The United Workers: Toward a New Paradigm of Transformative Community-Labor Organizing

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ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE UNITED WORKERS: TOWARD A NEW PARADIGM OF TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY-LABOR ORGANIZING


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In this thesis I analyze the Baltimore-based poor people’s human rights organization, the United Workers and its Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm between 2002 and 2008. Accordingly, I analyze three areas. (1) The United Workers as a response to neoliberal capitalism and the declining role of trade unions. (2) The organization and its model as an attempt to offer a successful example of organizing under neoliberalism. That is, within the service and tourist sector, which is nearly devoid of formal working class organization, and working conditions are precarious. (3) The obstacles and achievements of the organization as demonstrated through its organizing model and the Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards. The greatest obstacle comes in the form of a pedagogical tension, described as a rift in the group’s pedagogical praxis. The achievements stem from the resolution of this tension, which offer new ways of approaching labor within neoliberalism. Much of the information on the United Workers presented derives from eight years of participant observations.

An analysis of the three areas is produced using the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, David Harvey, Immanuel Wallerstein and Vanessa Tait’s Poor Workers’ Unions. They contribute to contextualizing the nature of class struggle, neoliberal capitalism, social movements, the decline of trade unions and the formation of community-labor
organizations like the United Workers. Furthermore, the works of Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, Willie Baptist and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) are drawn upon as they influenced the United Workers in developing its pedagogy and organizing approach.
THE UNITED WORKERS: 
TOWARD A NEW PARADIGM OF TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY-LABOR ORGANIZING.

By

Greg Rosenthal

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts 2013
Dedication

I dedicate any merit from this endeavor to the United Workers, to the Movement to End Poverty, to family (blood and beyond), to friends, to educators and learners.

    May we know liberation of mind-body, spirit and collective.
    May we live free from poverty and suffering.
    May love, wisdom and compassion pervade our every breath.

May we see with clarity the barriers (physical, social and mental) that separate us and work to break them down.

May we be with each other and ourselves in every moment with reverence, love-kindness, wisdom and compassion.

    May all beings be free.
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INTRODUCTION:
The Challenge of a New Way Forward

*To outfight the forces arrayed against us, we must outsmart them. Nowhere in world history can anyone find where a dumb force rose up and defeated a smart force.*

- Willie Baptist (qtd. in Baptist and Rehmann 160)

I. Thesis

This thesis is an investigation into the obstacles and strengths of the Baltimore-based United Workers between 2002 and 2008 through an analysis of the organization’s Living Wages Campaign and organizing paradigm. The United Workers was formed as a multi-racial and bilingual poor1 people’s economic human rights organization building of the legacies of the Abolition, Civil Rights and the Trade Union Movement. Its mission was to develop the leadership of low-wage and non-wage workers in order to build a sustained mass social movement capable of ending poverty and ensuring human rights for all. The organization believed they were able to accomplish this mission and the revival of working class struggle through its organizing model, which I refer to as the counter-hegemonic *Transformative Community-Labor Organizing* paradigm. The term for the organizing model derives from two sources. *Transformative* refers to the United Workers use of a Transformative Human Rights Framework that focused around human rights values to unite the poor across divisions and facilitate them to move beyond their self-interests. *Community-Labor Organizing* derives from a quote by labor leaders Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gapasin: “a trade union that addresses the interest of only one section of the working class (such as a white supremacist craft union) deserves the label

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1 The United Workers used the term “poor” instead of the more classical Marxist frame of “working-class.” The conception of the poor is not exclusive to those who labor for a wage, but also includes unwaged and non-traditional work. Their notion of poor actually goes further than Marxism by not limiting the major contradiction of society as between capital and labor at the site of production. The United Workers conception of the class contradiction between capital and the poor ranges from locations of the workplace, to housing, healthcare, education and other areas of economic human rights.
labor organization less than does a community-based organization that assists the unemployed or the homeless” (174). The core components of the organizing model focused on uniting the poor across racial, ethnic, gender, language and other divisions; class-consciousness; human rights values; execution of effective strategies and tactics for collective action; training leaders; corporate campaigns; dialogic education and storytelling-activism. While the United Workers organizing model presented useful and new mechanisms for building power and leadership, a major obstacle prevented it from the stated desire of taking a leadership role within antisystemic movements directed toward reviving working class struggle. I argue that this obstacle stems from what I refer to as a pedagogical tension: a rift in the organization’s pedagogical praxis. Conversely, the organization’s achievements derive from the resolution of this tension, both of which offer new insights for antisystemic movements.

My thesis is framed by three interconnected questions. (1) What are the particular political economic and historical conditions that gave rise to a heterodox community-labor organization like the United Workers? (2) Does the United Workers organizing paradigm present a potential approach for stimulating the revival of working class struggle?² (3) What are the major obstacles and successes of the United Workers and its organizing paradigm upon analyzing its history? To answer these questions, several theoretical and literary sources are drawn upon to develop an analysis of the United Workers and the particular historical, spatial and political economic conditions that

² Throughout the paper “working-class” and “poor” and used interchangeably to represent waged and unwaged labor. Furthermore, in the Marxist sense, the notion of worker is not limited to those who retain a traditional job, but rather includes unwaged housework or caring work, those on welfare, the unemployed, day laborers and prisoners. The working class is a representation of workers relationship to the means of production. All those who do not own the means of production, fit into the working class. This conception has been largely popularized by the Occupy Wall Street Movement and their resolve, “We are the 99%” (Marx, Manifesto of the Communist Party).
surround it. Subsequently, these elements contribute to understanding the organization’s temporal formation, development, campaigning, organizing model and organizational obstacles between the periods 2002 to 2008 as demonstrated by its Living Wages at Camden Yards Campaign.

The works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and David Harvey are utilized to present the general tendencies of the capitalist mode of production and its major contradiction between capital and labor. This contradiction leads to class struggle and the growing polarization of wealth as capitalists search for ever greater profit maximization through disciplining workers and constantly revolutionizing the production processes (Marx, *Manifesto* 12). Marxist geographer David Harvey builds on Marx and Engels’ theory of capitalism by applying it to the development of city centers in the U.S. and neoliberalism as the latest phase of capitalist globalization. An analysis of the hegemony of neoliberalism is critical to understanding the character and configuration of the United Workers within the class struggle and the urban core of a neoliberal Baltimore City that has been deindustrialized with a large population of dispossessed (Levine 125; Olson 292). As David Harvey explains, the neoliberal period is defined by the “New Economy” of market liberalization, privatization, state deregulation, financialization, “labor flexibilization” and the slashing of social services causing high rates of unemployment, underemployment and poverty (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 33; Gill 198).³ The principal configuration of Baltimore’s neoliberal project since the 1970s has been the investment of the public’s money into private wealth accumulation. As a result, the service and tourist industries dominate the city with, low-wages, part-time, temporary and informal

³ Labor “flexibilization” refers to the increased use of part-time, temporary, low-wage and non-union work.
work amid rising numbers of poor people (Kilar). This history of post-WWII Baltimore has been documented in this text as interpreted by several historians. The history relays the particular conditions that gave rise to the localized aspects of the United Workers and its Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards.

Turning to Immanuel Wallerstein and Willie Baptist, three different forms of social movement organization are examined as attempts to respond to the crisis imposed by capitalism on the livelihoods of workers, the poor and other historically marginalized populations. The three categories—Old Left, New Left and the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty—serve to locate the United Workers within a particular tradition of organizing and its theoretical approaches regarding how to develop what Wallerstein calls an “antisystemic movement” (Wallerstein, “Culture as Ideological Battleground” 51). Antisystemic movements are social movements concerned with altering the present political economic paradigm. Connected to variations of social movements is Vanessa Tait’s analysis of the decline of the traditional trade union and the formation of community-labor organizations like the United Workers. In Poor Workers’ Unions, Tait describes the formation of community-labor organizations as a product of the neglect and exclusionary practices of traditional trade unions from organizing the poor, Blacks and women (Tait 10). Accordingly the United Workers was also a response to the decline of the traditional trade union as the dominant mechanism of working class organization and struggle. Their decline stems from attacks by state and capital and their inability to respond to changes in the neoliberal economy.

The final grouping of theoretical contributors is applied directly by the United Workers to its Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm. This paradigm
includes: Transformative Human Rights Framework; corporate campaigning; pedagogical approach of reflective action; use of leadership development; the storytelling strategy of the Battle of Stories Framework; and the group’s governance structure. All of these core elements are described with particular attention given to the pedagogical theory, corporate campaigning and the Battle of Stories Framework as they represent the nucleus of the pedagogical tension. The four principal contributors to these aspects of the model are: Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci; Brazilian educator Paulo Freire; leader in the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty, Willie Baptist; and the community-based labor organization of farmworkers, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW).

The pedagogical tension is understood as a rift between the group’s pedagogy of reflective action on the one hand, as influenced by Freire’s “libertarian pedagogy:” based in dialogue and critical reflection on one’s conditions in order to change them and the world (Freire 54). On the other is the Battle of Stories Framework, which wraps corporate campaigning into the elements of narrative. The participants write out the story together and then enact it. Within the Living Wages Campaign, the pedagogical tension would often manifest as a breakdown in dialogue between the organization’s leadership and its membership. This occurred in the cases in which writing the narrative was not dialogic or the action was not followed by critical reflection. The tension was resolved when communication was present throughout, from the process of developing the Campaign narrative to enacting it and then reflecting. While this pedagogical tension existed as an

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4 Everyone in the United Workers is called and considered a leader. For illustrative purposes, I distinguish leaders between those who have institutional leadership positions (staff and the Leadership Council) and the general membership who make up the lower-level leadership development steps.
obstacle for the United Workers, the success of the organization contribute new ways for antisystemic movements to approach labor within neoliberal capitalism.

II. Audience

The impetus for this research began with my personal experiences and commitment to the United Workers and the larger Movement to End Poverty. The paper’s intention is to encourage dialogue through critical reflection on pedagogy, leadership and organization. As both a scholar and organizer-activist, this paper is directed at three communities: First, the United Workers and the Movement to End Poverty. Much of this research comes directly from this community: their voices, experiences, analysis and histories of poverty and the struggle for freedom from poverty. It is back to them, that optimistically this document can be a part of reflecting where they have come from, where they are and where they aspire to be. The second audience is U.S.-based activists and organizers of the antisystemic Left. Organizations and movements in different sectors often do not share lessons learned, successes and shortcomings. It is in this light that the contents of this paper propose increased cross-fertilization. The final audience is my academic colleagues who are often cut off from the social movements we study. In attempting to contribute to bridging the gap between academia and social movements, this paper attempts to link theory and practice.

III. Personal Motivation

I have spent over ten years as an activist and organizer, but I only found my political home when I met the United Workers and others in the Movement to End Poverty in 2005. As a fulltime staff member for three and a half years (2007-2010) and a
volunteer for another five years with the organization, I was able to get to know these leaders intimately. I was most inspired by the emphasis of crossing barriers through shared values and vision: encouraging personal and collective liberation was always alive in the exploration of alternative social and cultural relations. I was encouraged by their commitment to scholarship and action as part of an effective organizing strategy along with a radical analysis of societal transformation that prioritized leadership deriving from those most adversely affected by the social, cultural and political-economic degradations of capitalism. Having both personally witnessed and experienced transformation within the Living Wages at Camden Yards Campaign, it is my motivation to share the experiences that led there and the obstacles that are less discussed. On another level, having time away from the organization to reflect, I wanted to consider if the organization had in fact developed a paradigm for effectively engaging in class struggle. I pass on what I hope to be a useful study of some of the core organizing strategies and the limitations of the United Workers with the objective of contributing to what Bevington and Dixon have called “movement-relevant theory.” That is, “social movement theory that seeks to provide useable knowledge for those seeking social change” (189).

IV. Methodology

The research conducted for this paper relied upon qualitative research methods of ethnography in the form of participant observation, one-on-one interviews and a review of primary and secondary documents. The conceptual framework, literature review and the post-WII history of Baltimore and its neoliberal manifestation were developed using secondary sources. The latter half of this study focuses around the United Workers organizing model, the Living Wages Campaign and the pedagogical tension. These
components were reconstructed and analyzed using three methods: (1) Participant
observation provided for the bulk of data collected and presented here, followed by (2)
personal interviews (3) and finally, a study of primary and secondary documents. While
the United Workers still exists, I limit research and analysis of the organization, its
history, organizing model and obstacles to the period 2002 to 2008. Limiting research to
this six-year span offers a more definitive way of drawing conclusions about a constantly
evolving topic as it presents a clear beginning and end point. The foundation of the
United Workers occurs in 2002 and 2008 concludes the organization’s Living Wages
Campaign.

As the principal source material, participant observation was conducted over an
eight-year period. I was first introduced to the United Workers as a volunteer in 2005.
Between 2007 and 2010, I worked as full-time paid staff person. From 2010 to 2012 I
acted again in the role of volunteer. The title of researcher was acquired in spring 2011.
The role of transitioning from organizer to researcher was certainly not flawless and
necessitated a high level of reflexivity to my situatedness. As a staff member and then a
researcher, I was afforded a more insightful perspective into the organization’s inner
workings. I was brought into the organization under the mentorship of a long-time leader
in the organization. As a staff person I was first a Communications Organizer and later a
Worker Organizer. As a Communications Organizer I was responsible for being well
versed in the organization’s history, organizing model and the application of the Battle of
Stories Framework to the Living Wages Campaign. As a Worker Organizer, I was
intimately connected with the larger membership of the United Workers and responsible
for putting together leadership development opportunities that attempted to reflect the
pedagogy of reflective action. This fieldwork positioned me to witness and experience the obstacles of trying to mix the organization’s pedagogical theory of reflective action and its practice in the narrative-based Battle of Stories Framework. To compliment the participant observation, personal interviews were conducted with those who were central in developing campaign strategies, event narrative construction and direct participation throughout the organizational history.

The one-on-one interviews were semi-structured, with pre-formulated questions to guide the interviews. Nine interviews were conducted, all within Baltimore City and ranged from two to seven hours in length. Five of the participants were interviewed in connection with a graduate course in spring 2011. In the fall of 2012, three of the participants did follow up interviews along with four additional participants. I transcribed the recordings of the interview, and as needed, translated them from Spanish to English. These interviews provided the primary resource data that informed the reconstruction and retelling of the organization’s history along with its organizing paradigm.

Interviewees were selected based on their status as staff members and/or those organizationally defined as leaders. The staff selected worked for the organization for at least four years. All of the member/leaders were currently active and engaged with the United Workers for two or more years. Five staff people were interviewed, three of which no longer held full-time paid staff positions, while the other two retained their standing as current employees of the United Workers. The four leaders from the ranks of membership were part of one or both, leadership development programs: Poverty Scholars and the
Leadership Council\textsuperscript{5}. The decision to focus on the staff and leadership was based on their access to power in the formation and reproduction of priorities, values, discourses, culture, knowledge, identity and the consistency of their day-to-day involvement. Since much of the knowledge shared here came from the organizations collective struggles and reflections, a previous draft of this paper was shared with the United Workers and certain suggested revisions were incorporated into the final product. Nevertheless, the interviewed participants’ names have been changed to provide a level of anonymity and to underscore that while the interlocutors offered data, the analysis and conclusions are my own.

The final sources were primary and secondary documents regarding these assorted elements of the organization. The primary documents were a mix of internal and public documents produced by the United Workers. Secondary sources included the author’s own archives of news clippings, television news spots, foundation reports and alternative journal weeklies, monthlies and at least two book chapters.

V. Chapter Outline

This thesis includes this introduction and five chapters. The introduction poses the thesis, research methodology, the intended audiences and my personal motivations. I relied heavily upon the qualitative method of participant observation, which was supplemented with personal interviews, and a review of primary and secondary documents. The central thesis argument is threefold: (1) The United Workers was a response to neoliberalism and the decline of trade unions; (2) the organization attempted

\textsuperscript{5} A Poverty Scholar is a part-time paid organizer in training. A member of the Leadership Council is part of the elected decision-making body of the entire organization.
to offer a model for organizing under neoliberal capitalism; and (3) the obstacles and achievements of the organization.

Chapter 1 presents the conceptual framework and literature review as they contribute to framing and elaborating on the three points of the thesis argument mentioned above. The contributors include Marx, Engels and Harvey on theories of capitalism and neoliberalism. Wallerstein and Baptist offer insights into the objectives of social movements. Tait explains the decline of the traditional trade unions and the formation of community-labor organizations like the Untied Workers. Gramsci, Freire, Baptist and the CIW pose elements of their work that contributed to the United Workers pedagogical praxis.

Chapter 2 focuses on neoliberalism in Baltimore (late 1970s - present) as the economy was transformed by deindustrialization, the embrace of a service and tourist based economy, massive privatization, slashing of social services and high rates of unemployment, underemployment and poverty.

Chapter 3 examines specific aspects of the United Workers Transformative Community-Labor Organizing model. The critical features of its paradigm included: Transformative Human Rights Framework; corporate campaigning; pedagogical approach of reflective action; use of leadership development; the story telling strategy of the Battle of Stories Framework; and the group’s governance structure.

Chapter 4 reviews the United Workers history from 2002 to 2008, which includes the organization’s founding and the Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards. Seven moments are highlighted in telling the story of the Living Wages Campaign to demonstrate the group’s obstacles and achievements surrounding the pedagogical tension.
Chapter 5 concludes with a critical reflection on the organization’s greatest successes and obstacles as they contribute to providing lessons for a revived antisystemic working class struggle.
CHAPTER 1: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

*Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters.*

- African Proverb (qtd. in Feagin 54)

**The Development of the City in Neoliberal Capitalism**

As David Harvey explains in *Rebel Cities*, throughout history, cities have developed through a process of surplus accumulation, concentrated in the hands of a minority, such as a King, Lord, capitalist, landowner or developer. They dictate the laws, geographical and spatial organization, economies, and polity. Under the capitalist mode of production, class contradictions are an inherent byproduct of urbanization through a process he identifies as “accumulation by dispossession.” Accumulation by dispossession refers to the method of extracting wealth by means of displacement of marginalized populations, the commodification and privatization of public commons, consumerism and predatory financial practices (Harvey, *Enigma of Capital* 244).

Cities are triply formed by capital's perpetual need for new sources of surplus production and absorption, leading to the concentration of wealth. Secondly, the mobilization of migrants as labor, displaced from rural life via the capital accumulation process (agricultural industrialization, monopolization and resource extraction). Finally, adaptations are instituted in response to the protest of waged and unwaged labor. As Marx described capitalism, the irregular and unequal cycle of growth is endless in so far as the “coercive laws of competition” and the drive for ever-greater profit maximization leads to “limitless” expansion (qtd. in Harvey, *Rebel Cities* 6). As capitalists accumulate surplus, they must always reinvest to survive or another capitalist will replace them. The result of continuous reinvestment is the further expansion of surplus production and in
turn the growth of urban centers. The metropolis also offers a fixed space for the investment in infrastructure to facilitate production. Far from free of hindrances, capitalists face a series of obstacles to maximizing surplus value.

The urban core is created and recreated according to the needs and logic of capital and the contradictions with labor. All other interests—social, cultural and political—are forced to align with this logic. The changes that cities undergo over time are fueled by the capitalists need to eliminate or minimize impediments to growth. The primary impediments are labor costs, capitalist competition, market saturation, diminishing consumer purchasing power and the dead value of the city itself. The capitalist addresses these “issues” with the Orwellian doublespeak of “redevelopment,” “modernization” and “urban renewal.” The translation amounts to the radical transformation of the urban landscape, productive processes and terrain of social and cultural relations, which Harvey describes as a process of accumulation by dispossession.

The capitalist manages these obstacles to the generation of profit with two main solutions. The first involves labor reflecting Marx’s “labor theory of value,” which dictates that surplus is derived from the exploitation of workers; the greater the exploitation the greater the profit (Yates 176). When wages are too high and/or the number of available workers is in short supply the capitalist lowers labor costs by disciplining labor through work speed-ups, layoffs, labor replacing technologies and attacks on trade unions. Moreover, the perpetual cycle of capital accumulation causes newly displaced and dispossessed populations to migrate into the urban core as work and services are concentrated in the cities. The constant proletarianization of the working class ensures an ever-ready supply of labor to replace the current workforce: surplus
labor. In the same light, the “coercive laws of competition” usher in tactics to increase productivity through new technologies, disciplining labor and the reorganization of production (Harvey, Rebel Cities 6). These same tactics act to diminish the purchasing power of consumers to buy goods. When these changes reach a limit for generating profit, the capitalists maneuvers shift to: (a) the search for new markets through foreign trade and production; (b) the creation of new “needs” and lifestyles to extend the existing markets; (c) the commodification of culture and/or (d) the extension of new credit-based opportunities. If the rate of profit continues to be too low, state intervention creates new avenues for capital growth by financing private initiatives, privatizing public firms, services and even governance, and enforcing austere anti-labor practices, hallmarks of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism represents a new phase of capitalism, initiated in the 1970s to restore capitalist class power and profit growth through political-economic restructuring leading to offshoring and outsourcing of production to minimize labor cost and break union strength (Harvey, Neoliberalism).

A temporary divergence from the above-illustrated practice of urbanization occurred during the post-WWII economic boom. The city’s infrastructure began to represent dead labor that did not turn around quick enough profit for capitalists. Surpluses were absorbed by militarization and suburbanization (Olson 370). Consequently, urban centers experienced a disinvestment and neglect that left them devoid of a reproducing their economic base. The so-called urban crisis and rebellions of the 1960s ensued, led by the marginalized and dispossessed populations left out of the new economic prosperity. This called for a recalibration of the city in response to the resistance of city residents and the public financing to attract capital into the urban core. The subsequent reconstruction
of deindustrialized cities took on a new character by erecting physical barriers between the impoverished city residents and the newly prized downtown spectacle (Harvey, *Neoliberalism*). With the steep decline of privately financed industrial manufacturing as a source of growth, cities socialized the risks onto the public of capital investment in the production of services, while all surplus remained privately held by the developers, corporations and capitalist (Harvey, *Neoliberalism*).

The new neoliberal city has become a center of service and entertainment for visiting and suburban populations, and cared for by the dispossessed locals. The new and growing proletariat\(^6\) is characterized by precariate work arrangements defined by unstable, periodic, temporary and part-time employment, and workplaces devoid of organizing or other representation of class struggle (DeParle et al.; Harvey, *Rebel Cities* 130). Their work arrangements are governed by the shifting political economy of the city, oriented around the low-wage sectors of tourism, services, and cultural commodification, existing within—and produced through—a milieu which Harvey describes as an “economy of the spectacle” (Harvey, *Rebel Cities* 14). These deindustrialized cities have ushered in an increasingly polarized cityscape between proletarians and the wealthy.

**Social Movements – Old Left, New Left and Poor People’s Organizations**

With each new era of radical social change, it is the burden and goal of successive generations to learn from the lessons of their predecessors and begin charting a new path of antisystemic power. As Wallerstein describes, antisystemic power comes in the form of organizations and movements that are a product of capitalism and at the same time seek to transcend the asymmetrical power relations that define the system (“Culture as

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\(^6\) The 2011 Census Data shows 100 million people — one in three Americans — either in poverty or near poverty.
the Ideological Battleground” 51). Given the failure of Old Left strategies and the waning of the New Left, twenty-first century U.S. social movements find themselves at a crossroads over historicity⁷ (Nilsen 129). The Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty—which is where the United Workers positioned itself—attempts to bridge elements of the Old and New Left to pose a new way forward.

Wallerstein describes two substantial historical configurations of modern antisystemic movements. The first is the Old Left, which flourished from the late nineteenth century to 1968. The Old Left came in “two varieties,” the Communists and Social-Democrats, and national liberation movements (Wallerstein “Crisis of the Capitalist System”). Globally, the Old Left was defined by the creation of revolutionary political parties that adhered to a two-pronged strategy; “First gain power within the state structure; then transform the world” (Wallerstein, “New Revolts” 30). This was most evident in the Russian Revolution, Mao’s China, certain “Third World” Liberation movements such as Cuba, Vietnam and Angola, Communist and Socialist Parties globally and elements of the U.S. industrial trade unionism. Wallerstein contends that by 1968 the Old Left had delivered on its strategy with “Revolutionary” governments all over the world that challenged U.S. hegemony. However, the Old Left crumbled under the offensive of neoliberalism and became a source of criticism for the New Left (Wallerstein “Crisis of the Capitalist System”).

Wishing to break with the more top-down vanguardist politics and two-step approach of the Old Left, the New Left was more concerned with democratic leadership, the environment, feminism, sexuality, ethnic and racial “minority” based struggles and

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⁷ Historicity refers to the struggle between social movements “over the direction and form of the development of the social organization of human needs and capacities” (Nilsen 129-130).
anti-oppression politics (Wallerstein “Crisis of the Capitalist System”). These movements sought inclusion and participation in the current economic order as opposed to waiting until “after the revolution.” This was characteristic of the Black Power Movement, the LGBTQ Movement, Women’s Liberation and environmentalism (Wallerstein “Crisis of the Capitalist System”). In many respects the New Left was successful in obtaining inclusive laws and policies, but the systematic nature of these exclusive inequities remained embedded within capitalism. The Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty is an attempt to overcome the challenges confronted by the Old and New Left.

There is no definitive or concise source that deals with the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty and so I turn to the work of Willie Baptist, a long-time leader and theoretician in this movement to infer about the movement. In Baptist’s *Pedagogy of the Poor*, it appears that the Movement began in 1967-68 with Dr. King’s Poor People’s Campaign and carries on to the present as a network of Poor People’s Organizations (Baptist and Rehmann 161-162). This Movement both seeks to gain power within the state structures as with the Old Left, while also pursuing multi-issue reform campaigns that are inclusive in the immediate future (Baptist and Rehman 162). To date, this Movement is small and has yet to hit the world stage like the Old and New Left, but the “network of grassroots” organizations aspires to be a leader in a new antisystemic movement. One of the organizations within that network is the United Workers.

It is still too early to assess whether the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty has adequately learned from the mistakes of the Old and New Left. While the Old Left and New Left had moments of social upheaval within which to organize, the Poor
People’s Movement has yet to experience such an opportunity to fully demonstrate their larger strategies.

**The Formation of Community-Labor Organizations**

This section examines the historical nature and function of organizations like the United Workers as community-labor organizations and how the United Workers was both a product of and distinct from traditional trade unions. Through a review of Tait’s *Poor Workers’ Unions*, community-labor organizations and traditional trade union are defined and explored along with the conditions that surround their development and decline respectively. The use of the term and definition for “traditional trade unions” is borrowed from Tait in order to clearly distinguish it as the *hegemonic* institution of worker power and in turn, the point of departure for what I term as *counter-hegemonic* community-labor organizations from below, which included the United Workers amongst others.

Tait loosely describes traditional trade unions as workplace based, contractually oriented organizations, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), organized by trade or industry, top-down decision making, and defending the interests of their dues-paying members who historically have been “skilled” male workers and disproportionately white (Tait 10). Tait argues that “Poor Workers’ Unions” arose as a direct response to the exploitative squeeze of capital, the attack of capital on trade unions and the traditional neglect and exclusivity towards large sectors of the unorganized working class.

Community-labor organizations are distinguished by several factors. They operate outside the bureaucracy of traditional trade unions and are typically made up of a broad

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8 Tait’s distinctions are useful, but her use of “union”, as in Poor Workers’ Union is misleading since many of the organizations she describes are not unions at all in the traditional sense. This author uses, *community-labor organization* in place of "union" to signify Tait’s Poor Workers’ Union.
base of low-wage, no-wage workers, immigrants, contingent workers and welfare recipients, and are generally open to everyone. They have a strong, explicit commitment to racial and ethnic diversity, gender equality, participatory democracy and community-based organizing strategies. They take up the challenge posed by Fletcher and Gapasin: “if class struggle is not restricted to the workplace, then neither should unions be” (174).

Traditionally, the place of production is recognized as the site of struggle, but equally so might be spaces of social reproduction that include housing, offices of welfare and social services, healthcare, childcare and in areas of racial and gender discrimination.

As the dominant mechanism of working class power, the traditional trade union has served the critical function of protecting and advocating for the rights of workers at their jobsite. Unions are responsible for securing wage increases, job security, health and safety protections, pensions, respect, and the protection of workers from the shifting whims and general exploitation of the state and capital. However, while trade unions protect workers, they are not intended to defend all workers. As Wallerstein points out, this paradox is a direct result of the capitalist paradigm. The exploitation of workers results in some form of resistance, in this case a union. A union arises to push back from capitalist compression on wages and conditions, seemingly as an opposing force, yet as in every antisystemic social movement, the union is still a product of capitalism (Wallerstein, “Culture as Ideological Battleground” 51). Individualism, elitism, exclusion, and discrimination are present as a function of reproducing the very system the unions seeks to reform. Nonetheless, there remains the need for organization, agitation and resistance among those marginalized groups denied access to traditional trade unions. Often these parties bring about the organic sprouting of alternative bodies. Periodically
unions within the traditional labor movement are forced further to the left where the community-labor organizations’ practices get absorbed or the organizations themselves become usurped into the functioning of the union (Tait 225-6).

This phenomenon is demonstrated in the Black freedom struggle of the Civil Rights era. Since the merger of the CIO with the AFL (AFL-CIO) in 1955, the dominant labor body was an institution replicating white supremacy and patriarchy. All of the major civil rights organizations protested union-backed racial discrimination and unfair hiring practices. The neglect of the labor union to organize workers of color and women led the Civil Rights Movement and the Women’s Liberation Movement to develop “freedom unions” and “women’s liberation unions” respectively (Tait 26-27; Tait 38).

One of the significant differences of the heterodox community-labor organizations was their emphasis on multi-racial pluralism and overall inclusivity from welfare recipients to the unemployed. Such examples included the 1969 New York City-based Independent Distributive Workers of America, the National Welfare Rights Organization and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) with their Unemployed Workers’ Organizing Committee. Their basic demands were for respect and equity in obtaining services and for access to dignified work (Tait 68).

Another form of community-labor organization, although more rare, was the reformist and revolutionary caucuses formed within trade unions. Their objectives were to push for their organizing priorities to confront racism, elitism and bureaucracy. One such effort was the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM), formed in 1967 by United Auto Workers (UAW) rank-and-file members. They worked to link the
community and workplace, in addition to intentionally defining their organizing approach as multi-ethnic and intercultural (Tait 58).

More commonplace than internal resistance was the community-labor organizations that were absorbed by institutional trade unions. Often this was the result of a lack of sustainable funding. Successful organizations like the Independent Distributive Workers of America were enticed by the financial lifeline of joining the UAW in 1979. The Rhode Island Workers Union (RIWU), were absorbed by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) because they successfully united the dispersed of low-wage workers, the unemployed and welfare recipients (Tait 71; Tait 85).

The racism, sexism and exclusivism of the trade union movement clearly marginalized a large proportion of the working class. In turn, the poor and marginalized formed more horizontal, inclusive and activist-based community-labor organizations to address their needs to build community and resist capital (Tait 2; Tait 224). Labor unions could not ignore the resistance; they had to respond to the crisis of their weakening power and numbers. They pushed the trade unions to organize in new ways and include formerly unorganized workers (Tait 225-6). Major lessons for the trade union movement were: (a) poor workers could and should be organized, but not necessarily through conventional tactics of petitions, elections and strikes; and (b) inclusivity, equity, horizontal participation, flexibility, and a community-centered organizing approach were the keys to community-labor framework. Whether it was a reaction to their declining membership and power, the relentless protesting from below or some combination of the two, trade unions began adopting aspects of the community-labor organizations.
The traditional trade union movement was marked by “business-unionism,” that top-down bureaucracies, narrowly focused on self-interest and contracts that came from labor-management agreements instead of rank-and-file involvement. Many leftist and radicals had been purged during the anti-communist scare and labor settled for labor-management “peace” pacts. The peace agreement was an exchange: capital reserved the right to control the plants, set prices and introduce new technologies. In return, labor would receive wage increases, fringe benefits and acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the trade union, if the union gave up its most vital weapon, the strike (Yates 219). Most unions conceded trading in rank-and-file activism and militancy for complacent services with the help of paid representatives and legal contractual methods (Tait 5).

When the post-World War II economic boom ended in the 1970s, the new business unionism abandoned new labor in order to protect the interests of an organized few. As economic stagnation and recession set in, the labor-management peace pact crumbled. The trade union movement was unprepared and ill equipped for the rise of neoliberal capitalism. The global migration of capital and the introduction of labor replacing technology initiated the “new economy,” defined by the low-wage service sector work. In 1982, for the first time, service sector jobs surpassed those of manufacturing. Union membership fell from 35 percent of the total workforce in 1955 to 12.9 percent by 2003 (see Appendix 1, Table 1) (Tait 6). Despite unions shrinking numbers into the 1990’s, many AFL-CIO unions spent less than three percent of their budgets on organizing (Tait 6).
Between the years 1968 and 2000, the US minimum wage lost over 35 percent of its value and domestic corporate profits grew over 158 percent (see Appendix 1, Table 1.2) (Tait 3). Even in their decline and increasing irrelevance to the majority working class, most trade unions continued to follow a model that was leading them to greater decline. The gulf between the rank-and-file and union leadership increased as contract bargaining increasingly took place in closed boardrooms (Tait 55).

In the 1990s, some unions took a more activist turn. Justice for Janitors was one such effort. Other more progressive unions began working with community-based organizations or implementing more of a community-labor strategy like UNITE, HERE, CWA and AFSCME. However, sometimes this took the form of “staffing up,” where paid “professional” organizers, often white middle class people fresh out of college, would jump from campaign to campaign all over the country (Tait 196). As an overall critique to labors’ model of growth, Tait offers this final criticism: “Centralization and bureaucratization have historically gone hand in hand and contributed not to labor’s revival but its slow death. The swallowing of small unions into larger ones promises to reduce variation and with it innovation, leaving labor’s institutions more bureaucratically rationalized but possibly less able to creatively cope with the challenges of capital” (Tait 210).

In hindsight, the alliance of community-labor organizations and trade unions, and not their absorption could have led to a different outcome for working class organizations and antisystemic struggle. Although the community-labor organizations pushed the traditional trade union movement towards more pluralistic strategies, the structures,

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9 UNITE (now UNITE HERE) – formerly the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees; HERE – Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union; CWA – Communications Workers of America; and AFSCME – American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.
participation and overall concern for building a broader working class movement were not a part of the trade union movement’s agenda. It is questionable if this entrenched institution is capable of playing such a role. Either way, the class struggle continues, calling upon the need for a new form of antisysemic movement capable of posing a formidable challenge to capital.

**Theoretical Influences on the United Workers**

The United Workers was an expression of its founders, leaders, members and geography. These people and places come with historical antecedents that, in turn, informed who and what they were. Its genealogy points to three major influences: (1) the theoretical works of Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci; (2) the poor people’s organizing of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and efforts connected to Willie Baptist; (3) and the local experiences of the people of Baltimore within the Civil Rights Movement and informal neighborhood/street politics. These three elements have become inextricably linked to form the unique character of the United Workers within the counter-hegemonic tradition of community-labor organizing. These antecedents informed the central strategies and mission of the United Workers and in turn the development of its Transformative Community-Labor Organizing model.

As a leadership development organization, the United Workers pedagogical theory and practice informed all other aspects of the organization’s work. Its physical structure, curriculum and campaigning reflect this commitment to education. The four most influential thinkers and examples come from the works of Paulo Freire, Antonio

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10 To a lesser extent—although significant—is the influence of the local political and community experiences of members from Latin America, most notably, Mexico and Guatemala.
Gramsci, Willie Baptist and the CIW. Each of these is briefly reviewed based on what the United Workers drew from their work.

**Paulo Freire**

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian born adult educator and liberation theologian that saw critical education as the means to freedom. Accordingly, the oppressed go through a process of consciousness awakening. Through inquiry and reflection they understand the cause of their oppressive conditions so they can act to create change. In this way, Freire understood the significance of uniting theory, practice, reflection and action. In his seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire offered a valuable critique of normative educational practices, which he called “narrative education.” He argued this form of education to be based in dichotomist paternalism and the reproduction of inequities (Freire 71). In contrast, Freire proposed a language and methodology for liberatory education: education founded in dialogue, critical reflection mutual respect and epistemological co-creation (Freire 88).

The work of Paulo Freire was definitive in designing the United Workers pedagogy of reflective action. As a result, Freire critique of narrative within education is instructive for analyzing the obstacles that arise when the organization attempted to employ narrative within its campaigning as a means for realizing reflective action.

**Antonio Gramsci**

Antonio Gramsci was a leading Marxist intellectual and Communist Party leader in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century in Italy under fascism. He focused on how revolutionary social movements could build power. Of particular use to the United Workers were his concepts of “hegemony,” “common sense” and “organic intellectuals.” Gramsci theorized that
capitalists retained control not exclusively through military economic coercion, but also by what Gramsci described as “hegemony” through “common sense;” that is, the production of consent through traditionally held values, beliefs and ways of knowing incorporated throughout all aspects of society by the capitalist class (Gramsci 12; Gramsci 322-323). Accordingly, the path to challenging this power wrested with a mass social movement forming a counter-hegemony created through leadership and an educational process. The movement would be led by “organic intellectuals” rooted in the working class struggle that were trained organizers and scholars capable of challenging the ruling “common sense” and ideology. “All [humans] are intellectuals,” Gramsci wrote, identifying the universal capacity for people to be trained in leadership (Gramsci 9). In this way, leadership was less about authority or hierarchy and more centered on the various shared and interdependent roles in a revolutionary force.

Gramsci’s work influenced the United Workers to focus on leadership through a political education process to construct power. This trained leadership would be of confronting the complex apparatus of hegemony. The leaders or “organic intellectuals” were seen as capable of coming from anywhere in society since the capacity to lead exists within everyone, but only becomes ripe when cultivated.

**Willie Baptist**

Willie Baptist is a leading educator and scholar in the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty. His personal experiences, reflections and scholarship within this movement provided instrumental lessons to the United Workers praxis of education and leadership development. He grew up amid the 1965 Watts, L.A. uprisings and participated in the black student movement. He was an organizer with the United Steelworkers in the 1980s
and thereafter a leader within a host of poor people’s organizations: National Union of the Homeless (NUH); Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU); Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC)\textsuperscript{11} and most recently, the Poverty Initiative\textsuperscript{12} (Baptist and Rehmann 4). The collection of Baptist’s lessons from forty years of organizing the poor was offered to the United Workers providing countless insights. Some of the most salient points included conceptualizing a conflict over the “hearts and minds” of the American people through a “battle of images and symbols” (Jim, Interview). This battle referred to a struggle over the consciousness of the populace through story-based mediums. Furthermore Baptist contributed an analysis of the ability of the poor to be leading agents of social change when trained as “connected, committed, clear, and competent leaders” (Baptist and Rehmann 126). This requires not just one leader, but many Martins\textsuperscript{13} united around economic human needs and rights as opposed to ideology. Their effectiveness further rests on the ability to transcend “plantation politics” and “unite the poor across color lines and across religious and gender lines” (Baptist and Rehmann 71).\textsuperscript{14}

Baptist’s thinking around the “battle of images” influenced the United Workers to develop their Battle of Stories Framework as an attempt to overlay their campaigning with storytelling. Baptist also influenced the application of the United Workers

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} PPEHRC was a national coalition of poor people’s organizations founded in 1998 to unite the poor around economic human rights toward developing a movement to abolish poverty.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} The Poverty Initiative at the Union Theological Seminary in New York was founded in 2004 with the mission to raise “up generations of religious and community leaders committed to building a social movement to end poverty, led by the poor” (Baptist and Rehmann 4).
  \item \textsuperscript{13} A reference to the damning effects of building organization around Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s as the sole leader. His death signaled the downfall of the Civil Rights Movement and the Poor People’s Campaign.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Baptist uses the term “plantation politics” to refer to a form of racial solidarity described by W.E.B. Du Bois. Accordingly, plantation owners used poor whites to police enslaved Blacks to separate the otherwise natural allies.
\end{itemize}
Transformative Human Rights Framework as a way to unite the poor across divisions. Like Gramsci, the focus on a trained leadership convinced the United Workers to make leadership development the basis of it work.

*The Coalition of Immokalee Workers*

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) is a community-based labor organization of Mexican, Guatemalan and Haitian immigrants working in the agricultural industry of Southern Florida. Their Campaign for Fair Food demands that the retail industry (e.g. Taco Bell, McDonald’s, Whole Foods) leverage their buying power to improve wages and working conditions for tomato pickers in the supply chain (Sellers “*Del pueblo, para el pueblo*”).

From the CIW, the United Workers adapted their corporate campaigning as the mechanism that carried an effective narrative and provided a purpose for action and leadership development to occur through struggle.

*Local Baltimore*

At the more local level, the United Workers was also affected by the direct experiences of Baltimore City residents. Many members remembered the 1960s and had a connection to the Civil Rights Movement and the 1968 uprisings related Dr. King’s assassination. Many more related to the Social Gospel and hymns through Church. In their daily life, residents interacted with city politics, the unofficial politics within family, neighborhood networks, street culture and the informal economy. The conditions of Baltimore City and the experiences of its residents further informed the character of the United Workers and its organizing model.
This amalgamation of influences had helped to shape who the United Workers was. It was the task of the United Workers to attempt to interpret these various influences and lessons into their own cultural, historical and political context. They did so in creating the Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm.
CHAPTER 2:
Neoliberal Baltimore:
Public Financing for Private Accumulation

_In a crisis, assets return to their rightful owners._

- Andrew Mellon, Secretary of the Treasury 1921-1923
  (qtd. in Harvey, *Enigma of Capital* 11)

Like most medium-sized U.S. cities, the majority of Baltimore residents have not fared well under neoliberal restructuring. In fact, all signs point to an increasingly perilous life for public institutions, communities and individuals. At the same time, banks, developers and corporate elites, along with universities have taken over the city courtesy of the city-state, in large part, at the expense of the rest of Baltimore (Harvey *Spaces of Hope*). The most distinct quality that defines Baltimore as a neoliberal city over the past thirty years is public financing for private accumulation. Race, class, migration and capital flight have been resorted to repeatedly as mechanisms to divide the city geographically, economically and socially.

During the World War II buildup and shortly thereafter, Baltimore was an industrial powerhouse. The population peaked between 1940 and 1950 at nearly one million people, making it the sixth largest city in the country (see Appendix 2, Table 2) (Davis, Brocht et al. 1). Its strategic location along the Chesapeake Bay set it as a busy eastern seaboard port. Baltimore’s chief industry was steel—home to steel manufacturer Bethlehem Steel—a major employer producing ships and planes (especially in wartime). At its height the Bethlehem Steel mills and shipyards employed 58,000 men and women in the Baltimore region. The Glenn L. Martin’s aircraft factories employed 53,000 Baltimoreans from the metropolitan area (Pietila 75-6). By this point, much of the manufacturing jobs were unionized and considered to be the better paying jobs. The
social wage offered Baltimoreans, white and black, the opportunity to participate in the new consumer society and even purchase homes (although racially segregated) (Pietila 170). Despite the semblance of relative prosperity, the legacies of slavery and white supremacy continued to be institutionalized where Jim Crow was still the boss. For the first time whites began moving to the suburban surrounding counties, while many black families were denied loans initiating a process of redlining the inner city (Olson 380). The outflow of middle class whites was matched by the rural to urban migration of poor Black sharecroppers displaced by the mechanization of agriculture along with Lumbee Indians and poor whites from the surrounding coal-mining regions (Olson 363). In the wartime factories Black workers were the last hired and first fired. While they may have been in the union, union officials supported the segregationist policies, relegating Blacks to the most dangerous jobs, denied them promotions and kept them at the bottom of the pay scale (Olson 363-365).

As early as the 1960s and 70s, corporate profits began to fall due to the “rigidities” of Fordism-Keynsianism and the growth of global competition in steel and other major industries (Levine 125; Tabb 53). The decline of profits led capital to reorganize by pursuing labor replacing mechanization and sending production to the non-union South and Global South. This reorganization signified the decline of organized labor’s power. Between the years 1950 and 1970, Baltimore lost a third of its industrial base, 46,000 manufacturing jobs. Another 90,000 factory jobs were lost between 1970 and 1995 (Levine 125; Olson 292). Capital flight was followed by white flight

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15 Fordism was a process of organizing capitalism through large-scale industrial centralization revolving around mass-production techniques and scientific management dating from the WWII years to the early 1970s. Keynesianism was a set of economic policies in response to the Great Depression in which “the state promotion of profit growth and higher living standards coexisted” (Tabb 53).
(representing a formidable tax base) to the emerging suburbs, initiating the continuous neglect of Baltimore’s growing black neighborhoods, which were systematically segregated through redlining and blockbusting permeating into other areas of civil society such as schools (Pietila). The 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision led to integrating the city schools stirring up white racial fear, who then pulled their children from city schools at a rate of 10,000 a year between 1954 and 1970 in favor of moving to the suburbs. By 1958, city schools were fifty percent Black. In 1978, the city schools had been effectively re-segregated where Blacks made up two-thirds of the student population (Olson 370). The city was rapidly changing from predominantly white to majority black residents (see Appendix 2, Table 2.1). The cumulative effect of the fleeing white tax base, the loss of manufacturing jobs and the disinvestment by the city in poor neighborhoods, led to significant growths in poverty and deprivation. By the late 1960s boarded up and abandoned houses popped up all over. Ten thousand families were receiving food assistance from the state and poverty levels reached 30% in the Black community (Olson 366; Levine 127). Meanwhile, the combined suicide and murder rate hit a thousand per year (Olson 382).

By April of 1968, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. turned out to be a breaking point as the city exploded into rebellions leaving six people dead, 700 injured, 5000 arrested, massive property damage and military street patrols (Harvey, “A View from Federal Hill” 234; Pietila 196). The conditions had been laid for the total restructuring of the city’s economy, the restoration of capital’s dominance and the nearly complete destruction of organized labor. The City cut direly needed social services and redirected public money to private developers in exchange for non-union, unsustainable,
low-wage, part-time and temporary jobs in the service and tourist industry. The restructuring of the city began by evicting the poor from prized development areas. The rate of housing demolition rose from six hundred households a year in the 1950s to eight hundred in the early 1960s and twenty-six hundred a year in the late 1960s (Olson 377).

Then Mayor Donald Schaefer (1971-1987) fully embraced the tide of neoliberal restructuring of the city using public money for private accumulation stating, “Baltimore wants you so badly, we’ll let you write your own terms” (Davis, Brocht, et al. 2). Baltimore labor historian Levine dubbed this strategy “Baltimore Inc.: an urban redevelopment machine, fuelled with public dollars, that identified and packaged profit opportunities for developers. Public-private ‘partnership’ became the watchword of city policy” (Levine 129). Critics called this a “shadow government,” which operated outside the confines of city regulations or public oversight. Scores of public-private entities were established to funnel public resources into private developments in the form of tax breaks, subsidies and below-market loans (Davis, Brocht, et al. 2). The Inner Harbor, stadiums, hotels, luxury condos, malls and other entertainment spectacles were developed under this model; the formation of a postmodern playhouse for a visitor class, serviced or entertained by the condemned resident to poverty wage jobs and a life of instability. In place of the production of goods as in the previous era, the new approach was to manufacture culture, style and wants by supplying services in the tourist and hospitality industry (Olson 394).

By 2000, Levine calculated that “Baltimore has invested over $2 billion in tourist facilities since the 1970s (in inflation-adjusted dollars), and provided millions more dollars in subsidies to private developers of hotels and entertainment complexes, ” a
number which has ballooned in the ensuing years (Levine 136). With the city in the grips of private developers and banks, the endless supply of public money came from the deregulation of public utilities, the privatization of hospitals and the dismantling of the social safety net. Between 1976 and 1986, one-third of federal grants designated for the inner city poor were diverted to private development projects like the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Harbor Court (Olson 390). While giving away four times as much public monies to development, there was a 15% decline in education spending between 1974 and 1982. The city’s expenditures on social services for the poor fell by 45 percent in real terms over the 1974-1982 period (Olson 390; Harvey, “A View from Federal Hill” 238).

Further cuts were made in welfare, healthcare, food stamps, sanitation services, recreation centers, libraries and daycare, a trend which continues to the present day as the city prepares to close and privatize rec centers, shut down public pools, fire stations and close public schools (Berger 43). In the midst of these cuts the city continues to funnel millions of dollars of public money to private developments like Johns Hopkins’ Middle East redevelopment project, the Westside Superblock or Harbor East. Tourism remains one of the fastest growing industries in Baltimore with an average wage of $9.97 or $19,154 a year, well below the federal poverty line for a family of four and well shy of the state acknowledged “Living Wage” of $12.49 an hour (see Appendix 3 for “Baltimore Tourist Sector Wages, 2011”).

As sociologist Löic Wacquant argues, while the Welfare State was cut, the overall budget stayed the same, as it was reinvested into a “carceral state;” a state that prioritized prisons and policing as a means of punitive management of the growing dispossessed (“Crafting the Neoliberal State”). Criminalization (through forced survival in the informal economy) awaited the poor, the downsized, the laid off, the single parent and all those who became casualties of capitalist's endless accumulation.
Poverty wages, temporary, seasonal and part-time jobs and no essential benefits such as healthcare have left Baltimore residents in dire straits. According to the Department of Labor and Licensing, officially 10% of the working age population is unemployed (“LAUS”). The number is certainly much higher when considering those who have resigned from looking for work and the underemployed. Looked at another way, one in every four Baltimore residents is in poverty with certain neighborhoods reporting over 75% of the residents in poverty and still others with a household median income of just $9,458.00 (Kilar; ACS 2007-2011). Of these numbers, nearly 40% of children under 18 are in poverty (Kilar). Many of the city's neighborhoods have been left derelict by the city save the constant police surveillance. The only investment comes from corner stores, cash checking spots, liquor stores and storefront churches. Without supermarkets and compounded by dysfunctional public transportation, residents are trapped in food deserts where 20% of Baltimore’s residents are considered “food insecure” (“A Thanksgiving Pledge”). The neglect of the inner city and its 56,798 vacant houses was not lost on one Iraq War veteran who was reported as saying that conditions in some Baltimore neighborhoods reflect what he witnessed in war devastated Iraq and Afghanistan (2005-2009 ACS; Broadwater).

The uneven development of Baltimore City and the increasing poverty of residents are the unavoidable results of the systematic operation of neoliberal capitalism. Referring to the city’s development practice, one Baltimore promoter noted the postmodern nature of the tourist center: “We’ll have to open a new attraction every year” (Olson 390). The city has found itself locked into a model of economic development where the public’s money is routinely handed over to private developers causing
displacement and the reproduction of poverty. As of yet, no organization has yet to figure out how to successfully challenge capitals hegemony over the city on a major scale.
CHAPTER 3: The Transformative Community-Labor Organizing Paradigm

*I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed thousands more, if they knew they were slaves.*

- Harriet Tubman (*Biography*)

In 2009, in an effort to synthesize the United Workers paradigm of organizing, the organization penned two documents: *Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Organizing Model* and *Some Core Strategies of the United Workers*. These captured the core elements that effectively led to the Living Wages Victory at Camden Yards. They share the general organizing framework of the United Workers to apply to the next human rights campaign and influence the future of anti-systemic movements. These two documents serve as a jumping off point for further developing the Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm of the United Workers from 2002 to 2008.

The United Workers Transformative Community-Labor Organizing model was a product of the organization’s attempt to strategically carry out its mission. The mission of the organization was threefold: (1) “develop leaders from the ranks of the poor” united around human rights values; (2) build a mass-based social movement led by the poor to bring about a social, political, economic and cultural transformation; and (3) abolish a system that is dependent on maintaining poverty.\(^\text{17}\) (Michelle, Interview). Within the mission there were three underlying assumptions that further delineated the organizing paradigm. (1) The economic and political conditions that engender poverty can be eradicated. (2) An end to poverty will come through the power of a mass-based social movement led by a united and trained leadership of poor people. (3) The unity and

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\(^{17}\) The United Workers would never use the terminology of capitalism, but simply say poverty, in order to avoid the discursive ideological battle over economic systems. The frame of being opposed to capitalism immediately raises the simplistic “opposite” of socialism. By simply saying poverty, this idea is placed in universal language that supersedes the anti-communist history of these words.
leadership of the poor will be constructed by focusing on human rights values and leadership development (Model).

The following six core components of the Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm delve into how the mission and assumptions became realized. The six are: (1) Transformative Human Rights Framework; (2) Corporate Campaigning; (3) Pedagogy of Reflective Action; (4) Leadership Development; (5) Battle of Stories Framework; and (6) Good Governance. Three areas—corporate campaigning, pedagogy and the Battle of Stories Framework—are explored in greater detail as they serve as critical units for analyzing the Living Wages Campaign and the pedagogical tension.

**Transformative Human Rights Framework**

The United Workers Transformative Human Rights Framework came in part from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The internationally recognized document was developed in 1948 after World War II. The document established the inherent worth of all beings to social, political, cultural and economic rights. It included universally recognized cultural values that appeal to the heart of U.S. tradition. While various community organization use a human rights framework, five features in particular define the United Workers Transformative Human Rights Framework: (1) community-centered; (2) directed by those most affected; (3) provides a universal discourse to talk about poverty; (4) values-based (5) and interculturality (The U.S. Human Rights Fund).
Community-Centered

The United Workers was always rooted in the communities of its membership. Although the Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards drew workers directly from that work site, it included workers who no longer worked there or were otherwise outside. As an inclusive and expansive community, the organization turned the neoliberal inspired temporary nature and high turnover of work into a benefit (Jake, Interview). The benefit came from the organization’s belief that everyone represented a potential leader. The more people the United Workers met, the more potential leaders could be engaged in leadership development. In contrast, traditional trade unions were limited to working with their dues paying members and frequently viewed precarious labor as a barrier to building a union. Moreover, temporary workers were legally excluded from unions

Directed By Those Most Affected

The United Workers made a conscious choice to work with one of the more dispossessed sectors of the working class, namely temp workers and day laborers, to create opportunities for poor sectors that otherwise would not have access to leadership training and processes (Michelle, Interview). In addition, those who experienced the worst of capitalism’s perpetual crisis had the least stake in the survival of the system and the most to gain from becoming leaders in abolishing poverty. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed this rationale directly in his 1967 Trumpet of Conscience.

The dispossessed of this nation—the poor, both white and Negro—live in a cruelly unjust society. They must organize . . . against the structures

18 An additional factor that separated the United Workers from trade unions was trade unions were not legally allowed to pursue third party targets. Consequently, this severely limits their ability to gain leverage in corporate campaigns.
through which the society is refusing to take means which have been
called for, and which are at hand, to lift the load of poverty. There are
millions of poor people in this country who have very little, or even
nothing, to lose. If they can be helped to take action together, they will
do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force
in our complacent national life...
(qtd. in James M. Washington 650-51)

Moreover, those who most intimately understood poverty were in the best position to
articulate the causes and solutions (Anthony, Interview). With the poor positioned at the
forefront of the struggle, a platform was created to elevate their voices.

Values-based

The United Workers use of human rights and values allowed the organization to
reframe discourse around poverty and connect diverse communities. Drawing on human
rights discourse connected the United Workers to Dr. King and the Civil Rights
Movement. Human Rights was an extension of Civil Rights that built on a common sense
understanding of the latter. The United Workers took human rights a step further in
speaking of economic human rights as a way to talk about poverty. With human rights,
poverty became defined “not as a misfortune, or divine will or individual failure, but as a
structural deficit and a public responsibility” (Chong 12-13). Furthermore, the rights
discourse was legitimizing as it tapped into the public’s cultural beliefs connecting to the
Due to the wide resonance of these values, the United Workers drew upon them to
overcome barriers to unity.
Human rights values were interwoven through the United Workers for connecting diverse communities and establishing trust for engaging in an educational process. Political dialogue was able to take place by establishing an “underlying commonality of simply being human” (Chong 23). This is the foundational component of what United Workers calls “transformative organizing” (Anthony, Interview). Everyone was included in the values of respect, dignity and sanctity of life making the struggle universal. The intention is to move beyond people’s immediate self-interest and connect with their core values for class unity. The values act as an equalizer for bridging disparate communities. Shirley describes the feel of the process once people were able to come together in the same room:

[Human rights values] is what helped us become a bi-lingual organization. Our Latino friends had the illusion that was put out, the myth about black people being lazy. The African-Americans were having the illusions of all the Latinos taking our jobs, becoming the new minority. As we came together in the rooms together . . . Some Latinos could speak English and some of us English speakers could speak Spanish, but we always had translators in there, we started to find out how much we had in common. We didn't make up the myths, it’s just that we took them and ran with them. We started finding things out in common and realized that they [the employer] were abusing both of us, so why are we fighting each other. Let's get together and fight them [. . .] same thing with sexual preference. (Interview)
By focusing on points of unity based in commonly held values, the United Workers was able to create an environment where differences based in race, sex, gender, language and other traditional fault-lines were explored with compassion and respect.

*Interculturality*

Interculturality encouraged the coexistence among different cultural groups through dialogue, knowledge exchange and struggle for a new social order where all were respected (Medina and Sinnigen). Using the principles of interculturality, the United Workers developed a human rights culture in a segregated city and throughout segregated workplaces. Using a variety of means—song, dance, story, music, prayer, food, play, theater, dialogue and retreats—members of the organization, Black, white and Latino, came to call the organization their family (Federico, Interview). Members shared their histories, dialects, languages, symbols, beliefs, joy and pain across cultures through a safely constructed container for exploration and exchange. At meetings and protests Gospel songs, Civil Rights hymns and Latino folk music were commonly sung and played. Multi-faith, various foods, storytelling and theater acted to stimulate sharing and dialogue at meetings, retreats and protests.

The Transformative Human Rights Framework transformed participants, relationships, challenged assumptions and built collective power. It set the tone for how the United Workers community would interact with the other elements in the organizing model.

**Corporate Campaigning**

The corporate campaign acted as a “school-house” for the United Workers to conduct leadership development (Federico, Interview). The impetus to pursue corporate
campaigning stemmed from an analysis of two types of organizing that were framed as “reactive vs. strategic” (Jim, Interview). Reactive referred to jumping whenever an injustice occurred, while strategic was concerned with long-term planning through corporate campaigning (Jim, Interview). Ultimately the United Workers chose strategic corporate campaigning. Several components defined the organizations approach to corporate campaigning: (a) “focal point campaign;” (b) human rights demand; (c) campaign duration; (d) target criteria and (e) use of narrative (Jim, Interview; Michelle, Interview; Jake Interview; Model; Core Strategies; 2008 Strategic Plan).

Reactive was considered an emotional response to the uncertainty of what to do in the midst of people’s suffering. It negated the ability to pursue sustained efforts requiring a deeper study of conditions, history and internal strategy. Anti-war movements can sometimes be a representation of this, where there is a need for people to have a cathartic outlet in the midst of outrage. The mobilizations even feel powerful and politicizing, but lack a longer-term sustained vision where leadership is cultivated under the pretense of a “patient and sustained effort, the slow, respectful work, that [makes] the dramatic moments possible” (Payne 264).

Conversely, corporate campaigns were deemed offensive (Model). The offensive construction of a campaign allowed an organization to dictate the terms of the “school” for political education and skill development within a focused and unifying struggle for a tangible gain. Furthermore, the campaign offered a slow and mediated process of gradually generating power. The “work” focused on how to “build communities, develop leaders, think and reflect and start where we are at” with a real “commitment to patience” (Patricio, Interview). The slower pace did however mean not being on every picket line
that sprouts up. The hope was that the longer-termed vision would eventually retain the power to abolish injustice and not merely the symptomatic injustice. The United Workers proceeded with strategic corporate campaigning after reflecting upon how to reach its grand vision for change and pedagogical needs. Based on the CIW’s influence on the organization and its own analysis, the group concluded on some of the more critical points for their application of corporate campaigning.

“Focal Point Campaign”

The first point was the ability of the campaign to focus the United Workers efforts and limited resources. The problems of poverty were beyond a single organization. In order to be effective, the United Workers selected one area and one campaign at a time. This focusing was named the “focal point campaign”\(^\text{19}\) (Model). Each “focal point campaign” was guided by a set of demands.

*Human Rights Demand*

The demands were viewed in two ways: (1) they communicated a value (2) and set a far-reaching yet tangible goal as a projection of the organization’s power. The United Workers human rights discourse and framework were used to establish the demands. The main demand of Living Wages was tied to the “right to work with dignity” as referenced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Living Wages challenged the idea that the prevailing “minimum wage” provided for people’s livelihood. Moreover, the choice of the demand was intended to be a stretch for the group, but also something

\(^{19}\) In the 2009 Strategic Plan, the United Workers defined the “focal point campaign.” “A focal point campaign provides a focal point for our organizing efforts. By fighting to secure real gains in the struggle for economic human right we provide members and allies with a concrete and winnable struggle through which all our organizing takes place. Focal point campaigns are designed to win meaningful gains and to be winnable after an intense period of struggle. We focus campaigns on securing basic human rights demands. We focus most of our efforts on a single campaign at a time.”
that was attainable (Jim, Interview). Far-reaching was desirable because it forced the group to grow into the capacity needed to achieve the goal. In the same vein, the goal needed to be attainable so that people have a purpose for participating. The struggle itself was very rewarding, but a victory of the demand vindicated that expended energy and resulted tangible improvement for the base community. In connection to the organization’s story-telling approach, the final achievement established a clear ending to the narrative format of the campaign (Michelle, Interview). Interconnected with the demand was the overall duration of the campaign and its pace.

**Campaign Duration**

The United Workers recognized that it was possible to “win too soon” (Jake, Interview). As a result, the group theorized that the duration of the struggle should be from three to five years long (2009 Strategic Plan). This was deemed the appropriate length to conduct leadership development, engage in a difficult struggle while also building the amount of power needed to win the demand. Moreover, as a leadership development exercise, ample time was required to identify leaders, practice leadership, participate in and co-create a human rights culture and demonstrate acts of commitment and sacrifice. If the campaign went on for much longer than five years, it would have cultivated demoralization and burnout. In turn, a target was selected on the basis that it matched the desired campaign duration.

**Target Criteria**

The United Workers devised a set of criteria for selecting a target that would play to its strengths. This meant using the so-called New Economy to the organization’s advantage, relying on the group’s savviness in communications and narrative. The “New
Economy” represented an area where unions had little traction and was emblematic of neoliberalism. It was in this area that the United Workers was attempting to demonstrate they had a more sound strategy for organizing in this precarious sector. Within that sector, they wanted to identify a company with national brand recognition in order to implement a “brand boomerang” strategy (Klein, No Logo 343). Drawing upon the billions of dollars spent by marketing and PR firms to construct a story, association and recognition around a brand, if done well, the campaign was able to attach its message to the brand simulating a new association and storyline. A successful example was Nike with Sweatshops; or in the case of the United Workers, Camden Yards with poverty-wages or Angelos as a labor faker. Finally the site chosen required a vulnerable person with the power to concede the demand after an attack or considerable assault on their image.

All of these components worked for the organization as long as they could be placed into the narrative structure of the Battle of Stories Framework (to be explored in detail later on).

**Pedagogy – Reflective Action**

The corporate campaign provided a venue for the United Workers to act. These actions were then critically reflected upon, providing the basis for the practice of the organization’s pedagogy of reflective-action. This pedagogy derived from a mix of influences, namely Freire, Gramsci, Baptist and the CIW. These influences moved the United Workers to interpret its pedagogical function as identifying and developing more capable and skillful of leaders (Jim, Interview). Such a process began with the articulation of what a leader was, not as one-size fits all, but as a set of dynamic
guidelines for meeting people where they were. The process of leadership learning took
place through struggle with a community by way of experimentation, dialogue and the
interplay of acting as teacher and student.

A leader in the mind of the United Workers was someone who believed in and
was willing to work to realize the human rights values of respect, dignity and the sanctity
of all life (Federico, Interview). They demonstrated the “three C’s of leadership:
consciousness, commitment and cooperation,” and understood the problems of their
community and actively looked for solutions (Shirley, Interview; Patricio, Interview). A
leader understood their central task as developing other leaders and intentionally making
space for others to lead (Jake, Interview). Leadership also included skill development as
scholars and effective community organizers, from literacy and analysis to facilitation
and one-on-one conversations. These qualities of leadership were cultivated by constantly
encouraging leadership learners to grow to their full potential.

Jim explained the cultivation of leadership learning as helping set goals to “move
people to levels that they didn’t quite think possible” (Jim, Interview). This involved
employing developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal
development” (Vygotsky). Scaffolding was setup around the leadership learner, drawing
upon the skills they had, to the point where the learner needed a bit of assistance from a
more experienced practitioner. With minimal support, they were able to reach the goal
and over time be completely independent.

Patricio named a complimentary developmental process in the language of Paulo
Freire: “The work we do everyday is conscientizar” (Patricio, Interview). The concept

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20 Conscientizar is the Spanish translation of what Freire said in Brazilian Portuguese, conscienticao.
of conscientization was described by Freire as “the development of the awakening of critical awareness” (qtd. in Coben 72). In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire elaborated on this development of critical awareness as the unity of reflection and action.

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis (Freire 65).

Accordingly, leadership learning did not occur on the level of one person telling another about the world, but rather by people experiencing critical reflection of one’s own actions and relationships.

Leadership came through engaging in the practice of exercising and realizing one’s potential to be a leader through struggle, shared values and reflection. The United Workers used the phrase “lead to learn” to capture this idea. Embedded within “lead to learn” practice (as an educational process) was an acknowledgment that people already contained the capacity to be leaders (fully actualized human beings and agents of human history) within themselves, but needed the space and support to realize that themselves (Jim, Interview). Since a mediated environment was not sufficient alone, space and time were carved out to reflect upon individual and collective action.

More specifically, leadership learning occurred through the mutual revelation of the conditions of poverty, belief in one’s agency to make change and then acting for change. Such a realization began in dialogue with the members’ own theory of their condition and the world (Jim, Interview). This was then combined with the collective
knowledge of the group and scholarly research and inquiry. New member-generated theories were developed to test and re-reflect upon. In such a manner, new collaborative epistemologies were routinely evolving as everyone took turns being student and teacher. An example of this process occurred in group strategizing.

A “strategic planning process” occurred each year. It was an opportunity for leaders to come together in a month long process of reflecting upon the previous years’ projects, program, events, actions, priorities, goals and leadership development processes to dialogue and evaluate their effectiveness. At the end of the month, the organization had a unifying “Strategic Plan.” The Plan outlined the course of action for the following year’s strategic and tactical trajectory (2008 Strategic Plan). Points throughout the year were set aside to make course corrections as needed. These intentional methods were equally effective at constructing individual as well as collective power.

When combined with purpose (the realization of human rights values) and love (the basis of these values) the intent of the leadership learning process was to reach a transformative state, where the education of leaders becomes the process of liberation (Jim, Interview). Relying heavily on Freire’s framework of dialogic and liberatory education, the United Workers attempted to apply this pedagogy throughout their leadership development processes.

Leadership Development Processes

Leadership development was the pivotal purpose of the United Workers. Every activity stemmed from this purpose of developing critically aware leaders committed to human rights values. Within the “school-house” of the corporate campaign and organizational operations were a series of steps of leadership development using
reflective action. The year 2007-2008 serves as a snapshot of the particular leadership learning needs for that period. At that time, six steps of projects and programs were outlined in the United Workers 2008 authored document, *Paths to Poverty’s End*. The steps were not hierarchical or linear, but simply different processes to engage leadership learners based on readiness. Often different levels occurred at once or were “stacked” to integrate multiple learning objectives and approaches (Jim, Interview). The various programs further served to focus the organization’s minimal time and resources.

**Step 1**

The first step was “Outreach and Entry” (*Paths to Poverty’s End* 1). For the majority of members, entry to the organization was through the “focal point campaign,” which at the time was Camden Yards. After being met at the stadium, workers would be home-visited for a deeper one-on-one dialogue and invited to an event. A frequent invitation would be to the bi-monthly Leadership Forum.

The Forum was an open membership meeting drawing upon an informal economic human rights curriculum through member-generative theory, where the participants direct experiences where drawn upon to develop a deeper collective analysis. Meetings often included meals together, prayer, song, reflection, testimonials and witnessing.

**Step 2**

The second step involved more member-generated activities. Members put together “Unity Actions” from the ground up. They developed a strategy, plan and finally execution. Similarly, with “Community Building Actions/Events” members put together the meals, the set-up, the planning and outreach (*Path’s to Poverty’s End* 1). The annual
Human Rights Festival was one such opportunity where members held a barbeque with live music at a local church or park. These served as opportunities for leaders to come together in celebration and cultural creation while also practicing community-organizing skills.

**Step 3**

The third step was “Leadership” for its higher level of commitment to the organization (*Paths to Poverty’s End 1*). Each year, the membership of the United Workers gathered for Leadership Day. On that day, the Leadership Council, the all member decision-making body for the organization, shared reports on the year’s success and shortcomings and received feedback from the membership. The day also doubled as the election for open seats on the Leadership Council. Of another variety of member-generated actions was “Barn Raising Actions;” that was fund raising to support the work of the United Workers.

After new members participated in a serious of lower-level events, their involvement was consolidated in a retreat. The yearly Staying on Track Retreat was positioned within the campaign cycle to prepare and plan for upcoming intense actions (*Paths to Poverty’s End 2*). A second retreat, “Looking Forward Retreat,” came toward the end of the campaign cycle in order to prepare for the Strategic Planning Process.

The retreats focused on review and study, while the major action of the year put plans into action to demonstrate power and commitment. There were three components to the “Summer Action:” solidarity, alliance building and “willing sacrifice,” the latter of which will be discussed in the succeeding leadership development step (*Paths to Poverty’s End 2*). Solidarity referred to members standing with and bearing witness to the
sacrifice that other members were taking. Additionally, this Action was an opportunity to strengthen alliances with organizations of labor, faith, students and community.

**Step 4**

Step four revolved around “willing sacrifice” within the Summer Action. The sacrifice is perceived as essential for the immediate intentions of the organization to be realized. Jim expands on the intention and effect of the “willing sacrifice.”

The action of “willing sacrifice” within the context of reflective action is the point at which potential power (identified through early steps in the process) is transformed into political capital within the now realized (self-recognized) capacities of the leaders themselves. This is the point of greatest intended transformation, the point at which the learner intends to re-relate to ideas, structures, and the power of other people and human institutions in ways that fundamentally alter how the learner considers herself within the web of human power relationships. (Interview)

The level of intensity embedded within the sacrifice intimately bonds the community to the struggle. Each year the level of sacrifice appeared to be greater based on the level of the leaders.

**Step 5**

Step five was the Leadership Council. The fifteen member decision-making body was elected by the general membership. As a whole group, small group or paired up with a staff member, leaders learned the skills required to run the organization: “training in media and political analysis, communications, organizing, movement building and
history of social justice, finance and fundraising [and the] legal issues of organizing” (Paths to Poverty’s End 4). (This is discussed further in the Governance section).

**Step 6**

The two components to step six were the Poverty Scholars - New Organizers Project and the Staff Collective (Paths to Poverty’s End 4). The Poverty Scholars\(^\text{21}\) and New Organizers Program made up a total of a three-year intensive paid training program in community organizing. Year one was Poverty Scholars. Those who graduated from Poverty Scholars joined the New Organizers Program for year two and three. New Organizers is differentiated as leaders were challenged to take on their own independent learning projects, contribute scholarly writing and lead/facilitate meetings. By the end of the three years, leaders were believed to have the training to become members of staff.

Members of the Staff Collective performed the daily operations of the United Workers as community organizers, under the advisement of the Leadership Council.

The six stages of leadership development demonstrated the more formalized programs, actions and events at a particular time in the organization’s history. Moreover, they give insight into the overall importance of leadership development to the organization as it ran through every facet of the groups’ functioning.

**The Battle of Stories Framework**

Story telling and mythmaking define the industries of news, publishing, television, videogames and movies. According to mythologist Joseph Campbell “[a]ll cultures . . . have grown out of myths. They are founded on myths. What these myths have given has been inspiration for aspiration” (Campbell CD). Recognizing the potential

\(^{21}\) This term is borrowed from and originates with the Poverty Initiative.
power of myth and storytelling as described by Campbell, the United Workers appropriated aspects of these social construction tools to build and exercise power among the poor. They called this the Battle of Stories Framework. The organization refined the formula of storytelling and narrative to carry the values, vision and story of the United Workers wrapped in a corporate campaign. It relied on the classical components of conflict-based narrative, cultural epic narratives and effective story writing and then acting it out.

According to cognitive psychologist George Lakoff, contrary to Enlightenment thinking, reasoning and logic are not the dominant modes of un/conscious thinking. Rather, emotions, values, frames and moral stories are the leading forces of categorization. It is from the use of these elements that cultural narratives frame our perspectives on life, our “moral sensibilities . . . define protagonist and antagonists—and heroes, victims, and villains. They define right and wrong, and come with emotional content” (What Orwell Didn’t Know 69-70). By tapping into such stories, frames, metaphors, discourses and symbols, emotional resonance is activated to orient the new content into previously established worldviews. The United Workers took up the challenge of drawing upon established worldview to develop stories and outcomes where the poor are the winners and recorders of history.

The activist-scholars Snow and Benford described connecting narrative to activism—as the United Workers had done—as “collective action frames” (136). Frames are the way in which a story, images or symbols are presented. They simplify, condense and accentuate particular aspects of reality in a manner that is believed to most resonate with the perceiver’s worldview. The resonance comes by the ability of activist to
successfully use “accenting devices” to underscore or “embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable” (Snow and Benford 137). The underlying function of the framing is to foment action by presenting a problem in a simplified way where the solution is both obvious and attainable.

The Battle of Stories Framework was an expansion of “collective action frames.” Jim described it as linking together various frames into a comprehensive narrative to “make sense of the campaign for both ourselves and external audiences, and increase the power of ideas we seek to convey and the extent to which our ideas are heard, remembered and acted upon” (Jim, Interview; Core Strategies 24). The ideas conveyed are acted upon through creating “narrative fidelity” (qtd. in Snow and Benford 141). Both the observer and participant commit to the story because of anticipation of what will happen next and how the conflict will be resolved with the hero’s triumph. The United Workers initiated this process in the Strategic Planning Process by writing a story of what they planned to do and then acted it out. The particular narrative form the organization followed was what Lakoff calls a “rescue narrative” (Lakoff, Political Mind 24).

A traditional rescue narrative includes characters, actions and morals. The main characters are the Hero, Victim, Villain and Helpers. As Lakoff described it, the Hero is good and the Villain is bad. The Victim, which may also be the Hero, is entangled in a problem that is need of resolution. The actions often follow a particular order: the Villain commits villainy against the Victim; the Hero faces challenges; the Hero battles the Villain; the Hero triumphs over the Villain; the Hero rescues the Victim; the Villain is Punished; and the Hero is Rewarded. The actions of the Villain disrupt the morale
balance that becomes restored through the travails of the victory, rescue, punishment and reward (Lakoff, *Political Mind* 24).

The United Workers practiced the same principles but with variant elements: vision, values, narrative, people and action (see Appendix 4 for a diagram of the Battle of Stories Framework). The vision indicated where the story was going, the goal. The United Workers communicated this as an end to poverty through advancing human rights, unity and leadership development of the poor. Similarly, the Living Wages Campaign was the same, but in place of an end to poverty, it was Living Wages at Camden Yards. Values, which were the morals of the story, were human rights values: respect, dignity and the sanctity of life (see Appendix 4). Narrative reflected the twists and turns of the actions and conflict that made up the beginning, middle and end of the story. The people are the story characters. On the side of good were those personally affected by the major conflict in the story and the individuals and groups that were with them in solidarity. The opponents or villains were on the side of bad and initiated the conflict. The actions were the details, the specific events that built power through leadership development and community building (*2008 Strategic Plan*). The actions further represented the physicalizing of human rights values, as embodied by the characters, to connect with the universal “extant beliefs” of the “targets of mobilization,” which was the United Workers community and the greater Baltimore/Maryland public (Snow and Benford 141).

The public and membership of the United Workers were further mobilized by the use of epic narratives, which refers to historically righteous struggles like David and Goliath (Jim, Interview). They stimulate a myth-like resonance to the story for the public
and membership. Therefore, the United Workers connected itself to Dr. King, the Civil Rights Movement, the Abolitionist Movement, the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman (Jim, Interview). References to epic narratives became organically coded in the group’s freedom songs, study reflections, art and event naming. The epic narrative acted as an internal moral force and inspiration of the leaders involved.

The use of narrative in the Battle of Stories Framework was an effective means to build power, focus the organization, control the event timeline and communicate all the elements of the organization and the campaign in an understandable and accessible package for internal and external audiences. At its best, combining the Battle of Stories Framework with reflected action took place as the story was first acted out, followed by a dialogic reflection and deconstruction of the enacted events. However, as we shall see, at times a pedagogical tension arose in uniting narrative with reflective action.

**Governance**

The governance structure of the United Workers promoted leadership development and experience through training, skills development, decision-making, political assessments and judgments (*Paths to Poverty’s End*). The organization was divided into three primary bodies: Membership, Leadership Council, and Staff-Collective.

**Members**

Members made up the base of the United Workers and were the focus of the organization’s efforts. By 2008, the membership was around 800 with an active core of 80 people. A member was defined as someone who came from the ranks of the poor,
adhered to human rights values and demonstrated the “three C’s of leadership:”
consciousness, commitment and cooperation (2008 Strategic Plan).

The membership reflected the city’s demographics: majority African-American, then whites and Latinos, which encouraged the presence of both English and Spanish at meetings and events. Despite the organization starting in a male homeless shelter, by 2007, the group was evenly men and women. Moreover, the group was intergenerational, ages ranged from sixteen to sixty as many families were involved and encouraged to bring their children.

**Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council embodied the organizational identity as “led by the poor.” The all member decision-making body, made up exclusively of low-wage workers from the membership, was elected by the general membership for three-year terms (Shirley, Interview). Through on the job training, the Council’s responsibilities included assisting in developing the yearly Strategic Plan, budget, policies, and priorities through collaborating in writing and editing the document. Along with administering major staffing decisions including hiring and firing, a further duty of the Leadership Council was to oversee the staff. Bi-monthly meetings were held for the group to make any necessary decisions, which was done through consensus.

A final note on the Leadership Council: As a non-profit 501(c)3, the United Workers was legally required to have a board of directors, which was named the Oversight Board. The Board was composed of four trusted leaders in the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty. Since the formation of the Leadership Council, the Board turned their decision-making powers to the Leadership Council, while retaining their
legal role in name, as an advisory body and a last line of defense over the organization’s funds from an agent takeover or a provocateur on the Leadership Council (Jake, Interview).

**Staff-Collective**

Over the years, the staff-collective ranged from zero to six members and was appointed by the Leadership Council. The relationship between staff and the Leadership Council followed a “staff/board model,” where staff were granted a mandate by the Leadership Council to act on behalf of the organization and fulfill the organizations’ directives as laid out in the Strategic Plan (Shirley, Interview).

Within staff there was no official hierarchy or title that placed one person over another, and all were paid the same wage. Instead of a traditional executive director or boss, the group was self-managing wherein both support and accountability derived from within the collective (Patricio, Interview). Decisions amongst staff were made by consensus where all had an equal say and final judgments were carried out with one voice (Michelle, Interview).

The Governance of the organization allowed it to carry out its various strategies within the corporate campaign and leadership development programs. However, as of 2008, the United Workers had yet to realize its vision of being fully operated by its membership. According to the *2008 Strategic Plan*, the group had given themselves until 2015-2016 to hand over the legal role of the organization from the Oversight Board to the Leadership Council.
CHAPTER 4:
The Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards

I think people aren’t really free until they’re in a struggle for justice.
- Myles Horton (184)

The United Workers Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards lives on through two coexisting stories. There is the myth and, alongside it, the story according to the participants that was not consistent with this mythology. Myth in this instance refers to the concept described by Campbell: “in all times under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished; and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of the human body and mind” (The Hero 3). While the myth of the United Workers and the Living Wages Campaign has its place to inspire and motivate, it is insufficient for drawing out key achievements and obstacles of the group’s work. Therefore, in examining the story of the Campaign as its participants experienced it, lessons can be deduced for further social movement learning. Accordingly, in performing the Battle of Stories Framework within the Campaign, the United Workers was occasionally confronted with the pedagogical tension. When the tension arose, it was frequently the result of a breakdown in dialogue between the leadership and membership. Conversely, when dialogue was present, the organization’s pedagogy and narrative acted symbiotically. To demonstrate the pedagogical tension and its resolution, a total of seven moments are analyzed. The four “tension moments” where the pedagogical tension is most evident are: (1) a lack of participation as only leadership wrote the narrative, while others enacted it; (2) the static storyline and character roles minimized critical reflection; (3) reflection was subordinated to action based on the needs of the storyline to accelerate the pace of campaign events; (4) and not prioritizing reflection for those events that fell
outside of the storyline. To complicate the tension as neither wholly embracing nor rejecting reflective action, three additional “success moments” are presented as instances of reflective action and the Battle of Stories effectively stacked together. (5) Leaders and members wrote the narrative for the Living Wages Hunger Strike together for the following year and then enacted that moment; (6) when racial and language tensions arose at the stadium, dialogue was initiated to build unity; and (7) the decision to strategically compromise and form a union occurred through bottom-up dialogue. Each of these seven moments is evaluated as they are interspersed within retelling the story of the Living Wages Campaign.

**Background: The Founding of the United Workers**

The United Workers began in the Eutaw Street “abandoned firehouse turned homeless shelter” for men in downtown Baltimore City in 2002 (Interview, Shirley). A group of men from the shelter started meeting weekly as a project of the Homeless Persons Representation Project (HPRP), a legal service and advocacy non-profit organization. The weekly meetings—facilitated by an experienced organizer, Jake—sometimes attracted up to twenty-five people. The group’s discussions focused on three themes: (1) the political economic context of poverty, (2) the group’s own internal processes and (3) “we are not alone” (Jake, Interview). The group's years of study and reflection were set into motion by a system of problem-posing questions that sought to get to the systematic roots of the participants’ experiences in poverty (Freire 84). This critically engaged reflection on poverty and witnessing other poor people’s organizations in active struggle, informed the strategies of the United Workers within the specific circumstances of Baltimore City.
The group participated in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) Truth Tours, the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU) and the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) encampments and marches as well as in national global justice gatherings like the Root Cause People’s March in Miami to protest the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) (Jake, Interview). These experiences helped the United Workers define two core strategies for organizing: (1) the poor could be and should be a leading social force in the organization; and (2) in order to be effective, a social force had to be inclusive and united across racial, gender and language lines. Throughout 2002 to 2004, the United Workers-made videos about the day laborers. They captured their own and others’ stories and surveyed 100 workers throughout Baltimore City identifying the main employers of temporary agency workers—Universities, Hospitals, and Camden Yards. This workers survey was released in 2004 as “The Day Labor Report,” and served as the investigative basis for the organizations’ first corporate campaign (Jake, Interview).

The group’s initial investigation found that the working conditions at the stadium were deplorable. Workers were hired and fired each game. They waited in line two to four hours without pay before a game hoping to be picked to work that night. They waited outside in the rain and in 100-degree weather without cover. Discrimination based on gender and race was a daily practice. Women and men were separated; blacks and Latinos had separate work duties and sexual harassment was commonplace. Workers had no breaks, were often forced to eat their lunches in the bathroom during the game or taunted to eat out of the trash after the game (Our Words, Our Lives).
A General Strategy

All the Camden Yards day laborers were hired by temp agencies, which had little power for systemic change and had the ability and mobility to disappear. The targets of the campaign had to have the power to change the poverty wage system at the stadium: the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA), Governor Martin O’Malley and Baltimore Orioles team owner, Peter Angelos.

The demands were simple, big and yet attainable: a Living Wage, and respect through a voice on the job. The demand for a Living Wage challenged the idea that the prevailing “minimum wage” provided for people’s livelihood; and sought a wage structure referenced in the 1998 Baltimore city Living Wages law. The demand for respect through a voice on the job stressed the universal human right of dignity.

The United Workers campaign strategy was multi-pronged: they pursued meetings with the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) which was directly responsible for the cleaning contracts at Camden Yards and M&T Stadium while publicly attacking the image of Angelos as an example for the Governor of what could happen to him. However, the Governor was given a choice. He could be a “hero” and bring a resolution to the crisis imposed by the threat of 15 workers and allies going on a Living Wages Hunger Strike or face the “hammer and flashlight” (Jim, Interview).

The “hammer” represented the potential to attack Governor O’Malley’s image22 in the media “flashlight” garnered from publicity around the Living Wages Hunger Strike.

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22 The United Workers predicted that O’Malley would make a run for President, making his image particularly vulnerable and him responsive to such attacks to save face. What would have been under attack was O’Malley’s “Living Wages Legacy,” his notoriety for being the first Governor to pass a state Living Wages Law. However, the bill left out nearly all low-wage workers, which the United Workers messaged as a “Living Wages Loophole” (Jim, Interview).
Launching the Living Wages Campaign

The first two years of the Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards revolved around Peter Angelos. In 2004 the Campaign was launched. The United Workers received a response quickly from Angelos whereupon he agreed to pay the stadium cleaners the city living wage. While Angelos ended up breaking his promise, in 2005 the United Workers were able to get the cleaning contractor Aramark kicked out, raise the workers hourly wage to $7 and obtain a Code of Conduct settlement with the incoming contractor, Michigan-based Knight FM (Jake, Interview). Knight FM gave the United Workers the *de facto* role of representing the stadium cleaners.

With Angelos’ non-responsiveness and the election of Democratic Governor Martin O’Malley in 2006, the organization’s strategy shifted. Organizers concluded that in order to move the MSA, the Governor who appointed the MSA Chair, would need to be involved (Jake, Interview).

*(1) Tension Moment: Living Wages Co-op Defeat*

In the summer of 2006, the United Workers leadership constructed a story that when enacted, would be experienced as a major defeat by the general membership. The decision to create a setback fit into a larger strategy. That is, to accelerate the momentum of the Campaign with more intense actions, facilitate greater investment in the fight and develop an advantageous arc to the Campaign story. However, the decision and its effect were the first major demonstrations of the pedagogical tension, which appeared in the unidirectional development of the initial tactical plan.

The first action of summer 2006 was the Underground Railroad Tour from Maryland to Michigan “along the route of the Underground Railroad” (Robert,
Interview). A small group of United Workers leaders made their way in a van from Baltimore to Saginaw, Michigan. Along the south to north drive, the group talked about the Abolitionist Movement, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass and the relevance of this history to their ongoing work. The group met with Knight FM in Saginaw to propose the company hire a Living Wages Co-op for a trail period to get to Living Wages. In a meeting with Knight FM in a run-down trailer, the CEO agreed to move forward with the Living Wages Co-op at a joint press conference with several members of the United Workers (Jim, Interview). Back in Baltimore, workers put together the Living Wages Co-op, deciding everything from scheduling to work duties.

Two days before the Living Wages Co-op was scheduled to start, the agreement was called off. It was unclear whether the block came from Angelos or the MSA. On the day that workers were supposed to start working at a living wage, they held a Let Us Work Protest outside the stadium amid disappointment and anger (Jim, Interview).

Few of the workers outside of the central leadership knew that the defeat was purposefully setup by the United Workers. This moment was particularly indicative of the pedagogical tension where the narrative of the Battle of Stories Framework trumped reflective action. The tension was expressed as a small group wrote out the narrative that was then enacted by all. Pre-event dialogue was in effect absent. However, the narrative of defeat influenced members to consider tactics like a hunger strike and deepen their commitment to the struggle. Moreover, the larger story led to justifying the hunger strike as workers had been dually wronged: first Angelos broke his promise and then the MSA or Angelos blocked Knight FM from keeping their promise. Had workers known of the
setup for defeat, the level of intensity would have been lost, as they may not have gone through with the actions or experienced the moment so viscerally.

(2) Success Moment: Writing the Plan for the Hunger Strike

The aspect of the Battle of Stories Framework that claimed that everyone wrote out the story beforehand and then enacted it was clearly not evident in the Living Wages Co-op defeat story. The defeat (action) did however provide an opportunity for post-reflection, in turn an example of successfully mixing reflective action and the Battle of Stories Framework. The defeat led to the first Staying On Track Retreat held in Washington, DC. The purpose of the Retreat was for the group to reflect on and refocus their strategy. The epic narrative of the Abolitionist Struggle played a central role in the internal and external discourse of the organization, emphasizing self-sacrifice, commitment and leadership. The Retreat resulted in a new strategy and plans for a hunger strike. A hunger strike was deemed the appropriate tactic for elevating the issue to a clear crisis throughout Baltimore and demonstrating that the United Workers had the power and visibility to pull it off (Jim, Interview). Sights were then set fully on the Governor. At a second retreat, the Looking Forward Retreat, a “Strategic Plan” was drafted and adopted by the leadership for the following year. A full year in advance of the Living Wages Victory; the United Workers had already penned the successful end of the story.

The principal function of Retreats for the United Workers was to reflect and strategize. The placement of the Staying on Track Retreat served exactly that function effectively demonstrating the pedagogy of reflective action. Even though the organization did not reflect upon the internal construction of a defeat, they did examine its entire history and strategy within a larger trajectory of social change. Furthermore, narrative
and reflection were interwoven skillfully by more collectively pre-developing the future story of the Living Wages Hunger Strike in the “Strategic Plan.”

(3) Tension Moment: Stuck on Angelos

The strategy articulated in the Strategic Plan pointed to the Governor as the ultimate target given his power over the MSA and its ability to enforce a cleaning contract that mandated Living Wages (Jim, Interview). Nonetheless, without immediate opportunities to reach the Governor or the MSA, the United Workers continued the conflict storyline of workers versus Angelos. The oppositional role of workers in relation to Angelos left workers as narrowly characters. Angelos archetypically represented the greedy capitalist in opposition to the poor. The cultural resonance of the story pulled workers deeper into their role in the story equation, although possibly too much.

The momentum of 2006 continued with an All Night Prayer Vigil and Freedom from Poverty March. The All Night Prayer Vigil was a 24-hour vigil held outside Peter Angelos’ office in downtown Baltimore. Leadership and some members considered the event a trial run for the hunger strike the following year to assess where the organization’s capacity was to execute such an endeavor. The All Night Prayer Vigil was followed by the Freedom from Poverty March from Angelos’ office to the stadium. The vigil and the march were capacity building actions, opportunities for leadership development of members and learning how to work with allies. The term ally refers to the activist community, progressives, faith and traditional labor—those communities that shared values with the United Workers, but “do not come from the ranks of the poor”
(2008 Strategic Plan).\textsuperscript{23} The organization recognized that in order to win its demands they needed to grow outside of the worker community to execute the strategy.

Angelos did in fact act as a useful opponent to continue doing leadership development and build relationships with allies. Even though at that point in the Campaign, Angelos was merely a proxy target for the Governor, workers continued to experience Angelos as their enemy. At the Vigil and March, workers were peeved and agitated at Angelos as ever even though they conceptually understood that he was no longer the strategic target. Nevertheless, workers remained caught by a role they had been playing in the dichotomy. There is no explicit pedagogical tension demonstrated here, but it does raise questions about the consequences of routinely playing out a narrowly defined character role on critical thinking and reflection.

\textit{(4) Success Moment: Potential Racial and Linguistic Divisions at the Stadium}

As the group became progressively well organized, a new temp agency was brought into the fold that worked almost exclusively with Latino workers. This posed a new challenge to the monolingual United Workers. At the time, 2006, the United Workers was made up of predominantly African-American workers, upwards of 80 percent of the organization. This change caused an initial schism at the stadium along racial and language lines. With time and pedagogic dialogue, workers were able to identify common cause and struggle for justice together.

For the first time in a major way, discrimination along racial and linguistic lines came to the forefront. On the other hand, it raised an opportunity for the organization to

\textsuperscript{23} Ally was a concept that was borrowed from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers as opposed to supporter. Ally was believed to more accurately describe the relationship between low-wage workers and the larger engaged community as working \textit{with} and \textbf{not for} or on behalf of. The concept in general was rather misleading, since by the United Workers own definition of who the poor are, these allies would have been included.
more fully live out its mission, “unite the poor across color lines,”\textsuperscript{24} and test the idea of the universality of human rights values. A bi-lingual organizer was hired to conduct outreach. Slowly the two speech communities were brought together sharing food and stories. Listening proved pivotal as the two communities identified with some of the lived experiences of the other. Once dialogue was initiated, people moved to compassion and empathy (Patricio, Interview). As relationships developed through eating together, playing and struggling together, the demonstrated leadership of these two speech communities found common cause.

In many ways the efforts of the organization broke down some of the divisions at the stadium. Through the dialogues for unity at the stadium the United Workers was transformed into a community of practice\textsuperscript{25} (Patricio, Interview). A major victory was realized in building bridges between diverse racial, language and cultural communities. As a result of dialogic reflective action, what was normally a tool of the employer to break worker unity, turned out to make the United Workers even stronger.

**Building Capacity to Strike**

In late April of 2007, a group of 30 workers and allies set off on a “State-Wide Tour to Uncover Public Sector Poverty” to elevate the pressure on the MSA (Michelle, Interview).\textsuperscript{26} Like all United Workers events, the tour facilitated community building, cultural sharing, capacity building and political education. The theme was self-sacrifice

\textsuperscript{24} The use of “color line” is a reference to W.E.B. DuBois statement in his 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line.”

\textsuperscript{25} A community of practice coalesces as “members are joined together, as a community, and their shared identity and perspectives are generated through their engagement in their primary practice” (Ball 301).

\textsuperscript{26} The secondary function of this Tour was to strengthen the United Workers relationship with AFSCME by making linkages to other public-sector labor struggles (Michelle, Interview). AFSCME was the United Workers only ally in organized labor. While every other union distanced themselves from the United Workers as they attacked Angelos, AFSCME did not.
in the context of building a social movement, looking at Cesar Chavez, Mahatma Gandhi, Harriet Tubman and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.27

The tour ended in Baltimore City with a Human Rights March and Unity Concert targeting Next Day Staffing, a temp agency that served as a proxy target. The proxy target was used as a tangible focus to mobilize allies around building their capacity, while also presenting a clear story for the media in the lead up to the planned Living Wages Hunger Strike. In this regard, the Stadium Workers Ally Group (SWAG), made up of community activists, was formed in time to coincide with the beginning of the summer campaign cycle. The Human Rights March, put together with the help of SWAG, was the United Workers largest march to date, with nearly 400 people. This was also the first large public event that demonstrated the United Workers growing bi-lingual capacity and community.

The campaign was assisted by Governor O’Malley’s signing of the first ever state Living Wages Law in late spring of 2007. The law however, did not apply to the stadium workers or the majority of other contracted state workers, temporary, part-time or seasonal workers (Greenhouse). Nonetheless, the law did act as a potential source of leverage with the Governor’s new identity as a friend of labor—being the first Governor to pass a state Living Wages Law. They could challenge the Governor’s brand if the Campaign needed to enter that phase.

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27 The historical legacy of Cesar Chavez was included to incorporate figures that both fit into the United Workers narrative and may also have created resonance for the newly incorporated Latino community.
The Living Wages Hunger Strike

(5) Tension Moment: Too rapid a pace to include reflection

In the 2007 summer of the Living Wages Hunger Strike, the Campaign had reached its apex. This increased pace proved to have its own pedagogical tensions. Space for reflection only seemed available where the organization had explicitly written it into the Strategic Plan. Otherwise, the design of the pre-written narrative simply did not allow for space to be added once events were underway.

In July, the second Staying on Track Retreat was held. Over 50 workers and allies participated in the Retreat to prepare for the Living Wages Hunger Strike. It was a momentous occasion, as a leader from the CIW joined the group to prepare for the Strike. Romeo, a leader from the CIW and participant in their Taco Bell Hunger Strike, spoke first-hand of his experience as the group joined in reflection on how far they had come and what it meant to them to be a part of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, Mahatma Gandhi and Harriet Tubman. Before the end of the Retreat, a Striker Ceremony was held, where eleven workers and four allies committed to the Strike.

The Hunger Strike was set to begin two days after a September 1 deadline the United Workers had imposed on the MSA to come up with a solution for Living Wages. Each day, an aspect of the human rights crisis in Baltimore City would be highlighted until the Concert for Human Rights on September 8th, where workers would either be celebrating or resolving to once again, escalate the pressure. The internal strategy was to end the strike on the 8th, six days after the kick-off, by having a Bishop or respected politician intervene and call for the strike to end. No one outside of that Staying on Track Unity Circle knew of this detail.
Immediately following a press conference announcing the Living Wages Hunger Strike, the Strikers headed for Ocean City, MD. The Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) Conference had their annual gathering in Ocean City that acted as the summer session of the Maryland legislature. This gathering would be another opportunity to gather support in favor of the workers’ demands and “cloud” the Governor; that is to make it appear as though the United Workers were everywhere.

On the first full day of the MACO Conference, the United Workers had two afternoon encounters with the Governor and a decisive third run-in that night at a crab feast. One of the people that went to find the Governor that night was Robert, a hunger striker and the person placed as a volunteer in the Governor’s election campaign as part of their “cloud” strategy. A woman in the Governor’s close circle, who coincidently worked on the campaign with Robert, greeted Robert at the club front door. She ushered Robert in right in front of the Governor. Robert had just met the Governor earlier that afternoon, but this time he was with the Governor’s trusted young campaign advisor. Shaking hands with the Governor, Robert said, “I’m a worker at Camden Yards and I’m going to go on Hunger Strike in two weeks and we expect you to do the right thing” (Jim, Interview).

While all of these events were happening, the United Workers engaged in Face-to-Face talks with the MSA. Through the work of the organization’s legislative efforts, three meetings were arranged spaced out over two months to resolve the issue of Living Wages (Jim Interview; Jake, Interview). At all three meetings the United Workers presented a series of unrealistic options for reaching Living Wages along with a brief mention of the September 1 deadline. The detail was ignored by the MSA as the United
Workers intended (Jake, Interview). At the final meeting, held two weeks before September 1, the exclusive topic was the September 1 deadline. The MSA said they would not meet the September 1st deadline, thus the United Workers responded to the MSA by saying that as a result they were going to have to “ratchet up” the campaign (Jim, Interview).

The United Workers had engaged in good faith face-to-face talks with the MSA, but the MSA refused to budge. The Living Wages Hunger Strike was now fully justified and fit into a reasonable story of workers confronted with an irrational MSA. In first setting up the talks, the United Workers knew they did not yet have the power or leverage for the MSA to capitulate to the organization’s demands. The face-to-face talks with MSA were a means of conveying a larger narrative. The United Workers wanted to carry out the Hunger Strike as a necessary step to project the level of power to win the Living Wages demand.

In the days leading up to the Living Wages Hunger Strike, positive signs began to trickle in. In an interview with radio host Marc Steiner, Tom Perez, Secretary of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, took a clear stance on the Governor’s support for extending the Living Wages bill to the Stadiums. In another morning radio interview between the United Workers and Fred Puddester of the MSA, Puddester said Living Wages was possible, but he needed more time. On August 31, three days prior to the kick-off of the Strike, the Governor pledged his support for living wages for the cleaners at Camden Yards.

We have a lot of work to do in the state ourselves as an employer to not only talk the talk but also to walk the walk… And I’m confident that at the
Board of Public Works when we see a contract from such entities who think they are independent of the state but actually are not, when we see contracts from entities like the Maryland Stadium Authority, we expect them to abide by the spirit as well as the letter of the law. (Cho, “Governor backs pay raise at 2 stadiums”)

On September 2, Puddester called for an emergency meeting of the MSA board to vote on living wages. The following day, September 3rd, the Strike Kick-off went on as scheduled at the Light St. Presbyterian Church in Federal Hill. Instead of announcing the start of the Living Wages Hunger Strike as intended, the United Workers told the crowd and reporters of the Strike’s postponement until September 6 based on positive signs from the MSA.

On September 6th, under the threat of the Living Wages Hunger Strike, the MSA board came to a 5-2 decision in favor of rebidding the cleaning contract at Camden Yards and M&T Stadium at the new state Living Wage of $11.30 (Cho, “Stadium Crews Get Raise”). The United Workers called this a “historic victory for human rights.” Hundreds of workers and allies gathered again at Light St. Presbyterian Church for a Victory Candle Light Vigil in joy, celebration and song.

Political sports writer Dave Zirin acknowledged the historic victory with these words, “[t]he progress made on a living wage for day laborers . . . open[s] a new chapter in grassroots labor organizing not seen since the early days of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Poor People’s Campaign, a model that puts the poor in charge of movements to fight poverty” (“Cleaning Up After the Orioles”). While Zirin’s statements ring true and celebration was certainly in order, the struggle at the stadium was not over. As Carl noted
in his statement to *The Baltimore Sun* on the night of the victory, “‘The next step is to make sure workers who are currently working at Camden Yards will have a fair opportunity to keep their jobs in the next season and get a living wage’” (Cho, “Stadium Crew Get Raise”). While Living Wages was always at the forefront of the public demands, the secondary demand of respect through a voice on the job had not been settled.

The Living Wages Hunger Strike was indeed transformative on many fronts for participants and observers alike (Lamont). The Battle of Stories Framework had been successfully executed as the organization wrote out the narrative of the build up to the Hunger Strike and the Strike itself and then brought the story to life with action. The greatest obstacle that summer for the organization was for participants to be able to critically reflect upon their actions. This challenge was largely a result of the fast pace and momentum of the Campaign as intended in the narrative design to complete the storyline and demonstrate the level of power needed to win. While reflection was not absent, as it had been integrated through retreats and tours, not all of the active members of the organization were able to keep up with all aspects of what was happening as events unfolded. The division of labor between leadership and membership became unbalanced and magnified with the absence of intentional and consistent space being carved out for reflection or the ability to make changes mid-course. Even after the victory, the level of exhaustion from the final push made it difficult to gather everyone for critical reflection. Moreover, as it turned out, there was still more work to be done.
A New Season with Living Wages

(6) Tension Moment: A Bittersweet Victory

Prior to the Living Wages victory, the United Workers engaged in negotiations with a large-scale non-profit cleaning contractor, The Chimes, in an attempt to identify an attractive company for the MSA that could do the stadium job at Living Wages. The negotiations were not a part of the pre-written narrative. Accordingly, this moment did not receive the focus or attention for reflective action that it required, resulting in an unforeseen defeat amid the Living Wages victory. Dozens of Latino workers were excluded from the victory based on their citizenship status. Without time for reflection, the input of members was overlooked and proper research was not conducted. As a result, a few leaders were making uninformed decisions on behalf of the membership. This unidirectional decision could have been because the Battle of Stories Framework dictated what was worthy of reflection, and if anything fell outside of those confines, it was neglected or simply overlooked.

In the Orioles 2008 baseball season, The Chimes received the new Living Wages cleaning contract, but required that workers be direct employees instead of temp workers. They wanted to do criminal background checks and review the citizenship documentation of all workers. Under the temp agencies, a person's immigration status was unimportant as long as they offered themselves as a consistent supply of cheap labor. This was an unexpected downside to direct employment.

Based on the United Workers negotiations, The Chimes agreed to hire the current cleaners first. The length of the background checks were negotiated from ten years to three years, and anyone who was rejected could be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with
a lawyer chosen by the United Workers. Nonetheless, The Chimes would not budge on the issue of documentation (Jim, Interview; Strategy Timeline: Living Wages at Camden Yards).

Although the non-Latino cleaners were able to get their jobs back at the new Living Wage, the majority of Latino workers were not able to return to work that season due to their immigration status. Reflecting on the bitter realization, Jim recalled:

[t]hat was probably one of biggest mistakes we made, because I don't think we had ever thought that through before that meeting [with The Chimes]. There was a plan that we could just ignore the law, but there wasn't an operational commitment to that by the organization when it was the critical time for that to happen. (Interview)

As Jim describes, the organization believed that by ignoring immigration law, undocumented workers would simply return to work without presenting legal records of citizenship. However, the organization did not have the commitment or foresight to figure out how they would get around the law, either through pre-negotiation that ALL workers be included, or that the United Workers would continue to wage an all out battle. In the end, the rejection of Latino workers was in fact the first big blow to the Living Wages victory and to the morale of United Workers members. As a result some Latino members left the organization.

Whether including the negotiations with The Chimes into the Battle of Stories Framework would have changed the outcome of the United Workers agreement is uncertain. Similarly, given the rapid pace of events over the summer, there is no telling if the organization would have been able to include reflection time. Regardless, what is
evident is that by not including the negotiations in the pre-formulated story, it was not given priority for reflective action resulting in a serious setback to the victory. The gap between the leadership and membership was at its widest. Accordingly, the absence of reflection did not allow for the leadership to consult the larger membership, particularly the Latino members, on the agreement with The Chimes, conduct research or seek consultation on how to engage with immigration law.

(7) Success Moment: A “Fair Deal”

Even though workers were receiving the new Living Wage in the 2008 baseball season, there was still a lack of respect from supervisors and a question about how to institutionalize the victory. A decision to unionize was made. This decision was a representation of reflective action at its best. Dialogue around unionization began from the base and moved upward. The dialogue began with the workers’ direct experiences and evolved into the cooperative development of a strategy for change.

What had changed with the start of the new season was Living Wages, an end to the gratuitous unpaid wait times, extra charges, and the uncertainty of whether one would work that day or not. However, the wonton disrespect from supervisors and bosses continued. “[The supervisors] acted like we owed them something for the living wage. Like they had done us some kind of favor,” said one stadium worker. “‘We may have been making more money, but they still treated us like temp workers’” (qtd. in Ten Eyck). This pointed to a larger issue; without a legally binding agreement or a permanent bargaining body there was no guarantee that Living Wages would remain intact. This began a series of difficult conversations in the United Workers. Ultimately the decision was made that unionization was the best course of action. This decision was not made
lightly. Concerns remained for the United Workers regarding its lose of the core leadership to a union. In the end, there was a frank acknowledgement that the United Workers was skilled at political fights through corporate campaigns and leadership development, and unions were good at collective bargaining.

Traditionally, no union wanted to work with day laborers or temporary workers; the union accurately viewed them as a means for breaking their power by the company. However, one union stood with the United Workers on principle since the beginning. When the organization targeted Peter Angelos, AFSCME was the one union that did not distance themselves from the United Workers (Michelle, Interview). While UNITE-HERE or SEIU may have been better suited for the job given their experience in the low-wage service sector, AFSCME was ultimately selected given their relationship with the United Workers (Jake, Interview).

The union drive lasted a short two months. With workers already organized and seasoned through a three and a half year battle, they were prepared for The CHIMES to put up an anti-union fight. In June of 2008, in just three weeks, 191 (over 85%) cleaners signed union cards, and a petition of recognition was submitted to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). On July 6, 2008 a union election was held at the stadium where 80% voted yes to the union (Hopkins). A union local was officially formed to address workers’ grievances, give them a voice on the job and secure the Living Wages victory.

While the core leadership of the United Workers continued to hold a fundamental critique surrounding the effectiveness of trade unions, a compromise was made. It was a compromise based in the desires of the collective. Ironically, the union effort, which became known as the “Fair Deal,” was not part of the pre-devised story, yet received time
for reflection. Following a dialogue between leadership and membership, the Strategic Plan (narrative) was revised in accordance with newly consensed direction. What this revision illustrated was a resolution of the pedagogic tension. Herein, through the presence of dialogue, the formerly static story created through the Battle of Stories Framework, was demonstrated that it could be approached more dynamically.
CHAPTER 5: More than a Living Wage, A Struggle for Dignity

“Utopia is on the horizon. You walk two steps, and it retreats two steps. You walk ten steps and it retreats ten steps. So, then what is utopia for? For that—to make you keep walking.”

- Eduardo Galeano (qtd. in Conant 333)

Through the course of researching the history, trajectory and organizing model of the United Workers in the age of neoliberal capitalism, it is evident that the organization simultaneously represents a source of hope for community-labor organizing and a replication of some pitfalls. As the dominant form of class struggle, the traditional trade union movement has not responded effectively to neoliberal policies that have left workers structurally underemployed and unemployed without any form of security. Moreover, antisystemic movements have yet to find a new course for massive social change since the decline of the Old and New Left (Wallerstein “New Revolts Against the System”). While the United Workers may not represent a holistic solution for antisystemic movements, it offers useful lessons for others to learn from through its obstacles and successes. The obstacles largely presented themselves in the form of a pedagogical tension within the Transformative Community-Labor Organizing paradigm. This tension was between the organization’s pedagogy of reflective action and the Battle of Stories Framework. The major lesson from the pedagogical tension was that the absence of reflection resulted in minimal leadership learning and exclusionary unidirectional decisions. Conversely, the greatest successes of the organization came from the resolution of this pedagogical tension where dialogue between leadership and membership was intentionally integrated with action. The obstacles are instructive for
building more effective organizations and antisytemic movements while the successes offer positive new ways to engage with labor under neoliberalism.

**Lessons Learned from the Obstacles**

In the absence of reflection, the obstacles posed by the pedagogical tension were at their height for the United Workers. Some of the major obstacles presented for the organization offer critical lessons: (1) the gap in dialogue between membership and leadership; (2) the defeat within the victory regarding immigration status; (3) and ways to secure community-labor based victories without unions.

In moments when the pedagogical tension surfaced for the organization, it was often due to a failure to reflect and/or a breakdown in the dialogue between leadership and membership. One solution is to add more time for reflection into the construction of the campaign narrative. In this way, the storytelling is dependent on the reflection. The second aspect raises the question of how to have leadership development processes that adequately prepare a greater number of members to be in leadership? The hope here is that with more of leadership coming from the base community, there will be greater accountability to the larger membership. A failure to resolve this pedagogical tension may result in a victory turning bittersweet as occurred with the United Workers.

The defeat within the Living Wages victory, which excluded undocumented Latinos, posits an invaluable bitter lesson. The issue of immigration is critical in the neoliberal capitalist economy and is used by employers to threaten organization and divide communities as demonstrated in the Living Wages Campaign. Ample time for reflection and sharing strategies with other groups is critical to avoid making the same mistakes and to learn how to work with, or around deleterious immigration laws.
Concurrently, organizations cannot be afraid to experiment as long as the voices of those most affected by the decisions are included and represented.

Another dilemma that arose for the United Workers amid its victory was how to secure the victory and maintain organization at Camden Yards for the long haul. One option is to go the route that the United Workers chose: team up with a union where the United Workers initiates the corporate campaigning and leadership development while the trade union secures the victory and engages in collective bargaining. This strategy could be approached as a way to revive the trade union movement. A second strategy is for the United Workers type community-labor organization to conduct corporate campaigning, leadership development and then stay at the site of struggle to continue organizing indefinitely. The final strategy would be for the United Workers to spawn an autonomous, self-sustaining and bottom-up Human Rights Union that remained intimately connected to the Poor People’s Movement to End Poverty. Such an approach would allow the United Workers to continue to use its strengths in corporate campaigning while facilitating the exponential growth of the poor people’s movement with a labor body that was fully inline with its vision, values and pedagogy.

**Lessons Learned from the Successes**

Some of the more unique aspects of the United Workers organizing model that demonstrated the organization at its best was its ability to unite the poor across barriers; organize a largely dispossessed sector of Baltimore; create a dynamic form of leadership learning; and create transformative victories.

The class-based and value-centered approach of the Transformative Human Rights Framework offers new ways of considering crossing barriers of race, gender, sex,
language, ability and other identities. These various areas of identity and diversity often act as obstacles to groups working together. By focusing on universal human rights values, the United Workers was able to build bridges between separated communities. The values acted to identify intrinsic points of unity to begin dialogue about difference through a commitment to interculturality. The poorest sectors of Baltimore, which had been hardest hit by neoliberalism and neglect of trade unions, were able to find a space for reflection and struggle within the United Workers.

These diverse dispossessed sectors of Baltimore were historically an object of disregard by unions, while for the United Workers they were a source of revolutionary potential and leadership. Largely because the United Workers was a community-labor organization and not a union, they were able to organize the poor, the unemployed and underemployed. The organization’s use of corporate campaigning offered a way of engaging with the larger community and working class concerns. The corporate campaign allowed the group to construct their own timeline, target, and demands while also turning harmful aspects of the neoliberal economy into strengths. The rise of the public relations industry and branding granted the organization access to elevate their cause by attaching it to billion dollar brands like Camden Yards and learn how to incorporate aspects of storytelling into the group’s work. Furthermore, the temporary nature of the service and tourist industry granted the United Workers access to a greater number of potential leaders to work with and include in the community; their participation was not dependent on whether or not they worked at Camden Yards. Larger groupings of people were able to participate in the organization and in turn its leadership development processes.
The leadership development of the United Workers members occurred within the corporate campaign, which was wrapped in narrative through the Battle of Stories Framework. While weaving narrative and pedagogy acted as a major source of pedagogical tension, when storytelling, dialogue and action were in unison, leadership learning was effective. Moreover, leadership development was able to occur within a framework for building power, communicating the organization’s values and vision and tell a story that garnered larger public support for elevating the plight and the fight of the poor. The presence of these elements, while not always in sync, nonetheless facilitated a historic victory for the United Workers; a victory not limited to a wage increase, but that contributed to personal transformation.

Ultimately it was the goal of the United Workers to create opportunities for leaders to engage with transformative leadership development. This strategy occurred through the Living Wages Campaign at Camden Yards. Possibly the most telling success of the organization was certainly the Living Wages victory, but more so was the transformation experienced by leaders. Of course the material victory was of great significance: the termination of poverty wages, human rights abuses and the exploitative day labor system were replaced with direct employment, a 50% wage increase and a representative voice on the job. Moreover, the demonstration of power forced the exchange of millions of dollars from private accumulation to the pockets of low-wage workers. While these are momentous and tangible gains, some leaders in the United Workers viewed the process of struggle itself and leadership development as the more long-standing victory. At the 2009 City from Below Conference in Baltimore, Lamont, a hunger striker, spoke of what the Living Wages victory meant for him. He did not want to
go back to the stadium and work under the new Living Wage. For him it was always about the struggle. “For the first time, I feel like a man,” Lamont told the crowd. “I now feel like I have dignity . . . I have worth.” With tears welling up in his eyes, Lamont went on, “I am proud to tell my three kids I was a part of this fight [. . .] for standing up for what I believe in” (“A Conversation on Organizing Models” Mp3). Lamont experienced something quite profound after the three and half year campaign: the realization of his inherent dignity. Nearly his entire life, Lamont was told that he was not smart, that it was his fault he was poor, and that he was the only one to blame for his challenges with mental illness. He truly believed this. He had internalized the systematic oppression dealt to him on a daily basis. For many workers like Lamont, the struggle was as much internal as it was with the campaigns’ opponent. In the midst of the stadium fight, while building a community and facing his fears, Lamont began to believe that he mattered, that he could make a difference in the world.

There were many other workers engaged in the campaign because they understood it to be about something bigger than themselves. Robert was prepared to go on a hunger strike, not because he wanted a wage increase for himself, but because he understood this fight at a more fundamental level.

Everybody just came together, [because] this is something we have to do, make this sacrifice so nobody else wouldn't go through this. It didn't matter what color, race, religion, whatever or sexual orientation or whatever. It's just about human life and people just coming together; like we're all affected by poverty. (Interview)
Including the four allies, another three workers besides Robert had either never worked at the stadium or had no intention of ever returning. They too were prepared to make a tremendous sacrifice to realize the inherent dignity of all people.

Patricio often spoke of the Living Wages Campaign as a victory as a result of emerging from the fight with fifty committed leaders to a larger movement to end poverty. Those leaders were ready to take their experience and lead other human rights campaigns to build power among the poor (Patricio, Interview). The transformation that occurred within these leaders was most obvious in the symbolic kick-off march from Camden Yards to the Inner Harbor in 2008 that initiated the second human rights corporate campaign of the United Workers, the Human Rights Zone Campaign. More than 80 stadium workers led the march, excited to extend and expand the movement to end poverty beyond the stadium (Rasmussen).
Appendix 1

Table 1. Union Coverage rate in the United States, 1973-2011

Source: Authors’ analysis of Hirsch and Macpherson (2003) and updates from the Union Membership and Coverage Database


Table 1.2. Average real wages and productivity in the United States, 1960-200.

FIGURE 2.1: Average real wages and productivity level in the United States, 1960-2000
(wages are average hourly earnings, in 2001 dollars, for nonsupervisory workers in private sector)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Note: Productivity index measures output per hour of all persons in private business. Wages are average hourly earnings of production workers in private business.

## Appendix 2

### Table 2. Baltimore City Population, 1950-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>620,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>651,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>736,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>786,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>905,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>939,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>950,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2.1. Baltimore City Population by Race, 1950-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>723,655</td>
<td>225,099</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>610,608</td>
<td>325,589</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>480,377</td>
<td>420,147</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>345,080</td>
<td>431,153</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>287,753</td>
<td>435,768</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997 (est.)</td>
<td>214,857</td>
<td>427,300</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Levine, Marc V. 128.
## Appendix 3

### Table 3. Baltimore Tourist Sector Wages, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Average Starting Wage</th>
<th>Annual Salary for average hours worked in occupation</th>
<th>Percent of poverty-line for a family of four ($22,350)</th>
<th>State Living Wage ($12.49)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amusement and Recreation Attendants</td>
<td>$8.25</td>
<td>$17,225</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage Porters and Bellhops</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$18,775</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartenders</td>
<td>$8.75</td>
<td>$18,325</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$18,900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concierges</td>
<td>$14.25</td>
<td>$29,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks, Restaurant</td>
<td>$12.25</td>
<td>$25,250</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter Attendants</td>
<td>$9.25</td>
<td>$19,350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwashers</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$18,825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Service Workers</td>
<td>$11.25</td>
<td>$23,150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host and Hostesses</td>
<td>$9.25</td>
<td>$19,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitors and Cleaners</td>
<td>$10.50</td>
<td>$22,025</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid and Housekeeping Cleaners</td>
<td>$10.50</td>
<td>$21,975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lott Attendants</td>
<td>$9.75</td>
<td>$20,350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>$10.75</td>
<td>$22,525</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Guard</td>
<td>$11.50</td>
<td>$23,925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$18,800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushers, Lobby Attendants and Ticket Takers</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$18,600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiters and Waitresses</td>
<td>$8.25</td>
<td>$17,350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Tourism Job</td>
<td>$9.97</td>
<td>$19,154</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>$25,979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "Civilian Labor Force, Employment & Unemployment by Place of Residence(LAUS) - Baltimore City - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning." *Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.*
Appendix 4

Table 4. Battle of Stories Framework of the United Workers

Battle of Stories Framework of the United Workers
Low-wage workers leading the way to poverty's end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The story leads to an end to poverty</td>
<td>Human rights values are the moral to the story</td>
<td>Underground Railroad to freedom from poverty</td>
<td>We are fighting for human rights in solidarity together</td>
<td>Fighting for the human rights of everyone, everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement: led by poor = Leadership Development</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Actions – Paragraphes</td>
<td>Personally Affected</td>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic human rights = End poverty</td>
<td>Dignity</td>
<td>Campaigns – Chapters</td>
<td>Groups Working Together for Change</td>
<td>Community Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing color lines and language barriers = Unity</td>
<td>Sanctity of Human Life</td>
<td>Epic story always leads to poverty's end</td>
<td>Opponents and Villains</td>
<td>Campaigns (The Fight)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The United Workers.
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