

(that's not to say that disputes don't arise, but under One Big Union, they can be worked out democratically).

(5) Industry Wide Contracts -- When you have achieved large scale industry-wide unionization, even if you haven't organize all workers into your union, it is still possible to organize industry wide contracts that cover workers in all shops organized into the union. There are numerous advantages to this strategy, including the ability to negotiate conditions for all workers at once instead of piecemeal. Some industry-wide contracts can even stretch across national boundaries.

(6) Hiring Halls -- Another benefit of organizing by industry is the ability to establish union hiring halls. Employers post job openings with the union. The union then dispatches workers on a daily basis from the union hall in person or by phone. Workers are hired from a pool of qualified union members or applicants who then are dispatched to a job. This allows workers who cannot get full-time employment in a specific industry to still work regularly in that industry until hired full time. It also allows workers to avoid the bureaucracy of unemployment offices, arbitrary standards for hiring and firing set by employers, and allows for stronger rank & file union control.

(7) Abolition of the Wage System -- All of these things help us build towards our final goal of abolishing the wage system and building a new society within the shell of the old. However, these are by no means the only tactics that will be used in this ongoing struggle. The battle for industrial democracy (and true freedom) is multifaceted and complex. There is no one single way to win. We will no doubt add more as time goes by. Perhaps some of these new tactics will be pioneered by you and your coworkers. Only time will tell.



Labor Organizing



Some Basic Steps To Organizing a Union

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Some Basic Steps To Organizing a Union

<http://bari.iww.org/organize/steps1.html>

Although every workplace is different and the needs of workers vary, there are some basic steps involved in winning a union voice on the job. This will be primarily useful to workers in the United States of America.

To begin organizing a union at your workplace there's a simple starting point before going through the steps listed below: quietly talk to a few of your coworkers who you think may be interested in organizing.

Step 1 - Build an Organizing Committee

Identify your leaders (the one's who will take initial responsibility and initiative in starting your organizing campaign) and an organizing committee representing all major departments and all shifts and reflecting the racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the workforce is established. If you don't do this, you will have a much more difficult task ahead of you. Organizing committee training begins immediately. Committee members must be prepared to work hard to educate themselves and their coworkers about the union and to warn and educate coworkers about the impending management anti-union campaign. The employers will most likely engage in a well organized, well funded anti-union campaign. Numerous books have been written for employers who desire union free workplaces, but a well prepared organizing committee can withstand the employer's propaganda. The organizing committee must be educated about workers right to organize and must understand their union's policies and principals of democracy and rank-and-file control.

Also at this step basic information about the workplace must be gathered including:

Workplace Structure: departments, work areas, jobs, shifts

Employee Information: name, address, phone, shift, job title, and department for each worker (employee list) employer information: other locations, parent company, product(s), customers, union history, financial assets, economic

(1) Subsequent Contracts -- After you negotiate your first contract, you will have to consider the next one. At least six to nine months before the expiration of the first contract, you should be prepared to begin negotiating for the next contract. Even before you begin such negotiations, you and your coworkers should be ever mindful of things you want to make better and what your employers have up their sleeve. It's a given that they'll want to negotiate a contract that takes away as many benefits and pro-union clauses as you want to add; they might even try to bust your union altogether. The contract is but a temporary truce in the class war. The bosses never sleep, and neither should you.

(2) Publicizing your victory -- Once you win an organizing campaign, you will want to let the world know about it. A mistake workers often make is assuming that their workplace and the issues concerning them are isolated from the rest of the world. Not so. Your ability to organize a union at your job will help others organize a union at theirs. The more workers that are organized (especially if the unions they organize are democratic), the greater power workers will have to control their destinies.

(3) Organizing the unorganized in your industry -- Once you win your first victory and negotiate your first contract, other unorganized workers that work in your industry may approach you and ask you about organizing. (They'll certainly approach your union). It is in your best interest to help them organize. The workers in your industry are not your competition. The bosses "compete". Workers do not. Bosses pit one set of workers against another in hopes that they can keep wages low, conditions bad, and workers helpless. When all workers in one industry organize into one big union, they have far more power to control their destiny and make conditions better for themselves.

(4) Building Industrial Unions -- Workers gain economic power by organizing along industrial lines. Unfortunately the employing class and the business unions keep workers divided, pitted against each other in meaningless squabbles that actually hurt all workers roughly equally (whether or not one workers "wins" a dispute with another). Bosses and Business unions try to keep workers, even organized ones isolated from the other workers in their industry. The IWW will help you fight this tendency by helping you organize a union in your industry, joining with other workers in your industry, and helping rank & file workers in other unions build rank & file opposition to their fat-cat union bosses. This is done by all workers in one industry working together and all workers in all industries cooperating with each other to form one big union.

federally binding status. The IWW traditionally rejected time-contracts for numerous reasons. One such reason is that employers usually demanded that unions agree to "no strike clauses" (such provisions are fairly standard in contracts these days).

This did not prevent the One Big Union from winning huge gains for the working class. For example, the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO) and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) of the IWW managed to win major concessions from the employers in those industries during the 1910s. In 1917, the LWIU won the eight hour day for lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest by striking on the job. Unions would state their demands in writing and unless the boss agree to them, the workers could strike or engage in on-the-job direct action, including work-to-rule, sabotage, or sit-down strikes, as IWW-led workers often did. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) of the AFL-CIO was born through such a strike, and is now one of the most militant, strong, and democratic unions in the AFL-CIO. For more information check out the historical archives section of the Timber Workers Industrial Union website.

Today the IWW accepts contracts in some circumstances, but even the best contract is at best a temporary truce with the boss class in the class war. Contracts do not guarantee the conditions outlined within them unless the union remains strong and organized. Under many circumstances, a well organized union doesn't need a contract to ensure that their demands are met (though they'll often accept one, and the bosses will usually ask for one anyway).

Direct action on the job can be utilized even if a union fails to gain official recognition from the employers. However, you have no legal recourse should your actions be resisted by the employer in such circumstances, and many workers are not willing to take such radical steps to protect their rights. Therefore, winning gains through direct action is very risky, and most unions discourage direct action. Not so with the IWW. If you choose to take direct action on the shop floor, as long as the goals advance the cause and improve the conditions of workers and the working class, the IWW will back you 100%.

Organizing a Union is only the First Step in the struggle to abolish the wage system. Once that is done, there are many further goals you will want to consider:

strengths and weaknesses.

Intangibles: informal cliques, social networks, and existing relationships - the employer will try to use these to their advantage to try and disrupt union organizing activities. Your organizing committee must accommodate for these existing relationships.

Step 2 - Determine Your Issues

The committee develops a program of union demands (the improvements you are organizing to achieve) and a strategy for the union recognition campaign. A plan for highlighting the issues program in the workplace is carried out through various organizing campaign activities.

Step 3 - Choose your Union Recognition Strategy

Your coworkers are asked to join the IWW (or some other union of your choice) and support the union program by achieving union status. You will need to determine which union recognition strategy is best.

You can choose one of the following:

Card Check Recognition - Your Organizing Committee and/or a representative from your union informs your employer that a sizable majority (at least 50% plus one person, but ideally 60% or more) have signed union authorization cards. If successful, your employer will voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Strike for Recognition - A sizable majority (at least 50% plus one person, but ideally 60% or more) agrees to a short strike to force the employer to recognize your union. If successful, your employer will voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Call for an NLRB Sponsored Election - Your Organizing Committee manages to convince your coworkers to sign union authorization cards. The goal is to sign up a sizable majority. You only need 30% of the workforce to sign authorization cards to have an NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Sponsored Election.

This "card campaign" should proceed quickly once begun and is necessary to hold a union election. If successful, your employer is legally required to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Organize Direct Action on the Job - You needn't achieve legal recognition of your union to act as a union. However, you have no legal recourse should your actions be resisted by the employer.

You will have to determine which recognition strategy is best for your situation.

Step 4 - Achieve Union Recognition or Status

Should you win voluntary recognition from your employer, you can skip right to the next step, "Negotiating a Contract". If you choose to "Organize Direct Action on the Job", you should read about How to Fire Your Boss. Otherwise you will need to have an NLRB Sponsored Election.

To hold an election, the signed authorization cards are used (and required) to petition the state or federal labor board to hold an election. It will take the labor board at least several weeks to determine who is eligible to vote and schedule the election. The union campaign must continue and intensify during the wait. If the union wins, the employer must recognize and bargain with the union. Winning a union election not only requires a strong, diverse organizing committee and a solid issues program, but there must also be a plan to fight the employer's anti-union campaign. For more details about the types of anti-union tactics your employer might use, please read about your rights in the workplace (on our organizing page).

Step 5 - Negotiate a Contract

The organizing campaign does not let up after an election victory. The next goal of the campaign, a union contract (the document the union and the employer negotiate and sign, covering everything from wages to how disputes will be handled), is still to be achieved. Workers must be mobilized to support the union's contract demands (decided by you and your co-workers) and pressure the employer to meet them. Remember, the contract only represents a short term goal in organizing. You may choose to pursue long term goals after you negotiate your first contract.

The employer can appeal to the NLRB (or PERB) for delays; such tactics are used to lengthen organizing campaigns and drain popular support for the organizing campaign among the workers. The employer can question the make-up of a bargaining unit and challenge the union's right to represent certain workers (or the employer may try to hire new workers with non-union attitudes to try and sway a close vote in their favor).

Although anti-union intimidation tactics are illegal, anti-union statements from the employer are not. The longer it takes to have the election, the more anti-union sentiment the employer can spread.

For these reasons, most unions will attempt either voluntary card recognition or strike for recognition strategies before attempting NLRB or PERB sponsored elections, and the IWW is certainly no exception. Since employers know that elections are generally to their advantage, it is wise for your organizing committee to achieve a sizable majority of 60% or greater pro-union support before you petition for an election.

Once the election date is set, it's imperative that your organizing committee solidify its base of support in the shop. It makes sense to call upon the union to build support within the shop as well as without. Informal networks of supporting community groups that support unionization can make all the difference in winning an election (especially if the workers realize that they are not alone in their efforts).

The union is allowed to have a representative present on the day of the election to observe the proceedings and to ensure that the election is indeed fair and impartial. Neither the employer nor the union may intimidate or coerce workers into voting against their individual will. Should the union win a majority in the election, your organizing committee can move onto the next step: negotiating your contracts or achieving your desired goals.

Strategy #4 - Direct Action

You needn't achieve legal recognition of your union to act as a union. Legally guaranteed representation didn't exist in the United States of America until the passing of the National Labor Relations Act in 1937. Prior to then, unions sometimes negotiated contracts with their employers, but they carried no

economic and political means to withstand your strike, you could find yourself out of a job.

Striking is protected concerted activity by workers under the NLRA, as long as the workers and the employers don't agree to no-strike provisions. Striking is generally prohibited in a great many circumstances under the Public Employee Relations Act (PERA), although government agencies are less likely to oppose unionization.

Striking for Recognition is sometimes used to convince an employer to stop delaying NLRB elections (more about that below), and is most likely to succeed when your employer is a small business owner with few economic and political assets beyond their business, or in massive industrial unions that are strong and very well organized (more about that in Long Term Goals).

Keep in mind that signing an authorization card or joining the IWW as a dues paying member does not require a worker to vote yes to strike (though IWW members are prohibited from crossing picket lines whether IWW sponsored or sponsored by another union).

Strategy #3 - NLRB or PERB Sponsored Elections

This is the most common and established strategy for winning union recognition from an employer in the United States of America. In many industrialized nations (for example, Canada), 50%-plus-one support is sufficient to achieve union recognition. Not so in the USA.

If you manage to sign up as little as 30% of the non-management employees in your workplace, you may ask the union of your choice (or an independent union or your own creation) to petition the NLRB (or PERB) to hold a secret ballot election for Union Representation. If 50%-plus-one vote in favor of unionization, your union may legally represent your bargaining unit. If you are successful, your employer is legally required to recognize your union as the legal representative for your bargaining unit. You may petition for an election even if you first attempt voluntary recognition through a card-check or strike and are not successful.

Despite the assurances promised under the National Labor Relations Act, elections are not necessarily advantageous to union organizing campaigns:

Organized! Make It Your Union!

The IWW is the most democratic union in the world. We believe that every member is potentially an organizer and a leader. We will train you how to achieve this (all you have to do is ask). Should you choose another union to represent you, the IWW is still here to help you where the other unions cannot or will not.

IWW members run their own local unions and there's no other union where this is a truer statement. But you don't "go it alone," either. We will be with you every step of the way helping with everything from organizing to negotiating your first contract ... and helping you learn how to build and run your own local union.

Will we still be there after you win your first contract? Absolutely! While we want and encourage our locals to make their own decisions on issues of local importance, the resources our union will always be there when you need them. We believe that An Injury to One is an Injury to All.

Strategies for Union Recognition

<http://bari.iww.org/organize/steps2.html>

You must determine your Union Recognition Strategy, based on the needs of your workplace, and the mutually agreed upon, democratic decisions of you and your coworkers.

In the United States of America, you can achieve official union recognition through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the private and/or non-profit sector, or the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) if you work for the government (though most government employees are unionized anyway). Certain industries fall under special jurisdictions (such as Railway Workers, which are governed under the National Railway Act). For this reason we focus mainly on NLRA (National Labor Relations Act) union recognition. For further information, you can check out the National Labor Relations Board website (<http://www.nlr.gov/>).

Your co-workers are asked to join the IWW (or some other union of your choice) and support the union program by achieving union status. You will need

to determine which union recognition strategy is best. Workers in the United States can choose one of the following:

- * Voluntary Card Check Recognition
- * Strike for Recognition
- * Call for an NLRB Sponsored Election
- * Organize Direct Action on the Job

Each strategy has pros and cons, and we will describe each below

Strategy #1 - Voluntary Card Check

If you use this strategy, you must convince at least 50%-plus-one of you and your co-workers to sign union authorization cards (or a petition), and then convince your employer to voluntarily recognize your union as the legal representative for your bargaining unit. Ideally, you will want to convince more than 50%-plus-one to sign cards.

50%-plus-one means one more than half of the work-force. For example, in a workplace of 100 (excluding management), that means 51 workers. In a workplace of 99 (excluding management), that means 50 workers. In a workplace of two (excluding management), both workers must agree to recognition to achieve a majority. Unions have discovered that 60% - 70% pro-union support is an ideal majority under most circumstances no matter what recognition strategy you use.

A union authorization card is not a membership card. By signing a card, a worker is not agreeing to join a union, nor does it require them to vote "yes" should an NLRB or PERB sponsored election occur. When a worker signs an authorization card, they include their name, address, phone number (if they have one), e-mail address (if they have an account), the date, their job title, hours per week and per day of work, rate of pay, and their signature. That information is confidential. Only the union and the NLRB or PERB has access to that information. The employers and their agents do not have access to the authorization cards.

Your Organizing Committee and/or a representative from your union informs your employer that a sizable majority (at least 50%-plus-one, but ideally 60% or more) have signed union authorization cards. If successful, your employer will

voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

The positive aspect of this strategy is, that if you are successful, you can skip the NLRB (or PERB) sponsored recognition election (more about that later).

The downside of this strategy is that if you DO win voluntary recognition, if there is a minority of workers that are opposed to unionization, they might believe that their democratic rights have been violated, and they might not be as easy to work with in the future.

In reality, employers rarely grant voluntary recognition (though it does happen on occasion). And even when an election is held, some workers may be opposed to unions in general. Whether or not your employer chooses to recognize your union voluntarily will depend on their outlook (some employers are fairly favorable to unions), and whether or not they think they can defeat the unionization efforts through an NLRB election.

The IWW is different from most other unions, because individuals may join the IWW before winning union recognition, but like authorization cards, membership in the IWW does not require a member to sign an authorization card or vote "yes" in an election. If you have any doubts about a co-worker's support or commitment, do not ask them to join the union.

Strategy #2 - Strike for Recognition

Striking for Recognition is one way to utilize direct action on the shop floor. If you have near unanimous support for the union in your workplace (perhaps as much as 90% or more) and your employer refuses voluntary card-check recognition, you can attempt a short strike to force your employer to recognize the union without going through a drawn-out NLRB or PERB election.

Positive effects of striking for recognition include skipping a lengthy election process, and if you are successful, you and your coworkers will gain a very strong sense of empowerment.

However, striking for recognition is a very risky strategy. If you do not have near unanimous support, those in your workplace that oppose unionization will most likely be even less supportive of your efforts. Also, if your boss has the