



# CCDS MOBILIZER



A Publication of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism

Vol. 6 No. 2

Summer 2010

## National Coordinating Committee: 2010 Election – Save the Progressive Majority

Meeting July 31, August 1

The NCC met in a video conference July 31, and August 1. The first point was the upcoming national election. Ted Pearson opened with a PowerPoint on “Can the Progressive Majority be Saved?” Jean Hardisty and Deepak Bhargava in The Nation said, “Eighteen months into the Obama era, the progressive movement is experiencing malaise, based on disappointment about what has been accomplished so far and confusion about the path forward”. This problem was reflected in many of the local chapter reports also. The report laid out a strategy of mass actions that can help progressives reshape the national agenda, especially the Oct. 2 “One Nation-One Dream” march on Washington called by the NAACP and endorsed by the AFL-CIO.

A video of [Van Jones speaking in July to the Netroots Nation](#) was shown. Jones called on the Netroots Nation to keep going. We thought we’d crossed the finish line on Election Day, 2008, he said, but actually we’ve just got to the starting line. **See NCC page 2**

### Jack O’Dell’s *Climbin’ Jacob’s Ladder* and the Future of the Democracy Charter by Brandon Wallace

Jack O’ Dell’s *Climbin’ Jacob’s Ladder* makes a succinct case for the perseverance of progressive struggle in the face of open hostility from social, political, and economic forces in the United States. O’Dell offers up brilliant interpretations of Reconstruction Era politics and the ensuing social and political movements leading up to the Civil Rights Movement. Throughout the book, he weaves together a historical continuum based on race, labor, and class politics through the 1980s and Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition.

One inspired item that O’Dell incorporates into the book is the Democracy Charter. Based on South Africa’s Freedom Charter, the Democracy Charter proposes thirteen premises to serve as a basic commitment of the United States to the people who reside within it. Those premises include:

1. An end to homelessness.
2. Full employment.
3. A commitment to human rights.

See Democracy Charter on Page 2

## WHO WE ARE

CCDS is a national membership organization dedicated to democracy and socialism with local chapters in several cities. We are active in struggles for peace, justice, democracy, equality and hold a vision of a socialist future.

Annual membership is \$36 (\$18 for low income, unemployed, seniors, youth). Household membership is \$48. Add \$5 additional for a subscription to Dialogue & Initiative.

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Subscriptions are \$10/year, \$5 with CCDS membership.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Local chapters and leaders will be receiving a questionnaire soon to enable the NCC to “take inventory” of our members and their activities as part of a new Strategic Planning Initiative.

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- Regional/local CCDS reports page 5
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### **NCC from Page 1**

Key battle ground states for CCDS in the Senate and Congress races were identified: Illinois, New York, California, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Ohio.

This was followed by a good and frank discussion. What should our approach to the Blue Dogs be? How to support Obama when his policies are contrary to the progressive agenda? How to respond to attacks such as that on ACORN. The importance of discussing race and racism, support for immigrant rights with white workers. "Local mass struggles are key." There will be Jobs with Justice actions on August 6<sup>th</sup> and August 28<sup>th</sup> (in Detroit) followed by a JWW National Day of Action on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

The October 2 "One Nation-One Dream" mobilization is a national priority under the slogan "Demand the Change we Voted for." It has broad support including NAACP, LaRaza, AFL-CIO and SEIU. There will be a strong peace contingent present, especially if we help organize it.

[It's Time to Fight for Full Employment](#) is out in pamphlet form! This is a major step forward in our work and a valuable tool in the fight for jobs. Randy Shannon opened this discussion stating the "Over arching slogan should be "Peace and Prosperity -- Yes. War and Austerity -- No!" This booklet can raise the level of understanding and unity around the economic issues. It was suggested that the Labor Committee organize a national discussion of this important work. The booklet can be ordered from the CCDS website.

The NCC launched a strategic planning process. Renee Yvonne Carter explained that it was needed because of "not only the financial straits of the organization, but to clarify its mission, both to our members but also to other progressive groups; to assess, reassess and adjust our programs of work. ... This is a dynamic process ... It makes us focus, and also think outside the box. "

This process will start with taking a local inventory of where we are. This information will be assessed at the next meeting of the NCC which will be in 3 months.

Members called for more focus in the work of CCDS. Harry Targ proposed that we focus our work on jobs, the war and military budget, and the environment.

This meeting also took up finances. While we made significant gains in sustainers and fundraising after our last letter we still are not meeting our monthly expenses. We need to push forward with membership and fundraising and our sustainer drive.

This was first meeting by video conference and it went very well. It is hoped that the standing committees can transition to video conferencing soon as well.

The Organizational Report given by Janet Tucker, committee reports and local reports showed that much has been accomplished since our last meeting and good work is going on everywhere. There are plans for the Mobilizer to come out more frequently so that we can communicate the wonderful work we are doing.

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### **Democracy Charter from Page 1**

4. Free education from early childhood through college.
5. An anti-aggression foreign and military policy.
6. Universal healthcare.
7. A social security system with undiminished integrity.
8. A farm economy restructured to rest on family and cooperative enterprise.
9. A prison system committed to rehabilitation.
10. Restoration, preservation, and protection of the environment.
11. Expanded public management of resources strategic to our nation's economy.
12. The right to have every vote counted.
13. The airwaves maintained as public property.

Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism has been made a steward of the Democracy Charter, charged with the effort to put before the public a concrete and tangible plan of action surrounding this document. In this effort, websites have been formed, study groups have commenced, and strategic plans of action have been put forward. These efforts have been largely confined to college campus groups.

Another avenue for popularizing the Democracy Charter takes into account one of the most important aspects of this document, the fact that it is a charter. A charter is a basic tool of government built on the idea of a social contract.

With this idea in mind small groups can be formed with the specific goal of introducing the Democracy Charter before city councils, state legislatures, community boards, and other bodies that would have the authority to adopt the Democracy Charter as a statement of their values and a declaration of their beliefs. We have seen this practice before with regards to sanctuary cities and various other causes and efforts.

Another plan of action recalls Betty Reardon's Anti-Patriarchy Project, which is based on several goals that have been implemented into a U.N. charter and are espoused in communities around the globe, much the same as the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. Using this model, and building on Malcolm X's aborted plan to take the U.S. before the United Nations on the charge of crimes against humanity, the Democracy Charter could also find a useful home in the United Nations with a larger, global aim.

*Good Jobs, Green Jobs 2010:*

**Green Energy Manufacturing To Solve the Jobs Crisis? A Very Tough Battle**

**by Carl Davidson, *SolidarityEconomy.Net***

On May 4-6 nearly 3500 people attended the 2010 'Good Jobs, Green Jobs' conference in Washington DC. Carl Davidson and Ted Pearson represented the CCDS. This third and largest conference was organized by the Blue-Green Alliance of several hundred environmental, community groups and trade unions initiated by the United Steel Workers and the Sierra Club.

Last year's gathering was fresh from Obama's victory and several new recession-fighting initiatives and was highly spirited and visionary. Now after a tough year, the mood had shifted. There was still plenty of idealism and optimism but the fierce resistance of the GOP and finance capital were sobering.

"We must seize this opportunity to turn the economy around and end global warming," said Leo Gerard of the Steelworkers in closing remarks. "If the Republicans take majorities in the House and Senate in November, only Heaven will be able to help us. For our children, our grandchildren, and all the future generations we cannot allow this to happen."

There were many more youth at this Convention than at the one a year ago. They were Black, white, Latino and Asian American, and came mainly from the Sierra Club, the Apollo Alliance and the "Corps Network" as well as Green for All.

A series of large plenary sessions alternated with workshops. A Green Innovation Expo featured booths from more than 100 green nonprofits, unions, government agencies and a variety of 'high road' green energy companies. There was frequent mention of GAMESA, the Spanish wind turbine construction company, which now has major investments in the U.S.

The final day of the conference was devoted to lobbying on Capitol Hill.

There were scores of workshops. One workshop discussed "Can Green Jobs Solve the Biggest Unemployment Crisis Since the Great Depression?" There was little optimism around the central theme of the workshop. The panelists, each in their own way, believed it was possible for green jobs to be a big part of the solution to the crisis, but everything depended on a good number of less likely 'ifs...' "

There was very little emphasis on war and militarism. At the workshop on 'Infrastructure and Jobs Creation,' a question was asked "Would not cutting the military budget and ending the wars, and investing the money in green infrastructure and technology development do more to create jobs than is now possible?" This drew loud applause from the audience and both panelists agreed it was true.

At the plenary the next day Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, made the case for the AFL-CIO's fight for jobs. "We're 11 million jobs in the hole," Trumka declared, "and that's on top of the unemployment that already existed." He closed by saying, "Now is the time to invest in new technologies that generate energy, grow the economy, and create good green jobs. Now is the time to build the alliances, present the plans, and fight the fights that will create a cleaner, greener, more prosperous and more just America."

Senator John Kerry also addressed the plenary. He had a more difficult task – pushing a major bill on carbon emissions through the Senate that was being weakened and gutted even as he spoke.

At the workshop on "What Green Jobs Mean for the African American Community" the jobs issue came to a head. The Rev. Lenox Yearwood of the Hip Hop Caucus had done a good job of opening up the subject. "I just spent seven days on the road talking with African American communities, mostly young people, in Indiana, Missouri and Arkansas about clean-energy, on the Hip Hop Caucus Clean Energy Now! Tour," he said. "We have officially put our elected officials on notice: 2010 must be a year of action on clean energy and climate legislation."

"Are there really any jobs?" asked one organizer, who described himself as someone working with dozens of young men recently released from prison or otherwise part of the long-term unemployed. "Or are we just talking bureaucratic run-arounds? Is there an office somewhere where we can go and sign up for a job today? I mean the folks I'm working with are desperate. They've got nothing, not even a place to live."

He got convoluted answers, but nothing concrete. "So again, are there really any jobs?" he persisted. "Tell me where we go!" Finally, Maya Goines of the Dept. of Labor admitted that there were no jobs to hand out, only programs and projects that were being planned, and that hopefully would come to scale in the near future and reach into his community.

One of the more inspiring workshops was held at the end. Entitled 'Using Community Investment to Create Green Jobs You Can Own,' it featured the newly created Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, Ohio, and started with a 10-minute video highlighting three worker-owned coops—an industrial laundry, a solar panel assembly and installation firm, and a huge greenhouse/community garden growing fresh produce in the city on a large scale.

*[Carl Davidson is a national co-chair of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism ([www.ccds.org](http://www.ccds.org)) and a nation board member of the Solidarity Economy Network. (<http://ussen.org>) If you like this article, make use of the PayPal button at <http://carldavidson.blogspot.com>.]*

### **On New York City's Two May Day Rallies**

**by Pat Fry**

*Pat Fry is a labor union activist in New York City and a National Co-Chair of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism*

There were two May Day rallies and marches in New York City. One saw 15 – 20,000 in Foley Square. The other about 10,000 a couple miles away in Union Square.

For the first time since the Cold War unions officially sponsored a May Day March and Rally. The Foley Square rally was called by dozens of unions and immigrant rights and workers centers. Arlene Holt Baker, Executive Vice President of the AFL CIO, called upon the U.S. Department of Justice to stop Arizona from implementing its law targeting immigrants. She urged Present Obama to terminate all programs that result in racial profiling.

The other May Day event that took place at Union Square organized by the May 1st Coalition. Efforts made in the months preceding the rallies to work toward a coordinated effort failed. Instead some denounced the unions and immigrants rights organizations at Foley Square and focused attacks on President Obama and the Democratic Party.

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### **Striving Towards Freedom**

**By Brandon Wallace**

A bright spot shines midst the negativity of unfulfilled dreams in America. Just a few months ago, a victory occurred in the state of Alabama when a populist with ties to organized labor, small farmers, and many progressive elements throughout the state, defeated Artur Davis for the Governor of Alabama.

Davis was a Congressman who voted against President Obama's healthcare legislation. He was defeated by Alabama Agriculture Secretary Ron Sparks, a bright hope in the movement towards seeing the dreams of the Civil Rights Movement fulfilled.

On March 3, 1968 at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, Martin Luther King delivered a sermon entitled "Unfulfilled Dreams." In this sermon, he addressed the plights of David, who never got to see his temple built, Moses, who never made it to the promised land, and Paul, who died in a prison in Rome instead of taking the Christian gospel to Spain as he had planned. He related these deferred dreams to the quests for justice and freedom that faced a hostile existence in the Civil Rights Era.

During the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King and others fought to change the basic character of America, to foster a true sense of justice, of freedom, of brotherhood, and to foster a new commitment to achieving equality for all people.

Forty years later, the dreams have not been realized. For example, in Montgomery Alabama the bus system has returned but little else has changed. In the 1950s bus boycott many patrons were Black women riding to the wealthy neighborhood of Cloverdale where they served as maids. In 2010, Black women are again boarding the buses to go work as maids in Cloverdale.... Unemployment is on the rise in Alabama. The victory of Sparks in the Democratic Gubernatorial primary election is a ray of hope in this situation.

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### **America's Future Now**

**by Reneè Carter, CCDS Co-Chair**

Over 1,000 progressives gathered in Washington, DC, June 7-9 for the annual America's Future Now Conference. Formerly known as the Take Back America Conference during the dark days of the Bush II presidency, the meeting featured plenary sessions intermingled with numerous breakout, breakfast and lunch sessions.

Notable speakers included, SEIU President Andy Stern, Arianna Huffington, Daily Kos founder and publisher Markos Moulitsas, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, and U. S. Rep. Donna Edwards, just to name a few.

Robert Borosage, co-creator of the conference, set the mood by declaring, "We need to stop analyzing and critiquing the [Obama] Presidency and take action once again." Registrants, representing 30 states, received their marching orders for combating corporate control over the economy, rebirth of the extremist right through the tea-bagger movement, never-ending wars, and devastation of the planet.

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### **Study Group - After Capitalism**

**by Tina Shannon, Western PA**

It wasn't easy to find a book to begin our study group. We wanted to learn more about socialism. But since we were just getting started, I was on the lookout for something that was based in concepts that could be imagined in practical terms. We weren't ready to delve into dense theoretical concepts.

Plus we are working people. We are all activists. None of us has a lot of spare time. We wanted to read a book that would help us understand where we stand right now. We wanted to see the possibility for a better future in a way that was concrete enough that we'd be able to convey it to others.

After Capitalism by David Schweickart was perfect for us. Schweickart strikes an excellent balance between respecting the reader's intelligence and writing in an accessible manner. A lot of people are intimidated by the thought of trying to learn economic principles. Schweickart explains them as they are needed to understand the mechanisms that would allow society to democratically control capital. It feels like you're acquiring tools that you have an immediate use for rather than struggling to learn dry academic terms.

### **National Coordinating Committee - Regional Reports**

The July 31-Aug. 1 meeting of the NCC heard reports from many regions of the country. Here are some highlights. Many reflected a problem of malaise in the movement, also reflected in the problems around the national election.

#### **Kentucky:**

Kentucky Jobs with Justice sent 2 bus loads of people to the US Social Forum in Detroit. The statewide the campaign against mountaintop removal remains strong in Kentucky in spite of Rand Paul saying "it is just a few little hills." The campaign to restore voting rights for former felons also remains strong.

Right winger Rand Paul captured the Republican nomination for U.S. Senator from Kentucky. Young people are very active in opposing his candidacy. A progressive, Jim Holbert, is running on the Democratic ticket for the 5th CD in Eastern Kentucky. He is for jobs, ending the wars, and single payer health care. Watch him at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1CG1ESEXHU>.

Although there are many activities around the state many progressives seem adrift and disillusioned. Peace and immigrant rights organizations in Lexington have dissolved. We haven't gotten on top of this.

There was a CCDS meeting around the elections in Louisville a couple months ago. The topic of the meeting was "Electoral Politics." Sixteen people attended, including five CCDS members. There was a spirited discussion. Third party candidates were discussed, and it was felt that the most effective way to promote change is to elect enough progressive Democrats to Congress to give us a chance to push change.

#### **Central Indiana**

In Indiana there are about 12 CCDS members, at least 6 in the Greater Lafayette area. A few other local activists come to Midwest meetings. Most members of the local peace group, LAPC, are CCDS members. We have a responsibility to examine the lethargy and bewilderment that seems to have crept around the local progressive movement.

Student activists at Purdue University and anti-sweatshop activists at other universities pressured campuses to force Nike to honor worker rights in sub-contracts made with manufacturers of logoed products in Honduras.

Obama activists in Tippecanoe County have continued to organize around local issues and to canvas people urging them to register and vote in November, 2010.

The Lafayette Area Peace Coalition (LAPC) meets monthly and networks with the Indiana Peace and Justice Network (IPJN) on statewide projects, including an annual Midwest Peace and Justice Summit.

Central Indiana Jobs With Justice includes the Northwest Central Labor Council in Lafayette. JwJ sponsored civil disobedience in Indianapolis as part of the UNITE-HERE anti-Hyatt Regency national mobilization. Forty were arrested.

Some local progressives are starting up a new free distribution newspaper, "The Lafayette Independent."

#### **Los Angeles:**

The LA chapter is doing well. We have had monthly meetings since December, with attendance usually about 12-15 people. Our last meeting had 16-17 people. We have discussed the Current Crisis in Education in the U.S., democracy under socialism and capitalism, fifteen months of

Obama - the change we need?, the jobs crisis from a socialist perspective. the Middle East, the Intersection of the economy and the environment.

We have gained 10 new members over the past few months. But our Coordinating Committee keeps shrinking. Members are too busy. Somehow we have the CCDS needs to get on everyone's TODO list.

#### **Northern California:**

The anti-war movement has greatly diminished in activities. International ANSWER is the main organizing group in the Bay Area. The Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace and Justice, part of USLAW, is organizing a new priorities campaign.

The movement for jobs recently observed the anniversary of the WPA and called for public works programs. The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Emergency Contingency Fund must be extended. It has subsidized employment for 250,000 parents across the country. There is a push for a Local Jobs for America Act to prevent lay-offs of city and state employees and school teachers, and to fund paid on-the-job training by community organizations. There is also a movement for green jobs and a fight to unblock the Property Assessed Clean Energy program for financing energy retrofits of homes and small businesses.

The AFL-CIO has asked the San Francisco Labor Council to consider holding a march for jobs on October 2 in San Francisco. Labor also is fighting in solidarity with UNITE HERE for contracts at major hotels and 160 people committed civil disobedience at a recent action in San Francisco.

The environmental movement and social and economic justice organizations are working more closely together, especially against the climate crisis and for green jobs. The "Dignity Campaign"

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for progressive immigration laws is connecting the Bay Area movement, historically a center for the immigrant rights movement, with the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance.

A youth-led anti-racism movement has energized against the police murder of Oscar Grant. The Micklejohn Civil Liberties Institute is fighting for resolutions to report violations of UN treaties dealing with human rights and forms of discrimination which has reached the state legislature.

Northern California CCDS will soon have an online newsletter and we will be working for a western regional conference on the Democracy Charter.

#### **Greater Boston Chapter:**

The chapter of eight to ten activists continues to meet every month. It includes the chair the citywide tenants coalition, a person in the thick of the anti-eviction movement, a board member of an organization in the fight for housing and tenants' rights., two people active in the local affiliate of the UfPJ the Majority Agenda Project, a person working with MoveOn and others for passage of federal healthcare, a nurse active in National Nurses United who fights for health care as a human right, a retired transit worker active in his community health center, a local union shop steward, and a progressive educator.

The Greater Boston CCDS has sharpened its focus on health care, the main industry. A teach-in is planned for October on a socialist approach to health care, with a diverse panel of activists.

Nine out of ten Massachusetts Congressional representatives voted against major escalation in wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Peace sentiment remains strong despite years of pro-war propaganda. That sentiment remains very difficult, however, to organize.

During the Bush years money poured into Operation Bioshield. Scientists, Labor and community organizations blocked the plan by Boston University to put a level-4 bioterror laboratory in the heart of the Roxbury/South End Black and Latino community.

Occasional local rallies by the Tea Party movement and continued excessive press coverage have poisoned the atmosphere in some quarters, especially against immigrants. There are continuing massive layoffs in education, health care and public service. Wages are frozen or rolled back. Health insurance costs are being shifted to workers and there are attacks on pensions and retiree health benefits.

A non-binding referendum is on the ballot promoting health care as a human right through a single-payer system. Another major project was supporting the UFCW warehouse workers' strike against Shaw's supermarket chain, which was won. The fight of the Hyatt hotel workers continues, with Boston

holding a major rally in support of the workers.

#### **Southern Region:**

There was a very successful workshop at the Social Forum in Detroit—about twelve individuals came to the panel. Bill Chandler, Ashlee Henderson, Brandon Wallace, and Tim Johnson were presenters. Several Members of CCDS attended the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary SNCC Conference at Shaw University in Raleigh NC. Members of the Southern Region have also started a study group focused on Jack O'Dell's *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* and the Democracy Charter and how it can be implemented in the South.

The Southern Human Rights Organizer's Conference (SHROC) will be held in Birmingham, Alabama December 10-12, 2010, hosted by the Southern Human Rights Organizers' Network. The Ron Sparks' Gubernatorial Campaign in Alabama is underway...a populist movement with the backing of Labor Unions, Civil Rights Organizations, and other progressive entities.

#### **New York Metro:**

Several members are part of the NYC Labor Left Project which initiated a union-sponsored coalition to celebrate May Day around the slogans "Unite for change now," "labor and immigrant rights" and "jobs for all." At least 35 union locals and many community organizations participated in the heart of lower Manhattan. It also drew City Council members, other city officials and a member of Congress who fought to be able to speak. NY metro CCDS members participated and marched with our banner.

A March took place on May 2 in connection with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty United Nations Review Conference held in May, April 3- to May 1. It concluded with an international conference at the Riverside Church on the theme "Win a Peaceful, Nuclear Free, Secure and Just World in Our Lifetimes."

The NY Metro CCDS participated in planning the rally and march. We marched with our banner. Many organizations sponsored the march and rally but the turnout was less than hoped for reflecting what seems to be a general malaise in the peace movement.

Binghamton NY several months ago installed a "Cost of the War" sign at their City Hall. The New York CCDS is working for a NY City Council resolution urging Congress to cut the military budget to help solve the NYC budget deficit. We are discussing bringing the Binghamton sign project to the boroughs of NYC and City Hall.

Several months ago we started a monthly on-line newsletter and events calendar. We post CCFDS, other left, anti-war, and progressive events. Our Coordinating Committee of 8 comrades is most active - we have difficulty mobilizing members.

## U. S. Social Forum: High-Energy Gathering - A New Generation of Activists in the Left and Social Movements

by Carl Davidson



When 15,000 vibrant and politically engaged people gather in one spot for five days and organize themselves into more than 1000 workshops, dozens of major plenaries and late night parties across five major cultural hot spots, no one article can claim to give a full account and get away with it.

But that's what happened in Detroit June 22-26 at the US Social Forum. Cobo Hall and nearby universities buzzed with thousands of people trying to shape a new world.

I won't even try to capture it all. I'll just affirm the common conviction that it was a major happening and a huge success, an inspiration and affirmation of hope that

progress is being made towards a better future.

The Forum started on June 22 with a massive march of thousands through the streets of a devastated and de-industrialized Detroit. "What an amazing day!" said Allison Flether Acosta of Jobs with Justice.

### New entry of the Trade Unions

One important new addition to the young crowd in the streets was the participation of organized labor. Newly elected UAW President Bob King joined Metropolitan Detroit AFL-CIO President Sandra Williams; Al Garrett, president of AFSCME District Council 25; and Armando Robles, UE Local 1110 president, in leading the march, chanting 'Full and Fair Employment Now!' and 'Money for Jobs, Not for Banks!'

The opening events, unfortunately, were either ignored or strangely spun by the mass media. "This ain't no Tea Party," said Noel Finley, in a scarce account in the Detroit News, somewhat awed by the sight of it all. "The forum is a hootenanny of pinkos, environuts, peaceniks, Luddites, old hippies, Robin Hoods and urban hunters and gatherers."

There were 1062 workshops and panels, 50 major assemblies, and the huge march of thousands through Detroit - all in a festive and cooperative atmosphere.

### Tediously Planned and Well Structured

The USSF core was organized into 'tracks' around common freshly defined themes, including:

- \* Capitalism in Crisis: tearing down poverty, building economic alternatives & a solidarity economy
- \* Climate Justice: sustainability, resources and land
- \* Indigenous Sovereignty
- \* Displacement, Migration and Immigration
- \* Democracy and Governance
- \* To the Right: internationally and domestically
- \* To the Left: building a movement for social justice: intersections and alliances across race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability.
- \* Strategies for Building Power & Ensuring Community Needs (housing, education, jobs, clean air...)
- \* Organizing a Labor Movement for the 21st Century: crisis and opportunities
- \* Media Justice, Communications, & Culture
- \* Transformative Justice, Healing, and Organizing
- \* Endless War: militarization, criminalization and human rights
- \* International Solidarity and Responsibility: building a unified response to global crises
- \* Detroit and the Rust Belt

The result was an amazing array of workshops, on every topic under the sun, ranging from 'how-to' hands-on organizing techniques to oral history and theoretical debates.

Labor gave the USSF important financial support and populated the event with a cohort of labor activists from around the nation. The AFL-CIO presented two workshops.

### Importance of Full Employment Campaign

A two hour workshop on the Fight for Jobs and Economic Recovery was led by an AFL-CIO staff person and the national jobs coordinator of Jobs with Justice. The workshop focused on the tasks of organizing the unemployed

locally and mobilizing for the October 2nd National March on Washington for Jobs and Justice. The second focus of the workshop was around how to raise the militancy of tactics in the struggle for jobs. The workshop of 80 people broke into 8 subgroups to separately come up with proposals for local organizing and raising the level of militancy, then reported back to the body.

The Immigration rights workshop was also organized by the national AFL-CIO. Panelists included a founder of the Alliance of Guest Workers founded in 2007, who responded to the abuse of immigrant guest workers who are recruited by corporations on the basis of false promises.

### **The role of CCDS**

The Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism organized two panels - 21st Century Socialism, and the role of the struggle for democracy in the South. But we also cooperated with others in panels on the peace movement and the economy, on Vietnam and Agent Orange, on Anne Braden's Legacy as a Southern Activist, and especially on the Democracy Charter initiative launched by civil rights veteran Jack O'Dell. We put together our own program, a "CCDS Track" of some 32 panels and two 'Peoples Movement Assemblies.'

"I attended three workshops that were very large," said Randy Shannon, a CCDS National Committee member, "two were packed with youth. The composition of these workshops reflected that of the USSF overall, which is predominantly young people."

The Metro DC CCDS chapter also organized a workshop on "Rapid Solarization."

The major venue for groups to display their wares was the huge Macomb sector of Cobo Hall, which had hundreds of tables and displays. CCDS had a good, well-stocked table.

### **Cultural activities: 'The Leftist Lounge'**

There was a 'Leftist Lounge,' for late-night parties and revelry. "The most fun I had was at the Leftist Lounge," said Tina Shannon, a CCDSer from Beaver County, PA. "It was a series of warehouses turned into dance clubs. The walls were covered with posters from social movements and pictures of activists and videos documenting protest in different places. The music in each room had a different flavor. The crowd was mostly young and very diverse. The social atmosphere was welcoming."

Somehow it all worked out. One reason is that Social Forums are a 'political space,' where groups with conflicting and contending idea can seek common ground, or at least co-exist cooperatively for a time. An assembly under the bigger tent can come up with a statement which is reported to the closing assembly, but it's not binding on anyone.



The assembly on the Oct 2 March on DC for jobs initiated by the NAACP, La Raza and several unions said, "Support the One Nation, Working Together march to be held in Washington, DC, October 2, 2010. Jobs, Education, Housing, Immigration Rights, Cut the Military Budget!"

The assembly on Displacement, Migration, and Immigration said, "The freedom to move across borders that **were set up to colonize and exploit people for profit is a basic element of human dignity.**" **The assembly on endless war and militarism said, "We call for a diametrical shift of U.S. tax revenues from war and militarization to meet human needs, here and abroad."**

Some argue that the WSF approach to resolutions and platforms bends too much towards anarchism, avoiding a unified spearhead against a common target. A few others argue that the Social Forums have become 'tame' and 'taken over' by foundation-funded Non- Governmental Organizations, or NGOs. Still others have picked up the call by Hugo Chavez of Venezuela to found a new 'Fifth International' of socialist and related anti-imperialist liberation movements. But these criticisms are all a minor chord in the background. When all is said and done, there's still nothing quite like the cross-fertilization and synergy that arises en masse from the formula devised by the Social Forum.