



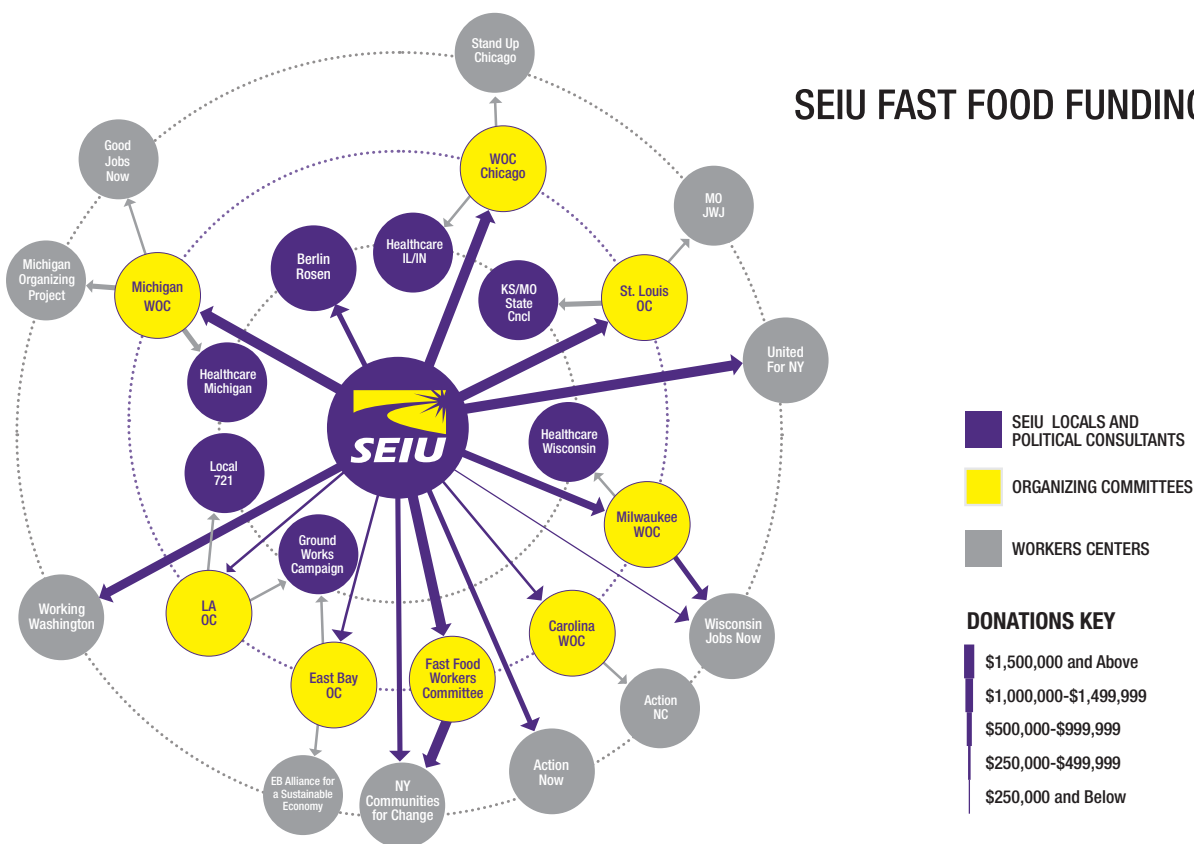
THE UNION MONEY BEHIND THE FAST FOOD “STRIKES”

Since late 2012, there have been numerous demonstrations—termed “strikes” by organizers—against various fast food establishments, with the participants arguing for higher minimum wages and unionization. Contrary to appearances, the campaign is not a grassroots effort: It is stage-managed by political consultancy and public relations firm Berlin Rosen and funded to the tune of \$15 million by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

There is little evidence that the protests are worker-driven or have rallied actual fast-food employees to any significant degree. Reports in the Associated Press¹ indicated that at recent demonstrations “it wasn’t clear how many participants were fast-food workers, rather than campaign organizers, supporters or members of the public relations firm that has been coordinating media efforts.” Even labor movement newspaper *In These Times* has been skeptical of the level of employee involvement in the protests.²

SEIU—The Funding Muscle

According to Labor Department filings, the SEIU has spent over \$15 million on the fast food campaign since January 2013, mostly through a tangled web of front groups.



To keep itself out of the limelight, SEIU organizers have created an elaborate network of “Workers Organizing Committees” (WOCs). Purportedly independent, WOCs are almost entirely funded by SEIU. The groups form an intricate web, with SEIU funding the “worker centers” through the WOCs. Many of the WOCs receive upwards of 90 percent of their revenue in direct subsidies from SEIU national headquarters.

Additionally, the WOC leadership as stated in Labor Department filings show strong ties to SEIU: WOC Presidents and other officers are also employees and officers of SEIU and SEIU local unions.

COMMITTEE	OFFICE	NAME	SEIU CONNECTION
NYC's Fast Food Workers Committee	<i>President</i>	Kendall Fells	SEIU City Coordinator
NYC's Fast Food Workers Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Kevin J. Doyle	SEIU 32BJ Special Adviser
Carolina Workers Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Benjamin Wilkins	SEIU Organizing Coordinator
Carolina Workers Organizing Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Anthony Coles	Workers United SEIU Southern Region Joint Board Manager
East Bay Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Ryan Dowling	SEIU City Coordinator
Los Angeles Workers Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Martin Manteca	SEIU 721 Director of External Organizing
Los Angeles Workers Organizing Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Anton Farmby	At-Large VP of SEIU United Service Workers-West
Michigan Workers Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Mark Raleigh	Chief of Staff for SEIU Healthcare Michigan
Michigan Workers Organizing Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Zac Altefagt	Communications Director of SEIU Healthcare Michigan
Milwaukee Workers Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Michael Lauer	SEIU City Coordinator
Milwaukee Workers Organizing Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Jacqueline McElroy	SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin VP-Long Term Care Unit
St Louis Organizing Committee	<i>President</i>	Wes McEnany	SEIU Local 1 Employee
St Louis Organizing Committee	<i>Secretary</i>	Shannon Hilton	SEIU Local 1 Employee
Workers Organizing Committee of Chicago	<i>President</i>	E.J. Serrano	SEIU Healthcare IL/IN VP and Organizing Director
Workers Organizing Committee of Chicago	<i>VP</i>	Flora Johnson	SEIU Healthcare IL/IN Board Member
Workers Organizing Committee of Chicago	<i>Secretary</i>	Caleb Jennings	SEIU Organizing Coordinator

Berlin Rosen: The Puppet Masters

Berlin Rosen, Ltd. is a public relations firm and campaign consultancy founded by former New York State Senate Democrat communications flacks Valerie Berlin and Joshua Rosen. The consultancy does significant amounts of work for liberal organizations, Democratic politicians—most notably New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio—and labor unions.

According to 2013 annual reports with the Labor Department, in that fiscal year Berlin Rosen received nearly \$4 million from various unions. In addition to running SEIU's fast food campaign, Berlin Rosen has been retained by other major labor unions to push Big Labor's agenda:

- The Communications Workers of America retained Berlin Rosen to consult on corporate campaigns against Verizon and Cablevision;
- The United Food and Commercial Workers retained Berlin Rosen to consult on campaigns related to OUR Walmart, its in-house attack front against the retailer;
- Berlin Rosen has also been paid to conduct campaigns by New York-area locals of UNITE HERE, the SEIU, UFCW, and the American Nurses Association.

In total, Berlin Rosen received over \$3.25 million since 2012 from the SEIU and its local unions for all campaigns, including the fast food "strikes."

2013 UNION SPENDING DIRECTED TO BERLIN ROSEN	
Service Employees National Headquarters	\$848,847
Service Employees Healthcare IL/IN	\$386,177
Service Employees Healthcare Pennsylvania	\$288,291
Service Employees Local Union 32	\$40,566
New York State Nurses Association	\$15,000
Communications Workers AFL-CIO National Headquarters	\$1,711,978
Food & Commercial Workers New York/Northern New Jersey District Council	\$75,000
Food & Commercial Workers National Headquarters	\$240,614
Change To Win National Headquarters	\$151,438
Communications Workers AFL-CIO Local Union 3	\$80,000
New York Hotel Trades Council	\$22,000
Service Employees District 1199	\$54,565
Unite Here Local Union 6	\$13,750
TOTAL 2013 UNION SPENDING TO BERLIN ROSEN	\$3,928,226

The End Game: Unionization

SEIU's strategy, as reported in [In These Times](#), follows a three-stage plan.²

- Rally public support for a doubling of the federal minimum wage, enacting it in as many jurisdictions as possible;
- Eliminate the legal distinction between franchisor and franchisee insofar as it applies to employment; and
- Organize restaurant employees by making card-check agreements at the national brand (franchisor) level.

The "rally" stage is in advanced operation. It consists of the protests (purported "strikes") and legislative action at the city level such as Seattle's \$15 minimum wage proposal and ballot measures for wage hikes in San Francisco, San Diego, and Washington, D.C.

Recent litigation implicating franchisor companies in the alleged "wage theft" of franchisees indicates the second phase is underway.

The registration by the WOCs as labor organizations confirms their representational objective. Members of the media shouldn't be fooled into thinking that any unionization demand is coming from employees—it's coming from professional agents of one of America's largest and most powerful labor unions.

Appendix

¹Candace Choi, "Fast-food protests shift focus to 'wage theft,'" Associated Press, March 18, 2014, <http://www.azfamily.com/news/slideshows/Fast-food-protests-shift-focus-to-wage-theft-250874521.html>

²Arun Gupta, "Fight for 15 Confidential," In These Times, November 11, 2013, http://inthesetimes.org/article/15826/fight_for_15_confidential

SEIU FAST FOOD CAMPAIGN SPENDING		
SEIU	WOC Chicago	\$1,794,932
SEIU	Michigan WOC	\$1,478,950
SEIU	St Louis OC	\$75,000
SEIU	St Louis OC	\$1,458,592
SEIU L 32	Black Institute	\$30,000
SEIU L 32	NY Communities for Change	\$10,000
SEIU	MassUniting	\$18,450
SEIU	NY Communities for Change	\$889,864
SEIU	United For NY	\$100,000
SEIU	Wisconsin Jobs Now	\$45,656
SEIU	Action Now	\$767,188
SEIU	United For NY	\$1,443,682
SEIU	Milwaukee WOC	\$1,327,500
SEIU	Carolina WOC	\$300,893
SEIU	Fast Food Workers Committee	\$1,862,370
SEIU L 32	Ny Communities Organizing Fund	\$30,000
SEIU	East Bay OC	\$306,303
SEIU	LA OC	\$400,000
SEIU L 32	Berlin Rosen Ltd	\$40,556
SEIU	Berlin Rosen Ltd	\$811,047
SEIU	Berlin Rosen Ltd	\$37,800
SEIU	Working Washington	\$1,800,000
SEIU	Working Washington	\$781,784
SEIU GRAND TOTAL		\$15,810,567

For additional information, please visit WorkerCenters.com, or give us a call at (202) 463-7106.