



by Chris Cutter, Assistant to the President

With **Barack Obama** only being our President for two weeks (at this writing), he is taking some very harsh criticism – and the “honeymoon” isn’t even over yet. Just three hours after taking the oath of office, he was being blamed for Wall Street losing over 200 points that day on ABC radio by **Rush Limbaugh**. Good Grief! My son got a “D” in high school once. Was the future President Obama to blame for that also?

He has many “first” things to address to turn our country around, and his immediate priority is the economy and jobs. Right now unemployment is at 7.2% and is expected to be at 8% by mid-year and 9-10% by this time next year. 2.6 million jobs were lost in the Bush recession – a recession that looks a lot like the Great Depression. In New York 90,000 jobs were lost in December on top of the 100,000 that were already lost in the previous three months (Daily News 1/23) and 50,000 people were taken off the unemployment rolls in January because their benefits ran out and had no job to go to and are now on the welfare rolls. In Connecticut, they are reporting the highest record of people applying for unemployment benefits ever.

Sure, the harsh criticism comes with the job, but in all fairness, we should give the man a chance. Yet, as Congress debates his ambitious

economic stimulus plan, Fox News and other conservative pundits are likening his plan to Franklin Roosevelt’s spending during that Great Depression saying that “he made it worse...and helped turn a panic into the worst depression of modern times.” (12/24/08) I would like to remind those same critics that Roosevelt’s New Deal/jobs programs helped end the Depression and had unmistakable improvements for the nation’s economy. Maybe that’s why he won in a landslide in 1936. I would also

like to remind those same detractors that eight years ago, at the start of the Bush administration, some conservatives talked about rolling back the New Deal “to unravel the regulatory state, including protections for workers, consumers and investors...promoting the favorite cause of Wall Street – the privatization of Social Security.” NY Times 1/12/09

Thirty-plus years ago, unemployment hovered at 20%, (Bureau of Labor Statistics) families were losing their homes and spend-

ing was at its lowest. Gee! That sounds awfully familiar. Let’s go forward three generations to today where the public is in no mood for the dismantling of regulations or federal oversight. Look at the high cost of the deregulation of the mortgage industry and all of the people devastated by the Bernard Madoff scandal. The critics of President Obama’s stimulus plan in Congress and in the press say his plan will cost too much and that in the long run, the economy will cure itself and it hasn’t even been implemented yet. As an FDR administrator said, “People don’t eat in the long run, they eat every day.” For all these reasons we need our Senators and Congressional Representatives to give President Obama the chance reverse the damage that has been done and work with him to insure the success of his Economic Stimulus Bill. The House passed it 244-188 on January 28th, and at this writing, we are still waiting on the Senate to follow. Under the assumption that it will pass in the Senate, this package will not be a panacea nor correct everything overnight; but we need to be supportive of it rather than negative, and the Great Right Wing Recession will become a footnote as we watch history repeat itself and America becomes strong once again and the economic bleeding stops.

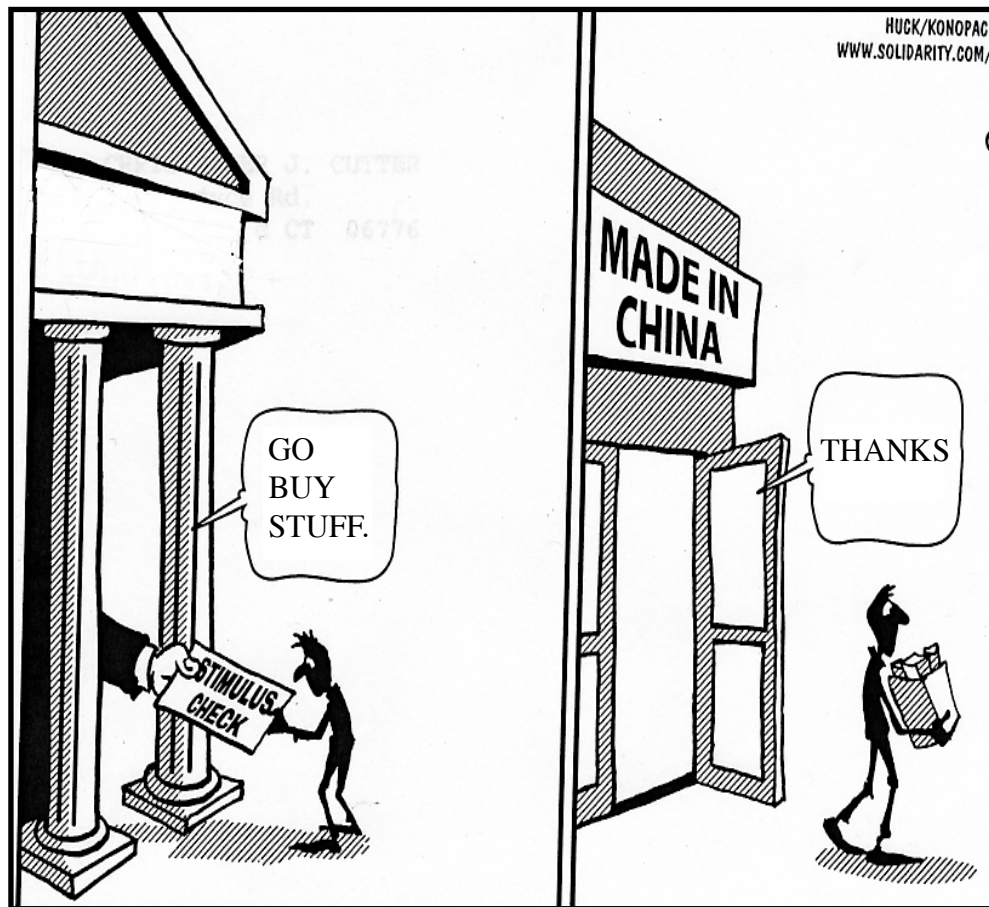
LABOR NOTES

The following article is by David Stout printed in the “New York Times”

On yet another morning of grim economic news, **President Obama** sought to further distance himself from his predecessor as he announced steps that he said would strengthen organized labor and improve the lot of middle-class Americans. At a White House ceremony, the president signed three executive orders that he said would “reverse many of the policies towards organized labor that we’ve seen these last eight years, policies with which I’ve sharply disagreed.”

Soon afterward, **Vice President Biden** drew applause when he flung another dart at the former administration as he told labor officials in the audience, “Welcome back to the White House.” ...The orders he signed, which union officials say will undo Bush administration policies that tilted toward employers, would require federal contractors to offer jobs to current workers when contracts change, and would make it more difficult for federal contractors to discourage union activities. In addition, Vice President Biden said that the first meeting of a newly created task force will be “to bring together those Cabinet members who have the greatest impact on the well-being of the middle class...and will look at issues as diverse as health care and college opportunities and will focus on restoring the balance in the workplace.”

When talking about this new task force, President Obama said, “These are the men and women that form the backbone of our economy, the most productive workers in the world.” He further added, “I do not view the labor movement as part of the problem. To me, it’s part of the solution.”



Let’s Support America with the Stimulus Package