

Direct Action & Sabotage

Three Classic IWW Pamphlets from the 1910s

**Elizabeth Gurley Flynn • Walker C. Smith
William E. Trautmann • Edited by Salvatore Salerno**

The pamphlets reprinted here were first published in the 1910s amid great controversy. Even then, the tactics of direct action and sabotage were often associated with the cartoonists' image of the disheveled, wild-eyed anarchist armed with stiletto, handgun, or bomb—the clandestine activity of a militant minority or the desperate acts of the unorganized.

The activist authors of the texts in this collection challenged the prevailing stereotypes. As they point out, the practices of direct action and sabotage are as old as class society itself and have been an integral part of the everyday work life of wage-earners in all times and places. To the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) belongs the distinction of being the first workers' organization in the U.S. to discuss these common practices openly, and to recognize their place in working-class struggle. Viewing direct action and sabotage in the spirit of creative nonviolence, Wobblies readily integrated these tactics into their struggle to build industrial unions.

Direct action is recognized as a valuable and effective tactic by many movements around the globe and remains a cutting-edge tool for social change. Whenever communities in struggle find more conventional methods of resistance closed to them, direct action and sabotage will be employed.

This new edition from the Charles H. Kerr Library contains "Direct Action and Sabotage" (1912) by William E. Trautmann, "Sabotage: Its History, Philosophy and Function" (1913) by Walker C. Smith, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's "Sabotage: The Conscious Withdrawal of the Workers' Industrial Efficiency" (1916), edited and with an introduction by Salvatore Salerno.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

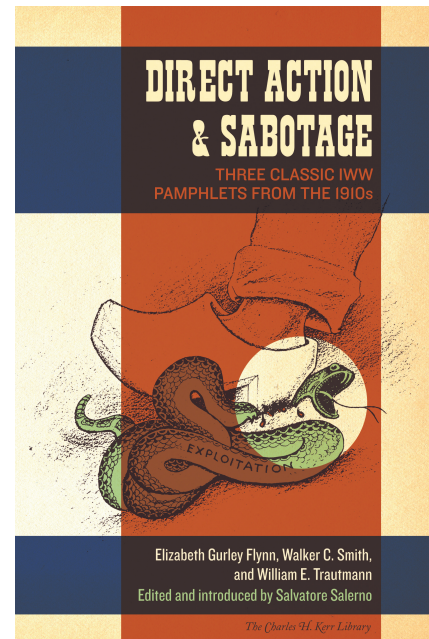
Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, "The Rebel Girl" (1890–1964) was a labor leader, activist, and feminist who played a leading role in the IWW. Flynn was a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union and a visible proponent of women's rights, birth control, and women's suffrage.

Walker C. Smith was a leading member of the IWW, who wrote and edited socialist newspapers, philosophical tracts, pamphlets, satirical plays, and even verse. Smith regularly went on speaking tours to promote the cause of the Wobblies and recruit new members. Smith's most famous pamphlet, *Sabotage*, was used by courts throughout the United States as evidence that members of the IWW union were guilty of criminal syndicalism for simply belonging to the union.

William Ernst Trautmann was founding general-secretary of the U.S. IWW and one of six people who initially laid plans for the organization in 1904. Between 1905 and 1912 he mostly worked in the field as an organizer. In 1922 Trautmann published a novel, *Riot*, drawing on his experiences as an IWW activist during the Pressed Steel Car Strike of 1909 in McKees Rocks (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Salvatore Salerno is the author of *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* and has contributed articles to the *Haymarket Scrapbook* and many other publications. He is a professor on the Community Faculty staff of Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, Minnesota.



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