CONTACT MILWAUKEE IWW TO WORK AGAINST EXPLOITATION
BY BOSSES, LANDLORDS, POLICE, AND PRISONS.

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DIRECT ACTIONS

Milwaukee General Membership Branch
Industrial Workers of the World

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Issue 2
By worker 383685

The Equity Caucus of the Milwaukee branch of the Industrial Workers of the World is a new working group that aims to address and correct the current marginalized state of organizing. The role of the Milwaukee IWW Equity Caucus is to create a safer environment for members to voice concerns regarding marginalization of people in the branch, including but not limited to, people of color, women, LGBTQ+ members, and disabled members. We exist to support these members through involvement in the complaints process and through informal support when they experience issues such as sexual assault, stalking, unwanted or excessive communication, discrimination, slander, slurs, microaggressions, unequal distribution of responsibilities, etc. in the branch.

The IWW Equity Caucus has in place a process in which a member can make a confidential concern/complaint. This process can include the Equity Caucus providing mediation between members. If a more serious occurrence has taken place and mediation is not appropriate, the Equity Caucus has a protocol to assess the action and hold accountability with appropriate ramifications.

In addition, we also provide educational opportunities for all members of the GMB to better understand the intersections of the class-based oppression shared by all fellow workers and the identity-based oppression experienced by some of us, and how to be a more inclusive, effective union. Early April the Equity Caucus held a skillshare that discussed trauma informed organizing. Upcoming events that are being developed include a workshop addressing misogynistic underlying behaviors in organizing.

Contact Equity Caucus: mke.iww.equitycaucus@gmail.com or (414) 678-9420.

Coalition Against the Ultra Right Delivers Demand Letter
IWW at UWM

IWW at UWM is a collective of students and workers who strategize direct actions to make UWM's campus a safer, more inclusive, and more fulfilling place to study and work. We meet weekly, and regularly table in the Union with literature about how to get involved. In December of 2016, fascists Milo Yiannopoulos scheduled a stop at UWM on his "Dangerous Faggot Tour". IWW at UWM organized a protest against Milo, and the administration who allowed him a platform to speak. After ridiculing our opposition for combating his hate speech, Milo outed a transgender student in front of the hundreds in the audience, as well as the countless people watching the live-stream on Breitbart, a far-right news website. Following this, the student received several threats to safety. She left UWM and moved out of state. The Chancellor, Mark Mone, did nothing; even after confrontation by organized protesters. Mone only pacified the student body with a detached and passive email, and later claimed that all people and groups, including fascists, should be allowed a platform to speak at UWM.

In the past several months, as the new administration has released a travel ban and increased deportations through ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) arrests, the Milwaukee community has been pushing the UWM administration to declare UWM a Sanctuary Campus. This would mean that the UWM Police Department would not collaborate with ICE agents or reveal to them information about UWM's students and workers. The Chancellor responded by claiming that he cannot, according to a law passed by Governor Scott Walker. Despite this, other UW campuses have declared themselves Sanctuary Campuses. Chancellor Mone refuses to disobey the Governor, even when the Student and Worker Body is directly threatened by his actions and policies. Mone is simply protecting his reputation, and in turn, choosing not to protect the undocumented, immigrant, and Worker Body with a detached and passive email, and later claimed that all people and groups, including fascists, should be allowed a platform to speak at UWM.

The Coalition Against the Ultra Right (which includes the IWW and Students for a Democratic Society) assembled a demand letter to be delivered to the administration, and a proposal, stating that students can opt-out of a portion of their Segregated Fees (which separate from tuition and are used to fund resources on campus) going to specific resource centers. This means that a student can choose not to give any money to the LGBT+ Resource Center, the Women's Resource Center, the Accessibility Resource Center, or any of the Cultural Resource Centers on campus like the Roberto Hernandez Center, the Black Cultural Center, or the American Indian Student Services center. The Student and Worker body at UWM sees this budget cut as a direct threat to groups on campus that have historically been given less access to further education.

The Coalition Against the Ultra Right (which includes the IWW and Students for a Democratic Society) assembled a demand letter to be delivered to the administration, and a campaign surrounding it called "Our University" took off. The letter focused on three demands: protecting the LGBT+ community on campus through Gender Affirming Policies (like not giving hate-speech a place at UWM and making bathrooms accessible and gender neutral); making UWM a Sanctuary Campus; and protecting the Resource Centers through mandatory funding. At the end of the letter, we invited the administration to a regularly scheduled IWW at UWM meeting, where we could openly discuss next steps and actions regarding our campaign.

The Coalition delivered the letter on Tuesday, March 14. We met in Spaights Plaza and marched inside the Student Union then to an administrative staff meeting, where Dean of Students Tim Gordon and Chancellor Mark Mone were both present. The disruption was expected, as we had covered campus in flyers, and Mone planned on fleeing the meeting as soon as he finished speaking. We were confronted at the door of the lecture hall by Campus Police and proceeded in. We occupied the exterior walls of the meeting, and approached the Chancellor, letter in hand. The demand letters were distributed to administration and other meeting attendees, and our demands were explained at the front of the room. We stayed for the remainder of the meeting and interjected in the Q&A portion of the meeting. We asked Mone questions regarding our demands and were met with unclear, pacifying responses.

After disrupting the meeting, the SDS received an email from Dean of Students Tim Gordon. He stated that the administration would only meet with the Coalition Against the Ultra-Right if we met in a closed, bureaucratic-style meeting featuring only 3-4 representatives from the Coalition and a few members of the administration (or their representatives). We met and decided that this approach would not only give the administration the upper hand on our own campaign against them, but would also be simply ineffective at communicating the complexity and urgency of the demands that the entire Student and Worker body hold. We replied demanding that this meeting happens on our terms, under certain criteria: that is open to all members of the UWM Student and Worker body, and made accessible with ASL interpreters and live-stream coverage; does not include rebuttal for questioning the administration, or the threatening presence of both Campus and/or City police; and is attended by both the Dean and the Chancellor. Dean Gordon refused these criteria.

We are now planning a mass-meeting with the Student and Worker body to discuss the administration's shortcomings and apathy, and how we will assemble to challenge them through the demands we presented. The administration's refusal build our resistance. We will continue to assemble as the Student and Worker body and hear each others' demands. We will, to the highest extent of our ability, make changes on campus ourselves to meet those demands. If the administration continues to refuse to represent us, let alone listen to us, we will represent ourselves. We expect this campaign to fill the rest of our semester, though we also have several working groups doing the leg-work of our organizing efforts.

We have a Student-Worker Organizing Committee, which prioritizes outreach to Workers on campus and distributes anonymous surveys to seek out issues in specific departments that can be met with winnable, direct actions; as well as find Students and Workers interested in joining our organizing efforts. Our Merchandise Committee is creating IWW at UWM buttons, patches and shirts to fundraise for our Student Group, as UWM makes it increasingly difficult to receive any funding through a Student Org. Our Literature Working Group plans on sourcing and distributing leftist zines, books, and flyers to the UWM community.

We have several actions and oppositions planned for the next several semesters. These include exposing the UWM community to the campus furniture created through contracted prison labor, opposing pyramid-scheme employers who recruit workers on campus, and of course, turning out to oppose any hate-speech brought to campus.

Find us on Facebook at IWW at UWM or facebook.com/IWWatUWM
Email us at IWW.UWM@gmail.com
By worker 384572

As monuments to mass incarceration go, the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility may be the most pernicious and grotesque of them all. This high-rise monstrosity, overlooking Highway 43, was founded in 2001 primarily to incarcerate ostensible violators of supervision arrangements (probation, parole, and extended supervision).

Over the years MSDF has become the focal point in Milwaukee County for crimeless revocation. This is the practice of re-incarcerating those on a supervision arrangements for minor infractions and without being convicted or even charged with a new crime. How minor you ask? How about "unauthorized computer or cell phone use, crossing county lines, missing appointments, failing alcohol tests, and entering bars."

Crimeless revocations buttress a neoliberal, white supremacist state that brutalizes and seeks to disempower whole communities in Wisconsin. According to sentback.org, CRs accounted for half of Wisconsin prison admissions in 2015. 40 percent of those revoked were African American, while 40 percent also suffered from mental illness. Unaccountable parole/probation officers and rubber stamp judges frequently violate due process rights using this practice. MSDF is the common destination in Milwaukee County for those subject to the whims of officials with revocation powers.

And what will individuals find when sent back into custody at MSDF? A facility that is notorious for overcrowding, poor ventilation, and prolonged cell confinement without sunlight and fresh air. Formerly incarcerated workers report triple bunked cells designed for one person, no opportunity for recreation, and regular 22-hour lock downs. Families are not allowed physical contact visits with their loved ones and extreme heat conditions were even linked to the death of Mr. James Wilborn in 2015.

Staff mistreatment of prisoners has a long and bleak history at MSDF. Guards have been documented verbally abusing and physically assaulting mentally ill prisoners. On a night in June 2011, Mr. Ishmeil Washington requested assistance for a cellmate convulsing and wheezing. The sergeant on duty dismissed the request and told Washington to go back to sleep. The next morning Mr. Jeremy Cunningham was found dead in his cell from likely alcohol withdrawal. Multiple Incidents of neglect and misconduct have occurred over the years at MSDF. Just last week Mr. Jesse Davis (aged 49) died while in custody at the facility under still unclear circumstances. Investigations have brought little clarity, transparency or accountability for the frequent injustices perpetrated at MSDF.

The Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee of Milwaukee (IWOC), in coalition with EXPO (Ex-Prisoner Organizing, a project of WISDOM) have determined that this blight upon the moral conscience of our community must be shut down! IWOC and EXPO are demanding that Governor Walker use his authority to close MSDF and work to end crimeless revocations as policy and practice in Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin.

We ask that you get involved in our campaign by first signing the EXPO petition to shut down MSDF at the following link: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/its-time-to-close-milwaukee-secure-detention-facility-msdf?source=email

On March 23rd members of IWW, EXPO and other organizations picketed in front of the Milwaukee County Court House to raise awareness of our campaign, handing out over 100 pieces of literature and engaging community members with personal stories of abuse at MSDF. We will continue to mobilize with our allies to gather support, educate, and engage in direct action to shut down this horrid facility. We invite you to join us! 😊

If you would like to get involved or require more information and materials, please contact IWW-IWOC:

Email: iww.milwaukee@gmail.com
Phone: Jeremy Booth, 262-227-4520
Mailing Address: Milwaukee IWOC, PO Box 342294, Milwaukee WI 53234

For more information about the work of our wonderful allies at EXPO and WISDOM:

Ex-Prisoners Organizing: Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/expowisconsin/…
General Website: http://www.rocwisconsin.org/our-work/expo/
WISDOM: http://wisdomwisconsin.org/

For more information about crimeless revocations in Wisconsin:
By worker 372754

We are currently engaged in campaigns to shutdown the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility and to fight mailroom practices at Waupun Correctional Institution. Campaigns that we are considering, and hope to build the capacity to take on, include opposing the 60% wage theft by the Wisconsin prison system, fighting longterm solitary confinement, resisting use of force feeding, anti-profiteering, divestment campaign for UWM, and connection to August 19th national prisoner strike.

We have 540 contacts on the inside, and 62 people on the inside have joined the IWW. 2 of these people have become delegates. There are 31 IWW members on outside on Milwaukee IWOC listserve. 126 people have filled out Help the Work Along. We are building more defined committee roles to create stable, long-term organizing that allows people to contribute meaningfully without taking on more activity than they can sustain. At IWOC strategy meetings every two weeks we elect people to roles, including Penpal Co-Ordinator, Research Co-Ordinator, Intake Responder, Liaison to National IWOC, Data Backup, One-on-One, Transcription Co-Ordinator and Bottomliner.

For the campaign to shut down the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility, IWOC is actively working with WISDOM, EXPO and other groups, doing research for outreach and direct action. We are sending mass mailing to our contacts on the inside who have spent time in MSDF to gather information. For the campaign against Waupun’s mailroom, we did one phone zap 3/7/17 against Waupun mailroom for them blocking the prisoner newsletter Voices Behind Wisconsin Prison Gates. We are testing if this had an impact, and have further phone zaps and mailing tactics prepared if it did not. We are now getting editorial feedback for issue 3 of Voices from Wobblies incarcerated in Wisconsin, and will be assembling and mailing to all contacts soon.

We regularly send organizing summaries and meeting notes to incarcerated IWW members, and have gotten agenda items from people on the inside. Based on their feedback, we have increased the care of language in communicating with people on the inside. Incarcerated workers recently started forming an artists’ collective which we will be supporting and coordinating with.

We are doing regular protests against solitary confinement, to increase public visibility. We have created a New Member Packet specific to Milwaukee IWOC, which will provide expanded strategy and How To information. We’re building visuals to increase alignment between our strategy and activity. We’re writing a campaign post-mortem on the Dying to Live hunger strike, to learn from what happened, analyze our mistakes, and build stronger organizing in the future.
In mid 2014, exponential workload increases were implemented by CapTel, affecting hundreds of employees, with no perceivable attempt to amp up hiring, raise wages commensurate with the demands, or mitigate the ensuing stress on the captionists, all being irresponsibly blamed on a new FCC ruling that ultimately generated record profits for the bourgeois administration.

But instead of submitting to the unfair conditions we were being subjected to, a core group of visionaries decided to band together and form a collective to ensure our rights, and on February 6, 2015, with representation from the IWW, we had our first meeting.

Since then, utilizing a number of strategies including slow downs, mailbox inundation, and circulation of literature, we, the CapTel Workers, have proven the strength of our actions and celebrated an initial success in the form of a significant wage increase for all impacted employees, and we vow to continue our efforts until our demands are met.

Despite intimidation tactics by the management company, including threats to pursue legal action against the IWW, Solidarity Network's (SolNet) latest campaign has proven successful. Months-long organizing to demand permanent repairs to a malfunctioning elevator and ensure access for a disabled tenant culminated in a demand letter delivery to Katz Properties that was supported by over 20 activists and drew media coverage by multiple local television stations. Although Katz Properties continues to assert their elevator has always complied with city regulations, the unofficial documents Katz Properties provided to SolNet indicates the elevator was up to code only following SolNet's direct actions.

The IWW General Defense Committee Self-Defense Subcommittee is a new addition to the Milwaukee GDC, providing a focus on physical self defense. The basis of the GDC is a focus on defense, as other movements in the past have lacked a good defensive strategy. The Self-Defense Subcommittee prioritizes equipping the community with the skills they need to physically defend themselves and their comrades. When fighting fascism, we must be prepared for physical and violent encounters. We meet regularly to cross train in Kickboxing, Krav Maga, and even Yoga. As the weather gets warmer and we have access to our own equipment through GDC fundraising, we set out to open our practice to the greater Milwaukee community. We hope to hold free workshops for working class families and children, as well as weapons training. We invite all GDC and community members to a convivial atmosphere where we can all participate in the actualization of self defense techniques, and it's application towards the broader community.

By worker 327755

By worker 379507 and worker 379509