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## ALEXANDER'S ESSAY

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### COLLECTIVIST TYRANNY

“If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretence of taking care of them, they must become happy. ... I think we have more machinery of government than is necessary, too many parasites living on the labor of the industrious.” --Thomas Jefferson

It may look more like Socialist protests in Greece or France, but the latest incarnation of collectivist insurrection is under way in Madison, Wisconsin, spreading like a plague into Indiana, Ohio and other Midwest states.

Government union activists are protesting Gov. Scott Walker's effort to confront the Wisconsin's looming \$3.6 billion 2012/13 budget deficit. Walker, a former county executive and state assemblyman, was elected last year on a platform promise that he would roll back 2009 state tax increases and bring government union compensation plans in line with those of the private sector taxpayers who fund them.

The governor plans to impose economic realities on the collectivist bargaining ability of the state's public employee unions by capping their wages with the Consumer Price Index (unless increase by voter referendum), requiring union members to contribute 5.8 percent of their salary to their pension funds and picking up 12.6 percent of their health insurance premium costs. For the record, private sector employee pension contributions average 7.5 percent and almost 20 percent for health plans.

Most vocal among the state's 300,000 public employee union members are protesters from the 98,000-member teacher's union, who are now paid, on average, more than \$75,000 in wages and benefits. Wisconsin parents should be protesting against these teachers, too many of whom are clearly motivated more by tenured job security rather than improving student performance.

According to the latest federal education data, pathetically less than 40 percent of 8th grade students in the state's government schools meet basic requirements for math and reading performance, even though the state spends more per student (\$10,791) than any other Midwest state.

In Milwaukee, where the average teacher compensation package exceeds \$100,000, the graduation rate is under 50 percent, and for black children it is below 35 percent.

The Wisconsin mutiny has given voice to some important questions regarding the power of government unions, paramount among them, “Who is in charge?” Certainly union interests have subjugated the will of the people. In regard to teacher demands, perhaps Gov. Walker should put a few more options on the table for protesters, like charter schools for higher-performing kids, school vouchers, merit pay and performance based tenure. Such changes would be enthusiastically received by taxpayers, but imagine the tenor of protests that would accompany the institution of such accountability measures.

Government unions face no competition, so there is no impetus to produce or perform at a higher level, and to call government union negotiations “bargaining” is a gross mischaracterization.

As George Will notes, “[Public-sector] unions are government organized as an interest group to lobby itself to do what it always wants to do anyway -- grow. These unions use dues extracted from members to elect their members' employers. And governments, not disciplined by the need to make a profit, extract government employees' salaries from taxpayers. Government sits on both sides of the table in cozy ‘negotiations’ with unions.”

By “government,” of course, Will means “Democrats.”

During the 2010 election cycle, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees forked over \$87.5 million in union dues for the sole purpose of electing Democrats. Countless millions more went to “advocacy campaigns,” thinly veiled promotions for Leftist candidates.

To that end, Barack Hussein Obama, whose most vociferous support comes from unions, weighed in with predictable partisanship: “Some of what I've heard coming out of Wisconsin, where you're just making it harder for public employees to collectively bargain generally, seems like more of an assault on unions.”

Gov. Walker responded, "I think we're focused on balancing our budget. It would be wise for the president and others in Washington to focus on balancing their budget, which they're a long ways from doing."

Of course, this government union game hasn't always been rigged. Government unions didn't even exist until 1959, when the state of -- drum roll please -- Wisconsin granted public employees "collective bargaining rights."

Prior to that egregious error, the notion of government unions was understood by elected leaders to be anathema to the best interests of the people, as noted by the Left's 20th-century patron saint, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Even he understood that permitting government employees to establish unions constituted a corruption of public trust.

In a 1937 letter to the head of the National Federation of Federal Employees, FDR wrote, "All government employees should realize that the process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be transplanted into the public service. It has its distinct and insurmountable limitations when applied to public-personnel management. The very nature and purposes of government make it impossible for administrative officials to represent fully or to bind the employer in mutual discussions with government-employee organizations. The employer is the whole people..."

That notwithstanding, since 1960 the Democrat Party has endeavored to support government unions with even more vigor than its support for non-government unions, and consequently, supplanted the best interest of the people with their own self-interests. Today, there are now 24 states that grant "collective bargaining rights" to government employee unions, and the resulting breach of public trust is evident in each of those states, particularly in education.

Between 1961 and 2008, spending per student in the U.S. increased 263 percent (adjusted for inflation). Are students today 263 percent smarter or better educated than they were in 1961?

In 1979, Jimmy Carter established the U.S. Department of Education. President Ronald Reagan's subsequent effort to close that ill-conceived bureaucracy was vigorously opposed by Democrats.

The department's mission was, ostensibly, to promote

student achievement in preparation for global competitiveness. Yet since its formation 32 years ago, student achievement compared to other nations has *declined*. In fact, according to a 2009 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment, which ranks students among 64 developed nations, the U.S. ranked 17th in reading, 23rd in science, and 30th in math.

Unions clearly understand the strategic import of the battle now underway in Wisconsin. "If we lose in Wisconsin, it's going to be a domino effect," proclaimed Teamster John Hennelly. "This is just the opening salvo in a war."

Democrats also know this battle is critical to the perpetuation of political dynasties.

Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA), who only weeks ago decried our nation's heated political rhetoric in the wake of the Tucson shootings, had this advice for the Madison protesters, "I'm proud to be here with people who understand that it's more than just sending an email to get you going. Every once and awhile you need to get out on the streets and get a little bloody when necessary."

It is no small irony that protesting Wisconsin teachers are sporting placards likening Gov. Walker to Adolf Hitler. Ironic, I say, because Hitler proclaimed, "We are socialists, we are enemies of today's capitalistic economic system for the exploitation of the economically weak, with its unfair salaries, with its unseemly evaluation of a human being according to wealth and property instead of responsibility and performance, and we are determined to destroy this system under all conditions."

It is tragically amusing that Wisconsin teachers indoctrinate their students with the errant notion that Nazis were "right-wing fascists," likening them to Tea Party conservatives who oppose Obama and his Leftist cadres.

Of course, any honest telling of history must note that the German party led by Adolf Hitler was the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), which evolved into the Nazi (Nationalsozialisten -- National Socialists) Party. (This would explain why the second volume of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is entitled "The National Socialist Movement.")

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Reich Minister of Propaganda, wrote that Nazi ideology incorporated Nationalism and Socialism in order to distinguish "the Internationalism of Marxism with the nationalism of German Socialism." The

rest is a very bloody history, and one subject to recurrence.

No matter whether it is Marxist Socialism, Nationalist Socialism or the most recent incarnation of this beast, Democratic Socialism, the terminus of Socialism has been, and will always be, tyranny.

But I digress...

As it stands now, Gov. Walker's admirable effort to disorganize Wisconsin's government unions cannot move forward so long as 14 of the state's Democrats continue to hide in adjoining states, having run away from their duty thus denying the 19 majority Republicans a quorum for a vote.

In the meantime, the new Republican congressional majority in Washington should take a cue from Republi-

cans in Wisconsin and set their sites on federal employee unions -- who were the beneficiaries of Obama's "economic stimulus" plan -- before Obama's 14 trillion debt bomb goes boom, and the nation goes bust.

They certainly have broad support across the nation -- a true mandate, actually -- where Obama's approval ratings have plummeted in all 57 states ... uh, by his count.

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post's* editors and staff. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm's way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)