

16302

1

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
OF THE WORLD

**BIRA**  
**RULE BOOK**

2011 edition



## IWW PREAMBLE

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

CONSTITUTION  
of the  
**British & Ireland  
Regional Administration**  
of the  
**INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
OF THE WORLD**



As adopted by ballot, June 1996,  
amended by Annual Conference 2003,  
amended by Annual Conference 2005,  
amended by referendum 2007,  
amended by Annual Conference 2008,  
amended by Annual Conference 2009,  
amended by Annual Conference 2010,  
*(2011 amendments and inclusions appear in italics)*  
*This Edition Issued May 2011.*

published by **BIRA**

IWW PO Box 7593  
Glasgow  
G42 2EX

## 1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the *Regional Administration (RA)* shall be as follows:

- a) To recruit members to the IWW.
- b) To promote the aims of the union as set out in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- c) To support branches locally in any activity to promote and protect the interests of workers.
- d) To co-operate with other friendly organizations as and when necessary to promote the interests of workers.
- e) To promote the educational and cultural well-being of members.
- f) To oppose any force in society which seeks to divide the workers from one another.

## 2. STRUCTURE

The *Regional Administration (RA)* Shall be comprised of;

- 1) RA Secretary.
- 2) RA Treasurer.
- 3) Regional Organizers.
- 4) IU National Secretaries
- 5) One delegate from each chartered branch.

## 3. COMPONENT PARTS

Branches shall exist in one of four forms. These are:

### Workplace Industrial Union Branches

- 3.1 Where five or more members work at the same workplace they shall form an industrial union workplace branch.

### Local Industrial Union Branches

- 3.2 Where five or more members work in the same industry and the same locality but not the same workplace, and are therefore unable to form a branch under the terms of paragraph 3.1 above, they shall form an industrial union local branch.

### General Membership (Or Mixed Industries) Branch

- 3.3 Where five or more members work in different industries in the same locality they shall form a general membership mixed industries branch.

### Unwaged Members Branches

- 3.4 Where five or more unwaged members live in the same locality they may form an unwaged workers branch of Industrial Union 680 (Amended June 2003).

### Groups

- 3.5 Where less than five members live or work in the same locality or workplace they shall form a group. Groups may combine for the purpose of electing delegates to the RA.

## Branch Delegates

- 3.6 Each group or branch shall endeavour to elect a central stationery delegate to collect dues and report monthly to the *RA* secretary, a secretary to deal with correspondence and a communications delegate who shall keep in touch with other IWW branches on a regular basis.
- 3.7 Branch central stationery delegates shall remit 50% of all dues raised to the *RA* treasurer.
- 3.8 Group central stationery delegates shall remit 100% of all dues raised to the *RA* treasurer.
- 3.9 Stationery delegates attached to branches or groups shall remit dues and reports monthly to the branch or group central stationery delegate.
- 3.10 Stationery delegates not attached to branches or groups shall remit dues and reports monthly to the secretary and treasurer.

## **4. LOCAL CO-ORDINATION**

Where two or more branches or groups of the IWW exist in the same locality they shall form a local delegate committee to co-ordinate the work of the Union.

## **5. OFFICERS**

- 5.1 The officers of the *RA* shall consist of a secretary, treasurer, regional organizers, supply depot coordinator, membership administrator and IU national secretaries.

- 5.2 The officers shall be elected by an annual referendum ballot as provided in paragraph 6, and appendix 1.
- 5.3 A National IU Secretary shall be established in cases where either
  - a) more than one hundred members of the *RA* belong to a certain IU, or
  - b) a motion has been passed by the *RA*, on behalf of an IU that has been shown to be active, organised and growing (supported by signatures of 30% of that IU in good standing), to establish a *RA* IU Secretary.
- 5.4 When more than one IU, with complimentary industrial basis (e.g. IUs 310/330 or IUs 460/640), fulfil one or both prerequisites laid out in section 5.3, they may apply for a Joint National IU Secretary. Joint National IU Secretaries are subject to the same duties and responsibilities as other National IU Secretaries, as laid out in sections 9.21-9.23.
- 5.5 The officers shall supervise the affairs of the *RA* between meetings of the *RA*.

## **6. METHOD OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION**

- 6.1 In March of each year the *RA* shall publish a notice in the Internal Bulletin calling for nomination of officers. Nominations may be made by any part of the Union identified in paragraph 3 above or by individual members.
- 6.2 The election shall take place in May of each year using the referendum process specified in paragraph 12 below.

- 6.3 The votes will be counted at annual conference by the audit committee elected under paragraph 8.
- 6.4 An announcement of the result shall be made at the annual conference and published in the next internal bulletin.
- 6.5 The successful candidate shall take up office on 1 July and shall serve for one year. No officer may serve more than three consecutive terms.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION

- 7.1 The RA shall establish an office at a suitable location.

## 8. FINANCE

### Funding

- 8.1 In addition to dues retained the RA shall be funded by a £5 per month levy on branches and may seek donations from branches and members at any time.

### Expenses

- 8.2 The travelling expenses of delegates shall be met from branch funds. In the event of a branch having insufficient funding these expenses shall be met from funds held by the RA.

### Audit

- 8.3 The Annual Conference shall appoint a three-person audit committee who shall audit and report on the accounts of the *Regional Administration* at the following annual meeting. Their written report shall be published with the agenda for said meeting.

## 9. DUTIES OF RA OFFICERS

### I RA SECRETARY

- 9.1 The secretary shall convene meetings of the RA and shall furnish delegates with an agenda no less than twenty one days beforehand.
- 9.2 The secretary shall maintain and control the membership list of IWW members and a directory of branches.
- 9.3 The secretary shall coordinate the publication of an internal bulletin every quarter.
- 9.4 The secretary (or their appointed proxy) shall represent the RA nationally and internationally subject to oversight by the RA.
- 9.5 The secretary shall issue all RA stationery delegate credentials.
- 9.6 The secretary shall be a signatory to the RA bank account.

## II RA TREASURER

- 9.7 The treasurer shall be responsible for compiling a financial report to each meeting of the RA.
- 9.8 The treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the RA bank account.
- 9.9 The treasurer shall be a signatory to the RA bank account.

## III REGIONAL ORGANIZERS

- 9.10 The regional organizers shall be responsible for collecting dues from individual members not affiliated with existing groups or branches, and coordinating the credentialed stationery delegates in their region not attached to an existing branch or group.
- 9.11 The regional organizers shall be responsible for assisting members and groups to form branches in their region.
- 9.12 The regional organizers shall represent the RA within their region subject to oversight by the RA.

## IV SUPPLY DEPOT COORDINATOR

- 9.13 The Supply Depot coordinator shall be responsible for production and distribution of all membership supplies; including providing new members with rigging (new members packs) and delegates with new member packs, dues and assessment stamps and continuation cards.

9.14 The Supply Depot coordinator shall be responsible for distribution of BIRA publications to the full membership; including the Bread + Roses, Internal Bulletin and updated editions of the Rule Book.

9.15 The Supply Depot coordinator shall be responsible for production and distribution of the National and International Ballot Papers.

9.16 The Supply Depot coordinator shall store, advertise and supply whatever additional merchandise is produced by or has been requested by the RA.

9.17 The Supply Depot coordinator shall submit regular financial and stock reports to the RA.

## V MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATOR

9.18 The membership administrator shall be responsible for the input and maintenance of data in the RA membership database.

## VI IU NATIONAL SECRETARIES

9.19 Each National IU Secretary shall co-ordinate and oversee the ongoing development and growth of their IU at all scales up to and including RA-level, according to the Aims and Objectives laid out in Section 1.

9.20 Each National IU Secretary shall sit on the RA and submit a quarterly report for publishing in the Internal Bulletin.

9.21 National IU Secretaries may establish a RA-wide committee of their IU, and host RA-wide and regional summits for their IU, where necessary and at their discretion following consultation with IU membership and RA strategic priorities.

## 10. MEETINGS

### Regional Administration

10.1 The RA shall meet no less than four times per year or as and when necessary. A special meeting may be called at the request of two branches or on the call of the RA secretary.

10.2 The RA shall organize no less than one open meeting per year to which all members will be invited.

10.3 The RA shall call an Annual Conference in June of each year which shall determine the principles and policy of the IWW in the geographical area covered by the *Regional Administration* and shall be able to amend the Rule Book by a two thirds majority.

10.4 The RA will set the date and venue of the Annual Conference no less than three months in advance and inform the membership through the Internal Bulletin. An annual report shall be circulated to the membership at that time and a call for motions and items for the agenda will be discussed.

10.5 The agenda for the Annual Conference shall be issued no less than four weeks prior to the conference.

10.6 Representation at the Annual Conference shall be from branches and groups on the basis of one delegate for every five members or part thereof. Branches and groups determine the number of delegates to send to annual conference to represent members in good standing.

10.7 Attendance at the Annual Conference shall be open to any IWW member. All those in attendance in good standing will have speaking and voting rights.

10.8 Where no consensus at branch level can be secured delegates shall report voting on motions according to the numbers for and against any proposition.

10.9 Branches shall elect and mandate their delegate not earlier than twenty one days beforehand.

10.10 The RA shall elect a chair and minute-taker at each meeting.

## 11. DUES

11.1 Union dues (monthly) shall be as follows;

Maximum dues £8.25  
(take home pay above £1200 per month)

Standard dues £3.30  
(take home pay between £651 and £1200 pm)

Minimum dues £1.10  
(take home pay less than £651 per month)

Sub-minimum dues £1.00  
(members facing hardship such as unemployment, fixed stipend, etc.)

Any member who is a dues-paying member of a trade union should pay the full dues as based on their monthly income, unless doing so would cause the member hardship and deprivation.

11.2 The dues structure can only be revised by a referendum vote of the membership.

11.3 The RA shall have the power to levy branches at any time provided that the reasons for the levy are explained and a full account is given of expenditure.

11.4 Methods of dues payments and reporting

- a) All monthly payment of dues to the BIRA shall be by means of standing order mandate (or direct debit) except as provided for under 11.4 c);
- b) All payments other than monthly shall be 12 months dues payable in advance by cash/cheque/standing order. Such account payments shall be calculated from 1 January each year. Part payment shall be allowed during the year for new joiners on a pro rata basis for the period from the join date until 31 December;
- c) Delegates shall have discretion in cases of genuine inability to pay as per a) and b) to allow for cash payments of dues;
- d) Good standing shall be determined as per the Constitution.

## 12. REFERENDA

12.1 If at any time the RA is unable to agree on a course of action a referendum of the membership shall be carried out.

12.2 Referenda shall be conducted by postal ballot to all IWW members.

12.3 The specific regulations and procedures involved are at Appendix 1. to this Constitution.

## 13. RECALL OF OFFICERS

13.1 If branches representing 10% of the combined membership of the IWW in the region demand a recall ballot of an officer this shall be held within 28 days of the receipt of this demand.

## 14. RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS

14.1 While the aim of the IWW is to abolish the employment relationship the regulation of relations shall rest with the appropriate branches, save that;

- (a) No branch shall be permitted to agree arrangements for the deduction of union dues from wages.
- (b) No branch shall be permitted to agree to any strike-breaking or the undertaking of any work boycotted by another union.

## 15. POLITICAL PARTIES

The *Regional Administration* shall not seek to build links with any political party or anti-political sect or organization save that branches or groups of the union may co-ordinate activities with any organization sympathetic to the broad aims of the Union.

## 16. PUBLICATIONS

- 16.1 The *RA* shall establish a newsletter and a web site for informing workers outside the IWW of the activities of the Union.
- 16.2 The *RA* shall publish at least quarterly an internal bulletin to inform members of internal affairs. This must contain the minutes of the previous *RA* meeting, an agenda and details of all motions on notice and discussion topics for the next *RA* meeting and the deadline for submissions for the next IB. The internal bulletin must reach members not less than twenty one days beforehand.
- 16.3 The website administration collective shall maintain all *RA* emails list's websites, servers and provide editorial supervision subject to *RA* policy.

## 17. INFORMATION

- 17.1 The chair of each *RA* meeting shall compile a written report of the meeting which shall be distributed to branches and individuals. A branch or group shall be given the task of compiling a quarterly journal for each member. This shall be free to members.

- 17.2 The minute taker of each *RA* meeting shall distribute accurate minutes of that meeting to all branches not more than twenty one days after that meeting.

The website administration collective shall place a copy of the minutes of each *RA* meeting on the internal section of the *BIRA* website not more than twenty one days after that meeting.

## 18. AMENDMENTS

- 18.1 Amendments to this Constitution can only be made by a two-thirds vote at the Annual Conference or by referendum of all members.

## APPENDIX 1

### Procedure and Regulations for Referenda

1. The *RA* secretary shall be responsible for drawing up ballot papers.
2. All ballot papers will be sent by post to individual members no later than 21 days before the closing date of said ballot.
3. On the closing date for the receipt of ballots the audit committee shall count individual postal ballots and compile a report which shall be issued to all members.

## Procedure at Branch Meetings

4. Branches shall call meetings with a minimum of seven days notice to consider and discuss ballot questions, motions on notice for *RA* meetings, and the annual conference. Branches shall call meetings not earlier than twenty one days before *RA* meetings and Annual Conference. Any member unable to attend said meeting shall be given a postal or proxy vote for the branch meeting.

## APPENDIX 2

Guide of dates for *BIRA* meetings and Internal Bulletin schedules:

- June - Annual conference - (Host of September *BIRA* delegates conference to be decided - exact venue and date to be publicised by host branch no later than two weeks after June annual conference)
- July - IB deadline for motions for Sept delegates conference / minutes published from June annual conference. (Exact deadline date to be published in the previous IB)
- August - IB out to members.
- September - *BIRA* delegates conference - (Host of December *BIRA* delegates conference to be decided - exact venue and date to be publicised by host branch no later than two weeks after September *BIRA* delegates conference)

- October - IB deadline for motions for December delegates conference / minutes published from September *BIRA* delegates conference. (Exact deadline date to be published in the previous IB)
- October - Ballot GOB and International Ballot papers out to members.
- November - IB out to members.
- December - *BIRA* delegates conference - (Host for March *BIRA* delegates conference host to be decided - exact venue and date to be decided by host branch no later than two weeks after December *BIRA* delegates conference).
- January - IB deadline for motions for March delegates conference / minutes published from December *BIRA* delegates conference. (Exact deadline date to be published in the previous IB)
- February - IB out to members.
- March - *BIRA* delegates conference - (Host of June annual conference to be decided - exact venue and date to be decided by host branch no later than two weeks after March *BIRA* delegates conference).
- April - IB deadline for motions for June conference / minutes published from March *BIRA* delegate conference. Deadline for ballot nominations / candidate statements / constitutional amendments. (Exact deadline date to be published in the previous IB)
- May - IB and *BIRA* Ballot papers out to members.