

# CCDS MOBILIZER

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Fall 2007

## NCC Meets with Packed Agenda

The National Coordinating Committee met July 27-29, 2007 in Washington DC for its bi-annual leadership meeting. The weekend meeting followed on the heels of a successful 5-day NCC leadership Summer School held at the AFL-CIO Labor College in Silver Spring MD.

Both the Summer School and the NCC meeting were well attended. Plans were developed on how to move the organization forward in the context of helping to build a progressive majority in the current period.

The following decisions and actions were adopted by the NCC:

**The 2008 Elections and Building the Progressive Majority.** CCDS co-chair Mark Solomon presented an analysis of the 2008 elections in building a pro-

gressive majority in the context of class, race and gender. After discussion, it was decided to ask the NEC to write a statement on the basis of the presentation and discussion. See the 9/25/07 NEC statement on page 6.

**Regional Coordinators Proposal for Building CCDS.** The Regional Coordinator Committee, established at the Dec. 2006 NCC meeting, proposed a plan for building the organization and establishing greater communication between the leadership and the membership. See page 3.

**Health Care Activist Meeting.** There was enthusiastic agreement on a proposal to call a meeting of CCDS members and friends who are active in health care as workers or as activists

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## Oct. 27th Anti-War Protests

CCDS will join with the mass anti-war mobilizations Oct. 27th, organized by United for Peace and Justice. Regional protests will be held in Boston, Chicago, Jonesborough, TN, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Orlando, Philadelphia, Salt Lake City, San Francisco and Seattle.

To obtain copies of the flyer download from: [www.oct27.org](http://www.oct27.org).

To march behind the CCDS banner in your area, see the CCDS web site at: [www.cc-ds.org](http://www.cc-ds.org)

Helping to build a movement reflective of the vast anti-war sentiment among all sectors of the population, including African Americans, Latinos, Asian Pacific Islanders, immigrants is a key aim in forming the CCDS Peace and Solidarity Committee in Dec. 2006. Since then, the Committee organized to insure CCDS participation at the national meeting of UFPJ in June and sponsored a CCDS literature table at the meeting.

The Committee urges your local area to be represented on this important committee with particular attention to racial and gender composition. Currently, committee members are: Duncan McFarland of Boston, Ted Pearson and Carl Davidson of Chicago, and Michael Kaufman of So. California.

For info, contact Committee Chair, Duncan McFarland: [Duncan.McFarland@sappi.com](mailto:Duncan.McFarland@sappi.com), or call the national office.

## Agenda for Peace and Justice

Distribute the updated CCDS "Agenda for Peace and Justice" brochure at your regional demonstration on October 27. Call the national office for bulk copies or download from the CCDS web page: [www.cc-ds.org](http://www.cc-ds.org)

## The 2008 Elections and a Progressive Majority

*The following statement issued by the National Executive Committee on Sept. 26 is submitted for membership discussion.*

There is no need to belabor the importance of the coming 2008 presidential and congressional elections. When most people think of "politics" they think elections. Those on the left who deny that reality risk isolation from the political engagement of millions of fellow citizens. Vast segments of the public recognize the crucial opportunity – and necessity

– to remove from power the most reactionary administration in the country's history. Youth are registering to vote in unprecedented numbers; labor is intensifying its electoral mobilization; oppressed nationalities, women, seniors are increasingly engaged with issues and candidacies. Small contributions to candidates have reached record levels – rivaling the power of corporate money. The coming elections can constitute a most significant

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CCDS held two workshops at the Atlanta Social Forum in June. At left, participants respond to a panel on "Envisioning Socialism" with Carl Bloice, James Campbell, Mildred Williamson and Bill Chandler (far left) of the Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance. A panel on the Progressive Majority was held the following day. See upcoming issue of D&I for full coverage.

## CCDS Membership by Local Area

Following is as of 9/24/07. If a state is not listed, there are no memberships.

	Current	Arrears
Alabama	1	1
Alaska	2	1
Arkansas	1	0
California South	34	27
California North	85	87
Colorado	5	1
Connecticut	5	12
D.C./VA/MD	8	9
Deleware	2	0
Florida	6	5
Georgia	2	4
Hawaii	2	1
Iowa	3	1
Idaho	0	2
Illinois	16	16
Indiana	12	1
Kentucky	7	3
Louisiana	1	0
Maine	1	0
Massachusetts	20	20
Michigan	3	7
Minnesota	6	5
Mississippi	1	0
Missouri/Kansas	2	0
Nebraska	2	1
Nevada	1	1
New Hampshire	0	1
New Jersey	8	7
New Mexico	0	3
New York City	80	64
New York Upstate	1	5
North Carolina	4	2
Ohio	4	5
Oregon	14	4
Pennsylvania Eastern	6	3
Pennsylvania Western	4	4
Rhode Island	1	1
South Carolina	10	5
Tennessee	1	1
Texas	3	1
Utah	1	0
Vermont	1	0
Virginia	0	1
Washington	8	3
Wisconsin	3	5
West Virginia	1	0
National At Large	0	0
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>323</b>

## 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*.

Send check payable to the CCDS to: 545 Eighth Ave, 14th Fl NE, NYC 10018 or pay on-line: [www.cc-ds.org](http://www.cc-ds.org)

## JOB OPENING

A full time organization coordinator in the national CCDS office in New York City is open. Salary is \$35,000 and includes health benefits.

Responsibilities include recording minutes of NEC/NCC meetings, routine correspondence, mailings, coordination of special organizing projects, follow up w/ organizational committee meetings.

Call the national office at (212) 868-3733 for information and application.

## Dialogue & Initiative

Subscribe to *Dialogue & Initiative*, a publication of the Committees of Correspondence Education Fund, Inc.

The Winter 2008 issue will publish presentations from the CCDS panels at the June Atlanta Social Forum.

\$10/year; \$5 with CCDS membership; \$3 for single copies.

The *CCDS Mobilizer* is a publication of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS). The CCDS National Office is located at:

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Member contributions to this publication are welcomed. Pat Fry, Editor

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# Building CCDS Member Involvement

The following proposal from the Regional Coordinators Committee is based on discussion of a proposal presented at the July NCC meeting. Your comments are encouraged by writing to the Mobilizer or the membership email list serve.

This is a proposal for an organization-wide discussion on how we should work in the current period to help build a progressive majority. It aims for a common national focus of work while allowing for locally based initiatives. It would utilize various organization forms (regional meetings, chapter meetings, and one-on-one member contact) to solicit the views of members and build member participation in the life of the organization.

Regional meetings and chapters will be asked to spend some time addressing key questions about our role as a socialist organization, how to make a contribution to build a progressive majority, and how we can make a specific contribution based on our understanding of class, race, and gender on issues related to labor solidarity, support for a single payer national health care system, economic justice,

fighting racism and for equality, opposing war and militarism, and responding to the crises of the environment.

In addition, it is proposed that members and former members be contacted through meetings, mailings, phone, CCDS web page, membership list serve to get feedback to core questions (see below). Each member of the NCC is asked to contribute to organizational outreach within their regions over the next several months. The questions listed in the text box below are proposed to frame discussion.

The RC committee will compile feedback based on the above and will report to the Dec. 2007 NCC meeting with recommendations. The Regional Coordinators anticipate that the report will lay the foundation for an action program that is commonly agreed upon by the membership to be launched the first of the new year in 2008. This proposal should not supplant local activity on various issues.

A \$5,000 budget has been allocated: \$1000 per region for meeting and travel, and \$1000 for a national membership mailing of the survey.

# Get Well Soon, Charlene

CCDS National Co-Chair Charlene Mitchell suffered a stroke in June that left her paralyzed on the right side and speech impaired. Charlene, ever the fighter, is engaged in an intensive rehabilitation program at a center in NYC. She has taken charge of her recovery, working hard to regain her voice and her mobility.

If you would like to send a get well message to Charlene, go to her web site: <http://www.thestatus.com> and click on "visit a patient page" link, enter Charlene's last name and the password - Justice07.

Cards (no flowers) can be sent to Charlene at: Amsterdam House, 110 W End Ave, New York, NY 10023.



## A Membership Survey

Members are encouraged to respond to the questions below. Please write or email the national office. Your feedback and ideas are critical to building the organization.

1. What work are you and/or other members of CCDS involved in in your community?
2. What political, social movement organizations do you work with?
3. Would you be interested in calling a meeting of CCDS members and friends in your city to discuss a common organizing project?
4. CCDS is working on the campaigns listed below. Would you be willing to work on any one of these projects in your community?

- ♦Building for the October 27th

anti-war regional demonstrations;

- ♦Organizing a national CCDS conference of health care workers and activists on Single Payer Universal Health Care;

- ♦Elections 2008: building coalitions on issues;

- ♦National campaign and conference on building multi-racial unity in the peace movement;

- ♦Jena Six committees and support work;

- ♦Jobs and economic fight back.

5. CCDS in its ongoing organizational activities needs interested members to participate in the following committees. Are you willing to participate on any of these committees

a) Peace and Solidarity Comm;

b) Publications/Communications (D&I, CCDS Mobilizer,

brochures, webpage, membership list serve, graphic design);

- c) Socialist Education Project;
- d) Climate Change Committee;
- e) CCDS Founding Documents Working Group;
- f) Labor Committee

6. Do you and other CCDS members in your area identify yourselves as members when you work with others in mass organizations and coalitions? If so, give examples.

7. What resources do you need from the national organization for your work?

8. What else should CCDS do from your perspective?

Send to CCDS, 545 Eighth Ave., 14th Floor NE, NY, NY 10018 or email: [national@cc-ds.org](mailto:national@cc-ds.org)

# NCC Meeting July 27-28 Decisions

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on universal health care. The meeting is planned for Chicago in the late winter or early spring of 2008. An initial planning committee meeting will be held Nov. 3rd in Washington DC during the annual conferences of Physicians for a National Health Plan and the American Public Health Association. The objective is to discuss ways in which CCDS can make a particular contribution, connecting class, race and gender to the fight for a single-payer universal health care plan.

The Organizing Committee members are Marilyn Albert, Renee Carter, and Mildred Williamson who are health care professionals. For information about the Nov. 3rd planning meeting: marilynalbert@juno.com.

**Climate Change Committee.** It was discussed that the committee established at the Dec. 2006 NCC meeting will undertake an update of the CCDS web page on Climate Change. The Committee members are Walter Teague, Ted Pearson, Steve Willett.

**CCDS Founding Documents and By-Laws.** The NCC agreed to establish a working group that will prepare a membership wide process for undertaking a review and update of the founding documents of the organization. The members of the work group are: Mark Solomon, James Campbell and Pat Fry. The documents to be reviewed can be found on the CCDS web page ([www.cc-ds.org](http://www.cc-ds.org)). They are: *For a Democratic & Socialist Future* and *Where We Stand: Declaration of Principles*.

It was agreed that the process should include revising and reissuing an organizational brochure.

In addition, a working group was formed to review the By-Laws of the organization to make recommendations for amendments to be brought before the membership, either at the next convention or by mail ballot. The committee members are: Renee Carter, Chair, Michael Kaufman, Marian Gordon, Meta Van Sickle, Walter Teague and Janet Tucker. A report on

the progress of the committee will be made at the Dec. 2007 NCC meeting.

**Finances and Membership.** The following motion concerning financial management was submitted by Treasurer Steve Willett and passed:

1. Members of the Finance Committee are Charlene Mitchell, Mildred Williamson, Anne Mitchell and Steve Willett (the change is the addition of NCC member Anne Mitchell).

2. Steve Willett will be responsible for day-to-day bookkeeping. Mildred Williamson will be responsible for budgeting and long range financial planning.

3. Mildred Williamson and Steve Willett will be responsible for financial reporting to the NCC and NEC at least quarterly; and monthly, whenever possible. The NCC would review and approve financial reports at each of its meetings.

4. The Finance Committee will be responsible for establishing procedures subject to approval by the NCC for approving expenditures and paying bills, subject to the approval of the NEC. The intention would be, as much as possible, to allow "routine" expenses to be dealt with directly where they are incurred, as long as effective oversight is guaranteed.

**Sustainer Payments.** The following motion submitted by Michael Kaufman was adopted:

The finance committee will make available to the membership instructions for sustainer payments and investigate a different method of including a procedure on the CCDS web page.

**Leadership and and Membership List Serve.** The following motion submitted by Walter Teague was adopted:

Henceforth the NCC agrees to implement a policy of diligently communicating to the members, via the membership email list serve, the following:

1. News or issues any leadership member thinks the members should be aware of.

2. Summaries of NCC/NEC and other leadership discussions once the issues have become both important and able to be described.

3. Decisions by the NCC and NEC and any other leadership body.

4. Reports of CCDS events, meetings and programs, both incremental when significant and negative when relevant.

5. Anything else that will show the members we work for them and the organization as a whole, not just for ourselves.

6. Since a great many valuable ideas, concerns and discussions occur during leadership discussions, on the NCC and NEC lists and elsewhere, all leadership are encouraged to contribute to this communication.

7. Publish a weekly digest of discussion for the email list serve, if someone can be found to do it.

**National Office Storage of Materials.**

It was agreed that the national office will clear outdated materials to make room for items that have been in storage since the aftermath of contamination caused by the attacks on the World Trade Center to be completed by summer's end.

**Publications.** Janet Tucker volunteered to help with production of the *CCDS Mobilizer*. Carl Bloice announced that he is stepping down from co-editorship of *D&I* but will continue as a member of the editorial committee. Meta Van Sickle will be added to the *D&I* editorial committee. There was a recommendation for new design for the front cover of *D&I*. It was agreed to discuss paying the CCDS webmaster a fee for the outstanding work of the design and upkeep of the web page.

**Leadership Summer School.** National co-chair James Campbell recommended that the CoC Education Fund sponsor another summer school project in 2008 and that 4-5 young people be recruited.

**NCC Meeting.** The next meeting will be held Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 2007 in San Francisco.

## CCDS Labor Activists National Meeting

The CCDS Labor Committee organized a national meeting of labor activists Feb. 10th in NY at the Queens College Murphy Labor Institute. The meeting focused on labor's role in 3 movements: anti-war, single payer health care, and immigrant rights.

In her opening remarks Marilyn Albert stressed the relationship between the success of the progressive movement on the three issues and the revival of the U.S. labor movement. She also emphasized that economic struggles, the fight for racial and gender equality, and for union democracy also must be viewed as components.

Professor Joseph Wilson, director of Brooklyn College's Center for Worker Education, outlined his views of the reasons for labor's decline - lingering effects of race and racism, labor's inability to understand migration and immigration, the turf wars and splits within organized labor, economic restructuring and the hostile political environment.

Marilyn Clement, the national coordinator of *Healthcare Now*, a national single payer advocacy organization, talked about growing union support for Rep. John Conyers' Single Payer bill (Medicare for All is the more favored term, it was noted) with over 250 local unions endorsing the bill (in Sept., the number rose to 312.)

From 2007-2008, 1,000 public hearings will be held on the bill, she said.

David Bacon, acclaimed labor journalist, photographer and immigration expert, talked about the increase in organizing of immigrant workers, one of the main areas where labor is attracting new workers rather than through affiliations, he stressed.

He drew attention to the HERE union hotel contracts in San Francisco and Los Angeles that won affirmative action clauses for workers in communities with high unemployment, thus building unity with African Americans who have been excluded from the industry as employers hired immigrant labor.

Bacon also discussed the disunity in the labor movement over support for anti-immigrant Congressional legislation and the disconnect between what is happening on the ground and in Washington. He called for building at the base to move unions to take a progressive position on immigration reform.

Bill Henning, VP of CWA Local 1180 in NY and a leader of the US Labor Against the War (USLAW) talked of the strategic importance of organized labor in the anti-war movement due to its role in production. USLAW, he said, makes the link between the interests of working people and the war in Iraq and has succeeded in institutionalizing the anti-war presence within labor. USLAW believes, he said, that the question of war and peace ought to be debated in every union hall. Resolutions have been passed from local unions to regional bodies and then to state federations, all the way up to the AFL-CIO's adoption of an antiwar resolution at its convention.

Wide ranging discussion followed the presentations. It was agreed that future meetings should include worker center organizations, and more rank and file union members.

Following the national meeting, the Labor Committee posed questions for membership discussion. Members are urged to send responses to: MarilynAlbert@juno.com

1) What is the CCDS' analysis of the strategic role of the labor movement in building a progressive majority? How does this intersect or differ from other groups we might consider to be on the Left?

2) What is our view of the composition of the US working class today and our understanding of what forms the working class is organized into today?

3) What is CCDS' "rootedness" in the labor movement? How can we be effective in the labor movement?

4) What forms can we use? Listserves, training schools, conferences, caucus development in unions?

## TAKE NOTE....

**Pete Seeger for Nobel Peace Prize**  
Help support the nomination of Pete Seeger for the Nobel Peace Prize. Petitions can be signed at: [www.NobelPrize4Pete.org](http://www.NobelPrize4Pete.org)

**Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico/North America Labor Conference.** Labor activists are urged to attend and hear from leading trade union leaders of participating countries in Tijuana, Mexico, Dec. 7-9, 2007. For more info and registration form: [www.cc-ds.org](http://www.cc-ds.org)

**CCDS Viet Nam Tour.** The Socialist Education Project of CCDS is planning a tour of Viet Nam in the Spring of 2008. Details will be announced soon. If you are interested in participating, contact the national office.

**CCDS West Coast Regional Meeting.** A west coast meeting of CCDS members and friends will be held in Nov. in conjunction with a CCDS sponsored conference on Climate Change. Date to be announced soon.

**NCC Bi-Annual Meeting.** The next meeting of the CCDS National Coordinating Committee will be in San Francisco, Nov. 30 - Dec 2, 2007.

## Midwest CCDS Meets

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being planned to address racial disparities in health care, the lack of sufficient trained health care professionals, and the need to rebuild a public health infrastructure including hospitals, health centers etc.

The next Midwest CCDS meeting will be in late March 2008.

*Presente!*

*CCDS Remembers*

*Moe Fishman*

*James Jackson*

*Bill Sorro*

*Three giants of our movement who gave their lives to the struggle for peace, equality and justice. Each leaves a treasured history filled with lessons for all who fight for a better world.*

# The 2008 Elections and a Progressive Majority

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impact of an emerging progressive majority.

At this juncture there is a populist surge measured in overwhelming opposition to the Iraq war, in favor of universal health insurance and combating environmental catastrophe. It is strongly influencing the Democratic candidates and their stands on issues. Major candidates of a woman and an African American male are immensely significant – marking a departure from white male domination of presidential politics, and, putting aside for the moment the positions and qualities of the candidates, is yet another example of the increasingly progressive outlook and direction of the electorate. (The pathetic all-white male Republican field in frenzied competition to pander to the Party's right wing base at this point is hardly worth considering.)

The populist surge has pressured the Democratic candidates to demand an end to the U.S. combat role in Iraq. Bill Richardson and Dennis Kucinich call for a total withdrawal of U.S. forces. John Edwards demands "no (congressional) funding, no timelines, no excuses" in cutting off funds for combat. However, while the principal thrust of the contesting Democrats is to end the war, their feet must be kept to the political fire as they increasingly buy into questionable doomsday scenarios if U.S. forces leave Iraq. Most of the candidates increasingly talk about phased withdrawal and maintaining a large residual force in Iraq to protect U.S. infrastructure, to train Iraqis or battle al-Qaeda and defend (often unspecified) U.S. "interests." The source of the ongoing human disaster is the occupation itself. The U.S. must

\*This statement refers to "major" or "leading" candidates in terms of their current standing in polls and in fund raising (an ever important factor in the nation's politics), but fully aware that such standing is largely engineered by the corporate media. The current standing of candidates in the polls cannot be considered a reliable measure of where they will stand after the primaries, nor reflective of the quality of their positions on the issues.

withdraw from Iraq and leave no permanent bases behind.

The electoral season offers an exceptional opportunity for anti-war activists to reach out to that public sick of the war but not yet actively involved in efforts to bring it to an end. The coming weeks and months of growing electoral interest can be utilized by activists to forge links to religious and community groups, veterans' organizations, unions and unaffiliated individuals – voicing an unambiguous demand through the electoral process to bring the troops home.

The public's revulsion at Bush's unilateral gun slinging has nudged the Democrats into addressing broader conceptual issues of global policy. Nearly all have advocated multilateralism over unilateralism, "soft power" material aid over "hard power" threats and use of military force. Nearly all have pledged to reverse the declining moral standing and influence of the U.S. across the world. However, the major candidates\* continue to embrace the concept formed at the dawn of the cold war of the militarized "national security state" and U.S. imperial leadership of the "free world." None of the big money candidates question the U.S.'s self-anointed role as director and protector of corporate globalization despite some anti-corporate rhetoric. They would keep nuclear weapons "on the table" in dealing with allegedly hostile states like Iran. They would increase the armed forces and spend billions on new weapons. On Israel/Palestine, they have voiced strident, unqualified support for Israel combined with hostility to the Palestinians, and they have been cautious in discussing any real changes in the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba.

The candidates' opening, however slight, to deeper questioning of the character of U.S. global policy offers the left an opportunity to engage the political center in dialogue regarding the underlying imperial motives of that policy. The left could seize upon

the candidates' proclaimed disquiet with the unilateral and militarist character of the current policy to spark a deeper public discussion. Also, the growing atmosphere of public distrust and hostility towards corporate-dominated politics provides an opening for much needed exploration of the catastrophic relation between corporate power and an imperial foreign policy. While such an analysis should not be a precondition to left-center cooperation, if advanced in a persistently thoughtful manner through a variety of forums (many new forums provided by the Internet), the groundwork can be laid for a more transforming turn in the nation's global policies.

While the media frames the unfolding presidential campaign in superficialities like "experience" vs. "change", relatively substantive and compelling issues are being discussed seriously, if not adequately and consistent with a progressive outlook.

The candidates who are leading in the polls have all advanced "universal" health plans, but after criticizing the insurance and pharmaceutical industries as principal sources of inequity in health care, they leave "room at the table" for those powerful industries. The goal of universal insurance is a step forward. But the major candidates remain intimidated by right wing and health industry attacks on "socialized medicine" and "government bureaucracy." Their cautious embrace of health for sale through the insurance and pharmaceutical industries is indefensible and out of step with growing public support for genuinely universal single payer health insurance (HR 676) that only Kucinich has thus far supported.

Most of the Democratic primary candidates appear to recognize the importance of the environmental issue – stressing alternatives to fossil fuels or advocating reduction of hydrocarbon use. However, none have strongly voiced the extreme urgency of the situation, nor have the major candidates linked the environmental issue to the

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# Building the Progressive Majority and the 2008 Elections

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Iraq war and the pursuit of oil (except Kucinich who has been marginalized by the corporate media) nor to the complicity of major industries and the military-industrial complex in cultivating the Bush administration's malign neglect of possible global catastrophe.

All major Democratic candidates have condemned the discriminatory effect of No Child Left Behind and have called either for its elimination or for a major legislative overhaul. All have generally supported gay rights but most have largely vacillated on marital rights. All have castigated the Administration's betrayal of the victims of Katrina and have pledged substantive relief. All have condemned Bush's assaults on the Constitution but must be pressed to take action to protect our rights.

Most candidates have been relatively quiescent on immigration – feeling the impact of the increasingly powerful immigrant voice, but fearing the lethal anti-immigrant mood emanating from the right wing and impacting large clusters of the white population. The major candidates at times have given tepid support to the Kennedy-McCain “compromise” backed by Bush that sets up nearly impossible obstacles to citizenship for the undocumented and fosters a corporate-willed “guest worker” program. Stronger links between progressive activists and an increasingly assertive immigrant community based upon commitment to protection of the rights of undocumented workers, a

fair path to citizenship, and ending the extreme exploitation of immigrant labor can have a crucially positive impact on the presidential field.

The recent collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market combined with falling employment has forced attention to economic issues. Driven largely by John Edwards' “Two Americas” populism and his attacks on corporate-dominated politics, the candidates all condemn escalating inequality under Bush. They call for restoration of labor's rights, advocate a roll back of tax cuts for the rich, urge an increased minimum wage, demand the shift of funds from Iraq to investments in universal healthcare, education and repair of a collapsing infrastructure. All have questioned big corporate-dominated trade agreements and have demanded labor and environmental protections. Kucinich again has been the boldest – saying that he would withdraw from the World Trade Organization and cancel NAFTA. Even Hilary Clinton, anointed by Fortune as the big corporate favorite, has been pressured by the progressive surge to attack “tax breaks to oil companies, no-bid contracts to Halliburton ... tax cut after tax cut to multimillionaires.”

Considering the sub-prime and employment crisis, the candidates leading in the polls need to be pressured to follow Kucinich in boldly calling for a massive job-creating program to revitalize the nation's rotting infrastructure – taking funds from the destructive Iraq war and restoring tax

cuts for the rich to finance such programs.

A brief look at the leading candidates confirms the need for constant pressure to get them to commit to progressive solutions on crucial issues and to keep them on a progressive trajectory.

Hilary Clinton's dilatory and negative Senate record on corporate issues has won big business and big lobby support. Barack Obama's appeal to “national reconciliation” does not account for the fact that there can be no reconciliation with a rabid, intimidating right wing. The ultimate source of national unity is defeat of the right by a broad coalition of progressive forces. John Edwards has articulated a populist, pro-labor surge and has railed against politics that “puts Wall St. before Main St.” But his health insurance program fails to eliminate insurance companies and his foreign policy statements are a contradictory mix of calls for both global cooperation and sustained U.S. global hegemony.

The source of needed constant pressure is mass movement on the vital issues – an independent alliance of left and center, including those engaged in electoral politics as well as those who favor non-electoral activism. The efforts of progressive independent third party movements like the Green Party and the Labor Party are crucial to building that independent alliance in this election cycle.

Whatever forum is chosen, unity and cooperation can force the candidates to fully and clearly commit to

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## Midwest CCDS Discusses Anti-War Movement, Health Care, Jena Six

The Sept 22 CCDS semi-annual Midwest Regional meeting in Louisville was attended by 18 members and friends from KY, IN, IL, and OH. Agenda topics included building for the regional anti-war protest Oct. 27 in Chicago. Ted Pearson reported the extensive mobilization underway.

Discussion also centered on what was vital to a “left” contribution in

building a progressive movement: one-on-one contact with progressives, grassroots mobilizations, and framing issues to make connections of war and peace, anti-racism and equality, jobs and justice, and environmental devastation clear. Participants emphasized how building a multi-racial movement was central to success.

The day's discussion ended with an

assessment of the significance of the Jena 6 defense and how the lack of measurable support among white people can be overcome.

Marilyn Albert presented an update on the newly adopted CCDS campaign to help build support for a single payer national healthcare system. A CCDS national conference is

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# The 2008 Elections and a Progressive Majority

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end the war and to support a progressive domestic program.

Within an expanding coalition, the left has a vital role of connecting issues – creating a holistic political vision and qualitatively advancing the unity of various sectors of the progressive movement.

Multiracial unity, in particular, must be established on the basis of peace and justice activists not only speaking to each other's concerns, but also acting forcefully upon them. Such issues as support for Katrina victims, justice for the Jena Six, opposition to segregated schools and the need for rebuilding the nation's cities is inseparably related to the war economy and billions squandered on Iraq. Those issues should be at the very center of the demands of peace activists upon the presidential candidates and upon the current Congress.

The intersection of class, race and gender constitutes a vital aspect of building a progressive electoral majority. Politicians often ignore the claims and interests of those sectors. However, it is virtually impossible to turn the country in a qualitatively progressive direction and effect progressive unity without strong identification with, and response to, interests

based upon class, race and gender. Thus far, the major Democratic candidates have not forcefully addressed the nagging disparities in wages and general economic circumstances between women and men. Nor have they offered a constructive, democratic and just approach to immigration. The leading contenders have not seriously addressed police brutality, racial profiling, the prison industrial complex, the Supreme Court's undermining of school desegregation, economic and social disparities based on race and the persistence of institutional racism in our society.

The electoral season is an optimal time for the left to lead in coalescing labor, communities of color, gay rights activists, women's organizations, seniors, students, etc., to advance the inseparable connection between issues and to press the candidates to take principled stands consonant with the outlook of the progressive majority.

◆ Now is the time to build community-union alliances to advance a progressive electoral agenda starting with ending the Iraq war, advancing universal single-payer health care (the creation of community-based health coalitions after showing of "Sicko" is an instructive example of what can be

done) and dealing forcefully with the environmental crisis.

◆ Now is the time to organize meetings, conferences and symposia of the broadest character to effect cooperation among the progressive majority.

◆ Now is the time for peace and justice activists to build the strongest possible multiracial cooperation and alliances to impact the electoral process and our communities.

◆ Now is the time to influence the electoral process through candidate forums, public meetings on issues, letter writing to local media, door to door canvassing, leafleting, Internet use, literature production and distribution, shopping mall tabling, etc., reaching out to heretofore untapped constituencies in even ostensibly "conservative" venues.

◆ With political concerns increasingly at the forefront, now is the time to build progressive majorities around local, national and global issues.

◆ Now is the time to broaden and deepen the progressive majority. Now is the time to advance a vision of fairness against the scourge of racism, sexism and homophobia. Now, in this election season, is the time to take giant strides for peace and justice – for our communities and for the survival of the planet.

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