

THE ORGANIZER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA NATIONAL OFFICE

SEPTEMBER 2010

Socialist Party Summer 2010 National Organizing Conference A Success!

By Bill Wharton, SPUSA National Co-Chair

We had an excellent National Organizing Conference (NOC) this year in Madison, Wisconsin. The three-day event featured music, speakers and workshops that offered practical skills to enhance our activism. A little more than 50 people turned up for the event from all over the country. The relatively new South Central Wisconsin local hosted the event and these comrades performed marvelously.



Friday evening the SCW local organized a benefit concert that featured three local bands. Comrades alternated between listening to the music and preparing for the big events to follow on the next two days. Saturday was the high point of the conference as the crowd moved from our opening speeches to workshops and then the plenary. Sunday was a workshop only day before the conference broke up and attendees headed back to their respective locales.

Saturday's plenary was noteworthy. Radical historian Paul Buhle gave the first speech in which he emphasized the need for radical political movements to take counterculture seriously. He lamented the early worker's movements cleaving off of the radical bohemian elements in favor of a more workerist approach. Similarly, he tracked the development of the Beat culture as an important part of the general radicalization of the 60s.



Peace activist Cindy Sheehan was the next speaker. The many comrades who donated funds to pay for her plane ticket and housing made Cindy's speech possible. She discussed the "so-called" anti-

war movement and spoke out strongly against the way in which the movement was funneled into the Obama campaign and killed. Cindy spoke passionately about re-imagining the anti-war movement as an anti-capitalist movement that understood the links between economic exploitation and war. She declared herself a revolutionary socialist from the podium. In addition, she announced her intention to run for president in order to challenge the war

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Solidarity with the Striking Workers in Europe and Student and Worker Walkouts in the US this September and October

Statement of the National Action Committee



Since May of this year, workers in Greece, Italy, France and Spain have organized increasingly large strikes. In Europe, just as in the United States, workers are confronted with budget cuts, union-busting, and labor law 'reforms' that favor the rich. In Spain, labor unions are organizing a general strike on September 29th to coincide with a meeting of European finance ministers on September 29 in

Brussels to coincide with a meeting of European finance ministers on September 29 in Brussels. It is expected that militant actions in other countries will also take place on this day.

Workers' organizations and individuals in Europe have been calling others to help build September 29 into a day that will begin to awaken a response by global workers to austerity and attacks on our rights.

In the United States students and workers have called for a repeat of last year's mass actions and students walk-outs. On October 2nd and 7th actions are being called to stop budget cuts and other regressive measures which balance budgets on the backs of students, the poor and union workers.



We stand with the European workers workers and our fellow workers and students in the United States, raising our fists in defiance this September and October.

As socialists, we must reject the latest onslaught of neo-liberal attacks on students' and workers' rights, working conditions, social services for our youth, the elderly, and people living with disabilities.

Inasmuch as we call on the US and European governments to immediately halt austerity plans that are killing

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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.

National Organizing Conference continued...

candidates in 2012. Quite an exciting development for us!

Finally, Dan LaBotz, fresh off his Socialist Party campaigning in Ohio gave a fiery speech about the disappeared. Dan mentioned our disappearing jobs, our disappearing social movements and our disappearing independence from the Democrat party. Instead of capitulation or depression, he shouted "Nunca mas!" (Never again!) while offering inspirational stories about his time on the campaign trail in Ohio. In particular, Dan mentioned a noteworthy conversation with a Pakistani woman who thanked him for speaking out against the US war being carried out against people in her country.

The spirited speeches of the plenary certainly spilled into the workshops. Some focused on practical skills like street activism or building locals while others looked at socialist organizing in the South or, the one I organized, which examined the possible connections between Anarchism and Marxism. Of note for me was a workshop that featured Dan LaBotz, Kristin Schall and Raphael Thurin that looked at how to build a healthy, attractive Socialist Party. Participants worked through common problems in their locals and emphasized developing habits of solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect inside of the socialist movement.

If you haven't been to a NOC, and this was my first, you should make a point of attending. It was encouraging to see everyone lending a hand – Candice Hare and Neal Gammill preparing our food, Jerry Stastny and Sean Hatley making endless car trips to the airport and hotels and Matty O'Dea buzzing around hanging flags, putting out chairs and engaging in rapid fire conversation. Greg Pason, of course, lugging around boxes of lit, t-shirts and books all on a bum foot. Socialist cooperation in motion folks. And we will need plenty more of it.

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Solidarity with the Striking Workers continued...

our people, we also remind our sisters and brothers in the movement that we cannot settle for reforms – we must reject capitalism as a whole. Just as globalization has opened borders to exploitation, we must stand united for the transformation of our societies from the rule of the wealthy few to the radically democratic governance of the collective wealth of the many.

Together we recognize that our politics and our approaches to this mass strike ought to reflect the open, transparent and democratic qualities that are prerequisites for genuine socialist democracy. It is necessary to show unity in action as well as theoretical, tactical, and political distinction from reformist parties and labor union bureaucracies.

With one voice, American and European workers, students and all oppressed by the capitalist system must rise up and demand an end to the war on workers, an end to the imperialist occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq; and an end to capitalism's war on humanity, thus giving substance to the words:

Workers of the world, unite!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 30, 2010: Hammer & Tongs Deadline

**January 15-16, 2011: National Committee Meeting:
New York, NY.**

NEW SPUSA T-SHIRTS

Printing and layout by SPUSA staff