

# THE ORGANIZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA NATIONAL OFFICE

JULY 2009

## Building A Socialist Feminist Response to U.S. Militarism and the Global Economic Crisis

*by the SPUSA War At Home Committee*

In this period of rising unemployment and economic turmoil, an increasing number of people are being drawn to radical concepts and are ready to consider radical strategies for social change based on the link between the severe problems we face at home, the actions of the U.S. military world-wide, and the destructive nature of global capitalism.

Clearly, what we face right now are not only wars abroad, but also a war at home. In both cases, masses of people are living under siege as a result of actions by the U.S. government to perpetuate the inhumane capitalist system. In both cases, a collective, activist, response is called for: a response consisting of energetic, grassroots organizing based on a coherent analysis, a radical program, and internal democracy rooted in socialist feminist principles and practice. To move forward, we must develop a plan of action along the lines of the pre-9/11 anti-globalization/anti-capitalist movement, but with the added perspective of the global economic meltdown, and with the will to act independently of the Obama agenda.

Our demands should be inclusive; to reflect the interdependence of the local, national, and international crises we currently must deal with. These include the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, full-funding for domestic programs by taxing the rich and slashing the military budget, social and economic equity and justice, human rights and civil liberty guarantees, socialized health care, nationalization of the financial sector, and political independence from the Democratic Party.

As we proceed with this agenda, we need to be guided by the fact that women and people of color are disproportionately affected by wars, occupations, economic crises, and assaults on human rights and civil liberties.

These are bad times for increasing numbers of women—as workers, as caregivers, and as members of minority and immigrant communities. Due to the disastrous state of the economy, women face extra stress on the job and in the face of lay-offs. Besides that, they are even more responsible than usual for the social service needs of friends and family due to the budget cuts—and to Federal spending that continues to prioritize the costs of war and domestic surveillance and intimidation over the needs of people for housing, healthcare, education, and jobs. Indeed, due to foreclosures and lack of affordable housing, many women are struggling just to keep a roof over their heads.

These circumstances just worsen the underlying problems of gender inequality and ethnic and racial bigotry. Activism organized around “wars abroad and war at home” acknowledges this, while recognizing how strong and resourceful women and families have been, and continue to be, in the face of exploitation, discrimination, and harassment.

As we build our movement for fundamental social change, we must honor women’s strengths, demand women’s rights, and fight against those aspects of society that perpetuate oppression.

## Solidarity with the People of Honduras


*By the SPUSA National Action Committee*

The Socialist Party USA condemns the coup recently carried out in Honduras by the military and backed by a section of the Honduran elite. We call for the immediate reinstatement of democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. We also support the call made by pro-Zelaya protesters to have all charges against Zelaya dropped. Finally, we demand an independent investigation into the brutality and murder carried out by the Honduran military while repressing pro-Zelaya protests.

Although Zelaya was elected in 2005 on a mild center-left reform platform, deteriorating economic conditions, the refusal of the elite to implement even the most basic reforms and pressure from popular movements have pushed his Presidency in a more militant direction. Honduras remains the third poorest nation in the hemisphere with 40% of the population living on less than \$2 a day. To combat this, Zelaya attempted to implement reforms such as, raising the minimum wage by 60%; a move which infuriated elites who fired workers or ignored the new regulations. Popular organizations have supported Zelaya in this process by initiating a series of strikes and mobilizations in the name of wealth re-distribution and social equity.

Honduran elites have disregarded these movements, choosing to use parliamentary process and the security forces to preserve political and economic control. They have attempted to paint Zelaya as a puppet of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. “What I believe we were seeing was the evolution of a democratic dictatorship,” Elizabeth Zuñiga of the Nationalist Party stated. Such illogical hyperbole mirrors the false proclamations issued by elites in Venezuela and Bolivia in the face of challenges by leftist governments and popular

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National Assembly

To end the Iraq & Afghanistan Wars & Occupations

Join members of the Socialist Party USA at the  
**National Assembly  
Anti-War Conference**

**July 10-12, 2009**  
La Roche College Pittsburgh, PA  
[www.natassembly.org](http://www.natassembly.org)

e-mail the National Office if you plan on attending.  
[natsec@socialistparty-usa.org](mailto:natsec@socialistparty-usa.org)

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## Honduras continued...

movements. The Honduran elite care little for democracy. Their sole concern is the maintenance of social and economic privileges.

The new left in Latin America has demonstrated a consistent commitment to organize itself democratically. Endless elections in Venezuela have been combined with electoral victories in Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Nicaragua. In each case, electoral campaigns have been backed by grassroots mobilizations of a myriad of worker, community and indigenous groups. This has had a general democratizing effect in the region, which has served to reverse the history of US-backed military coups and dictatorships. The elite coup in Honduras is an attempt to return to a bankrupt political model. But the people of Honduras are resisting.

As socialists, we therefore stand firmly with the popular movements in Honduras who are demanding that President Zelaya be returned. As socialists in America, we also recognize the negative role that US foreign policy has played in the region. We pledge our solidarity to the people of Honduras as a means of repairing the damage done by the US government. We share in the sentiments recently expressed by President Zelaya, "Do not bring weapons. Practice what I have always preached, which is nonviolence. Let them be the ones who use violence, weapons and repression."

**No the Coup! Return Zelaya! Justice for working and poor Hondurans!**

## New Party Committees

### Socialist Correspondence Committee

The National Committee has created a new committee to engage in dialogue with other socialist organizations in the United States. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact Marc Luzietti at [absynthe@gmail.com](mailto:absynthe@gmail.com). Final determination of the committee is to be made by the National Action Committee.

### Constitutional Review Committee

The National Committee has created a new committee to review the party constitution and to make proposals on improving it. Comrades with suggestions should contact the committee members: Matt Erard [sinaphtali@yahoo.com](mailto:sinaphtali@yahoo.com), Susan Dorazio [susandor@crocker.com](mailto:susandor@crocker.com), and Marc Luzietti [absynthe@gmail.com](mailto:absynthe@gmail.com) with your suggestions.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### 2009 SPUSA National Convention

October 9-11, 2009

Gateway Hilton, Newark

Updated info. including deadlines, requirements, registration, etc. will be posted at: [www.socialistparty-usa.org/convention/](http://www.socialistparty-usa.org/convention/)

The deadline for submissions to the pre-convention discussion bulletin is August 15, 2009. Send resolutions to SPUSA 339 Lafayette St. #303 NY, NY 10012

**[www.socialistparty-usa.org](http://www.socialistparty-usa.org)**

## The Organizer

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New York, NY 10012

## Statement on the Situation in Iran

by Eric Chester, Chair SPUSA International Commission

The brutal repression of the popular upsurge against Iran's ruling clique of Islamic clerics only postpones the inevitable. Iran's theocracy has lost the confidence of its people, as militant protests continue on the streets of Tehran.

The Socialist Party USA stands with the people of Iran in demanding an immediate end to arbitrary rule and the holding of genuinely free and open elections. We believe that the complete separation of religious institutions and the state is an essential prerequisite for a democratic society. Every resident of a nation should have the same rights and privileges, no matter what her or his religious belief may or may not be.

Women have been systematically oppressed under the rule of the mullahs in Iran. It is the Socialist Party's hope that the insurgency in Iran will lead to a new society where women are guaranteed full rights. Women should be able to fully participate in the workforce. They should be able to dress in accordance with their own wishes, and not have their life style be coerced by those holding rigid interpretations of religious dogma. It is time for Iran to move beyond outmoded puritanical repression, and to recognize the equal rights of gays and lesbians.

Iran is a wealthy country, with immense oil resources and a highly educated populace. Nevertheless, poverty is widespread, and corruption endemic. Independent trade unions are persecuted and strikes are crushed. Although the popular movement protesting the theocratic regime's autocratic policies has been a broadly based, inter-class, coalition, segments of the movement have presented a more radical critique. The Socialist Party USA supports the Iranian Left, with its base in the working class, in the call for an economic program that will provide essential services to all, while narrowing the vast gap between rich and poor.

Barack Obama and the U.S. government are not interested in a democratic Iran. For decades, the United States has shored up reactionary theocracies such as Saudi Arabia, where it found it served its imperial interests. The Iranian people remember the U.S. role in overthrowing the popular regime of Mossadegh in 1953, leading to the return of the Shah, a repressive dictatorship that lasted until the popular revolt of 1979. Iranians will make sure that the government that replaces the current theocracy will continue to maintain its independence from U.S. foreign policy.

Iran's effort to develop nuclear power has caused disquiet in the region. Nuclear power is a threat to the future of the planet. There is no valid reason why a country with vast oil resources should rely on nuclear power for energy. Iran should be in the forefront in converting from oil to sustainable alternative energy sources, particularly solar power. The Socialist Party USA has consistently opposed the use of nuclear power in the United States, and we call for a rapid conversion here to alternative energy sources.

Nuclear power frequently acts as a precursor to nuclear weapons. The problems confronting the Near East will not be resolved through wars. Furthermore, nuclear weapons only make a volatile situation more dangerous. The Socialist Party USA believes that the entire region should become a nuclear free zone. This would mean that Iran would forego the development of nuclear weapons, as Israel dismantles its arsenal of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The popular insurgency in Iran is of historic importance. It has demonstrated to everyone that a reactionary theocratic regime cannot provide a desirable alternative to capitalism. It is up to us in the United States, and in the rest of the industrialized countries, to build a democratic socialist movement that can pose a positive alternative to religious fundamentalism