

for “Freedom Schools” in the event of a teachers’ strike or kitchens to feed strikers. The skills that many people learned during the Capitol occupation can be shared widely. People should also begin organizing mobilization committees within their communities and make plans to support eventual picket lines, in order to show any scabs or police that strikers have community support.

For more information about Solidarity Unionism and how to defend yourself at work, look for “Labor Law for the Rank and Filer” (Staughton Lynd and Daniel Gross, 2008).

We Have the Power

We can defeat the anti-union bill and all of Walker’s cuts, and change our society for the better, if we continue to act together and return to the roots that our unions were built on. This will not be easy, and may even be scary, but if we just sit on our hands those in power will cut until we have nothing left. Those in power can intimidate us and pit us against one another, but, as Ralph Chaplin said in *Solidarity Forever*, “without our brain and muscle not a single wheel could turn.” If we act together, we have the power to resist these cuts, we have the power to go on the offensive, and we have the power to win.

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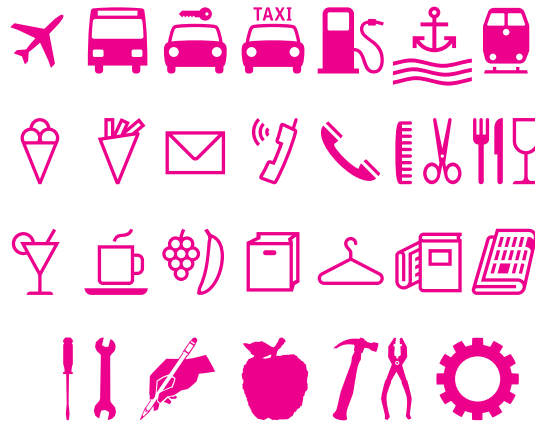
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The Longer the Picket Line The Shorter the Strike



The Power of Working Class Solidarity

What Do We Face?

Once Walker’s bill becomes law, public-sector unions will be stripped of the right to collectively bargain on issues other than basic wages. State workers will no longer have a legal say in their pensions, their health-care plans, or workplace safety. The budget bill is not just about collective bargaining -- cuts to BadgerCare, Medicaid, and food assistance programs are attacks on all of us, and will disproportionately affect people of color, immigrants, women, the unemployed, low-income workers, farmers, and children.

What’s good for corporations -- poverty wages, freedom to destroy the environment we live in, no protections against abuse at work, no social assistance to those who have been hurt by their policies -- is bad for us. What’s good for us -- control over working conditions, wages and benefits that let us lead dignified lives, protection against layoffs -- hurts profits, and corporations will do all they can to increase profitability. Those in power portray working families as the problem, yet they lead lives of wealth, privilege and power most of us can’t imagine and will never experience. Walker and his corporate allies claim that workers and poor people are at fault for the state’s budget woes. The average annual salary for a Wisconsin teacher is around \$40,000 (thousands less than the private-sector salary for workers with equivalent education). Meanwhile, David Koch, one of Walker’s biggest corporate backers, has a net worth of \$14,000,000,000, the equivalent of 350,000 teacher salaries. (There are 59,000 teachers in Wisconsin.)

This attack on workers’ rights will not stop with the public sector or with Wisconsin. Within the past month, anti-worker bills have been introduced or passed in Michigan, Ohio, Nebraska, Indiana, Iowa and Tennessee. The whole world is watching: if we let this happen here, Walker’s allies in other states will feel empowered to attack workers, but if we stand and fight, we will inspire resistance in other states.

What We Have Done

Almost as soon as Walker’s bill was announced, workers and students jumped into action without waiting to be told what to do. The capitol building

was occupied and the people quickly developed a mutual support network to serve their needs, complete with food distribution and medical teams, all created by and for the occupiers.

The Madison teachers gave a shining example of what we can do with their courageous “sickout”, helping to inspire student walk-outs as well as resolutions for solidarity and strike preparations in unions, while encouraging more people to occupy the Capitol.

The streets of downtown Madison overflowed with crowds so large that roads had to be closed off to traffic. Hundreds and thousands of miles away, people held solidarity rallies to support our efforts. Despite the distance between us, people have seen our struggle as their own.

Black Teamsters from Chicago have sung ‘Solidarity Forever’ with white school teachers from Kenosha. Unemployed factory workers from Iowa chanted in the streets with Madison nurses against cuts and concessions. University of Wisconsin students discussed strategy with Minnesota retail workers. And this is just the beginning...

From California to Bangladesh, from Egypt to the United Kingdom, people are looking to the people of Wisconsin, hoping for a working class victory. It is not enough to hope, we need to believe. If enough of us are united, we will win.

What We Still Have to Do

We must build on what we’ve already accomplished. We have to look at Walker’s plan in the context of the last 40 years. Nearly every job that can be automated or sent overseas has been outsourced, so that what 10 workers did in Milwaukee

or Detroit in 1970 is now done by 3 or 4 poorly paid workers in Mexico or China, pitting “us against them” in a race to the bottom. Workers in retail and service jobs, some of the only jobs in the US that can’t be outsourced, have usually been defeated when they’ve tried to organize for decent pay and benefits. These decades of defeat have created the “Rust Belt”, a region with few living-wage jobs where many people rely on social assistance.

Walker is trying to destroy support networks for those whose communities are already in crisis and

is working to crush the power of public employees, one of the last groups of workers that has managed to resist cuts and retain a decent standard of living. We didn't create this situation, but we can change it, as long as we remember where our strength lies: in our unity. "Workers united will never be defeated," we chant—for good reason.

The Recall

As soon as Walker's revised bill passed the state assembly, discussion centered around a recall effort. Scott Walker could be recalled in January 2012 if enough signatures are raised, and there are 8 Republican senators who are threatened with a recall as soon as June 20th. There is some hope that if enough Republican state senators are removed from office, they will be replaced with a Democrat majority.

The problem is that a recall takes our new-found energy and channels it into a drawn-out process in which we rely on politicians to act in our best interest. It is disempowering. A recall is telling people, "You can go home now, we'll take care of it." All that a recall can hope to achieve is to slow down the trend of constant cuts. What have to reverse the entire direction of things.

If workers act together, no matter what party is in office, our representatives will have to respond to our demands. Child labor laws, Medicaid, and civil rights legislation were not gifts given by politicians – they were a response to working-class mobilization. Richard Nixon, a far-right republican, greatly expanded Medicare in a bid for public support after massive protests against this administration. Change results from our collective action, not from electing a particular candidate.

During the protests in Madison, total strangers have talked and worked with each other as if they've been life-long friends. We begin to see changes in ourselves and others when we realize that we are not alone and that we will not remain isolated. Are we ready to abandon this unity? Should we just forget what we've done in the last several weeks and return to business as usual? Or should we see our shared actions and struggles as something that should not only continue, but spread?

Workplace-centered collective action is the strongest way to move forward, and would be far more effective than simply switching one group of politicians for another.

Solidarity Unionism

Before laws were passed in the '30s and '40s that institutionalized labor unions, the most effective organizing tactics avoided formal union recognition and automatic dues check-off. Unions were less of a faceless service provider and more connected to the shop-floor. Solidarity unionism affirms the central role of rank-and-file initiative in workplace change. It stands in opposition to what has been termed "business" or "service-provider" unionism: the idea that a worker joins a union to obtain material benefits in exchange for monthly dues payments, much as the worker might buy an insurance policy.

In solidarity unionism, workers carry out their own organizing. There are three fundamental principles:

1. *Rank-and-file control (every worker has an equal say in the positions/actions of the union);*
2. *Direct action;*
3. *Members carry their union membership with them, regardless of majority status, when they move on to other jobs.*

With the end of formal collective bargaining, solidarity unionism may be the only route public sector workers have to address grievances in the workplace. Sit-ins, confronting management in large numbers, slow downs, work-to-rules, pickets, "quickie strikes"; these are all successful tactics that were used by Flint auto workers in the 1930s and continue to be used by Starbucks workers today. These tactics, up to and including a general strike, can help us to rebuild the working-class solidarity that will be necessary for us to eventually defeat the anti-union bills being imposed on us.

Who Should Organize and How

Public-sector workers are the primary targets of Walker's bill. If we allow him to strip them of their rights, it will destroy the power of one of the last group of workers in the U.S. who have been able to maintain a decent standard of living by resisting cuts during the economic upheaval of the last thirty years. Additionally, the consequences of Walker's actions will affect anyone who uses public services. That is why we must fight back. The protests in Madison gained significant momentum after the "sick-out" of the Madison teachers. If all public-sector workers take action, they can inspire the rest of the state to move with them. Try to identify people who are sympathetic to the idea of collective action. Form mobilization committees and link up with like-minded groups or individuals. Build a contact list. Discuss strike preparations at your local, but be prepared for opposition from the international. Organize mass meetings with your coworkers, regardless of which union they're in, so that you can strategize together.

Private-sector workers are being told that our economic problems are a result of 'greedy public employees' defending their health care and pensions. These ideas are being pushed in order to divide us; with workers pitted against each other, we are all weaker, and Walker knows it.

Instead of blaming each other, we should be united by our common interests. We should all have decent health care, living wages, and a dignified retirement - and we can, if we fight together for these demands. Unionized workers can mobilize at their local to support a collective action, and all private-sector workers should begin meeting with their co-workers to discuss their own demands and strategy. With all of the public discussion of unions and workers' rights, non-unionized workers have a perfect opportunity to organize at their own jobs - especially if they use the "solidarity unionism" tactics discussed above, rather than the legalistic strategies that have led us to the current mess. This is an important moment in history; let's seize this opportunity to go on the offensive. Unionized workers can build their power and show that they are a force to be reckoned with. Non-unionized workers from any sector, industry, or company can organize and demand the living wages, rights, and benefits that so far have

been denied to them. Students can play a vital role in mobilizing for working-class solidarity. The economic crisis is shortening the gap between students and workers - many students are also workers, and prospects for graduates are becoming bleaker. Already, Wisconsin students have taken direct action across the state. Students must continue their support in order to protect our teachers, our university staff, our families, and our futures. Our tuition and tax dollars fund the universities, so let's reclaim the campus for ourselves! We should begin organizing for student strikes, build connections with co-workers where we hold jobs, and prepare to walk picket lines in solidarity.

It is us, the young people, who have to live with the future consequences of today's cuts, and for that reason alone, we MUST step up with all workers. Unemployed workers will be targeted by Scott Walker and his allies as potential scabs during any strike. Unemployed workers should prepare for this: there is a lot to lose if the bill passes, and a lot to gain if we defeat it together. During the Great Depression unemployed workers in Toledo organized themselves to support factory workers who were striking against overtime, forcing the company to hire more workers. Unemployed workers and public employees could fight together for things that would reduce unemployment and benefit everyone, for example to double the number of teachers in Wisconsin, or for a campaign to repair Milwaukee's infrastructure.

Agricultural communities have much to lose under Walker's proposals, as many farmers and farmworkers now stand to lose the BadgerCare that they rely on. Similarly, slashing state education funding will destroy many smaller schools that are the very heart of rural life.

Wisconsin farmers have a history of collective action, such as the 1933 milk strike, and they have already shown their solidarity with Wisconsin workers through the Tractorcade at the Wisconsin Capitol on March 12. We must continue our work to bridge the gap between the urban and rural workforce.

Everyone - union and non-union workers, students, unemployed, farmers, retirees -- is affected by Walker's budget, and we can all begin preparing to support collective action in other ways. Religious communities can prepare plans