Report on Socialist Alternative Ty Moore Campaign

Thano P (Atlanta) 12/10/13

Background & Context

I traveled to Minneapolis following the November 3rd NC meeting to participate in the final two days of Ty Moore’s campaign for City Council seat Ward 9. This provided an important opportunity to see the political culmination of work that Socialist Alternative (SA) had conducted on this front since March. It’s important to note that the background and context of the campaign precedes this time frame especially with respect to SA’s 8-10 year (?) participation in Occupy, anti-war, labor and other community struggles in that city.

I was told that up until several months into Ty’s campaign it really did not become clear that there was the potential for Ty to poll beyond the single digits as strongly as he did. Most of the money raised and volunteers came together in a 3 or so month period. In the end Ty received 42.07% to Alondra Cano’s 47.55%.

 At the time I had arrived SA estimated that they would run more competitively there than in Seattle or Boston. Consistent with this they made an outlay of resources greater than that which they did in other cities and out fundraised the other six candidates (50K +). I also believe that the Minneapolis campaign might have had a stronger social movement basis than the other cities because of SA’s relationship with Occupy Our Homes MN. (Ty Moore is a staff person for Occupy Our Homes, and SA helped to establish the organization out of the Occupy movement.)

Campaign Overview

Overall I felt that that this was an incredibly electrifying and powerful experience. The level of professionalism, infrastructure, critical thinking and coordination was high. SA had rented out a small storefront belonging to a tax preparer as a campaign headquarters. This was a hive of activity with 40-60 people regularly cycling in and out to pick up literature, warm up, snack, receive assignments for “stand outs”, canvasing particular neighborhoods etc. They also had set up a bank of computers in the back room for research and communications.

The rough sense that I got was that there was a core staff of 7 to 10 people, with a pool of regular volunteers of 40-50. This pool of volunteers included a significant number (15-16?) of Committee for a Workers International (CWI), members from Ireland, Sweden, and Germany. ( I also heard about CWI members from Canada having participated as well. Of course there were also many CWI members from other parts of the US including Boston, Florida, New York etc.)

There was also an important layer (15-20 people?) of Ward 9 residents, many of them older (40’s-50’s) retired movement oriented people with strong activist and left liberal sympathies who seemed to be fairly active, plugged in, and consistent. There was a core of a dozen or so Latino activists from a worker’s center (Centro Trabajadores En Lucha), DREAMers and others who were also involved. I also believe that there were a very small number of Somali immigrant community activists who were doing work in support of the campaign.

 Surprisingly Occupy Our Homes did not seem to have contributed heavily to the volunteer base of the campaign. One staff person told me that they only became more fully engaged in the final two weeks even though they had endorsed Ty fairly early on. The layer of SEIU and Green Party members seemed a little bit thin as well. I say this at least in comparison to some of the other forces. This is also consistent with a statement by one SA member that the SEIU MN District Council endorsement was shallow, and based on an estimate that Ty was the front runner.

The messaging of the campaign was clear and consistent in terms of its anti-austerity thrust: Especially the demands for 15$ an hour, and anti-foreclosure fight back. SA very consciously promoted the “Fight for 15” and the nationwide fast food worker strikes in its campaign work. In a similar way they raised enacting a moratorium on foreclosures, and the struggles being initiated by Occupy Our Homes. Ty Moore’s campaign platform addressed a fairly comprehensive range of other issues, especially racial justice and immigrant rights but it tended to focus on the economic themes.

Ward 9 is an incredibly diverse community with, one of the largest Native American urban communities in the US. It also has a particularly strong Latino community presence, and a smaller but significant Somali community. Before travelling to Minneapolis I had been unaware that Ty’s main opponent Alondra Cano was a younger Latina candidate with an activist political history and immigrant background.

 Though it never was completely explained in detail it’s clear that she had alienated an important section of Latino immigrant activists in the city\*\*\*. Certainly she had ties to Democratic Party state and local power brokers such as the mayor and Rep. Keith Ellison. She had also gotten support from corporate real estate interests who were very strongly opposed to Occupy Our Homes.

I felt extremely comfortable working with members of SA during these two days. I found them to be very respectful, honest, open and reflective. I sought to help them to sell their paper, petition, door knock, and engage in all other campaign related activity. In addition to building the campaign they very clearly sought to build their organization. In the campaign office they had membership cards, SA and CWI literature, and they announced at one point that just as important as their strong showing in the polls, 40 people had expressed interest in joining the organization. Without being overbearing or sectarian there were clear consistent calls throughout the campaign to build socialist organization and join SA.

Disappointingly there seemed to be very few if any other socialist organizations actively working on the campaign. This includes the ISO, DSA, and Socialist Action which have a presence in Minneapolis and endorsed the campaign. (DSA and Socialist Action did hold a successful fundraiser for Ty but beyond that their participation seems to have been limited.) Freedom Road Fightback might have also had a few members who helped to campaign for Ty but this seems to have been more of an individual initiative than an organizational priority.

Despite all this the attitude toward the broader left seemed to be a positive and constructive one. Many people were surprised that Solidarity had sent someone to support the campaign but were respectful and appreciative. (There was a degree of political ‘distancing’ and coldness that I picked up from some of them at times, but this was more the exception than the rule.)

SA members stated repeatedly that they were engaging in these campaigns to set an example for the broader left, and that they wanted other socialist organizations to run candidates as they had. This is of course different from wanting to build an alliance of socialist organizations to run candidates together like the DSP/DST in Australia. Their call for a class alternative to the Democratic Party also needs to be understood as distinct from political unification of anti-capitalist forces in terms of regroupment and refoundation.

In any event some SA members did seem to be aware of and sympathetic to efforts by supporters of Solidarity such as Howie Hawkins and Dan La Botz to run campaigns as open socialists. They also seem to have sought out support around housing policy from the Richmond Progressive Alliance which some members of Solidarity have participated in.

Role of race in the “race”

In campaigning for Ty I was sometimes asked by other Blacks I would encounter “Is he a brother?”, “Is he Black?”. One African immigrant actually yelled at me that “That guy is trying to run Black people out of the neighborhood”. To a certain extent this kind of thing is to be expected in an election campaign. The other five candidates running against Ty partly split up along the lines of the racial demographics of the ward. This was a majority minority ward and I’m sure that race baiting was used by his opponents in a back handed fashion.

At the same time I do think that there was a fundamental contradiction around SA’s ability to marshal the energies of its European international supporters in actively campaigning for Ty, but somewhat weak showing in involving Native American, Somali, and African Americans in its own backyard. During my time in Minneapolis I never met an SA member who was a person of color, and conversations that I had indicated that there were extremely few or none in the Minneapolis branch itself. Except for the decent size contingent of Latinos the staff and volunteers were very nearly all white. It should be kept in mind that obviously the broader base of those who voted for and in lower level ways supported Ty was much more multiracial.

I believe that SA’s tendency to prioritize anti-war, housing justice, student, and labor work relative to struggles more clearly rooted in communities of color reinforced this set of dynamics. (The staff of Occupy Our Homes Minneapolis which SA helped to found is also almost all white.) An inability to fully register the significance of race and gender in these campaigns might have also influenced their wrong estimation of the potential success of Ty’s campaign relative to that of Kshama Sawant’s.

Despite all of this it can’t be stressed enough that this was a very explicitly anti-racist campaign with literature in Somali and Spanish; strong demands around stopping deportations and racial profiling; endorsements from recognized Latino community leaders and a Spanish language newspaper etc. This was all done in a way that was very above board and principled.

Relationship to socialist vision and strategy

Some on the left have raised concerns about some of the limitations of certain kinds of minimum demands put forward in these campaigns. It’s very real that some people might have responded more on a more superficial and narrow level to demands like raising the minimum wage to 15$ an hour. It’s also interesting that these campaigns elicited such a low level of critical debate and challenge from Democratic Party candidates. On the contrary there was an effort to try to co-opt their basic thrust and message.

Despite this, I do believe that SA put quite a bit of critical thought into how to connect its campaign platform to a broader socialist program. Often when we went out we were careful to tell people that it wasn’t that Ty was automatically grant everyone a raise if elected but that this was part of a nationwide movement of striking fast food workers. There was also a serious political understanding around the relationship of working class dual power to the “Eviction Free Zone”, use of eminent domain to take over abandoned housing, and other measures used by Occupy Our Homes. (See appendix with campaign materials for more information on this.)

Political evaluation and assessment

It would be partly mistaken to state that SA has developed a political base in some of the communities where they polled strongest. Hopefully this is a step toward them developing one but my gut sense is that this might require a different kind of political project. Disbelief and dismissal in the likelihood of achieving 15$ an hour minimum wage, blind allegiance to the Democratic Party in the midst of grinding poverty, passivity, cynicism and general disengagement with the electoral process were not at all uncommon among many in the working class communities that I encountered.

 In reality SA was able to split to the left part of the base of the existing Democratic Party base. This includes the “left coalition” (in actuality a left section of the leadership/ bureaucratic layer) of progressive nonprofits and unions that got behind the campaign. (Generally these are not organizations that have concentrations of revolutionaries and socialists at their base even when they may be a sprinkling of radicals in their leadership.) In both Seattle and Minneapolis they ran against essentially liberal opponents with left of center constituencies. Without a stronger level of political organization at the base of such movements, and a broader set of relationships with others on the left, including other socialists and revolutionaries, the potential contradictions will be that much harder to weather.

 Another aspect of this is that they campaigned within the framework of the existing electorate. Prior to the election they did not conduct their own voter registration drives in the most working class and oppressed nationality areas (\*like the Phillips neighborhood, and “Little Earth” Native American community\*) which also had the lowest voter turnout. To the extent that they are able to in the future build a more independent base it might be possible to have a slightly more self-conscious “socialist” vote.

An important aspect of the election which requires a degree of separate discussion has to do with the relationship with other campaigns and candidates. The Green Party ran four candidates in other races in this election cycle. They also had one sitting City Councilperson, Cam Gordon, who was unopposed. There were also two independent movement oriented Mayoral campaigns: One by Jaymie Kelly, a woman working with OOH to fight the foreclosure of her home; another by a Green Party member, Doug Mann, campaigning around resisting privatization and fighting racism.

None of these campaigns were particularly strong or visible. There also might have been real dangers around SA spreading itself thin by trying to support some of these other campaigns, which did not necessarily have the same degree of political clarity and force as Ty’s. It did raise some questions politically for me that SA seemed to be raising rhetorically setting an example for the broader left, but to some degree, pulling back from full engagement with other forces by not endorsing others. Even when those other forces had endorsed them (e.g. the Green Party); were running as open socialists with a fairly grounded perspective (Doug Mann); or were linked to them through work in the movements (e.g. Jaymie Kelly through her anti-foreclosure struggle).

It’s important to make clear that SA has worked within broader formations (Labor party, Nader campaigns etc.) in the past and has also sought to bring together independent slates of candidates. It’s not clear if there really has been some kind of shift here. One SA member emphasized to me that Ty did not campaign for the endorsement of the Green Party but simply “showed up” at one of their meetings and asked if they were going to run someone against him.

At times it did seem that there was a particular orientation and dynamic at work. Jaymie Kelly’s home was raided on the morning of the election, and she would have been evicted were it not for OOH supporters, Ty, SA members and other activists who occupied the house and moved her back in. Ty’s campaign sought to use this to highlight the political terms of the election, and to galvanize his supporters. Certainly this was entirely justified, but it seemed to slip through the cracks that Jaymie Kelly herself was running as candidate specifically on the issue of fighting foreclosures.

Implications for Solidarity

Solidarity does not have the resources, active membership base, or international network to replicate SA’s campaign but nevertheless there are real lessons that we can apply. Part of this involves looking at ways we can translate strong areas of work and high points of struggle (like the Chicago teacher’s Strike) into breaking through the Democratic Party machine. Another aspect of this is the way in which it was clearly taken on in a centralized and collective way as a national and even international priority. Finally I would underline the emphasis on explicitly socialist identity politics, platform and program.

It’s my hope that we can have a greater level of dialogue with comrades in Boston, where there are branches both of Solidarity and SA, around how we can work on this relationship. It’s important that comrades there accurately pointed to weaknesses of Seamus Whelan’s campaign, despite the principled support which they tried to give it (, Whelan got 1.2%).They might have also correctly understood certain more fundamental political problems with SA’s political approach. I also think we should also assess not having done a little bit more than we did in relationship to these campaigns. I’m also interested in if we might be able to send a Spanish fluent comrade to Puerto Rico to assist with one of the campaigns of MAS/PPT in the future.

\*\*\*I believe that the divisions around Alondra Cano have a relationship to broader political fissures developing around the debate around Comprehensive Immigration Reform. I heard her described bitterly as someone “who really doesn’t care” by Latino activists who were non-SA members. There were also references to her using her record in the immigrant rights movement opportunistically, and their support for Ty as a statement that they wouldn’t support anyone “just because they are brown”.

Appendix of Socialist Alternative Campaign Material

**Our Shared Vision for Minneapolis**

**Jobs & Services, Not Corporate Welfare**

* Stop wasting hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on corporate welfare. City Council's $678 million give-away to billionaire Zigi Wilf for his Vikings stadium is just the tip of the iceberg.
* Redirect city development funds to create living-wage union jobs providing vital social services and to close the racial jobs gap.
* Property taxes on working people have increased 50% over the last decade while major banks and corporations in Minneapolis have gotten tax breaks and subsidies. The city should use every means at its disposal to raise taxes on big business.
* Elected leaders in Minneapolis must organize a major public campaign, including mass demonstrations, to demand the Minnesota Legislature and Governor Dayton raise taxes on corporations and the super-rich to fully fund education, healthcare, public transit, and a green jobs program to end unemployment.

**Stop Foreclosures & Evictions**

* City council members should campaign for a statewide moratorium and support families fighting foreclosures, which disproportionately impact women and communities of color.
* No police resources for evictions in Minneapolis until quality housing is treated as a basic human right, not a profitable commodity.
* Following the example of Richmond, CA, the city should implement Local Principal Reduction to reduce underwater mortgages to current market value, making the banks pay for the crisis they created. Using the power of eminent domain, the city should take bank-owned vacant homes now blighting our neighborhoods into public ownership under community control, refurbishing them to provide quality affordable housing.

 **A Sustainable City**

* End our city's reliance on coal, nuclear, and gas energy. Lower utility prices and rapidly transition to a renewable energy grid by taking the for-profit utilities, Xcel and Centerpoint, into public ownership under democratic control.
* Dramatically expand public transit and bikeways so cars aren't necessary to meet day-to-day transit needs. This should include a North-South Greenway through Ward 9.
* Expand city support for community gardens and urban agriculture and make the Midtown Farmers Market current home permanent. Increase access to affordable, healthy organic food in the low-income neighborhoods and expand market share for local farmers through institutional buyers like public schools and the city's convention center.

**$15/hr Minimum Wage and Union Rights**

* 25% of Ward 9 residents live in poverty. As a step toward a guaranteed living wage for all workers, city officials should initiate a major campaign to raise the minimum wage in Minneapolis to $15/hr, including a challenge to state laws limiting local government flexibility to address higher cost of living. Provide subsidies as needed to workers in small businesses who cannot afford $15/hr.
* Support unionization efforts by low-wage workers, starting with Target, US Bank, Wells Fargo, and other corporations receiving taxpayer benefits. City Council should publicly announce their solidarity with the growing national movement of fast food and retail workers fighting for "$15 and a union."

[.](http://www.tymoore.org/tags/workers_rights)

**Immigrant Rights**

* End discrimination and ensure jobs, equal pay, and access to services for all.
* The city should publicly campaign for immediate, unconditional citizenship rights for all immigrants and enact a moratorium on deportations and workplace repression in Minneapolis.
* Extend voting rights in city elections to all Minneapolis residents who live, work, and pay taxes here, regardless of their immigration status.

**Fully Funded Quality Public Schools**

* An emergency program to resolve the racial achievement gap includes increasing the teacher-to-student ratio by hiring hundreds of teachers, ensuring new hires reflect the diversity of students.
* Keep public schools open and funded. Stop the drive to privatize public education through expanding privately run, non-union charter schools.
* End the high stakes testing regime in schools, which is culturally biased and designed to make schools fail. Testing should be one part of a democratically determined and culturally specific criteria for success at neighborhood schools.
* Address deepening racial tensions in our schools by expanding student and parent-led cultural programs and classes. Empower students, parents, and teachers to democratically develop culturally relevant curriculum. Expand anti-bullying efforts and curriculum promoting LGBTQ equality.

**Safety & Police Accountability**

* Youth jobs are the most important public safety policy. The city should create hundreds of living-wage, part-time union jobs for young people, providing necessary community services.
* Build a movement against racial profiling and police brutality. Create an elected civilian review board with full powers over the police.
* Strengthen block clubs and work to fully integrate low-income residents, renters, and communities of color into cohesive neighborhood organizations that can, in partnership with the city, create bottom-up responses to safety and livability concerns.

***"This campaign is about more than just winning an election – we are trying to win a new world."***

While Wall Street posted record profits of $141 billion last year, there has been no recovery for working people. Unemployment continues to ravage our city, especially among youth and in communities of color. Insecure, low-wage jobs are pushing families into poverty. Each day in Hennepin County, four new families are forced into homelessness – double the 2006 rate. Meanwhile budget cuts undermine our schools and social services.

It's time we raised our expectations. The Democratic Party has run Minneapolis for decades, and despite the efforts of many well-meaning rank-and-file DFLers, the party leadership has governed in the interests of their wealthy corporate backers.

We're building a completely different kind of politics. We know that real change is never handed down by corporate politicians; it's won by ordinary people standing together and building movements. Our campaign will help build, unite, and give political voice to the ongoing struggles for justice in our community.

Unlike most city leaders, we won't limit our demands to what downtown business interests, the banks, and the big developers will allow. We won't hide behind the narrow limits of local government power imposed by the corporate politicians at the state and federal level.

Instead, we campaign for a bold political agenda for the 99% that would transform the lives of everyday people. We live in the richest nation on earth. Our city is wealthy and full of creative, intelligent, resourceful people. There is no scarcity crisis; there is a priorities crisis.

**If elected, together with you, we can organize powerful movements of working people to ensure the burning social needs of our communities are prioritized over corporate profits.**

At the national level, both the Democratic and Republican parties are controlled by big business. Working people will remain locked out of political power, left to protest on the sidelines, until we create our own political voice, one that refuses corporate donations, which has genuine democratic structures, and is held accountable to our social movements.

Imagine if the unions, community groups, and social justice campaigns united with Greens and socialists to build a serious, movement-based opposition to the corporate-controlled DFL machine. We could transform Minneapolis, and help inspire a nation-wide movement to put people over profit.

Capitalism is a system that prioritizes corporate profits above all else and prevents solutions to inequality, poverty, oppression, and environmental destruction. Socialists call for taking the top 500 U.S. banks and businesses into public ownership run under the democratic management of elected representatives of the workers and the broader public. In this way, our tremendous wealth and ingenuity could ensure a sustainable planet, good jobs, and a quality life for all.

Ty is a Socialist Alternative candidate, a national organization fighting in neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools to link today's campaigns against everyday injustices to a wider struggle to transform society.

## “MN Sports Facilities Authority Must Halt Construction of the Vikings Stadium”

### Leading City Council candidate Ty Moore urges delay until legal and political challenges to stadium deal can be reviewed.

**Contact:** Kelly Bellin, Ty Moore for City Council Campaign Manager

[www.TyMoore.org](http://www.tymoore.org/) info@TyMoore.org

Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority is expected to meet tomorrow, September 27, to decide on the proceedings on the Viking's Stadium construction. This body, controlled by the Democratic Party, used its power in the past to delay the process, but is now expected to give a green light to the construction plans. The decision to move forward would put the the city of Minneapolis on the hook for $150 million and the state for $348 million. Meanwhile, billionaire owner Zygi Wilf will effectively pay nothing, putting his share of the costs on the shoulders of fans and the NFL.

Moore continued, “I’m calling on MSFA to halt or at least delay the stadium construction until the newly elected council is seated and can review the whole process. The newly elected City Council will not likely support the stadium, especially after the Wilfs have been found guilty of massive fraud and fined $84 million.” Ty Moore, a frontrunner for Minneapolis City Council in Ward 9, explained that “Minneapolis voters are in revolt against this corporate welfare to the Wilf family. The current City Council’s decision to spend $150 million of Minneapolis taxpayer money, their attempt to avoid the legally required voter referendum, remains an open wound for the city’s political establishment.”

Endorsed by Socialist Alternative, the Green Party, and the SEIU Minnesota State Council, Moore argues that the millions spent on the stadium would better be used to fully fund public schools, public transit, and create sustainable living-wage jobs. Moore argues that public dollars should only be spent on stadiums if the public will own and control revenues, rather than subsidizing the profits of billionaires. Seat prices should be accessible to all fans, regardless of income.

## Socializing the Energy Industry — Minneapolis to Vote on Public Ownership of Utilities

Posted by [Kenny Guenther](http://www.tymoore.org/kennyg) 303pc on July 02, 2013 · [Flag](http://www.tymoore.org/forms/flags/page.js?page_id=75)

This article was first published in [*Justice*](http://www.socialistalternative.org/justice/), the newspaper of Socialist Alternative.

As the national debate over climate change and the role of the energy industry rages, Minneapolis voters may be asked this November to decide whether to empower the city to take their energy providers into public ownership. A ballot initiative to allow the City Council to municipalize the for-profit electricity and natural gas utilities – Xcel and Centerpoint – is setting the stage for a major showdown between the energy industry and a coalition of climate activists and community groups. Socialist Alternative and our Minneapolis City Council candidate, Ty Moore, will be at the forefront of this nationally significant debate.

As energy companies are ramping up fossil fuel exploration and turning to ever-dirtier means of extraction, the question of what to do about climate change looms large. All hope of mitigating the climate change crisis rests on rapidly transitioning our energy infrastructure away from fossil fuels and replacing them with renewable sources like solar, wind, and geothermal power. Yet energy companies, fixated on the enormous profits in oil, coal, and gas, refuse to make the switch and are even disinvesting from renewables. A few years ago, Shell sold off nearly its entire solar business (Chris Williams, Ecology and Socialism 93), and this year BP said it was selling off its wind business (Climate Connections, 4/5/13), citing lack of profitability as the reason.

As Bill McKibben pointed out in a recent article for Rolling Stone, energy corporations now hold in proven reserves five times the amount of fossil fuels it would take to send climate change into an irreversible spiral of truly catastrophic dimensions. These reserves are the assets on which these companies’ wealth is based, and they will not be convinced to simply write them off, no matter how dire the consequences of extracting and burning them. The only way to force the energy industry to shift their vast resources toward huge investments in renewable energy infrastructure is to take them into public ownership and run them to meet public need rather than to maximize profits.

**Voting for Public Ownership**

This coming year, Minneapolis’ 20-year contracts with Xcel and Centerpoint – our electricity and natural gas providers, respectively – are up for review. A new group called Minneapolis Energy Options (MEO) is building a coalition of environmental and community organizations to push the city government to consider municipalization, and Socialist Alternative’s candidate for City Council in Minneapolis, Ty Moore, is making public ownership of the city’s energy a central demand. With this as a first step, our campaign is calling for a clear goal and workable plan to move rapidly to 100% renewables for Minneapolis electricity and heating.

With the help of Socialist Alternative and other community groups’ efforts to build public support, MEO appears set to succeed in convincing Minneapolis City Council to approve the ballot initiative which, if passed by voters in November, would authorize the city to municipalize. We expect a vigorous “Vote No” counter-campaign financed by Xcel and Centerpoint. In 2011, when Boulder, Colorado voters were given the choice to municipalize, Xcel spent a million dollars on advertising and canvassers, nearly defeating the measure (Utne Reader, 9/12). A massive public education and get-out-the-vote campaign is required to ensure the measure passes.

**A Green Jobs Program**

Building an effective campaign in Minneapolis means linking the struggle around utilities to the crucial question of jobs. Historically, the environmental movement has had a hard time connecting with working-class people because of energy industry propaganda – loudly echoed in the corporate media – that environmental reforms will mean eliminating skilled, high-paying jobs. This is a false choice presented by the ruling class to undermine the movement. In reality, the demand for a major green jobs program to rapidly build, operate, and maintain a renewable energy infrastructure could mean full employment for everyone.

Socialist Alternative and the Ty Moore campaign are calling for the City of Minneapolis to initiate a major green energy jobs program to build windmills, solar parks, and other renewable electricity sources, and to retrofit existing houses for energy efficiency and geothermal heat. Such a program can be linked to other demands such as raising the minimum wage to $15 per hour and closing the racial jobs gap. The Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Area has one of the worst racial employment gaps in the country, with figures for 2011 showing 18% unemployment for African Americans, more than three times the number for whites (MPR News, 6/10/13).

**Socialism Needed**

Our demands point to a much larger picture than simply municipalizing utilities in one city. Working-class people are struggling across the nation, and climate change requires immediate emergency responses on a global scale. The technology to implement a transition to 100% renewable energy exists (Scientific American, 4/15/13), and the money to do it is there. Currently, Xcel reaps $450 million in revenue annually from Minneapolis alone. Taking control of our utilities would divert that money back into our local economy and make it available for a transition to renewables.

Since corporate politicians prevent city governments from implementing most forms of progressive taxation, our program would require an infusion of state money, provided by raising taxes on the super-rich. Nationally and globally, there are trillions of dollars in corporate coffers sitting idle, due to a lack of profitable areas of investment. But putting this money to use for the good of all will require taking public ownership of Wall Street and big business, meaning a shift to a socialist, democratically planned economy.

Taking our utilities into public ownership in Minneapolis is only a beginning. Nationalizing the energy industry is a necessary step toward any hope of a sustainable future on Earth. Ultimately, only nationalizing all major industries under democratic workers’ control will put an end to the environmental degradation and human exploitation created by capitalism. Challenging the power of big business will require a movement that dwarfs, in size and scope, all of the vital struggles in human history. Let’s make the fight to take Minneapolis’ utilities under public control into a model for the future and a flashpoint for the coming global revolution.