



ACORN Workers Need a Union

The campaign so far...



Industrial Workers of the World

Post Office Box 13476 • Philadelphia, PA 19101 • 215-763-1274 • acornunion@bari.iww.org

Look for updates on our webpage: <http://bari.iww.org/alerts/Acorn1.html>

The Beginning

December 2000: Gina Giazsoni had recently moved to Philadelphia and got a job working for ACORN. The hours were grueling, and workers had little say in how their job was to be done, but because she believed in the principles of ACORN, she stuck with it. Gina attended ACORN's annual Year End/Year Beginning (YE/YB) meeting in New Orleans and found that many of the people attending were unhappy with their working conditions. So she called the IWW and a campaign was born. This is the e-mail she sent out to interested ACORN workers.

January 5, 2001

Dear Fellow ACORN Workers:

I am following up with you concerning the discussions we had at YE/YB about changing some of our working conditions. Some of the concerns mentioned by workers include transit fare to and from the field and a guaranteed lunch break in our long 10-hour day.

Some offices or individual workers may not have these concerns because they have taken the risk of standing alone or with a couple of co-workers and have asked for a lunch break. Or some head organizers may "allow" a lunch break. However, if we really want to improve things, without being at the mercy of our particular head organizer, we need to do what we tell our constituents to do every day: stand together and make it happen. Organize.

I think we should form a union with the Industrial Workers of the World, a direct-action based, democratic, independent union. For more information on the IWW, please contact me or you can look on the web at iww.org.

We need to figure out what improvements we want to see, and how we will go about doing this. We need a process by which we make decisions that is agreeable to us all.

Forming a union means standing together and making our bosses do the things that we want them to do, and stopping them from doing the things we don't want them to do. If we want a say in our workplace, we need to stand together and form an organization that gives us power in numbers.

So, if you still want to make improvements at ACORN, if you want to be guaranteed a break to eat your lunch every day, if you feel like there are other things you need in the workplace but feel that you need an organization of your co-workers to stand with you, then please contact me.

There are already eight offices which have expressed interest in doing this. If you know of good contacts in any other offices, please let me know. But for now, let's keep a dialog going amongst those of us who have already met at the YE/YB meeting so that we can decide together how we can fill out our ranks.

As a first step, please take the time to come up with a list of issues you would like to see our effort address. If you have any thoughts on the methods you would like to see us use to make decisions, please write them up also. I would like to hear back from everyone before February 1st. Whatever is sent to me by then, I will assemble into another mailing, include contact information for each person, and get it to everyone who replies.

In solidarity,
Gina Giazsoni

Who is ACORN?

The following text is from ACORN's website: http://www.acorn.org/who_are_we.html

The website also features lists of ACORN offices across the country.

Who is ACORN?

ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, is the nation's largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, with over 100,000 member families organized into 500 neighborhood chapters in 40 cities across the country. Since 1970 ACORN has taken action and won victories on issues of concern to our members. Our priorities include: better housing for first time homebuyers and tenants, living wages for low-wage workers, more investment in our communities from banks and governments, and better public schools. We achieve these goals by building community organizations that have the power to win changes -- through direct action, negotiation, legislation, and voter participation.

ACORN stands alone in its commitment to organizing and winning power for low and moderate-income people.

As we approach the new millenium, the concerns of low and moderate-income people are not on the nation's agenda. Under attack from the right, ignored by the center and many progressives, the poor grow in numbers every day. Yet ACORN stands virtually alone in its dedication to organizing the poor and powerless - a dedication as strong today as it was in 1970 when a group of Arkansas welfare mothers formed ACORN's first membership.

ACORN is the largest low and moderate-income membership organization in the country. ACORN has grown steadily to a membership of over 125,000 African-American, white, and Latino families. They are active members, not just contributors or newsletter readers. Each belongs to one of more than 500 neighborhood chapters working on local, citywide, and national campaigns.

ACORN organizes the unorganized.

Although no stranger to coalition politics, ACORN's first priority is building organization in low-income communities. Because ACORN believes that social change comes from the bottom up, organizers are on the streets every day, knocking on doors and recruiting new members. Major campaigns, whether around housing, or jobs, or voter registration, are designed to reach the unorganized majority of low and moderate-income people - the key constituency that must be mobilized for a progressive movement for social change in this country to succeed.

ACORN campaigns address issues that are central to the lives of its members, to the viability of low and moderate-income neighborhoods, and to the future of the country.

A typical month might find ACORN neighbor-

hood groups in New York and Chicago campaigning to reform city schools, groups in New Orleans and Boston fighting to pass living wage ordinances, and groups in Detroit and Washington, D.C., demanding testing and treatment for lead poisoning.

At the same time, ACORN groups throughout the country work in unison on national issues. In recent years, ACORN has waged precedent-setting campaigns to win housing for the poor, jobs at living wages for the unemployed, and capital investment for low and moderate-income communities.

ACORN is a direct action organization.

ACORN employs the broadest possible range of tactics. It lobbies, petitions, and files lawsuits. But ACORN's long history proves that confronting decision-makers face-to-face brings the best results.

When the situation demands it, ACORN members will march, picket, sit-in, squat, and sometimes go to jail.

ACORN views political action as an essential part of its strategy for empowering poor people. When most community organizations still believed in sitting on the sidelines on election day, ACORN was leading the way in voter registration, education, and mobilization. For nearly 20 years, ACORN members have used the electoral arena to press their issues and to put responsive candidates in office. Increasingly, ACORN members are running for office themselves.

ACORN's low and moderate-income membership runs the organization.

ACORN members - not staff or lawyers or politicians - speak for and lead the organization. Many are new to community activism when they join but leadership development is at the core of ACORN's organizing process. On-the-job and in formal training programs, ACORN members develop the skill and confidence to chart the organization's course. From the neighborhood group level to the national board, ACORN leaders call the shots.

ACORN's membership pays for the organization.

Knowing that a poor people's organization can't rely on outside support, ACORN has always been committed to the principle of financial self-sufficiency. The organization is now 80% self-sufficient, deriving its funds primarily from members' dues, raffles, ad sales, dinners, and other events.

ACORN has been, and will continue to be, the most innovative community organization in the country.

From its inception, ACORN has constantly challenged the traditional notions of what a community organization is. It pioneered multi-racial and multi-issue organizing. It introduced strategies to contend with corporate targets, led the way in electoral organizing, and advanced direct action tactics like squatting. In recent years, ACORN has taken its path breaking ways in new directions:

* Union Organizing

To reach the unorganized not only in the neighborhoods but in the workplace, ACORN helped found the United Labor Unions in 1979, which succeeded in organizing low wage service workers most unions had ignored. Now affiliated with the Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, the Locals in Louisiana, Illinois, Arkansas, and Texas have over 20,000 members working in schools, nursing homes, hospitals, home health care agencies, and other services.

* Community Media

Understanding the power and potential of the electronic media, ACORN members are helping to build a progressive radio and television network. FM radio stations are on the air in Dallas (KNON) and Little Rock (KABF).

* Housing Development

To provide affordable housing and revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods, the ACORN Housing Corporation (AHC) offices in Arizona, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. acquire and rehabilitate abandoned buildings. Low and moderate-income families who contribute sweat equity buy the houses at below market prices and the land remains in the ACORN Community Land Association to ensure that it will always be used for affordable housing. AHC is also the country's largest provider of pre-purchase loan counseling to low and moderate income people with offices in Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Boston, Bridgeport, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Des Moines, Houston, Jersey City, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Little Rock, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New Orleans, New York City, Oakland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Jose, Seattle, Springfield, St. Louis, and Washington, DC. Each year over 10,000 low-income people come to AHC for help in purchasing a house, many of whom never dreamed homeownership was a possibility for them. By year's end some 2,500 of these people will be new homeowners. The program has produced over 25,000 new homeowners since its start in 1983.

ACORN's People's Platform

The following are sections of ACORN's own People's Platform (full text at <http://www.acorn.org/pp-content.html>) which ACORN management has violated by its treatment of its own employees.

Work and Worker's Rights

III. Provide an adequate income to every American

- Guarantee a minimum annual family income at a figure equivalent to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics "medium living standard," adjusted for inflation.
- Extend minimum wage coverage to all wage earners and peg increases in it to the cost of living.

IV. Establish the fundamental rights of workers, to include:

- The right to a job which does not endanger health or safety.
- The right to a job which is accessible from home.
- The right to a job which does not require overtime work as a condition of employment.
- The right to company or government financed child care for the worker's children.
- The right to a fair grievance procedure.
- Most fundamentally, the right to organize, which is to be promoted by:
 - a. Extending the National Labor Relations Act coverage to all workers.
 - b. Streamlining the union election and certification process.
 - c. Restricting the use of anti-strike injunction by courts.
 - d. Providing stiff penalties-back wages times five-for employers who fire or demote workers for their organizing activities.
- The right to company or government financed health insurance.

V. Reform the National Labor Relations Act

For workers:

- Permit
 - a. sympathy strikes
 - b. secondary boycotts
 - c. picketing to support sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts.
- Permit automatic union certification when a majority of a bargaining unit has signed authorization cards.
- Permit workers to refuse to handle "Struck work".
- Permit striking workers to receive unemployment compensation, welfare, and food stamps.

For management:

- Prohibit the hiring of temporary replacements to fund anti-union campaigns.
- Prohibit all lockouts.
- Regulate management consultation.
- Regulate management consultants:
 - a. Require consultants to file financial disclosure forms with state labor departments.
 - b. Prohibit the use of tax dollars to fund anti-union campaigns.
- Prohibit employers from forcing workers to listen to anti-union campaigns.
- Require management to negotiate over what the National Labor Relations Board now calls "permissive subjects":
Sale of the company, work schedules, pricing, choice of suppliers, organization of management, etc.
- Prohibit the use of bankruptcy as a tool to throw out valid collective bargaining agreements.

VIII. Protect All Workers

- Part-time and temporary workers should receive proportionately the same benefits as full-time workers.
- Workers in unorganized work sites should be able to join unions, and receive the benefits of union membership.
- All workers whether public or private, in small or large numbers, should have the legal right to:
 - a. Organize;
 - b. Bargain Collectively;
 - c. Strike when necessary;

and these rights should be under the full protection of the law.

Will ACORN live up to its principles?



Inside: 1,000,000 former ACORN workers can't be wrong
Stories from former employees who spoke out

TO-GATHER

A NEWSLETTER FOR ACORN WORKERS • ISSUE #2 • FEBRUARY 19, 2001

WRITE: TO-GATHER C/O IWW, PO BOX 13476, PHILA., PA 19101 • CALL: 215-763-1274 box #5 • E-MAIL: giazzi@usa.net

Philly ACORN workers strike for safe jobs & end to union-busting

The IWW struck the Philadelphia office of ACORN February 8 to protest a series of unfair labor practices that had made working conditions intolerable. ACORN workers asked management to recognize their union and respond to concerns about job safety and working conditions January 29. Although ACORN claims to be a progressive community group promoting rights for working people, management refused to

Although ACORN claims to be a progressive community group promoting rights for working people, management refused to recognize the union or address workers' grievances.

In the two weeks between collecting authorization cards and the workers' decision that they had no choice but to strike, managers subjected workers to captive meetings, threatened workers for engaging in direct action on the job, threatened to terminate and later briefly suspended a member of the union organizing committee on alleged productivity grounds, threatened to discipline a worker for taking a lunch break during her 10-hour shift, blamed the union campaign for its refusal to transfer another worker to a safer job, subjected union supporters to surveillance and investigations, and fired a member of the IWW organizing committee.

A lively picket line in front of ACORN's offices drew 15 ACORN strikers and supporters, and enthusiastic support from many passersby. Several ACORN members pledged to speak to management to demand better treatment for workers. The picket line concluded with a march into the

continued on page 2

Why we're organizing

• **We want organizers working in pairs in the field after dark for more safety.** In the past two months one worker was mugged, another robbed at gunpoint, and others have experienced harassment. When we raised the issue in Philadelphia, management responded with a memo claiming that there have been "no major incidents" in the past three years. Maybe they're waiting for someone to get killed.

• **We want an eight-hour work day, and two weekends off per month.** Fifty-four hours a week is just too much.

• **We want guaranteed lunch breaks.** Putting in eight or ten hours at a stretch, we need a chance to eat.

• **We want procedures to deal with racial bias.** We're tired of unequal pay and management insensitivity.

ACORN management can afford to meet these demands. Instead, they order us to continue unsafe work practices, and engage in union-busting. Attempts to intimidate and harass union supporters are illegal, and unworthy of an organization established to work for social justice.

from a flier distributed to Philly ACORN members during a February 8 picket

A Local 100 organizer remembers

LOUISIANA. The struggles of ACORN workers in Philadelphia for workplace democracy is not a new phenomena. Periodically workers in this "peoples' organization" have organized to challenge the undemocratic and exploitative practices of this organization and its leaders. Let me briefly tell you about my experience in one such fight. In the fall of 1986 I began working for ACORN-affiliated Local 100, SEIU, AFL-CIO, in New Orleans, as a union organizer. In the mid-1980s ACORN struck a deal with then SEIU president John Sweeney to open or take over existing SEIU union locals in a number of cities—New Orleans, Boston and Chicago. The local in New Orleans was run by self-proclaimed "chief organizer" Wade Rathke, also the chief organizer of ACORN. I came into the job with zeal similar to that of a lot of young people who are attracted to organizing and who see ACORN as an opportunity to work for progressive social change.

I started noticing that the organization had serious problems regarding democracy and exploitation of its own workers, and the consciousness-raising efforts of Local 100 organizers in North Carolina showed me that the problems were widespread. Let

me explain. One major grievance of the organizing staff was the competitive environment created by Rathke. This "organizing genius" developed a "piece rate" strategy of organizing. All the names of Local 100 organizers were placed on a chalkboard in the office along with a list of all sites where Local 100 had contracts. Scores were kept on how many new dues paying members organizers had signed up at each facility. Later, a bonus program was developed based on how many workers we were able to get on dues check-off each month. Local 100 management also promoted and provoked petty divisions among staff. Thus management helped to create the competitive, cut throat environment we were supposed to be fighting.

Other issues, which the Philadelphia campaign reminds me of, included late checks, and wages that worked out to be below or near the minimum wage. All these issues were also expressions of the lack of democracy in the organization for both staff organizers and members. In light of these grievances and problems, and due to the efforts of the "Carolina contingent" — the name for the group of organizers from North Carolina — the Local 100 staff organizing drive began in the spring of 1987. There were about 20 organizers and staff involved which included Local 100's offices in New

continued on page 2

To-Gather

To-Gather was first produced by ACORN workers in Philadelphia with the help of the IWW. It was sent to almost every ACORN office, and about a dozen IWW groups have distributed the newsletter in person to ACORN workers. It reports on what's going on in different offices and discusses the kind of workplace ACORN organizers would like to create through unionization. There have been four issues since publishing began in February.

A complete collection of To-Gather is available on the web at
<http://bari.iww.org/alerts/Acorn1.html>

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

© 2001 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

VOL. CCXXXVII NO. 60 EE/PR ★ ★ ★

TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2001

WSJ.com

Work Week

A Special News Report About Life
On the Job—and Trends
Taking Shape There

A UNION ALLY finds itself the target of an organizing drive.

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, a group that supports living-wage laws and curbs on predatory lending, often counts on unions for help. But a few Acorn organizers, who canvass neighborhoods on Acorn's behalf, say it opposes their attempt to unionize. Some have alleged unfair labor practices with the National Labor Relations Board.

The workers say they seek better hours and better pay, among other things. Gina Giazsoni, a former Philadelphia Acorn worker, says they also want the right to work in pairs, for better safety. The workers seek representation by the Wobblies of old, the Industrial Workers of the World. Wade Rathke, an Acorn official, says the group doesn't have anything to say about the allegations.

"We've worked with unions throughout this organization's history," he says.

Dramatic Irony

ACORN has led union campaigns across the country. Now the group's own employees claim they are being punished for organizing.

By Gwen Shaffer

A community organization whose mission is to protect the rights of low-wage workers is refusing to recognize its own employees' attempts to unionize, several field organizers with the group claim.

One employee was fired after she protested outside ACORN's Philadelphia office last week.

ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) is a national non-profit with an active chapter in Philadelphia. Most recently, ACORN has made headlines for tackling the issue of predatory lending and spearheading a "living wage" campaign, both of which prompted City Council to introduce legislation.

But several field organizers for ACORN — who earn about \$20,000 annually — claim that long hours, low pay and unsafe working conditions would be improved if they formed a collective bargaining unit.

In late January, they approached the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) union. Four of seven organizers working at ACORN as of Jan. 29 signed union cards. Since that time, at least one of them quit and one was axed.

"We work 54 hours a week, we work every weekend, and we don't get overtime pay," said Gina Giazioni, 24, who was hired by ACORN in December.

On the morning of Feb. 9, Giazioni led

about 15 people in a picket outside of the ACORN office, located at 846 N. Broad St. That evening, Jeff Ordower, the managing organizer for ACORN, delivered a letter to Giazioni's home. It notified Giazioni that she was "terminated."

Giazioni said the letter does not clearly explain why she was fired. But another source speculated that Ordower thinks Giazioni was working at the IWW office on a day she called out sick to ACORN.

Giazioni and some of her now-former colleagues believe that a collective bargaining agreement would lead to guaranteed eight-hour weekdays, lunch breaks and at least two weekends off per month.

Concerns about safety on the job are also prompting field organizers to seek help from IWW.

Each evening, they are sent out into some of Philadelphia's most dangerous neighborhoods to knock on doors and recruit new ACORN members. While working for the organization, Giazioni was in charge of signing up people who live between 31st and 48th Streets, north of Market.

After just two months on the job, Giazioni claimed she was sexually harassed twice. In December, a potential ACORN member invited Giazioni into his home, then grabbed her head and kissed her. Another evening, a man loitering on the sidewalk flashed her.

"It's not safe for us," she commented.

Other ACORN organizers agreed.

"A few days ago, I was robbed at gunpoint," asserted organizer Ozzie Sims. "Our supervisors haven't done anything except issue a vague memo saying to take appropriate precautions."

When field organizers asked to canvas in pairs, management said "no," according to IWW.

Ordower declined to comment for the record. "This is an internal matter and we are not going to work it out in the press."

But Giazioni said that when presented with signed union cards from a majority of the field organizers on Jan. 29, Ordower insisted it would be "illegal" for him to recognize a union in ACORN's Philadelphia chapter

unless field workers in about 39 other offices throughout the country also unionized.

Dorothy Moore-Duncan, regional director for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), said there is "a presumption that a single workplace is an appropriate bargaining unit." But that assumption can be challenged, she added, "based on the interchange of employees among offices, the role of labor relations in the workplace and how the office is managed."

Wade Rathke, Ordower's supervisor and a co-founder of ACORN, is based in New Orleans. He denies knowing any details about the situation in Philadelphia.

"I'm not particularly aware that workers are trying to organize," Rathke said, noting that he did receive a fax from the field staff outlining "general issues."

When questioned about the concerns raised in that memo, Rathke responded, "Now you're asking me to have memorized it." But Rathke added that ACORN "supports everybody's legal rights."

ACORN employees filed two complaints with the NLRB earlier this month. One, dated Feb. 1, alleges that ACORN threatened "Sims with discharge because of his activities in support of the union." A second

complaint dated Feb. 7 contends that management "interfered with and coerced an employee because of the employee's union activity."

The NLRB is investigating the complaints, Moore-Duncan said.

According to ACORN's website, it is the nation's largest community organization of low and moderate families, with more than 100,000 members in 40 cities across the country. ACORN helped found the United Labor Unions in 1979, which succeeded in organizing low wage service workers most unions had ignored, the site says.

And ACORN's Ordower is currently aiding the "Justice for Janitors" campaign in its search for new union organizers.

This is why IWW organizer Alexis Buss says she finds it ironic that ACORN management is resisting unionization in its own workplace.

"Right now, Mr. Rathke is leading a campaign for management neutrality, urging employers to stay neutral instead of fighting against their workers' organizing efforts," Buss says. "Meanwhile, the Philadelphia branch of ACORN is fighting the union tooth and nail."

(shaffer@citypaper.net)

Philadelphia staff goes on Unfair Labor Practices Strike

On January 29, workers at the Philadelphia ACORN office went on a ULP strike to protest ACORN's numerous illegal threats made to union supporters and the firing of Gina Giazioni. On the following pages are copies of the ULPs filed by the IWW with the National Labor Relations Board. The charges are still pending. Similar charges have also been filed against the Dallas ACORN office, where management fired two workers the day after they learned unionization was being discussed.



'Here's Why We're Striking...

We're on strike to protest ACORN management's many unfair labor practices, which began almost immediately after we requested union recognition and have made our working conditions intolerable. Management violates our most basic labor rights, and harasses and threatens workers for organizing.



We organized a union because:

- **We want organizers working in pairs in the field after dark for more safety.** In the past two months one worker was molested, another robbed at gunpoint, and others have experienced harassment. Management responded with a memo claiming that there have been "no major incidents" in the past three years. Maybe they're waiting for someone to get killed.
- **We want an eight-hour work day, and two weekends off per month.** Fifty-four hours a week is just too much.
- **We want procedures to deal with racial bias.** We're tired of unequal pay and management insensitivity.
- **We want guaranteed lunch breaks.** Putting in eight or ten hours at a stretch, we need a chance to eat.

ACORN management can afford to meet these demands. Instead, they order us to continue unsafe work practices, threaten to fire and subsequently suspending a member of the union organizing committee, telling a worker she can't have information necessary to do her job because she's organizing the union, and denying another worker a transfer to a safer job using the union drive as an excuse. These attempts to intimidate and harass union supporters are illegal, and unworthy of an organization established to work for social justice.

If you agree that ACORN management should stop its illegal union-busting, call "Head Organizer" (and boss) Jeff Ordower at 215-765-0042. Tell him you support the ACORN strikers, and justice for ACORN staff.



Industrial Workers of the World
PO Box 13476, Philadelphia PA 19101
215-763-1274 box 5

LABOR DONATED
IWW IU 450

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

Case
4-CA-30096Date Filed
2-21-01

1. EMPLOYER AGAINST WHOM CHARGE IS BROUGHT

JLB-501
(8-9)UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

INSTRUCTIONS:

an original together with four copies and a copy for each additional charged party named in item 1 with NLRB Regional Director for the region in which the alleged unfair labor practice occurred or is occurring.

1. EMPLOYER AGAINST WHOM CHARGE IS BROUGHT

a. Name of Employer
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)c. Address (Street, city, state, and ZIP code)
846 N. Broad Street, Phila., PA 19123f. Type of Establishment (factory, mine, wholesaler, etc.)
Non profit community organization

h. The above-named employer has engaged in and is engaging in unfair labor practices within the meaning of section 8(a), subsections (1) and (list subsections) (3)

g. Identify principal product or service
community organizingd. Employer Representative
Jeff Ordowere. Telephone No.
(215)765-0042b. Number of workers employed
7

Fax No.

2. Basis of the Charge (set forth a clear and concise statement of the facts constituting the alleged unfair labor practices)

On or about Jan. 29, 2001, the above-named Employer threatened its employee Ozzie Sims with discharge because of his activities in support of the union. On Feb. 1, 2001, the Employer suspended Ozzie Sims because of his union activity. On Feb. 10, 2001, the Employer discharged Ozzie Sims because of his union activity.

By the above and other acts, the above-named employer has in rights guaranteed in Section 7 of the Act.

3. Full name of party filing charge (if labor organization, give full name of labor organization)
Alexis Buss, General Secretary Treasurer, Industrial Workers of the World4a. Address (Street and number, city, state, and ZIP code)
PO Box 42777, Phila., PA 191015. Full name of national or international labor organization of which it is an affiliate or constituent unit (to be filled in when charge is filed)
Industrial Workers of the World

I declare that I have read the above charge and that the statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

By (signature of representative or person making charge)
PO Box 42777Address
WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENTS ON THIS CHARGE CAN BE PUNISHED BY FINE AND IMPRISONMENT (U.S. CODE, TITLE 18, SECTION 1001)

6. DECLARATION

(Print type name and title or office, if any)

(Telephone No.)

(Date)

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

215-763-1274

2/20/01

Seattle staff goes on union recognition strike

The entire staff of the ACORN office in Seattle demanded union recognition on February 26. When their manager, Doug Bloch, refused to recognize their union, the workers decided to go out on recognition strike in order to head off the kind of union busting that ACORN engaged in in Philadelphia, which picked off union supporters one-by-one.

The workers have made an offer to return to work, but it has so far been ignored by ACORN management.

ACORN Workers on Strike

Why We're Striking

We're on strike to demand union recognition.

On Monday, February 26, we requested that management recognize our union, the Industrial Workers of the World, and begin bargaining in good faith.

We organized a union because:

- **We want a 40 hour work week with flex time.** The fifty-four hours we work each week is just too much.
- **Our pay checks must be issued on time and be paid in full.** We can't pay our rent with IOUs and promises.
- **New hires need information.** When ACORN hires new staff, they must inform them of quotas, the canvass and fundraising schedule, and how "raising your own salary" works before the prospective worker is hired. It's not fair to keep people in the dark.
- **Health care.** Our health insurance benefit be activated on time.
- **An end to discrimination & harassment.** There should be absolutely no tolerance of sexual harassment, and there must be a statement of employees' rights and responsibilities posted in the office.
- **No one gets fired for union organizing.** Two workers in the Philadelphia ACORN office were recently fired in retaliation for their organizing efforts. A "social justice" organization like ACORN must guarantee workers the right to organize.
- **Safety on the job.** Workers must be able to decide if they want to work in pairs, instead of alone, while in the field. We work at night, by ourselves, and are too vulnerable when we are alone and nobody knows our exact location. There must also be a clear policy of response to harassment incidents that occur in the field.

ACORN management can afford to meet these demands.

To find out how you can support our effort, call the
Seattle office of the IWW: 206-706-6250



Industrial Workers of the World
5215 Ballard NW • Seattle, WA 98115

LABOR DONATED
IWW IU 450

Grants received by local ACORN offices

A report generated for ACORN's YE/YB 2000/2001 meeting

Arkansas

44,000 Pulaski County
25,000 Veatch
13,000 NCJIS (N)
20,000 CHD
37,500 Mary R. Babcock
18,000 NCJIS (N)
13,000 NCJIS (N)
170,500 Total

California Statewide

75,000 Irvine
50,000 McKay
125,000 Total

Los Angeles

35,000 CHD
20,000 Butler Family
35,000 CCC
25,000 Liberty Hill
44,000 CA Wellness
17,500 JFJ
50,000 Rosenberg
10,000 Food for All
5,000 Records
19,300 Mott Wrap (N)
1,750 anonymous
262,550 Total

Sacramento

5,000 UCC
20,000 Presiding Bishops
10,000 ?
40,833 Providian (N)
83,833 Total

San Jose

25,000 CHD
50,000 Luke B. Hancock
75,000 Total

Oakland

10,000 Bancroft
20,000 Haas Junior
30,000 CHD
10,000 PRRAC
25,000 Goldman
15,000 Freedman Family
25,000 Needmor
18,500 JFJ
20,000 San Fran Foundation
3,000 Needmor tech assistance
40,833 Providian
35,792 Oakland Fund for Children
5,000 anonymous
258,125 Total

Connecticut

8,000 UCC Hunger Action
7,500 Marianist
10,500 Total

Colorado

5,000 Anschutz
7,500 Rose Community
3,000 Dominican Sisters
10,000 Abelard West
35,000 CHD
5,000 UCC Hunger Action
28,000 Needmor
5,000 Chinook
9,400 Piton
2,500 Annie E. Casey
220,400 Total

DC

3,500 Chevy Chase
16,000 Marianist
19,500 Total

Florida

22,500 Health Services Coalition
9,000 Mott
10,000 Roblee Foundation
41,500 Total

Illinois

37,500 CHD
150,000 Annenberg
40,000 Wiebolt
45,000 Woods
15,000 JFJ
31,000 SCIU
13,000 NCJIS (N)
13,000 NCJIS (N)
15,000 NCJIS (N)
18,000 NCJIS (N)
5,000 NCJIS (N)
26,400 TCF Bank
20,000 NAACP
383,900 Total

Louisiana

52,500 HUD
8,500 Community Toolbox
5,000 Board of Ed
15,000 NCJIS (N)
81,000 Total

Michigan

20,000 CHD
20,000 N'hood Opportunity
51,000 Total (sic)

Boston

40,000 Needmor
20,000 Hymes
40,000 BPON
30,000 anonymous
20,000 JFJ
15,000 Discount
15,000 NCJIS (N)
180,000 Total

Springfield

3,000 Dominican Sisters
1,000 Lucent Tech
4,000 Total

Minnesota

5,000 UCC
37,500 CHD
12,500 Headwater
5,000 Dominican Sisters
20,000 Otto Bremer
15,000 Public Welfare
95,000 Total

Maryland

65,000 Annie E. Casey
30,000 Hazen
24,000 CHD
7,500 Poverty, Peace, Justice
9,000 Mott
15,000 JFJ
10,000 UU Just Society
8,000 Marianist
5,000 Fannie Mae
5,000 UCC Hunger
15,000 EPA
193,500 Total

Missouri

15,000 Needmor
32,000 CHD
3,000 Needmor
2,500 Veatch
52,500 Total

New Jersey

50,000 Health Care Fund
10,000 UU Just Society
2,500 Karma Foundation
62,500 Total

New Mexico

20,000 Needmor
20,000 CHD
36,000 CSIU
6,000 Revisioning MN
13,000 NCJIS (N)
15,000 NCJIS (N)
110,000 Total

Ohio

35,000 Needmor

Pennsylvania

24,000 CHD
20,000 Prudential
5,000 Allen Hillis
25,000 Hazen
2,000 Douty
5,000 1957 Charity Trust
5,000 Bread and Roses
86,000 Total

Dallas

30,000 CHD
30,000 Hazen
40,000 Providian (N)
15,000 RKG
115,000 Total

Houston

25,000 CHD
1,000 United Way
26,000 Total

Oregon

5,000 CHD
3,000 UCC
9,000 CCC
17,500 Total

Washington

5,000 Territory Resource
8,000 UU Just Society
5,000 Dominican Sisters
3,000 UCC Hunger
500 CHD local
25,000 CHD national
7,500 Pequod Foundation
54,000 Total

TOTAL: \$2,720,808

Notes:

No report from New York
(N) = Nationally generated

In Solidarity

Letters of support for ACORN Workers

Alice Woldt - Associate Director Church Council of Greater Seattle

I'm sorry you've taken an anti-union position on not recognizing the organizing rights of your employees in the local Seattle affiliate here. As an organization that stands in solidarity with workers in the community, it is hypocritical to not give your own employees the voice they're requesting. The Church Council of Greater Seattle has a long history of working with organized labor in support of workers rights. I encourage you to reevaluate your position in light of your own stated mission. The many community groups here will continue to support the striking workers and you will do irreparable damage to the causes you seek to represent.

Jeff Leys - Senior Staff Representative -- SEIU District 1199W (March 5,2001)

Dear Brother Bloch,

I strongly encourage you to recognize the IWW as the duly selected union for the staff of Washington ACORN. Their demands are just and their rights are clear. It is appalling that ACORN, which fights mightily for the rights of the working class on a day to day basis, is using all of the tactics of the corporate bosses to deny basic rights to its own employees and the citizens of this country.

I am perplexed that ACORN is taking the position that it will only recognize workers who organize into a single national union. Clearly ACORN knows that this is a virtual impossibility for ACORN's workers given the geographical dispersion of workers. ACORN also most assuredly must know that the law permits recognition of individual bargaining units in separate shops across the country. If ACORN's interpretation of the law were to be applied to labor law, it would become virtually impossible to organize any business which operates across state lines. Woe to the nursing home workers for whom I work if ACORN's interpretation of the law were to be applied to Beverly Enterprises, Vencor, ManorCare, Genesis, Horizon and all the other union busting chains out there.

I am also quite perplexed that ACORN is not willing to take simple measures like paying its employees a fair wage; paying its employees overtime wages; establishing a just sexual harassment policy; and taking steps to ensure worker safety on the job.

Again I urge you to recognize the IWW union established by your employees; to discontinue the use of scab labor; and to negotiate in good faith with the IWW workers.

Jeff Leys, Senior Staff Representative

SEIU District 1199W / UP, Milwaukee, Wisconsin & Shop Steward -- OPEIU Local 39

Jeff Mansfield -- President -- American Postal Workers Union, Local# 28 (March 2, 2001)

Dear ACORN Management,

I am writing on behalf of the American Postal Workers Union, Local # 28 to express our Union's support of striking Seattle ACORN workers with Industrial Workers of the World. It is clear that ACORN management should recognize its workers' Union, as all of Seattle ACORN's organizers have been striking on the picket line since Monday, February 26th. Management's refusal to recognize the union and the bringing in of scab replacements is offensive to the labor movement and disgraceful for an organization that claims to fight for the rights of working people. ACORN's management should be ashamed of themselves.

As Union president, I believe that all workers deserve the working conditions that unions have fought so hard for over the past century. Seattle ACORN workers are asking for the same rights to be extended to them. They are asking for an eight-hour workday, lunch breaks, and paychecks issued on time and paid in-full. These are basic demands. The Greater Seattle Area Local of the APWU, AFL/CIO stands in solidarity with the striking workers. We urge management to recognize the union and begin contract negotiations immediately.

Jeff Mansfield

President, Greater Seattle Area Local #28 APWU, AFL-CIO