

# **New Tactics for Organizing in the Restaurant Industry**

*You don't need an official union to act in union.*

*Conditions in the Restaurant industry are not conducive to "business" unionism, even if those unions were interested in organizing us. Worker transience, business turnover, changes in the market all make business unionism useless. BUT this doesn't mean we have to accept the crap our bosses hand out...*

On Friday, October 2nd, 1998, the La Crosse I.W.W. Group held a protest picket in front of the Bodega Brew Pub in downtown La Crosse, Wisconsin. The picket was called in response to the the illegal firing of a worker who threatened to file a complaint for not being paid on time and for never receiving pay for labor while training. It also focused attention on the Bodega's poor working conditions and consistent unfair treatment of workers. The picket attracted a lot of interest from the community and gained the current workers an immediate 50¢ raise in pay!

*We control the industry- Not the bosses!*

*It is through our work the way our jobs are performed, that our bosses make their money. Anyone who has ever worked in a restaurant knows the staff make the rules and set the pace of work. Usually this is done against the rules of the house and often to the benefit of the boss.*

*"My boss has cut back on the kitchen staff, which has really impacted the quality of the food. Our customers, even the regulars are getting pissed. We have told the boss but she won't listen. So the wait staff has taken up comping drinks, etc. to keep this fool in business, even though we could be fired if she found out..."*

*We can use our power to maintain our dignity.*

*We can win better work conditions, wages and other issues by controlling the "service" we provide. Our service can make or break any restaurant. We call the shots- thus acting on the job can win settlements from the boss.*

*"IWW strikers got quick results organizing the restaurants from the inside. IWWs whom the employer did not know, hired on as 'strikebreakers'. No sooner did these 'scabs' begin to serve lunch than 'accidents' began to happen...They were fired immediately after lunch and the victorious strikers returned."*

*Our strengths are their weaknesses*

*Like everything else in the restaurant industry, our accomplishments will be temporary. The only thing which will extend our victories are more and more workers acting in ways which establish our control over our jobs and the industry itself.*

Anyone who has been in the restaurant industry for any amount of time knows what power the workers have on the job. What we need to do is organize ourselves in such a way that we can communicate efforts to improve our working conditions throughout the industry! The IWW is the only union attempting to create new methods of organizing the Restaurant and other service industries- Join Us!

**Hotel & Restaurant Workers Industrial Union  
Industrial Workers of the World**