

# THE ORGANIZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA NATIONAL OFFICE

DEC 2011/ JAN 2012

## From Wukan to Wall Street - A Democratic Socialist Year in Review

by Billy Wharton Co-Chair Socialist Party USA

2011 ended just as it began – with mass protests against a deeply authoritarian regime. This time it was in the Chinese village of Wukan a place that had once been a “showcase of growth and harmony,” but is now transformed into the center of protests against inequality and political corruption. A Chinese official sent to quell the protests caused by the dissident villagers described the mood, “the public’s awareness of democracy, equality and rights is constantly strengthening, and their corresponding demands are growing.” What a perfect summary of the spirit of 2011, a year when people all over the world began to realize their collective strength and ability to change the course of history.

Not surprisingly, 2011 was a great year for the Socialist Party USA. Our organization has grown over the past year. Even better, we have grown in a healthy manner by adding new members who are interested in spreading the message of democratic socialism and new locals in areas where there were none before. Places like Philadelphia, Salt Lake City and in various parts of California all now have fledgling socialist locals. This is a signal that the long hard winter of left-wing political organizing in the United States may finally be ending. And nothing helped to thaw the ice more than Occupy.

Occupy Wall Street connected Americans with the wave of protests taking place across the globe. It has been a collective eruption of the pent up anger and frustration building at the base of our society. Chants of “We are the 99% (and so are you)” and “Banks Got Bailed Out, We Got Sold Out,” resonated with millions of people who had seen their homes, their jobs and their futures destroyed by yet another capitalist economic crisis.

Socialist Party USA members have been involved in Occupy from the start. We were there on the first day in Downtown Manhattan and we led one of the first break away marches toward Wall Street. We were there on the Brooklyn Bridge facing down the police and joining 700 others in going to jail for a movement. We have also participated in countless hours of organizing meetings and political discussion. And we have participated in nearly every other Occupy action at locations throughout the country.

We intend to be builders of this movement – broadening it, inviting more poor and working class people in and lending our organizing expertise to Occupy. Simultaneously, we offer our vision of democratic socialism in order to create a society based on peace, solidarity and justice.

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## North East Regional & California State Meeting Organizing on Both Coasts

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, SPUSA members gathered on both coasts for regional/state meetings.



In Los Angeles, members from across the state of California gathered in Los Angeles for a state meeting. Attendees were joined by SPUSA presidential candidate Stewart Alexander and discussed the presidential campaign, youth organizing and voted to

charter a brand new Party Local, the San Francisco Bay Area Socialist Party!

On the same day, members from New Jersey, NYC and Connecticut met in Stamford, CT for a North East Tri-State Regional Meeting. The attendees discussed Occupy Wall Street, anti-war work, electoral campaigns, fundraising and better cooperation in the region.



The next regional will be held in April in New York City.

## The Spirit of Occupy Wall Street Continues

Socialist Party members across the U.S. have continued their work as part of the on-going “Occupy” actions, including taking part in the November mobilization against President Obama’s corporate fundraising tour of Manhattan.



Pictured above, SPNYC members Kim Ortiz and Zelig Stern join other protestors in NYC to protest Obama’s visit with military contractors.

## ***Year in Review continued...***

2012 promises to be an even more exciting year for socialists. We will continue our positive work with the Occupy movement. As the capitalist economic crisis produces even deeper negative effects on working people, OWS may grow even stronger. We welcome the return of protest politics to the American political landscape. We want to extend the use of non-violent civil disobedience. We want to broaden the challenges to the top 1%. We can make history in 2012, transforming it from the "year of the protester" to the year of democratic revolution.

We also have an exciting electoral campaign to wage in 2012 that will challenge the two ruling parties of the system. In addition to our local candidates for office, Stewart Alexander from California and Alex Mendoza from Texas are our Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. They will draw on the long tradition of socialist presidential campaigns such as those of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas while rooting their message in the growing present-day desire for jobs for all, healthcare for all and an end to stranglehold of the Military Industrial Complex. Alexander/Mendoza 2012 will be a campaign of real hope, a place that offers a few answers to the question of whether another world is possible.

Socialists have the "patient impatience" that Dr. Martin Luther King once spoke about in relation to the Civil Rights movement. We are patiently growing our organization and, in the process, working to strengthen the movements we are engaged in. Yet, we also feel the impatience for change expressed by the Wukan protests, by those engaged in last year's Arab Spring and by the Occupy protests.

We hope that 2012 will be our year to help to place democratic socialism where it belongs – as the preferred political choice for poor and working class people.

If you are already a member, I ask you to continue to expand our message organize locally in the name of the Socialist Party, help build a local Occupy movement and encourage others to Vote Socialist in 2012. If you are not organized, but are interested, I encourage you to contact us and learn more about the positive possibilities and history of democratic socialism.

Working together, we can transform this country from a playground for the 1% to a healthy, productive society that operates democratically.

## ***The Organizer***

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The Socialist Party USA is putting out a call for candidates to fill open positions. These are all volunteer positions and will be filled by the National Committee or National Action Committee.

**The following positions are now open and will be filled at the January NC Meeting:**

**Editor of *The Socialist***- The Editor of *The Socialist* is a Party officer and oversees production of *The Socialist* under the guidance of the Editorial Board (which is elected by the National Committee). The Editor also has a seat on the Party's National Action Committee.

**SPUSA Treasurer**- The Party's Treasurer oversees the Party's Treasury and submits financial report to the National Committee. The Treasurer also has a seat on the Party's National Action Committee.

Send applications to [natsec@socialistparty-usa.org](mailto:natsec@socialistparty-usa.org) with information on your background and any other information you would like to share.

## **CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO HOST THE 2012 SPUSA NATIONAL ORGANIZING CONFERENCE**

The Socialist Party has put out a call for proposals to host the 2012 SPUSA National Organizing Conference.

**Info:** <http://socialistparty-usa.org/noc2012.html>

**Deadline for proposals:** January 21, 2012

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**January 28-29, 2012: Socialist Party National Committee Meeting - Dallas, TX**

**February 1, 2012: Deadline for Hammer & Tongs** – send articles (1500 word max- no personal attacks on other members) to [natsec@socialistparty-usa.org](mailto:natsec@socialistparty-usa.org) or SPUSA/H&T 339 Lafayette St. #303 NY, NY 10012

The Organizer is the newsletter of the Socialist Party USA National Office. Subscriptions are free to members and sustainers. For bulk copies contact the SPUSA National Office at 339 Lafayette St. #303 New York, NY 10012. The Editor is Greg Pason, National Secretary.