



STRIKE

WHAT IS A STRIKE ?

A Strike, in short, is when the working class withholds resources from the ruling class. Most of the time this comes in the form of a Labor Strike where Employees withhold labor from their Employer until a goal is met.

WHY STRIKE ?

The purpose of a Strike is typically for the working class to gain power “over” the ruling class long enough to get their needs met.

Common reasons people Strike: better pay, better working conditions, better living conditions, need for healthcare.

When we talk about a Strike most people have just one idea in their mind of what a Strike looks like. That idea is typically based on their lived experience. The truth is, however, that there are SEVERAL different types of Strikes. If one doesn't seem like it will work for you, maybe another will.

GENERAL STRIKE -

A General Strike is when all workers, regardless of their Union status or place of employment, are invited to withhold resources until a need is met. General Strikes are typically enacted to meet Political needs and that is why they have such a wide invitation for participation. These often target local and national governments via affecting the broader economy in addition to asking anything specific from their employer.

ROLLING STRIKE -

A Rolling Strike is when everyone invited to strike decides not to participate all at once. Instead, one department, Union, or location will Strike for the first few days and then another for the next few days and so on. This reduces risk for employees and the people they serve but it causes hardship for the employer (or government) because they don't know what will be affected next.

UNION STRIKE -

A Union Strike is a targeted specific Strike where members of a particular Union decide to Strike together to meet a set of goals. As members of a Union the Strikers are usually protected from losing their jobs. An example would be local school teachers striking until they get a raise that meets living wage standards.

Different Types of Union Strikes -

1. An **Official Union Strike** is just what it sounds like. A Strike authorized by the Union Leader and members. Official Strikes hold certain legal protections for the Striking workers and that is one reason why they are so effective. If you are an employer, your workers stop working, and you can't legally fire them then you are forced to the bargaining table.
2. A **Wildcat Strike** is when Union members choose to Strike without official Union approval. These usually happen when workers feel they are not being fairly represented by their Union. These strikes are usually not protected by labor laws but are often effective as they take everyone off guard.
3. A **Sympathy Strike** is when Union members choose to Strike in sympathy with other Strikers. The Public Health Department might choose to Strike to support already Striking Nurses, for example.

WORKING STRIKE -

A Working Strike is when workers use creative means to cause work stoppage until their needs are met. This differs from a formal strike where workers clearly walk out of the workplace to Strike. Even though unofficial these Strikes sometimes allow workers to keep getting paid.

Different Types of Working Strikes -

1. A **Sit-Down Strike** is when workers come to work and sit-down without doing any labor for the company. It resembles the commonly known protest tactic called a "Sit-In". This prevents the company from hiring temporary workers during the Strike.
2. A **Sick-Out Strike** is just like it sounds, it is when workers call in sick, in mass. This causes a work stoppage while protecting jobs.
3. A **Work-to-Rule Strike** is when workers do exactly the bare minimum amount of work as outlined in their employment contract. While this may sound minimal there are several industries for which this has major economic impact.
4. A **Hunger Strike** is when workers voluntarily choose not to eat, or to eat the bare minimum to survive. This causes work slow downs and shames the employer while allowing employees to maintain their pay. This also often attracts media attention.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF STRIKES -

There are not only different types of Strikes but there are various classifications of Strikes as well.

National vs. Local -

A **National Strike** invites all workers within the Nation to participate, either individually or within their Unions. National Strikes are usually aimed at larger Political goals.

A **Local Strike** is more specific and targeted. It requires less coordination and is the most common type of Strike.

Closed vs. Open-Ended -

A **Closed Strike** has a set timeline., the Strike ends on a specific date. These serve to remind the employer of the power of its employees without shutting down work indefinitely.

An **Open-Ended Strike** has no set timeline. The Strike continues so long as the demand is not met.

Labor vs. Other

A **Labor Strike** is when workers withhold Labor from their Employer & the Economy.

A **Tax Strike** is when workers withhold their taxes from the federal or state government.

A **Rent Strike** is when renters withhold their payments from their Landlord.

IT'S TIME TO STRIKE!

When people online call for a Strike to meet our Political needs what most of them are calling for is a **National - General - Closed - Labor - Strike**.

A Strike where everyone in the United States and its occupied Territories stop working for a set amount of days to remind the government the power of the people so they will work on meeting our demands.

Some people are even calling for an **Open-Ended - Labor - Strike** where nobody returns to work until those demands are met which increases pressure on the State but raises risk for Strikers as it threatens them with things like Homelessness and loss of Health Care.

An **Open-Ended - Rolling - Labor - Strike** might be more effective toward that end, or an **Open-Ended - Working - Strike**, as both reduce the risk to Strikers daily living needs.

WHAT MAKES A STRIKE EFFECTIVE?

For a Strike to be effective it needs **Participation**, the more the better. Beyond that there are other factors that help as well:

1. **Clear Goals** are critical for a successful Strike. After all, the ruling class needs to know what your Demands are in order to meet them.
2. A **Disruption of Operations** is necessary for a Strike to be effective. The goal of a Strike is to impact the ruling class by removing resources like labor, taxes, and rent.
3. It is necessary to **Understand and Target the Vulnerabilities of the Opposition** because knowing what causes the most impact for the ruling class increases chances of success significantly.
4. During a Strike **Union Support** is always helpful. The more Union Support a Strike has, even a General Strike, the better the results. And faster too.
5. **Public Support**, particularly via the **Media**, can greatly improve the chances of Striker success. It puts more pressure on the ruling class to capitulate.
6. **Striker Support** is useful for increasing chances of success. Providing meals, relief funds, encouragement for Strikers allows them to reduce risk from participation and to Strike for longer periods of time if necessary.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING:

- In the United States Local Strikes have been more successful than larger National Strikes. While National and General Strikes have had significant impact, the immediate demands of the Strikers are often not met in favor of larger political promises, that are only sometimes fulfilled. It is important to keep in mind is that the State's response to General Strikes has often been to then create more policy to over-police the working class. That's not to say we shouldn't try these methods of Strike, only that we might want to be creative in how we move, be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past.
- The most successful Labor Strikes are often the ones in that pull in a large Sympathy Strike, particularly when those Sympathy Strikers are from key sectors in the city (transport, shipping, medical etc).
- Using the Sick-Out and Work-to-Rule Strike methods have helped folks put pressure on their employers, and the larger economy, without risking their jobs in the same way that a more traditional labor strike does. These are particularly useful for non-Union workers.
- Strikes that support their workers by preparing for State pushback and by offering services such as feeding the participants are better received by the public and have greater success.

NOT EVERYONE HAS TO PARTICIPATE

Those who can - do. Those who cannot - help those who can.

While it is true that the more people the better in a Strike, it is also important to recognize that not everyone needs to participate.

At this time in history a Strike can still be successful even if this most vulnerable are unable to participate in a full capacity. Those who can take risk, do. Those who cannot have the job of supporting and encouraging those who can.

This is important for a couple of reasons. First, if we struggle to START a Strike because not everyone can take the risk then a lot of people suffer while we work that out. Second, allowing the most vulnerable to take a more supportive role helps prevent inequity. After all, too many times those suffering most are expected to carry the lead in social justice movements. We don't need to continually replicate that dynamic.

A NOTE ON MUTUAL AID

Sometimes folks get caught up in the question of Mutual Aid. The short of it is: It is really helpful but not necessary for a successful Strike. Each community can decide for themselves how they want to handle Mutual Aid (Striker Support). Here are a couple ideas:

Large Financial Support Fund: This is hard to organize because even if you do get an appropriate amount of donations there is a lot of community policing involved in regards to who gets help and how much. In the end it can be a legal nightmare.

Community Needs Board: create a physical (and online) space for folks in your community to post their needs and encourage others to read it and work to meet those needs. People get helped but there's no large fund to draw legal concerns.

Community Needs Pop-Up: instead of having people post their needs create a regular "pop-up" event where food, items, assistance is offered to those in need. Be adaptable, add to the pop-up as you become aware of new needs.

Community Support Radio: create a short-wave radio network where folks can speak their needs and offer to meet them as they arise. This keeps people in touch without putting the organizing burden on one small group of people.

SUGGESTED LIST OF DEMANDS LITE

Affordable Housing

Universal Healthcare

Living Wages

End to Police Violence

Right to Clean Water

End of Contributions to Israel

Fair Taxing of Billionaires

Equitable Immigration Policy

Sanctions for Corporate Food Waste

Progressive Climate Policy

Restoration of all DEI initiatives

**There are so many things we could ask for to improve the lives of us all.
Dream with me!**

IN CONCLUSION

There are many different ways the working class can use the Strike to influence the ruling class to meet their needs. While Strikes do take some work to organize they are both effective and well within our reach. Even if we fail we can always recover, learn from our mistakes, and try again.

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