

THE ORGANIZER

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MARCH 2011

Democracy in the Streets: Madison Mobilizes to Defeat the Anti-Labor Walker

by Omar Mohamad, Socialist Party of South Central Wisconsin and Billy Wharton, co-chair Socialist Party USA



The mass protests led by public employees unions in Madison, Wisconsin have been presented by some mainstream commentators as a labor's last stand. They are not. They are a spark, a spark with the potential to create a new protest movement capable of revitalizing our unions, radicalizing student creating a space for democratic socialist politics. As socialists, we stand steadfastly in solidarity with this protest movement. We pledge to support the immediate goal of blocking Governor Scott Walker's reactionary and draconian anti-union legislation and the longer-term project of building a serious left-wing political movement in the US.

Walker's proposal to strip workers of collective bargaining rights is an extreme example of the budget cutting strategies being prepared by state and local officials throughout the country. More than 31 states are in the process of implementing deep cuts to basic public services. The local budgetary situations have been made worse by the ending of Federal stimulus funds. Much like at the Federal level, most of these states have, for decades, refused to properly tax their richest residents and corporations. In the case of Wisconsin, corporate tax rates have not been increased since 1972 and a myriad of loopholes and tax credits allow these companies to further evade taxation

But the budget cuts are not about the fiscal balancing of budgets. They are, instead, an ideological attack on the rights of working people, on the opportunities for public university students and on the public programs that millions of people rely on. Gov. Walker and the other politicians, Democrats and Republicans alike, have refused to cover deficits by spending from reserve funds or increasing taxation on the rich and corporations. This is a political choice, driven by free market ideology, to defend the wealth of the elite at the expense of the vast majority of people in our society.

No wonder then that the protesters in Madison compared the Governor to the deposed dictator of Egypt Hosni Mubarak. This comparison is not only because the protesters see a bit of Walker in Mubarak, but more importantly, they see themselves in the massive street protests that gripped Egypt and in the occupation of Tahrir Square. And what great lessons to learn from this brave

International Women's Day 2011



In 1910, German revolutionary Clara Zetkin brought a proposal for an International Women's Day to the Women's Congress of the Socialist International, a resolution inspired by Women's Day rallies in 1909 organized by the Socialist Party of America.

Socialist Party members, through our local organizations as well as through community coalitions, will celebrate the one hundred and first International Women's Day by organizing against the attacks on public services and reproductive rights and celebrating the possibilities of socialist feminism.

As part of this struggle we need to:

- Put forward a socialist feminist analysis and program as regards the issues involved in this assault
- Rally under the banner "International Women's Day... Women Still in the Streets for Socialism... Rights, Equity, Justice... Stop the Assault on the Public Sector!" as a way to honor IWD's socialist founders, and to link their issues and activism with ours today
- Seek the participation of socialist and radical labor organizations both here in the US and throughout the world as part of a long-term effort to communicate, and to coordinate actions and events, on a regular basis

The dire state of the public sector is an international crisis that has become especially intense since the 2008 global economic meltdown precipitated by the heartless and calculated policies and practices of global capitalism.

Today, like yesterday, women are speaking out and fighting back against injustice and exploitation—as workers. We hope you join us on International Women's Day 2011.

SPUSA International Women's Day 2011 website

www.socialistparty-usa.org/iwd2011.html

Defend Public Employees and Government Services Campaign

socialistparty-usa.org/campaigns/defendpublicservices.html

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Democracy in the Streets continued...

movement that faced down the police and forced a dictator out.

The fighting spirit of Tahrir Square represents a global wave of unrest in which people are exercising and demanding their democratic rights. Democracy, in Cairo or Madison, is about more than elections. It is about creating a society based on economic democracy – where working people who create the wealth can claim that wealth.

Democratic socialism offers the best hope to make the aspirations of these protests real. We believe that society can best be run through direct democracy – where people have a direct say in how the society runs. Scott Walker and the Wisconsin Legislature should not be the ones determining how the budget is crafted. A system of participatory budgeting in which those who will be affected by the budget are given a direct decision making voice in how the funds are spent would be the most democratic and efficient process possible. Here, the true will of all those people mobilizing to stop Walker would be heard.

Until we are able to build the political will to create such a democratic structure, the political focus must be placed on taxing the rich and corporations to cover the immediate budget deficit in Wisconsin. In the short term, this will mean employing all possible forms of civil disobedience and non-compliance on our worksites, our schools and in our communities. Simply put, if a small group of politicians attempts to strip us of our rights in the service of protecting the wealth of the elite, we are more than justified in using all of the social power we can muster to bring the society to a stand still.

The Socialist Party USA has initiated a national campaign to fight against budget cuts and the attack on public workers. We are calling on all of our members and our supporters to join local campaigns to defend jobs, education, and services. As socialists, we bring with us a firm conviction about taxing the rich and a vision of a democratically run society in which people regain control of their lives from the logic of the market, from the workings of capitalism and from the elite 5% who benefit from our labor, while offering little in return.

**Solidarity with the Madison Protests!
Kill the Anti-Union Bill!
Defeat the Anti-Labor Walker!**

Keep your membership up-to-date! You can renew online at: www.socialistpartyusa.org/joinus/paydues.html or by mail to: SPUSA 339 Lafayette St. #303 NY, NY 101012

The Organizer

c/o Socialist Party USA
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New York, NY 10012



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.

Commission Chair/Conveners:
Commission chairs are responsible for convening meetings, chairing discussions

and playing a leading role in formulating Party statements and positions and chairing discussions. The Commission chair also serves as a Party spokesperson on issues related to the Commission.

The following positions are now open:
International Commission and Women's Commission

Send applications to natsec@socialistparty-usa.org with information on your background, what you bring to the Commission, what you see the commission doing and any other information you would like to share.

Campaign Clearinghouse Coordinator: The Clearinghouse Coordinator oversees the Party's election fund (SNC), provides support to local/national candidates, files appropriate reports with the FEC and maintains the www.vote-socialist.org website.

Send applications to natsec@socialistparty-usa.org with information on your background and any other information you would like to share.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS TO HOST THE 2011 SPUSA NATIONAL CONVENTION

The Socialist Party has put out a call for proposals to host the 2011 SPUSA National Convention. This convention must be in a location west of the Mississippi River.

Info: www.socialistparty-usa.org/convention/

Deadline for proposals: March 31, 2011

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March 8th: International Women's Day

March 19th: Resist the War Machine! Actions in Washington DC, Los Angeles and across the US

March 31st: Deadline for Hammer & Tongs – send articles (1500 word max- no personal attacks on other members) to natsec@socialistparty-usa.org or SPUSA/H&T 339 Lafayette St. #303 NY, NY 10012