

November 7, 2011

For Immediate Release

Edmonton conference to look at how workers are fighting back against attacks on their rights and democracy

EDMONTON – The past year has seen numerous attacks on public services, democracy, and the rights of workers all under the guise of austerity and with the economic crisis as a backdrop. We have also seen mass mobilizations and organized actions in response to these attacks. From the Arab Spring, to the worker take-over of the Wisconsin legislature, the mass marches and protests in Greece and the UK, and most recently the world-wide Occupy movement, people are organizing and making their voices heard.

This conference will explore the implications of this most recent set of attacks on public sector workers, public services, and genuine democracy for Alberta and Canada, and will also look at what Albertans can learn from hopeful examples of resistance from around the world. **Class Dismissed: Capital's war on workers and democracy** takes place on the University of Alberta campus from November 18 to 20.

Conference highlights will include:

Leo Panitch – Professor of Political Economy and frequent writer and commentator on capitalism and workers

Richard Wilkinson (by skype) – Co-author of *The Spirit Level* and co-founder of The Equity Trust

Stephanie Bloomingdale – Secretary–Treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

Paul Moist – National President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees

Joan Sangster – Professor of History and Gender, Women's Studies, and Working-Class History at Trent University

Bryan Palmer – Canada Research Chair and Editor of *Labour/Le Travail*

Gil McGowan – President, Alberta Federation of Labour

There will also be numerous break-out sessions throughout the weekend featuring experts and activists from across the country. The full conference schedule, along with speaker bios, is available at <http://parklandinstitute.ca/fallconference2011>

All sessions will be open to the media. Arrangements can be made for advance interviews and media appearances for conference speakers and organizers.

- 30 -

For further information:

Ricardo Acuña, Executive Director, Parkland Institute
W: (780) 492-8558 C: (780) 951-7180 E: racuna@ualberta.ca