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Corporations pull plug on America

By Sam Webb



The conventional wisdom is corporate capital has an enduring commitment to science, education, transportation, health and nutrition, public amenities, urban development, equal opportunity and more. Business executives are considered solid citizens as well as savvy investors. We are told that they are interested in the modernization of the state, economy, and society as well as their own enterprises.

There was at one time a grain of truth to this portrayal of the corporate class. Coming out of World War II, a broad alliance, with U.S. corporations occupying a dominant position, expanded the public sector, trained a skilled workforce, steadily improved wages and social benefits, renovated the infrastructure, built a national system of interstate highways, invested in public education, struck down the most egregious barriers of racial exclusion, and promoted vigorous economic growth.

Corporate capital's principal reason for being was still profit-making, but its profit-making strategy was tethered to the modernization of the domestic economy, state and society.

It was a win-win situation insofar as both the corporations and the people gained, even though very unequally, from this arrangement. The so-

cialist Michael Harrington, in an analysis of this era, wrote:

"The welfare state was thus not simply the result of socialist and liberal conscience and working class struggle. It was also a function of a capitalist socialization process, a way of allowing the system to absorb the enormous productivity of the new forms of collective labor."

But the arrangement didn't last. By the mid-1970s, this commitment began to fray, and then

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in the decades that followed it came apart at the seams, as the transnational corporations, with the assistance of right-wing extremists occupying powerful positions in government, drastically and negatively restructured the state, economy and society.

This grouping has become a parasite sucking the life out of our government, economy and society.

By the first decade of this century, effects were apparent.

We have experienced a historically unprecedented shift of wealth and power to the moneybags on Wall Street and across America.

We also have seen the deterioration of infrastructure, the destruction of the social safety net, the undermining of the public school system, the decay of urban and rural communities, the privatization of public assets, the growth of poverty and inequality, the hollowing out of the manufacturing sector and massive loss of jobs, the dismantling of regulations on corporate misbehavior, the lowering of workers' wages, the lifting of barriers inhibiting international capital flows, the imposition of unfair trade agreements, and a faltering - now stagnant - domestic economy.

Why did they pull the plug?

The explanation lies in the evolution, dynamics and profit imperatives of the world economy over the past three decades.

The markets, supply of exploitable labor, and investment strategies of U.S. transnational corporations are worldwide in scope.

Their production sites stretch across regions

and time zones, thanks to new technologies that reduce time and distance (think Internet).

That doesn't mean that domestic production sites, consumption markets and workforces are of no consequence, but their importance to the transnational masters of the world is far less today.

The commitment of major sections of the transnational elite to a people-friendly public sector, a vibrant national economy and a modern society has waned. This elite is turning the state into its personal ATM machine and a military juggernaut to enforce its will at home and abroad.

It's not an exaggeration to say that this grouping has become a parasite sucking the life out of our government, economy and society, while living in bubbles of luxury, racial exclusion and class privilege and exploiting labor globally.

It doesn't alter the necessity of defeating the far right, whose plan is to regain complete control of the federal government in 2012, but adjustments may be necessary, given this new reality.



Sam Webb is chair of Communist Party.

Austerity is not election mandate

By PW Editorial Board

The labor movement has persuasively argued that the election's mandate was to create jobs and resolve the economic mess in the interests of working people.

The election's mandate was not to make that mess worse. And yet, this is precisely what the Republican policies of draconian spending cuts would do.

What is delaying an economic recovery is not too much spending and a growing deficit, but not enough federal spending.

The economy is stalled and spending is down. Consumers are up to their ears in debt and are understandably reluctant to use scarce dollars to buy things like refrigerators, cars, houses, or home improvements.

And don't hold your breath waiting for the capitalist class, sitting on roughly two trillion dollars - yes, \$2,000,000,000 - to invest its surplus cash in new hiring and productive capacity.

Thus to cut government spending for jobs, infrastructure, green technology, public education, and aid to local governments in these cir-

cumstances is like throwing fuel on a fire - things will get worse, maybe much worse, before they get better.

If the Republican right has its way they will take a meat axe to people's programs at the federal, state and local level. Government, it is said, has to live within its means like everyone else does.

But the truth is just the opposite. For the time being government has to live, not within, but beyond its means. Its immediate imperative is to put dollars in the hands of people who will spend those dollars, namely working and poor people, people of color, youth, and seniors.

Nothing could be worse than for the government to tighten its belt in a period when the economy is slumping, unemployment is stuck in the double-digit range, investment in new plants and equipment is meager, and consumer demand is low.

The millions who went to the polls two weeks ago didn't cast their vote for policies that will drive the economy further downward.

Nothing could be worse than for the government to tighten its belt in a period when the economy is slumping.

Organized jobless: a powerful force

By Juan Lopez

A t few times in our nation's history has the cry for jobs - and the need to organize those doing the crying - been more apparent and more possible.

No individual or movement can advocate with as much moral authority for desperately needed jobs as the jobless themselves.

It should be noted that unions, community service groups and social justice organizations are gradually reaching out and organizing the jobless.

By taking a direct hand in helping the unemployed organize themselves, and bringing them into the House of Labor, a much expanded organized labor movement can leverage its new-found power on the legislative, electoral, union organizing and collective bargaining fronts.

As the organized labor movement takes the legislative battles into the street, the newly organized unemployed, with little to lose and much to gain, will bring added militancy to street heat. Such initiatives are being taken by local and international unions, service and social justice organizations.

Today's organized labor movement is emerging as defender of all workers, unionized or not, and of the people generally - forcefully taking on racism, anti-immigrant hysteria, gender and other forms of discrimination so destructive of unity and social progress.

In many local unions conditions are favor-



party arsenal of lies, including the boogey-man of big government and deficit spending, rather than striking out with behavior such as racism and anti-immigrant hysteria that's destructive of others, and self-destructive in the end.

Thus, they can become a potent force fighting for jobs with a new stimulus package, public works, transportation and production infrastructure, conversion to a green economy and - in a much-changed political environment - a new New Deal.

The unemployed can potentially play a pivotal role in the crucial 2012 elections and allow the Obama coalition to regain the initiative.

their own and the nation's destiny.

From dispirited victims, jobless workers can transform themselves into spirited molders of their own and the nation's destiny.

Texas students strike for DREAM Act

By Vivian Weinstein

SAN ANTONIO - Thirteen Texas students carrying out a hunger strike here have reached their 15th day. They are pushing for Congress to pass the DREAM Act.

The bill (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) was first introduced into Congress in 2001.

The hunger strike at the University of Texas in San Antonio is part of a series of strikes, rallies and candlelight vigils at universities across the state.

The students have brought a sense of urgency and a deeper level of commitment to the movement, as undocumented students are coming out into the open, risking deportation and possibly death.

The United Methodist Church and First United Unitarian Church of San Antonio have lent support, in addition to community organizations.

Thirty Texas Catholic nuns from various orders and congregations sent a letter to Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, calling on her to meet with the hunger strike students.

Some years ago Sen. Hutchison supported the DREAM Act. Not so in the Congress of 2010.

On November 18, a group of undocumented youth met with Sen. Hutchison and brought a message from the San Antonio hunger strikers.

She refused to make a statement of support for the DREAM Act, claiming her interest in a visa process instead of legislation.

Readers can contact Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison and ask her to meet with the striking students.

¿Posible para pasar el Dream Act?

Por Wilmer Barzallo

BROOKLYN, N.Y. - "El tiempo es ahora. Aunque los resultados de las elecciones no son lo que deseamos; sabemos que todavía tenemos el poder de reparar nuestro sistema migratorio porque es la correcta cosa que hay que hacer". Con estas palabras inició su intervención la congresista Nidia M. Velázquez (demócrata, Nueva York) en un encuentro con la comunidad en la Iglesia Santa Brígida de Brooklyn el pasado domingo 21 de noviembre.

El evento fué organizado por Make The Road New York cuya co-directora ejecutiva Ana María Archilla enfatizó el poder de las comunidades "para transformar la sociedad". "Vamos a luchar para que la justicia sea posible aquí en Brooklyn, Queens y en todo Nueva York ... y en el país entero" señaló. En el encuentro con los congresistas participaron varias autoridades locales y organizaciones comunitarias que se enfocaron en el problema migratorio en los EEUU. Anjelo Orellana, coordinador internacional del Frente Unido de Inmigrantes Ecuatorianos (FUIE) dijo que la reforma migratoria es algo justo y necesario "... y no vamos a descansar hasta poder lograr no solamente el Dream Act, sino la legalización de todos y cada uno de los inmigrantes... , queremos una reforma migratoria integral".

El nutrido y diverso auditorio congregado en la Iglesia de Santa Brígida se enfervorizó con las diver-

sas participaciones y sobre todo con las intervenciones de los congresistas Velázquez y Luis Gutiérrez que enfatizaron la necesidad de de pasar el Dream Act "como una cuota inicial de pago de la Reforma Migratoria" antes de final de año, y antes que los republicanos asuman en enero la mayoría en la Cámara de Representantes. "La ventana de oportunidad está cerrándose, sin embargo no descansaremos hasta que pase el Dream Act.", dijo Velázquez.

Gutiérrez fué claro al demandar del Presidente Obama poner fin a las deportaciones. De acuerdo a estudios existen más de 4 millones de niños estadounidenses cuyos padres son indocumentados. "¿Cuál es la política del gobierno americano?" preguntaba el congresista Gutiérrez "¿Dar a esos niños asistencia médica? ¿Darles mejor vivienda? ¿Darles mejor educación? ¡No! ¡Es llevarse a sus padres!. ¡Esto es equivocado! ¡Presidente Obama pare la deportaciones! ¡Termínalas ahora!". El congresista Gutiérrez señaló que el Presidente Obama tenía la autoridad para hacerlo "de un solo plumazo".

Gutiérrez hizo también un llamado a los inmigrantes que si tienen documentados a sentirse "indignados ante el atropello que sufren aquellos menos afortunados que nosotros", hizo un llamado a dejar sus comodidades, " a sacrificar su propia libertad para que otros pueden vivir libres aquí en éste país".

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