Comrade Motopu
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January 15th, 2025

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worth placing her in the context of who she writes, organizes, speaks, podcasts, and youtubes with.

> Citarella: right, right
>
> Frost: You know, let 'em play with the rocks and dirt!
>
> Citarella: mm
>
> Frost: You know, women do that too, it's rewarding. It's fun.

Staughton Lynd fought against steel mill closures in the 1970s in Youngstown, Ohio. Yet, he saw an underlying dissatisfaction, and a sense of feeling dependent on the mills, from the workers:

> As one Youngstown steelworker put it to me, 'You felt as if the mill would always be there.' Because steelworkers felt this way they put up with boredom, and danger, and humiliating harassment from supervisors every day, trading off these indignities for the fringe benefits which would come to them from long service at a particular plant. —Staughton Lynd, The Fight Against the Shutdowns

Conclusion

Reading Dirtbag led me to some good authors, the ones Amber Frost despises and attempts to destroy. When she goes after Care work, we get Gabriel Winant. When she sets out to destroy the practice of mutual aid, we are introduced to Dean Spade. I've started some reading and listening to interviews from both, finding they overlap with other researchers, activists, organizers, and scholars I already liked. For example, both of them appear on the Death Panel podcast.

Given Frost's substitution of class fetishizing in place of class analysis and how this fits with a productivist ideology it's

Contents

Industrial worker, labor writer, and author of *On The Line*, Harvey Swados would have seen Frost's statements about manufacturing work as an example of what he called "The Myth of the Happy Worker":

> "The plain truth is that factory work is degrading. It is degrading to any man who ever dreams of doing something worthwhile with his life and it is about time we face the fact…Almost without exception, the men with whom I worked on the assembly line last year felt like trapped animals. Depending on their age and personal circumstances, they were either resigned to their fate, furiously angry at themselves for what they were doing, or desperately hunting other work that would pay as well and in addition offer some variety, some prospect of change and betterment." —Harvey Swados, "The Myth of the Happy Worker" from On The Line, p243-244.

Frost wants it to be about how fun it is to drive a forklift. That's a part of her standard "rap" (canvasser lingo for your door speech). In October of 2024, she was on the YouTube show Doomscroll with Joshua Citarella[6].

> Frost: …maybe there should be less email jobs, and…I'm all about like the old school masculinity. Like, have a jobs program that has like, and women should be in it too, but like, have 'em drive a fuckin' forklift! It's fun!
>
> Citarella: mm, mm
>
> Frost: I drove a forklift, It's like playin' weird Tetris!

[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aBkzzIyGaY&t=616s

> cranes. The ultimate goal of organized labor should be that no man should have to work at a blast furnace. The labor force in steel, Sadlowski went on, had been reduced from 520,000 to 400,000 in fifteen years. "Let's reduce them to 100,000." Let the steel industry subsidize the education, as carpet layers, doctors, plumbers, of the steel workers displaced.
>
> McBride's people promptly put out the word that Sadlowski wanted to take away steelworkers' jobs. John Barbero, Sadlowski's campaign manager in the Youngstown area, believes that this was when "the Sadlowski stickers came off the hardhats."

Frost's alleged defense of the industrial working class quickly gives way to a delusional romanticization:

> Plenty of blue-collar workers wanted to be blue-collar workers. Plenty of blue-collar workers like or even love their jobs—yes, even in steel mills—especially if they're working under decent conditions for decent pay. It doesn't mean they like every day at work, or even every week, or that there aren't aspects of their job they hate, but unless you're a Stockholm Syndrome–afflicted tech guy, everyone hates their job some days.

No one is saying that industrial workers don't take pride in their jobs or that they don't want to defend them. But just sweeping away the issue of how degrading that work often is with "everyone hates their job some days" is disingenuous. If that's how Frost is going to justify her demand to bring back a bygone era of blue collar industrial employment, that it wasn't that bad, it doesn't instill confidence.

> This is a book about a millennial socialist's ridiculous adventures in left politics, and what happened when I threw all my weight behind an unlikely insurgent left-wing presidential campaign. Sounds good to a publisher, but it's hardly reinventing the wheel. Hunter S. Thompson's 1973 book Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail '72 obviously beat me to that one. —Amber Frost, Dirtbag

Amber A'Lee Frost's *Dirtbag* could be described as a Gonzo memoir. She herself calls it an "ADHD gonzo bricolage." What that means as far as street cred is negligible these days. I'm looking at my copy of *Fear And Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72* and remembering the forward was written by Matt Taibbi. Since then, he became an employee of Elon Musk, a twitter files curator, and boilerplate ex-Left anti-woke contrarian. He's a good representative for the crowd that seems to see themselves as the heirs to Thompson's legacy. Gonzo is a devalued social currency.

Beneath the coopting of Gonzo style there's Amber Frost's actual politics. Basically she wants to bring back the New Deal era labor/capital compact that saw higher wages, job security, and benefits like healthcare and pensions. To do this, the focus has to be organizing the industrial labor force to engage in point of production challenges and using industrial choke points to shut down production and distribution to attack capitalists. But that necessitates creating millions of new manufacturing jobs.

Frost has become known as the mean class-reductionist lady and I might agree if I thought she was serious about class analysis. Dirtbag is about class fetishism, specifically her fantasies about the industrial working class, part happy worker smurf, part "Yes Chad."

Frost has such a romanticized ideal of industrial workers that any suggestion to prioritize organizing other sectors sends her into attack mode. It's not just that she believes that blue collar workers confronting capitalists at the point of production is a vital part of organizing. Plenty of trade unionists and labor activists think that. It's that she is not even willing to admit there has been a decline in industrial jobs and manufacturing in the U.S.

She insists manufacturing doesn't need to "come back" because it never really left. She throws up a FRED chart showing "All Employees, Manufacturing" noting the number of manufacturing jobs was fluctuating but that it didn't necessarily signify steady decline:

> In 2019, it was at a dismal 12.817 million, but it's important to note that the decline itself hasn't been a steady descent. There was minor growth in 1984, and again from 1988 to 1989, and a relatively steady increase from 1993 to 1998 to levels commensurate with the low dips of the 1970s, and often with levels above—sometimes considerably above—that supposedly golden era of manufacturing from the 1950s to the mid-1960s.

Here's her chart:

> crushing, or incorporating their resistance, creating more dynamic forms of capitalism that reorganize the proletariat.

In other words, the battles between workers and bosses won't always look like auto-workers engaging in sit-down strikes. Even if it's determined that industrial workers confronting capital directly on the shop floor should be centered, during a certain period, or in a certain instance, that doesn't preclude the possibility that there will be vital organizing to do with other sectors, especially if they make up the majority of the waged labor force.

It's a bit weird that Frost has to resurrect a half-century old smear on Sadlowski as "the guy who wanted to shut down your steel mills." This is exactly what Lloyd McBride, his opponent in the 1977 election for USWA President did to him. McBride was a big supporter of the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA), and also went after Sadlowski as in bed with communists.

In *The Fight Against Shutdowns: Youngstown's Steel Mill Closings* Staughton Lynd notes this:

> Fear of shutdowns played a direct part in Sadlowski's defeat by his opponent Lloyd McBride. In an interview that appeared in the January 1977 issue of Penthouse magazine, during the closing weeks of the campaign, Sadlowski said that it might be a good thing to reduce the number of jobs in Basic Steel to 100,000 if the men and women displaced were retrained at company expense to do cleaner and more interesting work as professionals. Working forty hours a week in a mill drains the lifeblood of a man, Sadlowski said in the interview. There are "workers … who are full of poems" and doctors who are operating

Secondly, she mostly ignores Sadlowski's concerns for the effects that industrial employment can have on workers. Such concerns have always been central to understanding the conflict between workers and capitalists. Sadlowski is not denying that many are proud of the living standard they have achieved, or that they want to keep it. He's talking about the brutality upon their bodies and minds and how the work wears people down.

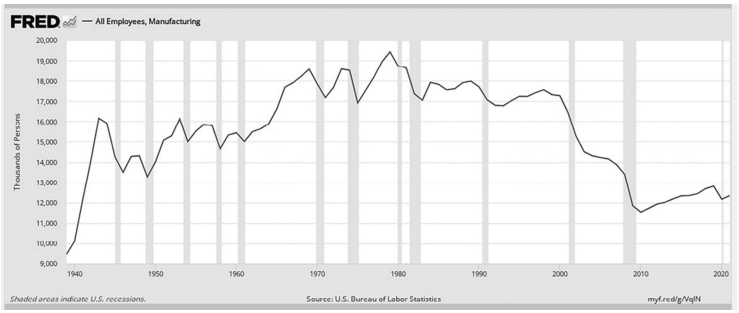
But Frost just counters with shallow statements like ""There are plenty of happy hard hats, many of whom even wanted to be hard hats when they grew up. And that's a good thing, because we still need the Makers, and the Movers, not only to make and move, but to get the bosses by the balls." Talk about missing the point.

Fetishizing Hard Hats

There is no denying that proletarian action against bosses at the point of production creates leverage against capitalists. This allows workers to at the least, make demands on employers, and maximally, to abolish bosses, waged labor, and class altogether. But that doesn't mean a one dimensional cartoonish reduction of the working class to hard hats suffices to understand class composition or the terrain of the current battles between labor and capital. To quote M Staudenmaier from a discussion[5] on the Sojourner Truth Organization in Insurgent Notes:

> Class composition is the idea that the proletariat is not some fixed identity; it is always changing as proletarians struggle against the way capitalism is organized, and the capitalists reply by co-opting,

[5] https://insurgentnotes.com/author/mstaudenmaier



But here's a couple of other charts from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing that jobs in manufacturing, mining and logging, construction, trade-transport and utilities all declined steadily from 1950 to 2020 as a percentage of total US jobs. So it's not just the number of jobs, but the percent of total US jobs that tells us about the decline.

ing cranes. We've run the workers into the ground. Ultimately, society has nothing to show for it but waste." (Winant, here[4])

Frost responds along two very disingenuous lines.

First she pretends Sadlowski is a snob smearing the working class for lacking culture so she can step in on behalf of her fellow workers to take a righteous stand against his bullying:

> As for poems, music, literature, etc., the obstacles to the creation and appreciation of the arts for people is not blue-collar work. The working class have not only always made and enjoyed art, but when they're strong, they've also organized their own arts and culture institutions and programs. The brass bands of Durham or the Labor Day marches in the United States are the more obvious examples, but Labour and Communist Parties have built public theaters and funded community classes in painting and literature. They demanded and won public funding for instruments in public schools, museums, orchestras, operas, and all the "high art" that was formerly the domain of the elites. I saw my first play from Shakespeare, Macbeth, on PBS. I saw my second in a park, where a community theater put on The Taming of the Shrew for free. (That I was rooting for both Lady Macbeth and Katherina, the titular shrew, may have portended some of my future virtues.)

I think we can agree her response has nothing to do with Sadlowski's statements about blue collar worker's capacity to do fancier jobs and deserving better than they currently have, and move on.

[4] https://www.nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/workers-full-of-poems/

ployment. The way she downplays the crushing routines of industrial work and its toll on the minds and bodies of workers is in line with the her productivist views. She tries to sell the reader (and herself) on the idea that these blue collar workers really mostly like their jobs and would protest at being told otherwise:

> It's true that work at a steel mill can be unbearable, but many people disagree that it necessarily has to be, and many would counter Sadlowski's line that "No man wants to wake up every day and face the blast furnace" with "Well, of course not every day." Americans work too much, and even if you don't, sometimes work just sucks.

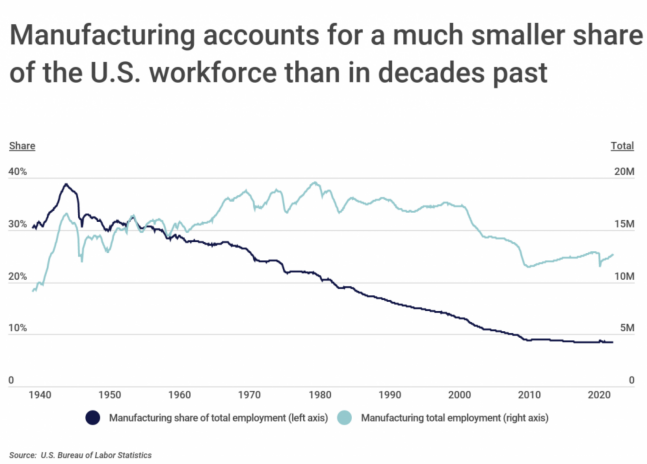
The extreme callousness here is jaw dropping when one considers the way coke ovens, blast furnaces, and open hearth, give off hellish levels of heat. The people working them must breathe in noxious and toxic gasses that lead to injuries, cancer, and other sickness and symptoms like vomiting blood. Those jobs were given far more to African American workers than white, and there was usually no seniority based route to get out of them. [See Interview here[3]]

She gets playful about it too: "I can't say I ever worked in manufacturing (though I did drive a forklift in both a garden center and a cocoa warehouse, which I very much enjoyed and likened to playing a giant, mechanized game of Tetris all day)"

In the Penthouse interview, Sadlowski talks about the problem of workers who may be trapped or stagnating in factory work when they are good enough to do other work if given the chance and the training. "Working forty hours a week in a steel mill drains the lifeblood of a man. There are workers there right now who are full of poems and doctors who are operat-

[3] https://open.spotify.com/episode/6h1RdXpZoXqHCupg7zRcmI

Manufacturing accounts for a much smaller share of the US workforce than in decades past



And another represenation:

Back engaged in was challenging the "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" (ENA). The ENA was negotiated in secret by the USWA leadership without rank and file foreknowledge or input and implemented in 1973. This agreement established that not only would the union agree to a no strike pledge *during* the duration of a contract (already common in union contracts by that time), but also when the contract expired (Staughton Lynd, Fighting Against the Shutdowns, p.51). He and others rightly saw how this traded real working class power for guaranteed wage increases. Sadlowski as a reformer then was all about including the rank and file in decision making on contracts, and taking back the strike.

Frost introduces Sadlowski by describing him as, despite having done some good union work, a darling of the Professional class and a bit of a loser:

> But he was extra-appealing to the professional set, not only because he did funny interviews with Penthouse and Rolling Stone where he denounced the Vietnam War and racism within and without the union movement, and not only for having lost a militant and righteous battle against capital and the sclerotic and corrupt elements within his own union.
> They loved Eddie Sadlowski because Eddie Sadlowski didn't like his job.

She can only forgive Sadlowski because he was operating at a time when assumptions about a just transition (this term does not appear in her book) were more understandable given higher union density, higher wages, and more militancy in the 1970s.

In Dirtbag, Frost's complaints don't focus on any critique of work itself. Instead she criticizes strategies to organize workers without bringing back previous levels of manufacturing em-

> health agencies, and nursing homes—the engines of employment—operate less profitably, further down the value chain.

This in turn requires hospitals to do things like reduce staff, increase workloads, cut services, etc. as cost cutting methods, hence the need to organize workers and push back in these parts of the healthcare industry that are "lower down the value chain."

"He didn't like his job"

Frost also mocks Gabriel Winant's focus on third generation Chicago steel worker and union reformer Eddie Sadlowski (b.1938, d. 2018). Winant sees him as an important voice of the proletarian responses to deindustrialization. Sadlowski was organizing in the lead up and during the period when de-industrialization went into high gear. In a 1977 Penthouse interview, he expressed some opinions about retraining workers, at company expense, to transition them into different kinds of work. He talked about how dangerous mining, steel, and other industrial work is. He was expressing his respect for the capacity of blue collar workers to do professional level jobs in the medical, academic, artistic fields or elsewhere.

Though Frost seems upset by the very idea, whether suggested by Sadlowski or Winant, it's basically the "just transition" strategy put forward in the early 1990s by Tony Mazzocchi of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union. His idea was to create a "superfund" to train workers as they were transitioned out of environmentally dangerous jobs. Frost lauds Mazzocchi in the first part of Dirtbag.

Sadlowski was part of the Steelworkers Fight Back movement which challenged corruption and the lack of militancy in the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) leadership. Frost doesn't mention it but one of the main campaigns Fight

U.S. Jobs by Supersector - as of January stewart title

Percentage of All Jobs - Seasonally Adjusted Data

Supersector	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Mining & Logging	2.0%	1.4%	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Construction	5.1%	5.6%	5.1%	5.1%	5.0%	5.2%	4.3%	5.0%
Manufacturing	30.2%	28.9%	25.9%	21.2%	16.3%	13.2%	8.8%	8.4%
Trade-Transport-Utilities	21.8%	20.4%	19.8%	20.3%	20.8%	19.9%	18.9%	18.3%
Information	3.6%	3.2%	2.9%	2.6%	2.4%	2.7%	2.1%	1.9%
Financial Activities	4.1%	4.6%	4.9%	5.5%	6.0%	5.9%	6.0%	5.8%
Professional & Business Services	6.6%	6.8%	7.4%	8.2%	9.9%	12.6%	12.8%	14.1%
Education & Health Services	4.8%	5.3%	6.4%	7.6%	9.9%	11.5%	15.3%	16.1%
Leisure & Hospitality	6.2%	6.3%	6.7%	7.4%	8.5%	8.9%	10.0%	11.0%
Other	1.9%	2.1%	2.5%	3.0%	3.9%	3.9%	4.1%	3.9%
Government	13.6%	15.3%	17.6%	17.8%	16.6%	15.7%	17.3%	14.9%

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

To examine her class fetishizing, I'll focus on her tirades against historian Gabriel Winant and trade union reformer Eddy Sadlowski below and briefly explain how her industrial dream points to the productivist ideology of the influencer and scholar crew she rolls with.

First, a bit of background about Frost from section one of her book.

Introducing Herself

Frost sets up her backstory in the first section of Dirtbag, "Indiana." It starts with her as the child of a single mom struggling with poverty, constant moves to new towns, early jobs, high school, punk rock, confronting a bully, and then her entrance into labor organizing and defending women's reproductive rights. We see the formation of her class centered politics, and her tenacious personality from an early age.

Part II covers her move to New York City, organizing with the Working Families Party and DSA, encountering Occupy Wall Street and eventually hooking up with Chapo Trap House and becoming a Left fringe celebrity and political influencer. It's implied that Chapo Trap House became her main and steady source of income though I don't know what her net worth is at this point.

The third section focuses on her dedication to the second Bernie Sanders presidential campaign, which most of her other work ended up being channelled into in 2019.

We get it, you're working class

To me, her class war routine comes off as a bit forced at times. I'm for the class struggle and abolishing class. It's just that Frost lays it on so thick and so constantly, turn to any page,

—Tom Wetzel, Against Productivism.

Frost often gets sloppy with her critique, like this attempted "gotcha" where she seems to say Winant has not thought through why organizing the care sector is allegedly a bust:

> If the pedophiles and masochists can't count voters, then the necrophiliacs can't count dollars; *the choke points of healthcare profits simply aren't in the care sector. The big profits are in insurance companies, pharmaceuticals, and medical supplies* (the latter of which, I might add, are goods that must be manufactured).

Winant lays this out in the first section of his book. A key part of his argument, which one would assume Frost would understand before dehumanizing him as a necrophiliac, has to do with the "polarization" of the economy. While profits go mostly to firms that don't create mass employment, labor actually does accumulate in "low margin industries far from profits." He describes the accumulation of capital being "decoupled" from employment, in the sense that the workers will not be included in the success of companies by taking a share of profits in the form of higher wages.

> High-employment, low-profit industries—such as health care, education, and social services—experience constant downward pressure on their margins as a result of these industries' limited opportunities for productivity gains, a problem inherent to the provision of human services. The pattern even plays out inside the bounds of a given industry like health care, as pharmaceutical companies, insurers, and medical technology firms capture the profits, while hospitals, home

"productivist," who has also been deeply involved with far Right wing contrarian, anti-environmentalist, Covid denier, and Elon Musk selected "Twitter Files" journalist, Michael Shellenberger and his anti-environmentalist "Breakthrough Institute."

Without going too far down that rabbit hole, I'll just offer a basic teaser for the critique of productivism by syndicalist labor historian Tom Wetzel, the author of *Overcoming Capitalism*. In this article he does directly critique a Jacobin article by Leigh Phillips and Matthew Huber.

> Among socialists there are those who think the problem with capitalist technological development is not the technology it does develop, but its failure to develop production of goods and services that are desirable but not profitable. This idea of capitalist technology as "progressive" and "class-neutral" or "socially neutral" is called productivism.
>
> For socialists who hold this view the goal of socialism is to "unleash production" from the "fetters" of the capitalist profit-motive. As Matthew Huber and Leigh Philips — contemporary productivists and growth enthusiasts — put it, socialism "releases production from those constraints….As markets limit production to merely the set of things that are profitable, socialism always promised to be so much more productive than capitalism." Thus they do not critique the technology that capitalism does actually develop, but it's failure to develop production of things that would be socially beneficial but not profitable. This implies that the existing capitalist technological development is not inherently antagonistic to working class interests.

that she ends up sounding like a spy for the Campus Republicans going undercover for reconnaissance on the Left. I know she's not, but there's so much stuff like this:

> "Liberals want to like the workers, but they fundamentally perceive them as wild animals; thus, they can only find them sympathetic when they are domesticated, endangered, or—even better—extinct."

And

> "I realized that not only are so many middle-class liberal professionals, particularly those who make up the liberal media, absolutely fucking insane, but their politics operate according to a delusional fear of working-class people that rises to the level of psychosis.

And

> "It's important here to note that these politically unambitious cynics, usually smack-dab in the center of the media/activist/academic Venn diagram, are not merely faddists scrambling for a fresh, new, and perhaps more "woke" substitute for the blue-collar workers whose putative, anti-elitist resentments make them so nervous (though many most certainly are)."

If you read her book you will be faced with this non-stop signalling about her authentic working class status and how she really gets the workers, hell she WAS one, and how she's not like those liberals "who look down on you, fear you, want to replace you, and want you DEAD, man!" [this last fake quote is mine].

Then there's her favorite story, which she tells often, about how she drove a forklift at a couple of her jobs and thinks young people would find it fun, so give 'em that kind of job,…but I'll stop.

The Occupy Wall Street Debacle: A Confederacy of Dirtbags

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In her introduction Frost quotes Vampire Castle era Mark Fisher to provide a basic expectation of solidarity politics: "We need to learn, or re-learn, how to build comradeship and solidarity instead of doing capital's work for it by condemning and abusing each other. This doesn't mean, of course, that we must always agree—on the contrary, we must create conditions where disagreement can take place without fear of exclusion and excommunication."

That describes a solidarity where we can communicate, listen and learn from each other, debate, and still have each other's backs.

Frost loves solidarity, but not with anarchists. During her participation in the Occupy Wall Street movement she "read and reread Jo Freeman's essay 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' to understand and parse out the fatal defects of anarchist horizontalism we were witnessing but weren't allowed to admit. 'This apparent lack of structure too often disguised an informal, unacknowledged and unaccountable leadership that was all the more pernicious because its very existence was denied.'"

Freeman's essay is worth reading and anyone who participated in an Occupy (or de-Occupy) encampment can relate to the critique after engaging with General Assemblies and seeing ways in which any form of democracy can be subverted by

> that "leave," they can certainly be compelled to stay; even tepid liberals don't mind tinkering with taxes here and there to discourage American companies from offshoring. It's hardly a leap to believe that if we were ever able to tinker real hard, we could get 'em to onshore. (I still hold the old-school socialist position that we could nationalize entire industries, but hey, one step at a time.)

She leaves off how capital moves to where ever the workers are least organized and once those workers do organize and demand benefits, safety, and higher wages, capital can move to the next location. It's not just tinkering with tax codes. Even if it was, lowering taxes on corporations to lure them to a state is another rip off of the working class who lose funding for services and social infrastructure.

And pay no attention to her demand elsewhere in Dirtbag that "We need a Green New Deal. Hell, we need another, regular New Deal, but we can't do any of that without hard hats." A Green New Deal would obviously involve the Federal Government mandating economic policy. It would require massive investment and a complete overhaul in economic and social goals for it to have any meaningful result. When Winant suggests it, it's delusional, when she suggests it, authentic class solidarity.

Jacobin's Productivist Wing

Frost romanticizes and fetishizes hard hat workers. We know the intellectual circles she's a part of so it's safe to say her arguments line up well with many of her colleagues at Jacobin Mag, especially Leigh Phillips who is now her regular co-contributor on the post-Left AufheBungaBunga podcast which is run by three Spiked mag cadre. Phillips is a proud

> would have to argue that making people healthier by increasing their standard of living is bad for (care) workers, since it would decrease demand.

To Frost, this is nothing short of a Soylent Green scenario in which workers "feed off their own dead and dying." Winant and those who talk about organizing care workers do so to make sure more and more sick workers keep coming so they can all keep their jobs.

Frost's attacks on Winant are uninformed and inconsistent with her own politics.

> In response to that pesky little issue of care work privatization, the author suggests that "the federal government could require increased nurse staffing levels, which would drive up pay and limit overwork. It could mandate higher wages and stronger labor protections for all care workers. It could put home and community based services on equal footing with care in nursing homes under Medicaid, or even move toward a public insurance program for universal family care." They could. And I could grow wings and shit on the University of Chicago from five hundred feet in the air (all things are possible through Christ).

Her joke would land better if she didn't immediately turn around and explain one of the cornerstones of her own plan is to save US industrial jobs by getting the Federal Government to mandate a tax code that would keep industrial firms here and then maybe even get Federal Government to nationalize said industries.

> Clearly, there's still manufacturing in America. And clearly, it's possible to open a new factory in America that turns a profit. As for the ones

smaller influential groups within a group. I saw similar problems when I worked alongside (not in) the International Socialist Organization against the 2003 Iraq invasion. They manipulated and essentially controlled the entire agenda of their own cadre and their front group "Students Against War" all with the use of Robert's Rules of Order and a predetermined set of goals decided outside their local membership through the organization's practice of "Democratic Centralism." The tyranny of structure.

At any rate, given that Frost came into the Occupy Movement armed with foreknowledge of the problem of unaccountable power, the reader is waiting to see how she implemented this into her own participation with OWS.

Smash cut to Frost and her husband spontaneously and unaccountably mobilizing and leading a march of OWS participants to march in circles with no designated destination until they headed for Wall Street and got attacked by a phalanx of billy club wielding cops who beat and arrested many of them.

They had arrived at Zuccotti Park, and were briefed on the consensus method of decision making that occupiers were experimenting with in an attempt to engage in direct democracy, to which her husband immediately blurted out ""Well that's fucking stupid." They also heard that a General Assembly was meeting and decided they needed to unilaterally take leadership and bypass that as well. Amber rounds up a crew made up of her friends from DSA, Working Families Party (which she was still working for), and the Socialist Party USA and with this ad hoc instant vanguard, pied pipers a group of breakaway marchers to their doom. All of this before any attempt to even engage with OWS.

As their spontaneous march took off for no one knew where, some facilitators protested that they were trying to call a General Assembly to which Amber comments textually "Maybe they were, but we weren't." Surely this unthought out act of anti-democratic vanguardism was a blow to the

"tyranny of structurelessness," that only those playing 4-D Chess will really get. It's structure if I do it, tyranny when you do. The only horizontalism Frost supports is the kind a protester assumes after being bashed over the skull with a police truncheon.

Not only does Amber contradict her alleged beliefs with her "praxis" (a word that annoyed her as trendy) but she recounts this bold move to show how much more experience and wisdom she had as a class focused organizer as compared to the "kiddies" and anarchists of OWS.

The disastrous anti-climax of her leadership comes when the crowd she mobilized surges ahead of her to Wall Street, with no plan, no reconnaissance, and no knowledge of what awaited them. When the police spring their trap, she decides she doesn't want to get arrested and flees the scene, actually dragged by her husband, leaving her would be comrades to their fate with the cops. But not before barking insults at the billy club swinging cops "Big fuckin' man!" to get them extra riled up for the protesters. As Frost puts it, "solidarity refers to nothing less than the work and sacrifice necessary to trust and hold on to one another."

The Care Economy Ghouls

Frost advocates fiercely for placing the blue collar industrial working class at the center of the class struggle because she believes this is the only sector capable of challenging production, shutting down capitalists, and exerting working class power in a meaningful way.

She defines three categories of people who just don't get it, who allegedly "insist that the industrial worker is no longer necessary for social democracy and that there must be some new agent of history to take their place." These people, she says,

bor market, more workers providing the care provided through these private plans given unionized workers.

Winant also goes into the eventual welfare reform of the early 80s which put more pressure on Medicare and Medicaid "to enforce market discipline on hospital care. Hospitals would have to economize, do only what's necessary." It was the usual market logic based on lowering costs, not on human need.

He sums up his goal: "In the book, I'm trying to figure out how the existing legacies of class formation and welfare state institutions, degraded as they are, can serve as points of solidarity around which to reorganize and recompose working-class power, rebuilding institutions of solidarity."

Rather than cheering on deindustrialization as Frost accuses him of, Winant is trying to see the current terrain of class struggle as it is, not as Amber Frost wants it to be. As I'll show below, Frost is just shooting the messenger here, then turning to her audience and saying "I kicked his ass" as if this makes her the savior of industrial workers.

Frost's Spin

Frost tries to twist Winant's acknowledging industrial decline and discussing possible labor strategies in response to the transition from industrial to care economy, instead portraying him as relishing the prospect of working people drawing wages based on maintaining suffering and misery:

> …I would hazard to guess that they would consider such a "plan" pretty ghoulish; the suggestion that everyone left in the wake of deindustrialization should merely feed off their own dead and dying ignores the fact that they'd prefer not to need such dire care in the first place.
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> Additionally, this plan actually depends on senseless suffering. Taken to its logical conclusion, one

collectively bargained contracts as "fringe benefits." This meant employers paid for healthcare for workers.

Because many in non-industrial sectors were left out of the private healthcare provided to industrial workers, the Federal Government stepped in and enacted Medicare and Medicaid. Both operate by purchasing healthcare from private companies. This meant that rather than the government being the *provider* of healthcare, as was done in other industrialized democracies, it was a consumer of it, as a paying customer. Again, because of the privatized model, all the capitalist and market logic behind that mandated that healthcare providers operate by depressing the wages and benefits of the work force.

Because of that, the shift from industrial work to healthcare work was a shift to a sector that provided mass employment but also low wages.

"This reliance on private-sector labor markets for the provision of health insurance is unique to the United States. What it means is that we have a huge private-sector welfare state, which created all kinds of political problems when reliance on different kinds of social welfare grew due to industrial job loss."

Another aspect of the shift away from industrial to healthcare jobs was how the decline was felt generationally. It was union jobs being lost, which meant seniority protected older workers while younger workers often relocated in search of other opportunities. That left the older workers in place and they either aged out of the workforce, or also lost their jobs to closures. By the 1980s, Pittsburgh's population was generally older. Aging brings the need for more healthcare and general care, and the job layoffs also exacerbated the overall health of workers, through more stress, and other factors that disrupted households and security.

But the union workers were often able to walk away with their collectively bargained health plans intact and this was another factor leading to an expansion of the healthcare la-

are all broadly "perverts" who fall into three distinct subcategories: "masochists, pedophiles, or necrophiliacs."

Masochists are ""guilt-ridden, progressive, liberal, college-educated professionals" following the lead of "marginalized people." In doing so they allegedly abdicate responsibility "to the people least in a position to exercise political agency." It might seem cute to Frost to use her "scare quotes" to mock marginalized people as a category, but it's ironic when you consider "being pushed to the margins" includes workers who lost their jobs due to deindustrialization. Frost defines the term "marginalized" as ""the fuzzy neologism now generally employed as a euphemism for 'minorities' and women." Oh, if it's just about those people who cares!

The "pedophiles" fetishize youth movements regardless of whether or not they're effectively challenging capitalists.

The Necrophiliacs want to organize an economy based on caring for the dead and dying remains of the working class after deindustrialization instead of trying to revitalize US manufacturing.

Frost's necrophiliac poster boy is historian and associate professor at the University of Chicago, Gabriel Winant. She unleashes a blistering series of insulting attacks on what she thinks his position is. In the process we see a not fully formed critique of capitalist production which helps explain her romanticized portrayal of industrial work.

I will give a concise but full (2 pages) overview of Winant's work on the shift from industrial to care economies, and then consider Frost's attacks on it.

Gabriel Winant's Thesis

Winant's recent research focussed on the industrial city Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He starts in the post-war 1950s when 47 % of workers there were in steel, manufacturing, rail,

trucking, mining, construction, or warehousing. The period fromWorld War II through the Korean War was a peak time for demand for steel in the US.

The New Deal State had extended "social citizenship," meaning economic security, healthcare, and other benefits providing a decent quality of life, to some of the working class mainly through collective bargaining in the private sector. This took place mainly in manufacturing jobs. That compact between workers and capitalists was a portal into economic security for those who could pass through it. It established a perimeter within the working class, with millions inside it, that functioned as a protective circle. Unfortunately many stood outside the circle. It was a raced and gendered division that created an unevenness and inequality in the U.S. working class.

There were Black and Latinx industrial workers, but they were fewer and the most precarious, last hired, first fired in most cases. They also tended to get the most dangerous or undesirable jobs. Women had a minimal presence in post war industrial jobs so their access to the protections of the welfare state were usually secured by getting married to an industrial working man.

The whole system was based around the nuclear family, mostly for whites, patriarchal, heterosexual, with the male breadwinner left to disburse wealth and benefits to his family. While he dispersed wealth to them, the women/wives performed non-waged labor, cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, childcare (producing future workers), and more, to reproduce the family.

It's important to note, beyond many being excluded from standing inside the protective circle of the private welfare state, they are also mobilized to serve those inside it. This is because one of the main benefits given to workers through collective bargaining was employer provided healthcare, and since care in general involves labor, the industrial workers

benefited by the low waged workers carrying out their care. Again, the raced and gendered aspects apply because most care workers were either women, non-white, or both.

The above five paragraphs are paraphrased from this interview[1]

The following paragraphs are based on an interview with Winant here[2]

"Industrial employment in Pittsburgh peaked in 1950 at the apex of the military-industrial cycle of investment that joins the Second World War and the Korean War." After that, the "massive but transitory pulse of investment, employment steadily declined." Deindustrialization was well underway by the late 1970s as the Steel Belt transition to the Rust Belt accelerated. As industrial jobs dwindled, more service sector jobs took their place.

Healthcare jobs made up a huge portion of the new jobs. They were mostly low paying. Many women, often women of color, moved into these jobs. "African-American women had always worked outside the home at higher rates than white women did, because African-American men always had less access to stable industrial employment" than white men.

When the jobs started to disappear, the impact on the family structure was enormous and often devastating.

The correlation between the rise in healthcare and the decline of manufacturing has to do with the way the welfare state was created in the post-war labor/capital compact. While unions had tried to expand New Deal demands beyond the right to unionize and strike to include healthcare provided by the government (we might compare it to demanding medicare for all today), they did not get it. Instead, healthcare was to be provided by private companies and given to workers in their

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bm8azSzzrSA

[2] https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/steel-and-social-reproduction/