

Union-Backed "Fight For \$15" Campaign Marginalizes Larger Struggle for Worker Power

September 10, 2015

Interview with Arun Gupta, journalist and a founding editor of New York City's *Independent* newspaper, conducted by Scott Harris:

<http://btlonline.org/2015/mp3/150918a-btl-gupta.mp3>



It's been almost three years since the movement for a living wage burst into protest, first in New York City and then in dozens of other cities and towns across the U.S.

In its short life span, the national campaign for a hike in the minimum wage has seen significant victories, including announcements from fast-food giant McDonald's and America's largest retailers, Walmart and Target, announcing they would increase the base pay for their lowest paid employees. Elsewhere, 11 states have legislated minimum wage increases and major cities, including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles have passed measures that will phase in a \$15 hourly wage.

The national workers alliance known as "Fight for 15," is backed by the Service Employees International Union, which has initiated other successful organizing drives including the Justice for Janitors campaign. SEIU has spent millions on organizing major protests, job walkouts, pickets and a sophisticated public relations campaign designed to move public opinion in favor of minimum wage increases. A recent National Labor Relations Board ruling will make it easier for unions to negotiate contracts for employees working at fast-food chains and other companies with franchises using contract labor.

Between The Lines' Scott Harris spoke with Arun Gupta, a founding editor of New York City's *Independent* newspaper and a widely published journalist. Here, he examines the strengths and weaknesses of the Fight for 15 campaign for higher wages that he's written about in an article titled "Wage Gains Won't Last, Unless Fight for 15 Builds Worker Power."

For more information on New York City's *Independent* newspaper, visit <https://independent.org> and Arun Gupta's blog, see <http://arungupta.com>.

Reposted from Between The Lines, a weekly radio newsmagazine.

