“These workers will still be living in poverty…”

Los Angeles area high school students express support for education workers continuing struggle against sellout tentative agreement

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After working without a contract for three years, some 30,000 public school support workers in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), joined by 35,000 teachers, went on a three-day strike last week, shutting down schools in the second largest school district in the United States.

Despite the immense support the strike received from students and the broader working class, members of Service Employees International union (SEIU) Local 99, which include maintenance, cafeteria, warehouse and other school staff, were ordered back on the job by the union bureaucracy Friday morning. Only later that afternoon was a tentative agreement announced.

On Monday the SEIU released the details of the full agreement. They confirm that the deal is a massive betrayal of workers. The pathetic wage “increases” barely even keep pace with inflation, leaving the majority of the SEIU membership making poverty wages in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

The *World Socialist Web Site* will be publishing a more complete analysis of the agreement in the very near future. However, what has been revealed so far already falls well short of the expectations of Los Angeles area students, who overwhelmingly support their public school staff.

Students in the Los Angeles area expressed their support for the powerful three-day strike and questioned the so-called “socialists” in the Democratic Socialists of America, which controls both the United Teachers Los Angeles union and the LA school board, who characterized the agreement as a “big victory.”

A high school student from Torrance, a city in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County, told this reporter that he had “heard about the strike and the contract that was offered to the service workers. There was an article in *Jacobin* that said that, basically, the service workers ‘won big.’ That is what I discovered about *Jacobin*—that is my biggest pet peeve with them—whatever contract it is, no matter what it is, it is a ‘big win.’

“*Jacobin* always takes—if you want to give them the benefit of the doubt—they always take the positive view. But actually looking at it, they just say any action by the union is a ‘victory.’ They [*Jacobin*] did not mention that the 30 percent wage increases won’t kick in for most workers until 2024. They did not mention that not all workers get these raises, it is dependent on when you were hired.

“And the workers’ main demand, to have more consistent hours, because no one can survive working on 8 hours a week, that was left out of the contract. And that was left out of the [*Jacobin*] article.

“So that kind of made it hit closer to home...These workers will still be living in poverty. They won’t get out of poverty, like, if you are drowning, this contract won’t get you out of the water. You will still be in the water.”

Gene, a senior in LAUSD, told the WSWS that he wanted to, “show my support for all the staff working tirelessly for all of us students. My school being in the Palisades is a lot wealthier compared to most other schools in the Los Angeles area. But due to its independent charter status, the workers here did not go on strike, the school was still open during the three

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days all week long.

“But even before my first day here I was experiencing the effects of its budget cuts, other students as well. I live in the town of Topanga, which my school ended up dropping from its bus routes my freshman year. Parents had to figure out a way to coordinate getting their kids to school. We ended up using a carpool situation.

“Our school is pretty big, 3,000 students. And to alleviate the burden on the cafeteria staff we had portable food carts. But all of a sudden when we came back in person last year they were just all gone, and since then the lines in the cafeteria extend all the way out to the quad and past the eating area.

“Throughout the entire district the budget cuts are happening and are being done to upend the money situation, just feeding money into the hands of the people already making it and cutting it from us, from the bus rides to the cafeteria workers, all of it.”

Public education workers and their supporters looking to fight back against the sellout SEIU contract are encouraged to fill out the form below.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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