

United National Antiwar Committee Calls for Solidarity with Wisconsin Workers

From Cairo to Madison, we must raise high the old union slogan:

“AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL!”

UNAC salutes the heroic workers of Wisconsin and calls on all who stand for social justice to initiate or join local actions in support of this historic struggle. By doing so, we will send a message to our own state (and federal) governments that similar union-busting attacks will be met with more mass upsurges, inspired both by the workers of Wisconsin and the courageous peoples of Northern Africa and the Middle East.

The historic labor upsurge in Wisconsin is sending shock waves through the political establishment, as tens of thousands of union members and their supporters stage a people's rebellion against the country's most aggressive anti-union attack by a state government. Using the pretext of a budget deficit, Gov. Scott Walker and his right-wing allies in the state legislature are attempting to strip public worker unions of their right to collectively bargain over wages, benefits and pensions. This isn't "fiscal reform" – it's a naked attempt at mass union-busting.

Wisconsin workers show the way!

Rather than fight this attack only through the legislature, Wisconsin's teachers, firefighters, university employees and local public workers have taken a page from the ongoing people's rebellions in Northern Africa and the Middle East, massing in Madison's own version of Cairo's Liberation Square and occupying the State Capital itself. High school students have staged walk-outs in support of their teachers. Thousands of workers, organized and unorganized, as well as university students have responded to a call by the statewide teachers union for all Wisconsin residents to come to the Capitol. In this way, the workers of Wisconsin are showing the rest of the country how to beat back these reactionary attacks: first organize the mass actions, which then make the legislative victories possible.

Every working person has a stake in this struggle. Gov. Walker's attempt at mass union-busting was meant to set off a chain reaction in other states, first on public workers, now the majority of the unionized workforce, and then, inevitably, on private-sector unions. Similar attacks in other states will fall disproportionately on workers of color, who nationally make up a high percentage of public workers.

But this attempt to ignite a national wave of union-busting is backfiring. Walker assumed the ongoing economic crisis and high unemployment would make workers afraid to fight back. But the immediate and fierce mass reaction by Wisconsin's unions has inspired workers in other states. Mass protests have broken out against similar attacks in Ohio and Michigan, while across the country solidarity actions are being organized by union, community and anti-war forces.

“Money for Jobs, not for War!”

A \$3.9 billion budget deficit in Wisconsin was cited as the reason for attacking the public worker unions. That claim is phony. What Walker did not say was that Wisconsin taxpayers have been forced to pay billions to fund U.S.-led wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, send drones to Pakistan, support dictators and maintain more than 800 military bases worldwide (costofwar.com). In addition, more billions have been given to the wealthy and powerful in massive bailouts and tax breaks. Truly, the demand "Money for Jobs, not for War!" has never been more appropriate or timely.

The United National Anti-War Committee is a coalition of organizations and prominent individuals that grew out of a mass anti-war conference held last July in Albany, New York. On April 9 and 10, UNAC will sponsor national protests in New York City and San Francisco to demand an end to the wars overseas and a redirecting of war funding to domestic needs.

From its beginning, UNAC has promoted unity between the anti-war and labor movements, recognizing that it is working people who pay for these unjust, endless wars with our blood and tax dollars. Our fight is here – for decent jobs at union wages; an end to evictions and foreclosures; universal access to health care and higher education; a society free from racism, sexism and homophobia; and the right of every worker to join or organize a union so together we can defend our rights.

United National Anti-War Committee (UNAC)

<http://unacpeace.org>

P.O. Box 123, Delmar, NY 12054; phone 518-227-6947