



WHEREVER MEN AND WOMEN ARE CONDEMNED TO LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED. TO COME TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT THESE RIGHTS BE RESPECTED IS OUR SOLEMN DUTY. JOSEPH WRESINSKI www.oct17.org

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Mobilizing for October 17 at the US Social Forum

Twenty-three Fourth World Movement members from New Orleans, Appalachia, Washington, DC, and New York joined 15,000 other activists from across the country and abroad at the first United States Social Forum (USSF), in Atlanta, Georgia, from June 27-July 1, 2007. Participants marched, mobilized one another in song, poetry, dance, and teach-ins, and networked to strengthen a global grassroots movement for positive social change. Our own delegation held a dynamic info table, organized a lively theater forum and panel discussion, ran an energetic Taporí Silhouette activity, connected with people back home via internet, and collected signatures on the Call to Action: *Ending Extreme Poverty, A Road to Peace*. We lived out our vision of partnership, manifesting that people living in persistent

poverty are, and must be recognized as, the principal actors in the struggle to end poverty. We also built awareness and momentum toward October 17, a day that is, as 16-year-old Samantha Dantzer told people at the USSF, “a chance to come together as one, talk about our struggles, and get solutions to problems of poverty.” Do days like October 17 or events like the USSF matter? Germaine, from New Orleans, thinks so: “*The Social Forum was life-changing. It’s important to me when my voice is heard. When you’ve got other people behind you, you can make a difference.*” This journal provides glimpses of encouraging, educational, and sometimes challenging encounters that, we believe, can indeed build a better world.

--Jill Cunningham

ENDING EXTREME POVERTY,  A ROAD TO PEACE.

Call to Action

At the US Social Forum march in Atlanta, Fourth World intern Joe Morris (left) holds high our banner and rallying cry, with Owusu Slater from New York.



Defining “Radical”

By Joe Morris

The U.S. Social Forum was a gathering of many groups seeking revolutionary change. The Fourth World Movement, since it doesn’t take a political stance, may have seemed out of place amidst the socialists, anarchists, and other groups with “radical” agendas. I think that the writings of Joseph Wresinski are actually quite radical.

The Fourth World Movement does not present itself as a radical revolutionary group, but its ideology seeks to create a complete cultural change--the elimination of poverty. Its different stance is: “We’re not going to go in and tell people how to live, we’re not going to give out charity, we’re not going to ‘help’ people.” Wresinski’s idea was to focus on working in cooperation with impoverished people to maintain the dignity of all involved. The emphasis is not on assistance, but on partnership.

It is radical to view impoverished

people as just as important as everybody else, and crucial to their own development. This is a radical idea because the prevailing attitude in America is that people become impoverished because of a personal failing and that they are not able to help themselves.

I think the Fourth World Movement fit in just fine [at the USSF]. Some organizations were more conservative and supportive of the status quo. Other groups were content to use the same styles of protest and resistance that [continue to] judge and divide people.

The Fourth World Movement has different goals and a totally different methodology, because to keep doing things in a way that isn’t radically innovative will only cause the same things to keep happening.

Joe Morris is a recent graduate of UNC-Ashville and interned full time with us this summer.

A Teen’s Perspective

By Samantha Dantzer

Going to the US Social Forum expanded my horizons because I got to interact with people from different backgrounds, different countries. I got to know their struggles and their accomplishments. We don’t always get that in school. It made me more respectful and sincere to all people: Caucasians, Hispanics, Native Americans, older people. I learned I’ve got to look at things from different perspectives.

The march that first day gave me a wake-up call! I’ve marched in parades, but mostly for tradition. This was my first time to go marching for something I believe in, and for a better future; it was important! A lot of people were talking about

See “Amazing to Be There,” p.2



Samantha Dantzer from New York and Corey Russell from New Orleans march for what they believe in: an end to poverty.

OCTOBER 17: International Day to...

UNITE

across lines of class, race, and nations, in a stand for human rights and peace.

SPEAK OUT

to make known the courage, dignity, and efforts of those who face poverty.

AFFIRM

the need for combined efforts and a common commitment to end poverty and exclusion.

RE-COMMIT

to support actions in which people with a direct experience of poverty are real partners.

Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.

--Joseph Wresinski



Sign Online!
Pass it on!

Tell Your Story

Wear
the Ribbon



Join Others: March, Sing,
Create Art, or Hold a Vigil



At the US Social Forum, Charmaine Russell from New Orleans collects signatures for the Call to Action: *Ending Extreme Poverty, A Road to Peace* Campaign.

October 17 is the UN-declared International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. But our members and others who stand in partnership for human rights have marked this day for 20 years! On October 17, families in poverty speak out; they give testimonies at the local level and in front of world bodies.

I believe these testimonies can help change laws and policies. They already have. But more importantly, this type of work together helps shift people’s mindsets. My own outlook has changed because of my involvement in this partnership against poverty. It’s what drew me and keeps me committed.

—Jean Stallings, at USSF panel presentation

US Social Forum: Building a Movement



Germaine, Charmaine, and Alison from New Orleans carry "The Peace Banner" that Germaine helped make as a child in Street Library. Anna and Marlena march with the Taporí Silhouette of Malasia from New York.



"AMAZING TO BE THERE"

Samantha Dantzer, age 16, from New York recaps what she did and learned at the USSF.

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poverty. We're all trying to solve the problem, but we all have different techniques.

I had good conversations when I was getting signatures on the Call to Action. First I'd explain that we reach out to people in low-income housing and children used to struggling. We help the kids by reading and help parents by taking kids on outings. And I'd explain how October 17 is meaningful to us. It's a chance to come together as ONE and talk about our struggles and get solutions to problems of poverty. The toughest questions were, "How do we get to know people in low-income areas and how do we get them involved?" That was hard! Mostly, I drew on my own experience. Sometimes I had to get Michelle to help, or I'd kind of cheat by reading from the newsletters!

When we were on the video conference to Appalachia, it was great! I never knew what they do. We all gave one another credit for the things that we're doing. That way we could get past the reputation and different interpretations of Virginia and just learn from them.

The best moment was when we were out at the Horizons School—the night Joe cooked the chili. We all gave input into the theater forum and panel that we would do the next day. I felt it was a very productive and fun time. Then the



OUR DELEGATION

Back row, from left: Anna Fagergren, Samantha Dantzer, Corey Russell, Cory Turner, Jill Cunningham, Joe Morris, Michelle Williams, Maria Sandvik. Front row, from left: Jean Stallings, Zena Grimes, Germaine Russell, Alison McCrary, Owusu Slater, Stephen Munro, Charmaine Russell, Maria Victoire. Kneeling: Dierdre and Bob Mauss. Missing from photo: Sr. Bernie Kenny, Jason French, Nui Nakpassorn, and Sheng-Ling Lin from Appalachia, and Marlena Tucker from Washington, DC.

next day, a lot of people came for our workshop. It was a success! I think we accomplished a lot as an organization. A lot of people know us now.

It was amazing just to be there! In history class, I'll bring out what I learned at the USSF: at the times in the auditorium, the workshops, and just talking to people in general. For me, it was important to meet our members from New Orleans, because there's always been a controversy between North and South. But we're just the same; the only thing different is accent! The hurricane hit them and I think it changed people for the better. I saw how close they were; there was a lot of love and unity among them.

People who didn't go to the USSF need to know how New Orleans set it out! They're trying to rebuild their city, but they gave the most, in terms of music, food, culture. They were very active and humble in spirit. They're going through such a transition to rebuild, and they still wanted to come and connect with others at this US Social Forum. That was inspiring to me.



TAPORÍ ACTIVITY

"Ono and Rene," a story of friendship, captured children's attention and primed them for making their silhouettes and writing messages "from the heart."



AT OUR INFO TABLE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by Germaine Russell

I loved the march! We had our beautiful banners; I was holding up the banner I'd helped make as a little kid! We were out there screaming our lungs out, and I felt we were making a change. We made friends. We weren't just marching as different organizations, we were marching as family. We all came together as ONE VOICE. We wanted the government and other people to hear our voice. If the people have a voice, then everything will be okay.



Did it make a difference? I think it did! The whole time at the Social Forum was life-changing because you could hear different people's struggles—from Native Americans, Hispanics, other cultures.

It's important to me when my voice is heard. But we weren't just there to talk, but also listen. Everyone there did that well. I want to make a difference, to make a change. When other people feel that way, when you've got other people behind you, you can make a difference.



Encounter point: Our info table was home base to collect signatures on the Call to Action, explain our projects, and give "live feedback" to members via internet video and audio conferences. Below, right: Zena Grimes with Samantha and Corey, at the Gandhi statue at the MLK Center.



EXAMPLE OF HOPE

Long-time member Zena Grimes is Samantha's mother. Below is an excerpt from her presentation at our panel on the theme of partnership.

...At Fourth World gatherings I meet people from different backgrounds and other families who struggle too. We all treat one another with respect. I am able to share my experiences, but also ask questions and learn information that I can take back to my family.

Fourth World Volunteers and other members have stuck by my family and me through fires, homelessness, and other struggles. My kids have grown up in Street Library. Now I am a role model for them, and they are role models to me. My daughter Samantha is here with me now. I was proud to see her interviewing and talking with all different people yesterday at the Social Forum.

I want to show you this Fourth World "partnership" I'm talking about. I want all my Fourth World family to stand up. You see: it's different races, ages, backgrounds. It's an example of hope for young people to see this type of partnership. I look forward to learning from your examples, too.

THANK YOU to all who sent financial support to help us attend the U.S. Social Forum. Special thanks to supporters and new friends in Atlanta for providing vital logistical and moral support: member Martha Rummel and staff at Horizons School for their excellent accommodations; Natallie Keiser and Faith Garlington for pre-event research and contacts; Meg Harper and Rick Stoops for opening their home and network of friends to us; Sue Buckholz for sound equipment; and Alisha Waller and family, Beth Starling and family, and other members of the Embry Hills United Methodist Church for lunches, goodie-bags, shopping trips, a potluck dinner, and good ol' Southern Hospitality!



PANEL AND THEATER FORUM

Above: Maria Victoire leads participants in song before a panel and theater forum on partnership against poverty. Right: Time together as a national delegation: Sr. Bernie Kenny from Virginia and Dierdre Mauss from New Orleans dance as Jason French provides Appalachian bluegrass tunes.



SUMMER '07 HIGHLIGHTS: Stitching, Stories, and Treks in the South

June 2nd brought this year's "Four gatherings, one Annual Meeting." Members conducted business by proxy and internet conference, in order to stay local and prepare delegates to attend the US Social Forum in Atlanta. After the USSF, members continued partnership-building activities and encounters with renewed vigor toward October 17. From our WASHINGTON, DC National Center team, Michelle Williams wrote, "At the USSF we could more fully realize how all of our progressive work makes up a larger movement. Seeing the vastness of this and the energy behind it, serves to further fuel our passion to continue our work, once back in our communities." Thus we took an active part with other organizations in a metro-DC feedback and follow-up session from the USSF. And to log the hundreds of Call to Action signatures that members collected at the USSF and at the Remote Area Medical (RAM) event in Appalachia, we organized "Data Entry Parties" at our DC office. This section and page 4 relate other enriching encounters that took place in our grassroots locations.



APPALACHIA: New Playground and Nature Hikes

The Dickenson County, VA town of Trammel has a new look! Community members like W.C. Phillips (above, right) have created partnerships among local organizations and residents to provide funding, equipment, volunteer skills, and publicity for a new playground, picnic tables and shelter, and flower and vegetable gardens at the Trammel Community Center. This summer the Center was the point of departure for nature hikes that included plant-identification (above, left) and dam-building to create swim holes in the nearby creek.

NEW YORK CITY: Street Library Festival



"The festival had the theme of inclusion despite difference," writes Fourth World Volunteer Anna Fagergren, "leading up to the telling of a story called *The Woman Who Outshone the Sun*. With a painted backdrop, wonderful rainsticks, painted animal puppets, Owusu's drumming, and Therese's storytelling, the children's play was a success. Parents are still talking about it!" Steve Munro, another Volunteer added, "I loved the Street Library Festival for the parent involvement. I saw a lot of cooperation. The play was awesome!"



(www.thereseclair.com)

Adults Lloyd and Carol exchange reading and creative time with children in the Ocean Hill Community in Brooklyn. Children engage in the story performed by international artist Therese Plair with the masks and rainsticks they made.



NEW ORLEANS: Taking Taporí and October 17 on the Road

Jim, a "Nawliner" in Texas, gives a "shout out" to the NY Street Library maker of the Taporí Silhouette that Maria Sandvik shows him. Strengthening ties made during the USSF, Maria Victoire (above, right) speaks about October 17 with student activist Julee Valdez in San Antonio, while in Houston, our Volunteers met again with Bryan and Juan Parras (left, back row), who run a freelance radio station, work for human rights (www.shroc.org), and advocate for environmental justice (www.tejashouston.org).



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CALL TO UPDATE!

Help us get it right. Receiving this newsletter for the first time? You signed the Call to Action: *Ending Extreme Poverty, A Road to Peace*. Thank you! For **name corrections**, to prevent **doubles**, or to be **removed** from our mailing list, fill out the bottom of the form to the right, or e-mail us.

Help make it cheaper: To receive news about events, campaigns, and publications, send a message entitled "Add me to your E-Mail list" to nationalcenter@4thworldmovement.org.

Creative Encounters Mark Learning Co-op's First Year

What happens when people meet together, share their skills and their stories, and are willing to have their memories—pieces of their history—intertwine with those of others? They can create something new and unified, something colorful and comforting, a work that reflects the diverse life of a community. "The Quilt of Our Lives" is exactly such a creation. And the types of exchanges that produce such a communal work of art are what the Appalachian Learning Cooperative is all about.



Experienced quilters share skills with Sheng-Ling (top, left), from Taiwan, while Nui, from Thailand, learns fiddle from local musician, Teddy Owens. As Fourth World Volunteers, Sheng-Ling and Nui spent 3 months learning from the community.



The Learning Co-op developed from a weaving together of different local experiences into a shared vision: a place that would promote and display the wealth of local culture and knowledge, while inviting others to "add their own piece." Now the "quilt" of activities at the Co-op includes language classes, computer workshops, music lessons, stress-management exercises, and, of course, quilting sessions.

Congratulations to Dickenson County residents on the first successful year of the Appalachian Learning Cooperative!

--Jill Cunningham



Left: The "courage and clarity of an indigenous woman," a pillow case that followed the life journey of a German immigrant to the US, "local historian" Miss Hetty's floursack, cloth from the pain and provision of the mines: these stories and more are sewn into "The Quilt of Our Lives." Above, Fanchette Fanelli and Lucille Greene (right) with the finished Quilt at the Learning Co-op.

The Quilt of Our Lives

"My son died at the age of 35. He always wanted to travel around the world and now is his chance in the memory of him in this quilt."

"The Quilt of Our Lives" is made of pieces of material, each carrying a message from the person who offered it. Miners' shirts, flour sack material made into dresses, baby blankets, souvenirs from other lands—all these have been sewn together over the past year at the Learning Co-op by quilters, experienced ones and learners. It was finished on time to be exhibited at the Dickenson County Community Hall for the 4th of July celebration. It has since been at the public library in Clintwood, the local supermarket, and is currently at the public library in Haysi, Virginia. At each location people can also view the 44-page album containing the image and story of each piece of material. While they read, people have shown a whole range of emotions as the stories remind them of their own. They speak of quilts they have made and cherish. All appreciate that this local effort will travel around the world, allowing other people to appreciate the culture of this region and to add their own comments.

--Fanchette Fanelli



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Call to Action: Building a Movement

At the United States Social Forum

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