both unions and a comparative case report. In the last (cross-case) report, I demonstrate that cases verify my theory in that the comrade union (IU 1100) retained and grew membership, while the non-comrade union (HERE) lost members.

¹¹² For IU 1000 this is for March 1919, for HERE it is for February 1919.

¹¹³ As of July 2025.

¹¹⁴ Used estimated overall membership of the IWW as this was all that was possible to collect.

Chapter III: Historical Background

Every theory and every attempt to understand a person, event, or aspect of human interaction should build on the firm foundation of history. While this project is not a history, to understand the unions that we are putting "under the microscope," we must know something of the whole organism from which we have "scraped" our sample. War, slavery, race, and the conquest of the western frontier dictated the labor movement in the United States in the twentieth century. While I cannot hope to fully expound upon every feature of the labor movement in the few pages I can devote to this background, I attempt here to orient the reader for our case studies. I begin with a broad overview of the labor movement and then narrow my focus to the organizations I examine in the case studies. In this section, I also devote a few pages to a broader historical analysis of the period that I believe is essential background to understanding key aspects of the cases. Overall, this section is the preconditions for the case studies and is essential to understanding the case reports that follow them.

3.1 The Labor Movement: 1886-1900

While there had been organizing efforts in North America since the Colonial period, the labor movement in the US only found its footing with the rise of the Knights of Labor (founded 1869). By 1877, the Knights of Labor dominated the labor movement, growing even further after increased organizing efforts after 1881.¹¹⁵ For much of this period, the main objective of the labor movement was to institute an 8-hour workday across the country.¹¹⁶ This struggle, initiated

¹¹⁵ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement In The United States Volume I From Colonial Times To The Founding Of The American Federation Of Labor* (International Publishers, 1947), 1:464, 504–12.

¹¹⁶ David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925*, Reprint, 1999 edition (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 192–95.

by various socialists and supported by the rank-and-file Knights, came to a head in May 1886 when protesters in favor of the 8-hour day gathered in Haymarket Square in Chicago, Illinois.¹¹⁷ Police surrounded the peaceful gathering, and a bomb (of uncertain origin) exploded, causing the police to fire wildly into the crowd.¹¹⁸ After a show trial, officials hanged four of the leaders of the demonstration, and repression of labor became even more intense.¹¹⁹ While the leader of the Knights, Terence V. Powderly, denounced the Haymarket leaders and attempted to distance himself from them to avoid the government crackdown that followed, this did little more than alienate a substantial portion of the Knights' membership who supported the socialists.¹²⁰ This only furthered the ever-increasing gap in ideology between the leaders of the Knights and the working-class members.¹²¹ Between this, increased repression from business owners in the wake of the Haymarket Affair, and competition for members with other unions, the Knights lost 600,000 members in the four years following their peak of membership in 1886.¹²²

As the Knights declined, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) rose. A congress of various national and local unions founded in December 1886 under the leadership of cigar-maker union organizer Samuel Gompers, the AFL entered the scene during a period of intense labor struggle.¹²³ The Homestead Steel Strike (1892) starkly exemplified this intensity. The strike, which quickly turned into the "Battle of Fort Frick" (so named for the steel plant's ruthless operator, Henry Clay Frick), saw union members fight off a private army and only disperse when

¹¹⁷ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement In The United States: Volume II: From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism* (International Publishers, 1955), 2:105–7.

¹¹⁸ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:108–10.

¹¹⁹ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:106–10; Paul Le Blanc, ed., *Work and Struggle: Voices from U.S. Labor Radicalism*, 1st edition (Routledge, 2011), 36–37.

¹²⁰ Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 194–95.

¹²¹ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:158.; Which must be specified as the Knights allowed non-working-class members.

¹²² Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:159.

¹²³ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:171–74.

the state called in the militia.¹²⁴ Events such as this, as well as the ever ongoing and often violent class struggle, was a result of a changing industrial organization of a recently renewed capitalist system.

During the period from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the twentieth century, the nature of work and the workers had changed significantly. Industry increased significantly overall in terms of total industrial workers and the number of workers at any business. For example, in the 1860s the average iron or steel plant employed 65 workers; by the turn of the century plants employed an average of 333 workers.¹²⁵ Women entered the industrial workforce on an unprecedented scale, making up a quarter of the workforce by 1900.¹²⁶ Due to the growth of industry in the US and slumps in the European economy, more and more of the workforce was increasingly made up of foreign-born workers, constituting nearly 15% of the population by 1890.¹²⁷ Overall, the number of workers in manufacturing jumped from 2.7 million in 1870 to 4.5 million in 1900.¹²⁸

Despite the many changes in industry and the workforce, the one issue that dominated the labor movement by 1900 was the same that had dominated since at least the end of the Civil War: the issue of race. The blood of the Union soldiers, both black and white, had ended the chattel slavery of the Southern states in 1865, but the newly freedmen needed to toil to sustain themselves. Despite the combination of share-cropping and slavery via prison labor, many freedmen made their way into industry. White workers in both the North and South gave their

¹²⁴ Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 37–44.

¹²⁵ James R. Green, *The World of the Worker: Labor in Twentieth-Century America* (University of Illinois Press, 1998), 10.

¹²⁶ Green, *The World of the Worker*, 4.; this of course only accounts for waged-labor, not domestic and reproductive labor which was a near universal expectation of women, regardless of employment status.

¹²⁷ Kim Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century* (Cornell University Press, 1994), 50.

¹²⁸ Green, *The World of the Worker*, 4.

fellow workers no warm welcome into the world of the industrial working class. While the Knights of Labor's national organization had a relatively progressive policy toward integration, with Terrance V. Powderly in particular standing firm to the idea that their slogan of "an injury to one is the concern of all" applied to workers of any race, many of their locals and most other unions did not share this sentiment.¹²⁹ The biggest concerns with integrating labor, beyond outright racist ideologies among the workers themselves, were that focusing on race would cause unions to lose focus on the primary objective of workers' rights and the fear of upsetting more conservative whites of all classes which could otherwise be sympathetic to the cause of organized labor. Adding to this, southern white workers and even some northern unionized workers made an uneasy alliance with the pro-segregation, anti-black Democratic Party, which only worsened labor's position on race.

More than black and white divides, unions in the US were outspokenly anti-immigration. Gompers himself was an outspoken advocate for the Chinese Exclusion Act before forming the AFL, despite the fact that he was foreign-born.¹³⁰ The AFL leadership also had little sympathy for the non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants who began entering the country increasingly since the early 1880s. AFL leadership depicted these immigrants as natural strikebreakers and without the characteristics needed to be of benefit to the labor movement. It took steps not only to continue the principles of the Chinese Exclusion Act but to extend its basic premise to immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe.¹³¹ The AFL imposed harsh conditions on immigrants who wished

¹²⁹ Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis, eds., *The Black Worker, Volume 3: The Black Worker During the Era of the Knights of Labor* (Temple University Press, 1978), 3:242; Voss, *The Making of American Exceptionalism*, 81.

¹³⁰ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:204–5.

¹³¹ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:362.

to join their affiliated unions, including higher initiation fees than US-born workers and requiring preexisting union membership in their former country.¹³²

Despite the regressive attitude the AFL showed toward foreign-born workers, the AFL took some stands against segregated unions in the early 1890s by refusing to admit unions with constitutional color bars.¹³³ Sadly, it proved to be empty words. By 1897, prominent civil rights leader Booker T. Washington had to petition the AFL to open unions to black members, as the AFL participated in "Jim Crow Unionism."¹³⁴ By 1899, the AFL was openly admitting unions with color bars in their constitutions despite their earlier refusal to do so.¹³⁵ It would require new and much more radical unions to deal decisively with the color barrier in US unionism and, more crucially, the intervention of more radical labor activists.

3.2 The Rise of Radical Labor

One of the most crucial events of this period of US labor history proved to be the Pullman Strike of 1894. The failed strike against the Pullman Company organized around the local branch of the American Railway Union (ARU) in the Chicago area would prove decisive not because of the tactical or material advantage gained by the labor movement but because it proved a training ground for some of labor's future leaders and a source of further agitation for workers' rights. The strike began in May 1894, but the Pullman company refused to negotiate, causing the leader of the American Railway Union (ARU) Eugene V. Debs to call for a boycott that spread far beyond Debs' original hopes, effectively shutting down the rail lines out of Chicago by the end of June

¹³² Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:364.

¹³³ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:195.

¹³⁴ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:248.

¹³⁵ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:348–49.

1894.¹³⁶ The strike, which was referred to as the "Debs Rebellion" in the newspapers, eventually attracted federal government intervention, using federal troops to place the city of Chicago under martial law to support capital.¹³⁷ They arrested Debs and other leaders soon after. These events galvanized the labor movement.

While the AFL leadership seemed to believe the result of the strike justified their more conservative attitudes towards strikes, many rank-and-file members and unorganized workers saw the governments' intervention against them as a clear sign they needed stronger organization and state power to win their rights. One of these workers was Debs himself. After reading Marxist literature in jail, Debs became a committed socialist and began his journey to be one of the most influential voices of radical labor in the history of the US.¹³⁸ After his time in prison, Debs founded a series of short-lived groups before he finally founded the more permanent Socialist Party of America (SPA) in 1901, which quickly became the political arm of radical labor.¹³⁹

Debs was hardly the first socialist, or for that matter, Marxist involved in the labor movement. At the same time Debs was emerging from prison, Daniel De Leon, a Curaçaoan-American scholar, Socialist Labor Party (SLP) leader, and union organizer, was actively moving workers away from the AFL and the nearly extinct Knights of Labor into his Socialist Trades and Labor Alliance (STLA), which he founded in 1895 or encouraging "boring from within" the AFL to make it more radical. De Leon was a controversial figure even among his own party and

¹³⁶ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:262–64.

¹³⁷ Philip S. Foner, *The Labor Movement in the United States Vol. II*, 2:261–71.

¹³⁸ See William Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States* (New York, 1952), 82–84.; Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of the IWW and Syndicalism in the United States*, Revised edition (Ivan R. Dee, 1999), 53.

¹³⁹ Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 58–60; Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, 94–95. Morris Hillquit, the leader of the breakaway faction, was afterwards referred to by De Leon as "Mr. Hillquit" as opposed to the address of comrade which he used for other SPA members. See Renshaw 58-60.

family, both of which thought him to be a kind "Pope" of socialism at the head of a self-proclaimed "'tyranny' of truth," names he lived up to when he expelled his own son from the SLP over differing interpretations of the Marxist theory of value. While this kind of conviction would posthumously earn him the admiration of V.I. Lenin, it made Debs' widely acknowledged kindness and general aversion to internal divisions a much-needed influence on the left-wing of the labor movement.¹⁴⁰ Despite his less than inviting temperament, DeLeon's theoretical contribution to radical labor in the US was massive. From his pen flew some of the most important words in the history of socialism in the US, including (as we will see in a moment) the Preamble to the IWW's constitution (which remains untouched in that place to this day).

3.3 The Labor Movement in the US: 1900-1917

The AFL experienced a steadily increasing membership despite its poor response to the Pullman Strike (1894) because the business unionism of the AFL had borne some "bread and butter" fruit for unionized workers. In the latter half of the 1890s, most large businesses were willing to come to the table with the conservative AFL leaders to avoid the chaos that the Pullman Strike caused.¹⁴¹ However, the first of many Open-Shop drives broke the peace with an open war on one of the most essential practices of unions: closed shops (i.e., workplaces in which only card-carrying union members can work). This effort, and other similar efforts, took a great toll on the power of labor in the US and nearly destroyed one of (if not) the most effective strategies unions could employ to secure their previously won working conditions.

¹⁴⁰ Foster, *History of the CPUSA*, 82–84.

¹⁴¹ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement Of The United States Volume III: The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor 1900-1909* (International Publishers, 1964), 3:28–31.

Despite this, the AFL did not abandon its "bread and butter" approach despite the clear contempt the vast majority of the capitalist industrialists showed for its very existence. This, combined with the rise of more radical unions at this same time, led AFL membership to go on the decline after peaking in 1904 (at 1,676,200 members).¹⁴² Despite these challenges to its basic "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" ethos, the AFL's business unionism gained more of a foothold in the labor movement. Gompers and other business union labor leaders could argue that their position as negotiators with capitalists justified lavish salaries and (in the most extreme cases) open corruption so that they might appear acceptable to their capitalist negotiation partners.¹⁴³

The changes to industry occurring around the turn of the century made the task of organizing workers quite different than it had been before the turn of the century. The rise of Taylorist scientific management of the industrial process, in part through extremely granular management of the workers' movements in their work, from the late 1880s through the First World War was changing work from simply a grueling experience into a deeply mechanical, invasive, and dehumanizing affair.¹⁴⁴ The growth and changes to the character of production were destroying the lines between skilled and unskilled workers as well as differing crafts.¹⁴⁵ The craft union-based labor movement in the US led by the AFL, which argued that capitalists and workers ultimately had the same interest, seemed more and more like a fever dream, even when compared to the most radical visions of the socialists.

¹⁴² Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States III*, 3:32.

¹⁴³ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States III*, 3:150–52.

¹⁴⁴ Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor*, 245–49.

¹⁴⁵ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States III*, 3:181.

The issues of race and gender, which had been a fundamental struggle within the labor movement, were further drawn to the surface in this period. The first significant change was the mass exodus of people of color from the Southern states to escape the horrors of open White Supremacy. This "Great Migration" picked up when European migration came to a standstill with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, allowing people of color to take the jobs that would have otherwise gone to "white" immigrants.¹⁴⁶ The fight for women's right to vote intensified as western states granted the right to vote, the pro-suffrage Women's Christian Temperance Union gained prominence, and it seemed likely that women might be eligible to vote in every state within a lifetime.

While the AFL had thrown its support behind women's rights to vote, they had done painfully little to bring women into the labor movement and even less to bring workers of color an ounce of relief. It took a group of women's labor advocates founding the Women's Trade Union League in 1903, whose chief purpose was to organize women into AFL unions, to begin the slow process of making unions open to men and women.¹⁴⁷ The League proved to be one of the most progressive sections of the non-socialist labor movement in the years to come, playing a crucial role in the decisive Shirtwaist Strike in 1909, which saw a union of primarily immigrant women-workers force the Triangle Shirtwaist Company to negotiate.¹⁴⁸

While women got some attention from the forces of labor, workers of color received even less from the AFL. Gompers allowed unions in the Deep South to dictate the AFL's policy on

¹⁴⁶ Racial lines were far different at this time than in the present. I use "white" in quotes to indicate that these workers would be considered white today, but not all of them were considered as such at the time.

¹⁴⁷ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States III*, 3:228–29.

¹⁴⁸ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States Volume V: The AFL in the Progressive Era, 1910-1915* (International Publishers, 1980), 5:226–40.; This was before the tragic (and entirely preventable) Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in 1911. However, the two events are connected as one of the primary reasons the doors were locked from the outside, preventing the workers escaping the flames, was to prevent further unionization efforts in part as a response to this victory.

race when he bowed to the Alabama Federation of Labor protests to the appointment of black organizers in the South.¹⁴⁹ At the same time, the use of black workers to break strikes by white industrialists seemed to justify the AFL's line that it was the fault of workers of color that they were underrepresented in organized labor, although the bulk of black strikebreakers were, in fact, living in near-slavery conditions in the South and therefore had little to no idea what they were being brought to the North to do and upon being informed would generally refuse to participate in strikebreaking.¹⁵⁰ Neither women nor workers of color benefited from the work of the AFL business unionism, and the AFL's dominance in organized labor in this period accelerated their exclusion from the labor movement as a whole. It would take a much more radical movement to address these issues and push the labor movement to be a more egalitarian force.

3.4 The Rise of the Wobblies: 1905-1919

The most consequential outpouring of US socialist organizing in the US from 1894 and arguably to the present, and crucial to our inquiry here, is the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905, when some workers' general dissatisfaction with the craft union model, drove them to industrial unionism.¹⁵¹ In order to move the country towards socialism, the major socialist leaders in the US combined with the radical workers of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) who wished to be "the vanguard of any army that will lead [the workers] to industrial liberty"¹⁵² These groups, representatives of other unions interested but not committed

¹⁴⁹ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States V*, 5:235.

¹⁵⁰ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States V*, 5:242–43.

¹⁵¹ Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 1st ed. (International Publishers, 1965), 4:13.

¹⁵² Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:25.; A note on socialism in the US at this time: While US-Marxism was still emerging, the working class movement was slower to adopt a firm line between Marxism and Anarchism that was a result of the split of the

to the new model of unionism, and various labor advocates from across North America met in Chicago in 1905 to build the most radical union the nation had ever seen.

The meeting was called to order by the WFM's "Big Bill" Haywood on June 27th, 1905, in Brand's Hall, Chicago, with the words "Fellow Workers."¹⁵³ Debs, speaking on the third day of the convention, spoke to the founding principle of this new union, comradeship:

Now, let me say in closing, comrades [...] We are in precisely the same position; we depend absolutely upon each other. We must get close together and stand shoulder to shoulder. (Applause). We know that without solidarity, nothing is possible, that with it nothing is impossible.¹⁵⁴

Directly after him, the SLP's DeLeon echoed Debs' sentiment, despite the many differences between them, calling for "the necessity of united work" on the road to the overthrow of capitalism.¹⁵⁵ Further, "Big Bill" Haywood took great pains to clarify that the IWW was a union for workers regardless of race, sex, or nationality:

[I]t does not make a bit of difference whether he is a negro or a white man. (Applause). (A voice [from the crowd]: - "As long as he is a union man"). It does not make any difference whether he is an American or a foreigner. (Applause). [...] The organization that has been launched in your city recognizes neither race, creed, color, sex, or previous condition of servitude. [...] We propose that this industrial movement shall provide, for every man and woman that works, a decent livelihood. Is that something worth working for?¹⁵⁶

The IWW was to be a union for all the working class, not just in the US; but the entire world.

First International. Many Marxists, including De Leon, who was otherwise a Marxist of a most orthodox, anti-revisionist nature, could take inspiration from anarcho-syndicalism for his theory, which combined the simultaneous uprising of unionized workers as the key event of the revolution of syndicalism with a capture of state power (although he imagined this taking place at the ballot box, rather than the streets as would other Marxists). However, the SPA and SLA were, by 1905, definitively Marxist organizations, and those who leaned more towards anarchism, such as the founding mother of anarcho-feminism Emma Goldman, generally did not maintain membership in either parties.

¹⁵³ Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings* (Merit Publishers, 1969), 1.

¹⁵⁴ Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings*, 146.

¹⁵⁵ Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings*, 151.

¹⁵⁶ Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings*, 575.

The IWW promoted the idea of Industrial Democracy. This was a particular vision of socialism that had a massive impact on the legacy of US socialist movements. In their manifesto, the IWW stated that Industrial Democracy would be a society “wherein there shall be no wage slavery, but where workers will own the tools which they operate, and the product of which they alone will enjoy.”¹⁵⁷ The IWW imagined this society as being governed by a congress of workers and modeled itself in such a way that it could take over this role once the workers had overthrown capitalism. In this, the IWW built itself as a miniature of a future workers' republic in which all workers were equal, regardless of trade.

In the fight for this future, the IWW was to teach workers perfect solidarity. Their motto was: "An injury to one is an injury to all."¹⁵⁸ They specifically framed this as an advancement to the Knights' “An injury to one is the concern of all.” The IWW held that this was to be the new guiding principle carried from their industrial unionism to the Industrial Democracy of the post-capitalist world.

Despite the talk of unity, the first three years of the organization's life featured splits on ideological lines and responses to the trial of "Big Bill" Haywood on the charge of the

¹⁵⁷ Industrial Workers of the World, *The Founding Convention of the IWW: Proceedings*, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:37.; They overwhelmingly lived up to these principles, as is perhaps best represented by the diversity of their prominent organizers who emerged from the ranks following the organization's founding. Ben Fletcher, a black Philadelphia native, stood out as the most crucial organizer of the IWW's Marine Transport Workers across the Eastern Seaboard.¹⁵⁸ In this effort, he organized "Local 8" in 1913 in his hometown, which quickly became one of the most powerful and radical locals in the union, being able to enforce an arms embargo on the Allies during their intervention in the Russian Civil War. Women organizers also played a significant role in the life of the IWW. Perhaps the most famous IWW organizer was Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the subject of IWW's ballad-singer Joe Hill's "Rebel Girl," who was only a teenager when she began her career as an organizer.¹⁵⁸ She was a remarkable symbol of working-class perseverance. By the age of twenty (20), she had endured prison while pregnant and national attention as an agitator.¹⁵⁸ Yet, she refused to give up on her class, remaining very active in the socialist movement (with the IWW and later the Communist Party of the US) until her death in 1964. Fletcher and Flynn are two of a multitude of diverse organizers and members who held the IWW to the idea that their movement was truly for all workers.

assassination of the former governor of Idaho (a crime for which officials poorly framed him) in early 1906. While this trial drained the coffers of the young organization, it gave national attention to the IWW, with Haywood taking full advantage of press coverage in the courtroom to spread the socialist message of the IWW (a tactic the IWW was to deploy several more times).¹⁵⁹ This extended period of fighting over the fallout around this and several other faction fights ended by 1909, when the IWW dropped its official party affiliation, showed the contentious DeLeon the door, and began focusing on direct action.

As this reconfiguration was taking place, the IWW was engaged in an extended struggle over the right to spread its socialist messaging openly.¹⁶⁰ While this fight saw many IWW members jailed, it worked to excite much support from the working class broadly. The IWW began organizing workers in the virtually ununionized lumber and construction industries.¹⁶¹ The lumber industry proved to be the backbone of support for the IWW, making the Pacific-Northwest a stronghold for them for most of its history. Their lumber organizing efforts also brought the IWW into direct confrontation with the appalling conditions that workers of color suffered in the South.¹⁶²

These efforts yielded results. In 1912, dues-paying "Wobblies" (as IWW members began to call themselves at this time)¹⁶³ amounted to 25,000. However, even larger than their

¹⁵⁹ Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 96–100; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:55–59.

¹⁶⁰ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:172–213.

¹⁶¹ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:214–32.

¹⁶² Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:233–35.

¹⁶³ The origin of the name Wobbly is not known, but is traditionally attributed to a Chinese-American supporter who pronounced the initials “Eye Wobbly Wobbly,” to the delight of the Wobblies he was helping. Regardless of the truth of this story, the term first appeared in print in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1911. See Renshaw’s *Wobblies*, 21-22.

membership numbers was their influence among the working-class in the US, which was difficult to overstate.¹⁶⁴ The fear the Wobblies inspired both in the government and in the more conservative AFL was the greatest evidence of this. The AFL and the government, with the help of the mainstream press, spent an inordinate amount of time railing against and attempting to restrict the activities of the Wobblies. The organization also inspired the creation of several IWW branches in other English-speaking countries, including the UK, Australia, and South Africa.¹⁶⁵

It would be other foreign events that would initiate the near-destruction of the IWW. The US entry into the First World War in April 1917, which the IWW vocally opposed, closed the ranks between capital and the government.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the alliance of the AFL and Woodrow Wilson's Democratic Party, which had begun several years earlier with Gompers' endorsement of Wilson, brought labor into lockstep with America's war efforts.¹⁶⁷ Gompers' unofficial pledge that his labor unions would not go on strike during the war frustrated the AFL's membership, but made the IWW one of the few labor organizations in the country with a free hand to organize and agitate during the war.¹⁶⁸ This earned them the ire of many who considered their actions to be some combination of unpatriotic and anti-racist.

The war gave the government the pretext it needed to crack down on many socialist and anti-racist groups, including the IWW. Enacted on the faulty premise of quelling German

¹⁶⁴ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:147; Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States III*, 3:32.

¹⁶⁵ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:126n, 556.

¹⁶⁶ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:555–57.

¹⁶⁷ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement In The United States Volume VI: On the Eve of America's Entrance into World War I, 1915-1916* (International Publishers, 1982), 222–31.

¹⁶⁸ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement In The United States Volume VII: Labor and World War I, 1914-1918* (International Publishers, 1987), 7:162–66.; It is worth noting that several AFL affiliated locals disregarded the unofficial pledge.

sabotage efforts, the Espionage Act (June 1917) gave the government all the legal rights it needed to repress any speech or organization that did not subscribe to the "100 Percent Americanism" which had swept the US in the wake of its entry to the war.¹⁶⁹ It was this act that gave the Department of Justice the authority to raid the IWW headquarters in September and arrest some one-hundred sixty-six leaders in the IWW that same month.

While the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia that same November (1917) caused much rejoicing among Wobblies, it made a socialist organization in many workplaces across the country more concerning for those who watched events in Russia with fear. Repression continued to intensify. In the most infamous case, the government used the Espionage act to arrest Debs in June 1918 for a speech that was interpreted as being opposed to the draft.

However, the government was not the only concern. Vigilante groups, inspired by the fever of patriotism, took up arms against the IWW, often with the aid of local law enforcement—such as with the "Tulsa Outrage" of November 1917, where a local sheriff handed over twelve members of the IWW to the "Knights of Liberty,"¹⁷⁰ who tarred and feathered them in Tulsa, Oklahoma.¹⁷¹ The problem only continued. In 1919, the American Legion¹⁷² attacked Wesley Everest alongside his fellow Wobblies in their union hall in Centralia, Washington.¹⁷³ For

¹⁶⁹ Philip S. Foner, *History Of The Labor Movement In The United States Volume VII: Labor and World War I, 1914-1918*, 7:296.

¹⁷⁰ A nationalist vigilante group which was essentially a mid-western Ku Klux Klan (KKK). They dressed in very similar robes (identical except for color), were primarily racially motivated, and they had a disputed relationship with the re-emerging KKK at the time. Not to be confused with the Knights of Liberty founded by Moses Dickson, which was an abolitionist group started by freed people of color as they could not have been more different.

¹⁷¹ Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:294–95.

¹⁷² A newly formed veterans' organization that was hyper-nationalist, but mainstream. It was respected by mainstream presses. See "The American Legion – Our National Ku Klux Klan," *The Messenger*, February 1920.

¹⁷³ Tom Copeland, "Wesley Everest, IWW Martyr," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (1986): 122–29.

defending himself, the American Legion hunted him down, had him arrested, before police handed him over to a lynch-mob, who beat and killed him in front of the jail.¹⁷⁴ The Centralia Massacre, as it became known, was notable not only because it was a more “respectable” group who committed the vigilante violence, but for Everest’s remarkable bravery and devotion to his comrades, whose lives he likely saved by returning fire on the legionnaires.¹⁷⁵ His last recorded words perfectly encapsulated the spirit of the Wobblies in the face of this repression: “Tell the boys I died for my class!”¹⁷⁶

3.5 September 1918- April 1920: Setting for Comradery

When the Armistice came in November 1918, it did not bring peace on the home front. The return of soldiers only intensified the violence surrounding labor issues. White soldiers, many of them working class, returned expecting to resume their jobs and lives as if the war were only a brief interruption. However, the need to fill industrial jobs (in both the North and South) had made space for black workers to fill jobs formerly done by white workers. White workers returned, fresh from the brutal conditions of the trenches, to find their jobs “taken”¹⁷⁷ by people they had been taught from birth (in many cases) were inferior. Pogroms¹⁷⁸, the typical “release

¹⁷⁴ Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 210.

¹⁷⁵ Sadly, most were later captured and served prison sentences for their, essentially, being attacked by the veterans organization’s members.

¹⁷⁶ Copeland, “Wesley Everest, IWW Martyr.”; it is possible this iconic quote was a later revision of the story, but some commentators have not doubted it as true. See Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 210–11.

¹⁷⁷ Read: given by capitalists to those they felt they could more easily or thoroughly exploit.

¹⁷⁸ The term pogrom is used here, despite its normal association with antisemitism in Europe (particularly Eastern Europe) because many civil rights advocates and political radicals in favor of racial equality used the term either interchangeably with the more commonly used term “race riot” or in its place. Further, as I have explored in (forthcoming) work on the Red Summer, these so-called “race riots” resembled pogroms, which are a clear sociological phenomena, as opposed to “race riots,” which acknowledges a false cause of the violence (race), whereas the cause of pogroms is (racial or religious) prejudice (not race itself) *and* incitement from authorities in response to political radicalism and uncertainty.

valve" of the most reactionary European regimes, soon followed. In the US, it began in the Deep South in April 1919, flaring up in the nation's capital in July, boiling over in Chicago that same month, and finding its most bloody days in Philips County, Arkansas, when white vigilantes murdered at least one hundred (100) black farmers who were attempting to unionize under the Progressive Farmers and Household Union.¹⁷⁹

While the nation tore itself apart in tides of violence, the President of the United States, Southern Democrat Woodrow Wilson, was far too focused on foreign policy to give any attention to the groans of his own nation. However, this did not prevent those in his administration from putting forward ambitious, if vague, plans for the Reconstruction of the nation. Wilson claimed his duty to Reconstruction was to “draw the executive minds of the country together so that they may profit by each other's suggestions and plans, and so that we may offer our services to coordinate their efforts.”¹⁸⁰ However, it appeared in reality that the key feature of the Wilsonian Reconstruction was to continue many of the wartime government programs of forced cooperation between the government, business, and labor.¹⁸¹ Many of the wartime agencies that had sprung up to mobilize the nation now saw being at the helm of Reconstruction efforts as their only reprieve from their obsolescence.¹⁸² A large number of outside organizations also saw themselves as potential leaders of Reconstruction. This left the concept of Reconstruction as umbrella term, being mobilized in vastly different directions, even by the Wilson administration to describe the transfer from the war economy to a peace economy.

¹⁷⁹ David F. Krugler, *1919, The Year of Racial Violence: How African Americans Fought Back*, Illustrated edition (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 177–80; Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011), 109–15.

¹⁸⁰ Woodrow Wilson, “Problems of Reconstruction,” in *War and Peace: Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924)*, by Woodrow Wilson, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William F. Dodd, vol. 1 (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927).

¹⁸¹ Kendrick A. Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson* (University Press of Kansas, 1992), 205–6.

¹⁸² Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, 206.

Although talking about Reconstruction in Central Europe, Wilson revealed his true aim when he wrote that Reconstruction was vital because: “Hunger does not breed reform; it breeds madness and all the ugly distempers that make an ordered life impossible.”¹⁸³ This “madness” and “ugly distempers” were undoubtedly a reference to the revolutionary socialists that were challenging power in Central Europe at that moment. While Wilson began speaking about Reconstruction (in this context) in March 1918, it proved to be little more than a fad that Wilson’s administration gave up as quickly as it had floated the idea.¹⁸⁴ Wilson’s brief interest in Reconstruction began to come to an end when Republicans in Congress, still conflicting with Wilson over his desire to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, wanted to take the lead on Reconstruction. Wilson balked at the idea, and it suffered a slow death of neglect by early 1920.¹⁸⁵

Beyond Wilson’s use of the term, Reconstruction failed to take place in any meaningful way because every sector of society had its own meaning for the term. It was one of the most important and most disputed concept of the period. For labor advocates, the focus was on the railroads, which the government had nationalized for the war effort, and which they wanted to continue being owned by the public. For the capitalists, this included shaking off the limited cooperation expected of them with the demands of labor for the sake of the war. By spring 1920, it was clear that the capitalists had won their demands for limited Reconstruction. Railroads returned to private hands. The economic shock caused by the sudden shift from wartime

¹⁸³ Woodrow Wilson, “End of the War,” in *War and Peace: Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924)*, by Woodrow Wilson, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William F. Dodd, vol. 1 (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927).

¹⁸⁴ “Every Party Must Try to Serve Humanity,” in *War and Peace: Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924)*, by Woodrow Wilson, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William F. Dodd, vol. 1 (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927).

¹⁸⁵ Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, 207.

production to a peacetime economy was shifted by capital to the working class. Wilson's last use of the term Reconstruction in this context appears to be in late May 1920 when he (or someone writing for him)¹⁸⁶ attempted to get striking coal workers back to work without a settlement by arguing that having a strike while "we are actively engaged in the problems of reconstruction would be a serious disaster."¹⁸⁷ After bringing out club of Reconstruction to use on a picket line one last time, Wilson appears to have put the idea to bed. The campaign of Republican Warren G. Harding to be Wilson's successor proved the final nail in the coffin of Reconstruction. Harding campaigned on a return to normalcy. "His goal," a historian recalls, "was to turn back the clock to simpler times."¹⁸⁸ He did just that, forever jettisoning the idea of Reconstruction from World War I in the US.

The most significant pieces of legislation in this period — those relating to Prohibition and Suffrage for women — had very little to do with the war, and nothing to do with Reconstruction. Indeed, Reconstruction was a brief flash in the pan compared to the longstanding fight of Prohibitionists and Suffragettes. When the dust of war settled, arguably the only thing that was really reconstructed was the Ku Klux Klan, which had risen from the grave with Wilson's approval, suckled on the nationalism the government had help to produce on a massive scale in an attempt to get citizens who were skeptical of foreign involvement into a war which was a little more than a hecatomb for empire.¹⁸⁹ It was in this situation that our cases emerged.

¹⁸⁶ Wilson had suffered a stroke in October 1919, and his wife, Elenor, did much of the work of president for him, including signing documents in his name.

¹⁸⁷ "Protest Against Anthracite Coal Strike," in *War and Peace: Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924)*, by Woodrow Wilson, ed. Ray Stannard Baker and William F. Dodd, vol. 1 (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1927).

¹⁸⁸ Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, 222.

¹⁸⁹ Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

3.6 HERE: 1891-1921

The AFL's founding convention of 1886 saw visitors from various culinary worker unions from across the country looking for a national union to associate with (or a new national in some cases).¹⁹⁰ It was only a few months into the AFL's history that they issued charters to a waiters¹⁹¹ union and a bartenders union in New York, and within the first four years, the AFL issued several charters to bartenders and server locals. However, in 1891, after repeated calls from culinary labor union leaders, the AFL formed a national waiter and bartender union with Samuel Gompers' personal approval, who also ordered all locals of waiters, cooks, and bartender unions into the young national union called "The Waiters and Bartenders National Union."¹⁹² The years between 1891-1900 proved a difficult beginning for the young organization, which repeatedly renamed itself, eventually landing on the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' International Union and Bartenders' International League of America (HERE).¹⁹³

Two major factions formed in the early years of the organization. Jere Sullivan, a former Knights of Labor "missionary"¹⁹⁴ and a founding member of HERE, led one faction. W.C. Pomeroy, also a founding member and former Knight, led the other.¹⁹⁵ Jere Sullivan had broken onto the scene at the 1893 convention when he attempted to have an investigation launched into

¹⁹⁰ Matthew Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar; the History of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, AFL-CIO*, with Internet Archive (New York, Random House, 1956), 14, <http://archive.org/details/unionhouseunionb0000jose>.

¹⁹¹ Waiters as in servers who are men specifically.

¹⁹² Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 15.

¹⁹³ We are using HERE, which is based on a later version of their name for two reasons: firstly HERE, being a word, is easier to remember, and secondly to avoid using either HRE (which lacks the ring of HERE, and is not technically accurate) or the long (and rarely used by the union) H&REIU & BIL of A. HERE, in this period, generally referred to itself in short by the "international union" or "our/your international," which may cause confusion.

¹⁹⁴ The Knight's word for organizer, influenced by their early religiously infused nature.

¹⁹⁵ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 8–9, 12–13.; at this point neither were officially in national positions of power, but were simply influential members.

Pomeroy's local with the intention to (in Sullivan's words) "get rid of the *barnacles*."¹⁹⁶ Sullivan accused Pomeroy of making up locals and fabricating membership and then, by a system of proxies, voting for these paper members to swing the convention in favor of his policies and friends, something for which Pomeroy was almost certainly guilty.¹⁹⁷ Pomeroy worked his way into being editor of the union's journal and openly attacked Sullivan in the union's journal, naming him "Cigarette Jerry" (for his reported excessive habit of smoking) and "Yeller Jaundice Jerry."¹⁹⁸ Sullivan had to appeal to the AFL to stop Pomeroy from tearing apart the young union. They voided the most blatantly corrupt policies of Pomeroy's administration in late 1898 into early 1899.¹⁹⁹ Pomeroy, to solidify his recently challenged power, called a convention of 26 loyal locals to denounce the AFL's intervention and rearrange the governance of the union to his liking.²⁰⁰ The AFL declared this to be a separate organization, allowing for members not affiliated with Pomeroy to take the helm of the remaining locals.²⁰¹ The following 1900 convention saw a break in the at which the organization claimed a standing membership of 4,000, with 94 affiliated locals.²⁰² After this landmark year, HERE grew with remarkable speed, having some 9,552 members in 1901, 18,268 in 1902, 38,571 in 1903, and 50,430 in 1904.²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 20–21.

¹⁹⁷ *A Brief History of Our Union: Hotel & Restaurant Employees, International Alliance, Bartenders International League of America* (Hotel & Restaurant Employees, International Alliance, Bartenders International League of America, 1941), 6, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924050071293?urlappend=%3Bseq=1>; Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 20–21.; Pomeroy, when questioned, refused to show any documentation for the unions and whipped up his faction to conduct a vote of confidence in him despite him not holding an official office at the time (excepting the position of proxy for the locals), see above citations.

¹⁹⁸ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 24–25.

¹⁹⁹ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 24–26.

²⁰⁰ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 13.

²⁰¹ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 29–30.

²⁰² *A Brief History of Our Union*, 14.

²⁰³ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 14–16.

1904 saw a new wave of infighting. After President Robert A. Callahan and Sullivan fell out over financing striking workers, Sullivan plotted against him.²⁰⁴ As General Secretary-Treasurer, Sullivan claimed that Callahan's local had not paid their national dues, meaning that Callahan was no longer a member of the union and, therefore, could not be president.²⁰⁵ This was a massive success for Sullivan, who helped put T.J. Sullivan (unclear relations) in the now vacant position.²⁰⁶ Now, with a loyal president, Jere Sullivan emerged from this dispute as the leader of the union. Jere Sullivan enjoyed immense popularity with his "brothers" in the union. He was generally credited with the success of the union in the new century, earning him such epithets as "old-war horse," "master-builder," and the "architect" of the union.²⁰⁷

Yet, the Sullivans could hardly bathe in the light of their praise and victory; dark omens appeared on the horizon. By 1907, the Anti-Saloon League, a band of primarily women who opposed alcohol chiefly on religious grounds, was becoming a problem for the union, which, partly because of Callahan's work, was becoming more and more filled with bartenders.²⁰⁸ The union was aware of the threat, and the union's monthly, *The Mixer and Server* of 1905 onwards, was filled with news of counties turning "bone-dry."²⁰⁹ The union could do little more than promote petitions and attempt to counter the voter drives of the Anti-Saloon League (and other similar organizations) to prevent the march of Prohibition. They attempted to appeal to the AFL leadership to wield the significant political power Gompers was amassing for the issue, but the AFL did little to stop the rise of Prohibition, as leaders of the AFL were divided over it.²¹⁰ Jere

²⁰⁴ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 55–59.

²⁰⁵ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 60–61.

²⁰⁶ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 60–63. As stated, I cannot find definitive statements as to the relation between T.J. and Jere Sullivan, but given that it is not mentioned, I must assume it is mere coincidence.

²⁰⁷ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 59.

²⁰⁸ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 63.

²⁰⁹ *Mixer and Server*, Vol. XIV- Vol. XXVIII. Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 116.

²¹⁰ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 131.

Sullivan threw much of the union's money at the issue, furnishing legislative representatives in the national and various state capitals.²¹¹ However, even this could not make a dent in the march forward towards the 18th Amendment.

As they attempted to face this threat, the union began some moderate reforms. In 1911, a group who came to be known as the “Knob Polishers”²¹² threw their weight behind "Ever Smiling" Ed Flore for president, ending T.J. Sullivan’s run as president and opening the era of reform.²¹³ Flore began his presidency with a plea for unity, something the union needed desperately as it faced the challenge of Prohibition. Luckily, Ed Flore was an ideal leader for a union. He was a soft-spoken listener. His speeches always came from a place of humility, and he was willing to truly forgive and forget the trespasses of political rivals.²¹⁴ Early in his presidency, he traveled widely to meet the members of his union and learn their needs, as well as paying a visit to Jere Sullivan. This trip led him to the conclusion that the union could do much more to organize workers, especially in New York City.²¹⁵ This opposed Jere Sullivan's “Bread and Butter” strategy. To counter this, Flore suggested that the union give the president more direct control over organizing efforts, circumventing Jere Sullivan's post.²¹⁶ Sullivan's considerable power prevented any movement on the issue. Preferring an imperfect peace with Sullivan to another factional fight, Flore let the matter rest for the moment, leaving his organization unprepared for the difficult period ahead.

²¹¹ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 116.

²¹² It is not exactly clear why they earned this very odd name. The reason appears to have been that when these passionate members rose above decorum in their debate, for some reason, the order “polish” would be given (by whom is not made clear). See Josephson, 78.

²¹³ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 17.

²¹⁴ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 80–82.

²¹⁵ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 82–84.

²¹⁶ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 105.

HERE, despite the gathering storms it faced, was strong under the early years of Flore. It had 55,227 members in 1913, with 569 locals.²¹⁷ 1913 was the first year of the new century in which the presidency of HERE was uncontested.²¹⁸ The 1915 convention, which marked the beginning of the "modern" era of the union, rejected the idea of separating the waiters and cooks from the bartenders, deciding that the difficult road ahead was best traversed together.²¹⁹ At this same time, women were coming to have a more prominent role in the organization. In 1901, only one (1) delegate to the national convention was a woman, but at the 1915 convention, there were 16 women serving as delegates (about 7.5% of the total delegates).²²⁰ Several locals were only for waitresses, and, from the era of 1915 to the US's entry into the First World War, there was a massive increase in organizing women, led by the women within the union itself.

The outbreak of war in Europe in the summer of 1914 seemed far removed from the concerns of the ostensibly "international" but truly national HERE.²²¹ However, it quickly had a massive effect on the union. When the US entered the war in 1917, some 5,814 HERE members entered the military,²²² retaining membership through special funds or due exemptions despite their temporary departure from the culinary industry.²²³ Even with the strain of the war, the union reached its peak membership in February 1918 with an impressive 65,938 members, making it one of the largest unions affiliated with the AFL.²²⁴ Yet, at the same moment that it reached its peak, a well-foreseen tragedy struck. Congress passed a wartime prohibition in

²¹⁷ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 20.

²¹⁸ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 106.

²¹⁹ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 115–19.

²²⁰ Dorothy Sue Cobble, "Sisters in the Craft: Waitresses and Their Union in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D., Stanford, California, Stanford University, 1986), 534.

²²¹ They had a few locals in Canada and in the Panama Canal Zone (then under US control), but beyond this they were a national union.

²²² As we shall see in the case report for HERE, these records may not capture the entire picture and are probably an underestimate of the true number.

²²³ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 21.

²²⁴ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 21.

November 1918, enforcing it the following year, ending production in May and sales in June 1919.²²⁵ The "Great Drouth,"²²⁶ as members called it, had come, and with the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in January 1919, it was there to stay.²²⁷

The result of Prohibition was devastating. Some locals as old as the organization disbanded due to lack of membership. Others barely held on with the bare minimum of ten (10) members.²²⁸ Compounding the issue, trends in dining also changed in the wake of the Great War, with self-service cafeterias spreading and replacing more traditional restaurants that required respectable servers.²²⁹ With no need for a bartender's skill or the fine European-style manners of tuxedo-clad waiters, HERE was in a vulnerable place in that its membership was more replaceable than it had ever been. All of this, combined with the increased persecution of unions during the First Red Scare, even for conservative unions like HERE, threw the union down a path of decline.

Where HERE membership peaked in early 1918 with 65,938 members, by the summer of 1921, they could claim only 51,302 members.²³⁰ It was not just an immediate effect, but membership continued to decline, with membership hitting a low of 37,743 members in 1923, the lowest membership the organization had since 1903.²³¹ The introduction of Prohibition essentially undid the work of twenty years of organizing. Membership in HERE would not return to its 1918 level until Prohibition was lifted in 1933.

²²⁵ D. Leigh Colvin, *Prohibition in the United States: A History of the Prohibition Party, and of the Prohibition Movement* (New York, 1926), 1:446, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.beal/proush0001&i=1>.

²²⁶ A variant of "drought," in use at the time.

²²⁷ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 129.

²²⁸ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 132.

²²⁹ Josephson, *Union House, Union Bar*, 133.

²³⁰ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 22.

²³¹ *A Brief History of Our Union*, 16 & 22.

3.7 Wobbly Servers, Maids, and Bartenders

The IWW had been interested in organizing culinary industry workers from the very beginning of the organization but got their first major opportunity to organize servers in 1912 when a group of servers at the Belmont Hotel in New York City went on strike and found support from the IWW — including the famous "Rebel Girl" organizer, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.²³² Unfortunately for the IWW, they failed to maintain a permanent presence in New York's culinary industry after the strike.²³³ Nor was the IWW able to make a permanent national branch devoted to the issue.

In 1918, the IWW established the Hotel, Restaurant, and Domestic Workers' Industrial Union 1100.²³⁴ I.U. 1100 was centered in Chicago, as was the overall IWW, but by early 1919 had branches in cities across the country including Detroit, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, New York City, and Los Angeles.²³⁵ They made special efforts to organize women workers in the culinary industry, which HERE had largely ignored.²³⁶ In addition, they put one of the IWW's most noted writers, L.S. Chumley, on writing a pamphlet entitled *Hotel, Restaurant & Domestic Workers: How They Live & How They Work*, aimed at both agitating employees in the industry and increasing sympathy from workers in other industries.²³⁷ The union was relatively small when compared to its AFL counterpart, having only 615 members in March 1919.²³⁸ However, it

²³² Peter Rachleff, *Starving Amidst Too Much & Other IWW Writings On The Food Industry*, with Internet Archive (Charles H Kerr, 2005), 16–17, <http://archive.org/details/starvingamidstto0000pete>.; see previous footnote on a few notable members of the IWW. In brief, Flynn was a professional organizer, radical, and subject of the ballad "Rebel Girl," by fellow Wobbly, Joe Hill.

²³³ Peter Rachleff, *Starving Amidst Too Much & Other IWW Writings On The Food Industry*, 16.

²³⁴ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 3 (May, 1919), 53.

²³⁵ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 3 (May, 1919), 53.

²³⁶ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 9 (August, 1919), 53.

²³⁷ L.S. Chumley, "Hotel, Restaurant & Domestic Workers: How They Live & How They Work," in *Starving Amidst Too Much & Other IWW Writings On The Food Industry*, by Peter Rachleff, with Internet Archive (Charles H Kerr, 2005), <http://archive.org/details/starvingamidstto0000pete>.

²³⁸ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 3 (May, 1919), 53.

pushed into areas where HERE would not, like organizing domestic and hotel maids, and hoped that one day it would "be able to feed the working class when the great hour arrives."²³⁹ With this revolutionary goal in mind, they braved the storm of Prohibition without fear, hoping that, despite its repressive nature, "when the workers are sober and able to think clearly, they [will] decline to be misled by [Samuel Gompers] and his gang."²⁴⁰ Thus, I.U. 1100 went forward into an uncertain era, bringing in more and more workers as they went

3.8 A Historical Conclusion

The history of the labor movement in the US from the end of the Reconstruction period after the Civil War to the abortive "Reconstruction" after the First World War was defined by two key conflicts. The division of workers on lines of race, gender identity, or nationality, and the division of labor unions between conservative business unions and radical unions and their allies. The AFL associated unions sought to get workers a better deal with the capitalists, even at the expense of women and workers of colors. The IWW, and associated socialists involved in the labor movement more broadly, also wanted a better deal with the capitalist (in the immediate), but were uncompromising on the unity of the workers regardless of gender or race, and saw this as only step one in a larger fight for emancipation from capitalism as a whole. While both the IWW and the AFL's HERE struggled with internal divisions, it's notable that HERE's endless drama of ousting, rebellion, and consolidation centered on the drive for power by more prominent members (namely Jere Sullivan), whereas the IWW's divisions centered the best way to achieve the shared goal of liberation from capitalism. While belonging to the same movement,

²³⁹ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No, 9 (August, 1919), 53.

²⁴⁰ *One Big Union Monthly*, Vol. I, No, 9 (August, 1919), 11.

these wings of labor could hardly have been more separate if their concerns and aims. In the case studies below we see this division play out even more clearly as we get to know [HERE](#) and the IWW's IU 1100 more intimately and try to grasp the relationship of members to each other.

Chapter IV: HERE Report

The tone of HERE's monthlies for the period examined were soaked through with the depression of union leaders that saw a very clear and present threat to their union's very existence. The first and most evident thing one finds from HERE in this period is a commitment to tedious detail. While one can admire their need to keep the business of their union in full light of day for their members, especially considering the turbulent history of the union we just discussed, the publication reaches impenetrability through repetitive lists of members who had lost their membership, the expense reports of organizers in the field, decisions on revoked memberships, and unclear list of data without context. However, when the union's members and elected officials were speaking for themselves, they draw a clear picture of the internal culture of the organizations: a deeply xenophobic trade union, committed to a labor movement for native-born workers which aims to reconcile their differences with the owning class.

In this section, I measure HERE against the criteria of comradery already spelled out. Through this process, we will also examine where HERE excelled during this period, as well as the numerous failures HERE suffered. We begin by discussing the class nature of the organizations. Then we discuss HERE's failure to maintain and enforce equality among members and the form of shared address the members used. After this, we discuss the work the members were expected to do in order to maintain their membership. In addition, we discuss why and how HERE expelled members and whether members expressed discipline of action. Lastly, we discuss the long-term goal of the union.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ I will use the abbreviation M&S for *Mixer and Server* to both avoid repeating the title or employing *ibid.* Instead of volume and issue numbers, I use months in this section since this better demonstrates the spread of the content for the reader. The *Mixer and Server* of 1919 were Vol. 29 and 1920 were Vol. 30 and each issue number corresponds with the month of release (i.e., January=#1, February=#2, etc.). Additionally, as will be true in all the case reports, I do not cite every instance of any given feature I discuss, but choose one or a few particularly glaring examples of

4.1 Class

HERE was undoubtedly a union of working-class people. There is no evidence that owners or bosses could be members, and clear proof that HERE did not allow members to retain their membership if their class position changed.²⁴² While HERE often took a conciliatory tone towards the owning class, it spared harsh words for those owners who took what they perceived as unfair advantage of their employees.²⁴³ HERE was a union of workers, for workers, with no exceptions.

4.2 Equal Membership

In HERE's monthlies, there was a repeated claim that members were brothers and sisters in the fight for dignity in their labor. The most clear and omni-present evidence of this unity is that every letter addressed to elected officials or the union broadly began with some variation of "Dear Sir(s) and Brother(s)." However, the "Brotherhood idea," which HERE claimed to be guided by, got little more thought than these stock phrases.²⁴⁴ HERE restricted membership exclusively to citizens of the US (or those actively seeking citizenship).²⁴⁵ Women, although they appeared to be active members and organizers in the union, had a secondary place in the union,

what I am referring to help the reader verify my claim without taxing them with every instance of a given trait. For many of the traits I discuss, especially the shared form of address, I could cite a majority of the pages in the monthlies, which would not necessarily help the reader verify my claim.

²⁴² M&S Jan. 1919, 12.

²⁴³ M&S Jan 1920, 36.

²⁴⁴ M&S Feb. 1919, 4.

²⁴⁵ M&S March 1919, 1.; I would note that actively seeking membership is somewhat vague and, beyond learning English, there is no material requirement, seemingly leaving it up to the local to determine if immigrants were attempting to become American.

and were even subject to hostility when they entered work perceived as being for men.²⁴⁶ While there was some solidarity shown to workers internationally, it was restricted to foreign workers of the countries allied with the US during the First World War. Racism and a general disdain for anything less than the “100 percent Americanism,” that dominated the political discourse of the time seeps through the pages of these monthlies in such a way that it is difficult to imagine people of color and foreign-born persons not considered white at the time feeling comfortable, let alone equal, to their white counterparts within HERE.²⁴⁷

While examples of casual xenophobia and sexism are plentiful, I found decisive evidence of the devaluation of foreign-born and women workers in the first pages of the first issue from the period we are studying. Welcoming the New Year, an untitled article²⁴⁸ opened: “Nineteen Nineteen, there is a job ahead of you.”²⁴⁹ The article goes on to explain that this job was “readjustment.” However, instead of what one might expect from a labor focused publication, such as the readjustment of wages to the cost of living, the readjustment the article advocated for was returning jobs to native-born American workers that the articles claims were taken by “alien men and women who have neither fought nor sacrificed anything for America.”²⁵⁰ The article goes on to blame the supposed weakening of the country on employers for “employing cheap female labor or aliens.”²⁵¹ There is scant truth in the claim that immigrants were in any way responsible for the lack of employment for returning soldiers, and while women “took” some

²⁴⁶ M&S May, 1920, 29; M&S Jan. 1919, 2; M&S Oct. 1919, 30.

²⁴⁷ It should be noted that despite the racialization of those who would today not be considered “people of color” such as Irish, HERE seemed to have respected second-generation Irish immigrants and do not mention other groups not considered white at the time (Eastern Europeans) in any context, except that they are most likely the group of immigrants referenced in broad declarations against them, as these were the primary immigrant group at the time.

²⁴⁸ While not official attributed to anyone, it seems to have been written by the then editor of *M&S*, Jere Sullivan.

²⁴⁹ M&S Jan 1919, 1.

²⁵⁰ M&S Jan. 1919, 2.

²⁵¹ M&S Jan. 1919, 2.

jobs while men were off fighting, this was hardly the fault of the women who desperately needed the work and who the owners paid less for the work than men. Blaming women and immigrants for the employers' decisions to hire cheaper labor and keep it even after the war ended was an apparent and undeniable act of inequality. The article's bold conclusion that "NONE BUT AMERICAN MEN AND WOMEN SHALL BE EMPLOYED IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY IN AMERICA"²⁵² made this undeniable. This article painted a dim picture from the very first pages of HERE's monthlies for the period, and the rest of the material does little to redeem the union's disdain for immigrants and distrust of women workers.

While women had an equal place as organizers, HERE hardly treated its women members as equal to men. Issues of women's rights and concerns appeared in a relatively limited capacity in the whole of HERE's monthlies studied, and when they appeared, it was to disregard cries for equality. In an especially pointed case, an organizer discussed a one dollar per day pay difference between men and women at a particular work site. Not only did the local members approve of this, but the organizer endorsed the pay difference, calling the proposal to raise women's wages to the same level as men "going too far."²⁵³ For HERE, a clear segregation of work by sex was totally acceptable, and in some cases, desirable.

When HERE's monthlies discussed the exploitation of women, it was in rather striking language. According to the monthlies, women "engaged in such strenuous labor that it is astonishing how they manage to retrain any semblance to youthfulness."²⁵⁴ Many contributors proudly disregarded the goal of women's suffrage. A comment from one contributor argued that a woman who brought a case against a man for (allegedly) staring at her ankles, could not have

²⁵² M&S Jan. 1919, 2.

²⁵³ M&S Jan. 1920, 18.

²⁵⁴ M&S March 1920, 56.

been a suffragette, “for they are not usually good to look at.”²⁵⁵ While hardly surprising in a time where women were just getting the right to vote, it is surprising from a union which served an industry with a heavy presence of women.

Where HERE’s treatment of women, both members and outsiders, left much to be desired in terms of equality, their treatment of immigrants was far worse and more devastating to the proclaimed brotherhood of the union. When reading many contributions, readers in 2025 could be forgiven for thinking they have somehow started to read a more contemporary account. There was a repeated sentiment that “Immigration should never be greater than the ability of the country to absorb and Americanize the immigrant.”²⁵⁶ This was supported by the idea that only immigrants who learned English or otherwise attempted to “become” American should be permitted employment and union membership. Immigrants were not only viewed as competition for the “true” American workers, whom the union represented; they were explicitly seen as dangerous on principle. When commenting on a budget shortfall at the Federal Immigration Department, a contributor asked “Are we due for another influx of Anti-American agitators[?]”²⁵⁷ Immigrants are painted as lazy by other contributors and called “Sacred Alien Slackers” in a vicious article on Congressional proceedings regarding immigration reforms.²⁵⁸

Besides the obvious economic motivation to exclude immigrants from the labor force, the source of this brutal disregard for the humanity of immigrants is difficult to mesh with the claims of the union to be an international brotherhood. The source is to be found in the opposite of internationalism. Nationalism, such a central characteristic of politics in most countries during

²⁵⁵ M&S May, 1920, 29

²⁵⁶ M&S Nov. 1920, 34.

²⁵⁷ M&S Oct. 1920, 30.

²⁵⁸ M&S Sept. 1919, 30-31.

this period, was in plenty among HERE's membership. While HERE kept a skeptical eye to the anti-labor legislation coming out of the federal and various state governments during this period, the blatant disregard for their democratic rights did not stop proud flag waving by many of the contributors. This flag waving was most transparent in the anti-German sentiment that stood out even in an era that saw Germany blamed for the First World War. A contributor to the paper urged that the feared break-up of Germany into its component states should not prevent them from being occupied and forced to pay damages.²⁵⁹ Another contributor urged members to not buy anything from "any Hun here or abroad."²⁶⁰ While this may be chalked up to war induced anti-German hysteria, it was not the entire extent of the nationalism. The union, through republication²⁶¹ of articles from other presses, expressed support for a "Self-Determination League" instead of joining the proposed League of Nations.²⁶² Clearly, HERE members believed and abided by a nationalist sentiment that was antithetical to the internationalism attested to in the very name of the union.

In addition to nationalism, HERE failed to combat the racism of the time and the leadership openly supported many of the most racist attitudes of the day. At the most basic level, the union permitted segregated locals. The handbook instructs members of color to remain affiliated with a "colored local" in another city if they moved to a city where no "colored local" existed.²⁶³ Beyond this clear inequality, the union failed to mention racism as a problem for

²⁵⁹ M&S Jan. 1919, 50.

²⁶⁰ M&S March 1919, 62.

²⁶¹ I use republication instead of syndication because it is unclear if the articles republished here were done so through a syndication service or simply republished without the permission of the author under some understanding of fair use. Considering that many articles are either very short, abbreviated, or credited to papers that were unlikely to be syndicated (such as local papers, or labor presses), it seems more likely that the articles were merely republished and not technically syndicated.

²⁶² M&S March 1919, 41.

²⁶³ *Membership Book*, 5-6.

uniting workers, which is especially telling since they published this during the Pogroms²⁶⁴ of the Red Summer of 1919.²⁶⁵ When HERE mentioned race, it was not to criticize the racist attitudes which were weakening the labor movement at that very moment, but to reinforce racial stereotypes. For example, a republished article entitled “A Colored Surprise Party,” depicted its black characters as violent thieves, speaking in broken, nearly indecipherable English.²⁶⁶ There is practically no depiction of black people which is not accompanied by a racial slur, broken English, or the committing of a crime by one of the black characters (most often all three appear together). In a particularly baffling instance of this racism, four verses of a poem from the San Francisco *Bulletin*, retells the story of Moses and the Israelites’ wandering in the desert. However, the poem was written in such broken English and used racial slurs so constantly that it is unclear what part of the Biblical story the poem is supposed to be spoofing.²⁶⁷ What is especially baffling about the inclusion of this poem, is that it takes up nearly half a page (a larger article for the publication) and does not seem to have any connection to labor, Reconstruction, or Prohibition, the issues which normally fill up the pages of these monthlies. It leads one to believe it is only included because the editors of the monthly believed it was humorous and were proud to reproduce the bile contained within it.

It seems that the contributors from the union itself shared and proudly reproduced the same racist attitudes as the articles they republished. The only depiction of people of color that

²⁶⁴ See previous footnote on the use of this term.

²⁶⁵ I will repeat here my earlier context given for this term. The term pogrom is used here, despite its normal association with antisemitism in Europe (particularly Eastern Europe) because many civil rights advocates and political radicals in favor of racial equality used the term either interchangeably with the more commonly used term “race riot” or in its place. Further, as I have explored in (forthcoming) work on the Red Summer, these so-called “race riots” resembled pogroms, which are a clear sociological phenomena, as opposed to “race riots,” which acknowledges a false cause of the violence (race), whereas the cause of pogroms is (racial or religious) prejudice (not race itself) *and* incitement from authorities in response to political radicalism and uncertainty.

²⁶⁶ M&S January 1919, 49.

²⁶⁷ M&S Sept. 1920, 49-50.

ascribes any positive qualities to them, albeit through a harmful stereotype, appears in an untitled article replying to the worry that the needs of the war had created more good cooks than could the economy support. In this article the author described the “old Southern ‘mammy,’” among other groups as expectational cooks, who could create better cuisine than “scientifically trained cooks” (however, it immediately follows with broken English attributed to the “mammy”).²⁶⁸ Suffice to say, this is hardly an extraordinary testament to racial equality. Beyond depiction, the contributors were explicitly skeptical of the idea of unions combating racism. In a lengthy piece (relative to the publication) given the honored spot of being the back page of January 1920 issue, an unsubstantiated claim is made that when radical organizers campaigned to “eliminate the ‘drawing of the color line,’” their “invitation and appeal is directed to none but the Negro workers.”²⁶⁹ The same article expressly asked:

Will the Negroes fall for this bait, or will their real leaders among their own race put them wise to the fact, that the little ball is not under the shell, but that it is in the hand of one of the Bunk Peddlers of Yankeeland?²⁷⁰

This article is especially telling of the attitude of the union towards people of color, in that it was one of the only reference to combating racism.

Clearly, HERE was not an organization that valued equality of members. While HERE was a desegregated union open to any gender membership, it did little more than leave the door open for members of color or women. There was no commitment to any kind of equality among members, nor any emphasis on creating an attitude for the equality of all workers.

²⁶⁸ M&S Jan 1919, 39. It should go without saying that the “mammy” stereotype cited here is not what I refer to as being possibly described as positive depiction, but the actual attribution itself of the craft of cooking. The point here is that even the most “positive” example of discussion of people of color is still a depiction deeply infected with the racism of the time.

²⁶⁹ M&S Jan. 1920, 65.

²⁷⁰ M&S Jan. 1920, 65.

4.3 Shared Address

While equality of members (and workers more broadly) of different races, genders, or nationalities was certainly not an emphasis for HERE, they shared a form of shared address: brother (or, less often, sister) which was used consistently throughout to refer to members regardless of rank. However, given what we have discussed in the above section, this form of address rings hollow. Surely, the members of HERE considered each other brothers, but only if they were native-born, English speaking, white *brothers*.

4.4 Shared Work

HERE officials were at pains to get their members, even members elected to office, to participate in any part of the organization. Elected officials of various locals seemed unable to fulfill basic requirements of the organization, such as submitting reports for conventions. Moreover, the work of the union seemed to nearly exclusively reserved for the paid organizers, whose reports made up the bulk of the original material of any given issue. While there were occasional contributions from rank-and-file members, paid organizers repeated the limited work by rank-and-file members. This illustrates a union that lacks any kind of consistent shared work from members.

Counter-examples of members being asked to participate or actively participating in union business are few and far between. One of the few references to a joint effort of all membership was from one contribution of a rank-and-file member which simply stated that it “behooves every trade unionist to put on his thinking cap and give [affiliation with a political

party] his careful consideration.”²⁷¹ Beyond this, and a few similarly meager request for member participation in either providing information (mainly service records during the war) and consideration of issues is the plea of an official of Local 34 that all members “arms himself with application forms” to reverse the steady decrease in membership.²⁷² These hardly indicate consistent work. While HERE occasionally bothered its members for some minor request it hardly expected consistent, collective, or meaningful work from the vast majority of its members.

4.5 Expulsion for Breaches of Solidarity

HERE’s monthlies were filled with decisions and deliberations over disagreements between members and locals. Many of these disagreements, usually settled by President Ed Flore, resulted in the suspension of membership for members involved, and fines of various amounts in order to rejoin. The vast majority of the offenses that resulted in a member being expelled was a failure to pay dues. However, there were several dozen cases in which Flore did not clearly state the reason for suspension. Flore was more concerned with the method of reinstatement. Besides the cases in which Flore expelled members for failure to pay their dues, there was some indication that breaches of solidarity may have been involved. For instance, Flore suspended one Frank M. Cubine from membership from Local 277 for “accepting employment in an unfair establishment.”²⁷³ While Flore’s meaning is very unclear (the whole decision is only 130 words, including the signature), one could argue that this constitutes a breach of solidarity as (for

²⁷¹ M&S Feb 1919, 53.

²⁷² M&S April 1919, 66.

²⁷³ M&S Jan 1919, 12.

unclear reasons) the establishment was “unfair.” However, it appears akin to expulsion for scabbing than a breach of the broader idea of solidarity.

While breaches of solidarity did not appear as a reason for expulsion, it is still worth discussing the means of reentering the union for suspended members. In most cases, the *only* recourse to members wishing to resume membership was to pay a hefty fine (ranging from \$10-\$100).²⁷⁴ There was no indication that any kind of re-affirming of solidarity was required of members who were suspended or expelled. This indicates that the union did not aim to repair a broken partnership between members in violation, but sought restitution for the breach of (what they refer to as) the “laws” of the unions. In sum, there was no evidence of expulsions (or suspensions) of members for reasons of solidarity, but chiefly failure to pay dues, and breaches were breaches of the law, not of the principles of solidarity.

4.6 Long Term Goal

Perhaps the most intriguing idea one encounters in these pages is the idea of Reconstruction. HERE hoped for Reconstruction after the First World War. The Reconstruction that HERE imagined was one that created what we would today call social democracy. In place of the robber-barrens’ iron grip on industry, Reconstruction would continue the nationalization of the railroads and other key industries that had begun under the war. In place of a government hostile to labor, Reconstruction was to give the US a government more likely to enforce a bargain agreement by force than to break up a strike.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ For reference, a week’s wages sat somewhere around \$25 for unionized culinary workers discussed in this publication.

²⁷⁵ This concept will be discussed further in the cross-case report, as the IWW uses the term as well.

While not strictly speaking a succession of one class over another, which is how this study has defined revolution, it would be insincere to discount that the demands of Reconstruction as revolutionary out of hand. The enactment of these goals would have seen the workers dramatically increase their political power and a government that represented all classes, rather than a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Given this, we need to further examine how HERE imagined Reconstruction, as opposed to the broader concept we discussed in the historical review, to determine if it constituted a revolutionary long-term goal.

The term Reconstruction appeared from the very beginning of the period studied, and contributors wrote about the idea more than any other single topic with the exceptions of the broad concept of trade unionism, anti-clerical sentiments,²⁷⁶ and Prohibition. The publication went as far as to refer to the period as the “age of reconstruction” (although it’s unclear the exact time period for this Reconstruction).²⁷⁷ For HERE, this was not a task to be completed by the government. Rather, they imagined Reconstruction as a popular movement, with a particular place for trade unions within it. In the AFL’s “Reconstruction Program,” which was reprinted in the February 1919 issue, summarized their role in Reconstruction:

Given the whole-hearted support of all men and women of labor our organized labor movement with its constructive program, its love for freedom, justice and democracy will prove the most potent factor in protecting, safeguarding and promoting the general welfare of the great mass of our people during this trying period of reconstruction and all times thereafter.²⁷⁸

Clearly the task lay beyond the membership of HERE, but with the general membership of the AFL, and the whole of the working-class. According to Sullivan, Reconstruction was so

²⁷⁶ This was particularly interesting. While by no means anti-religious or exclusionary on religious lines, there is a near constant line of insults for preachers who the contributors believed to be misleading the workers.

²⁷⁷ *M&S* Oct. 1919, 41.

²⁷⁸ *M&S* Feb. 1919. 17.

informed by class that it was “not so much a plan of reconstruction as a revitalizing of the dormant brotherhood idea,” which he summarized with the old Knights of Labor slogan “An injury to one is the concern of all.”²⁷⁹ While Sullivan may have merely been nostalgic for the days of the Knights of Labor, his assertion that Reconstruction would simply be a brotherhood of workers certainly made it seem that this brotherhood would constitute a class rule, thereby qualifying as a revolution.

It was unclear if Reconstruction was to be for the working class. Given some indications, it is difficult to conclude that HERE members believed the task was one for the working class alone. Rather, HERE painted Reconstruction as something to be obtained by liberals in general. Members appeared skeptical as to the working-class nature of Reconstruction, with one member even going so far as to comment that: “Not only the smiling, well-fed employers, but the equally well-fed pulpit pounders, are now and have been polluting the air with their damn nonsense about reconstruction.”²⁸⁰ Another member, speaking more directly to the issue of the class nature of this Reconstruction, put it in simple terms: “the bosses are urging reconstruction.”²⁸¹

This leads us to another major problem with Reconstruction as a shared goal: there was no evidence that the rank-and-file shared the hope with the officers of the union. The only clear indication that rank-and-file members supported Reconstruction came in the form of affirmative votes by their representatives at the AFL convention (a dubious piece of evidence as to the rank-and-file opinions at best),²⁸² there is limited evidence that at least some locals and their leadership considered Reconstruction as the task before them. One of the professional organizers

²⁷⁹ M&S Feb. 1919, 5.

²⁸⁰ M&S July 1919, 72; see here one of numerous examples of the above mentioned anti-clerical sentiments.

²⁸¹ M&S March 1919, 73.

²⁸² M&S July 1919, 56.

attested that at Local 811 “[t]here was considerable interest displayed” in “co-operation and reconstruction.”²⁸³ However, for Locals, the term Reconstruction was used to refer to something more akin to a membership drive, rather than a grand political project of any sort. For example, another professional organizer reported that a waitress locally has been succeeding in reconstruction in that they had gained “two applications: two initiations.”²⁸⁴ Given the lack of clear understanding from members, and some organizers as to what exactly Reconstruction entailed, it was difficult to judge how rank-and-filers felt about Reconstruction as a broad series of revolutionary changes in governance.

Beyond the fact that HERE members were far from unified on Reconstruction, there is also the issue that Reconstruction appears as a passing piece of political rhetoric rather than a firmly held belief in any part of HERE. While the term Reconstruction appeared some 10 times in the January 1919 edition of the *Mixer and Server* and some 17 times in the February edition of that same year, the term Reconstruction appeared only 17 times in the *Mixer and Server* monthlies published for all of 1920. Therefore, while a seemingly less “revolutionary” way of expressing *some* revolutionary sentiment on behalf of the workers, Reconstruction appeared more as a temporary turn of phrase used by workers’ advocates and employers alike with no clear true north.

Reconstruction failing to be a consistent and shared goal leaves HERE without any shared long-term goal. While, as with the vast majority of unions, HERE fought for living wages, dignity of labor, and various other consistent demands in the service of the workers, none of these constitute a long-term goal, as they appeared and disappeared as centerpieces of HERE

²⁸³ M&S Aug. 1919, 24.

²⁸⁴ M7S April, 1919, 22.

activity as the opportunity to advance them appeared and disappeared in various locals. To put it simply, there was little shared vision and no shared goal beyond the immediate advancement of reforms that tied HERE's membership together.

4.7 Discipline

Besides HERE's lack of any shared long-term goal, they also lacked discipline. This did not merely apply to the rank-and-file, who (as we have previously discussed) were not consistently involved in the business of the union, but it extended to the officers of the union. In a particularly telling example of this, a brief article from the AFL, written in dire and exhausted language, stated that:

Ever since the opening of the war we at headquarters have tried, by every known means of persuasion, to induce the officers and members of our affiliated unions to supply us with complete [war records] as conditions would permit.²⁸⁵

Considering the simplicity of the task requested (simply sending the name, rank, and branch of any members who had served during the war), this is particularly telling to the lack of discipline in HERE, even of elected (albeit, likely volunteer) officers. When some officers complied with the simple request, they did so inaccurately. In one amusing case, HERE only discovered an officer's inaccuracy when a membership list was "picked up on the Flanders front" and returned to them, at which point they found that the very officer who reported that no members in his local had served, had himself served in the Army.²⁸⁶

There were limited nods to the concept of discipline, such as a longer article at the end of the February 1920 issue describing discipline as what "puts a man in his place for a given task"

²⁸⁵ M&S Jan. 1919, 8.

²⁸⁶ M&S Jan. 1919, 8.

and one organizer described “unity, discipline and determination,” as “the compass to guide” the union.²⁸⁷ However, in practice, there is no evidence that the union was disciplined. There was, in fact, much evidence that indicates that elected or paid officers did not even practice it.

4.8 Conclusion to HERE’s Case Report

It becomes clear through this examination that HERE was not a union of comrades. It was a loose association of workers, calling each other “brothers” and “sisters,” but acting more like self-interested actors attempting to gain short-term gains through collective action. They were co-workers, marching together while it was convenient and leaving with the changing of the wind. While the union officials appeared genuine in their hopes for better conditions and dignity in an honorable profession, beyond this there was no shared aim, and certainly none that was shared by all or most members. Members did not have to fight prejudices that divided the working-class, such as racism, sexism, or xenophobia. Rather, the union officials encouraged, or at least tolerated, these sentiments through republishing racist material and producing a mountain of anti-immigrant propaganda that would make any non-native born member unwelcome, to say the very least. Discipline and shared work were absent. In short, HERE demonstrated very few of the traits we expect of comrades, and was in many respects the antithesis of comradeship.

²⁸⁷ M&S Feb, 1920, 81; M&S June 1919, 66.

Chapter V: IWW's IU 1100 Case Report

The IWW's monthly *One Big Union Monthly* contains a great insight into how each IU within the IWW looked at the world and how members thought of each other. What stands out from these monthlies is the profound sense of hope and excitement that was galvanizing those who were interested in a workers' revolution in the wake of the successful Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and the ongoing establishment of the first socialist state in the world. As their own government and their fellow citizens hounded, arrested, and killed them, Wobblies expressed their rage, but also a sense that they were standing at the edge of victory.

The most tangible theme from the IWW during the period studied is shared hope. Hardly a page goes by where the writers did not hail the coming of the socialist revolution, the growing class consciousness of the workers of the world, or the growing fragility of the capitalist powers. Even if the more specific predictions of the timeline of socialist revolution may seem unrealistic (with the benefit of hindsight), the reader gets the clear sense with each succeeding issue that they are marching steadily, happily, and bravely into a new world of justice and brotherhood. As the Wobblies pursued these goals, they demonstrated exceptional discipline in the face of violent harassment. The sacrifice required from members, and the indication that these sacrifices were gladly and proudly given by members, speak to a union of deeply committed comrades moving on a clearly delineated, but jointly decided, path towards industrial liberty.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Like in the previous case report, I abbreviate the title of the monthly (One Big Union Monthly -OBUM). All issues from 1919 are part of Vol. 1 and from 1920 are part of Vol. 2. However, the issue numbers are not as clear since they started publication in March, 1919, meaning issue 1 was the March issue and December is issue 10. However, Vol. 2 resumes the issue numbers being aligned with the month.

5.1 Class

One does not have to look far or thoroughly into the IWW's publications to discover the clear class nature of the organization. Every issue began with the republication of the IWW's famous preamble, which begins with the sentence: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common."²⁸⁹ Further, the Preamble insists the IWW exist to aid "the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism," and that an "army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists but also to carry on production when capitalism has been overthrown."²⁹⁰ An unnamed author put it neatly when they wrote that: "Briefly [our goals] are: to organize the whole working class industrially so that it will be able to take over production and distribution as soon as possible."²⁹¹ Undeniably, the IWW built itself for and by the working class, with their class interests alone in mind. As another writer enthusiastically recorded, IWW members were "front trench soldiers of the class war."²⁹²

Directly, and without question, being a wage earner was a prerequisite for membership in the IWW.²⁹³ Being anything but a wage-worker was the only bar to membership. Their handbook specified the membership requirements in a republished excerpt.

In short, the I.W.W. organizes all who work for wages or salary, regardless of classification, which is considered no bar to membership. Only stockholders, owners, employers - The all non-wage workers- are barred. I.W.W. is an organization of wage workers just as they work.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ OBUM March 1919, I.

²⁹⁰ OBUM March 1919, I.

²⁹¹ OBUM June 1919, 13.

²⁹² OBUM April 1919, 20.

²⁹³ It appears some expectations were made to this for unemployed people who would otherwise be waged workers, and, as we shall discuss in a moment, house wives.

²⁹⁴ OBUM Oct 1919, 43.

This rule was not only on the books, but the Wobblies practiced it. In all the records from this period, there did not appear a single record of a member who was not either a wage-worker or a union organizer with the IWW.

5.2 Equal Membership

As stated in the previous section, the only bar to membership was that all members were required to be wage-workers. The passage quoted above from the IWW handbook on the matter of membership requirements went on to say that they did not restricted membership by “trade, sex, color, religions, or any other distinctions, styles or shirts and collars included.”²⁹⁵ This is further confirmed in a cheeky note:

As the employer compels us to work in the shop on an equality of wage slavery with the negro, we fail to see why we shouldn't meet him on the basis of that same equality of our union. [...] Yes, sir. We I.W.W. aim to organize every man, woman and child that is in the leaking, rotten boat of capitalism [...] From the brain worker and the negro—from the stunted kiddie and robust women—from all in wage slavery—the I.W.W. draws its strength.²⁹⁶

This firm statement was the basis of the organization. It was more than any other union of the time had said, and the diversity of the membership and organizers attests to the truth of these words.²⁹⁷

More than merely allowing any worker to join, the IWW took an active interest in combating prejudice and addressing underserved groups of workers. In particular, the IWW

²⁹⁵ OBUM Oct 1919, 43-44.

²⁹⁶ OBUM Oct 1919, 44.

²⁹⁷ While there is no statistics available from the IWW as far as the exact make-up of their membership by sex, race or other demographic, many of the well-known organizers of the IWW were people of color and women and there is consistent references to members of various races and national origins as well as men and women the IWW in the monthlies for this period.

expressed an interest in organizing workers of color. During this period, the IWW commissioned a study to be done on organizing workers of color, they consistently protested the AFL's treatment of workers of color, and repeatedly brought to light the horrors of the racial violence of the pogroms of the Red Summer.²⁹⁸ However, as a contributor, Frederick A. Blossom, attested in a thorough article entitled "Justice For the Negro," "Protests, petitions and resolutions will never accomplish anything," rather "[o]nly by threatening to withdraw their labor power and thereby cripple industry and agriculture can the Negroes secure equal treatment with other workers."²⁹⁹ The IWW repeatedly affirmed that the workers of color could not do this alone, nor could white workers do it for the workers of color. Rather, only by coming together could all workers liberate themselves from the oppression of capitalism.

The IWW made great strides towards both including workers of color and fighting race prejudice, and IU 1100, in particular, took care to include women and encourage members to fight prejudicial treatment of women. "Fellow Workers of the I.W.W.," one article signed by an (unnamed) representative of IU 1100 read, "do you make it a point to ask the girl who serves your meals, if she is lined up?"³⁰⁰ This article also encouraged men to buy advertisement cards for the IU 1100 to place under plates at restaurants.³⁰¹ In a continued effort to include more "Rebel Girls" in IU 1100, they opened themselves up for wives, who they (correctly) assessed to be domestic workers, worthy of unionization. Although it did not appear that many women took up this offer, this recognition of equality of labor between men and women was decades ahead of its time.³⁰² Besides this, they spent an unspecified, but reportedly significant amount of their

²⁹⁸ OBUM May 1919, 42.

²⁹⁹ OBUM Aug. 1919, 30.

³⁰⁰ OBUM July 1919, 20.

³⁰¹ OBUM July 1919, 20.

³⁰²The union dues for wives would have been collected by other IUs (the IUs their husbands belonged to). This lets us know that not many women took up this offer. For example, in the month of May 1919, only 6 members' dues

limited resources to send a prominent IWW organizer, Roberta Bruner, on tour with the “special business to organize the women workers” in the hospitality and service industry.³⁰³ IU 1100 not only considered women equals, but made tangible steps towards combating the underservice of working women by unions to unite the workers of all genders.

Perhaps the most remarkable, and needed, solidarity among workers that the IWW promoted and lived by, was the solidarity between native-born workers and foreign-born workers. More than simply allowing members of any national-origin, the IWW actively encouraged membership that spoke languages other than English by putting out publications in various languages. A report claimed that the IWW offered publications “in Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Polish, Jewish [most likely Yiddish], Croatian and English,” all of which were readily available to any members who wrote for them and could pay the small subscription fee (\$1.50 in 1919 per year, equal to about \$28 in 2025).³⁰⁴ In addition, the Education and Propaganda Department of the IWW claimed to publish “Two English Weeklies, seven foreign language weeklies, an English monthly, and [that] two foreign language monthlies [were] directly under the control of the organization, and a Finnish daily with a circulation of over ten thousand,” in addition, they claimed that: “[n]ew pamphlets have been printed in a dozen different languages and several new weekly foreign language publications will soon appear.”³⁰⁵ They also made efforts to go beyond this by printing the IWW Preamble in 62 languages.³⁰⁶ To allow for the

was collected by unions that were not the IU 1100 itself, in the following month only 10 members’ dues were similarly collected. Similarly, in January 1920, only 7 members’ dues were collected by other IUs. This clearly indicates that there was far from an influx of women through this means of membership. This is in no doubt due in part to the fact that Wobblies were generally unmarried either because they were too poor, too mobile, or too radical for such a practice.

³⁰³ OBUM July, 1919, 48; OBUM October, 60.

³⁰⁴ OBUM Sept. 1919, 38. The fee was the same regardless of language.

³⁰⁵ OBUM June 1919, 48.

³⁰⁶ OBUM Aug. 1919, 41.

continual expansion of their ability to reach workers in their own language, the IWW encouraged members from language groups they did not yet serve to start their own papers, and solicited donations from other members to help them publish these papers.³⁰⁷ Besides publications, the IWW had specially designated organizers to include members of various nationalities, and were proud to encourage workers to organize among their own nationalities with the help of literature published in their native tongues.³⁰⁸ All of this effort to reach foreign-born workers seemed to produce remarkable results in terms of inclusion.

In a time of increased xenophobia, caused by the war and prejudice against any immigrant (especially those not considered white), the IWW stood out as a union for *all* immigrants. Particularly remarkable at the time where the Chinese Exclusion Act was still the law of the land, the IWW wrote that “[t]he accession of Chinese workers to our ranks fills us with great joy.”³⁰⁹ The consistent sense of respect for immigrants is remarkable in part because of the times, but in no small part because the IWW was being targeted by the government for its support of immigration. Yet, faced with this, Harold Lord Varney (a regular Wobbly contributor) could write that the labor movement was “hastened” by immigration and that it had “fertilized the mind of American labor,” and “supplied the American labor movement with the intellectual substratum which it has always lacked.”³¹⁰ Their respect for the contribution of immigrants, as well as the strenuous efforts to include them in the organization, was accompanied by a consistent campaign in protest to the ongoing deportation of immigrants. The IWW was not only rhetorically strong on the equal treatment of immigrant workers; they took action to include them

³⁰⁷ OBUM Sept. 1919, 59; OBUM March, 1920, 54; OBUM April 1920, 52-53.

³⁰⁸ OBUM June 1919, 49.

³⁰⁹ OBUM March 1919, 6.

³¹⁰ OBUM March 1919, 51.

in the union as equals, protested the violations of their rights, and made strides towards increasing the solidarity among workers of every national origin.

The IWW not only took action to treat all workers as equals and include members of every race, sex, and nation of origin, but there were clear indications they tried to make other factors that might divide workers irrelevant. A particularly interesting aspect of this was equality in level of education. While the relationship between the “intellectual” and the laborer is far too storied and complex to fully explore here, for the Wobblies, the matter was rather simple: anyone who was a wage-employee was a worker and therefore entitled to equal membership in the IWW. While the IWW had harsh words for the “intelligensia” who wanted the IWW to be more of a book club for theory than a network of action, they welcomed college educated members who took action with them, as long as the college educated members treated his fellow workers with the respect they deserved.³¹¹

More broadly, the IWW welcomed any member (that had been with them for six months or more) to be an officer, with no additional requirements or specifications. This opened up positions of authority in the organization to any member, regardless of race, gender, education level, language, or citizenship status. Even in matters less politically heated than race, gender, and immigration status, the IWW demonstrated that all members were equal partners in their union.

³¹¹OBUM Aug. 1919, 21; OBUM March 1919, 30.

5.3 Shared Address

The IWW was not only a union of equals, but a union of “fellow workers.”³¹² This shared form of address was universal, mostly for members, but also used for other revolutionary workers.³¹³ The Wobblies used the term regardless of rank or seniority in the IWW.³¹⁴ The terms “fellow worker” or “fellow workers” appeared well over four hundred times in the monthlies for the period studied, meaning it appeared once about every two pages, indicating the sheer amount of times the Wobblies referred to each other by this title. Besides “fellow worker” and “fellow workers,” the terms “comrade” and “comrades” were also frequently used to refer to members of the IWW and socialists more broadly.³¹⁵ Wobblies used at least two terms of address to refer to each other and did so frequently and ubiquitously.

5.4 Shared Work

For the IWW, the idea of a passive member was unthinkable. Members expected active participation from each other. They came to meetings, kept up with literature to the best of their ability, and contributed to fundraising drives. It was not enough to passively accept the ideals of the IWW; each member contributed to the organization in one of three ways on any given day, expressed in one of their most famous mottos: “Educate! Agitate! Organize!”

One of the most constant requests of IWW members was to educate their fellow workers. While the IWW conceded that “It is quite impossible to educate the worker, generally speaking,

³¹² Sometimes this term is extended to non-Wobbly workers, but only when they are inviting them to abandon the AFL or other such pleas. See (for example) April 1919, 17-18.

³¹³ OBUM May 1919, 6.

³¹⁴ OBUM March 1919, 41.

³¹⁵ OBUM May 1919, 46.

to be a Karl Marx,” they also argued that it was the duty of the class conscious workers to aid in the building of revolutionary class consciousness among those workers who could develop it and “to impress him with his historical mission.”³¹⁶ While the IWW firmly believed that it was the working conditions themselves which formed the basis (or we may say the elements) of class consciousness, workers still needed to be told what class consciousness was, naming the feelings in their bones. While numerous organizers attempted to build class consciousness through writing literature and going on speaking tours, the average member was expected to think and discuss matters of theory and spread the literature as widely as possible. Members were given ambitious targets for spreading literature: “Every reader should get at least 10 subscribers a year—no, per month.—Then you would see something drop!”³¹⁷ Even if there seemed to have been a movable quota, members were called on to sell subscriptions consistently. Considering the repeated ads for the return of back-issues so they could be redistributed, it is fair to assess that the members faithfully performed the work of spreading IWW literature to as many workers as possible.³¹⁸

In addition to attempting to educate their fellow workers, IWW members were agitating constantly. The IWW believed every worker could learn about their exploitation and “break dreary, stubborn deafness” among the workers.³¹⁹ This could take the form of speeches or writings, but it was also to take the form of talking to one’s co-workers, waking them up from their sleep of passively accepting wage-slavery. However, this was not enough for the IWW’s members.

³¹⁶ OBUM July 1919, 49.

³¹⁷ OBUM Aug 1919, 12

³¹⁸ OBUM Oct 1919, 56; OBUM Dec 1919, 15; March 1920, 53; April 1920, 48.

³¹⁹ OBUM July 1919, 12.

The next step in the Wobblies' plan was to organize. For them, this was the most essential step, and the one that members were to partake in most consistently. "Drop everything and organize industrially," one simple plea read.³²⁰ Another contributor proposed the admittedly less punchy slogan: "Organize on the job (for your own improvement and emancipation) just as you work on the job for your bosses' profits."³²¹ Members were expected to do most of the organizing work themselves. Organizers were more in the business of training workers how to organize and giving aid during periods of intense struggle, not doing the constant work the IWW needed. Organizing was to occur on the job, a phrase repeated almost *ad nauseam*: "If you are going to reorganize the world, *do it on the job*."³²² Wobblies were supposed to put in as much effort and energy into organizing as their actual jobs.

In the IU 1100 in particular, members expected each other to organize on the job, and even in their leisure time. As a report from IU 1100 states: "We are now prepared to forge ahead; with the unstinted co-operation of all members, [IU 1100] can be made an important factor in the Industrial Union movement."³²³ To say the least, the work of organizing was not an occasional task for some members. Rather, every member, at every possible moment, was organizing their fellow workers.

Union work was not just consistent for IWW members, but pointed toward their shared goal. As one author put it quite simply: "To get to the new society we will have to teach all the workers industrial unionism."³²⁴ Another officer shared a similar sentiment:

³²⁰ OBUM April 1919, 41.

³²¹ OBUM May 1919, 28.

³²² OBUM Nov. 1919, 48.

³²³ OBUM May 1919, 53.

³²⁴ OBUM Sept, 1919, 15.

Fellow Workers, if you want to see the end of capitalism and the advent of industrial democracy, you must do your utmost to spread the propaganda of industrial unionism and to organize your fellow workers on the job.³²⁵

Plainly then, Wobblies worked constantly with an eye to their shared goal (discussed below in more detail) together.

5.5 Expulsion for Breaches of Solidarity

While there were no documented cases of expulsion within the monthlies for the IWW, this is mostly because they rarely discussed the more procedural business of the union. There is clear evidence in the governing documents that the IWW expelled members for breaching solidarity. The section on charging of members with offenses opens with the idea that “Whenever any member of the Industrial Workers of the World violates *any of the principles* or rules of the Organization, he shall be proceeded against in the following manner.”³²⁶ Considering that the phrase “an injury to one is an injury to all” printed above the title page of the Constitution which members received and appears in the Preamble, it is safe to conclude that solidarity was one of these principles for which members could have been expelled.³²⁷ While we would like to see this in action, the poor records of this time, the destruction of records in this period and in the following years, and the lack of day-to-day business being publicized in the monthlies, the assertion that members could be expelled for breaches of solidarity must be concluded from these indicators.³²⁸

³²⁵ OBUM Nov. 1919, 50.

³²⁶ IWW Constitution, 1916, 28. Emphasis my own.

³²⁷ IWW Constitution, 1916, 3.

³²⁸ We can also consider one of the most infamous errors made by the IWW, which falls just outside of our period of study. In the Summer of 1920, the Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union (based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) was expelled from the IWW on the allegation that they had loaded weapons headed for the White Army in Russia. This was perceived as a violation of the international solidarity with the workers of Russia. While the charges were

5.6 Long Term Goal

In a time of repression, one might expect a union seeking to continue operating to soften its language on the overthrow of the current order. *The IWW did no such thing*. There is seldom a page of any documents from the IWW that did not openly call for revolution, socialism, and the overthrow of capitalism. Most telling was the IWW's description of its purpose. Written in bold, all-capitalized letters, a writer proclaimed the IWW was a movement to: "ORGANIZE ALL THE PRODUCTIVE AND DISTRIBUTIVE WORKERS INDUSTRIALLY SO THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE OVER AND MANAGE PRODUCTION WHEN CAPITALISM COLLAPSES."³²⁹ This was not only a dream for the distant future, it was the reason for the IWW's existence, and their main point of contention with every other trade union in the US. To put it simply, the IWW planned to organize the workers, which itself would lead to socialist revolution, at which point the IWW's structure would become the governing body of the new society.

Without a doubt, the IWW valued socialist revolution. Those with even a passing knowledge of the organization or anyone who glanced at these monthlies could not deny this fact. We need to clarify two points: Did the general membership share this goal? Was the IU 1100 in particular committed to the goal of revolution? After carefully examining the sources, I

ultimately found to be false, the mere fact that the IWW expelled one of their most successful Industrial Unions on the allegation of violating solidarity with workers on the other side of the globe speaks to a profound commitment to expelling those who did not live up to the highest standard of solidarity. For more see, Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 249-250.

³²⁹ OBUM Aug. 1919, 19.

have no doubt that the vast majority of Wobblies and the members of IU 1100 in particular held this goal.

Going directly to rank-and-file voices published in the monthlies, numerous poems, and letters submitted by rank-and-file members expressed a devotion to revolution. Raymond Corder's "Freedom" clearly described his hope for revolution. It concludes:

Thou art the inspiration
To do the daring deed,
The hope of every nation,
Of serfs who slave and bleed.
Thou art the end of hating,
The usher in of love;
For you the world is waiting
Her sorrows to remove.³³⁰

Another poem by Robin E. Dunbar, entitled "I am a Wobbly," put it more undeniably:

There is only one sort of revolutionists now;
Viz., the Wobblies.
[...]
If he stands against it [capitalism], he's got to line up
With those who are making the biggest fight against it.
And these are the Wobblies,
There's no doubt about that.³³¹

This sentiment was shared by less poetic rank-and-file members as well. In fact, the revolutionary sentiment was least extinguished in those who might most be expected to remain silent. The numerous "class war prisoners" proved some of the most regular contributors and the

³³⁰ OBUM Nov. 1919, 16.

³³¹ OBUM May 1919, 47-48.

most openly revolutionary members. Manuel Rey, a prisoner at Leavenworth, wrote in an article entitled “Love For the Ideal of the Revolutionary World Proletariat,” that he loved revolution “as the poet loves his fame... as the warrior loves his loot... as the just loves his virtues, and as all the birds love all the flowers, the trees and the forest.”³³² Expressed in flowery language and simple prose, members clearly welcomed the coming of the socialist dawn, and worked hard to bring the world around to it.

Knowing that there is clear evidence that the general membership had valued revolution and saw it as a goal, we need to narrow our focus back and see if the members of IU 1100 shared this trait with the general membership. As a first step, there was clear evidence that the officers of IU 1100 readily believed in revolution, and repeat that their members agreed with this goal. In a rather clear example, IU 1100’s Secretary-Treasurer, Ernst Holmen, wrote that they were:

making a thoro [sic] attempt to organize the workers in the industry with the immediate view of shortening hours and increasing wages, and with the remote idea of being able to operate the hotels and restaurants. We are including in our program the management of the industry like the other industrial unions so that we can be able to feed the working class when the *great hour arrives*.³³³

This same officer affirmed in another article that the IWW stood against “the principle that capitalism and wage slavery shall continue permanently,” and affirms that the IU 1100 was “preparing the workers of this industry for the taking over and running of this most important branch of human activity.”³³⁴ We do not have only the word of officers. A member of IU 1100, Louis Melis, in a thorough article on the working conditions of the workers covered by IU 1100, concludes by reaffirming the IU 1100’s commitment to the principles espoused in the Preamble

³³² OBUM Aug 1919, 44.

³³³ OBUM Aug 1919, 52; emphasis my own.

³³⁴ OBUM Jan. 1920, 51-52.

of the IWW Constitution, particularly “forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.”³³⁵

While there may not be as many rank-and-file writings on the topic of revolution from IU 1100 members as expected, there is just cause. As one writer explained:

As a matter of cold, hard fact, the rank and file of the I.W.W. numbers more [Marxist] students than any other American radical group. Of course, these harvesters, lumberjacks, and general all round laborers, are not in the habit of shouting it to the world, because they are too busy organizing on the job. But we defy the learned doctors of decorated persiflage [banter], to enter any Wobbly sanctum sanctorum and there not find a student of Marx.³³⁶

This was certainly the case. The IWW was all about action, sometimes to a fault. As we have seen in the section about shared work, most were too busy making the revolution to write about it. However, given that the officials attested to the devotion of members of IU 1100 to revolution, that the general membership in the IWW shared this devotion (and recorded so in these monthlies), and that there is hard (albeit somewhat limited) evidence that rank-and-file members of IU 1100 shared this devotion, it is safe to conclude that IU 1100 was not an exception to the IWW regarding the vast majority of its membership being committed to revolution as a long-term goal.

5.7 Discipline

The discipline of the IWW was best summarized in a short note: “As far as the I.W.W. men are concerned we shall, in the face of all resistance and all persecution, continue on our road, same

³³⁵ OBUM April 1919, 59. No title, or positions is listed with Melis’ name, leading the conclusion that he was rank and file, given that letters by officers generally included their position after their name.

³³⁶ OBUM July 1919, 49.

as before.”³³⁷ Despite the excessive risk of violence, the IWW carried on calmly, carefully, but vigorously. With their eyes on revolution, the Wobblies did not stray from the goal. As one Wobbly put it: “we shall resist petty individual irritations in our onward march to solidarity.”³³⁸ Wobblies lived up to this high ideal. They made sacrifices, stayed steady in the face of constant threats, resisted spontaneity, and progressed together in solidarity.

The sacrifices of the Wobblies during this period were immense. The IWW claimed to have several hundred members in jail,³³⁹ and among these were several of the longest-standing and most respected members. Yet, members bore this with pride and refused to submit to their captors, counting on their comrades to carry on the fight, including the fight for their freedom. One Wobbly from Idaho, who had already spent several months in prison proudly remarked, when asked (hypothetically) if he would renounce the IWW to get out of a ten-year prison sentence, “I would rather rot to death in prison than abjure my principles.”³⁴⁰ Another rank-and-file member in jail, despite his imprisonment, only tried to agitate further: “Look to your fellow workers in Russia and Germany.”³⁴¹ As these voices attest, members kept up discipline even in the harshest of circumstances.

The discipline of the Wobblies was persistent in the face of repression, but it also was firm in the face of changing circumstances. While members remained in control of the organization through its democratic, “bottom-up” structure, they resisted spontaneity. The Wobblies knew that “terrible results spring from hasty action without preparation,” and their

³³⁷ OBUM March 1919, 4.

³³⁸ OBUM April 1919, 18.

³³⁹ I cannot confirm the numbers the IWW forwards, but given the lists of names produced it seems unlikely to be dramatically inflated.

³⁴⁰ OBUM Oct. 1919, 10.

³⁴¹ OBUM Oct 1919, 11; This was when Germany was still in active revolution.

members operated without falling to the temptation for unplanned action, in the most difficult of circumstances.³⁴² They recognized that “the revolution that the I.W.W. wants cannot be made in a day, nor in a month, nor in a year.”³⁴³ With the utmost discipline, they acted decisively and in good order in the class war. One Wobbly striker observed that his fellow Wobblies “came long distances thru [sic] snow and hostile towns by beating their way, penniless and hunger, into a place where a jail sentence was the gentlest treatment that could be expected, and where many had already been driven into the swamps and beaten to death” to participate in the struggle with their fellow Wobblies.³⁴⁴ This speaks to a remarkable discipline.

5.8 Conclusion

The Wobblies, particularly those of IU 1100, were comrades devoted to a common cause of the working-class’ ascendancy to political power. In their efforts, they were extremely disciplined, actively working to be equals, and undoubtedly universally involved in the work of the union. As the government and vigilante groups hunted them down; as their industry was torn to ruins; as their society tried to divide them by color, creed, language, gender, citizenship, and nation of origin, the Wobblies of IU 1100 kept in lockstep towards revolution.

There was *abundant evidence that IU 1100 had a comrade network*. IU 1100 constitutionally mandated that only waged employees (with the notable exception of housewives) could be members. It not only permitted members of all color, creeds, language, gender, citizenship, and nation of origin (per the Constitution), it encouraged their membership

³⁴² OBUM March 1919, 14.

³⁴³ OBUM April 1919, 41.

³⁴⁴ OBUM April 1919, 30.

with efforts to include them in the union from recruitment through entire tenure in the union. Wobblies in IU 1100 called all other Wobblies (and socialist more broadly) either “fellow workers” or “comrades,” regardless of their rank in the organization, seniority, or any other factor except membership in the working-class movement. Members of IU 1100 were constantly organizing on the job, and otherwise consistently working for the union. The IWW had a known mechanism for expelling members who breached solidarity as stated in the Constitution. All Wobblies, including the Wobblies of IU 1100, believed and consistently expressed their belief in a revolution that would see the working-class overthrow the capitalist class and establish a socialist form of governance. The members of IU 1100 demonstrated significant discipline in continuing on their tasks despite considerable threats of arrest, violence, and even death while also resisting impulsive or thoughtless action that would not move them closer to their goals. Given these facts, it is conclusive that the *Wobblies of IU 1100 were comrades*.

Chapter VI: Cross Case Report

The IWW's IU 1100 and the AFL's HERE could not be more different while still belonging to the same movement. Where the IU 1100 had an egalitarian culture of devoted members working towards a shared long-term goal, HERE was a particularist assemblage who shared only short-term goals. While both suffered from similar oppression and unfortunate circumstances for their industries, only the IU 1100 was able to maintain (and even grow) their membership. Despite HERE having well over a two decades head start on the IWW as a whole, and nearly three decades on the IU 1100, HERE had no loyalty from members as soon as their union could not win immediate material rewards. IU 1100, despite being only a few years old, and having limited resources, was able to retain membership, and even vastly expanded its membership during a period in which one of its served industries was rapidly shrinking and the US government (as well as various vigilante groups) was targeting their union in particular. The remarkable success of IU 1100, and the failure of HERE, in retaining their membership during the First Red Scare and the onset of Prohibition can be explained robustly by no other means than the fact that the IU 1100 had comradeship, while HERE did not.

In this section, we compare the two unions we have already examined on their own. Instead of looking at a trait by trait basis, this section will take a more focused approach, taking shared traits or themes from each union and comparing them and examining the differences. We will begin that section with a discussion of the unions' ideas of equality expressed in the terms "brother" and "fellow worker," used by HERE and the IWW, respectively, which leads us into a discussion of the universalist tendencies of both unions (or lack thereof). Moving from this, we will discuss the two unions' use of Reconstruction as an idea and long-term goal. After closely examining these shared (but different) themes, I summarize the overall comparison of traits

through a chart and then investigate other possible explanations for the membership retention rates of the two unions. Last, this section will conclude with a summary of the comparative findings, with a definitive statement as to the cause of membership retention in these unions.

6.1 Brother or Fellow Worker

On the face of it, “brother” and “fellow worker” seem to both be addresses for members of closely knit groups. If one ignores the gendered nature of brother (which the authors of the time almost certainly did not have in mind), the term brother seems to be a closer association than “fellow worker” which, if stripped down, means little more than co-worker. However, once placed into the context of the time and further examined, the difference between the two forms of address becomes more stark.

Brother (as to a lesser extent, sister) for HERE is reserved almost exclusively, for the members of HERE itself. Brother is occasionally used to refer to members of the AFL, but beyond this the term is not used to refer to others directly outside the union. While used as a form of address (e.g., “Brother Smith,” or “Sister Jones”), it was most often used in addressing the whole body (e.g., “Dear sirs and brothers” at the beginning of an open letter). This indicates that members shared a feeling of unity. However, the term was also in regular use at this time by many civil societies and clubs, such as the Freemasons.³⁴⁵ The term, in this context, indicates less of an unbreakable, familiar bond and more their shared membership to an organization,

³⁴⁵ Various denominations of the Church also used “brother”/“sister” as a form of address. However, the key difference is that everyone in the above mentioned example may be referred to as “brother” or “sister,” whereas in the Church, generally some officials are to be called “Father” or “Mother” and cannot (generally) be referred to by “brother” or “sister.”

which as we have previously discussed held limited shared ideals, and no shared long-term goals. Certainly, it was a shared address, but was little more than this.

“Fellow workers” is nearly the opposite. First, IWW members used “fellow workers” to refer to members of the socialist movement. While this included Wobblies, it also included workers from across the world. There is an emphasis on the shared struggle of the US workers with the German and Russian workers indicated by referring to workers of those nations actively involved in the ongoing revolutions as “fellow workers.”³⁴⁶ While one could argue that the fact the term “fellow worker” could refer to workers other than Wobblies weakens its use as a shared term of address, what matters here is that the Wobblies identified those who shared the same long-term goal as members. Membership was necessarily included in this category, but what the shared address referred to was not the fact that members were up on their dues, but that they were after the same thing: socialist revolution. This title existed to emphasize two of the most salient features that made the IWW such a strong comrade network: shared goals and shared class standing.³⁴⁷

6.2 Universalism

While using the term “fellow worker” and focusing on the working class, it is crucial to understand that the IWW was not using class in a particularist manner. This reframes the class requirement for entry. It was not about excluding people from the network, but about making

³⁴⁶ There is an interesting note to be made here in that “fellow workers” seems also to applied to the peasants who made up the bulk of the revolutionary masses in the Russian Revolution. The title was then certainly more about political allegiance and the material interest of the person than their exact Marxist class position.

³⁴⁷ I would again note that the IWW also used the term comrade, albeit less frequently. This term was more exclusively used for members of the IWW and other socialists.

clear that there was a powerful class that was opposed to uniting humanity in common cause for progress. Class positions could affect this only because the capitalist class cannot display the solidarity required of comrades by definition of their class position. In other words, the IWW was explicit in its commitment to universalism. Discussion of their efforts to combat racism and sexism in their individual case report should serve as a background for their actions to embrace universalism. However, it was the IWW's considerable theoretical writings on universalism that explain how they could at once proclaim to be for the working class *and* all humanity. The IWW, although distancing itself from any orthodoxy, ascribed to Marx's idea that the working class as a universal class. For Marx and the IWW, this meant that the emancipation of the working class was the same as the emancipation of the entire human race. One Wobbly summarized this idea: it was the "Constructive Ideal of the IWW [that] the working class is the human race, and its liberation means the liberation of every human faculty and aspiration."³⁴⁸

The IWW's self-proclaimed mission was to achieve Industrial Democracy. Yet, in doing so, they wanted to "subdue the mad dog of capitalism and open the gates of freedom" for all humanity.³⁴⁹ They believed, as Marx did, that the rise of the proletariat would result, not in novel forms of class conflict, but would "destroy all classes except the working class."³⁵⁰ Thus, while they clearly and proudly saw themselves as the representatives of the working class and working class liberation, they could also write: "My party is all human-kind."³⁵¹ Thus, for the IWW, the

³⁴⁸ OBUM March 1919, 26.

³⁴⁹ OBUM June 1919, 38.

³⁵⁰ OBUM June 1919, 23; the writer takes great pains, after this passage, to make clear that he means not destroying individual members of other classes, but destroying the foundation of every class until no class can exist besides the laboring class, which is to say the abolition of class. The way this, and other Wobbly authors, talk about this is nearly identical to Marx's: "The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class, just as the condition for the liberation of the third estate, of the bourgeois order, was the abolition of all estates and all orders." See Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*, ed. Matthew Carmody (Marxist Internet Archive Publications, 2009), 80.

³⁵¹ OBUM April 1920, 47.

unification and rise of the working class to power, was at the same time the unification and rise of all of humanity to self-rule.

This theoretical universalism extended to the IWW's practice. As we have seen, the IWW mirrored "international capitalism" in that its members knew "no boundaries, color, race, creed, or sex."³⁵² The IWW organized workers based on the assumption that the workers "have only one fatherland, -Humanity."³⁵³ This not only rejected nationalistic obsession with lands of birth, but posited that humanity itself was a concept that could compel the same kind of loyalty that a nation did. In addition, they spoke of "the gospel that all working men are related to one another," as "the last word in solidarity," and of the whole of humanity as a "whole human family."³⁵⁴ In this way, when the "One Big Union" sought to unite the workers of the world, it was at the same time emancipating humanity and making it all one big happy family.³⁵⁵

By comparison, HERE members showed no concern for universalism. Rank-and-file members exhibited the few sparse references to universalism that we have been able to glean were exhibited, in contrast to their leaders. Besides the racism and sexism I discussed at length in the report on HERE, it is also worth recognizing the organization's total lack of understanding of the workers as anything resembling a universal class. HERE seemed to have no desire to unify

³⁵² OBUM March 1919, 23.

³⁵³ OBUM April, 1919, 24; It is worth noting this comes from a reprinted article from *L'Internationale* (a French socialist publication) written by Raymond Péricat, but was reprinted in agreement without commentary (all articles reprinted which the IWW did not endorse was accompanied by a scathing introduction, critique, or response). It was printed in OBUM under the title "A French View of the Berne Conference" and the IWW agreed with the critique Péricat offered of the reformist socialist Berne Conference. They viewed themselves as internationalist, which is who Péricat writes believes in his assertion.

³⁵⁴ OBUM May 1919, 48; OBUM February 1920, 31.

³⁵⁵ More keen eyed observers will note the overlap of this idea with the idea that the comrade social bond can be a universal democratic social bond after the revolution and the idea of Alexandra Kollontai that the comrade bond is similar to the familiar bond. This further demonstrates the validity of the claim Kollontai and myself are making about the power of this bond beyond the immediate aim of our study. We will touch upon this more in the further research chapter below.

the workers of the world beyond the professions and nationality they had chosen to organize. While a member argued that trade unionism should be a “brotherhood of man,” this sentiment did not appear to be echoed by members in power, nor was it anything resembling a recurring theme in HERE’s material.³⁵⁶ Overall, HERE’s purpose was to protect the narrow and immediate interests of members, against all others. The organization did not embrace the universalist understanding of class conflict that the IWW saw as a necessary stepping stone to universal emancipation. In HERE, there was no universalism to be found.

6.3 Long-Term Goal Reconsidered: Reconstruction

While clearly these unions had different ideas about their goals, they shared some ideas about immediate aims. The idea of Reconstruction permeated in HERE at the time this time. However, the term also appeared in the IWW material. While we have examined at some length what HERE meant by Reconstruction, and how it failed to be a long-term, shared, revolutionary goal, we have yet to see how it compares to the IWW’s use of the term. The section on the IWW did not need to examine the concept too closely, as it was completely supplemental to the numerous and prominent discussions of revolution to be found in the literature of the period.

Reconstruction appeared relatively early on within the pages of the *One Big Union Monthly*. In March 1919, an articles appeared entitled “A Study of Reconstruction.” The author opened with the fact that “The idea of reconstruction that is now agitating society finds its expression in the

³⁵⁶ M&S February 1919, 54; The exact phrase “brotherhood of man” appears five times across HERE’s material. Only in this instance was it used to refer to trade unionism by a rank-and-file member. One other instance uses it in a similar manner, with much more flowerily language, but by is unsigned, so it’s unclear who wrote it and if they are even a member (M&S June 1919, 59). All other instances were in reference to the idea in Christianity or in rival organizations, said with an air of contempt.

minds of some of the membership of the I.W.W.”³⁵⁷ However, how the author used it in this article is very similar to one of the meanings to be gathered from HERE’s use of term; it was the task of rebuilding the union after the war.³⁵⁸ The task was to rebuild and restructure the IWW’s Industrial Unions to be a more fit potential form of government for evolving fields in the post-war environment. The task of Reconstruction, even in the most modest definition, for the IWW was always a part of the overall task of revolution. The idea of Reconstruction, as with HERE, became something much more grand in the IWW as well. In a lengthy article that appeared in September 1919, the IWW’s hope for Reconstruction is made clear: “Socialism [...] should be the Labor program of reconstruction.”³⁵⁹

Unlike HERE, the IWW had a more consistent understanding of Reconstruction. Reconstruction as a whole inspired the Reconstruction within the IWW, as is shown in the first example above. Whatever else was to be done with Reconstruction, the IWW wanted to bring labor together under socialism as a stepping stone towards a socialist revolution. From the most limited meaning to the most expansive, Reconstruction for the IWW was not a distraction from, or an alternative to revolution, but a way in which the IWW could attempt to prepare more of the population for the revolution they sought to make.³⁶⁰

The IWW’s conception of Reconstruction was quite removed from what HERE had in mind for the same term. At its most radical, HERE wanted Reconstruction to give the US a government favorable to labor, but not a workers’ government (i.e., a socialist government). The

³⁵⁷ OBUM March 1919, 13.

³⁵⁸ OBUM March 1919, 13.

³⁵⁹ OBUM Sept. 1919, 25

³⁶⁰ While it would be ideal to have more information on the rank and file opinion of Reconstruction among the IWW, there is not enough indication within the literature as to the rank and file’s feeling on this particular matter, perhaps indicating that it was seen as a means to an ends by more experienced organizers, but that it never entered the rank-and-file’s broader understanding of the IWW’s purpose.

IWW demonstrated a more consistent understanding of Reconstruction than HERE. HERE had various understandings of Reconstruction, some members interpreted it to be little more than an increase in membership for unions (HERE in particular) and others considered it a series of reforms to install a more pro-labor order.

The most crucial difference in the deployment of the idea of Reconstruction by the IWW and HERE was the purpose they ascribed to it. Where the IWW saw Reconstruction as a means to an end (i.e., revolution), HERE saw the shorter term Reconstruction as an end in itself. Beyond embracing a more labor-friendly Wilsonian liberalism, HERE saw no point to Reconstruction beyond this, certainly not the attainment of political power by the working class. In short, Reconstruction for HERE was a mangled mess of meanings for a seemingly short-term reform movement, while for the IWW it was a clear stepping stone to revolution.³⁶¹

If HERE and IWW shared Reconstruction in common as the same idea, and held that alone as a long-term goal, neither would qualify as a shared, long-term, revolutionary goal. However, since the IWW's understanding of Reconstruction is that it was a mid-term goal on the road to socialism, whereas HERE's was not, we can certainly qualify the IWW's Reconstruction as *a part* of the long-term revolutionary goal, which the IWW repeatedly spoke about as its central purpose.³⁶²

³⁶¹ The IWW's understanding was influenced by Daniel DeLeon's idea of the socialist Reconstruction of society which had been in circulation since at least 1905 and its reintroduction through information the emerging socialist state, including the 1918 book by Louis C. Fraina (*Revolutionary Socialism: A Study in Socialist Reconstruction*). Indeed, the SLP was defined by its reconstruction idea, and while the IWW had split from DeLeon early on, his ideas still had some sway in the organization. See: Daniel De Leon, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society* (Labor News Company, 1905), <http://archive.org/details/socialistreconst00dele>; Louis C. Fraina, *Revolutionary Socialism: A Study in Socialist Reconstruction* (The Communist Press, 1918), <http://archive.org/details/revolutionarysoc00coreiala>.

³⁶² There is room here for further exploration of the concept, not just within these unions but unions of the time and the socialist movement. The room for exploration of Reconstruction as an idea among socialists is added to by the fact that socialists continued to use and reuse the concept of Reconstruction until the present. The USSR seems to have used the term in a very similar context to how the IWW was using it to refer to their own rebuilding efforts

6.5 Membership Retention

HERE:

Membership numbers for HERE were available month by month for the period of our study. However, these records, while promising in the initial phases of research, proved unreliable due to the discrepancies found within them and other official numbers given within the same convention. The official number given for February 1919 announced at the convention was 60,679, while the number given from the locals for that same month was 60,743. While this may appear small, these are only the differences I saw as they contradicted each other in the same document. There is no way that I could estimate the difference between the “official” numbers of members for each month for which we do not have an “official” announcement. It was not explicitly clear where each source was getting the numbers presented, but it appears that the locals self-reported numbers with no oversight or hard proof needed (such as financial records). The very manner in which the month by month numbers were recorded makes itself doubly susceptible to human error.³⁶³ Given the troubled history this union had with locals overestimating numbers of members to boost their voting power at convention, it seems probable that locals could do some “creative accounting” to accomplish this.³⁶⁴ While perhaps the national could have done this as well, it is very unlikely that they would have, as they would have very

after the Russian Civil War and then eventually after the Second World War. Moreover, with the work of W.E.D. DeBois on Radical Reconstruction with his book *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) reexamining the original US Reconstruction as a sort of socialist revolution, the idea seems to have experienced renewed interest. The term is still in use today by one of the largest socialist parties in the US: the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), whose recent publication of *Socialist Reconstruction: A Better Future for the United States* (2022) spells out what they imagine a post-revolution US might look like. The term Reconstruction seems to have taken on a post-revolutionary meaning, whereas the IWW was using it more to refer to a pre-revolutionary movement preparing the way for the revolution itself. This evolution, while far from the main topic of this project, is worthy of through investigation in the future.

³⁶³ Error both by the original counters and compliers in 1918-1920 and by your humble author who had to add each month’s tally by hand as no computer program accessible to them that could recognize the numbers

³⁶⁴ See further explanation of this in the historical background section above.

little motive to misrepresent the numbers announced at conventions.³⁶⁵ Again, it is not clear how they got the numbers they presented at convention. However, given that the preceding and proceeding paragraphs around the announcement of the membership numbers refer to financial audits, it is safe to assume that the membership numbers here refer to numbers calculated from financial records.³⁶⁶ However, these official numbers were only announced every two years, February 1919 is the only report strictly in our period.

Despite this minor setback to finding accurate data, we have official numbers for the years we want to study (1918-1920) and the union announced these numbers at conventions, and reprinted through convention proceedings repeatedly, at least until the 1950s. These numbers appear to be computed from the same financial sources as the number just cited.³⁶⁷ Union scholars John P. Henderson and Sue Cobble have used these numbers, lending to their credibility as accurate reflections of HERE's members at this time.³⁶⁸ Given the verification of these numbers, and the more credible source they appear to come from, it is more reliable to use these numbers to get an accurate idea of the membership of HERE through the period we are studying.

With these considerations, the assessment of membership numbers for HERE becomes relatively simple to assess. In February 1918, the membership of HERE was reported to be 65,938.³⁶⁹ In February 1919, as we have discussed, the membership had dropped to 60,679.

³⁶⁵ I assert this because these numbers were not the direct numbers for their representation at the AFL convention and even if they were, it would take a staggering amount of fraud to actually get enough convention delegates to significantly increase their influence. Given that they were already one of the largest AFL affiliates and close allies of the Gompers faction, lying for this would make very little sense.

³⁶⁶ HERE 20th Convention, 106.

³⁶⁷ Again, there is little clarity as to the source of the calculations.

³⁶⁸ John P. Henderson, *Labor Market Institutions and Wages in the Lodging Industry* (East Lansing, 1965), 132, <http://archive.org/details/labormarketinsti0000unse>; Cobble, "Sisters in the Craft," 537.

³⁶⁹ 34th HERE Convention (1957), 15-16.

However, by February 1920, membership had dropped significantly to 53,540.³⁷⁰ This represents *an 18.8% decrease in membership* between 1918 and 1920, and a decline of nearly 12% between 1919 to 1920. In other words, *HERE lost 12,398 members between 1918 and 1920*, a significant failure in membership retention. Considering the difficult circumstances, this is hardly surprising. However, when we consider the IWW IU 1100 case in comparison, it is difficult to say that the loss of membership was inevitable.

IWW IU 1100:

The IWW's IU 1100 had the opposite trajectory to its more conservative counterpart. Before we can discuss this, there is a brief note to be made about sources. Unlike HERE's membership numbers being for the whole years of 1918 to 1920, IU 1100s had more reliable records of month-to-month membership (with a few exceptions) from published financial records. While this leads to a slight imbalance between HERE and IU 1100 in regard to record keeping, we still have a good understanding of how IU 1100 fared over the time in general. Because IU 1100 used financial records, there was very little room for miscounting, as they had to accurately report how much they received in dues so they could give the appropriate amount of money to the national. Overestimation or exaggeration would have direct financial consequences for IU 1100, and there would be little incentive to fake membership on a small scale as, after the first 500 members, a IU had to have another 500 members to get 1 more vote at

³⁷⁰ This number actually represents another indication that the month-by-month numbers were severely flawed, and that the lack of clarity on their calculation leaves us with too many question to proceed with them. The number for 1920 (53,540) is presumably calculated in February of 1920, as this is when the other membership numbers were calculated. However, the February 1920 numbers calculated from the month by month reports (which again are very prone to error, so I have no confidence in this number) found that there was a reported 59,886 members during February of 1920 (a discrepancy of 6,346).

the national convention. The creation of this kind of membership would undoubtedly bankrupt an IU already operating on a limited budget. In other words, the financial records here, while not fully complete as HERE's and taken differently than HERE's numbers were, are far more reliable numbers for membership of the periods for which we do have records. However, it is worth noting that our numbers can only account for dues paying members, which is not a full accounting of IWW members, due to their flexible enforcement of dues payment. Many more members may have been involved in IU 1100, but were not dues paying members, primarily because the IWW as well as IU 1100 in particular, found their membership base in the lowest paid positions which were not considered worthy of union membership by the trade unions (such as AFL associated unions including HERE).

The first month we have records for IU 1100 membership is September 1918, at which point the IU had a reported 165 members.³⁷¹ Unfortunately, after this, there was a gap in the records from October 1918 until March 1919, when the membership stood at 615. There was another gap between April 1919 and May 1919, but when numbers return, we can see that there was a slight decrease in membership of 527. This number remained steady, with the number of members for the months of July and August 1919 being 518. However, here we can see some problems in using month-by-month statistics. The next month (September 1919), the number of

³⁷¹ This number is reconstructed from records of new membership between September 1918 and September 1919. While this may give some pause in the accuracy, there is little cause to believe that the numbers are inaccurate. Firstly, IU 1100 was new, so the low membership for September 1918 is makes sense in this regard. Secondly, the report was internal and had nothing to do with representation so there is little reason for reporters to overestimate the number except prestige. Thirdly, considering that the IU 1100 did not have an incredible recorded growth in this period compared to the other IUs discussed in the same announcement any exaggeration is unlikely considering they did not get any reward or notice for their membership increasing to this degree. Lastly, considering that the IWW national would be looking for initiation fees and dues from new members during the period, any major discrepancy here would certainly result in an audit from national, which was very concerned with money matters, considering the many problems their fellow unions had suffered due to money mismanagement. The public financial records, also give a layer of accountability to these numbers (which is more than can be said for HERE, which did publish some financial records, but only in such a manner that anyone without access to the books for the union would be unable to accurately make an assessment of any claims).

members increased to 721. There was no explanation for the sudden increase, but considering the move from summer to autumn, it is possible that some domestic servants, whose employers had gone to a summer home, returned, returning them to employment.³⁷²

After this, there was an uptick in membership starting in September 1919 when they had 721 members. The next month (October 1919) they had some 752. There was a brief gap from November to December 1919, but the number resume again in January 1920, where there appears to have been a slight dip in membership (717 members), and a more dramatic dip in February 1920 (down to 616). However, they immediately recouped their losses³⁷³ and added to it in March 1920, where membership rose higher than ever before to 925. The next month, and incidentally the last month we have numbers for, April 1920 appears to have been the peak membership at 986 members.

The publication of membership numbers ended with their publication in April 1920. Within a few months the IU 1100 ceased to exist, not from a lack of membership or interest, but because the IWW as a whole reorganized their IU system, putting together workers of previously

³⁷² There is a brief aside to be made here regarding additional data for IU 1100: initiation numbers. The number of initiates from the previous month should account for all growth. However, while in August 1919 there were only 518 members, there were only 151 initiations, meaning there should be 669 regular dues paying members for September 1919, not the 721 we find. This is likely because members of the IWW could be delinquent on their dues and could reenter the union without paying a re-initiation fee. However, our records would not reflect these members when they were delinquent on their fees, it only shows us dues paying members. In any case, initiation numbers seem to bare little relevance to actual membership, presumably because people would join and never pay additional dues, either because they no longer wished to remain after the first month or because they did not have the resources to pay dues consistently. This is further supported by the curious case of July 1919 and August 1919 when membership remained at 518 despite a reported 191 initiations to the union in that July. Either 191 members left between July and August, exactly replacing the new initiates, which seems highly unlikely, or some combination of new initiates remained in the union as due paying members for a second month while that precise number of members among of preexisting membership left in the same period, which is also seems unlikely, or that the initiations (perhaps conducted by an overly ambitious organizer) did not lead to members actually remaining in the union past the month of their initiation, which seems the most probable explanation. Therefore, it is best to leave the initiation data out of our analysis.

³⁷³ It actually seems more likely to me, given what I know about this organization, that they didn't even lose that many members, but that for one reason or another, more members than usually failed to keep up with their dues that month.

separate IUs (IU 1100 appears to have become the “foodstuff” IU 460, with the addition of food manufactory workers).³⁷⁴ Even if numbers were available, it would be impossible to tell how many members were gained through merger rather than through recruitment and continuing membership. However, with the numbers we have we can safely say that the IWW IU 1100 kept their membership during this period, and, if we take the month-by-month numbers alone for the beginning and end of our period there was a *497.6% increase in membership* from September 1918 to April 1920. In other words, there was nearly a *5-fold increase* in membership. For each month after September 1918, IU 1100 acquired 34.2 members, which obviously meets the requirements of maintaining membership.³⁷⁵ In the simplest terms possible, it appears the IU 1100 maintained, and in fact grew, its membership during this period of exceptional political repression.

6.6 Resources and Comparative Resources

From the above we have seen the general trajectory of membership retention during the period we are interested in studying. However, it is necessary to address them comparatively more directly than the above has accomplished. These unions differed significantly in size and resource availability. In this section, we will address the issue of finances in each of the unions, beginning with an assessment of membership dues in each union and then continuing on to compare the unions’ resources to one another more fairly by calculating the amount of resources (expressed here in dollars) each union held per member it had. This will effectively allow us to compare how much money each union could mobilize to address the issues of membership

³⁷⁴ OBUM, Oct. 1920, 37.

³⁷⁵ To factor in a more broadly focused analysis of the numbers, the whole of the data set produces a linear regression equation of $Y = 34.2x + 234$ (with an R-squared of 0.76).

retention, to see if one union had an advantage in this regard that could account for our findings instead of the presence of a comrade trust network.

To begin, it is worth noting that there was a significant difference in membership fees for each union. While the IWW had a standard monthly membership fee of \$0.50³⁷⁶ throughout the period we studied, HERE did not have a standardized rate. Rather, each HERE local set the monthly membership fees with only a minimum being required by national to pay into the general coffer as well as various funds. It appears from the records we do have about membership fees at HERE locals that membership fees (for 1919-1920) ranged from as low as \$0.35 to high as \$2.00.³⁷⁷ Some locals even provide a price-range, although no source explained why some members may have been paying as much as \$1.50 more in membership fees than other members in the same local.

While this would appear to be a factor affecting membership retention, it is hard to say how much it would affect membership overall, as the numbers fluctuated. It is worth noting a few factors affecting this. To begin, as we have discussed briefly, the IWW was known to let members lapse on dues and return without any difficulties. While many HERE locals charged more in fees than the IWW, these fees went towards a Death and Sick fund, which would pay out to members, while the IWW had no comparable funds. Further, HERE catered to “craft” workers, meaning workers who were considered more skilled or educated and therefore paid at higher rates than supposedly “unskilled” or “uneducated” workers. The IWW, on the other hand, was known for catering to “low skill” and “no skill” workers, famously including hobos (a

³⁷⁶ For reference, \$1.00 in January of 1919 is equal to \$19.58 in July 2025, meaning \$0.50 here is worth \$9.79 today (per the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ calculator which can be found here : https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

³⁷⁷ HERE 21st Convention, 57-71; Today this would be worth \$6.85-\$39.16.

specific sub-culture of impoverished migrating workers).³⁷⁸ Given this, there is absolutely no means by which we can assess the relative cost of maintaining membership for the members of the IU 1100 and HERE.

While we cannot fairly assess the relative cost of membership to members of the IU 111 and HERE, we can assess the union's relative resources. To do this, we must compare membership and resources that the unions possessed. What matters more than sheer number of members is member to resource ratio (the amount of resources divided by the number of members). This number will give us an accurate idea of how much money the union could deploy relative to its size. To accomplish this, we will take a snapshot of the organizations when we can get the best information for both numbers (dollars and members). We will use only the cash on hand values to assess resources because it is impossible to find a revenue for HERE which represents what the nation and all locals collectively held, as locals retained the majority of the dues and fees they collected and these are not reported in the records directly. With these caveats, the amount of cash on hand held by these unions will give us a good indication of their comparative strengths relative to their size.

In March 1919, IU 1100 had 615 members and ended the month with \$126.08 on hand. The cash on hand ratio is *\$0.21 per member*. However, we can also account for the whole of the IWW's cash on hand. In March 1919, the IWW as a whole held \$3,542.20 on hand, however, we only have rough estimates for the whole IWW's membership for the year of 1919 as a whole:

³⁷⁸ Although falling outside our period, "T-Bone Slim," author the pamphlet *Starving Amidst too Much* was a noted hobo as well as a Wobbly singer-song-writer, and worker in the food-service industry. For more see: Clayton, Owen. "Puns, Politics, and Pork Chops: The 'Insignificant Magnitude' of T-Bone Slim." *The Journal of Working-Class Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019): 6–23.

68,000.³⁷⁹ This would give us an *estimated* overall IWW cash on hand to membership ratio of \$0.05 per member. If we add this to IU 1100s cash on hand to members, we get a rate of \$0.26 *per member*.

In February 1919, HERE had 60,679 members and had (across various funds, Liberty Bonds, and direct cash on hand) \$146,982.86. The rate of money on hand then was \$2.42 *per member*. If we take only cash directly on hand into consideration, excluding bonds or anything else non-liquid, we have a rate of \$1.27 *per member*. This represents only what the national had on hand, not the locals which, as stated, retained the majority of dues and other fees paid by members, unlike with IU 1100 which gave only a small portion of its raised revenues to the IWW's general body. Even taking the most conservative figure given for HERE's cash on hand. As HERE had a five-to-one advantage over the IU 1100 in term of resources.³⁸⁰ Clearly, the difference in membership retention cannot be accounted for by superior resources.

It is worth discussing the use of resources by these unions besides their mere presence. The IU 1100 (and the IWW more broadly) seems to have spent much of their resources on printing, promotion material, and for the ability of organizers to go across the country. Opposite this, HERE did use a significant part of its resources for promotional material, as well as the pay and travel expenses of organizers. HERE was also able to offer direct benefits to members that IU 1100 could not. HERE had Death Benefits and Sick Benefits available to members, although the latter seems to be handled on a local-by-local basis and was not universal (but appears near

³⁷⁹ Peter Stone, "The Industrial Workers of the World," in *The American Labor Year Book 1919-1920*, ed. Alexander Trachtenberg, vol. 3 (The Rand School of Social Science, 1920), <http://archive.org/details/americanlaborye00resegoog>.

³⁸⁰ Again, this does not even account for HERE's local, which seem to have held a majority of the funds collected from members, meaning HERE's figure is the most conservative figure that could be produce for HERE's actual material resources on hand.

universal). The IU 1100 (and IWW as a whole) had no equivalent. These benefits tied members directly to HERE as neither were still available if one left the union, and one had to keep active membership with up-to-date dues to be eligible for payout. Exploring the aspect of resource use gives us another reason why HERE, not IU 1100, from a purely material perspective, should have membership retention, regardless of the difficult circumstances, and yet, it is the IU 1100, which could offer little more than comradeship that retained membership during this period.

6.7 Other Factors

The comparison would be incomplete without further considering several factors that could have been affecting membership of HERE and IU 1100. These factors are minor compared to any of the factors discussed above; however, to narrow down on the effect of comradeship on membership retention, it is worth mentioning them, and attempting to account for their possible effect on membership. We will address three minor concerns that emerged from our study up to this point. We will address the possibility of different compositions of membership within each union as regards to the effect Prohibition might have had differentiated between the two. After we have addressed this, we will address the uneven effect of government and vigilante repression on each organization. To more thoroughly eliminate the effect of differing political circumstances, we will address the flip-side of this repression argument, and consider the health of the socialist movement as opposed to liberalism in the country to dispel the possibility that the IU 1100's growth and retention can be attributed to an increasing interest in socialism after the Russian Revolution, whereas the decline in membership in HERE could be accounted for by the failures of Wilsonian Liberalism, which was then becoming clear as the world still recovered from the devastating First World War.

The most obvious factor to account for is that HERE was may have been more narrowly focused on work effected by Prohibition as only hotel and restaurant (including bars) workers were permitted, whereas IU 1100 admitted restaurant (including bar), hotel, *and* domestic workers. The heavy blow dealt to HERE would seem to have been more severe because of this. Unfortunately, we have no data on how what percentage of HERE or IU 1100's membership was involved in the service of alcohol or were in business that vended such beverages. HERE had dedicated locals for bars in some instances (although not uniformly or exclusively) whereas IU 1100 definitively did not have such designated divisions. HERE certainly had a significant portion of its members involved in the trade, particularly as bartenders, but there is no evidence that indicates that the IU 1100 had any less investment in the sale of alcohol, and considerable literature from the IU 1100 discusses the conditions of bartenders. It appears from their concern over the effects of Prohibition that a considerable amount of HERE's membership was to be directly affected, whereas IU 1100 does not speak on the issue of Prohibition, and when it is mentioned by the IWW they seem unworried about any effect it might have on membership.³⁸¹ Given the lack of clarity, we have to work with what evidence we have for each. The information is very unclear and we can only say that we do not know how the organizations were differently affected by the imposition of Prohibition on their work.

Another factor is the particular troubles faced by the IWW, as opposed to the AFL-affiliated unions. While all movements that could have been considered left of center faced repression in this period, the IWW was undoubtedly the primary target of most reactionary repression. Indeed, Criminal Syndicalism laws, which began appearing in the US in 1917 and

³⁸¹ What little appears about Prohibition is mixed to positive. Many socialists of this time, including Eugene V. Debs, thought that Prohibition might help workers' clear their minds enough to understand capitalist exploitation. Obviously, history has discredited this theory, but it was a widely held belief at the time and may go to explain why more IU 1100 officials did not voice their concern about Prohibition to their professions if such worries existed.

spread from state to state, were tailor made to combat the IWW, and served their purpose well. They essentially gave any law-enforcement officer in any of the states where these laws were on the books a legitimate reason to arrest Wobblies simply for being members of the organization. These spread across the nation during this period but did not end until 1924.

The AFL could claim no comparable level of political violence against them. They experienced police violence when its unions went on strike (as did the IWW). However, the AFL was a legitimate organization and was seen as such by authorities. The president of the AFL, Samuel Gompers, was a political ally of incumbent President of the US, Woodrow Wilson throughout the period of concern to us. In contrast, the Department of Justice had investigated the IWW at the behest of President Wilson just a few years before our period.³⁸² The repression against the IWW was certainly more substantial than that experienced by the AFL, and it would be difficult to argue that this would increase IWW membership, considering the risk involved in being a part of the IWW increased significantly, whereas there was no comparable risk increase for AFL members. Private vigilante groups almost exclusively focused on the IWW as a target for violence, while some AFL locals suffered violence, the AFL's hesitancy to admit workers of color and immigrants made them less of a target for the largely racially motivated violence from organizations such as the American Legion, Knights of Liberty, and Ku Klux Klan. One could argue that the attacks against the IWW made them more popular, since they certainly appeared in the news more than they normally would be due to government and vigilante attacks against them. However, the mainstream press, and even the right-most labor presses universally despised

³⁸² Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States: Volume IV: The Industrial Workers of the World, 1905-1917*, 4:277.

the IWW, considering them racial provocateurs, Bolsheviks, German agents, poverty-stricken thugs, and, in many cases, all the above.³⁸³ Given this, it is nearly impossible to argue that the attacks against the IWW did anything but hurt their chances of reaching new members. In fact, this campaign was a definite threat to retaining members due to public pressure against membership. Any publicity increased attention in the press brought the IWW that might have reached potential members was counteracted by the negativity of the press and made it more difficult for existing members to continue their membership as they would experience significant public pressure to disassociate from an organization which was painted in the popular press as a terroristic, anti-American band of vagrants.

It is worth considering the political landscape of the time to see if this could have favored the membership retention of one union over another. While it was the time of the most elevated repression against socialist ideas in the US, it was also one of the peaks of support for socialism in the US. Famously, in 1912 Eugene V. Debs as the Socialist party candidate for President won about 900,000 votes, which represents about 6% of the national vote.³⁸⁴ Yet, in 1920, when Debs ran again as the Socialist Party candidate, he won 915,302 votes.³⁸⁵ This should represent a steady level of support, but it actually represents a decline in support as in the eight years between 1912 and 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment had gone into effect and the electorate had otherwise expanded, meaning that while Debs received roughly the same number of votes, this

³⁸³ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Quadrangle, 1969), 378–79; Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the US Vol. VII: Labor and World War I, 1914-1918* (International Publishers, 1987), 7:292–314.

³⁸⁴ Paul Le Blanc, *A Short History of the U.S. Working Class: From Colonial Times to the Twenty-First Century*, Second edition (Haymarket Books, 2017), 64.

³⁸⁵ David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America: A History*, First Edition (Quadrangle, 1967), 157.; It is worth noting that Debs gained more attention for his campaign because he was running from a federal prison at the time. Debs was also competing against a labor party (the Farmer-Labor Party) in 1920, which most likely affect the vote for him, however, in 1912, he was running against former president, and progressive, Theodore Roosevelt and the labor-friend Wilson.

represented a mere 3.6% of the vote as opposed to the 6% he won in the especially competitive 1912 election.³⁸⁶ While splits within the Socialist Party itself might explain some of this loss of vote by percentage, there was no other explicitly Socialist (or Communist) party running nationwide (the Socialist Labor Party had a place on 14 states' ballots) and many newer parties put their support behind Debs, even as they left the Socialist Party. Even if we are to add the Socialist Labor Party's vote to the socialist vote for that year, we get a socialist vote of 945,815, hardly a massive increase from Debs's vote in 1912.³⁸⁷ As the vote count indicates, there is little change in interest in socialism in this period. There is certainly not an increase in interest reflected by votes during this period that would indicate any significant change in interest in socialism. Clearly, it was not the IWW's advertised socialism that was attracting new members.

HERE's politics were much more mainstream than the IWW's and much less explicit. HERE, like the AFL it was affiliated with, was officially unpolitical, however, in practice they supported the Democratic Party, which had a broadly liberal philosophy which included a wide-spectrum of beliefs ranging from progressive liberalism of Northern urban laborers to the regressive agrarian-republicanism of Southern white landowners. The war had hurt the reputation of the Democratic Party since Wilson had promised peace and then prepared the nation for war, led the war effort, and tried to make the US take a leading role in the war and peace process. While the Democrats lost the 1920 election to the Republican Warren G. Harding, this was only a return to the Republican domination of the Fourth Party System (1896-1932) which had been interrupted by the competitive four-way contest of the 1912 presidential election between the

³⁸⁶ Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America*, 157.

³⁸⁷ Socialist Labor Party, *VOTE FOR PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY* (n.d.), accessed August 14, 2025, <http://archive.org/details/VoteForPresidentialAndVicePresidentialCandidatesOfTheSocialistLabor.>; The Socialist Labor Party also ran a candidate in 1912, and was on the ballot in 20 states.

Democrat Wilson, Socialist Debs, Progressive (Bull-Moose) Theodore Roosevelt, and Republican William Howard Taft. Given the looser connection with liberalism and the fact that the AFL (and affiliated unions, such as HERE) was officially not political, it is unlikely that this would have any appreciable effect on members. The most important issue to restaurant workers (and many hotel workers) was undoubtedly the passing of Prohibition, which HERE took a strong stand against repeatedly and loudly. This allegiance to liquor sales was far more important with their target industry than an allegiance to any party (and was an allegiance the IWW could not claim). We can safely conclude, HERE's political affiliation was not having an appreciable effect on membership.

6.8 A Comparative Conclusion

The cases of HERE and IU 1100 could hardly be more different. HERE was a reformist, disjointed coalition of workers, with no clear goal or discipline, pushing headfirst into difficult political circumstances and bleeding membership faster than they could bring membership on board. In contrast, IU 1100 was a revolutionary, strongly disciplined group of committed comrades, working towards a clear and shared goal, who were not only surviving particularly difficult circumstances (mainly political repression), but growing as they did. HERE had more resources per member, a longer track record, powerful political allies, and was not facing the same threat which IU 1100 (as part of the IWW) was facing during the First Red Scare. While Prohibition is to blame for the majority of the membership loss experienced by HERE, there is little reason to believe that the IU 1100 was not equally subject to being affected by this considering the overlap in industries served by the unions.

Give the comparison discussed here we can be robustly confident that the presence of comradery in IU 1100 was responsible for the membership retention that union enjoyed at the same time that HERE's ranks were depleted. Other factors such as resources, popularity of stated political beliefs, and differences in make-up did not account for the membership retention in IU 1100, nor the lack thereof in HERE. Considering the factors we discussed, the IU 1100 was at a serious disadvantage: the press was against them, the government and private groups were violently repressing them, they had limited resources (compared to HERE, who had a five-to-one advantage over IU 1100), and their ideology was not gaining popularity at the time to a degree that would account for membership growth or retention. *Only the presence of a comrade trust network can reasonably explain the membership retention IU 1100 experienced.*

Conclusion: A Future for Comrades?

This project has advanced our understanding of what comradeship looks like and its functions within a union. However, as we have developed and tested our concepts throughout this work, there are some clear limits to what we could achieve. First, since I could not empirically demonstrate the presence of class consciousness, I have only proven empirically that comradeship raises membership retention during periods of political repression, even if I can only explain this through the construction of robust class consciousness. Second, while our cases were carefully selected, and were the best possible choices among the population according to our methodology and requirements, they were far from perfect. In addition to our concern about the cases in general, there is also the problem of having to use historical cases at all in a concept I claim has political relevance to today's labor movement. In this conclusion, I discuss the limits of this study and propose some clear next steps for further research into the concept of comradeship and its place in the labor movement. Having discussed the limitations of our study, I also discuss what this study does inform us about in the present.

In this project, I have only been able to move *towards* an understanding of comradeship. However, given the urgency of reforms of the current labor movement to make it more resilient in the face of rising far-right authoritarianism, I argue this project's prospects are too important to ignore. This concept demands continued research; both into its theoretical elements and further empirical research into the central claim of this work. At the same time, the urgent need for a renewed and redoubled labor movement requires that immediate labor leaders act in the direction of comradeship. In this conclusion, we will develop both halves of this study, exploring its limitations while outlining ways future research might overcome these challenges. All of this can help us gain a more complete understanding of comradeship.

Limitation and Further Research

My theoretical foundations leads me to assert that the cause of comradery's membership retention ability is that comradery leads to the formation of a more robust class consciousness within workers in the union. Yet, it would be desirable to be able to study class consciousness itself to verify that comradery is helping build it. *This is no easy task.* Studying a phenomenon of the mind that we cannot scan for in the brain never lends itself to simplicity. However, the clearest way that one might go about this is ethnographic research into a union that uses comradery, to assess the class consciousness of members separately from their loyalty to the union itself, and the quality of that class consciousness. While more specific details of the study design is best left to future researchers, it would likely take the appearance of embedded research in two unions (one comrade union, one non-comrade union), participating in union business regularly and observing labor actions taken by the union such as strikes, demonstrations, and protests.³⁸⁸ Consistent consulting with the membership during and in between these actions, as well as structured interviews, would yield the best results for understanding members' class consciousness. If future research can assess the class consciousness of members in what we could call a comrade union, they would be able to compare this to similarly conducted research in a union that does not have it. Ideally, this non-comrade union would be nearly identical to the comrade union in the same manner that we attempted to find similar unions in this study.

³⁸⁸ I advocate for the Extended Case Study Method developed by Michael Burawoy and used for his excellent study *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism* (1979) among other of his works. In any case, a reflexive approach would be needed to study the phenomena.

Future research will certainly have to address class consciousness directly from within a union with ethnographic research. However, this case study can be replicated to produce more evidence for the claim I have made about class consciousness as determined through membership retention. Further, this study can be modified in object to find what other effects comradery might have on unions. This may move the research away from class consciousness, strictly speaking, and focus more on the democratic health of these organizations through factors such as election participation, turnover of officers, and ability of members to voice concerns to elected officials. However, in replicating this study, or modifying its object, the following limitations of our case studies should be taken into account and addressed to achieve more valid results.

Given the population of cases, IWW IU 1100 and HERE were certainly the options to produce valid results. However, they do not represent a perfect logic of replication. IU 1100 had (in mid-1919) 1/100th of the membership of HERE. While the development of a means of resource comparison further demonstrated that the IU 1100 was less likely than HERE to retain members, this situation is far from ideal for replication. Further research must find cases that share more similar starting membership numbers and, ideally, a more similar resource to membership ratio between the two (or more) unions. Cases with more complete records would also be desirable. While at the time of selection the records for each union appeared more or less complete (IU 1100 was missing some months of membership data and ended abruptly), later investigation revealed the membership numbers for HERE to be unreliable on a month-to-month basis. The only way to remedy this is to find cases with remarkable record keeping or more contemporary cases that have digitized records of membership and finances or which must report them to the government.

In this same vein, more cases are ideal for validity. While time, funding, and depth of study required of each union to determine the presence of a comradeship meant that having two cases was the maximum that I could feasibly achieve for this study, my original intention was to have six cases (three comrade unions, three non-comrade unions), and this design is still ideal for future research with more time and funding. This design (or more cases) is ideal because with each additional case the validity of our finding that comradeship is a causal factor in membership retention increases and the likelihood that membership is attributable to any other factor decreases. These cases need not be all from the US, even if we wish to relate our findings to the US labor movement, as there is nothing about comradeship that is culturally specific to the US. If our understanding of comradeship is complete, it must be inter-culturally compatible. Further studies may also wish to use cases of a more contemporary nature. While we selected the period of 1918-1920 because of the unique political circumstances which were relatively short-term, there is value in studying longer periods of political repression (such as Second Red Scare in the US of the late 1940s to the mid-1950s or the Nazi occupation of France 1940-1944). These avenues open up further and more thorough research that could validate my conclusions about the effects of comradeship.

Case selection is crucial in this process, as I briefly discussed above. However, with further study, a more contemporary example of a comrade union would be ideal. Firstly, as mentioned, this will likely address many of the shortcomings of the cases selected here in terms of data available to study. In addition, it will address a concern that arises from the mere fact that the study selected cases from over 100 years ago: is comradeship a relevant concept to study in our supposedly post-ideological age so skeptical of explicitly ideological political movements and even more skeptical of collective political action? The difficulty arises in actually finding a case

to study, and beyond simply returning the IWW, there are only a few unions in the English-speaking world that would be likely candidates for comradery. Notable possibilities include Workers United (an SEIU³⁸⁹ affiliate), United Auto Workers (UAW), and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Regardless, further investigation is crucial to understanding the population of cases available for further research. Moreover, further investigation should look into the possibilities of using cases outside the English-speaking world not only to expand the population of cases but also to diversify findings.

For my comrade union, I used a historical example of comradery in a union that explicitly used the term comrade for members. It is crucial to move away from this more obvious case of comradery to bring out the contemporary relevancy of the comrade bond. Modern cases are unlikely to use the word comrade, or discuss it as openly as the IWW did. However, as future research looks for cases of comradery, even if not in name, they must retain their radical elements. I will restate here clearly, so there is no room for doubt, that comradery requires a shared revolutionary hope, and this hope must be the ascendancy of the working class over the current ruling class. No substitutions or divergence on this point is permissible as it is central to our claim as to comradery's building power. While the statement of these shared goals may be more or less explicit or "official"³⁹⁰ they must be present or else (at best) we will simply have a trust network, which hardly would require this much work to demonstrate as beneficial for any given organization.

³⁸⁹ Service Employees International Union

³⁹⁰ I mean that it does not have to be at the level of the IWW, which devotes a significant portion of its founding documents explicit statements of revolutionary aims (although this is ideal). For instance, the Workers United is not an explicitly socialist by any stretch of the word. However, (speaking from my own personal knowledge) many members and officers are, they claim to be an industrial union (which is the same as the IWW), with broad goals of making a world for the workers.

As future research pursues validity in my empirical claim, it is also crucial to pursue two theoretical lines of inquiry begun in Kollontai's work on comradeship. Firstly, Kollontai, as we could only briefly discuss above, considered the comrade bond to be the potential social bond of a post-capitalist, democratic order. This requires much more exploration, but I have set up the research quite well in this regard by bringing it into conversation with Tilly. Tilly's focus on how trust networks are incorporated into systems of rule is particularly useful to understanding how comrade networks would allow smaller communities to harmoniously incorporate into larger democratic systems without either sacrificing autonomy or risking some kind of localism whereby individual comrade networks consider themselves apart from others in the system of integrated trust networks. While this is far too complex to examine satisfactorily here, I hope that I have given the future researcher enough to begin an investigation.

The second mode for expansion in the theoretical realm is something Kollontai is very interested in and which we have only been able to spare a few precious words to in this project. Kollontai is interested in comradeship as an alternative to the capitalist family structure. While her critique of the family has made Kollontai a foundational figure in contemporary family abolitionist theories, her alternative gets little attention.³⁹¹ Her idea of the social bond of the family being expanded and democratized as the comrade social bond is essential to any understanding of how we could potentially evolve social relations beyond the current property based relationship of the family. At the same time, Kollontai is careful to examine how capitalist

³⁹¹ Patrick J. L. Cockburn, "Paths to a World without Families: Reasons, Means, and Ends in Family Abolitionism," *Contemporary Political Theory* 24, no. 3 (2025): 390–407, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-024-00729-6>; Sophie Lewis, *Abolish the Family: A Manifesto for Care and Liberation*, 1st ed. (Verso, 2022); Marina Martinez Mateo and Esther Neuhann, "What Makes Reading Alexandra Kollontai so Intriguing Today?," *Feminist Theory*, SAGE Publications, April 30, 2025, 14647001251336165, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647001251336165>; M. E. O'Brien, *Family Abolition: Capitalism and the Communizing of Care*, 1st ed. (Pluto Press, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.3508398>.

ideology creates and recreates the family and how a workers' ideology would need to challenge it. In a similar line of inquiry, the way the comrade bond is an evolution of the familiar bond in a more democratic manner opens possibilities to further research in Wilhelm Reich's theory of the family. While we have not had a chance here to examine it, Reich's most popular work, *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, argues that the capitalist family is the root ideological cause of fascism.³⁹² The comrade bond, in challenging this, may hold a key to understanding how to combat the "mislaying" of the class consciousness I developed in my examination of his *What is Class Consciousness*. However, before we can understand how it might do this, we have to understand a bit more about how comradeship forms and how we could maintain the structure.

This brings us to one of the unanswered questions of this study, which has vexed me: Where does comradeship come from? This question could probably fill a shelf with tomes of answers, but Kollontai points us in the direction of understanding the production of workers' ideology. Particularly, I think there is a lot of reasons to take a (very) critical reexamination of Louis Althusser's theories of ideological apparatuses, and in particular the way that the family works as an ideological apparatus and is itself (according to Kollontai) a product of ideology.³⁹³ I believe that if we understand this more completely, we can understand comradeship's relation to ideological interpellation and the potential role of labor unions as a counter-hegemonic ideological apparatus. There are some obvious places to start attempting to produce ideology presented in this study, such as constant reminders of revolutionary goals, but to fully understand the production and reproduction of the ideological backing for comradeship we have to understand

³⁹² Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (WRM Press, 1970).

³⁹³ Leonard Williams, "Althusser on Ideology: A Reassessment," *New Political Science* 14, no. 1 (1993): 47–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393149308429699>; Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster, with Fredric Jameson (Monthly Review Press, 2001); Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster, *Radical Thinkers* 2 (Verso, 2005).; Critical engagement being the key term.

the way ideology is produced in similar structures. This study could spare only to point the reader in this direction, but a long line of research is ahead if we want to understand this aspect of comradery.

Present Implications

Leaving aside the considerable room for continuing research for a moment, it is crucial to note that the findings of this project are urgently needed. The much noted rise of right-wing authoritarianism here in the US and across the globe, combined with dissatisfaction with the current order makes for a deadly combination for labor rights and working class democratic organizations. What we now see is undeniably an echo of the situation in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The most crucial difference is that, while in the 1920s-1930s the labor movement was strong, spreading, and steadfast, the labor movement of today, especially here in the US, is weak, withering, and wary of revolutionary action.

In short, as it stands, the AFL-CIO dominated labor movement in the US hardly puts a roadblock to the ascent of right-wing authoritarian leaders. The trouble begins with a lack of membership. However, as we examined at length in our discussion of social unionism, the problem is more critically a lack of devotion to class-based politics in the existing membership and (especially) leadership. This has led it down a road of irrelevancy and incapability of resisting political repression.

Yet, it is difficult to underestimate the power of union members in resisting authoritarian takeovers. Despite the conclusion of some skeptics, there is nothing so special about workers in the US to make them unable to serve a similar role to union members in many situations

mirroring our own. Union members, when properly engaged, have proven their ability to act definitively in service of their class and work towards democratic unions. The members are not at fault. Rather, it is the leadership and organizing models which fails to aid the workers in their duty to resist anti-democratic forces and advance the cause of humanity that are at fault for the lack of resistance from rank-and-file members. Business unionism's focus on contracts is at fault. Social unionism's emphasis on identity-based struggles is at fault. Above all, the lack of a revolutionary core in labor organizing is poisoning the labor movement in the US; painfully slow at first, but quickly once a regime the likes of which seems to be forming on the horizon emerges. The labor movement in the US must strive towards a more resilient model of membership which begins with an end to "non-political" unionism and end with forging the comrade bond among members. The benefit is not only that the union itself will be resistant to membership lost during periods of political repression. Rather, the main benefit is that it can create a membership that is not only negatively motivated to struggle against a repressive regime, but positively motivated to struggle for democracy; for the working class; for their comrades.

On a practical level, the most important step that unions can take towards a movement of comrade unions is to embrace the political nature of unionism beyond the very shallow social unionist manner of embracing broadly contracted social justice advocacy. More than this it must adopt a radically *class-based* politics that seeks not to reform the system, but radically break from the system of capitalism and its attendant ideologies of division among the working class. It is worth repeating: it is pertinent to build unions as *consciously working-class and consciously revolutionary*. This cannot be a pure staff-drive project, but a project for those with revolutionary

class consciousness within unions (staff-organizer or not) to push their fellow workers towards the further development of their own class consciousness.

At the same time unions embrace a political vision, they must also not forget that it is shared work which is the key factor in the building of class consciousness. Work is not only important for the union itself, it is important in that it gets done, and done together.³⁹⁴ Members build their trust and class consciousness through this work more so than they can through shared belief. The model of the AFL-CIO unions which relies heavily on paid organizers and a small group volunteers to do the bulk of the work required to keep the union functioning is incompatible with the kind of shared work required for comradeship to thrive. While paid organizers and volunteers willing to do more work than the average member are essential to the work of the union (the IWW had both), putting the majority of the work on these organizers and volunteers does not create an environment for comradeship. Unions need to galvanize their membership into action. Most importantly, it must be true that each victory of the union is a victory won by all comrades equally.

In part, mobilizing members towards equal participation requires the membership to be spoken to with rousing rhetoric, motivated to action through the promise of material changes, and continuously reminded that their union is a crucial part of the struggle for liberty, equality, and solidarity. Yet, this is not enough. As discussed in the opening chapter, action taken must be

³⁹⁴ I would take this a step forward and say that the work does not even necessarily need to be directly impactful on the union's overall mission or growth. It simply needs to be work in the name of the union or the workers more generally. A great example of it is the recent scavenger hunt done by Zohran Mamdani's mayoral campaign across New York City. This work, while hardly crucial to the campaign, built solidarity among volunteers and supporters in the campaign and served to highlight the state of public transit in the city, the reform of which is a key plank of Mamdani's campaign. The point of the work is not necessarily to mobilize voters or get the word out (although this may be done in the course of it) it is to get members working together. See: <https://www.newsweek.com/zohran-mamdani-held-zcavenger-hunt-across-nyc-what-we-saw-2118571>

consistent and collective or else the bonding effect is minimized and it is unlikely to contribute to comradeship.³⁹⁵ To put it simply, comrades must have the class struggle as a daily fact of their life.

Unions do not need to be the IWW to be comrade unions. They do not need to have always been revolutionary to accommodate the bond that can save them. While a union could have always built itself with the proper structure and ideology for comradeship to emerge, unions could reform themselves to accommodate this bond. Unions which already have a base of young, more progressive membership, such as the Workers United and the Amazon Labor Union, have an opportunity to make the reforms needed while they are still relatively young as organizations and can more easily assume new political characteristics without the burden of tradition on them. However, unions with longer histories can also move towards being unions of comrades, albeit with more difficulty in fighting off reformist remains in the organization. At the same time, unions that are newly forming, unions that are already undertaking serious reform or mergers and have a chance to start anew are likely the best suited to commit themselves to building comradeship. Regardless of their particular circumstances, in light of the growing risk of considerable political repression against any organization which seeks to preserve or promote democracy, it is imperative that every union undertakes strenuous efforts to build repression resistant unions. As this study has demonstrated, the creation of a comradeship is an effective way to build a union that is not only resistant to the membership drain caused by increased political

³⁹⁵ A diversity of actions should be taken on my the general membership. These could range from writing or editing articles, promotional material, and communications, to serving on committees of the union, to training and acting as strike-captains to almost any other task an organization could require. The point is that every member should sit on a committee, hold an office, serve and train as temporary officers in times of need, or be a regular contributor to some publication or outlet run by the union. In support of this, it would be wise for unions to have regular publications, a practice many unions have abandoned in favor of websites, social media, feeds, or other seemingly more modern means of communications. While not needed in print, it would be very wise to have a monthly magazine length publications.

repression, it can also lead to membership growth during these same periods of political repression.

A Further Conclusion

The urgency of this project in light of recent political trends is self-evident. In the process of working on this project, I have had the distinct honor of speaking with many labor organizers, both volunteer and professional, who have all expressed interest in the prospects of this work. The interest may be polite, but the common phrase I have heard upon explaining the broad strokes of this project is some variation of: “this is just what we need right now!” While this would hardly be surprising if I had spoken solely to Wobblies or other more revolutionary organizations, this was something I heard from organizers across the labor-spectrum: from IWW organizers to organizers (somewhat ironically) from HERE’s successor organization: UNITE HERE. While I can hardly put much weight on these anecdotes, I can claim a sort of “finger on the pulse” reading which shows that there *is* room in the labor movement among younger organizer and active rank-and-filers for comradery to take hold at the dawn of our new Red Scare.

In addition to the need to resist repression, comradery has something positive to offer, which can restrengthen and grow democratic movements. Briefly touched upon in our theory section, it is worth ending on the idea that comradery builds lasting, familiar relations among previously disconnected workers. Contrast this with the epidemic of extreme isolation in the “post”-COVID-19 world which is feeding into the resentment that right-wing movements are mobilizing against their choice of scape-goats to gain the very power that now threatens

democratic movements. Thus, comradery is a light of hope that democratic movements can extend to the workers. The comrade bond challenges the radical isolation and atomization of this new and (frankly) frightening era of capitalism, exemplified by the replacing of actual human contact with AI “therapists,” “companions,” and even “lovers.”³⁹⁶ Comradery is radically and completely the opposite of this kind of “post-human” capitalism, which now stifles our lives. Instead of isolation, comradery demands constant contact; instead of hate, comradery demands solidarity; instead of an inescapable continuation of capitalism, comradery demands an end to the profit-driven system. The proposal of the comrade is not to merely resist membership loss, but to do away with the alienation and lack of belonging inherent to capitalism.

To return to the more tangible proposal of this project’s aim, we can say here that our case study has demonstrated the membership retention element of comradery. We saw a non-comrade union lose 18.8% of their membership at the same time that a comrade union not only retained, but grew its membership nearly 5 fold. While we need further research to both build the validity of the findings here by conducting additional case studies and expand upon theoretical aspects of comradery, this project has advanced our understanding of the theoretical significance and possibilities of a comradery by determining criteria in concrete terms as to how one goes about finding comradery within a given organization, and demonstrating in practice what comradery can look like, and what it can do for a union. While we need further research into

³⁹⁶ “Half of Young Men Would Rather Date an AI Girlfriend Than Face Loneliness or Rejection, New Report Reveals,” Press Releases, *Reuters*, August 26, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/press-releases/young-men-prefer-ai-girlfriend-over-loneliness-rejection-report-2025-08-26/>; “New Study Warns of Risks in AI Mental Health Tools,” accessed September 29, 2025, <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2025/06/ai-mental-health-care-tools-dangers-risks/>; Brian J. Willoughby et al., “Artificial Connections: Romantic Relationship Engagement with Artificial Intelligence in the United States,” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, SAGE Publications Ltd, August 25, 2025, 02654075251371394, <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075251371394>; “Artificial Intelligence, Real Emotion. People Are Seeking a Romantic Connection with the Perfect Bot,” AP News, February 14, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/ai-girlfriend-boyfriend-replika-paradot-113df1b9ed069ed56162793b50f3a9fa.>; Words in quotes to highlight that AI is not, and cannot be any of these things in a true sense, since it lacks the humanity to do anything but (poorly) fill a void left by humans.

comradery, there are many reasons to believe that building comradery is necessary to the task of saving organized labor and democracy. If this study has demonstrated anything, it is that there is good reason for every union to be a union of comrades.

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Appendix A: Codebook

Introductory Note

I have provided the code book below, but have decided to slightly alter it. I have expanded on some codes to clarify my meaning in cases where meanings were obvious to me as someone who had been reading this material consistently and had a preexisting understanding of the period of history and the life of the movement. In other most cases, I abridge these entries in that I do not include the codes merged into these codes in phase two of coding as it would serve only to confuse the reader. I also removed any mentions of codes in descriptions that did not make it to the codebook as it sat at the very end of the coding process. Moreover, you will notice that shared address does not have an entry here because I used one word codes such as “comrade,” and I coded any instance of the word. The only thing to note about those codes is that in all forms of address codes I did not code the passage if the title was being used insincerely. I also did not include miscellaneous codes. These are codes that either served a purely practical purpose (such as my code for any mention of IU 1100 in the IWW material) or which I developed in the first phase, but did not get grouped in the theoretical coding process. The point of including the codebook is to demonstrate that there was a method used and to allow future researchers to verify my work by using this code book on the material. This entry certainly satisfies this requirement.

Discipline

- “*By every known means of persuasion*” : Counter-examples of discipline where there is a clear indication that officers of the union had difficulty getting members and lower-ranking officials to complete tasks or maintain order. This should not be confused with repeated indication that an act was needed, but was also seemingly fulfilled, or is unclear as to the fulfillment of the of the act (such as calls for back issues of a publication which has repeated ads, but does not mention if they simply were responding to new requests, or had failed to receive adequate supply from members).

“*Continue on our road*” : This code indicates a passage in which perseverance is present, but particularly, perseverance on a specific path, agreed upon together, for victory. For example, striking despite police brutalization would be the ideal example of this code. This code does not cover passages that are simply discussing continuing to a shared goal (such as saying “we will win”/ “the revolution will come,” which would be covered by various codes under shared vision).

- “*Funds Urgently Needed*” : Asks for material sacrifice from members for various causes that directly relate to the mission of the union and for other union members. There needs to be an indication of urgency either by literally indicating it (as in the *in vivo*) itself, but also through mention of directly dire circumstances such as the imprisonment of fellow Wobblies.
- “*Masters of all Problems*” : Discipline as allowing members to overcome anything. We want this to be general in that it includes the overall mission of the union, not merely short-term or long-term goals (Separate from the "continue on our road" code, because it

is general, rather than requiring a specific continuation).

- *"Previous experience has opened our eyes"* : General critiques of members and other socialist movements. Demonstrates an ability to calmly critique fellow members, or past experiences of the member themselves without descending into factional strife, "name-calling," or expulsion. Essentially, we want to see the union learning from a mistake without further hindering itself through disunity (not to be confused with cross-factional anti-solidarity, for the code to be applicable the reference must be to those considered "in" the organization's own ideology).
- *"Terrible results spring from hasty action without preparation"* : Critiques of spontaneity and indication that disciplined action is required of members. General. Includes rules that indicate this as well as actions of members indicating that they stuck to a (short-term) plan despite reasons to abandon it such as threat of arrest or violence for continued action.
- *"The revolutionary soundness of our rank and file"* : Mentions that the membership itself is bound by their internal commitment to revolution. Further, the passage indicates that this commitment is both expected of members and that it leads to success in the general struggle. This can be theoretical in nature, in that members have some command of theoretical knowledge and/or a general "in the bones" sense of the correct position to take on political issues as they relate to the revolutionary aim of the union.

- *"To get the new society we will have to teach all the workers industrial unionism"* :

General references to the importance of education to the health of the organization and/or to the discipline of the organization. Indication that members were expected to either educate themselves or their fellow workers to relevant theory or methods of organizing.

Equality

- *"All members who have been in good standing ... for six months are eligible"* : Passage which indicates that all members in good standing have the same ability to hold office, speak at meetings, and/or generally participate in the business of the organization. No further requirements beyond membership for a set period of time can affect this (including literacy or any identity).
- *"Are you seeking the highway to equality?"* : Indication that the organization is attempting to be a place for building equality into the world (not to be confused with *"We draw no lines..."* or *"The I.W.W. had a place for every worker..."* which e about the organization itself not permitting division or inequality).
- *"Graduated from the University/Graduated from the lumber yard"* : Passage clearly indicates that education level did not affect station in the union, either as a benefit or a detraction. Does not include critiques of "intelligentsia" or clergy, as these are generally critiqued not for being over-educated or any other such claim but for the content of the ideas they mobilize that education to spread.

- *"Just a few words to the unorganized women workers"* : Indication that the union made efforts to organize women in particular and that women members of the union/working class were equal partners in the class struggle. (Not to be confused with *"the I.W.W had a place for every worker..."* which is about the union itself not permitting inequality or division).
- *"We draw no lines of nationality, color or creed, but we think we are right in this assumption"* : Clear statement of efforts made to introduce racial, national, and other kinds of equality of membership. This includes citizenship status. (Different from *"The I.W.W. had a place for every worker.."* in that this is a specific rejection of national/racial prejudice, and the *"...every worker..."* code is general to identities).
- **Universalism:**
 - *"For the working class is the human race"* : Passage clearly indicates that the working class is a universal class and/or that upon the event of the working class coming to power the working class would be all humanity.
 - *"The I.W.W. had a place for every worker in the world"* Clear indication that the organization was not only open to all identities, but that the organization was carefully making place for workers of all identities and that they are welcomed into the organization as equal partners without exception. (Different from *"Are you seeking..."* code in that this is about the organizations effort to open the ranks equally, whereas the other code is about the organization being a place to build equality in general and into the world broadly).

- *“To my mind trade unionism is the full realization of the brotherhood of man”* : Clear indication that the labor movement broadly (not only the organization) is based on the idea of universal emancipation and unity of all humanity.
- *“Workers! Upon your shoulders rests the destiny of the future”* : Indication that the organization considered the workers not only a universal class, but that it is the mission of the working class to see this universalism come into being. It must be the workers in general, not only the workers of this organization. However, it may say that the workers must hold the idea that the workers have a historic mission as expressed by their organization.
- **Counter/Particularism**
 - *“Be a man”*: General. Indications that the union favors male associated traits or considers them desirable, even if it is asking women to display this trait as if it were neutral.
 - *“Enemy alien who is a perpetual menace to American government”* : General fear of outsiders on nationalist grounds. (Different from “...Deprive aliens...” code, in that this is specifically when a disdain for immigrants is placed on the idea that they are harming the nation, rather than labor).
 - *“Surely we can show the spirit of Brotherhood to no better advantage than to deprive aliens [...] from cluttering up American hotels and restaurants”* : General. Clear disdain for or prejudice towards immigrants or people of other nations/races.
 - *“This people be barbaric and culturally inferior”* : General. Indication of racial prejudices being held by members.

- *“The Jewish element”* : General. Religion persecution or that there may be some “dual loyalty” in members of certain religions (this does not include critiques of religious leaders for their stated anti-worker beliefs, only discrimination on the basis of an individual’s held religious view).

Shared Vision

- *“Let us build the new society within the old”* : Indication that the organization will be the basis of a new society. General.
- *“Our new society is bound to come”* : Certainty that their shared political vision will be achieved as long as they continue to struggle for their shared vision together. (Different form *“Workers! Upon your shoulders...”* code, in that it does not address universalist principles explicitly, only that a new society of their ideals is coming).
- *“Reconstruction”* : Direct mention of some kind of political/economic/social Reconstruction, excluding independent references to the event in US history, but inclusive of foreign events as long as they are clearly relating those foreign events to the domestic situation.
- *“Revolution”* : General mentions of revolution to come from the efforts of the union and mentions of such things as the abolition of class, the unification of workers under a common government, etc.

- *"The wave of persecution will hasten it"* : Indication that the union considered obstacles to the union's shared goals are, in fact, sign that their campaigns were working and they were growing closer to the shared goal. (Different from "*Carry on our road*" in that this is about how violence and persecution will lead to success, not the actions of the members to acute instances of this persecution, however it may include some indication that members must carry on in the face of the persecution in order for the statement to be true).

Shared Work

- *"Do not hang back. Get busy."* : Calls to collective action. General. Excludes calls for money or other material sacrifice that are not collective in nature.
- *"It behooves every trade unionist to put on his thinking cap and give this subject his very careful consideration"* : Calls for collective thought on an issue of importance. This can be a matter of theory or practice, but must be immediately importance and it must be a general call to the members, not merely to leaders or more intellectually minded members.
- *"It is time that the members got together"* : Calls for meetings and gatherings to get the membership on the same page for work. Can apply to theory and practical matters. Does not include calls to action such as a strike. (Different from "*It behooves...*" code in that it is calling for members to physically gather together for the purpose of discussing an issue).

- *"Make him class-conscious and to impress him with his historical mission"* : Indication that it is part of the historic mission of members to recruit or otherwise aid in the introduction and education of new members. Should include clear indication that this is a process of aid, rather than the hosting of political education events for those already well acquainted with theory.
- *"Organize on the job"* : Calls to work for the union at the same time one was working for a boss/on the job. Other activities such as distributing literature, selling stamps, etc. are included in this code. However, the key is that the activity must be constant.

Solidarity

- *"Brotherhood idea"* : Indication that the union shares an ideal of collectivity and interrelations of an intimate nature. General.
- *"Cultivate the Spirit of Solidarity"* : Indication that the organization exists to help to create solidarity in the working class, but not relating to education directly (for example, calls that the union help workers unite, but not mentioning distributing educational material or giving more theoretically minded talks to members about why they should work together).
- *"How Craft Lines Disappear"* : Indication that the union wants to unify workers regardless of their particular craft in solidarity. General.
- *"In every land and clime"* : Clear passage indicating a rejection of nationalism/hyper-nationalism and/or embracing internationalism and showing solidarity with workers of other nations. This includes reporting on the conditions of unions in other countries,

revolutionary activity of workers' movements, and on workers of the world more generally. The subject of discussion must be workers in other countries who are not members of the union itself, although stories about them can feature members as "point of view" characters.

- *"Solidarity spells success"* : Passage which indicates that the union considers solidarity to be a determining factor in their own success both in short-term and long-term struggles.
- *"Solidarity with class war prisoners/martyrs"* : Indication that solidarity is being used to support members in jail or who have otherwise suffered for the movement. This support can be financial (and thus has overlap with *"Funds Urgently needed"*), however, it must explicitly call to members as fellow members with a responsibility to help their fellow workers.
- *"Unionism means unity"* : A general indication that the union values collective action, identity, and uniting various elements of the working class and considers it a core part of its identity. This also should indicate that it is not only the union, but that the union says that it should be a principle of the labor movement more broadly.
- **Counter**
 - *"An injury to one is the concern of all"* : General. Lack of distributed harm. One member's or group's problem is of interest to the union, but they consider themselves allies, or mere observers of the issue.
 - *"Make a favorable impression on the managers and proprietors"* : Indication that members were expected to align with employers, even to a limited degree, violating the principle of class solidarity.

- “*None but American*” General. Solidarity of the union does not extend to those not considered American by the union either due to nation of origin, race, religion, or citizenship status.
- “*We will have no unity with any who are not*” : Indication of some inability to work with labor unions or workers’ organizations with different political or theoretical ideas (not including completely different and mutually exclusive goals, such as reformist and revolutionist ideas, however, it must be clear that both sides are professing these mutually exclusive ideas, not that the writer is accusing the other of holding opposing ideas).