



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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U.S. Disney workers win campaign for higher wages, health care, 2008-2011

14 August

2008

to: 5 December

2011

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: *Anaheim, California*

Location Description: *Disneyland Park and Resort*

Goals:

Workers demanded pay raises and better work conditions for 2,100 workers.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 098. Quickie walkout (lightning strike) › Union workers stage first walkout in protest

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 038. Marches
- 097. Protest strike › Workers went on a one-day strike to voice their discontent

Methods in 4th segment:

- 016. Picketing
- 034. Vigils › Vigils were held in solidarity with fasting workers
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast) › The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)›7 workers began a hunger strike, which was picked up by 7 different workers after 7 days

Methods in 5th segment:

- 036. Performances of plays and music › Tom Morello, lead singer of Rage Against the Machine, played in solidarity with the striking workers at a protest.
- 038. Marches

Methods in 6th segment:

- 038. Marches

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Group characterization:

- Workers at the Disneyland resorts
- ranging from character impersonators to custodians

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Ada Briceno, leader of Unite Here 681

Partners:

Not known

External allies:

Not known

Involvement of social elites:

Tom Morello, lead singer of Rage Against the Machine

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- Unite Here 681
- Unite Here! local 11

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 6 months

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Disneyland Parks and Resort

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

Not known

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

On 31 January 2008, the Walt Disney corporation's workers represented by the union Unite Here Local 11 found themselves without a labor contract. Workers held meetings with management to discuss new contract plans, but the talks fell through. Most importantly, the workers hoped to secure a health-care plan in which they would not have to contribute their own wages. However, Disney favored a health care plan that would include worker contributions.

On 14 August 2008, thousands of Disney workers took to the streets and marched from Disney-owned Paradise Pier hotel to the California Disneyland entrance. Twenty-eight demonstrators were arrested after they stopped traffic in front of the park.

Union workers and Disney representatives met several times in the next few weeks, but no new contract was agreed upon. On 6 December 2009, workers staged a walkout, leaving their positions in the middle of the day in protest.

Seeing that they needed to be more extreme in their attempt to affect change, on 10 February 2010, workers organized and began a weeklong hunger strike, with seven employees, two union representatives, and one child of a Disney worker all participating.

Later that year, on 10 June 2010, union hotel workers decided to go on strike for one day. After another year of protracted talks, in May 2011, Disney agreed to pay raises for 2,100 workers.

After another series of talks, on 5 December 2011, the Disney hotel union approved an employment agreement, which guaranteed a multi-year contract and a union-backed healthcare plan. The workers also won a guarantee of a 3% increase in salary each year for the duration of the contract agreement.

The campaign ended with the workers satisfied in their efforts to affect change in their working conditions.

Research Notes

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