

# SOLIDARITY UNIONISM AT STARBUCKS

**Staughton Lynd and Daniel Gross**  
with illustrations by Tom Keough

Legendary legal scholar Staughton Lynd teams up with influential labor organizer Daniel Gross in this exposition on solidarity unionism, the do-it-yourself workplace organizing system that is rapidly gaining prominence around the country and around the world. Lynd and Gross make the audacious argument that workers themselves on the shop floor, not outside union officials, are the real hope for labor's future. Utilizing the principles of solidarity unionism, any group of co-workers, like the workers at Starbucks, can start building an organization to win an independent voice at work without waiting for a traditional trade union to come and "organize" them. Indeed, in a leaked recording of a conference call, the nation's most prominent union-busting lobbyist coined a term, "the Starbucks problem," as a warning to business executives about the risk of working people organizing themselves and taking direct action to improve issues at work.

Combining history and theory with the groundbreaking practice of the model by Starbucks workers, Lynd and Gross make a compelling case for solidarity unionism as an effective, resilient, and deeply democratic approach to winning a voice on the job and in society.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Daniel Gross** is an organizer with the Industrial Workers of the World on its Starbucks campaign and the founding director of Brandworkers International, a non-profit organization for retail and food employees.

**Staughton Lynd** taught history at Spelman College and Yale in the 1960s and coordinated the hugely successful Freedom Schools during the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. After moving to New Haven, Lynd became a spokesperson for opponents of the Vietnam War. As a result of these activities, Lynd was blacklisted as a university professor and he and his wife became lawyers. Since 1976 they have lived in Youngstown, Ohio, working with and representing local victims of deindustrialization, and prisoners confined at Ohio's first super-maximum security prison.

Together with Marty Glaberman, Stan Weir, and Daniel Gross of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), he developed and publicized "solidarity unionism": the idea that workers should rely on their own direct action and seek horizontal relationships with similar groups in other workplaces.



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