

BUILD OUR POWER – SPREAD THE STRIKE

The strike is now spreading. With each passing day it seems to gather steam – a sickout here, a teach-in there, marches on administration buildings, solidarity pickets and sit ins, all culminating in decisive and enthusiastic “YES!” votes being cast in strike polls.

Where we once felt the inertia of an unresponsive union bureaucracy, we’re now riding on a wave of self determined momentum. Though resignation had before appeared to be the only option in the face of an inadequate contract, militancy and workers’ self-organization have jolted both our peers and ourselves into shaking off this useless self pity. A new path has emerged, blazed first by workers at Santa Cruz, but now widening and branching off onto campuses statewide.

We have conjured a mass movement, which presents us now with this choice: allow it to be smothered by fear and self-doubt already trickling in through the expected channels, or, to animate it by reproducing our activity in every corner of the state. For it to live, we must spread the strike.

No one can say for sure what lies ahead. The coming struggle requires us what has oftentimes thought to be unachievable: we must contest the power of one of the world’s largest employers, we must fight on the terrain of a housing crisis decades in the making, and we must make clear that the rank and file, not bosses or bureaucracy, determines the agenda of our union. This will be a long struggle, but the COLA movement proves our power everyday.

Already, fellow workers within and outside the academy cite us as an example of a worker militancy once thought to have been lost in this country. In the words of one midwestern UAW auto plant worker watching our wildcat from afar: “This

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system is complete and utter bullshit [...] These graduate workers know the game and are actually doing something to change it.”

Beyond simply a COLA, what would it look like to rid ourselves of the ‘system’s bullshit’? A worker-student run university would be a good start. The American University in general, and the UC in particular, is a microcosm of the ills which infect our society: austerity measures fuelled by capitalist greed and brutality which seek to break the will of those who dare imagine and build a better future; a militarized police force intent on protecting property interests and maintaining a racist, colonial social order; and ecologically disastrous policies based in the myth of never-ending expansion, extraction, and profit. If we continue building our power, the seeming impossibility of radical, bottom-up transformation starts to melt away – much the same way that our pessimism about a system-wide wildcat strike is melting away now. Another university is possible. Another world is possible.

We *believe*, as the chant goes, that we *will win*. Not only will we win our COLA, but we will also win a combative spirit to carry into the next struggle.

Let’s Go.

Written and edited by UC graduate worker members of Black Rose Anarchist Federation
www.blackrosefed.org



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