

Military Resistance 9B16



**“There Is A Great
Hunger In The Land”
[A Wall Street Financial Analyst
Understands Reality In Egypt]
“They See Generals, Unnamed
And Anonymous, Promising To
Give Them Bread And
Democracy”
“However, They See That The Truth
Is Otherwise”**

“The Ouster Of Mubarak Was Merely A Placebo To Attempt To Cover Up The Fact That The Generals Have Been The Power Behind The Government”



A demonstration for liberation in Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, Feb. 18, 2011. Protests continued and labor unrest has increased in Egypt since Mubarak's departure last week that set off a chain reaction around the Middle East, with anti-government demonstrations reported in Libya, Bahrain and Yemen. (AP Photo/Enric Marti)

They are well aware as we may not be that the Egyptian Military runs beach resorts, banks and bread factories. Their subsidiaries manufacture automobiles, televisions, furniture, washing machines and other myriad necessities.

From this gigantic conglomeration of businesses, the generals pay no taxes, use drafted workers and buy real estate on advantageous terms.

Feb 18 2011 By Jeb Handwerker, Gold Stock Trades [Excerpts]

We are constantly being advised that the Egyptian Military has the situation under control.

As the situation develops it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is something wrong with this picture.

The military and the media assure us that the morganatic wedding between the Generals and the Masses will proceed as scheduled.

As the old song goes, "it's time to wind up the masquerade...the piper must be paid."

There is a great hunger in the land. The people have access to Facebook and the faces they see increase their rage.

They see Generals, unnamed and anonymous, promising to give them bread and democracy.

However, they see that the truth is otherwise.

They are well aware as we may not be that the Egyptian Military runs beach resorts, banks and bread factories. Their subsidiaries manufacture automobiles, televisions, furniture, washing machines and other myriad necessities.

They even have the hubris to control the bottle water industry. The brand is named "SAFI" after one of the general's daughters.

From this gigantic conglomeration of businesses, the generals pay no taxes, use drafted workers and buy real estate on advantageous terms.

They are not responsible to report anything to the Egyptian people or to the legislature.

The ouster of Mubarak was merely a placebo to attempt to cover up the fact that the generals have been the power behind the government.

Their names are unknown except for the leader, Field Marshall Tantawi, who has often been referred to as "Mubarak's poodle".

They have established Martial Law, dissolved Parliament and cleared Tahrir Square with the carrot stick of eventually permitting democratic elections.

Still unanswered are the protestors with no release of thousands of political prisoners.

Such brazen exercise of authority might be justifiably interpreted as a conflict of interest.

However, the masses in Egypt as well as the rest of the Middle East are growing increasingly restive.

The old games of propping up despots such as Batista and Trujillo are in this age where internet is accessible to the men on the street and the students in the universities, is growing increasingly thin.

Revolutions have never played out according to script.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

“Protesters Calling For The Provincial Governor To Resign Blocked A Bridge Friday In Basra”



Protesters denounce the government during a demonstration against the lack of basic services in Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, Feb. 18, 2011. Protesters calling for the provincial governor to resign blocked a bridge Friday in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, as the demonstrations against the government continues across Iraq. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

February 18, 2011 By ALISSA J. RUBIN, The New York Times

In southern Afghanistan, a foreign servicemember was killed in an attack Friday, according to a NATO statement.

Three German Soldiers Killed In Pul-i-Kumri, Eight More Wounded: “Several Local People Complained About The Way The Foreign Forces Treated Residents”



U.S. Army and German soldiers attend to dead and wounded German soldiers at the German base in Pul-e Khumri, south of Kunduz, Afghanistan, Feb 18, 2011, where they were shot by an Afghan in an Afghan army uniform while working on a vehicle. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

February 18, 2011 By ALISSA J. RUBIN, The New York Times & TREND News Agency

A man dressed as an Afghan National Army soldier opened fire on German troops in their camp at an outpost in Pul-i-Kumri, where the provincial capital is located. The attack killed three German soldiers, according to Afghan security officials.

Berlin officials dubbed it a “terrorist attack” on the army’s Observation Point North, deep inside territory made unsafe in recent years by the Afghanistan Taliban insurgency.

Germany’s defence minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg had slept two nights previously at the outpost so he could get a personal impression of the dangers.

Berlin officials had no immediate explanation of how the attacker managed to get inside the camp, home to 500 German soldiers in Baghlan province, but said the camp was undergoing rebuilding, so Afghan soldiers and workers were often inside the compound.

The military headquarters near Berlin said the fire came from “close quarters,” seemingly with a submachine gun.

Gen. Daoud Daoud, the Afghan police commander for the north of the country, said that eight German soldiers were also wounded in the attack, which set off a firefight that lasted more than an hour.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul said the Germans had been repairing vehicles at the time.

First reports suggested the attacker was a rogue soldier who had not been spotted by the usual security screenings during recruiting.

OP North, located on a hilltop at Poza-e-Eshan, 70 kilometres south of Kunduz, houses a combined training and guard battalion tasked with training Afghan soldiers to take over security.

Several local people complained about the way the foreign forces treated residents and said it was possible that the gunman had been provoked.

“This kind of incident is taking place in Baghlan because the foreign forces do not have good behavior with the Afghan forces and then incidents take place,” said Alam Khan, a member of the provincial council.

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

**Insurgents Destroy Jalalabad Bank
As Karzai Collaborators Were
Collecting Their Salaries:
18 Dead, 70 Wounded;
Attack Goes On “For Several Hours”**

2.19.11 By Rafiq Sherzad, Reuters

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Insurgents and bombers dressed as border police killed at least 18 people and wounded more than 70 in an attack on a bank in the main city in Afghanistan's east on Saturday, government officials said.

A Reuters witness reported hearing blasts soon after the attack began and gunfire could be heard coming from the branch of the Kabulbank in Jalalabad, which handles salaries for the Afghan police and armed forces, for several hours.

Gul Agha Sherzai, governor of Nangarhar province, of which Jalalabad is the capital, said 18 people had been killed, with civilians and members of Afghanistan's security forces among the dead and wounded.

He said seven insurgents had attacked the bank, three of them detonating explosive vests inside the building.

Ahmadzia Abdulzai, a spokesman for the Nangarhar government, said fighting had gone on for several hours and described the scene as "chaotic."

One man was seen earlier running from the area with his clothes covered in blood.

Coordinated assaults by insurgents against government buildings and military bases have increased in recent years, especially in eastern provinces near the Pakistan border.

The Taliban later claimed responsibility, saying three bombers had entered the bank when Afghan security forces were collecting their salaries.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a text message to Reuters that "many" members of the security forces had been killed and that fighting was continuing.

"I was inside the bank when seven men in border police uniform attacked," said a government employee who identified himself only as Salman and was wounded in the attack. "My brother was killed by them," he said.

Another witness, Sediqullah Momand, said: "They shot the bank tellers first. I saw dead and wounded people inside the bank."

Traffic from Jalalabad to the capital, Kabul, was blocked by Afghan police and foreign troops, witnesses said.

Kabulbank, is Afghanistan's politically well-connected top private lender, and is mired in a corruption scandal that could have grave political consequences for Karzai and his government.

The International Monetary Fund has painted a grim picture of the government's handling of the crisis, in which hundreds of millions of dollars have been put at risk through mismanagement, fraud and bad loans, and is considering whether to renew its support for Afghanistan.

That would trigger a review of other commitments by international donors, who provide billions of dollars a year in aid to Afghanistan.

Resistance Action

February 17, 2011 Xinhua & February 18, 2011 By ALISSA J. RUBIN, The New York Times

A policeman was killed on Thursday as a roadside bomb struck a police van in Kunduz province, 250 km north of the Afghan capital Kabul, police said. "The gruesome incident happened in Chardara district at 3:30 p. m. local time as a result one policeman was killed and another sustained injuries," deputy to provincial police chief Abdul Rahman Haqtash told Xinhua.

In the southeast province of Khost, on the edge of the provincial capital of the same name, a bomber detonated a car packed with explosives near a police station in a crowded shopping area. The blast killed two police officers.

Local people described the blast as completely unexpected since Khost City had been relatively calm over the past seven months after an aggressive effort by American troops to capture insurgent leaders and bomb makers in the area.

Naqeeb Isashas, whose car was slightly damaged in the blast, described it as "terrible," adding that "the ambulances and police did not come quickly and there were bodies all over."

The Taliban spokesman for eastern Afghanistan, Zabiullah Mujahid, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying a man named Irshad had driven the car.

In Nangarhar province, eastern Afghanistan, three police were killed when a roadside bomb exploded under a police truck as the men were returning from defusing two other roadside bombs, said Ahmadzia Abdul Zaid, the governor's spokesman. The explosion occurred about 35 miles from Jalalabad, the provincial capital.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATIONS**

**THE UNDOUBTED SUCCESS OF THE U.S. MILITARY
EFFORT MAY BE SEEN HERE, SHOWING THE VAST**

**QUANTITIES OF AFGHANISTAN THAT HAVE BEEN
LIBERATED, AND WILL FORM THE BASIS FOR A NEW,
FREE, DEMOCRATIC AFGHAN SOCIETY**



U.S. Marines from the First Battalion Eighth Marines Alpha Company patrol through the town of Nabuk in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, February 18, 2011.
REUTERS/Finbarr O'Reilly

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
-- Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done

**A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners.
-- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution**

“The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy”

-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt

It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.

-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you-
Ye are many — they are few

-- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1819, on the occasion of a mass murder of British workers by the Imperial government at Peterloo.

February 19, 1942: A Day That Will Live In Infamy



Japanese American residents board the bus for Camp Harmony, 1942

Carl Bunin Peace History Peace History February 18-24

Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt 10 weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, ordering all Japanese Americans (Nisei) evacuated from the West Coast of the U.S. and forcing them to live in concentration camps.

The document authorized the Secretary of War and military commanders "to prescribe military areas...from which any or all persons may be excluded."

There was strong support from California Attorney General Earl Warren (later U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice), liberal journalist Walter Lippmann and Time magazine—which referred to California as “Japan’s Sudetenland”

112,000 citizens of Japanese ancestry were relocated, losing their businesses, homes, and belongings to whites.

In the entire course of the war, 10 people were convicted of spying for Japan, all of whom were Caucasian.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Union Members Under Attack And
Their Civilian Allies “Were
Prepared To Physically Prevent
The Senate From Conducting
Business”**

**“The Woman Leading Began
Chanting, ‘This Is Class War.’ The
Guy Next To Me Said, ‘She’s A
Kindergarten Teacher””**

**“Another Big Hit Was A Sign Carried By
A Bearded Man In His 20s That Read: ‘I**

Went To Iraq But I Came Home To Egypt''

Anticipating the possibility that state troopers could seize control of an elevator located near a side entrance to the chamber, hundreds of students from the University of Wisconsin and area high schools and middle schools jammed the area.

A large man in a United Steelworkers jacket made a point of putting himself between the elevator and the door--and got a large cheer of appreciation from those nearby.

February 18, 2011 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

WISCONSIN LABOR was gearing up for its fourth consecutive daily rally--and biggest yet--February 18 after sit-ins by workers and students and stalling tactics by state senate Democrats stopped a vote on devastating anti-union legislation pushed by Republican Gov. Scott Walker.

It was difficult to estimate the size of the protest on Thursday, February 17, but it was clearly larger than previous protests, which began with a 20,000-person demonstration on Tuesday, and a 30,000-strong protest the following day.

The numbers on Thursday were swelled by thousands of teachers--members of the Wisconsin Education Association Council who followed their union leaders' call to skip work and join the protest. Numerous school districts around the state decided to shut down altogether on February 17 and 18 as a result.

The Wisconsin's teachers' sick-ins are one of the largest union job actions in years--and a long overdue show of labor's muscle. But the unprecedented mobilization is understood everywhere as an appropriate response to Walker's plan to slash state workers' pay and benefits--and bust public-sector unions.

MUCH OF the media coverage of events on Thursday focused on the boycott of the senate session by Democrats, which denied Walker and the Republicans the quorum they needed to conduct business. According to news reports, the Democrats traveled out of state so that Wisconsin state troopers couldn't be sent after them to bring them back to the senate chambers and force a vote.

But Democratic state Sen. Chris Larson's exit from the Capitol was assisted by dozens of protesters who blocked his office with a sit-in midday February 17. Earlier, that same group--teachers, students, some building trades workers--scuffled repeatedly with Republican state senators and their staffers for two hours as they tried to reach the senate chambers through a nearby back staircase.

"It was the most militant action I've been involved in for a long time," said Shaun Harkin, a Chicago-based socialist and activist. "The woman leading began chanting, 'This is

class war.' The guy next to me said, 'She's a kindergarten teacher.' We locked arms and sang, 'Solidarity Forever.'"

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The sit-in outside Larson's office was a preview of a much bigger action a couple hours later outside the senate chambers. Although word had circulated that the Senate Democrats were safely out of state, protesters weren't taking any chances.

Anticipating the possibility that state troopers could seize control of an elevator located near a side entrance to the chamber, hundreds of students from the University of Wisconsin and area high schools and middle schools jammed the area.

A large man in a United Steelworkers jacket made a point of putting himself between the elevator and the door--and got a large cheer of appreciation from those nearby.

At the same time, those blocking the main senate chamber entrance led the thousands of people in the Capitol in chants--"This is what democracy looks like!" "People power" and "Union power." With protesters covering the Capitol floor and all three circular balconies, the chants at times made normal conversation impossible.

Unlike the outdoor noon rally organized by union officials, the multi-level indoor occupation and protest had no organized speakers. Nevertheless, the crowd communicated through signs, banners and cheers.

The loudest roar came, like the previous day, when members of the Wisconsin Professional Fire Fighters Association marched through the rotunda.

Another big hit was a sign carried by a bearded man in his 20s that read: "I Went to Iraq but I Came Home to Egypt."

There were many other signs with the same theme, such as "Walker, Pharaoh of the Midwest," and depictions of Walker alongside ousted dictator Hosni Mubarak.

To sustain the sit-in outside the Senate chambers, building trades workers brought in water, hot dogs, fruit and Oreo cookies, which were a big hit with a group of 14-year-old middle school students who joined the sit-in near an entry hall.

"My mom is a teacher, so she really encourages this," said Julian Halsy-Milhaupt, an 8th grader at O'Keeffe Elementary School in Madison.

Those participating in the sit-in were prepared to physically prevent the senate from conducting business.

Instead, Democrats members, by denying the senate a quorum and crossing state lines to avoid being forcibly brought to the legislative chambers, prevented Walker from muscling through a "budget repair bill" that would strip public-sector workers of the right to bargain collectively over anything other than wages.

Walker's bill would also end the automatic payment of union dues and compel unions to hold votes each year to recertify their status as bargaining units. The legislation would also force public employees to pay 12.6 percent of their health insurance costs, and contribute 5.8 percent of their paychecks toward their pensions.

That would slash take-home pay, say workers. "It sounds like it will be a minimum of 20 percent of our wages," said Dick Dahnert, a member of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 655 and a worker in the Jefferson County Highway Department.

Dahnert scoffed at Walker's claim--which has become the justification for attacking public-sector workers not only in Wisconsin, but around the country--that they have an easy, and early, retirement at taxpayers' expense. "The reality is that none of us can afford to retire early," Danhert said. "We'd be paying 100 percent of our insurance. Retiring early is not an option."

THE STAKES in Walker's war on labor are clear to both sides. If he wins, he'll set an example for Republican governors and legislatures out to break public-sector unions in Ohio and Iowa. He'll also make it easier for Democratic governors, like Jerry Brown of California and Andrew Cuomo of New York, to appear more reasonable as they press their own demands that public-sector workers suffer cuts in wages, pensions and jobs.

The difference is that Democrats will leave public-sector unions mostly intact--not because they're pro-worker, but because they want labor's fundraising and get-out-the-vote operations at election time.

Because Walker's plan poses a grave threat to the very existence of public-sector unions, top labor officials are being drawn into the fight.

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten met with University of Wisconsin graduate employees who are members of her union the night of February 18. (Ironically, Weingarten came to Wisconsin fresh from a government-sponsored labor-management collaboration conference in Denver, at which she praised recent

concessionary contracts as the way forward.) AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka was reportedly set to speak at the February 18 rally at the Capitol.

But Trumka and Weingarten aren't coming to Madison to lead the movement so much as to catch up to it.

But the dramatic mobilization of rank-and-file union members, students and nonunion working people across Wisconsin has transformed the situation in a matter of days.

Anyone who participates in the rallies is struck by how the unions see themselves as fighting on behalf of the entire working class.

In other words, the one-sided class war is over.

Unions in Wisconsin are fighting back--and they're doing so across union lines that have traditionally divided and weakened them.

Around the Capitol, it's common to hear conversations from veteran unionists that they'd never seen anything like this from the labor movement--and they couldn't be happier.

But the struggle is far from over--and despite the powerful mobilizations, victory is by no means assured in Wisconsin.

Walker has a Republican majority in both houses of the legislature to rely on if he can get a vote. "If this passes, it's going to be nationwide" said Dahnert, the highway worker. "You're going to see the quality of life go way down."

Asked if that means workers have to be prepared to escalate their action, he said: "I believe that's the only choice we have."

MORE:

“The Spirited Rally On The Capitol Steps Turned Into An Unchallenged Occupation Of The State Capitol”

“They’re Going To Try To Bust The Unions And Make Serfs Out Of All Of Us”

“This Is Just About Stamping Out Unions For Profit. It’s That Simple”

“Walker is just another bought-and-paid-for pawn. The money owns him, the money directs him, and the money set this bill up. You don’t think they just put this together last month, do you? It’s been on the shelf for a long time. They created this economic climate in which they can get it through. Now they’re going to try to bust the unions and make serfs out of all of us.”

February 17, 2011 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

References to the revolution in Egypt were commonplace in Madison yesterday, with homemade placards comparing Walker to the deposed strongman Hosni Mubarak.

The mood of the protesters was summed up by Dane County highway worker Arlyn Halborson, a member of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). He got one of the biggest cheers of the afternoon rally when he said of Walker’s proposal: “This isn’t a financial decision. It’s a political decision to suppress the working class and take their rights away while rewarding Corporate America.”

The spirited rally on the Capitol steps turned into an unchallenged occupation of the state Capitol as thousands of workers streamed into the building, chanting “Kill the bill.” Only a handful of state troopers were on hand to monitor the demonstration.

The protesters’ march into the Capitol building was led by the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin (PFFW), an affiliate of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Although firefighters are exempted from Walker’s proposed anti-union legislation, they have nevertheless mobilized members across the state to stop this union-busting attack, said PFFW President Mahlon Mitchell, who last month became the first African American to hold that office.

Such messages of solidarity struck a chord with workers like Abe McCoy, a member of Ironworkers Local 2 in Milwaukee. He said:

“Walker is just another bought-and-paid-for pawn. The money owns him, the money directs him, and the money set this bill up. You don’t think they just put this together last month, do you? It’s been on the shelf for a long time. They created this economic climate in which they can get it through. Now they’re going to try to bust the unions and make serfs out of all of us.”

As a private-sector worker, McCoy’s union isn’t targeted by Walker’s proposals.

But if the law goes through, he said, unions everywhere will be in the crosshairs next. “As soon as they get through with them, they’re going to come after us, the 8 percent of us in the population”--workers in the private sector who belong to unions.

McCoy's fellow member of Local 2, Shane Bakken, made a similar point:

“This bill isn’t at all about a budget fix. This is simply about trying to stamp out unions and advance the corporations. If this was just about budgets, why didn’t it stop at demanding concessions on benefits? Why is it going into destroying collective bargaining? Why are they talking about right-to-work?”

“This is just about stamping out unions for profit. It’s that simple.”

Michelle Rue-Miller, president of AFSCME Local 3798, which represents workers in the Jefferson County courthouse, said the economic hit from Walker’s health care and pension proposals would be devastating, too:

“It would cause some people to lose their homes. There’s no cushy retirement in Wisconsin. Yes, we have a pension plan, and it gets paid, and that’s great. However, we take lower wages.

“We’re sacrificing now so we have a future when we retire. We don’t have Social Security. This is all we’ll have.”

But if Walker thought unions would fold under pressure, the opposite has happened, Rue-Miller said.

“This won’t stop today,” she said of the rally. “All they’ve done is brought us together--they’ve proved what solidarity is.”

It may not be surprising that veteran trade unionists like McCoy, Bakken and Rue-Miller are fighting mad at an attack on decades of organized labor’s achievements in Wisconsin.

But adding to the energy of the protests were thousands of high school students from in and around Madison, who came out to support their teachers and their parents.

“We are supporting our teachers and parents who are city workers and teachers,” said Ali Vandelune, a student at Monona Grove High School who participated in a walkout of 200 students that joined the protest. She rejected the idea that young people aren’t interested in unions. What happens to organized labor, she said, “affects us, because this is affecting our parents.”

When the midday rally swarmed into the Capitol building, it was a multiracial group of high school students who took the lead in jamming the hallway to Walker’s office door, chanting, “Come out Walker!” and “Walker, escucha, estamos en la lucha” (Listen, Walker, we’re in the fight)--adapting a chant widely used in the immigrant rights movement in recent years.

The diversity on display was proudly noted by many protesters. “One point I think deserves to be emphasized is how demographically broad everything is,” said Elizabeth Wrigley-Field, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin and member of the graduate employees union, the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA).

TAA members stayed in a Capitol hearing room all night February 15 in an effort to keep legislative hearings going and block progress on Walker's bill. "It was amazing being in the Capitol after midnight last night with not only dozens of students, but also dozens of union workers from around the state who were going to stay as late as it took to get their two minutes of speaking time," Wrigley-Field said. "The testimony was absolutely riveting. Then, of course, today, we had the incredible high school students from Milwaukee, Racine and everywhere."

And when news came of an attempt to ram through the law in a midnight session, the TAA again mobilized to camp out in the state Capitol building overnight.

PUBLIC-SECTOR union leaders have little choice but to take a stand--Walker's proposals could literally bust their unions.

Those sentiments were shared by Yolanda Pillsbury, a production worker at the John Deere plant in Horicon, Wis., and member of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 873.

"If this goes to the private sector, we will lose our bargaining rights, benefits and won't be able to bargain collectively," she said.

"I have only worked at John Deere for 13 years, but I have been a union member for 30. It hurts us greatly if we don't have a voice--our collective bargaining."

MORE:

“More Than One Person Said To Me, ‘The Whole Country Is Looking At Us Now. If This Happens Here, It Will Go Everywhere Else’”

“The Mood Was Angry, But Also Optimistic--Almost Jubilant”

‘Walker’s Statement That The National Guard Would Be Called Out Merely Added Fuel To The Fire’”

February 16, 2011 By Aongus Ó Murchadha, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

WISCONSIN SAW its biggest labor rally in memory Tuesday as an angry crowd estimated at as many as 20,000 turned out to oppose Republican Gov. Scott Walker's efforts to gut public-sector unions of their bargaining power, break them financially and force workers to pay for the state budget deficit.

Mike Imbrogno, a shop steward in American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSMCE) Local 171, described how union members surged inside the capital building, chanting their demands:

"I've never seen anything like it. It wasn't just teachers and union members from the University of Wisconsin (UW), where I work. There were Steelworkers, Teamsters, Pipefitters, building trades unions and more--unions I've never seen at a rally in 10 years."

The most amazing thing is when the firefighters came in a delegation. Along with police, Walker has exempted firefighters from the legislation--but they came with signs that said, "Firefighters for workers' rights." People were crying.

The signs people made were great. Many of them referred to Egypt: "Mubarak-check. Walker--?" and "Hosni Walker, Elected Dictator." There was a woman in her late 50s with a sign that said, "Walk Like an Egyptian."

Another read: "I was sent to Iraq to get rid of a dictator, and I won't tolerate one here."

The mood was angry, but also optimistic--almost jubilant. More than one person said to me, "The whole country is looking at us now. If this happens here, it will go everywhere else."

But Walker is sticking to his hard line.

Elected as part of sweeping Republican victories in November as a result of low turnout and disillusionment with Barack Obama and the Democrats nationally, Walker is confident enough to take on every single public-sector union at once, demanding not only that workers pay more for their health care and pensions, but that any demand not related to wages alone be taken off the negotiating table, that unions be forced to recertify every year, and that automatic dues deductions ended.

What's more, Walker has informed the Wisconsin State Employees Union, an AFSCME affiliate, that on March 13 the state would cancel contract extensions for five union bargaining units that had been in place before the old contract expired in mid-2009.

And for good measure, Walker ordered the Wisconsin National Guard to prepare to intervene in case of any strike action by unions.

In short, Walker wants the destruction of organized labor in Wisconsin.

While unionists knew that Walker was their sworn enemy, the full extent of his assault wasn't known until February 10, when his so-called "budget repair bill" was released. In

an unprecedented move, this bill is due to come up for a vote on February 17, with almost no debate. As a result, Wisconsin's unions, which had been expecting more time to ramp up opposition to whatever Walker would propose, have been forced into immediate action.

Walker's statement that the National Guard would be called out merely added fuel to the fire.

While ostensibly it was to take over government functions in the potential absence of state workers, the gesture was widely interpreted as a deliberate provocation, especially since the first major protests were not to be held until four days later.

Comparisons with Egypt were not slow in coming. Walker's rush through this legislation is widely perceived as profoundly undemocratic, and the addition of the military to a political and economic conflict has solidified the image of "Hosni Walker" in the mind of a large number of Wisconsinites.

Thousands Of Bahrainis March At Funeral Of Man Killed By King-Dictator's Police



Thousands of Bahrainis march Feb. 18, 2011, in funeral procession in the western village of Karzakan, Bahrain, for Isa Abdel Hasan, who was killed by government police Thursday during clashes at the Pearl roundabout in the capital of Manama between anti-government protesters and Bahrain police forces. Marchers carried pictures of Abdel Hasan and chanted anti-government slogans. (AP Photo/Hasan Jamali)

MORE:

“Thousands Of Bahraini Protest Marchers Defy A Government Ban”



Bahraini anti-government protesters in Manama, Bahrain, Feb. 18, 2011. Soldiers fired tear gas and shot heavy weapons into the air as thousands of protest marchers defy a government ban and stream toward the landmark square that has been the symbolic center of the uprising against the Gulf nation’s leaders. (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

Yemenis Tell Their Dictator To Go Out



Yemeni anti-government protesters hold a sign demanding President Ali Abdullah Saleh get out during a demonstration in central Sanaa. Yemeni police opened fire on a crowd of protesters shot and injured six people on Thursday evening trying to break up a demonstration in the southern port city of Aden. (AFP/Ahmad Gharabli)

Bolivians Hurt By Rising Food And Transportation Costs March Against Morales Regime



Bolivian people attend a protest rally in the centre of La Paz February 18, 2011. Thousands of demonstrators rallied against President Evo Morales' government policies, protesting against rising food and transport costs and demanding for an increase in their wages. REUTERS/David Mercado

“Strikes Are Continuing Across Egypt In Defiance Of Attempts By The Military Chiefs To Stop The Revolution”

While the heavily industrialized Delta region in the north is seeing many of these actions, some parts of Egypt's south are also on fire.

For example, workers from all trades in the southern city of Asyut are on strike, and their street demonstrations give the town the appearance of a general strike.

February 18, 2011 Mostafa Omar reports from Egypt, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

STRIKES AND workers' actions are continuing across Egypt in defiance of attempts by the military chiefs who took over after Hosni Mubarak to stop the revolution from going further than the downfall of one tyrant.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has called on striking workers to go back to work, claiming that the continuation of protests could lead to economic catastrophe.

Government-run newspapers that supported Mubarak until the 11th hour before switching sides on February 11 are likewise calling on strikers to put the "national interest" ahead of their economic demands. Even moderate sections of the anti-Mubarak opposition are calling for strikes to end out of fear of what is called "civil war"--but which really means an intensification of the class struggle.

THE SPREAD of the workers' uprising since Mubarak fell is phenomenal. This is an expression of how the lid has been lifted off Egyptian society--individuals or groups from all walks of life now feel they can organize and act to have their grievances heard and answered.

It would be impossible to list in this space all the hundreds of strikes and protests that have taken place.

They come from every economic sector--Suez Canal workers, petroleum, textile, cement workers, iron and steel, bus drivers, railway workers, bank workers, nurses and hospital staff, teachers, government workers of all kinds, and airport and customs employees. Journalists are organizing to purge their institutions of pro-Mubarak apologists. Even workers in the camp of multinational peacekeeping forces, located in the Sinai, have gone on strike.

The strikes raise specific demands related to individual workplaces, and this been the excuse for some in the media to claim they aren't necessarily political. But if you look closer, there are a number of common factors in the nature of the strikes and their demands.

Most of the strikes are in the government-owned sector or in newly privatized companies.

The demands typically center around five grievances.

First, workers want a 1,200-pound (\$204) monthly minimum wage. Second, they want to replace corrupt CEOs--many of them are also members of Mubarak's National Democratic Party. Third, the strikers, many of whom have been working on temporary contracts for years, want job security. Fourth, many workers are demanding that privatization and outsourcing be reversed, and that they become government employees again. Fifth, among many strikers, there is a desire to get rid of pro-regime union officials and sympathy for the formation of new, independent unions.

A number of strikes have won concessions, especially around the demand to become permanent employees. Other walkouts have forced the government to replace corrupt managers and officials.

On January 30, four independent unions, led by the property tax collectors union, formed the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions. This federation is gaining support.

On Wednesday, night-shift workers at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Co.--the country's largest state-owned company--in the industrial center of Mahalla went on strike, and the action spread to other shifts. The workers reportedly voted to join the new federation.

Egypt's two biggest cities, Cairo and Alexandria, are the site of daily multiple strikes.

While the heavily industrialized Delta region in the north is seeing many of these actions, some parts of Egypt's south are also on fire.

For example, workers from all trades in the southern city of Asyut are on strike, and their street demonstrations give the town the appearance of a general strike.

Western media reports on the Egyptian revolution have emphasized the role of youth in making the revolution--and especially those with access to Facebook and Twitter. But this misses the importance of the mobilization of workers, whether young or old.

Egyptian workers refuse to live in the conditions they have been forced to endure any longer.

On the other side, military leaders and their liberal backers want the Egyptian revolution to come in for a soft landing as a political revolution against a dictator, which leaves the structure of Egyptian society intact.

This would replace one section of the ruling class with another--the sections of big business not tarnished by associations with the Mubarak gang taking over from the most corrupt cronies.

The strike wave in Egypt shows the potential for deepening the revolution and transforming it into an all-out class struggle against the social and economic system.

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