

## Global Mass Strike Spreads; Glass-Steagall Only Solution

by Nancy Spannaus

March 9—The global mass-strike process, which erupted in North Africa in early January, and brought down the Tunisian and Egyptian governments within weeks, has now surfaced throughout the entire Maghreb-Mideast region, the United States, and Western Europe, specifically Germany. It is as if the entire human race is awaking from a long sleep, and rising in revolt against a threat to its existence, and its future.

This mass-strike process, noted Lyndon LaRouche in his March 2 appearance on the LPAC-TV Weekly Report, “is a signal of the countdown for the collapse of the world system, the world monetary-financial system, which is in progress right now.” It’s not “orchestrated by anyone, it’s not a planned strike, it’s a spontaneous reaction within a population.” Younger generations in particular are driving it, because of the lack of perspectives for the future.

These are not isolated events, concerning any local issues or leaders, but a reaction to the breakdown of the system, LaRouche stressed. A mass strike movement is not something you can control by the ordinary mechanisms, he added. It’s a process, “like a weather change, which you don’t control, you react to the weather. So this is a weather-like phenomenon, and it’s spreading around the world.”

This mass strike represents hope, and the energy required to kick the entrenched, demoralized political class out of the way, in favor of an actual solution to the world financial breakdown. But, as LaRouche elabo-

rated on May 2, “If the nation-state system does not respond to the demands of people, the mass-strike will turn into an obscene mess, which will be the end of civilization for a long time to come. So therefore, we better listen to the mass-strike voices now, while there’s still time to do so. We now have to offer real solutions.”

LaRouche laid out the solutions: Get rid of Obama, pass Glass-Steagall, and build the NAWAPA project and its extensions. And the LaRouche political movement is on the front lines globally, to win over the leadership of the mass strike, to take up LaRouche’s solutions, before it’s too late.

### Wisconsin, and Beyond

The epicenter of the upheaval in the United States is the state of Wisconsin, where the popular mobilization which began with the unions in that state around mid-February, is continuing to pick up steam, and expand. The fate of the public employee unions in Wisconsin, under assault from the fascist wing of the Republican Party, represented by newly elected Republican Governor Scott “Muammar” Walker, is seen throughout the state, the nation, and the world, as of vital interest to people everywhere.

The rallies in Madison, the state capital, tell only part of the story. They are being buttressed by rallies through the rest of the state, in favor of the public employee unions and their cause. Contrary to the lying propaganda in the major national media, the rallies in



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*Contrary to the lying propaganda in the media, the mass strike is not just a reaction to the union-busting agenda, but a repudiation of the ruling policy of bailing out Wall Street, while destroying the population. Shown: a rally of hospital employees in Washington, D.C., March 5.*

the capital, and elsewhere, are not simply a response to the union-busting agenda, but to the entire outlook of the ruling clique, which has agreed to Wall Street's terms for destroying the population, in favor of massive bank bailouts. Sections of the labor movement which have not been directly targeted—police and fire unions, private-sector unions such as nurses, teacher, and postal workers—have taken up the fight against Walker as a crucial battle for their future.

Only recently, has support also begun to surface from some in the political class, most notably, the Congressional Black Caucus, which issued an open letter to Governor Walker this week, blasting his attack on unionization. This support suffers from a crippling weakness, however, in failing to identify the bank bailouts as the source of the states' budget crisis—and thus, remaining susceptible to the lie that “deficit-reduction” in the form of “shared sacrifice” is the way to resolve the impasse.

However, the rallies in favor of the public employee unions in Wisconsin and the other “frontline states” where the Republican governors are directly assaulting state workers, such as Indiana and Ohio, are increasingly evading this liberal trap. It's Wall Street, not public employee unions, who created this devastating

financial and economic crisis, many speakers have pointed out.

The LaRouche movement is unique in proposing the solution that makes Wall Street pay: specifically, the reimposition of FDR's Glass-Steagall reform, which will freeze the gambling debts, and open up the path to the Federal support, and jobs, which the states need to get back to economic health.

### The Teachers' Role

In the hundreds of demonstrations which are popping up around the United States, it is clear that teachers and their students are playing a lead-

ing role. On the one hand, the governors—and President Obama—are specifically targeting the teachers, as the first in line to be defeated. In addition to Ohio and Indiana, where there have been large demonstrations, the teachers have been mobilizing against assaults in Tennessee, Florida (including during Obama's scandalous tête-à-tête with Jeb Bush March 4), and Rhode Island.

The Providence, R.I. demonstration, held March 2, in protest against the mass firing of that city's teachers in February (to give “flexibility” to the mayor for budget cuts, he said), provides a sensuous picture of the dynamic among this layer of the population. Over 1,000 people attended, with most of the speakers and organizers of the event being 30-50 years old, and the students who came were mostly high-school students.

What was clear from the discussion LaRouchePAC organizers had with the students and teachers, is that they understand the attack on them in a much deeper way than simple union-busting. An attack on education, is an attack on the future of the nation, they said. The teachers' entire commitment to their students is under attack. And the students—most uncharacteristically rallying in support of their teachers—agreed.

Two men marching together at the rally carried signs

which said “First they came for the teachers” and “I didn’t speak up.” Those phrases allude to the famous statement by anti-Nazi German pastor Martin Niemöller, which said that, “they” first came for the communists, unionists, and Jews, and I did nothing, because I wasn’t a communist, or a unionist, or a Jew. So, there was no one left to help, when they came for me.

The determination to defeat this attitude is what is being reflected nationally, as people pour into the streets to reject murderous cuts against the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens—as well as expressing solidarity with the international mass-strike actions in places like Egypt and Libya.

### **And Now, Germany**

Over the last week, the mass-strike upheaval has finally begun to hit Europe. First, there was the Irish election, which totally rejected the ruling toadies for the British banks. Now, there is Germany, where citizens are beginning to assert their will against the perceived corruption and oppression by the ruling circles.

When it was revealed that German Defense Minister Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg had plagiarized significant parts of the doctoral dissertation for which he was awarded a doctorate in 2007, and his political cronies continued, despite such blatant fraud, to defend him, more than 50,000 members of Germany’s scientific-academic community spontaneously signed a petition online, calling for his instant dismissal or resignation. At the end of the day, faced with such fierce protests, Guttenberg had to resign from the Cabinet and from the Bundestag, in spite of the high-profile show of solidarity from Chancellor Angela Merkel, and the support campaign for him organized by *Bildzeitung*, Germany’s widely read mass tabloid.

A related, but even more significant aspect of the mass strike, is the boycott by millions of Germans, of the new “biofuel” E-10 (gasoline containing 10% of ethanol). In April 2009, an EU directive required member states to increase the percentage of biomass in gasoline from 5% to 10% by the year 2020, and to begin making it available by the end of 2010—supposedly to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. So far, only France and Germany have done so.

In Germany, massive supplies of the fuel were delivered to gas stations throughout the country by the self-imposed deadline of Feb. 25. However, on the very first day of the “new fuel era,” 70% of drivers simply boycotted the biofuel mix, and filled their tanks

with super gasoline and, when that turned scarce, even with super-plus, in spite of the considerably higher price. Now, stations are running out of traditional fuels.

On March 3, the government of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany’s most populous state with 20% of the nation’s citizens, decreed a hold on E-10 and a return to traditional fuels for the time being. That spectacular slap in the face of the national government was prompted by a mass exodus of German drivers into neighboring Belgium and Netherlands to fill up. An emergency summit was called for March 8, to reconsider the problem.

There is clearly more to come. About 17,000 teachers, policemen, and other public employees demonstrated March 8 in Dresden. When Saxon Finance Minister Georg Unland said that the crisis is being overcome, he was booed and people shouted “stop it’.’ And then, they turned their backs to him.

Public workers’ unions have been calling limited strikes across the country since the beginning of last week after they failed to reach a wage agreement with employers for some 600,000 public workers nationwide. Walkouts have taken place already in the ten western German states, in the course of the past ten days.

What is particularly interesting, is that teachers are not only demanding an additional EU50 per month, plus a 3% wage increase for themselves, but also insist that the state and private industries give a guarantee of employment for apprentices. At present, several tens of thousands of German youth leave school without getting an apprentice job, and an equally high number cannot find regular employment after apprenticeship ends. Teachers say that all their efforts to provide a good education for the youth, and prepare them for later life, is in vain, if nobody provides job opportunities.

Nor is this broader concern limited to Germany. The public service union federation ver.di has announced a support demonstration for the Wisconsin workers on March 12.

As in the United States, the LaRouche movement is actively intervening in the German uprising, with the program of an international Glass-Steagall and NAWAPA (North American Water and Power alliance). The potential for victory is very much in sight.

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