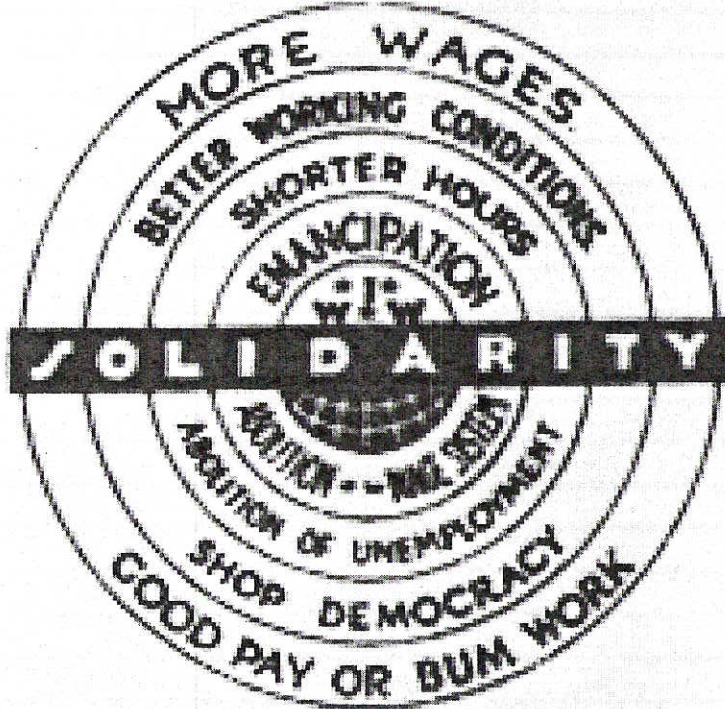


I.W.W.
WHAT WE STAND FOR.



THINK IT OVER,
★ JOIN THE
ONE BIG UNION
FIGHT FOR THE FULL PRODUCT
OF YOUR LABOR

NYC RETAIL WORKERS UNION



IWW IU 660

***Fighting for decent jobs
and better lives
for today's workers***

support the union including higher wages and better benefits. Unfortunately if the union is beaten the boss won't come through on the promises. Spying is when the boss, either directly or indirectly including through cameras, engages in or creates the impression of surveillance of workers. It is important to prepare for TIPS by informing your co-workers in advance about the anti-union campaign: the boss will do or say anything to keep the money and power in his hands and not in the hands of unionized workers.

Enforcing these Rights

You may be surprised that the best way to enforce these rights is not through the National Labor Relations Board which is the government agency charged with administering union-management affairs. The best way to enforce your rights is to learn them well and then work with your fellow workers and the Retail Workers Union to apply direct action pressure on the boss when he crosses the line. Always keep in mind that these rights are just a minimum and they're important to know but what can be achieved is much greater than these minimums. Also, the way these rights are often expanded (or contracted) are when workers push the line and fight for an extension of the law. So don't be limited! This all being said, you can also file an Unfair Labor Practice Charge (known as a ULP) against your employer at the local office of the National Labor Relations Board. Charges take a long time to be processed and even if you win the employer can appeal dragging things on even longer. Even if the employer is found to have broken the law the penalties are minimal including: posting a notice promising not to do it again, reinstating any fired workers, and giving back pay to fired workers. If the employer repeats the offense, it is held in contempt of court and the penalty is more serious. If you do decide to file a ULP make sure to do it as one part of a broader grassroots strategy. If you are an undocumented worker you have many of the same union organizing rights as citizens or permanent residents. However, the Supreme Court has recently ruled that undocumented workers cannot receive back pay if fired for union organizing. One last thing: You should definitely keep a detailed log of what happens at work to help enforce your rights. Good luck and remember that the Retail Workers Union is always here to help!

"My friends, it is solidarity of labor we want. We do not want to find fault with each other, but to solidify our forces and say to each other: We must be together; our masters are joined together and we must do the same thing."

Mother Jones

Retail Jobs are Worth More – We Are Worth More

Ever since the 1950s, the United States economy has shifted from relatively high-paying, unionized manufacturing jobs to low wage, often part time jobs in the service sector. As the industrial jobs head south or overseas, businesses like Wal-mart, McDonalds, and Starbucks have become the dominant face of the new economy. In *The Betrayal of Work* Beth Shulman states that "through 2010 it is projected that virtually all 22 million new jobs will be in the non-manufacturing industries with retail trade and low end services expected to account for the large majority"¹.

Retail jobs have historically paid poorly, however, with today's high costs of living the amount of Americans working in poverty is steadily increasing. Real wages have dropped compared to the cost of living and if wages had kept pace with rising productivity since 1968, the minimum wage would be \$13.80--not \$5.15.² Low wages forces us to pick up several service sector jobs to make ends meet. We are doing more work and getting paid less!

While our corporate executives bosses like to pretend that low-wage/part time jobs are only a supplementary source of income for teenagers, this is clearly inaccurate -- in fact, thirty million Americans, one out of every four workers, makes less than \$8.70 an hour³. These low wage jobs translate into billions of dollars of profits for CEOs. These jobs are not however designed for workers trying to support ourselves or our families..

Although retail jobs involve creating a pleasant experience for our customers, for those of us behind the counter, the workplace can be unpleasant. Our jobs are often physically demanding and emotionally stressful. Repetitive stress injuries, security risks and poor scheduling practices plague us. Rigid rules and constant surveillance give us the

¹ Shulman, Beth. *The Betrayal of Work*. The New Press. New York: 2003, p. 5.

² <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0829-08.html>

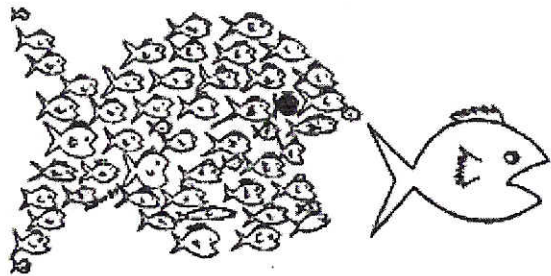
³ Ibid.

sense that our bosses' do not trust us. Most unpleasant however is the poverty many of us come home to. Whether we work sixty hours a week at \$6.15 an hour or two twenty hour a week jobs at 8.25 an hour, we are never quite certain that we'll have enough at the end of the month for food, transportation, rent, tuition, and other expenses.

Some ask why we don't get better jobs- we ask, why not make our jobs better?

Its no surprise that the trend in declining wages and living standards is accompanied by a decreasing union density in all areas of work. With a union, workers have a voice to speak out against such common employer practices as cutbacks, lowering wages, speedups and layoffs. Without a union, your boss can make these changes without your approval. Retail workers receive some of the lowest wages in the country but we work in a highly profitable industry. The numbers don't add up, our bosses are scamming us! *Would our wages be so low if we raised our voice, if we made a union?*

Despite the dreary conditions of the retail sector, we must realize that we hold an immense amount of power. We are the fastest growing part of the American labor force. Our bosses are entirely dependent on our labor to sell their product and keep their businesses open. Without us on the front line, our workplaces would crumble! Its time to speak up and...



ORGANIZE

WUWU

Wearing Union Pins at Work

Retail workers have a more limited right than other workers to wear union pins because many retail workers come into contact with customers. If your boss has no policy regarding pins, you have the right to wear your union pins. If the boss has a no-pin policy but it's not enforced and you see other workers wearing various pins from time to time, you also have a right to wear a union pin. If you come into contact with customers and your boss has a consistently enforced policy of wearing no pins except company pins, you probably do not have a legally protected right to wear union pins. Remember, just because you are not legally protected doesn't mean you don't want to get together with your co-workers and protect yourselves by sticking together while wearing union pins.

Anti-Union Discrimination

Your boss cannot lawfully discriminate against you in any way for union membership, union activity, or what's called concerted activity which is talking to co-workers about unions, wages, and working conditions or confronting the boss with co-workers about unions, wages and working conditions. The key to understanding concerted activity is that it must be done with other co-workers. Acting alone to address unions, wages, and working conditions is not protected activity. Anti-union discrimination is prohibited in all its forms including among other things: termination, getting less hours, having your pay cut, getting transferred to a less convenient location, getting assigned more onerous tasks, etc. Remember the boss can still fire you for other things while you're engaging in concerted activity as long as they can prove they would have fired you even if you had not been engaging in concerted activity.

TIPS

Remember the acronym TIPS: Threats Interrogation Promises and Spying. The boss may not engage in any of these activities during a union organizing drive. However, bosses inevitably launch vigorous anti-union campaigns that incorporate TIPS. Therefore, it is important to familiarize yourself with common TIPS to call them out when they occur. A common threat that employers issue is a wage cut if workers join the union or the closing of the shop if workers join the union. Interrogation is when the boss sits down workers and attempts to find out who is supporting the union and who is not. Sometimes they seem formal or other times the boss will make it look casual. Promises are increased benefits the that boss will guarantee if workers don't

Our Right to Organize

Despite what management may say retail workers have the *right* to form a union. It is illegal for your boss to discriminate against you for your union activity. However, that does not mean the boss will not break the law; in fact the overwhelming odds are that the boss will break the law. ***The best way to stay safe while you exercise your rights is to act collectively with other workers at your job and in your community.*** While labor law is totally skewed against workers, it is important to know your rights as the company will be telling you a whole host of things you are supposedly doing wrong as part of it's anti-union campaign.

Discussing the Union at Work

No matter what policies your employer has: You always have the right to discuss the union while you're working as long as your employer allows talking about any non-work related subject like sports or the weather. Inviting a co-worker to a union meeting and advocating for the union is also considered 'discussion' under the law and is therefore protected.

Signing People Up and Handing Out Flyers at Work

No matter what kind of "no-solicitation-no distribution" policy your employer may have: You always have the right to ask people to join the union and distribute union literature as long as you're in a non-work area like a break room and you're not on the clock like when you're on a lunch break and when the person you are handing the flyer to or signing up is not on the clock either. Consult the actual policy and you may find you can do more, but at a minimum the boss can never deny you the right to engage in these activities on non-work time in non-work areas. If the policy was never enforced in the past, the boss may not all of a sudden began to enforce it. Also, the boss may not selectively enforce the policy against union organizers.

If your company does not have a "no-solicitation/no-distribution" policy you can hand out flyers and sign people up anytime as long as you're still doing your job. Also, your employer does not have the right to all of a sudden come up with a "no-solicitation/no-distribution" policy when union organizing begins.

What is a Union?

A union is an organized group of workers who come together to make decisions about the conditions of their workplace. With a common voice workers have the power to impact wages, work hours, benefits, workplace health and safety, and other work-related issues.

The best weapon against your boss/manager is, of course, organization. If one of us stands up and protests, it is unlikely that our voice will be heard. But if all of us stand up together, the boss will be forced to take us seriously. S/he can fire any individual worker who makes a fuss, but s/he might find it difficult to fire the entire workforce. When we organize we challenge the balance of power. We create a workplace where we have the power to decide the terms and conditions of our labor.

Although it is true that only about 20 percent of American workers are in unions, that 20 percent sets the standards across the board in salaries, benefits and working conditions. If you are making a decent salary in a non-union company, you owe that to the unions. One thing that corporations do not do is give out money out of the goodness of their hearts. – Molly Ivins

We hear the message that retail is only a temporary vocation, not a “real” job, but opportunities are limited for those without multiple college degrees. Regardless of your future dreams or aspirations, take pride in your current place in life and don’t settle for less than what you’re worth. We need a better life today not in ten years!

Join us and learn what you can do to make your job a *real job*...work environment means a life of poverty and hardship. We deserve better.

Organizing your Workplace

Getting a list of co-workers

Most of our stores make the employee roster available to all workers. Copy this list so that you can contact your co-workers outside of work.

Creating a workplace social map

A workplace map will help you see the power dynamics and social relationships at your job. "Mapping" your workplace will help you more effectively communicate with your co-workers about starting a union. Make a chart for every worker in your shop, showing social relationships (friends and enemies, relationship with supervisors, leaders and followers), groups membership (ethnic/language groups, shift supervisors, smokers, particular assignments on the job, etc.). For each group, identify leaders and personal relationships. The purpose of doing this is to identify who you can trust to first approach about the union. Ideally, this person will also be highly respected by your co-workers and capable of communicating across social, racial, and gender lines. It may be easy to bring your close work friends into the union, but the purpose of organizing your union is to bring all workers together.

Workplace journal

When involved in a union campaign, it is essential to document day-to-day proceedings in your store. This will help you reflect on your co-workers, help you build a workplace map, and put into words the frustrations and pleasures of work. Immediately following each day you work (if you can) make a brief entry into your journal. Analyze the pace of the store, the attitude of co-workers, any significant conversations you may have had, and of course any conflicts that may have arisen. Make note of particular issues that bother your co-workers. Your journal serves as an aid to agitate and organize your coworkers. It is especially important to record any conflicts or

On May 28th 2005 Starbucks Workers at 2nd and 9th publicly announced their membership in the Starbucks Workers Union. Wearing their Union pins, workers let the company know that workers have organized a union.

The moment a union is formed the power balance is shifted. Starbucks workers have seen their shop change dramatically since May 28th.

Two major company-wide victories have been seen since the union's formation:

- Starbucks workers in New York, California, Pennsylvania, and across the country have gained raises of \$0.50 to \$1.00 per hour!
- Starbucks management has introduced ergonomic standards and training into its employee manual to help prevent the occurrence of repetitive stress injuries (such as carpal tunnel syndrome).

The company gave us these concessions to try to prevent a wide-scale union drive. Think of how much more we could gain if workers at Starbucks everywhere joined together for greater democracy and control over our jobs, finances, and ultimately our lives!



Retail Organizing Case Study: Starbucks Coffee Company

Starbucks is the world's #1 specialty coffee retailer. They operate and license more than 8,500 coffee shops and employ over **96,700 workers in more than 30 countries**. In 2004 total revenues were well over \$5.2 billion. After Starbucks covered the expense of operations, opening over 600 new stores, and meagerly paying its workforce, it still had **\$400 million left over in profits**.

Starbucks acknowledges that more stores, higher revenues from existing stores, and overall growth resulted in a 27.3% - 29.9% increase in total net revenues for the 2004 fiscal year. The growth rate exceeded the 3-5 year goal of 20%

Starbucks coffee can be found almost anywhere these days. They have licensing agreements with major hotels, Colleges and universities, Hospitals, restaurants and other major corporations. The list includes such companies as United Airlines, Horizon Air, Seattle's KeyArena and Safeco Field, Chicago's Wrigley Field, University of Washington athletic venues, Hyatt Hotels, Barnes & Noble bookstores, Borders bookstores, ARAMARK Corp., SYSCO and Sodexo. In addition, Starbucks markets its coffee through grocery stores and licenses its brand for other food and beverage products.

On May 17, 2004 Starbucks Baristas at the 36th and Madison location announced publicly that they formed a union with the Industrial Workers of the World - IU/660, also known as the Retail Workers' Union.

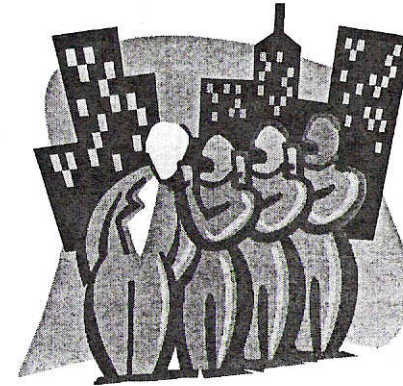
On July 22, 2004 the IWW - IU/660 filed Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charges against Starbucks for threatening wage cuts, giving bribes, and selectively enforcing no-distribution policies regarding union materials in an attempt to alter the results of the Baristas union vote.

On January 7, 2005 the National Labor Relations Board confirmed the IWW's accusations of ULPs against Starbucks Corp.!

arguments you observe between management and employees – try to get exact quotes if possible. Starbucks is notorious for illegally interrogating co-workers about union activity and discriminating against union involvement. Workplace journals have helped prove this illegal activity in court.

Committee building

You cannot organize a union alone. As soon as possible have a meeting with your co-workers who may show active interest in the union. The committee is often the first time that co-workers start acting together. The most active union members supporters are usually the first to be part of the committee. Don't just trust your luck or wait for interested people to come to you. Include workplace leaders as much as possible, even if they're problematic. Figure out how to work with troublesome leaders to change their flaws into strengths. Meet as often as possible to decide how to bring more people into your committee and how to solve small workplace issues.



Talking Union

It is best to start talking to your co-workers in one on one meetings outside of work. A simple "hey, can I meet you after your shift to talk about work issues" will usually get the attention of your co-worker. You can have an open discussion about why it would be good to form a union, how to go about forming a union, and what to expect from your management. The goal of this talk is to peak both interest and action from your co-worker. You may need to discuss this multiple

times with some of your co-workers but here are some general guidelines when first discussing the union:

Agitate - Find out what your co-worker sees as problems in the workplace. Your co-workers issues may range from shop floor issues such as wages, scheduling and disrespectful managers to personal issues such as childcare, education and poverty. These problems are almost always a direct result of the current power relationship between classes and can be seen in the relationship between workers and employers. The goal of agitation is to listen to your co-workers, discover their issues and focus their anger into organizing.

Educate - Teach your co-worker about the concept of unions and how workers form unions to advance their collective interests. Be realistic yet positive about the benefits of participating in a collective struggle. Point your coworkers towards literature, or even other members who can tell them more about the union.

Inoculate -After going through the first two steps, ask your coworker, "What do you think our bosses are going to do when they find out we're organizing a union?" Bosses generally follow a predictable pattern of harassment and propaganda once they realize their workers are organizing. You must prepare your co-worker for this anti-union campaign. You can defuse workers' fear if you let them know you can predict what management will do and how you can work together to defuse management's actions. Common "bad-cop" tactics bosses will include firing union activists, captive audience meetings where workers are required to sit and listen to anti-union propaganda by the boss, one-on-one meetings aimed at intimidating workers, anti-union mailings and character attacks. On the other hand there are "good-cop" tactics, like raising wages temporarily, firing unpopular supervisors, promotions, rewarding snitches, etc.

Organize - If the worker is interested, invite him/her into the committee. Your workplace committee will succeed only if you get several people actively participating in union activities. You may have to help people along in this process. For instance, if a worker is not quite sure what to do, ask her, "What can you do to help this effort along?" Give her an easy task to start with, such as . Get her to commit

Sometimes they seem formal or other times the boss will make it look casual. to a due date, then follow up. When she completes the assignment, praise her and give her another, more complicated one. If she doesn't do the job as promised, hold her responsible in a constructive way. Give her another chance and impress on her that people are relying on her, and that she can do it. Find out what is getting in her way--fear? family obligations? disorganization?--and help her get past that obstacle. Have other members of the committee talk with her, to encourage her and put gentle pressure on her.

Outside the Workplace: NYC Retail Workers Union and the Community

If you are a worker that is not ready to directly confront your boss there are several ways to be a part of the movement. We are forming a broad coalition of community supporters. You can take part of any of these groups' activities so you can further fight for justice.

Our growing Coalition:

Make The Road By Walking, a bushwick, Brooklyn based workers/community organization that focuses on immigrant's rights.

Million Worker March Movement, an organization of rank and file trade unionist dedicated towards rebuilding the labor movement.

Billionaires for Bush: street performers dedicated to exposing the injustices of an economically stratified world.

The Rank and File Youth Project, a grassroots network of young workers trying to build a stronger labor movement.

IWW NYC General Membership Branch(GMB), Our union brothers and sisters who currently work outside of the retail industry.