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# CCDS MOBILIZER

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## Excitement growing for symposium on "Building a Progressive Majority: The Next Steps"

Excitement is growing for the day long Symposium, "Building a Progressive Majority: The Next Steps" that will take place Dec. 10th, 2005 at SEIU Local 1199 in New York City. The discussion, sponsored by the Committees of Correspondence Education Fund, Inc. is designed to facilitate a dialogue with leading progressive activists to explore the next steps to win a progressive majority to defeat the right wing in the country.

The speakers bring a wide range of experience in building progressive politics over many years. The symposium co-chairs are Charlene Mitchell and Mark Solomon who are also national co-chairs of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism. Panelists are: Prof. Manning Marable, Columbia University; Prof. Angela Davis, University of California, Santa Cruz;

Prof. Frances Fox Piven, City University of New York; Chuck Turner, Member, Boston City Council; Donna DeWitt, President, AFL-CIO, South Carolina; Prof. Michael Honey, University of Washington, Tacoma; Charles Ensley, President, SSEU Local 371, AFSCME; Carl Bloice, Independent Journalist; Leslie Cagan, National Coordinator, United for Peace and Justice; Damu Smith, Founder, Black Voices for Peace; Angelo Falcon, Senior Policy Executive, Institute for Puerto Rican Policy; Bill Henning, Vice President, CWA Local 1180; Elizabeth Rothchild, National Organizer, Young Democratic Socialists; Heidi Boghovich, Executive Director, National Lawyers Guild; and Joseph Wilson, Director, Center for Worker Education, CUNY.

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## September 24-26 Anti-War Protests in Washington DC a Huge Success

By Duncan McFarland

CCDS contingent was part of the massive march that drew 300,000 against the Iraq war Sept. 24th in Washington D.C. CCDS also sponsored a literature table at the Anti-War Fair alongside of hundreds of organizations during the march and rally.

The march was part of 3 days of protest actions that included a fundraising concert attended by 50,000, an interfaith service that drew 1,000 and civil resistance actions that involved 400. Some 1,000 activists lobbied 300 offices of the House and Senate, making it the largest lobby effort of any organization in memory, according to Peace Action.

Following the success of Lobby Day, 5 Members of Congress joined

the Out of Iraq Caucus and 40 Senators signed a letter to the Bush administration questioning aspects of the Iraq policy.

In summing up the events, the decision to hold one unified rally between UFPJ and ANSWER proved to be a correct one because there was a lot of pressure from the grassroots to do so. However, this created major problems during the day. For example, ANSWER speakers ignored time limits for the speeches. This biased the program in a left sectarian direction and kept some UFPJ speakers off the program.

Looking forward, UFPJ feels it has made a breakthrough by creating local organizing networks for lobbying and civil resistance. For the latest info, go to: [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

## NCC to set plans for 2006 Con-Con

The CCDS National Coordinating Committee (NCC) will meet Dec. 9 and 11th on the days preceding and following the Dec. 10th Symposium, "Building a Progressive Majority: The Next Steps."

On its agenda, the NCC will take up plans for the 2006 National Conference/Convention of the organization. An organizing committee constituted by the National Executive Committee will present proposals for the agenda, location and date for the 2006 Con-Con.

On the first day of the NCC meeting, presentations and discussion will address the following questions:

*In the building of a progressive majority for the country, what kind of organization of the left is needed? What kind of organization does CCDS need to be? What will it take to achieve it?*

NCC members who will present their thinking are Jay Schaffner (NY), Barbara Blong (San Fran), Mildred Williamson (Chicago), and Charlene Mitchell (NY). The presentations will be posted on the CCDS web site following the meeting. This is intended to mark the launch of Con-Con debate and exchange of views among all CCDS members on the future of the organization.

The meeting will also be the occasion for the much anticipated preview of the new CCDS web site. A collective of CCDS members have been working for months on redesign and updated content. The new site will be publicly launched on Jan 1st, 2006.

Reports on the 2005 CCDS fund drive, membership, Portside, and publications of and supported by CCDS will be presented at the NCC meeting. A report on the Socialist Education Project (SEP) will also be presented. The next issue of the *Mobilizer* will report on highlights.

# CCDS Around the Country

Following are highlights from local areas:

## **Metro D.C.** by Glenn Morrison

The Metro DC CCDS chapter continues to meet every 3-4 weeks with regular attendees, and some new faces. Our members are active in progressive movements, particularly in the area of solidarity with Cuba. CCDS members provided local support for setting up and staffing the CCDS literature table for the 9/24 demo. Others are involved in helping to organize the D.C. leg of the Agent Orange Justice Tour in November.

## **Kentucky** by Fred Hicks

Two thousand empty T-shirts were strung along a major street in Louisville, from the freeway exit to the city's largest and most historic cemetery. They were accompanied by over 200 anti-war protesters, among them a number of CCDS members. The anti-war protest received good press coverage. CCDS members are also active on issues of homelessness and solidarity with Nicaragua and Colombia.

Lively discussion continues to mark the monthly meetings of the Socialist Education Project, which are attended by members and others. Last month the discussion was based on Jack O'Dell's *Democracy Charter*.

## **New York City** by Ted Reich

A well attended forum to discuss "Labor at the Crossroads" was held

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

Oct. 15 at the Musicians Union Local 802 union hall. The featured speakers were JoAnn Wypijewski who writes for the *Nation*, *Counterpunch* and *Mother Jones*, and CCDS leaders Charlene Mitchell who is retired from an AFSCME local and Jay Schaffner who works for a union in NY.

The event stimulated lively discussion on the issues facing the labor movement and the recent split in the organized labor movement.

Members of the CCDS Lower East Side chapter are celebrating the Nov. 8th victory of progressive city council candidate Rose Mendez to represent Manhattan's District 2.. Mendez was the candidate of the Coalition for a District Alternative (CODA), a coalition that has involved members of CCDS since its inception 13 years ago. CODA, an independent organization dedicated to promoting social and economic justice, elected progressive city council member Margarita Lopez in the previous two elections for City Council. CODA has controlled the Dem. Party leadership in a section of the Lower East Side for the past 10 years and supports progressive political candidates.

## **Massachusetts** by Mike Wolfson

The Mass. CCDS meets monthly to discuss current events and local struggles. In August the chapter hosted its second annual picnic. The well attended potluck featured discussion about the recent split in the labor movement. Mass. CCDS has also devoted significant energies in the recent period to putting the Socialist Education Project online, dealing with both technical and editorial questions. Members frequently discuss questions of unity in the movement and will be attending the Dec. 10 Symposium.

## **CCDS Remembers**

We salute lifetime veterans in the struggle for world peace and justice.

They are sorely missed.

Irving Beinin Hannah Cohen

Forrest Crumpley Len Levenson

Phyllis Lewis Evie Weiner

*Presente!*

## **Oregon** by Ed and June Hemmingson

The Oregon Mid Vally Chapter of CCDS meets every month in Corvallis for a study discussion and general review of world events. Some 10 to 15 people attend, members and friends. We are involved in the Green Party leadership, Oregon PeaceWorks, anti-war vigils, union activity, health care initiatives, support for the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan, and more. Some of the Portland members are beginning to hold regular meetings in their local area, and it is hoped that they will become a self sustaining Portland chapter. Portland members are involved in support of KBOO community radio, Green Party, health care and anti-war activities, among others. Our discussion topics in the recent period have been on issues of world oil, Venezuela, the Israel/Palestine conflict, Cuba, Katrina, and Iraq.

## **South Carolina** by Jim Campbell

CCDS members in South Carolina are participating in two statewide ballot initiatives. One is driven by the Labor Party, the other by the Working Families Party. Both are securing ballot lines through petition drives and share a base among organized workers and working families in this state.

In Sept., the LP secured the support of South Carolina Pro-Vote, a coalition of sixty (60) groups in the state. During their annual retreat, LP representative, Adolph Reed, and the S. C. contact, Prof. Willie Leggett of SC State Univ., introduced Longshoreman Leonard Riley as the LP candidate to challenge a long term conservative for a S.C. House of Representatives seat in 2006. The immediate challenge is securing 10,000 signatures on a petition for a ballot line by Jan 2006.

South Carolina has also been the focus of the Working Families Party, a fusion party that runs candidates of

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**Whoops:** A June 24th CCDS fundraiser in NY celebrated Charlene Mitchell's 75th birthday, not the 80th.

# CCDS Around the Country

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the two major parties as well as their own. WFP Labor Coordinator, Larry Moskowitz, and WFP local contact Erin MCKee who is Pres. of the Greater Charleston CLC, held a series of meetings across the state with labor, community and church groups.

The overall expectation of these campaigns is for a broad, serious and critical debate on S.C.'s anti-union Right to Work Law; bolstering an organized push for a Living Wage; organizing support of Wal Mart workers; stimulate organizing among the growing immigrant workforce in S.C. and securing "best value" contracts; supporting quality education for all children and focusing, most notably, upon the Democratic Party's failure of working people and organized labor in S.C.

CCDS continues its activity with the Socialist Education Project. This year's series of discussions will conclude at the College of Charleston on Nov. 20th. Next year's series is being planned and organized.

## **So. California** by Marian Gordon

The So. Cal. chapter of CCDS has been active, meeting every 2-3 months. Our meetings feature discussions by members and friends, usually with a kick-off presentation by an invited speaker, on subjects such as the elections, the war in Iraq, developments in Cuba and Venezuela.

CCDS members were in the campaign last spring to win a TREMENDOUS VICTORY in electing our first Latino mayor in many generations, Anthony Villaraigosa. We walked precincts, phone banked, did the necessary office work. This was a major victory not only in the election of a very progressive mayor, but in building unity of Latino, African-American, Asian, white working class unity and progressive unity.

We also participated in the Nov. election, where WE HAD A SECOND VICTORY! A series of six ballot propositions - anti-people, anti-union, anti-social services, and pro-big business - were soundly defeated.

The anti-choice referendum was defeated but the campaign revealed a real lapse in consciousness of women's rights within the progressive movement. A very large coalition of labor unions, as well as other coalitions, opposed all of the right-wing initiatives except the one which would have forced parental consent for an abortion by women minors. Mainly, it was only women's groups that opposed it; the other coalitions generally did not take a position. Ultimately, it was DEFEATED with a larger majority than the anti-union proposition. More discussion is needed on this situation.

CCDS is also represented in the Coalition for World Peace, an affiliate of UFPJ. This is an ongoing peace group, which has recently seen an exciting reorganization and growth.

## **No. California** by Karl Kramer

Members marched with the CCDS banner in the Labor and United For Peace and Justice contingents at the 30,000 anti war march, Sept. 24th.

Two days later, on Sep. 26, CCDS members helped organize the UFPJ Defund the War & Defend our Communities rally outside of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's office.

On Nov. 28, the SF Labor Council made its regular delegate meeting an anti-war forum with soldiers returning from Iraq and the mothers of soldiers who had died in Iraq speaking.

The Oakland/Berkeley and Contra Costa Chapters met to discuss how to defeat Schwarzenegger's anti-worker, anti-people initiatives. The No. Ca. Coor. Comm. produced a leaflet with a class analysis of the initiatives and information on how to volunteer in turning-out the vote. Senior CCDS members at the Strawberry Creek Lodge retirement home sent the leaflet to nearly a thousand people.

CCDS members were active in a Poor People's March for living wage jobs, universal health care, affordable housing, quality public education and progressive taxation Oct. 16 in SF. A reception for CCDS national organizer Attieno Davis, was held Nov 1.

## CCDS Midwest Region Meets

By Harry Targ

CCDS members and friends met Sept. 17 in Lexington, KY for a semi-annual regional mtg that was energizing, both theoretically and practically. Participants were from Louisville and Lexington, KY; Chicago, IL; Gary and W. Lafayette, IN.

The morning panel examined the role of the right in contemporary U.S. political life and the possibilities of fascism in the country. Carl Davidson provided a data-based analysis of sectors of the right-wing - who they represent, their ideologies, their bases of financial support, and how to fight their influence. His presentation can be found at his blog, [Carldavidson.blogspot.com](http://Carldavidson.blogspot.com).

Pem Buck, an anthropologist at Elizabethtown Community College (KY), presented an updated analysis of the functions the middle class plays in maintaining order and its possible shift toward fascism. Ted Pearson tied discussion of the rise of the right and the possibilities of fascism to the changing global political economy of capitalism.

In the afternoon, panelists addressed progressive coalition-building. Drawing lessons from the brutal response to victims of Hurricane Katrina, Mildred Williamson underscored the need to ground the progressive response in a broader struggle for radical social change and the need to reckon with the class and racist character of the U.S. political economy.

Bob Sloan, a Kentucky novelist, spoke about the super-exploitation of the Appalachian peoples, pointing to the horrific environmental devastation occurring as a result of "mountain topping" by coal companies.

Janet Tucker described Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, a grassroots statewide multi-issue organization of progressives.

Harry Targ talked about the commitment of CCDS to help build a new national progressive coalition.

The next Midwest meeting will be Sat., Feb. 25, 2006 in W. Lafayette, IN. For info: call (212) 868-3733.

## Symposium

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Amy Goodman, Host and Executive Producer of *Democracy Now*, will speak at the symposium luncheon held at the same location.

Symposium co-chair Charlene Mitchell said that interest is building for the event because "with the many crises confronting the country at this time and the continued revelations of high level corruption and political chicanery being uncovered, more and more people are asking where do we go from here?"

"While the Bush Administration may be thoroughly compromised and politically vulnerable, many people are concerned that out of this political crisis an alternative, progressive and realizable alternative program can be formulated and put before the people to move the country forward," said Mitchell.

"The idea behind the symposium is for some of us to put our heads together and find the ways to push that process along in unity," said Mitchell.

The registration fee of \$35 includes rolls, coffee, tea and a light lunch. Scholarships are available for youth.

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Ph: (212) 868-3733, or Email to: [national@cc-ds.org](mailto:national@cc-ds.org)

## 1st Congress of European Left Held

### CCDS leaders invited as observers

By Ira Grupper

With the slogan "Yes, we can change Europe," over 300 delegates from throughout Europe and invited guest observers attended the historic 1st Congress of the Party of the European Left in Athens, Greece, Oct. 29-30th.

National leaders Charlene Mitchell and myself attended representing CCDS.

The Party of the European Left formed in 2004. This, the first Congress, was held in Peace and Friendship Stadium.

The tenor of the gathering was set in the opening speech by the Italian comrade, Fausto Bertinotti, who would be elected chair at the end of the Congress. He spoke of the year that had passed since the founding of the European Party of the Left. "Only one year has passed, sadly another year full of war. War continues to mark the world and life within it. It is a special form of war - the pre-emptive war of the Bush administration, one of the worst kinds of war we have ever known.

"The tsunami and the New Orleans hurricane have shown us what type of development this really is. In New Orleans, as well as the

destructive fury, we saw what levels the civilization crisis of this world has reached. There is a historic need that is becoming ever more evident: the need to build an alternative society."

The congress was an occasion to meet a number of comrades, among them were the Chair of the Partit Communistes de Catalunya, headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, a member of the National Executive Committee of the French Communist Party, the International Coordinator of the German Party of Democratic Socialism, the head of the International Department and the second leading spokesperson of the Palestinian Peoples Party, the Foreign Relations Secretary of the Peace and Democracy Movement of Cyprus, a representative of the Israeli Communist Party, and representatives of the Palestinian Peoples Party. We also met with leaders of SYNASPIS-MOS of Greece (Coalition of the Left Movements and Ecology).

Conspicuous by their absence was the Communist Party of Greece.

It was an honor to accompany Charlene to this event, and to be part of the CCDS delegation.

For more info about the Congress, go to: [www.synaspismos.gr/](http://www.synaspismos.gr/)

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