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# THE SERVICE WORKER



## “Results of the SBWU Strike”

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The SBWU strike ended the only way that was expected: a complete failure. Despite all plans within the union pointing to a specific end date, SBWU nationally is either stuck in denial or purposefully obfuscating the truth, claiming that the strike is still going on in some places. This is, of course, entirely untrue. In some areas, the only “organizing” left is local leaders pushing the rank-and-file members to go to their rallies for Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), which is a national organization known for acting in opportunistic ways such as usurping local movements and harboring abusers. Planning and meetings have ceased, but leadership at all levels keep repeating that they can still win their bargaining agreement.

The contract that SBWU is pushing is a spineless one. Under the wages being fought for, there is no proposal of an immediate pay increase beyond a 2% increase to be applied at the time of ratifying the contract, nor a proposal for an increased starting wage. All other raises and bonuses are just “at the discretion of Starbucks”, and the proposed starting wage is \$17, meaning that the areas with higher minimum wages are receiving no economic benefits whatsoever.

In the shops, it is as if the strike never even happened. Conditions are exactly the same as they were before the strike began, and management acts like no action occurred. Employees aren’t allowed to talk about the strike at work, but those who participated share their disappointment about how the strike went down. Many did not receive their strike-pay when it was expected, and many agree that they could have been paid more and been on strike for longer if the union had utilized their resources better.

As it stands now, SBWU has absolutely no leverage left and is stuck begging for a worthless, sell-out contract that likely will never get passed. While disappointing, it is unfortunately unsurprising for those who have been criticizing the method of organizing of the Starbucks union since it got absorbed by Workers United of the SEIU. SBWU is like all other unions that have been co-opted by the state, in that the business-like structure and necessary opportunism of high level leadership quells worker power instead of wielding it. In the midst of this failure, instead of giving up it is important that we redirect the enthusiasm of the workers, and return Starbucks organizing to an independent union effort.

Starbucks workers must pick up the pieces of our shattered movement and begin building it anew, without the bureaucrats in far away offices lying through their teeth about the supposedly wonderful new contract they are proposing, without setting our strikes up for failure, without multi million dollar investments into the very companies workers are fighting with. Starbucks workers must turn away from state unionism and go their own way, this new organizing can start small, and will likely have to. Talk with your fellow baristas about the strike, and the criticisms of SBWU, organize studies of New Labor publications like the Service Worker, organize slowdowns and work stoppages, make demands to your store managers, talk with baristas from other stores in your district. Working people in this country can no longer afford to merely play at union organizing, the time has long come to get serious and to cast aside all illusions about the state unions that supposedly work in the workers interests.

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