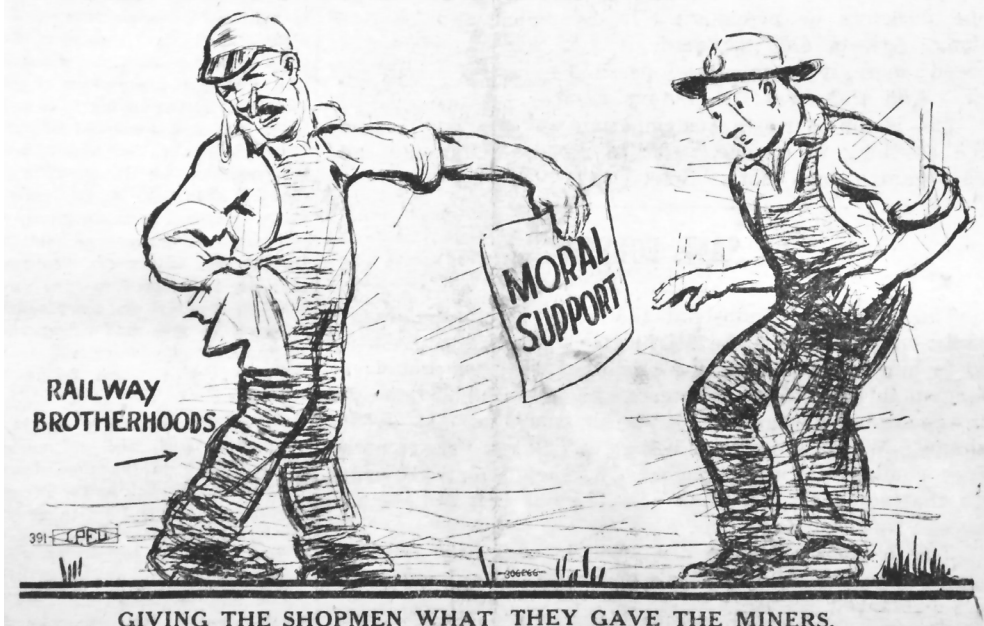


HOW CRAFT DIVISION WORKS



GIVING THE SHOPMEN WHAT THEY GAVE THE MINERS.

July 15, 1922, Industrial Solidarity paper. From the IWW Materials Preservation Project, restored by x426914.

WHY WE OPPOSE THE NO-STRIKE CLAUSE

February 6, 2026 | Fellow Worker J.R.

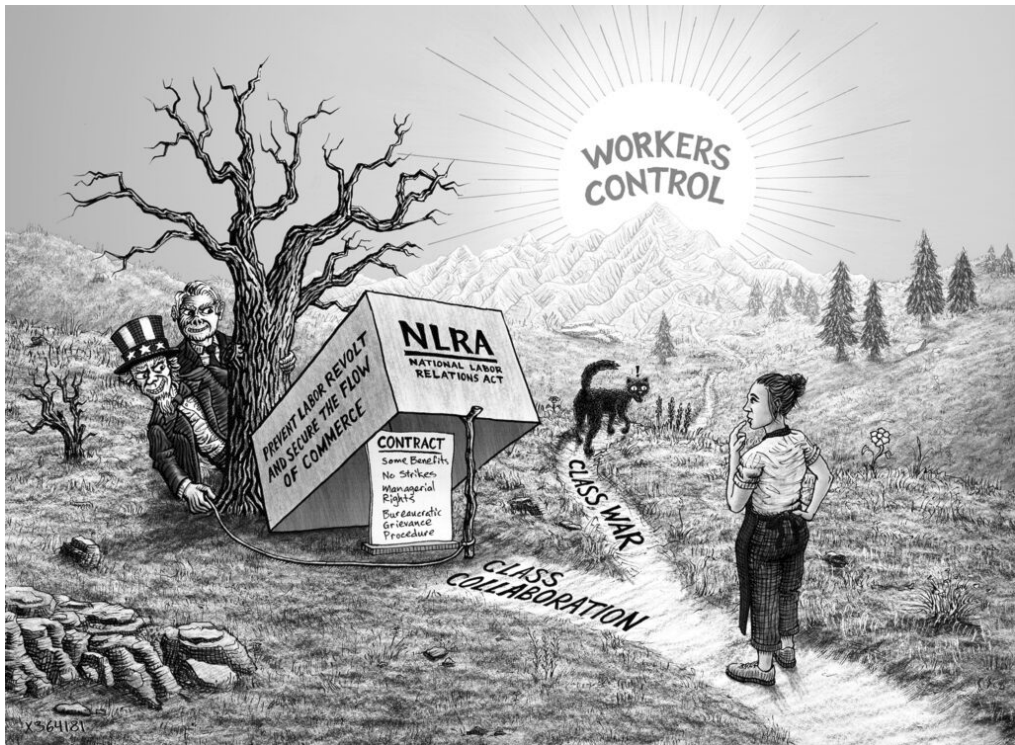
These are my observations as a dual-card steward in one of the largest unions in the U.S. while working under a contract with a no-strike clause.

The IWW's Constitution¹ contains a ban on no-strike clauses.² Some members may recall that this ban was temporarily lifted in 2020, as a measure deemed necessary for a couple of campaigns to organize with the IWW. The membership reversed this decision the following year when it became clear that experimenting with the business unionism model had no benefit for the IWW's approach to organizing workers toward the general strike to abolish the wage system. In practice, entertaining a no-strike clause only weakened organizing power.

Organizational drift is a concern to be taken seriously. As the IWW grows and recruits workers

¹ <https://www.iww.org/constitution/>

² <https://definitions.uslegal.com/n/no-strike-clause/>



art by x364181.

beaten down by weak business unionism and unfamiliar with any alternative, the idea will inevitably reappear that we can be a contract union “just like them,” but somehow radical about it, with our middle finger raised while signing collaborationist agreements that benefit employers more than workers. That illusion needs to be dismantled before it resurfaces. The IWW has never rejected contracts outright. What we reject is the contract that functions as an instrument of employer control. This should be stated plainly.

When a revolutionary union trades strike power for the promise of membership growth or media legitimacy, it creates a contradiction that begins to corrode its purpose. The central distinction separating the IWW from business unionism is simple: we refuse to sacrifice collective leverage for legal recognition. We know that whatever gains we could chase through recognition, we can win more durably through organization and class power exercised directly. Mindless contractualism creates a cycle that burns out even the best and most motivated organizers. It generally goes something like this:

- Contract bargaining is approaching, and members are starting to get fired up about making changes.
- A bargaining committee is formed. Decision-making begins to centralize. Committee members become defensive when criticized and start pressuring others to capitulate: “We might get nothing if we don’t take this offer.”
- Members get angry and feel hopeless, and some vote against the contract, but fear usually pushes it across the finish line.
- The union goes dormant until the next bargaining cycle. The angriest members stop paying dues and get representation anyway.

The experience varies based on size and structure, but a union of any demonstrable size will follow this pathway in general. Under these conditions, the strike – the only real equalizer in the workplace – is imagined as either illegal, unrealistic, or self-destructive. That mindset is exactly what the IWW exists to break. When workers learn that they can win without permission from the boss, they cultivate genuine class consciousness. That development is the foundation for rebuilding the IWW as a serious alternative to the failed strategies of business unionism.

The broader labor landscape reinforces the point. Under the AFL-CIO's disastrous leadership of the labor movement, union density in the United States has reached its lowest point. Business union leaders like Shawn Fain and Sean O'Brien align themselves with one political party or another and court the favor of the ruling class. At the same time, workers are laid off and treated without dignity on the shop floor. No-strike clauses fit neatly into their model because they remove the one tool that would place employers under workers' command.

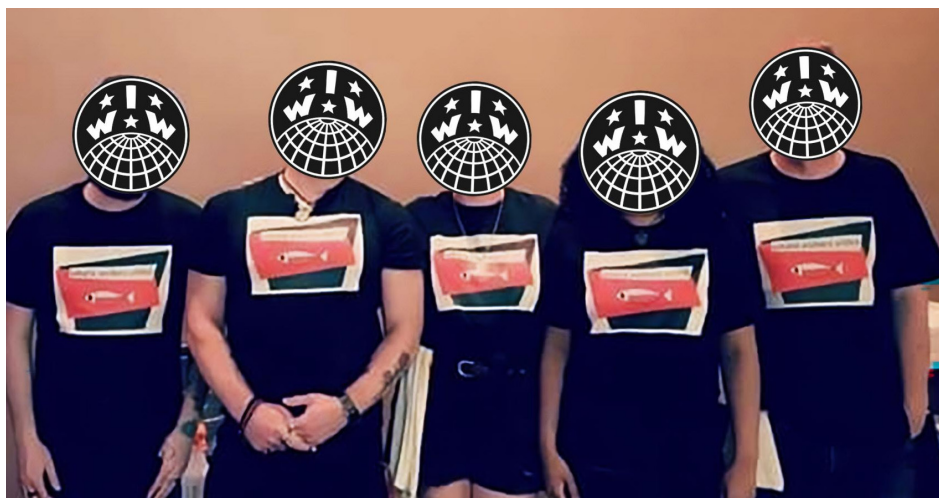
The working class has arrived at a fork in the road, as exemplified in the cover art and text of the Industrial Worker article titled "Contracts are not Class Struggle."³ The first path is one of collaboration. It will mean incremental gains for individuals while the capitalist system dominates. Billionaires are already preparing their rocket ships for Mars after they finish tearing through our planet and our class.

The second path is one of class consciousness. It will mean that workers put themselves aside as individuals in favor of the collective organization of the working class to overthrow the bloodthirsty capitalist system and create a new society in which all people can live with dignity, not just the few who have all the good things in life.

This decision starts on the shop floor, no matter how small. A no-strike clause is a step toward a path of collaboration with the ruling class in exchange for a few more dollars and

an extra day off. Resisting that temptation in favor of doing the harder work - one-on-ones, social mapping, democratic meetings, socio-political education - is a step in the direction of class consciousness.

3 <https://industrialworker.org/contracts-are-not-class-struggle/>



THE GRIEVANCE, IT'S IN OUR HANDS

February 12, 2026 Jean-Carl Elliott

In his poem *"The Grievance, It's Out of My Hands,"* Martin Glaberman lays bare the dead end of business unionism. He traces the life of a workplace grievance as it leaves the worker's hands, passes through the steward, disappears into the committee, gets reviewed by the rep, and is eventually filed somewhere in the bureaucratic stratosphere: far removed from the shop floor where the problem began. It's a grievance in name only. What was once a real, felt injustice becomes paperwork, procedure, delay. In the end, it's not only out of the worker's hands; it's out of the workplace altogether.

But in a solidarity union, the grievance stays where it belongs: on the shop floor, in the hands of the workers, among the people who have the power to act on it.

That means grievances aren't just complaints to be managed, they're flashpoints for collective action. They're opportunities to bring coworkers together, to test and build our solidarity, and to change our conditions on our terms.

At Sakana Sushi, a restaurant where the Detroit IWW had an active campaign (code-named "The Moby Dick"), a cook came forward with a clear grievance: wage theft. Under a business union model, he might've been told to file a complaint with the labor board or wait to see if a steward could escalate it through the official channels. Instead, we escalated it ourselves.

First, the cook raised it directly with the boss. When that was ignored, we circulated a petition. When the demand still wasn't fully met, we organized a march on the boss, with a group of workers confronting management together. Each step wasn't about moving the grievance up a chain; it was about spreading it out, broadening the issue across the workplace, and increasing the pressure through unity. We didn't remove the grievance from the site of struggle; we multiplied it. We socialized it.

The cook wasn't a member of the union when this all began. In fact, nearly everyone else at the shop had already signed a red card. Everyone except him. He had seen the front-of-house staff take action and win through a previous march on the boss. But he hadn't felt the need to join until it happened to him.

When he wasn't paid for his overtime, he came barging through the back door of the restaurant, approached the committee members who were on shift and said "Sign me up!"

THE DEMAND LETTER AND THE MYTH OF THE CONTRACT

On August 14, 2018, a small delegation of IWW members from Sakana hand-delivered a petition to the boss. It was quick and direct and we left without giving him a chance to respond. The grievance was unpaid hours and overtime, and we figured a small action would put the boss on notice and resolve the issue. When the deadline came however, the cook only received payment for the hours worked at his normal hourly rate and that's when he came to the committee asking to join and take action. We had debated a few options, but after meeting with organizers from Stardust Family United, we settled on a clear strategy: deliver our demands backed by visible, direct worker action: a march on the boss.

The march was successful- not only in pressuring the owner, but in transforming the worker himself. He became the first to speak and then others followed. The message was clear: this isn't one person's problem, it's everyone's. He had gone from being the only person who hadn't signed a red card, to leading a confrontation with the boss over stolen wages. He wasn't just asserting his rights; he was becoming part of the union, part of the struggle, and part of something larger than his individual case.

These sorts of demand deliveries function the way a contract should, but often doesn't. In mainstream labor relations, people talk about contracts as the mechanism that solidifies gains. But a piece of paper doesn't enforce itself. If workers aren't organized, a contract is just a piece of paper.

That's why it's not the contract that solidifies gains; it's the organization behind it, with or without a contract.

And especially right now, with the NLRB effectively defunct, bogged down in delays, hostile courts, and chronic underfunding, even legally recognized contracts are becoming in-

creasingly toothless. Unions that once relied on state and federal mediators and the labor board to intervene on their behalf are now scratching their heads and hoping for some sort of electoral alchemy to put grievance procedures back in their hands.

In that environment, any union that relies on the state to enforce its victories is already losing ground. A grievance that depends on lawyers, filings, and federal agencies is a grievance that can be ignored.

But a union built on direct action and collective strength enforces its own gains. We don't need to win recognition through the state to act like a union. We don't need the boss to agree to a process in order to set demands. And we don't need a contract to defend our dignity. We need each other.

Our demand letter worked not because it was legally binding, but because the people delivering it were. We were organized, visible, and ready to escalate. That's what got the worker paid and what prevented retaliation.

That's how real power works. Not on paper. On the floor.

BUILDING POWER IN ACTION: FROM DEMAND LETTERS TO ESCALATION

On December 30, 2018, we escalated further: we delivered a second demand for across-the-board raises for the kitchen staff. We demanded a 50¢ raise immediately, and another 50¢ raise every six months moving forward. This wasn't charity- it was a response to the growing skill, experience, and responsibility that workers were already taking on, without compensation. The confrontation lasted much longer than we had anticipated, but the boss was outnumbered nearly ten to one and eventually caved.

Less than a year later, on July 3, 2019, we delivered another set of demands, again through a march on the boss. This time, when the owner didn't comply, we didn't back down.

We escalated strategically:

- Phone zap: workers and supporters flooded the bosses cell phone while he was vacationing in Cape Cod with calls demanding action
- Dining room flyering: during busy hours, we handed out flyers to customers explaining the situation and asking them to contact ownership directly
- T-shirt action: coordinated shifts where workers wore the same messaging on shift, creating a sense of visibility and unity

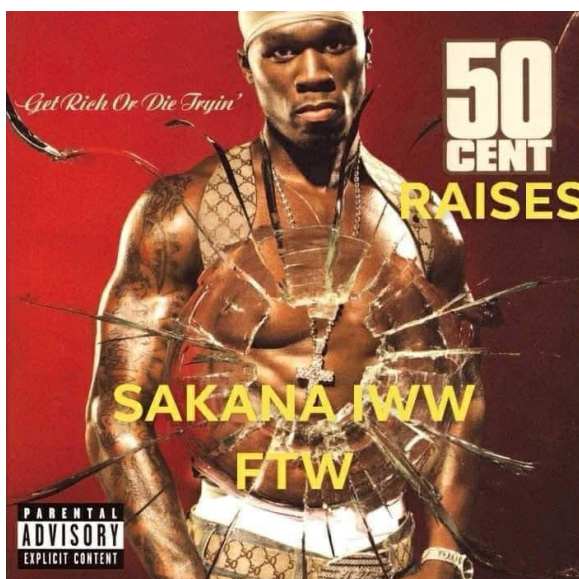
Not all of the demands were met. Some were ignored. But every action advanced our collective capacity. We didn't just get better at writing demand letters- we learned how to escalate, how to craft strategy, how to read the power dynamics of our workplace in real time.

That's something a contract can't teach. And it's why we reject the idea that legal agreements are what "solidify" gains. Too often, workers are told that a contract is the final step, the proof that your union is "real." But as we see all around us, especially today with a near-paralyzed NLRB, contracts are only as strong as the organization that backs them.

In our campaign, it was the action that won back pay. It was organization that won raises. It was escalation that forced bosses to respond. And it was the process of struggle itself that made us stronger and more confident.

We didn't just win demands. We created a space where workers transformed into organizers. And in doing so, we weren't just resisting exploitation; we were building the new world in the shell of the old.

The committee at Sakana dwindled over the years and the restaurant eventually went out of business. But the campaign produced lessons on organizing that are being retold through articles, case studies in training, and through the more and better organizers we continue to produce in the IWW and across the restaurant industry.



Meme that circulated in the group chat during the campaign, FW JC Elliott.



Illustration by Edvin Grans

ORGANIZE! YES, BUT HOW?

December 31, 2025 | Rasmus Hästbacka

When the wild times we're living through demand strong social movements, Sweden's multitude of movements are in a lousy shape. The same goes for the Swedish union movement. The problem isn't "all talk and no action." "There's barely even any talk about organizing, and very few seem to know what this skill and craft is about." So writes Rasmus Hästbacka, lawyer and member of the syndicalist union SAC.

Organizing is – or should be – the core business of every labor union. That's how ordinary workers become a force to be reckoned with in the workplace and society. But in Swedish unions today, organizing is noticeably absent.

It's not that there's all talk and no action. There's barely even any talk about organizing, and very few seem to know what this skill and craft is about. Apart from the efforts of union educator Frances Tuuloskorpi, organizer training is almost dead in Sweden. Let me say it straight away: recruiting members and administering unions is good and necessary, but it is not organizing. So, what does organizing entail?

I will tackle the subject by drawing on three books: *Secrets of a Successful Organizer* (2016),⁴ *Swedish syndicalism* (2024)⁵ and *Something Has Happened* (2023)⁶. The first book is published by Labor Notes. The second is written by me, mainly for beginners in union work. The third is authored by syndicalists in the Stockholm Local of SAC and highlights union activity involving migrant workers.

Below, I will first define the term organizing, then describe an organizing method taught in SAC's courses and finally discuss union structures that can promote and sustain organizing.

4 Alexandra Bradbury, Mark Brenner, and Jane Slaughter, 2016. *Secrets of a Successful Organizer*.

5 Rasmus Hästbacka. 2024. *Swedish Syndicalism*.

6 Emil Boss, Agnes Lansrot, Davis Garriga, Sebastian Rosengren, Pamela Otarola, 2023. *Something Has Happened*.

WHAT IS ORGANIZING?

Let's start with a narrow definition. Organizing means that co-workers develop and use their collective strength in a systematic way.

Moving to a broader definition, organizing also entails workers at different workplaces building cohesion and acting together. It could be workers in the same industry meeting up and strategizing – or workers from different industries coming together to support each other.

Thus, the common denominator is workers building and using their strength.

To make it more concrete, we can break organizing down into three dimensions: 1) building a formal organization, 2) developing a union movement, and 3) mobilizing for collective action and bargaining with management.

The first dimension is about building a union with a formal structure. At the local workplace, this structure is usually called a union club (within Swedish LO unions) or an operating section (within syndicalist SAC). The word “operating” refers to the long-term vision of workers taking over and operating the workplace. Swedish syndicalists often use the shorter term “section.”

The second dimension – developing a movement – is about cultivating community among co-workers and engagement around shared interests. It's about creating a strong sense of “We” against management. Co-workers need good relationships so they can trust each other.

The third dimension, to mobilize, is about getting the workers collective moving for common demands and backing those demands with appropriate pressure – thus pushing management to make concessions.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF PRESSURE

Pressure can range from soft methods to industrial action. Two examples of soft methods are petitions and speaking as one voice at meetings with the bosses.

Examples of industrial action include block-

ades and strikes. A strike shuts down the workplace by means of work stoppage. A blockade is refusing to perform certain parts of the labor process, like refusing overtime work. A blockade can also mean stopping the delivery of goods and new labor power to a workplace.

The workers' pressure gives weight at the bargaining table. Negotiations can take the form of formal union negotiations (in Sweden according to the Co-Determination Act) but there are also informal ways to confront management, for example at staff meetings.

All three dimensions of organizing are needed. The union structure gives stability to the movement. The movement leads to collective action, making negotiations successful.



A CONCRETE METHOD

In an era when information technology has reached science fiction levels, Swedish popular movements have on the contrary regressed to a primitive stage.

Since the craft of organizing is more or less forgotten in Sweden, it's hard to discuss organizing without first outlining a concrete method. As far as I know, SAC is the only union in Sweden that teaches organizing in a systematic way. In SAC's courses, participants learn a four-phase method. Lately, we've started illustrating the method with an organizing wheel that looks like this.

The first phase is to map the workplace, the second phase is to assess, the third to act and the fourth to evaluate the struggle. I'll explain each phase in turn. The common thread through all phases is organizing conversations – that is, talking and above all listening to co-workers.

MAP

Mapping is about finding organizing issues. These are concrete issues that can rally co-workers. The goal is to find out which problems at work colleagues care about and ask what they are willing to do about them.

Mapping also means identifying key people – informal leaders among the staff. These are

co-workers whom others trust and listen to a bit extra. Informal leaders have great influence in the group and can get people moving.

To succeed in organizing, it's important to get the informal leaders on board. If it's a large workplace with many departments and categories of staff, it's valuable to find informal leaders in each category and department.

As I mentioned, the common thread through all four phases is organizing conversations. This means talking to all employees, ideally one at a time. In English union jargon, these conversations are called One-On-Ones.

Organizing conversations can happen at work or outside. In Sweden, one factor that helps is



Polish cleaners in the Gothenburg Local of SAC. In the fall of 2021, they won a strike for higher wages for all employees, pay for the time spent driving company vehicles between different client companies and the right to use the vehicles to commute to and from work.

being elected as a health and safety delegate (skyddsombud). Such delegates have the right to perform their tasks during paid working hours. That's a good foundation for walking around and talking to co-workers.

ASSESS

The second phase of the wheel is to assess which organizing issue is best to start with. There may be several issues that trigger the collective of workers. Then it's about choosing the one with the greatest potential to push the frontline forward.

It's also important to assess what's called the balance of pressure or balance of power. The central question is: How hard do workers have to push management for their demands to be accepted? I'll get to the balance of pressure in a moment, but first, a word about choosing organizing issues.

The authors of the book *Secrets of a Successful Organizer* have formulated four criteria for a good organizing issue. First, the issue should have breadth – that is, the issue engages many employees. Second, it should have depth – which means it engages people strongly. Third, the issue should be winnable through the workers' collective pressure. Fourth, a fight over the issue should make the collective stronger.

When it comes to assessing the balance of pressure, two concepts are useful: concession cost and damage cost. For employers, conceding to union demands often comes at a cost – a concession cost. The question is whether the workforce can inflict a damage cost greater than the concession cost. If workers can do that, the balance of pressure tilts in their favor. Then it's cheaper for management to say YES to the union's demands than to say NO. In other words, there's enough pressure for management to accept the demands.

ACTION PLAN

In the second phase, or no later than the third phase, it's time to make an action plan. The plan needs to be anchored with as many employees as possible. It should specify who does what and in what order.

There also needs to be readiness for various countermoves from the employer side. Preparing for countermoves is sometimes called union vaccination. It's about preparing protection before entering conflicts.

A countermove might be managers calling employees in for individual interrogations and scoldings. One way to prepare is co-workers promising each other to always approach the boss as a group.

ACT

The third phase is putting the action plan into practice. Now it's time to mobilize for collective action and bargaining.

When it comes to methods of pressure, the authors of *Secrets of a Successful Organizer* offer four tips. First, the methods should be visible. That means all employees know pressure is being applied and understand why. It also means the methods are felt by management. But it doesn't have to be visible actions in front of the bosses. Pressure can be more hidden or anonymous, like slowdowns.

Second, the workers' demands and pressure should be properly addressed. That means demands are directed at managers who can actually act on the issue – and those managers should feel the pressure. Third, pressure should be collective. That's pretty obvious. The more employees who participate, the better.

Last but not least, collective pressure should follow a planned escalation. Workers can start with soft methods, like petitions and group visits to management, and then move on to more demanding and impactful actions, like slowdowns and overtime blockades.

EVALUATE

The fourth phase is to evaluate the struggle. Evaluation isn't just about the obvious question: Did we win our demands or not? Just as important is for employees to assess their ability to stick and act together. Important questions include: How many participated in the struggle? Who didn't, and why? How can we get them involved next time?

One purpose of organizing is for the workers collective to become stronger and stronger. So,

it's important to regularly check whether the collective has made progress.

When workers finish the fourth phase, they start the next round of the wheel. They find new organizing issues to rally around or push the same issues further. In this way, a union movement can grow and develop more and more.

UNION FORMS

In the absence of workers struggles through Swedish unions, spontaneous worker action sometimes arise outside unions. But it's usually short-lived. Activism flares up and fizzles out. That's why a union structure needs to be added.

I will limit the discussion to the structure at the local workplace – the union club or section. A syndicalist section holds formal member meetings year-round. The section's elected representatives also meet regularly, year-round. All organizing work becomes easier when there's a clear structure for gathering, making decisions and carrying them out.

The four phases of the organizing wheel can largely be carried out at section meetings – at least if the section has many members who attend. At meetings, members can discuss suitable organizing issues and draw up an action plan.

For the section to promote (rather than hinder) organizing, it's important that meeting time isn't wasted on purely individual cases. By that, I mean cases that can't rally co-workers – or cases that affected members don't want to rally colleagues around. Thus, section meetings should focus on the best organizing issues. Individual cases can instead be handled by the section board or a special bargaining committee.

ANCHORING

Of course, it's not enough to sit in section meetings if the whole staff isn't participating. The section's organizers need to move throughout the workers collective to make an action plan that's broadly anchored and mobilizes many workers.

It is of great value that a formal section elects fellow workers to positions of trust. The elected reps can prepare member meetings so they're both democratic and effective. Reps can make sure that decisions taken are carried out.

Elected reps also make it easier to handle ups and downs in engagement at the workplace. They maintain continuity. At a minimum, the section should have an elected board. Beyond that, various committees can be elected with different areas of responsibility.

DUAL TRACKS

Solidarity at work is undermined when unions fall into narrow turf thinking – when unions only look out for their own members (if even that) and ignore the rest of the collective.

Syndicalists instead try to work on two tracks at the same time. That means syndicalists foster solidarity both within the section and among the staff as a whole. The goal, of course, is to mobilize as many co-workers as possible in collective action and negotiations.

How can members of a section or union club work on dual tracks? The section or club can choose to hold meetings only for members or have meetings open to non-members as well.

If closed meetings are chosen, it's important that members also promote discussions for all employees who want to change the workplace. That could be, for example, cross-union lunches on a certain day each week, an online forum or after-work gatherings where co-workers strategize together.

When a workers collective proceed along to the organizing wheel – and keep going round after round – they can win more and more influence, better pay and improved working conditions. In this way, the organizing wheel can become an upward spiral. That's the beginning of a more reasonable world.



Image by MissLunaRose12, Wikipedia Commons

A SPECTRUM IS HAUNTING THE IWW...

February 12, 2026 | Simon Ingrand

TOO MANY COINCIDENCES

"In the end, the only people left in the organization were the autistic folks. We held the movement together by taking on all the tasks. But it wasn't enough..."

That is not how I thought Occupy Austin would end. But that is how my coworker Maurice described it, having been at the core of the movement in its prime and in its last days.

"All the neurotypicals ran out of motivation, or free time so we were the only ones left. It was too much work and I felt abandoned. That's why I don't organize anymore. I burnt out hard. I never want to go through that again."

That was the day when Maurice rejected my offer to join an organizing committee. And I was left with a terrible doubt: What if the same fate awaits the IWW? What if it awaits me?

After that conversation, I started to see a pattern. A fellow officer mentioned taking ADHD meds. Another casually said she was on the spectrum. I started to notice the neurotypical officers coming to meetings and events less and less.

Then, the 2021 membership survey report showed that neurodivergent IWW members are twice as numerous in the union as they are in the general population. But why? The same report showed that most minorities are under-represented in the IWW. Why are neurodivergents over-represented? A chill went down my spine when I saw the similarity with Occupy Austin's downfall.

I was developing a theory: One of the symptoms of autism is called "justice sensitivity." It makes many of us more emotional in situations of unfairness. I believe this symptom explains the large percentage of neurodivergent members who are active enough to fill out the survey. I believe "justice sensitivity" makes it easier to agitate us using AEIOU skills, or for us to self agitate. I

believe it also makes us more likely to stay invested in a cause for longer, especially if the cause becomes a hyperfixation or a special interest like the IWW is for me.

But confirmation bias is a powerful thing and I didn't want to reach any conclusion that wasn't supported by data. So, I joined the Survey and Research Committee and analyzed the data available in our recent membership surveys. They contained questions about whether the respondent was neurotypical or neurodivergent. And I was able to compare how the two groups answered the other questions.

Please be aware that the data only shows the answers of IWW members who took the time to fill out the survey. The numbers are skewed towards members who are more likely to be active in the union and doing tasks, such as this survey.

In 2021, 38 percent of the respondents self identified as neurodivergent. In 2025, it was 43 percent. In comparison, a reasonable estimate of all neurominorities within the population is around 15–20 percent.⁷

This includes up to 10 percent of people with dyslexia, 6 percent with dyspraxia, 5 percent with ADHD, and 1–2 percent with autism.

7 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7732033/#sec6>

The survey unfortunately didn't ask which type of neurodiversity each respondent had. So we don't have the data to conclude that there is a disproportionate number of autistic people in the union compared to the average population. All I have to support that theory is my personal experience asking active members of the union. But the data does show we have twice as many neurodivergent people active in the union as there are in the average population.

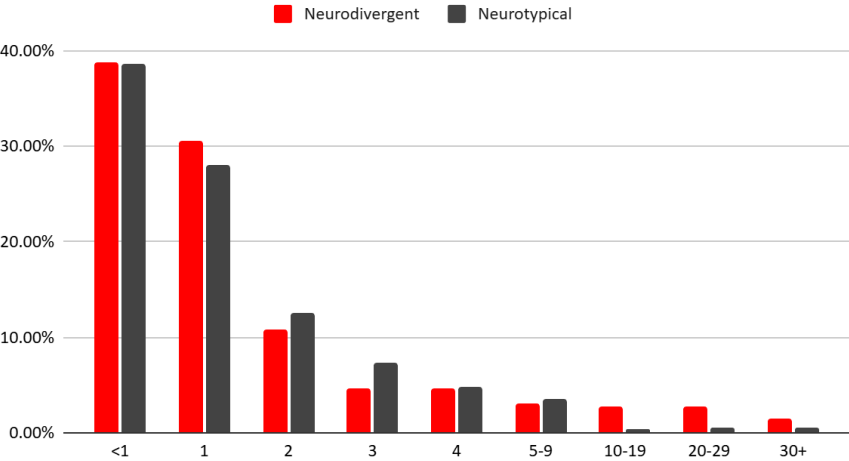
When we look at membership demographics like that, there are two factors that can explain who is in the union. Recruitment, and retention: Who joins and who stays. So either we recruit a disproportionate number of neurodivergent folks, or the ones who join, stay active longer than neurotypical folks. Or both.

There is also the possibility that neurodivergent folks are more prone to filling out surveys than neurotypical folks. However, I haven't found studies that support or disprove this option. We will assume moving forward that only recruitment and retention have an impact on membership percentages.

MEMBER RETENTION

The graph below shows the length of membership of survey respondents in 2021. For the first 9 years, the numbers are similar. Neurodivergents and neurotypicals leave at similar rates each year... Until memberships that last

Years Since Initiation



for 10 years or more. Beyond that point, neurodivergents are 6 times more likely to still be in the union and answering surveys. For some reason, the neurodivergents who stick around more than 10 years are in it for the long term. I believe that is because the union itself is a life-long special interest for some neurodivergents and that makes it easier to stick around: Union work is more fulfilling than it is for neurotypicals, or neurodivergents who don't have the union as a special interest.

Overall, the retention numbers are very similar. So the higher than average numbers of neurodivergent folks can probably be explained by a higher recruitment rate of neurodivergents.

RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

The survey only asked how respondents had first heard of the IWW, not the reason why they joined. This means we can only theorize as to why we are so much better at recruiting neurodivergents.

But it shows us where we could apply efforts to recruit members.

Neurotypicals are more likely to find the IWW through media like songs and books, history, and web searches. Neurodivergents are twice as likely to find the union through social media or Youtube.

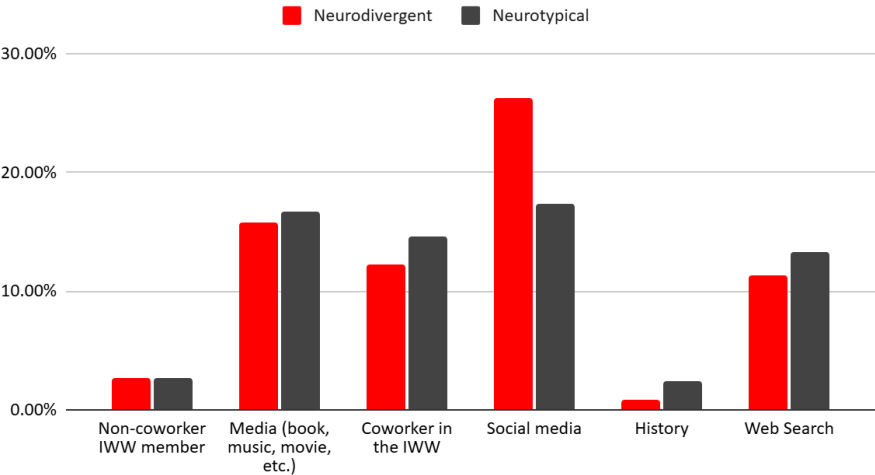
PARTICIPATION IN UNION ACTIVITIES

Last month, I was a trainer on an OT101. I asked the participants to raise their hands if they identified as neurodivergent. Out of the 15 trainees, 10 raised their hands and they were the folks who had been most active during the training. All 3 trainers raised their hands. I thought that surely, this pointed towards more participation in union work than neurotypicals! But the surveys show that it's not clear cut, depending on which task/officer position is looked at.

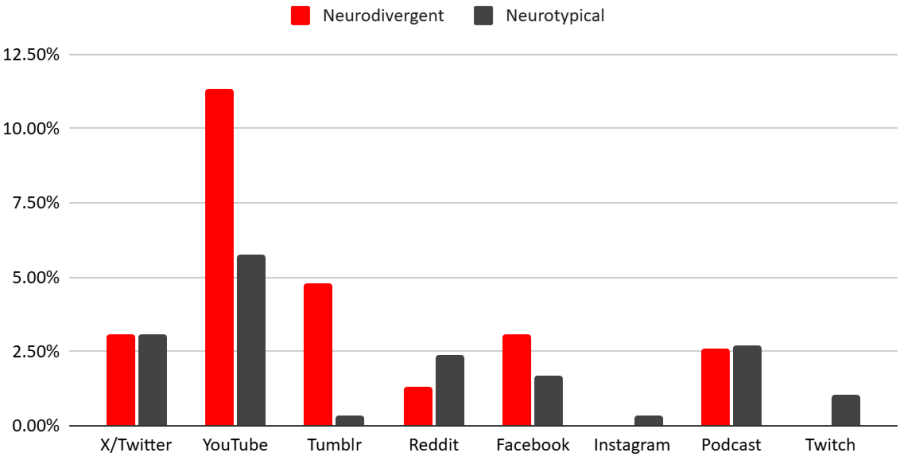
When comparing survey responses, I found that most of the questions were answered similarly by both neurotypicals and neurodivergents. Minor trends did emerge when it comes to participation, appreciation of certain IWW resources, and feelings of belonging.

Neurotypicals are more likely to have filled the roles of chair, co-chair, note taker, or time-keeper in branch meetings. They are also more likely to have added an agenda item to branch meetings (15%), more likely to be serving on branch committees (2%), or in officer positions (6%). Neurotypicals are also more likely to be dual carding with another union in the workplace (15%), to have experience as an external organizer (7%) and to have more than one person on their workplace organizing committee (7%).

How did you find out about the IWW and membership?



Please specify which Social Media or Media you learned about the IWW from



In 2021, neurodivergents are 10 percent less likely to be actively organizing their workplace, but in 2025 they are 10 percent more likely to.

This is good news for us in the long term. If the model of a dying movement Maurice proposed is typical, then we haven't reached the end stages where neurodivergents are taking on most of the responsibilities.

It's also interesting that a group who takes on less tasks or positions in the union sticks around for the long term, as we saw in the previous section. This might be because pacing oneself in organizing helps prevent burnout. See my previous article on burnout in the union.⁸

APPRECIATION OF THE UNION'S RESOURCES

Neurodivergent people report more difficulty finding organizing resources, which is surprising because they also report having access to resources more often than neurotypicals. For example, neurodivergents report attending an OT101 11 percent more often than neurotypicals. They also report having an organizing mentor 11 percent more often and to find them more useful.

Neurodivergents report having access to contacts in their local branch 5 percent more often.

Neurotypicals find media, communications and outreach training useful 11 percent more often.

Neurotypicals find OT101s and OT102s less useful than neurodivergents do and find support from the ODB useful 12 percent less often than neurodivergents.

Neurodivergents report feeling less support from the union and local branches. Neurodivergents also report that the work they do in the union makes their fellow workers proud of them less often. They are also less proud of their own work.

Neurodivergents are more likely to report facing the following barriers to organizing:

- Unsure of what to do next
- New to the job
- Don't feel comfortable talking to coworkers
- Difficulty getting coworkers' contact info
- Fear of retaliation
- Not planning to keep this job

Neurodivergents are less likely to think the dues they pay are worth it for the resources the IWW provides, and less likely to see the union

8 <https://industrialworker.org/burnout-at-the-stake/>

as a community of like-minded people. And they are also less likely to advise friends and co-workers to join the IWW.

BUT DO WE FEEL LIKE WE BELONG?

Neurodivergents report less confidence in the union's future, less ease accessing union spaces, less feelings of safety in union spaces and more desire to focus on establishing safe spaces within the union.

That is consistent with other minorities being less satisfied than majorities with the IWW's efforts to make them feel welcome and safe.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, we see that our current recruitment methods are more likely to bring in neurodivergent folks.

They then tend to be less active in the union, taking on less officer positions, participating in meetings less, and organizing their workplace less. Neurodivergent folks make more use of the resources that the union provides like OT101s and organizing mentors, and organizer trainings. They also report more satisfaction with those resources.

This might make neurodivergents feel less useful and appreciated but it also seems to prevent burnout in the long term.

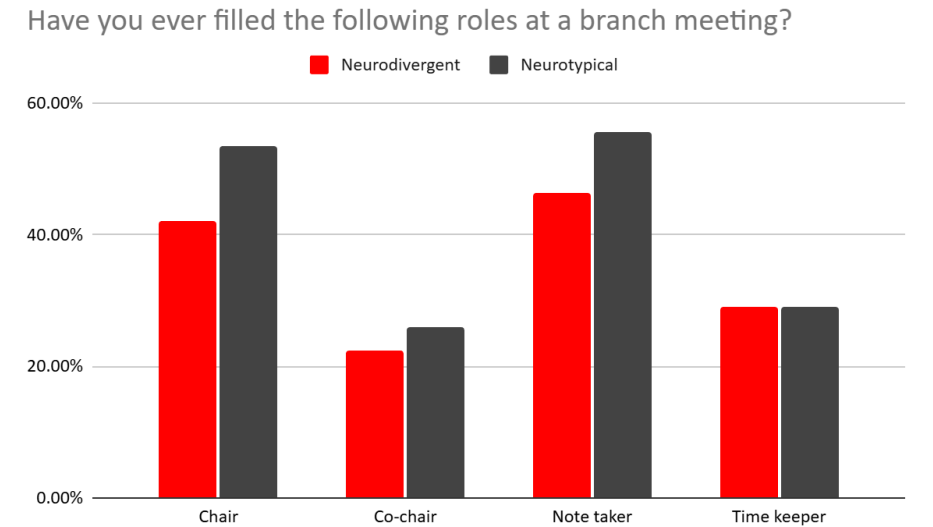
So what does this mean for us? We should adapt our recruiting methods to recruit workers more broadly.. And we should find ways to keep them involved for the long run. We should make sure we are a safe space for all workers and that neurodivergent workers are able to participate as equally as neurotypical workers.

More importantly, we need to address why so few of our recruitment numbers are coming from workplace organizing. It is the next subject of my research so keep an eye out for another article.

We need to make union spaces safer and more welcoming to all minorities. Otherwise, how can we say we believe in solidarity?

Lastly, we need to get in touch with the illuminati and tell them to put more autism in the vaccines.

Special thanks to x-431037 for all the data crunching and graph making work that went into this article.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Organizing Word Search

Y	C	Z	S	Z	T	B	R	L	K	Q	V	L	C	O	Z	P	P
V	O	R	O	C	N	Y	W	S	J	S	J	Q	N	V	X	J	I
N	Z	H	L	P	P	H	O	N	E	D	R	I	V	E	K	J	N
P	A	I	I	T	G	J	C	F	O	L	L	O	W	U	P	V	O
E	C	X	D	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N	M	O	K	C	U	C
K	M	H	A	V	A	E	D	U	C	A	T	E	A	Z	I	D	U
Z	A	U	R	F	P	O	R	G	A	N	I	Z	E	M	N	X	L
B	R	P	I	E	V	X	L	H	V	I	F	F	U	I	J	E	A
F	C	U	T	T	Y	C	G	J	Q	G	X	I	H	C	S	D	T
T	H	U	Y	C	O	W	O	R	K	E	R	S	T	B	U	F	E
I	U	X	A	G	I	T	A	T	E	B	L	S	J	R	H	L	S
F	H	W	S	O	C	I	A	L	M	A	P	C	I	V	L	H	G

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden →, ↓, and ↘.

AGITATE
COWORKERS
EDUCATE
FOLLOWUP

INOCULATE
MARCH
ORGANIZE
PETITION

PHONEDRIVE
SOCIALMAP
SOLIDARITY

BLANK PAGE FOR NOTES, OR YOUR SOCIAL MAP

BLANK PAGE FOR NOTES, OR YOUR SOCIAL MAP



WRITE FOR THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER

We are looking for submissions about organizing stories and lessons, debates on Wobbly topics, reporting on labor news from a Wobbly perspective, historical pieces on Wobbly- or Wobbly-adjacent history, obituaries for Fellow Workers, labor cartoons, and reviews of labor media!
If you have an idea that isn't listed, please contact me.

- FW Hannah, IW Editor
BLOG@IWW.ORG

CONTACT

Contact the IWW today if you want to start organizing at your job.
IWW.ORG/ORGANIZE

If you are a member in good standing and wish to take the Organizer Training 101, please email the Organizer Training Committee at **OTC@IWW.ORG**
If you would like to request a group OT101 with your GMB, job branch, or coworkers, fill out this form: **tinyurl.com/OTrequest**