

Don't Wait on Aramark, Strike While the Iron is Hot!

As the Philly government bulldozes through a plan to build a new arena in center city, the workers at the three stadiums in existence can't afford to feed their families. The demands that striking Aramark workers are fighting for, namely higher wages and classification as full-time workers to receive full benefits, reflect problems that are common to the entirety of the working class in the US and world. Likewise, the actual struggle of Aramark workers, from the strike at one stadium in April to the current strike at all three in Philly, reveal the broader need for workers to reclaim the control of our struggles beyond the union framework, use the most effective tactics to win our demands, and spread our struggle to the wider working class in a period of deepening economic crisis and greater sacrifices demanded of our class.

Aramark's offer for piecemeal 10¢ wage increases until arriving at \$20 in 2030 is nowhere near what workers need to survive in a time of a cost of living that has risen tremendously even over the last few years. By all measurable criteria life has gotten more expensive and more precarious for our class stretching back decades. These are the conditions of the Aramark workers, directly faced with the consequences of the unsolvable economic crisis of capital. And this also means that the union counter-offer of \$23 by 2030 is nowhere near enough to cover neither the wage cut in real terms that workers have suffered over the last few years through inflation, nor the further attacks on our wages (direct and indirect) that the ruling class is preparing for the next few years to pay for their crisis and wars, regardless of who is elected.

Workers at Aramark are not the only workers to fight against part-time qualifications which deny us wages in the form of benefits. From October-December 2021, for instance, Kellogg's workers as close as Lancaster PA fought against a two-tier wage system which ensured that the bosses could pay at part-time rates workers who had sometimes worked at the factory for decades. The refusal of Aramark to aggregate the hours worked by individual workers at different stadiums is identical in terms of its function for the bosses; maximize their returns on our back-breaking exploitation through enforcing the precarity of wider sectors of our class.

Right now workers across the US and even in other parts of Philly are striking or gearing up to, and all in response to the same class issues. Boeing workers have gone on strike for a 40% wage increase that their union tried to convince them not to fight for, and port workers in Philly might strike on October 1st for similar cost of living issues. Our struggles would be all the more powerful if we linked up, generalized them and self-organized our strikes through strike committees that stretched across workplace and industry.

Yet Aramark workers do not have to wait to place the struggle firmly in their own control and outside of the hands of the professional negotiators with the bosses. Currently the union at Aramark tells people to come to the stadiums for the games and concerts, but not to buy food and drinks. Why hold back when workers can win much easier by hitting the bosses where it hurts most, their profits? How much more likely would victory be in this strike if workers took action so that fans didn't go to stadium events at all? Stadium events over the next few days are crucial for the strike in terms of events at the stadiums, and Aramark workers can take advantage of this to win. But to do so, it will require the workers to self-organize the struggle on their own, outside of the union, which is tasked with maintaining the class peace between employers and employed. When what is really needed at Aramark and internationally is for any notion of truce between the global class of exploiters and wage-slaves to be ripped to shreds.



The Internationalist Workers' Group - Internationalist Communist Tendency

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