

**FRANK P. ZEIDLER'S VIEW ON PUBLIC SECTOR  
LABOR RELATIONS AS MILWAUKEE'S LAST  
SOCIALIST MAYOR, 1948-1960**

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**ABSTRACT**

Frank P. Zeidler, Milwaukee's last Socialist mayor, considered a labor supporter by the city's private sector labor unions, was not regarded as an ally by the public sector labor unions. Zeidler believed that public sector unions should neither have the legal right to strike nor the right to settle interest disputes with arbitration if a collective bargaining agreement could not be achieved. Initially, such positions appear to contradict Zeidler's socialist politics but, upon further examination, are quite consistent with Zeidler's particular brand of socialism, known as "municipal Socialism." Under this philosophy, even though the Socialists depended on the working class and the labor unions for votes at election time, no sector of the labor movement, or even the working class as a whole, takes precedence over the effective administration of the city.

Left-wing trade unionists of all stripes—Socialists, Communists, and Anarcho-Syndicalists, for example—have actively participated in labor unions in the United States throughout the latter part of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. Socialists were active in the craft-oriented unions of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), founded in 1886, while the Industrial Workers of the World, established in 1905, was heavily influenced by anarcho-syndicalist ideology. The Communists, after splitting from the Socialists in 1919, organized within the AFL unions through the Trade Union Educational League

during much of the 1920s and were a major force in the organization of the industrial-oriented unions of the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the mid to the late 1930s. As activists and leaders of the labor organizations mentioned above, many of these left-wing trade unionists made significant contributions through their leading of strikes, other collective actions, and collective bargaining negotiations that resulted in such things as increased wages, benefits, and job security for millions of workers throughout the United States [1].

Based on the above historical analysis, the opposition of Frank P. Zeidler, Milwaukee's last Socialist mayor from 1948 to 1960, to providing public sector unions with the legal right to strike or the right to resolve interest disputes with arbitration if a collective bargaining agreement could not be obtained appears to be contradictory to socialist politics. However, upon further examination, this article provides evidence that these views are quite consistent with Zeidler's particular brand of socialism.

This article presents a brief history of Zeidler's branch of the Socialist Party of America (SP), the Milwaukee SP, and Zeidler's personal and political background, culminating with a discussion of his successful mayoral campaigns and his major achievements as Milwaukee's mayor. Next, Zeidler's views and relationship with private sector labor unions are followed by a discussion of Zeidler's stance on public sector labor relations, focusing on his opposition to public sector unions having the legal right to strike and the right to settle interest disputes with arbitration if a collective bargaining agreement could not be attained. The article concludes with an analysis demonstrating why Zeidler's positions on these public sector labor relations issues are consistent with his specific brand of socialism.

### THE MILWAUKEE SOCIALISTS

Founded in July 1901, the SP united a number of diverse socialistic groups under one organizational umbrella. In the early years of the SP, New York City—specifically lower Manhattan—represented an important center of U.S. socialism with immigrants, predominantly Jewish garment workers from Eastern Europe, comprising the organizational base of the party. Another center of SP strength in the first two decades of the twentieth century was in Pennsylvania, with Reading being the most successful local in the state, although both the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh locals were of decent size and strength. Other locals and states where the party exhibited considerable strength at this time include Chicago, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, Washington, and California [2, pp. 1-3, 8, 15, 16, 18-42].

However, in spite of the SP's significant influence in New York City, the party's most powerful center, and where it experienced its greatest success, was in Milwaukee. There the SP successfully transformed a two-party political system into one of three parties. From 1910 to 1940, Milwaukee Socialists were elected to a variety of offices, including the city's school board, the city council, U.S.

Congress, and other city and county offices, as well as the mayor's office. Elected in 1910 as the first Socialist mayor of a large U.S. city, Emil Seidel, "the son of working class German immigrants" and a skilled woodcarver and pattern-maker by trade, served as Milwaukee's first Socialist mayor until 1912. Milwaukee's second Socialist mayor, Daniel Hoan, "a second-generation German American" who became the city's attorney at 29 years of age, was elected in 1916 and served for 24 years until he was defeated in 1940 [3, pp. 19, 30]. Frank Zeidler, Milwaukee's third (and last) Socialist mayor, was elected in 1948 and served for three consecutive terms until 1960, when he decided against seeking reelection.

The base of electoral support for the Milwaukee Socialists' early strength lay in the party's ties to the local trade union movement. In 1887, the Milwaukee locals of the recently organized AFL joined together to form the citywide Federated Trades Council (FTC). With the formation of the Milwaukee Social Democracy, it became interconnected with the FTC in terms of membership, policies, and goals, with the FTC working in the economic arena and the party working in the political arena. Although the party and the trade union movement remained organizationally autonomous, this symbiotic relationship was mutually beneficial until the onset of World War I, when the pressures of the period put a strain on this intimate relationship. After this period of time, the party was able to expand its base of support beyond the trade union movement [3, p. 24].

Since the Socialists had elected a majority of aldermen on the common council as well as a majority on the county board of supervisors, the two-year mayoral administration of Seidel was highly effective in bringing about significant municipal reform in Milwaukee. From 1910 to 1912, the Socialists eliminated corruption in the city administration while implementing a wide variety of reforms, including greater regulation of industry in the city; the passage of new factory and building regulations; the enforcement of fire-prevention initiatives; crime-prevention programs; the formation of housing and fire commissions; the institution of public health, city planning, and parks programs; free public concerts and lectures; and modernization of public administration procedures (including the introduction of cost accounting and centralized purchasing). Milwaukee's workers also benefited from the Socialists' efforts. The administration established a strike arbitration service in the private sector, and municipal employees were given union wages and an eight-hour workday [3, pp. 31-32].

With his election as mayor in 1916, Hoan attempted to continue the reforms but was largely unsuccessful because he lacked sufficient Socialist support on the city's common council. Trying to move in the direction of municipal ownership, Hoan tried to introduce additional municipal planning as well as acquiring a municipal lighting plant. However, confronted by an anti-Socialist majority on the common council, Hoan's more moderate initiatives such as improvements in the city's harbor and sewage facilities, were easily defeated. Nevertheless, Hoan persevered in his efforts and, in his second term was successful in obtaining some

municipal improvements, including the acquisition of a stone quarry, street lighting, sewage disposal, and water purification. In addition, in 1923, he initiated the first low-cost housing program in the United States with the establishment of Garden Homes [3, pp. 32, 38].

In characterizing the mayoral administrations of Seidel and Hoan, one can conclude that although they were in favor of public ownership and the transformation of the capitalist economic system, because of structural limitations in bringing about this objective, both administrations focused on achieving pragmatic goals in the here and now as opposed to building “socialism in one city.” Therefore, what the two Socialist administrations became known and remembered for was promoting the practice of good government, fighting for the public interest, and actively involving the working class in the highest echelons of city government [3, pp. 38-39]. The third Socialist mayor, Frank Zeidler, possessed the same vision and goals as those of his two predecessors, although his election as Milwaukee’s mayor in 1948 occurred at a time when the Socialist movement in Milwaukee and throughout the nation had largely dissolved.

## BACKGROUND

Zeidler, born on September 12, 1912, in Milwaukee, was the youngest son of Michael and Clara Zeidler, who already had two sons and one daughter at the time of his birth. Zeidler’s father was a barber who owned and operated his own shop on Milwaukee’s west side for more than 50 years, and his mother was the daughter of a Lutheran school teacher. Although he was from a German family, Zeidler grew up in predominantly Irish neighborhoods that were known in Milwaukee as the Fourth Ward, or Merrill Park. After attending the public schools of Milwaukee, Zeidler graduated from West Division High School in 1929 [4, p. 4; 5, pp. 1, 6].

Zeidler was attracted to the politics of the SP early in his life through his readings of Socialist writers who had opposed World War I. According to Zeidler, “The First World War was a major influence in my early life because our family was German and had German relatives who were, in turn, affected by the war in Europe.” Zeidler specifically cited the writings of Norman Thomas, who became a party leader in the 1920s, and those of Harry Laidler as being particularly influential in winning him over to the ideas of socialism [6].

Zeidler joined the SP in 1932, immediately becoming active in the Sixty-Fourth Ward branch of the Milwaukee party. Although Zeidler was quite young, he participated in regular ward work and “became something of a leader in the community” [6]. In the early 1930s, while serving as the ward branch’s secretary, he conducted monthly meetings, distributed literature, and worked at polling places during electoral campaigns. Advancing through the party ranks fairly rapidly, Zeidler became the local secretary of the Milwaukee SP in 1935, as

well as the Milwaukee County SP and the Wisconsin SP state secretary in October 1937 [6; 7, p. 556].

Zeidler's appointment to the county and state secretarial positions was made in an attempt to halt the dissolution of the party at the county and state levels. When the "zealous newcomer" took over these positions, he discovered that the party records were in severe disarray and that there were no party contacts remaining "outside the southern lake-shore industrial cities and in Madison's Dane county" [7, p. 556]. Even within the state's party stronghold of Milwaukee, Zeidler found that many branches were no longer functioning and that organizing work had ground to a halt. In response to this situation, Zeidler hired a full-time Young People's Socialist League organizer, resuscitated the distribution of party literature as much as the dwindling finances would allow, established the Socialist Reserves to activate party sympathizers who were willing to work for but not join the SP, and participated in radio broadcasts at the county and state levels [7, p. 556].

At the time Zeidler joined the SP in the early 1930s, the party was undergoing a period of both revival and tumult, no doubt in part because of the Great Depression and its radicalizing effect on the population at large. Although the SP had a membership of 108,504 immediately prior to the split of the two Communist parties in the late summer of 1919, party membership continued to decline throughout the 1920s, reaching a nadir of 7,793 members in 1928. With the more than doubling of the SP membership to approximately 16,863 in 1932, and the continued growth to 20,951 members in 1934 [2, pp. 128, 185, 250], the party experienced the rebirth of a vigorous factionalism, a phenomenon that it had not been confronted with since the immediate post-World War I period.

When the two Communist parties left the SP in 1919, according to Olson [7, p. 397], "(t)he Milwaukee comrades rejoiced at the outcome" and did not suffer significant membership losses in the city at the time [8]. However, when the SP at the national level was experiencing membership difficulty in the late 1920s, party membership in Wisconsin hovered between 1,272 and 1,350 from 1925 to 1929. With the increase in SP membership throughout the nation in the early 1930s, party membership also revived in Wisconsin, to 2,341 members in 1932, and which increased to 2,599 members in 1936. During these four years, most of the state's membership gains occurred in Milwaukee. After the "Old Guard" split in 1936 to form the Social Democratic Federation, by early 1937, Milwaukeeans made up a third of the SP's total membership [7, pp. 481, 486, 549].

Although party leader Norman Thomas encouraged the Wisconsin SP to work with the Wisconsin Progressive Party in 1933 and 1934 because of his belief that the latter organization was moving in the direction of socialism, he dropped the issue after the Wisconsin SP strongly opposed the idea. In spite of the state party's reluctance to cooperate with the Wisconsin Progressive Party in 1933 and 1934, the Wisconsin SP in 1935 helped to establish the Wisconsin Farmer-Progressive Labor Federation, which backed a "production-for-use" plank in the

party platform, which all federation-endorsed candidates were required to support. However, instead of moving the federation toward adopting socialist politics and participating in independent political activity, the state party found itself “swallowed up in the liberal reformist tide,” which led to a disintegration of the state party’s strength. A number of Wisconsin SP leaders, including former Milwaukee mayor Daniel Hoan, who was defeated for reelection in 1940, argued that the demise of the state party occurred once the Socialists were working inside the federation because they focused much of their effort on obtaining jobs and demonstrated little interest in building the Wisconsin SP and promoting socialism [9, pp. 71-73].

Zeidler began to work as a surveyor and topographical engineer in 1931, an occupation that he engaged in until 1943. While working as a rodman on a surveying crew employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Greendale (Wisconsin) suburban resettlement project, Zeidler joined the municipal engineers union, Local 54 of the AFL, in 1935. Three years later, in 1938, running on the Progressive ticket, he was elected to his first position as a public official—surveyor of Milwaukee County—which he held until 1940. After running unsuccessfully for state treasurer on the Progressive ticket in 1940, the following year Zeidler was elected to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, a position he held until 1948. Running on the SP ticket, Zeidler ran unsuccessfully for governor of Wisconsin in 1942, mayor of Milwaukee in 1944, and for the U.S. Congress in 1946 [4, pp. 4, 7; 6].

### **MAYORAL CAMPAIGNS AND ADMINISTRATIONS, 1948-1960**

Although he remained an active member and leader of the SP, Zeidler’s fortunes changed in 1948. However, at this time, when he ran for mayor, Zeidler did not run on the SP ticket. With the dwindling of the party’s membership, Zeidler organized a meeting of 50 liberals and trade union leaders and established a group called the Municipal Enterprise Committee, which backed his candidacy for mayor. Although the committee was attacked by business and the press “as a Socialist front,” Zeidler easily won the mayor’s office by a margin of 124,000 votes to 97,000 votes [10, p. 223].

Zeidler explained the confluence of political forces that led to his election as Milwaukee’s mayor in 1948:

. . . (I)n 1947, I was secretary of the party (SP) and keeping the movement going and they (the party) decided to try to get a coalition of people. The Progressive Party had gone out of business when the LaFollettes went back to the Republican Party. And Robert LaFollette was a very good senator, nevertheless, got beat by Joe McCarthy in 1946. So there was an attempt to get liberal Democrats, former Progressives or people who had been Progressives and Socialists into one campaign. And they formed it under

the Municipal Enterprise Committee. And that was the group that . . . then tried to get candidates for other offices like city controller, treasurer and they couldn't get anybody. And so I ran almost alone and was endorsed by the Municipal Enterprise Committee. And . . . I got elected mayor [6].

Four years later, in 1952, the Milwaukee *Journal*, the city's influential newspaper, endorsed Zeidler for reelection after opposing him in 1948. The major force opposing Zeidler in the 1952 election was the real estate industry, which was upset with his innovative housing program. Nevertheless, Zeidler's margin of victory increased from 27,000 votes in 1948 to 92,000 votes in 1952 [10, p. 223].

Although he was elected for a third consecutive term, the 1956 Milwaukee mayoral election did not go as smoothly for Zeidler as the one in 1952 had. Zeidler's opposition was much better organized and raised a significant amount of money to run newspaper advertisements which claimed "that mobs of juveniles crazed with liquor and dope were roaming the city." In addition, a whispering campaign accused Zeidler of being a "nigger lover." Although the *Journal* supported his candidacy once more, the other major city newspaper, the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, according to Zeidler, accused him of "being a Communist like Khrushchev." Nevertheless, Zeidler won the election, although his three-to-one margin of victory in 1952 had been reduced to a mere 23,000 votes in 1956 [6; 10, p. 223].

Continuing the tradition of the good government practices of the two previous twentieth-century Socialist mayoral administrations of Seidel and Hoan in Milwaukee, Zeidler compiled an impressive record of achievements during his 12 years as mayor. Although Zeidler's accomplishments are too numerous to mention here, much documentation exists outlining them in detail [11-13]. Nevertheless, when discussing the major achievements of his administration, Zeidler stated:

The major thing was not in the form of municipal administration or anything like that but it was in the form of standing up for civil rights. The biggest issue that developed in my campaign was the problem that Milwaukeeans had when African-Americans started to come into the community. How to treat everybody fairly and that became the dominant issue from 1952 to 1960 when I was in office. And thereafter and today it is still the dominant problem. But in terms of city administration, we had absolutely an honest city administration. . . . I built, I didn't build it myself but got the forces together to build, about 3,200 public housing units. I more than doubled the size of the city by annexation . . . I . . . developed a new, completely new water works system. We had many miles of new streets of new subdivisions of lighting. All developed without any corruption in the contract. . . . I helped start the interstate highway system locally and nationally. . . . Then, I expanded the library and museum service, the playground service. I supported the development of the vocational school. I helped get the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee into existence. And I also formed the committee that got the first educational television station in the area. . . . Built many bridges



and refurbished completely the sanitation department and the fire department because they had equipment that couldn't get through the winter snows and so on. So those were some of the things . . . [6].

Zeidler's many accomplishments as mayor are even more impressive when one considers that there were no other Socialists on the Milwaukee Common Council during his administrations. He claimed that, on the Common Council, "(t)here was one person who was sympathetic because his ancestors were socialist laborites," although if Zeidler "wanted to sustain a veto," he "had to rely on progressive Republicans" because "(t)he Democratic element in the city council" was quite hostile to Zeidler [6]. Because Zeidler could not get Socialists approved for appointments to positions such as fire, police, or planning commissioners, he had to look to appoint liberals to these positions "usually coming from the old progressive or the new liberal wing of the Democratic Party because a lot of the progressives, the younger progressives that had followed LaFollette, went into the Democratic Party . . . which represented a kind of Rooseveltian idea" [6].

#### **VIEWS ON PRIVATE SECTOR LABOR RELATIONS**

Private sector labor unions considered Zeidler to be a "friend of labor" when he was Milwaukee's mayor. According to Zeidler, "the Socialist mayors of Milwaukee did not buck the strikes that took place in the private sector and did not use the police to break 'em up. That was my philosophy too" [6]. In fact, Zeidler was quite active in intervening in private sector labor relations disputes while mayor. He helped to resolve a number of serious work stoppages in the private sector, the most serious one being a strike of gas and coke employees late in 1949, that appeared to pose a serious threat to the community's well-being. Zeidler acted as a mediator during this particular dispute, keeping negotiations going after two all-night sessions and did not allow the two sides to adjourn until a contract had been obtained [6; 11, p. 6].

#### **VIEWS ON PUBLIC SECTOR LABOR RELATIONS**

Zeidler admitted, however, that during his 12 years as mayor, the public sector unions in Milwaukee did not consider him to be an ally. Under his administration, the only unionized city employees were members of the construction trades. The passage of Wisconsin's law legalizing collective bargaining for public sector employees in 1959 was the first state public sector law passed in the United States. When Zeidler became mayor in 1948, the public sector labor relations system that was in effect in Milwaukee was a "meet and confer" system. The Milwaukee Common Council would "meet and confer" with the construction trade unions



representing city employees. The two sides would try to reach an agreement with respect to what the wages, working conditions, and labor policies would be and then the mayor and the Common Council would unilaterally enact them [6].

Although the only Milwaukee city employees who were unionized were in the construction trades, the other municipal employees were represented by an employees' league. Zeidler admitted that "there was a great fear that the fire-fighters and the police would organize" during his years in office [6]. And even though these other city employees were not unionized, the garbage workers engaged in many wildcat strikes of short duration throughout Zeidler's years as mayor. Zeidler stated, "(T)here were a lot of wildcat strikes . . . (among) the garbage workers. They had a certain leader there, a certain vocal person there who'd call them off for a one-day strike or something like that. He'd get mad and then they'd all walk off. So that was difficult" [6].

However, in 1958 and 1959, with the passage and implementation of Wisconsin's public sector labor law, Zeidler's position on public sector labor relations became clearer. Although he was not opposed to public sector employees having the legal right to unionize per se, he felt that there should be limitations placed on the rights and activities of public sector unions. In response to a December 16, 1958, letter from a constituent (a lawyer) who agreed with Zeidler's position that city employees should not have the legal right "to strike against the public" [14], the mayor acknowledged that his administration was experiencing difficulties "with employees who insist on the authority to strike" [15]. Although Zeidler reiterated his position that city employees should not be given the legal right to strike, he added, "A great many labor leaders have criticized me, but I do not think that there is such a thing as a right to strike against the public health and safety" [15].

However, denying public sector employees the legal right to strike was not the only restriction that Zeidler believed should be placed on public sector unions toward the end of his tenure as mayor. In response to reading the *ACLU Labor Committee Report on Civil Rights in Government Employment* that had been sent to him, Zeidler offered major detailed criticisms at the end of April 1959 to a number of the report's conclusions [16].

With respect to public sector employees having the legal right to strike, the ACLU report claimed that the limitation of this right to strike "is defensible only if and when adequate machinery for handling employee-employer relations is established," with the last step in this process being arbitration [16, p. 1]. Zeidler, who still believed that public sector employees should not be given the legal right to strike, argued that this was not a sufficient reason for restricting public employees' right to strike. According to Zeidler:

It is obvious that under this resolution any desire to strike will always be justified on the grounds that there is no effective machinery, no matter how good the machinery is. It is in the nature of men that when they want to strike,

they will find the justification in the assertion that grievances are not properly handled [16, p. 1].

Zeidler also disagreed with the committee's conclusion that unresolved grievances between public employees and the government must be submitted to arbitration. He felt that having arbitration as the terminal step in a grievance processing system involving public employees would ultimately weaken the government because the will of the people whom the government represents would not be served by the implementation of such a system. Elaborating on this point, Zeidler stated:

When the decisions of the government cannot stand by themselves but are subject to arbitration then the government is no longer the government. Instead the arbitration board becomes the government, or whatever agency enforces the decision of the arbitration board. In other words, the dully [sic] elected representatives of the people are not supreme under this arrangement but can be successfully challenged by a group of people whom they employ. The relatively few employees are, therefore, equal to the majority of voters in decisions on governmental operations [16, p. 2].

However, even though Zeidler was opposed to both strikes and arbitration for public employees if their grievances were not settled, he did not state what procedure should be used if the government and the public employees could not resolve their differences on their own [16].

Finally, Zeidler disagreed with the report's blanket support of the union shop for public employees. He argued that this position privileged the right of public employees' freedom of association over the right of freedom of these employees to *not* associate. According to Zeidler, this viewpoint holds governments to higher democratic standards than those of public sector unions:

This means that it is, therefore, opposed to freedom to not associate as compared to freedom to associate. Such a situation poses a very subtle point. A union often in itself will not permit within its own organization the same democracy or the right to dissent that it desires from the government; and the question then is, "Who is more democratic—a government which permits its employees to join any association the employees desires, or a union which says that an employee can only join one association?" [16, p. 2].

Zeidler's views on public sector labor relations, which were formulated and crystallized during his years as mayor, did not change dramatically after he became a municipal labor relations consultant and the permanent umpire (arbitrator) between Milwaukee County and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District Council 48 in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Zeidler remained a committed Socialist and continued to serve as a leader of both the Milwaukee and national organizations. After a three-way split of the SP and the reorganization of one of the factions in the early 1970s as the Socialist Party of the United States of

America (SPUSA), Zeidler was nominated as the SPUSA's presidential candidate in 1976. Battling obstacles such as state election law requirements, limited financial resources, and the lack of adequate press coverage resulted in Zeidler's name appearing on the ballot in only eight states, where he obtained a modest 8,000 votes [4, p. 7].

### **ZEIDLER'S VIEWS AND "MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM"**

How can we account for Frank Zeidler's views on public sector labor relations as a Socialist mayor? One would expect him to be equally supportive of the rights of both private sector and public sector labor unions with respect to important issues such as the right to strike, etc. According to the distinguished historian Isaac Deutscher, Zeidler's socialist political views and his positions on public sector labor relations would appear contradictory and to be, what he calls, one of the "ironies of history" [17]. However, if we examine this issue more closely, we find that these views are not contradictory but are consistent with Zeidler's specific brand of socialism.

One should realize that the SP was far from a homogenous or monolithic organization that advocated one specific type of socialism throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century. There was not just one type of socialism that party members envisioned as the ultimate goal to be achieved in the United States but alternative socialisms that existed within the SP from 1901 through circa 1940. For example, in 1919, the SP left-wing, inspired by the 1917 Russian Revolution, advocated a revolutionary socialism that was based on the Bolshevik model, while the party's right wing promoted a parliamentary socialism that viewed the implementation of socialism as evolving gradually over a longer period of time. During the SP's revival in the 1930s, a number of factions emerged within the party that advocated alternative socialisms. The "Old Guard" believed in the pursuit of socialism through the parliamentary road; the "Militants" were Marxists who supported working with the Communists in a United Front through the utilization of extraparliamentary methods; the "Clarity Caucus" promoted the use of revolutionary tactics and wanted the SP to act as a Leninist vanguard party, while the "Appeal" group was composed of Trotskyists whose view of socialism was motivated by the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik regime's early years before the onset of Stalinist degeneration in the 1920s [18, pp. 207-208].

Zeidler's brand of socialism, which is consistent with that of the Milwaukee SP in its heyday from 1897 to 1940, is known as "municipal Socialism," or by the more derogatory term of "sewer Socialism." The latter term was coined by the more radical Socialists from New York City, who decried the Milwaukee Socialists' pragmatic emphasis on providing efficient city services like sanitation instead of emphasizing the actual construction of socialism in its daily activities [6, 19]. And even though the Milwaukee Socialists depended on the working class

and the trade unions for political support at election time, no section of the labor movement or the working class took precedence over their effective administration of the city. This view is best represented by Milwaukee SP leader Victor Berger, a national party leader from 1901 until his death in 1929 as well as Milwaukee's first Socialist congressman in 1910, who stated, "(W)e are a labor party and as such we must support the legitimate demands of labor, but when such demands conflict with the public interest, we must be for the public" [14]. This pronouncement helps to explain why Zeidler was opposed to providing public sector unions with either the right to strike or the right to utilize arbitration to resolve interest disputes if collective bargaining negotiations had reached an impasse.

And, as stated earlier, Zeidler's view on public sector labor relations did not change significantly after his 12-year tenure as Milwaukee's mayor. Related to his role as a municipal labor relations consultant, he wrote a number of works on how public officials should deal with the proliferation of public sector unions after the passage of an increasing number of state laws sanctioned public sector collective bargaining. For example, in 1968, in the inaugural issue of a series published as the *Public Employee Relations Library*, Zeidler compared some public sector strikes to an illegal physical assault: "Choking a man's windpipe is not a legitimate method of bargaining, and there are work stoppages in the public sector that are akin to this" [20, p. 8]. Two years later, in a subsequent issue of the same series, he argued that because public sector strikes "are occurring with growing frequency," public officials should not overreact to this development even though "[a] need exists, nonetheless, for laws that are effective in dealing with strikes, especially strikes in violation of existing agreements or contracts" [21, p. 28]. And in 1980, he wrote a more extensive work than the two previously cited titles in the same series entitled, *Management's Rights Under Public Sector Collective Bargaining Agreements* [22].

Zeidler acknowledged that the decline of manufacturing jobs and the continuing advance of technological change have dramatically diminished private sector union membership over the past few decades. But, according to Zeidler, because "the public has the power to tax," the public sector worker has a guaranteed income and thus,

the big thing is union organization in the public sector. That's the new strength of the labor movement. And, in effect, the unions have gotten in a situation where local governments are really "two-house" governments. One is the elected official and the other is the union, because you don't get any municipal services unless those two parties agree [6].

Zeidler vigorously supported the unionization of workfare workers, a group that may be considered to be the newest "public sector employee," but, in the early years of the new millennium, he still was not in favor of public sector employees having the legal right to conduct strikes [6, 8]. However, with the growth of public

sector unionism combined with increasing pressure on both federal and state budgets, one might anticipate that there may be more difficulty in obtaining agreement in collective bargaining negotiations in an environment characterized by diminishing resources. Under such a scenario, public sector unions will undoubtedly engage in more strikes in the future in an attempt to achieve their demands, which, no doubt, would have displeased Frank P. Zeidler.

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