

All Support to Public Employees! For a Workers' Solution to the Crisis

Wisconsin is on the front lines of the nationwide battle against cuts and austerity. Most public sector workers in the state belong to unions that collectively negotiate their wages, benefits, and pensions. It has been that way for over 60 years. Now Governor Walker wants to make Wisconsin a "right to work" state, make it illegal for state employees to bargain collectively, and limit wage increases to the consumer price index. The result is that 175,000 teachers, government employees, prison guards, etc. will be at the mercy of the Wisconsin state legislature every year to determine how much they will get in benefits and pensions, with wage increases limited to adjustment for inflation.

Governor Walker's vicious attack against organized workers is part of an ongoing assault that is picking up steam as the crisis of the system continues. If he succeeds in smashing Wisconsin's public sector unions, other states and the private sector will follow. This will mean an even lower standard of living for all workers in the United States. What happens in Wisconsin does not stay in Wisconsin!

Just six weeks after he was elected with the backing of the Tea Party, Walker said that anyone who could not see he was preparing an assault against the unions "must have been in a coma." But the Governor, like the rest of the Big Business politicians and the corporate media, seems to have gone into a sort of self-induced coma, believing their own hype about the Tea Party having a real mass base in the American population. His assault is being made from a false sense of strength on his part. Walker came to power not because Wisconsin's voters gave him a mandate for these policies, but because they were disillusioned by the Democrats and influenced by the millions of dollars spent by billionaires like the Koch brothers on his campaign. These are the real interests behind his election and his policies.

Walker blames the budget deficit and says we need to make "hard choices." But this has nothing to do with balancing the budget. It has everything to do with making life even easier for the wealthy, while the majority of us see our quality of life driven to new lows. Two thirds of Wisconsin's corporations pay no corporate tax whatsoever. Corporate America is sitting on \$2 trillion, but are not investing in creating new jobs because they want even higher profits than they are already getting and can get fewer workers to do more work as the millions of un-

employed compete for fewer jobs. And yet we are told that we are the ones that have to make sacrifices! For Walker and those like him, corporations are more important than people. Profits are more important than jobs that pay decent wages and quality services for the state's citizens.

However, the reaction of Wisconsin's workers and young people to the implementation of the Tea Party's anti-worker program has quickly shown the real state of affairs! The solidarity from private sector union members and the unorganized has been tremendous. Organized contingents of hundreds of firefighters and other unions have marched on the Capitol. Hundreds of students have staged walkouts. Thousands of workers have descended on the Capitol every evening after work. Thousands of ordinary workers and young people have camped out overnight. As many as 45,000 have surrounded the Capitol at one time and many schools have been shut down, a vivid reminder of the power of the working class. This can't help but remind us of the inspiring scenes in Egypt's Tahrir Square, which as we know, led to an important victory! We have the numbers. But we also need the organization and coordination.

So far, the response has been largely spontaneous. What we need is a coordinated fight back against these attacks. There is talk of a recall of Governor Walker, but this will take time. On March 13, public employee contracts will be torn up. Therefore, more concerted action must be organized. A one day general strike of public sector workers, with solidarity strikes, pickets and actions from private sector unions and the unorganized would bring the state to a halt and make clear the real "will of the people." To prepare for this we must urgently organize a city-wide assembly of Madison's workers and young people, a kind of mass "town hall" meeting, and extend an invitation to workers and youth from around the state to join us. The union leaders and coordinating bodies like SCFL must take the lead on this. They were elected to lead, and this is the time to do it!

At such a mass meeting we could democratically and concretely discuss proposals and dates for a general strike. To build for this we should form coordination and action committees in every factory, school, and workplace, linked up centrally and governed by elected delegates. This is a fight we can and must win! We, the people have the power! Contact us for more information:

This leaflet is being distributed by the Workers International League and *Socialist Appeal* magazine. We believe that the working class is the only force in society that can bring about fundamental change. We believe that the crisis of the capitalist system should be paid for by the capitalists, not the workers and youth. We believe that both the Republicans and Democrats are bought and paid for by the billionaires and therefore cannot serve the interests of the working class majority. We believe the unions need to break with these parties and build a party of, by, and for the working class: a mass party of labor based on the unions. We believe that everyone living in the U.S. has a right to quality jobs, health care, education and housing. We believe we need a society that is truly democratic, with leaders that are directly elected and directly accountable to their constituents. But it is clear that this is not possible under capitalism. This is why we fight for socialism, and we invite you to join us in this struggle!

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For A Mass Party of Labor!

