

# The Organizer

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA NATIONAL OFFICE

FEBRUARY 2013

## Join Us in Celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the reconstitution of the Socialist Party USA



On Memorial Day 1973, the Socialist Party USA was reconstituted after the breakup of the old Socialist Party of America. The Socialist Party USA proudly celebrates our 40th anniversary this year.

Over the last 40 years the Party has grown and continued the struggle for democratic socialism, led by rank-n-file members in the labor, student, anti-war and women's movements.

To celebrate our 40th anniversary, the Party will promote our unique history and ideas and hold a series of conferences, public forums and celebratory /educations events.

### These events will include:

- 40th Anniversary events starting on International Women's Day 2013
- A formal campaign kick off press conference on April 30, 2013 (web streamed)
- Local and regional events from May through early June
- A national 40th Anniversary Forum to be held during the weekend of the June 8 -9, 2013

### Stay up-to-date:

[www.socialistparty-usa.net/spusa-40th-anniversary.html](http://www.socialistparty-usa.net/spusa-40th-anniversary.html)

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.

## SPUSA CALLS FOR CLOSING GUANTANAMO & ENDING TORTURE

Socialist Party members in locals across the US joined Witness Against Torture's (WAT) call for demos to end torture and Close Guantanamo this January.



SPNYC member Larry Rockwood joined WAT in Washington DC for their Fast for Justice starting on January 11<sup>th</sup> (a report by Larry is printed below).

In Northern New Jersey, SP

members organized a vigil with NJ Peace Action and other organizations on the January 11th "day of action" in Montclair on the night before the National Committee meeting.



Shortly after the National Committee meeting, the SPUSA national office helped organize putting up a banner on the Muste/WRL Building in NYC. The banner will stay up for the month of January.



More photos from WAT actions can be found at:

[www. http://witnesstorture.org](http://www.witnesstorture.org)

## Report back from the WAT Actions in Washington DC by Lawrence Rockwood

On January 11, 2013, Witness Against Torture (WAT) commemorated the eleventh anniversary of the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, with its seventh annual march from the US Supreme Court to the White House. This year it was joined by Amnesty International USA (AIUSA), the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). For WAT, it was also the sixth day of its fifth annual week long fast marking the holdings of detainees in the so-called war on terror. This year's contingent of fasters was dominated by members of the Catholic Workers Movement,

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## Report back continued...

although it also included participants from such diverse groups of participants as Veterans for Peace, the War Resisters League, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and the Socialist Party (SPUSA). The week's activity included WAT's long line of orange jump suits and black hoods holding demonstrations at the Pentagon, the Capital Building, the Justice Department, the Washington Memorial, and the White House, and the CIA. WAT joined AIUSA and Code Pink in protesting the Washington DC premier of the pro-torture movie Zero Dark Thirty.

At the Justice Department event I was allowed to address the disparity between the Obama Administration granting legal impunity to War Criminals merely because they are American citizens and the continued indefinite detention of 86 men at Guantanamo who have been cleared for immediate release, merely because they cannot be released to their native countries. The Bush Six (now Obama Six) Torture Memorandum authors committed what, in the consensus of most International Humanitarian Law experts, are indictable war crimes. The six American lawyers granted legal impunity by the Obama Administration include the Justice Department's own Alberto Gonzales, former US Attorney General, and sitting Federal Judge Jay Bybee, former White House Counsel John Yoo, Douglas Feith, former undersecretary of defense for policy; William Haynes II, former general counsel for the Department of Defense (chief counsel for Donald Rumsfeld); and David Addington, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President of the United States (under Dick Cheney).

Over half the remaining prisoners at GITMO have been cleared for release by the Guantanamo Review Task Force. These 86 men are either those who are cleared immediate release or those held in conditional (indefinite) detention. Most are Yemenis that are being held for no other reason than having for their fellow countrymen the individual charged in the failed underwear bombing in Detroit in 2010. In other words, they are imprisoned for no other reason than being born in the wrong country.

Attorney General Eric Holder and President Obama both explained their gutlessness of their failure to hold their fellow citizens accountable for war crimes as their preference to "looking forward rather than backwards."

But to imprison the unindictable and grant legal impunity to the indictable is neither "forward" nor "backward" justice, it is upside down justice. The most poignant moment of the week

for me occurred when the anniversary march was crossing 15th Street NW to enter the Ellipse south of the White House. Angry at being inconvenienced by having to wait at an intersection as the march passed, a Caucasian male got out of his car looking to have a physical altercation with a marcher. While a typical occurrence at any demonstration march in a large city with traffic, this reminded me that the day before I had visited my parents' graves at Arlington National Cemetery. On my way back to the subway from their graves, I was held up for 20 minutes as the "Old Guard" ceremoniously dismounted a cassette from a caisson at a cemetery intersection. I waited in respect, not because of the flag, the military ceremony, or fear of a dirty look from the Master Sergeant holding back vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but because the person in that casket was someone's son, daughter, brother, sister, mother, father, or spouse. I was allowing myself to be inconvenienced in respect for the sacred space created for those commemorating the death of a human being.

Yes, demonstrating for social justice is for the purpose to inconvenience a capitalist imperialist society with the fact that it is inescapably and manifestly unjust. But peering through my black hood at the angry white male looking for a fight in the middle of the street next to the White House, I thought to myself that what I had been doing for the last week by fasting and walking in silent columns through the streets of the Capital was exactly the same mission as that Old Guard Master Sergeant the day before at Arlington, creating inconveniences by creating a sacred space for those who have died and have been given a defacto sentence of death the GITMO. And like that Master Sergeant ours was a worthwhile enterprise.

### **NOTICES:**

**Call for Applications to Serve on the International Relations Committee.** The IRC is responsible for communication with international organizations and operates under NC guidance. **Deadline April 30, 2013**

**Call For Convention Location Proposals.** State or Local organizations interested in hosting the 2013 SPUSA National Convention are encouraged to apply. Must be "east of the Mississippi" on a weekend between Oct 19 & Nov 17. **Deadline April 30, 2013**

**Send all applications to [natsec@socialistparty-usa.org](mailto:natsec@socialistparty-usa.org) or SPUSA 339 Lafayette St #303 NY, NY 10012**

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