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Capitol Hill protesters demand “jobs not cuts”

By Tim Wheeler

Over 1,000 protesters chanting “Jobs not cuts” and “Speaker Boehner’s got to go” gathered in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Oct. 5 to denounce Republican obstruction of President Obama’s \$450 billion jobs program.

The rally came at the conclusion of the Take Back the American Dream Conference, which drew 2,000 activists from across the nation to strategize on how to break the grip of the corporate Republican right in the 2012 elections and create an economy that serves all people, not just the elite.

“We are the 99 percent,” the crowd chanted, waving placards that read, “Tax the rich” and “Work that needs to be done.”

Linda Evans, a home caregiver in Washington, D.C., told the crowd she has been unemployed for three years. She is often on the phone seeking work and the answer is “I’ll call you.” Tearfully she added, “I hear that so often, I’m beginning to think it’s my middle name. I’m sick and tired of being out of work.”

Addressing lawmakers in the Capitol she shouted, “How can you sleep knowing that people in the District of Columbia are hungry, living at a poverty level? Serve the people! Create programs that serve the elderly! Create good jobs for the people who put you in office! Save the babies!”



Shawn Wygant, a jobless worker from Pittsburgh, said, “Pittsburgh was once known as ‘Steel City.’ Now it is known as ‘Jobless City.’ The bridges, roads, and schools are crumbling. We need to rebuild America, rebuild the dilapidated bridges. Put America back to work! If they deal with this jobs situation, they’ll get our votes in 2012.”

A voice at the back of the crowd shouted, “The House belongs to the people! Take it back in 2012!”

Ian Gillette of Deerfield, N.H., said he was laid off last January. He has three children and re-

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cently lost his house in foreclosure. He has turned to a food pantry for food. He has filed hundreds of job applications but got only one interview. “There

Ian Gillette of Deerfield, N.H., said he was laid off last January.

are tent cities in New Hampshire where people are forced to live outside with their families. They've lost their jobs, their homes, their cars. They're hungry. I'm here to ask Congress: Will you please pass the jobs bill? It shouldn't be that hard. We need to get America back to work."

Van Jones, leader of the Rebuild the American Dream Campaign, sponsor of the rally, introduced progressive members of Congress who he said "come from the grassroots" and "go face to face, toe to toe with the high paid lobbyists, the tea party, and never buckle, never bow."

Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., led the crowd chanting "The people united, will never be defeated." He said, "The good news is that the progressive movement is on the upswing. We're organizing all across America. We are not going to stop. We're going to get the justice we deserve. We are listening to you. We want to be in partnership with you."

Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., rejected those who say the movement is an "answer to the tea party."

"No," Grijalva said, "This is different. This is not about hate, fear, division. You ... care about this country of ours, this dream of ours."

Kim Doyle Wille of Ellsworth, Colorado, leader of the group Feed the U.S., said a mood of anger is spreading and voters are "fired up" to oust the Republicans in the 2012 elections.

Shawn Wygant said he was laid off many months ago from the Sodexo industrial laundry in Pittsburgh. "They laid me off because they said they weren't making enough profits. I live together with my sister, her husband, their two children and grandmother. We share the expenses. It's the only way we can survive," he said. "Our landlord cut our rent from \$600 to \$400. I'm diabetic and have no health insurance. I sacrifice my insulin to keep the lights on."

He has attended two of Republican Senator Patrick Toomey's town hall meetings in Pittsburgh. "He's a member of the supercommittee," he said, referring to the bipartisan committee of senators and House representatives assigned to come up with \$1.2 trillion in drastic cutbacks by Nov. 15. "Toomey needs to support America going back to work, jobs not cuts," Wygant said. "We need less talk and more action."



Tim Wheeler writes for the People's World.

Due process by drone

By PW Editorial Board

The killing of American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki by a U.S. drone and presidential order reignited a debate that began under the previous administration and elicited criticism in the main because he is a U.S. citizen and should be accorded due process.

President Obama signed off on the secretly developed U.S. kill (or capture) target list on which U.S.-born al-Awlaki had been placed. Once someone is on the list, the CIA proceeds with assassination if it has actionable intelligence.

Then the administration said it could target "leaders of enemy forces, regardless of their nationality, who are plotting to kill Americans" and further argues that both Congress and international law have provided this authority.

Targeting al-Awlaki is just the next logical yet slippery step in the failed War on Terror policies first constructed by the Bush administration.

In 2002, the Bush administration killed six suspected terrorists with an unmanned drone in Yemen and officially widened the War on Terror beyond the initial Afghanistan target.

The country is now in its 10th year of the War on Terror. Afghanistan has joined Iraq in being widely seen as a "quagmire." Yemen, Pakistan,

the Horn of Africa are all new frontiers for the terror war. Thousands of U.S. soldiers have died, tens of thousands suffer seen and unseen lifelong wounds.

Yet, terror plots seem never-ending, even after the killing of King Terror himself, Osama bin Laden.

Mr. President, enough! Isn't it time for a change?

Obama has shown some important initiatives in foreign policy. He has called for cutting the Pentagon's budget, and has begun to draw down troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. He reached out to the Muslim world.

These initiatives have opened up space for the people's pro-peace movement to weigh in and influence public opinion.

But in too many cases continuation of the economic blockade against the administration is continuing Bush-like policies.

Drone attacks on American or other suspected terrorists also fall in this category.

It still will take the leadership of the American people to change U.S. foreign policy away from the unilateral gun and towards peace, prosperity and sustainability.

Targeting al-Awlaki is just the next logical yet slippery step in the failed War on Terror

“Occupy” demonstrations erupt in St. Louis

By Tony Pecinovsky

Members of CWA Local 6355 are part of the 99 percent of the country that are getting completely hosed by the financiers that have taken over our democracy and have ruined our economy for working people,” Bradley Harmon, president of Local 6355, said as OccupySTL activists met in down-town Kiener Plaza to plan a protest on two local Bank of America offices here in St. Louis.

OccupySTL is part of a nationwide movement that started with the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations in New York City. That occupation is now three weeks old with tens-of-thousands participating. The “Occupy” movement has spread to at least 80 other cities nationwide.

While the OccupySTL demonstrations are considerably smaller than their New York City counterparts, their spirit and energy is high, and dozens of tents, sleeping bags and a couch have laid claim to what is being called “people’s territory.”

Additionally, grassroots, direct democracy is in the air, as local activists - many of whom have never been a part of social and economic justice movements before - hold “general assembly” meetings to collectively discuss and plan their occupation, and its political and legal ramifications.

“Wall Street is really the belly of the beast,” Harmon continued.

Harmon’s union, the Missouri State Workers’ Union, CWA-MSWU, represent 7,000 state employees in the “Show-Me-State.” In the past few years it has seen thousands of layoffs due to budget cuts and the underfunding of social service programs.

He added, “Public workers are taking it on the chin...It is directly because of the funneling of



wealth up to the top, top, top, top people who are running our economy and destroying our democracy.”

“I have a small voice. We all have small voices,” activist Annie Quain said at the first Bank of America protest. “But if we join our voices together it becomes a roar.”

The crowd then joined in: “Hear me roar! Hear me roar!”

Quain continued, “We need to get out into the streets. We need to talk to people.”

“I worked hard all my life. I have tried to keep up,” Quain added, her voice noticeably shaken. “I love this country. But Goddamn it, it is wrong.”

After protesting at the first BOA office OccupySTL activists marched a few blocks north-east to another BOA location and briefly occupied the lobby.

According to Harman, “When you are left without the ability to negotiate, when you are left without a seat at the table, the only thing left to do is to force your way into their face, and I think that is what this is about.”

**Grassroots,
direct democracy is
in the air.**

Conn. youth jobs fight kicks off

By Lisa Bergmann

Over 50 people gathered for a recent youth jobs forum at the New Haven Peoples' Center. High school students, leaders of student organizations, local politicians, community organizations and labor organizers put their heads together to launch a campaign for youth jobs in New Haven, Conn.

Attendees enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the young people who were leading the meeting. When the introductions began, it became clear that an exciting array of community representatives had shown up. The President of the Black Law Students Association at Yale, Alderwoman Dolores Colon from New Haven's sixth Ward, a representative from Connecticut Students for a Dream, and labor leaders from AFSCME and the Teachers' Union were all in the room.

Perhaps even more inspiring than the presence of these organizations was the way young people stood up, confidently introduced themselves and declared that they were there to make change in their community. Half the participants were in middle school, high school or, early college years.

Nollysha Canteen and Sabir Abdussabur, both high school student leaders, MCed the event. Several youth, including Abdussabur, gave testimonies.

Joelle Fishman of the New Haven Peoples' Center gave the keynote speech, providing hope and a rallying cry to support Obama's American Jobs Act and Jan Schakowsky's Emergency Jobs to Restore the American Dream Act, pointing out that these bills could create over five thousand new jobs for youth in Connecticut.

For the discussion portion of the meeting, those present were asked to consider how youth unemployment has affected them.

Los Ángeles, presente en el movimiento del "99 por ciento"

Por Rossana Cambron y Luis Rivas

El 1º de octubre se reunía gente de todos los oficios y profesiones para mostrar su solidaridad con el movimiento por ocupar a Wall Street, llamando a los bancos a pagar su justa parte.

Gritaban los manifestantes "rescataban a los bancos; nos traicionaban a nosotros" y "somos el 99 por ciento," refiriéndose al hecho de que los más ricos son el 1 por ciento de la gente mientras que los otros del 99 por ciento andamos perdiendo trabajos y casas, y mientras que los estudiantes se gradúan endrogados con deudas aplastantes y sin posibilidades de encontrar trabajo.

Se manifestaban más de 2.000 personas marchando desde la Plaza Pershing hasta el City Hall (Ayuntamiento Municipal), en donde se acampaban más de 300 personas para la primera noche. Se le urge al público en general a unirse a la Ocupación, en donde se puede participar en las muchas comisiones que han sido formados para cumplir con las múltiples tareas necesarias.

Según los participantes, la Ocupación es un movimiento popular para mostrar que estamos hartos de este sistema y que hay que cambiarlo. Ya están organizando sus propias acciones más de 100 ciudades por toda la nación.

Ocupa a Los Ángeles ha estado en preparación desde el 23 de septiembre, trabajando en solidaridad con todos los movimientos de ocupación por todo el país. Y, al igual que en el resto del país, la mayoría de Ocupa a Los Ángeles está compuesto de jóvenes y estudiantes.

Declaró Andy Díaz, estudiante de periodismo en East Los Angeles Col-

lege, "Se nos prometió un cambio en este país y hasta el momento no lo hemos visto. Si miras a la doctrina del capitalismo, esta es 'Ponerse rico de la manera que puedas' sin más Yo creo que debemos trabajar colectivamente por el bienestar de la humanidad en general".

Han comenzado a participar muchos oficiales locales y otros miembros de la comunidad que se sienten afectados por la crisis económica.

Mario Brito, integrante del Concilio de Vecindad de Lincoln Heights, dijo que "Tienes al 99 por ciento de la riqueza nacional en las manos del 1 por ciento. Tienes que dirigirte al hecho de que los bancos fueron rescatados mientras que a la gente se les está echando a la vil calle. Sabes que en este país si es que alguna vez existía un Sueño Norteamericano, lo seguro es que ese Sueño Norteamericano ya se ha transformado en pesadilla".

Ocupa a Los Ángeles ha utilizado a sitios y medios sociales como son Twitter, Facebook, YouTube y Tumblr para movilizar y animar a la gente a asistir a las reuniones. La página de Facebook del grupo Angelino ha crecido día tras día.

Nadir Romo, estudiante de relaciones internacionales en la Nueva Escuela de Investigación Social de Nueva York, ha estado siguiendo al movimiento Ocupa a Wall Street y tiene esto que decir: "Si la gente cree que vivimos en una democracia, pues este es un ejemplo de cómo es que no vivimos en una democracia porque nuestros recursos están siendo desviados para las ganancias financieras en contra del pueblo. Yo creo que este es un evento de gran importancia; la ocupación es algo que, creo, seguirá creciendo".

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