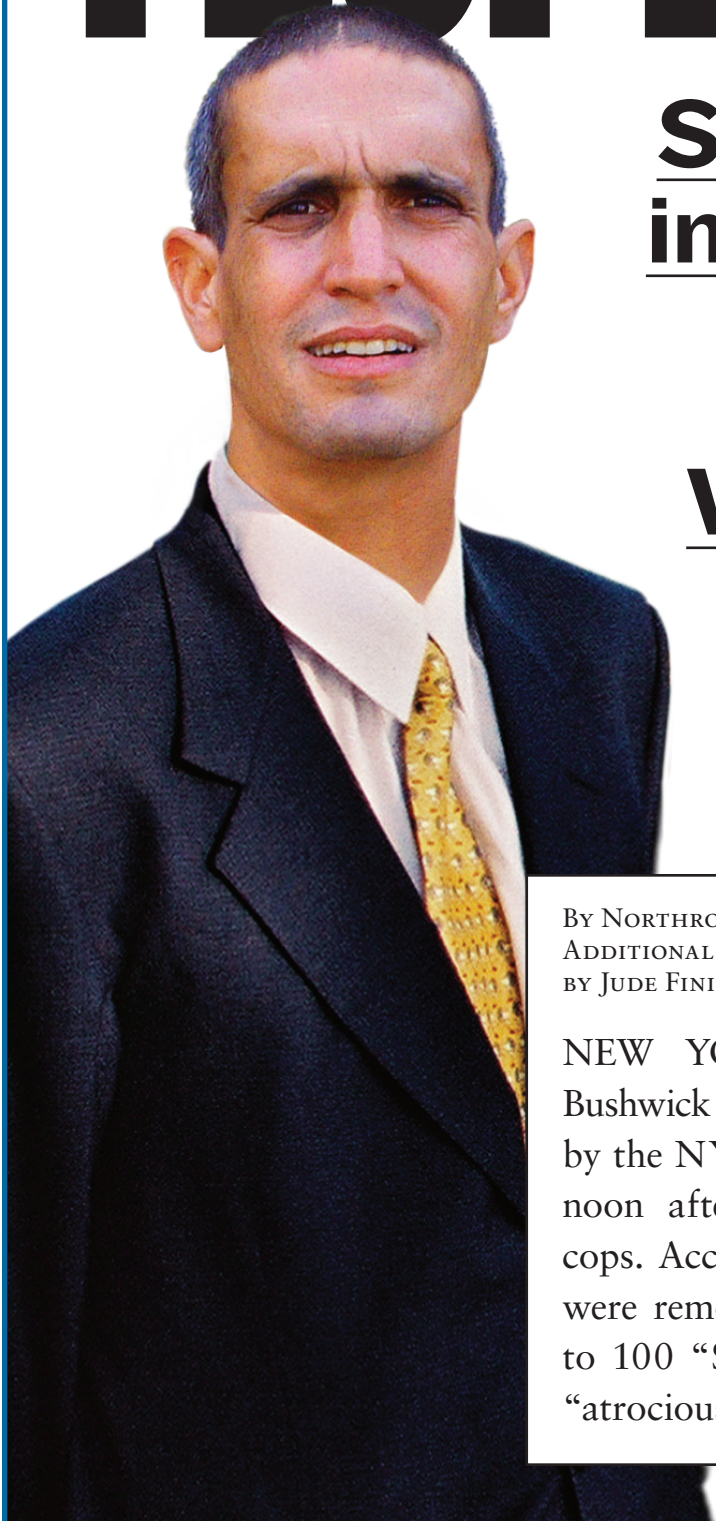


YESPLOITATION!

Sicko Yes Men in Kiddie Labor Scandal!

Will Disgrace Taint Film Premiere?

SEE BACK PAGE



BY NORTROP GOODY
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH
BY JUDE FINISTERRA

NEW YORK, NY—A fetid Bushwick sweatshop was raided by the NYPD yesterday afternoon after a disgruntled seamstress sang to the cops. According to our tipster, at least seven minors were removed from the sewing workshop where up to 100 “SurvivaBall” suits were being built under “atrocious” conditions. *continued on page 2*



SEE THE SHOCKING VIDEO HERE:
youtube.com/watch?v=CSvbjCfPOOE



HOW SWEATSHOPS THRIVE IN HIPSTER BROOKLYN, P47



INSIDE THEIR TWISTED MINDS, P62



CAN THE SURVIVABALL PROTECT THEM FROM THIS NEW OUTRAGE? P99

“I LOVE CHILDREN!” SAYS KIDDIE-LABOR KINGPIN

Continued from page 1

Surviva-what? That's what we asked. The building, on a mostly industrial block in Bushwick, had apparently been under surveillance for weeks, ever since “Yes” wackjob Andy Bichlbaum tried to storm the United Nations during the U.N. Climate Summit Sept. 22. The NYPD threw him in the Tombs for a day and a half.... Too bad they didn't throw away the key.

Bichlbaum was at a loss for words when we asked him how liberal, Nazi pinkos like “The Yes Men” could defend running a ramshackle piecework palace to crank out an expensive line of “couture for climate calamity.”

“I really had no idea things had gotten out of control. I love children!” said Bichlbaum, whom we found dining on baby



octopus at the exclusive Nobu restaurant in Tribeca.

The perp claimed he'd subcontracted the SurvivaBall job to a group calling itself “The House of Yes,” which appears to be a motley collective of renegade seamstresses, acrobats, biker terrorists, former Obama campaign workers and other Brooklyn riffraff.

“They assured me they were doing things right,” Bichlbaum stammered. “They said those kids were getting everything that they needed.”

In a shocking twist, further investigation revealed that many of the workers, few of whom spoke English or appeared to have valid paperwork, were smuggled into the country by ACORN as part of a plan to add more illegal voters on to the rolls in time for the 2012 elections.

We reached “Yes Man” Mike Bonanno at his villa in the Scottish countryside, but the prankster showed no remorse. “Look, we have a film to promote. Tickets don't sell themselves, and an army of corporate survival suits don't sew themselves either. If it takes importing kids from Vanuatu to get bums in seats, so be it.”

“Hell, we're doing them a favor,” Bonanno continued. “Their poor excuse for an island is disappearing under water, but these kids are gonna be on Oprah next week. That's America for you.”

Charges are pending, but we say No Way Jose to the Yes Mendicants, and we hope you do too. Join us for a boycott of their new sicko doco, which screens at the Film Forum theater on West Houston Street from October 7 - 20.

Watch the shocking video here: youtube.com/watch?v=CSubjCfPOOE

THE YES MEN

FIX THE WORLD

GONZO SCREENING EVENTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

8pm Screening followed by “Hijinx” **Premiere Party** at Delancey Lounge (@ Houston & Clinton in LES)! Legendary downtown Event Producer Earl Dax brings Justin Bond, Penny Arcade, The Yes Men and many others together to celebrate queers, gender benders, muckrakers, pranksters, culture jammers, activists, independent media makers, and... people!

www.earldax.com/HIJINX.html

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

4:30pm Screening: Join the **Raging Grannies**, **Granny Peace Brigade**, and **Gray Panthers** at this Senior Rabble Rousing Film Extravaganza Experience.

8pm Screening: **Reverend Billy** sanctifies a Survivaball, exorcises the spirit of Milton Friedman, and... well, we can't tell you. It's a special surprise that will leave you gasping for MORE!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

8pm and 10pm Screenings followed by talk-back and Q&A between the Yes Men and organizers from **Bhopal Campaign USA**.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11

6:15 Screening. Join innovative human rights organization **Witness** and the Yes Men for screening and post-screening conversation nearby on video activism.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12

8pm Screening. Join staff and friends of **Creative Time**, for a post-screening Q&A with the Yes Men.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

8pm Screening followed by Q&A with the Yes Men and Vince Warren, Executive Director of the **Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR)**.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

8pm Screening followed by **CODEPINK** ladies, including Dana just back from Afghanistan. Drinks afterwards!

For Full Film Action Factory Event Schedule: www.theyesmen.org/FilmForum

FILM FORUM W. HOUSTON STREET (WEST OF 6TH AVENUE)
212.727.8110 • WWW.FILMFORUM.ORG

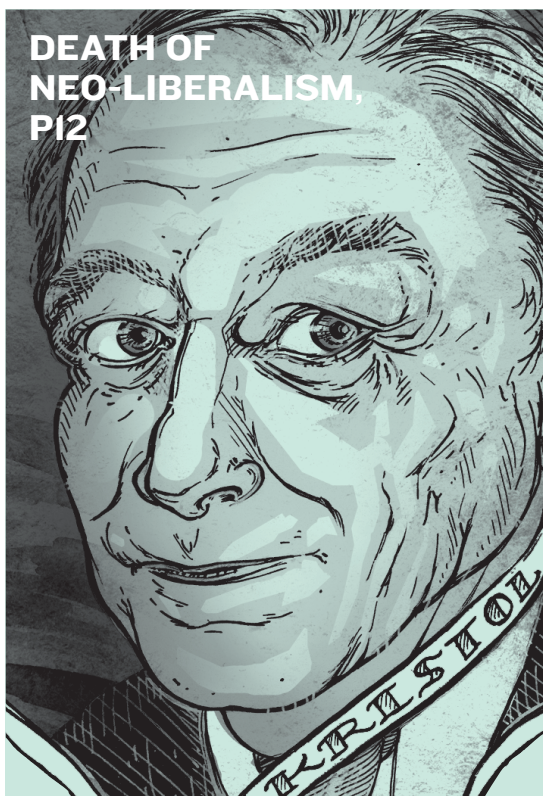
Labor Pains

IN AN ECONOMIC RECESSION,
WHERE IS THE LABOR MOVEMENT?

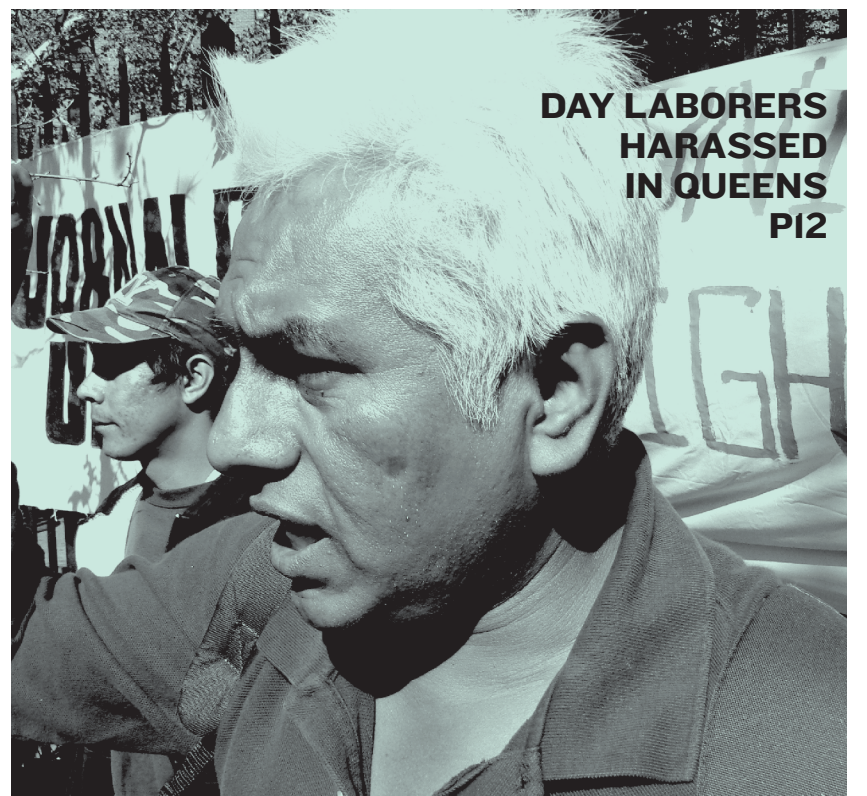
COVERAGE BEGINS P8



COUNTDOWN
TO COPENHAGEN,
P10



DEATH OF
NEO-LIBERALISM,
P12



DAY LABORERS
HARASSED
IN QUEENS
P12



THE INDEPENDENT



THE INDEPENDENT
P.O. BOX 1417
NEW YORK, NY 10276

PHONE: 212-221-0521

GENERAL INQUIRIES AND SUBMISSIONS:
contact@indypendent.org

READER COMMENTS:
letters@indypendent.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS:
indypendent.org

DONATE ONLINE:
indypendent.org/donate

NEWS TIPS:
news@indypendent.org

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION:
Arun Gupta: ak Gupta@indypendent.org

GENERAL COORDINATORS:
Jessica Lee, Elizabeth Hendersen

ILLUSTRATIONS COORDINATOR:
Frank Reynoso: freynoso@indypendent.org

DESIGNERS:
Ryan Dunsmuir, Anna Gold

INDYKIDS: indykids@indymedia.org

INDYVIDEO: awolf@indypendent.org

PUBLISH YOUR NEWS: nyc.indymedia.org

The Independent is a New York-based free newspaper published 17 times a year on Fridays to our print and online readership of more than 100,000. The newspaper is a labor of love by a network of volunteers who do all of the reporting, writing, photography, illustration, editing, designing, distribution, fundraising and website management. Since 2000, more than 600 citizen journalists, artists and media activists have contributed their energy to this project. Winner of dozens of New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Independent* is dedicated to empowering people to create a true alternative to the corporate press by encouraging people to produce their own media. *The Independent* is funded by subscriptions, donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising from organizations with similar missions. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of ordinary people locally and globally. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

The Independent is the newspaper project of the New York City Independent Media Center, which is affiliated with the global Indymedia movement (indymedia.org), an international network that is dedicated to fostering grassroots media production. NYC IMC sponsors three other volunteer projects: the children's newspaper *IndyKids*, the *IndyVideo* news team and the NYC IMC open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org).

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTORS:

Sam Alcock, Steven Arnerich, Eleanor Bader, Mark Bailey, Gino Barzizza, Bennett Baumer, Mike Burke, José Carmona, John Cheng, Joel Cook, Kenneth Crab, Ellen Davidson, Carlos Davalos, Soozzy Duncan, Seth Fisher, Sophie Forbes, Leo Garcia, Samantha Gorelick, Mary Heglar, Alex Kane, Ruth Kelton, Daisy Lidz, Tom Marczewski, Ana Nogueira, Jaisal Noor, Nicholas Powers, Katrin Redfern, Ramor Ryan, Jacob Scheier, Ann Schneider, Sarah Secunda, Jewell Stewart, John Tarleton, Jimmy Tobias, Danny Valdes, S.M. Vidaurri, Eric Volpe, Steven Wishnia and Amy Wolf.

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community calendar

PLEASE SEND EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS TO INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

PLEASE EMAIL EVENTS TO INDYEVENTS@GMAIL.COM.

TUE OCT 13

7:30pm • \$6/\$10/\$15 sliding scale
DISCUSSION: "MORE PROFITS, MORE HUNGER: NEOLIBERALISM & THE CORPORATE CONTROL OF FOOD: LESSONS FROM INDIA & THE US" U.S. agribusiness corporations have played a huge role in shaping policies that have exacerbated hunger and poverty and fueled a global fuel crisis. Brecht Forum, 451 West St (btwn Bank & Bethune) 212-242-4201 brechtforum.org/node/3115

WED OCT 14

8pm • \$6
FILM/DISCUSSION: *YES MEN! FIX THE WORLD*. Exposing corporate greed and destruction from India to New York City, *The Yes Men Fix The World* through satire and gonzo journalism. Discussion follows with Mike and Andy, the Yes Men themselves. Film Forum, 209 W Houston St Filmforum.org • 212-727-8110

7pm • Free

WORKSHOP: ZINES AND BEYOND. An evening of DIY publishing with people experienced in zines, comics, radical book publishing and indie social networking sites. ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St abcnorio.org • 212-254-3697

THU OCT 15

4:30pm-6pm
ACTION!: EIGHT YEARS OF THE WAR ON TERROR. Tell the Obama administration that enough is enough: We want our troops home now! Brooklyn Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon St (btwn Court and Boerum Sts) 718-624-5921 • brooklynforpeace.org

7:30pm • Free

EVENT: SINGLE PAYER ACTIVISM IN OBAMA'S FIRST YEAR. Healthcare professionals will present the ongoing fight for national and state single-payer healthcare. Beth Israel Medical Center, Phillips

Ambulatory Care Center, Second Floor Auditorium, 10 Union Square E healthcare-now.org

12pm-6pm • Free

EVENT: UNION SQUARE THEATRE. Union Square Free Night of Theater Celebration will have a wide-range of art installations, speakers and performances. Union Square Park freenightoftheater.net

7:30pm • Donations accepted

DEBATE: CAPITALIST'S POWER IN AGE OF OBAMA. Debate between Tom Hayden, legendary 1960s Students for a Democratic Society activist; Stanley Aronowitz, with Progressives for Obama and author; and Cindy Milstein, anarchist organizer, writer and popular educator. Presented by Left Forum. The Community Church of New York, 40 E 35th St 212-817-2002 • leftforum.org

FRI OCT 16

6:30pm • \$15-\$20 Sugg
EVENT: THE CAMPAIGN TO END THE DEATH PENALTY'S 2ND ANNUAL HOUSE PARTY FOR ABOLITION. Join the Harlem chapter of the CEDP in celebrating their achievements and supporting the struggle against the death penalty. RSVP required. Food & beer/wine included. 145 W 122nd St 718-964-7875 • nyc@nodeathpenalty.org

SAT OCT 17

11am • Free
PRESS CONFERENCE: PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR THE EAST RIVER WATERFRONT. O.U.R. Waterfront Coalition, organized by activists in the Lower East Side and Chinatown, has a better vision for the waterfront than New York City's Economic Development Corporation. Courtyard btwn 265 and 275 Cherry Sts. Rain Location: 82 Rutgers Slip, 2nd Fl 646-459-3010 • urbanjustice.org

7pm • \$5 Sugg

READING: "ONCE YOU GO BACK." Author Douglas A. Martin reads selec-

OCTOBER



SAT OCT 24

BOOK RELEASE PARTY: 5 NEW GRAFFITI BOOKS. • Revolution Books

tions from his novel about the tension of a working class household transplanted to the American South and the curious nature of adolescent sexuality in the midst of family violence. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

SUN OCT 18

8pm • \$10 (21+)
EVENT: BROOKLYN GET RADICAL. Host Brooklyn For Peace celebrates 25 years of community activism for peace and justice in Brooklyn. Public Assembly, 70 North 6th St, Bklyn 718-624-5921 • brooklynforpeace.org

7pm • \$5 Sugg

DISCUSSION: "TAKING OURSELVES SERIOUSLY." Anarchism has become a widely espoused organizational practice in radical U.S. communities, but many anarchists seem to revel in the margins and are prone to dismissing their own potential. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St 212-777-6028 • bluestockings.com

THU OCT 22

8pm • \$12 adv/\$15 door
EVENT: HOMELAND HIP HOP II. Support

and celebrate the partnership between Native and Palestinian artists and organizers. Public Assembly, 70 N 6th St, Williamsburg publicassemblynyc.com

SAT OCT 24

9:15am - 6:30pm • \$25 Sugg.
CONFERENCE: ECONOMIC CRISIS: RADICAL ANALYSIS & RADICAL RESPONSES WITH CUNY PROFESSOR DAVID HARVEY, NYC COUNCILPERSON CHARLES BARRON AND MANY OTHERS. 15+ workshops. Sponsored by Union for Radical Political Economics. St. Francis College, 180 Remsen St, Bklyn 413-577-0806 • urpe.org

6pm-9pm • Free

BOOK RELEASE PARTY: 5 NEW GRAFFITI BOOKS. Refreshments and special guests. Revolution Books, 146 W 26th St 212-691-3345 • revolutionbooksnyc.org

8pm-10:30pm • \$15 Sugg

LOCAL MUSIC: PEOPLES' VOICE CAFE. Music in celebration of Augusto Boal's Life. Community Church of NY Unitarian Universalist. 212-787-3903 • peoplesvoice.cafe.org

READER COMMENTS

Post your own comments online at indypendent.org at the end of each article or email letters@indypendent.org.

HIGHLIGHTING THE PROBLEM

Responses to "A Forgotten Youth: New York City Queer Homeless Youth Survive at the Bottom of the Barrel," Sept. 18:

The coverage and representation of Sylvia's Place is distorted, poorly researched and frankly, unforgivably fallacious and vitriolic. This is a shameful embarrassment to objective journalism that aspires to veracity and a raise in consciousness of one of the country's most vulnerable populations. Your only redemption is to remove your name or find the courage to contact the program director or myself.

—JAMES VINING,
SYLVIA'S PLACE SOCIAL WORKER

Mr. Vining: I personally think that you would be glad to receive any PR for your program. I seriously doubt that you get allot of press if any. It would be my hope/wish that when readers peruse the article, they would see just the opposite of what you de-

scribed and realize that there is a huge problem in our community nationwide. When their heart is touched and a tear comes to their eye, (as it did with myself), then hopefully they will find out more about the places mentioned and perhaps find some way to help. I in no way want to diminish your message or voice. I know having worked in non-profits, that it is a continuous uphill battle and I thank god that they are people like you on the frontlines, helping in anyway possible.

—GAY ACTIVIST

Tears around downing my face. I have no words in me right now.

—MICHAEL

I think its an important issue, and the journalist did do some real on the ground investigation which is commendable. However, I agree that staff should have been interviewed at Sylvia's Place, or residents with varied perspectives. The picture painted was quite bad and might deter potential queer youth from going there and using its services. I agree with Mr. Vining that the reporter should have given more details about the breadth of the services available. Its easy to tear on poor nonprofits and call them crap-

py and dysfunctional, especially next to the well funded ones. Its more difficult to give a well rounded look at these institutions.

—AMY

I used to volunteer at Sylvia's Place. The work they do is totally needed, but their space is, frankly, dangerous. Our community needs to help these kids so they don't have to sleep in basement rooms or on the streets.

—FORMER VOLUNTEER

continued on page 7



PHOTO:
MARK BAILEY

WORKING FOR CHANGE

INTERVIEW WITH DAN CANTOR,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
THE WORKING FAMILIES PARTY

BY ELIZABETH HENDERSON AND JOHN TARLETON

Founded in 1998 as a coalition of labor and community groups, the Working Families Party has combined old-fashioned, grassroots organizing and strategic alliances with the Democrats to become an increasingly powerful force for progressive politics in New York City. *The Independent* recently spoke with the party's Executive Director, Dan Cantor, about the WFP's recent victories in the run-off elections for city comptroller and public advocate, mobilizing voters and taking on Bloomberg in November.



STAYING ON TRACK: Dan Cantor (third from left) speaks at a rally to stop the MTA fare hike. PHOTO: DAN LEVITAN

ELIZABETH HENDERSON: *Why has the WFP decided to take on Bloomberg this year when many democrats have given up the hope of defeating him?*

DAN CANTOR: Eight years is enough, and we think it's time to have someone at City Hall whose instinct will be to ask a different question than the mayor asks. We need to be asking: How does this affect average middle class and working class people? Bloomberg has a lot of resources, but at some point that becomes sort of irrelevant and I think that what happened with term limits is still out there. There's also the economic crisis. This is a serious, slow motion crisis that we really need to address as a society, and so we need leaders who will face that crisis squarely and work with community organizations to solve it.

EH: *Why is it important to have a third party that has a strong base in labor unions?*

DC: We see our role as speaking truth to power and saying things that the major parties either can't or won't say. We didn't invent the idea that it would be good if labor and its allies had a political party of their own. It's a very old idea and it's very common in countries that are more advanced than the United States, such as in Latin America and Eu-

rope. In the United States, most of the action has typically been just inside the Democratic Party. In New York, we have the Working Families Party, which, because of the unusual New York voting rules, can be both independent but also relevant to the major parties. We're a young party, but we've come a pretty decent way in a short amount of time.

EH: *What will be WFP's main policy goals here in NYC over the next four years? How will you translate your electoral successes into tangible victories for working people, especially if Mayor Bloomberg wins a third term?*

DC: The first issue that we're pushing right away is paid sick days. We also think the whole issue of responsible development, or equitable development, is a crucial one. That gets at a whole set of issues around housing and jobs and neighborhoods and what makes New York so great. We need development policies that create and maintain good jobs and affordable housing.

EH: *Many radicals have described the Democratic Party as the "graveyard of social movements." How do you get the Democrats to work for the people who vote them into office instead of their corporate funders?*

DC: You have to have power, you have to organize and you have to be incredibly, tremendously diligent. You have to stay on them and provide support when they do the right thing. We hope that by providing support and getting people into office, we'll then have credibility when we say we expect them to actually take on the peoples' business once they're in office. And also, we're not naive. There are lots of counter-veiling forces, and we don't expect elected officials to be perfect. Perfection is not a credible goal. If we organize well we will win much more than we lose.

EH: *How would you respond to critics who say that the WFP is compromised by its relationship to the Democratic Party?*

DC: I don't think that's a fair critique. We don't expect democrats to be perfect — we just want them to be better. It's not enough to publish manifestos. You actually have to be willing to knock on doors and make phone calls and talk to people who don't agree with you. And that's how you build power with and for working people, and that's what we hope to accomplish.

For more information and to get involved, visit workingfamiliesparty.org.

Ridge gets schooled

BY ELIZABETH HENDERSON

On the morning of Sept. 24, a small group of New School students disrupted a talk by former Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. During the Q&A portion of the event, New School president Bob Kerrey was interrupted by the ringing of students' cell phones. New School anarchists and other radical activists then announced their opposition to the event, citing Ridge's involvement in Bush's "war on terror," including its legacy of torturing and abusing detainees.

The disruption resulted in Kerrey closing down the event.

Student, and community, response to the demonstration has been mixed, with some viewing the protest as childish, while others viewed the very fact that Ridge was invited by Milano and The Center for New York City Affairs to talk as offensive.

"I was shocked that someone from the New School invited Ridge to speak," said Atlee McFellin, a member of the New School Radical Student Union, the student group that orchestrated a less-than-two-day occupation of the Graduate Center last school year. Their demands included the resignation of Bob Kerrey and James Murtha, the school's Executive Vice President, more student space and better benefits for school employees.

"In terms of building a larger movement though, I don't really see much point in spending time organizing disruptions like that. It is important that Kerrey doesn't ruin the direction and historical mission of the university, which he has done to a significant degree, but in the grand scheme of movement building and social change I don't really see it as having a lasting impact," McFellin said.



CODE RED AT NEW SCHOOL: Student protests shut down Sept. 24 talk by former Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge sponsored by Milano and The Center for New York City Affairs at the New School. PHOTO: NEWSCHOOL.EDU

It's No Walk in the Park for Day Laborers

By Karen Yi and Jaisal Noor

Nearly every day along Broadway and 69th Street in Jackson Heights, Queens, day laborers — mostly undocumented immigrants — line up and wait for someone to come by and offer them a job. On Tuesday mornings, jobs or no jobs, day laborers gather nearby in Hart Park to chow down on a free hot meal provided by St. John's Bread and Life program.

But on Tuesday, Sept. 22, the day laborers got a different type of treat.

According to witnesses, their meal was interrupted when the New York Police Department arrived to sweep the more than 80 laborers out of the local public park.

Roberto Meneses, president of Day Laborers United, said the police kicked them out, claiming only adults with children were allowed inside. He believes the police were responding to complaints by local residents, concerned about the growing number of day laborers in and near the park.

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation signs posted on the fences read, "Playground Rules Prohibit: Adults Except in the Company of Children." But according to Kathy Byrnes, director of the mobile soup kitchen program, the signs are misleading.

There are "distinct areas" designated for adult use, like the basketball courts, she said. "What needs to take place now is the clarification of this playground ... in a language that people read." The signs are in English while most of the day laborers only speak and read Spanish.

Park employees beg to differ. Employees

at Hart Park, questioned about the rules, pointed to the sign and said, "Read the sign. This park is only for adults with children."

Several day laborers said that park employees routinely force them out of the park, while the police often issue them tickets for "using the benches" and for "public disturbance," claiming the park is off-limits to adults not accompanying children.

According to other sources, park employees, as well as the NYPD, seem to be enforcing their own interpretation of the rule.

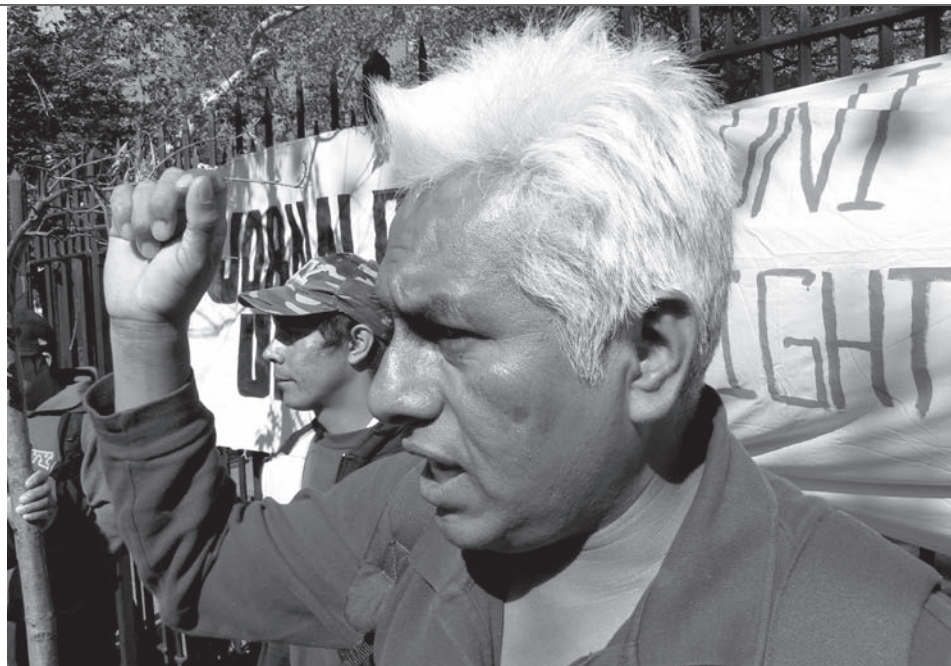
Official park regulations, according to Phil Abramson, a spokesperson for the City Department of Parks and Recreation, state that adults without children are allowed inside Hart Park in all areas except those clearly designated playground by colored pavement around playground equipment.

"The park is open to anyone," Abramson said, "the restrooms are open to anyone [as are] the benches." He said that this is the first time he has heard of confusion over the posted signs.

However, this debate over park access has been longstanding.

Back in 2004, New York State Assemblyman Jose Peralta (D-Queens) worked to mitigate similar tensions resulting from the presence of day laborers. According to his Chief of Staff Yonel Letellier, Peralta helped broker an agreement between the Parks and Recreation department and the advocacy group Day Laborers Project to allow the use of benches and bathrooms by the laborers.

Day laborers "should have access by law,"



PUSHING BACK: Day Laborers United President Roberto Meneses rallies workers and supporters outside Hart Playground Sept. 29, a week after NYPD swept out 80 day laborers from the park. PHOTO: JAISAL NOOR

to the park, said Letellier, "but sometimes things don't work the way they should."

The NYPD did not respond to repeated interview requests by *The Independent*.

Five years later, and 21 months into the economic recession, the dramatic increase in day laborers seems to be fueling local tensions, as more people are pouring into the streets soliciting work and showing up for the Tuesday meal.

Byrnes says she's seen a "40 to 45 percent increase" in the number of day laborers requesting food over last year. "That alone tells me about the economic need and how many people are still around without a job at this hour in the morning," she said.

As the New York City unemployment rate hits double digits — 10.3 percent for the month of September — Meneses says there

are more than 600 laborers around the Jackson Heights streets on any given day.

On Sept. 29, more than 40 day laborers and immigrant rights activists held a protest in response to the police action. They rallied for the right of day laborers to solicit work in the area and for the continuation of the Bread and Life program inside the park.

Felix Cruz Ortiz, coordinator of Day Laborers United said, "They've been giving us tickets and arresting us for no reason. What they're doing is an injustice."

Letellier said he's working to address these ongoing concerns. "Right now we are in the middle of coordinating a meeting to explain to [the day laborers] what's going on, to let them bring forth their tickets, and let the legal experts find out if their human rights have been violated," he said.

PICTURE THE HOMELESS

10TH ANNIVERSARY GALA AND FUNDRAISER

WE ARE PLEASED TO HONOR:



Brenda Stokely



Jean Rice

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- Iris Morales, Educator, Activist and Filmmaker
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- Dr. William F. Pepper, International Human Rights Attorney and author
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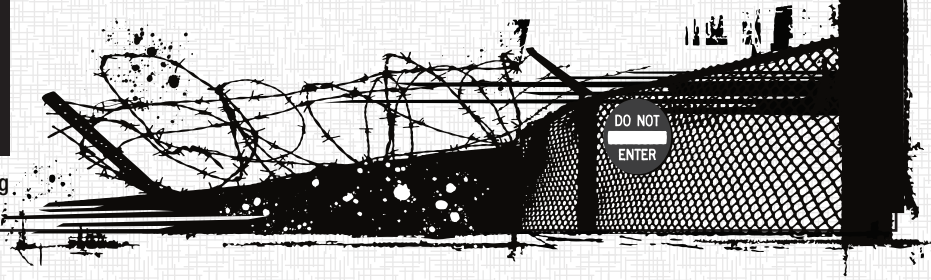
DATE & TIME
November 17, 2009, 7:00 PM

PLACE
Judson Memorial Church
(corner of Washington Square So. and Thompson Street)

Send a congratulatory message to Brenda, Jean or Picture the Homeless (PTH) in our commemorative journal. For prices and details please contact PTH at Gala@picturethehomeless.org or call 212-314-6423.

Purchase tickets online please visit : www.brownpapertickets.com/event/80772

2427 Morris Avenue, 2nd Floor, Bronx, NY 10468 | 646-314-6423 | www.picturethehomeless.org



Continued from page 4

Mr. Vining: With all due respect, I think you are missing the point of this article. This article is to spotlight the plight of homeless LGBT, and it does so brilliantly. I just happened to pick up a copy of this paper in the lobby of the Kraine Theater, and largely due to this particular article, it is now my new favorite publication. I was literally fighting back sobs on the subway. I was moved to take action! Had this article focused on the success stories, I wouldn't be as incited as I am. I wouldn't think of applying to volunteer at your shelter, or another like it. I wouldn't be thinking and planning about how to raise money for your organization. I would just be thinking, "Well done. I guess that is that. No more work to be done there."

—ALAINA

ON THE FRONTLINES

Response to "Students Armed with New Anti-Recruiter Regulations," Sept. 18:

Good to see this is finally changing. Recruiter pushiness was really starting to be a problem in the early 1990s when I left high school. Recruiters would constantly call and some would even make personal visits to my home, despite my "There's nothing you can do to make me even consider you" attitude. It took breaking an ankle and having a dozen screws put in it to make them stop.

—GREG _ G

PRIVATE MONEY HEALTHY

Response to "The Myths of Canada Care," Sept. 18:

It is only with private clinics opening up that Canada's healthcare system has begun to deteriorate.

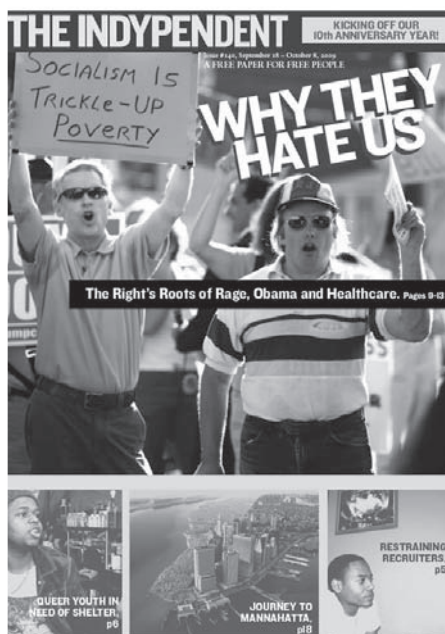
For years we have received excellent care, and most Canadians (87.5 percent) are still very satisfied with our system. With neoconservatives and neoliberals getting in to power because of economic fears, we are seeing a decrease in funding for hospitals. Money is going for roads and general support of corporate projects. Citizens are seeing the disastrous results of privatization. Provincially they are fighting back.

—MYNA LEE JOHNSTONE

ON THE HIGHLINE

Response to "Rainforest Rescue," Sept. 18:

While it is stupid and tragic for New York City to be using tropical hardwoods in public constructions (in addition to the ecological arguments made here, what of the cost to the taxpayers?), it is important not to misstate the case. The market for tropical hardwood is by no means the leading factor in deforestation of the Amazon



or other rainforests. The leading factor is cattle ranching, which has been responsible for nearly 40 percent of deforestation in the Amazon since the 1970s. Settlement and subsistence farming and growing soy — most of it feed for American steers — are next on the list. Some estimates put commercial logging's contribution to deforestation as low as 3 percent. It is true that logging is often the first commercial activity on a given tract of forest. So, surely it is important to boycott the use of woods like îpe because it can be an important gateway to educate people about deforestation.

—ROWAN MOORE GERETY

NO HOPE IN ALBANY

Response to "Tenant's Voice," Sept. 18:

The Democratic-held New York State Senate, like Obama, will in the end disappoint tenants rights advocates. There is just too much real estate money at stake. Democrats get elected with the people, but it is an electoral strategy, not a governing strategy. I don't call what goes on in the state Senate "governing."

—WILL

SOCIAL MELODIES

Response to "Homemade Culture: Peoples' Voice Cafe Celebrates 30th Anniversary," Sept. 18:

Hooray for the Peoples' Voice Cafe! When someone says to you that the days of great songwriters and affordable evenings in New York City are a thing of the past, tell them that great music at affordable prices have been around for 30 years and continue to happen. After all is sung and done, it is the community of volunteers and many spirits that makes the Peoples' Voice Cafe so special. Join us!

—JOEL LANDY

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SAT, OCT 17 • 9am-5pm
2-DAY WORKSHOP: Education for Liberation
Led by Carmelina Carteia, Kate Cavanagh, Sally Hyppolite, Eperanza Martell, Onaji Muid, Julie Novas, Javier Salamanca and others.

WED, OCT 28 • 7:30pm
FILM & DISCUSSION: The Indigenous and Popular Minga - One Year Later
Led by Rafael Coicué & Gerardo Renique.

THURS, NOV 5 • 7:30pm
BOOK PARTY : Emergent Communities & Elite Panic
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Fighting for the Union Label

BY ABBY SCHER

Rite Aid warehouse worker Angel Warner stood before a crowd of dock workers, cookie makers and other unionists gathered outside the corporation's annual shareholder meeting on June 25 in New York City. Warner had traveled from the Mojave Desert city of Lancaster, Calif., where she works at a sprawling million-square-foot warehouse that distributes merchandise to hundreds of Rite Aid stores throughout Southern California.

She was in Times Square to tell the union rally that Congress needed to pass the first major labor law reform since the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 barred the sit-down strikes that built the labor movement during the 1930s.

"If the Employee Free Choice Act were enacted right now," Warner said, "we

wouldn't have had to wait two years before we even got our vote. We wouldn't have lost all the workers that we've lost." She explained that Rite Aid "would have gotten more than just a slap on the hand" when it was charged with 49 labor law violations for firing pro-union workers. "They had to hire two workers back, but all they had to do was pay them back pay minus unemployment."

Three years earlier, in March 2006, some of the 700 workers at the Lancaster warehouse contacted the International Longshore and Warehouse Union about organizing a union. Among their chief complaints were abusive management practices and harsh conditions in the distribution center, which Warner described as "burning hot in the summer and so cold in the winter that it's like working in an icebox."

Union supporters say managers re-

sponded to the organizing drive with a harassment campaign that included weekly anti-union meetings in which workers were warned of high dues and told unions resulted in plant shutdowns. Warner told a reporter for *The Washington Monthly* that since June 2006 more than 100 union supporters have been fired at the warehouse, while about 10 non-supporters were let go during the same period.

Nonetheless, in March 2008, 52 percent of workers voted in favor of unionizing. As of this October, however, workers are still without a contract. They claim management is using work rules to punish workers and is stalling on a contract because current labor law allows a company to delay endlessly without penalty.

The case of the Lancaster workers is hardly unique. According to the AFL-CIO, "Even after workers successfully form unions, 44 percent of the time they can't get a first contract."

STACKED DECK

Angel Warner and her colleagues say the rules are set against them. That's why passing the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) is labor's number one goal. Today, only 12 percent of U.S. workers are in unions, and just 7 percent in the private sector, down from a peak of 35 percent in the 1950s.

Mild penalties mean employers freely use union-busting tactics. They can fire union supporters and even if workers prove the firings were illegal, the company only has to re-hire them with back pay, minus what they earned elsewhere. Management can legally force workers to attend anti-union meetings and if it engages in unlawful intimidation, at worst it will have to post notices in the workplace promising not to commit such infractions again.

If an organizing drive gets 30 percent of workers to sign cards authorizing a union to represent them, allowing for an election,

management can delay the election long enough to stop the organizing altogether. If workers win a unionization vote, management can bargain indefinitely as long as it does so in "good faith."

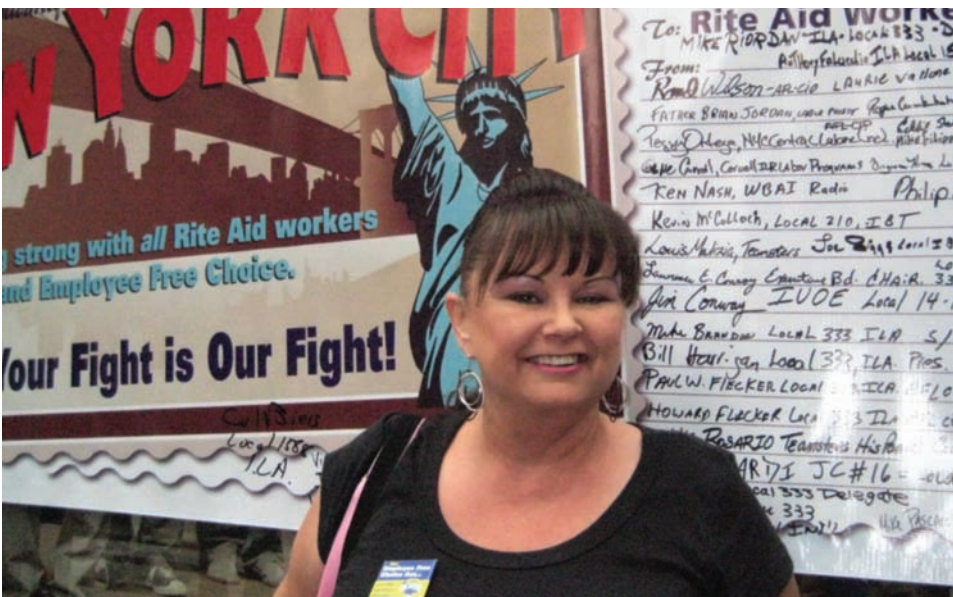
Despite the urgent need for labor law reform and the fact that labor reportedly pumped \$350 million into the Democrat Party in 2008, enabling its sweeping electoral victory, the business lobby has pressured congressional Democrats to back away from EFCA one by one, like Blanche Lincoln of Wal-Mart's home state of Arkansas. Senators like Lincoln have bargained away what was once the heart of EFCA, called "card check."

Card check would let workers form a union if a majority sign cards saying they want one. This would take away employers' ability to ignore the cards and demand secret ballot elections. Many government workers currently organize through card check. The Hawaiian legislature just gave this option to farm workers and others in the state not covered by federal labor law.

MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN

But a coalition of conservative anti-union organizations including the National Right to Work Committee and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — the nation's largest lobby — has successfully painted card check as an anti-democratic measure that would nullify workers' right to a secret ballot. Backing them up is PR impresario Richard Berman, famous for defending Big Tobacco, who set up misinformation mills with names like Center for Union Facts and Employee Freedom Action Committee.

A U.S. Chamber of Commerce television ad charged, "Congress wants to strip away the secret ballot. The private vote is so important to our basic fundamental rights. A bureaucrat in Washington could never tell any private enterprise how to run their business. This is going to devastate medium-sized and small businesses."



STANDING UP: Angel Warner traveled to New York last June to speak in favor of labor law reform. She and her co-workers voted to unionize their Rite Aid warehouse in California in March 2008 and are still waiting for a contract 19 months later. PHOTO: RAND WILSON

Stella Workers Hoping for a Miracle

BY JOHN TARLETON

On Oct. 2, a crowd of 200 people gathered outside the gates of the Stella D'oro Biscuit Co. at 237th Street and Broadway in the Bronx. Stella D'oro workers on the verge of losing their jobs mingled with supporters as a parade of speakers took to the microphone.

"How many birthday parties or family gatherings have we sat around eating Stella D'oro cookies?" Beth Borzone, a high school social studies teacher from Long Island, shouted as the 1 train rumbled overhead. "They [the workers] have brought joy to many, many people for decades. And now their jobs are threatened because of some greedy venture capitalists in Connecticut who produce nothing of value. They strip other businesses so they can sell them for a profit, benefiting who? A small few."

The rally was part of a last-ditch campaign to save the iconic bakery, site of a bitter, 11-month strike between the 136-member unionized workforce and Brynwood Partners, the private equity firm that bought Stella D'oro in 2006.

Management demands for steep cuts in wages and benefits drove the workers to strike in August 2008. A month later the

U.S. financial crisis erupted, and Stella D'oro workers emerged as symbols of working-class defiance during a time of recession.

They returned to their jobs this July following a favorable ruling from the National Labor Relations Board only to watch Brynwood sell the company to snack-food giant Lance, which promptly announced it would close the factory on Oct. 9 and move production to Ohio.

Since the sale was announced, Stella D'oro workers have tried to pressure large institutional investors, including Goldman Sachs and various public-sector pension funds, to divest from Lance. On Sept. 25, 400 Stella supporters rallied outside Goldman Sachs headquarters in lower Manhattan and marched to City Hall. They demanded that the city seek a temporary restraining order to prevent the dismantling of the factory until the city recoups \$425,000 in tax abatements that Brynwood has received since it bought Stella D'oro.

To date, the Stella workers have not received a reply from the mayor or his finance commissioner, David Frankel, who was named to his current post in July following stints as a managing director at Morgan Stanley and head of global operations for the AIG Trading Group.

"He [Bloomberg] keeps preaching he

wants to create jobs for New York [yet] he keeps losing jobs in New York and he don't do nothing," said Stella D'oro shop steward Mike Filippou.

Louis Nikolaidis, an attorney for the union, said that Brynwood has \$15 million in outstanding liabilities to the Stella D'oro workers: \$1.5 million in severance pay, \$1.5

million in back pay from the strike plus \$12 million in pension and healthcare fund obligations.

"The union is going to fight to the end for everything its members are entitled to," Nikolaidis said. "I wouldn't put anything past [Brynwood] but their obligations are pretty clear."



STILL MARCHING: Stella D'oro workers and their supporters marched from Wall Street to City Hall on Sept. 25 demanding that the city block the departure of the Bronx bakery for Ohio. PHOTO: DAVE SANDERS

WORKERS BATTLE BIG BUSINESS FOR THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

Warner still supports card check even though the AFL-CIO leadership seems to have abandoned the idea. “The Employee Free Choice Act doesn’t take the right to a secret ballot vote away; it just puts that right in the employees’ hands instead of the employer.”

The labor federation continues to fight for another important provision of the Employee Free Choice Act that has a better chance of passage. The bill would push contract talks into binding arbitration after 120 days if talks and then mediation fail. This would apply only to first contracts of brand new unions.

The act would also toughen penalties for employer misconduct, such as allowing for fines of up to \$20,000 for each violation during an organizing campaign and tripling back pay damages for employees who are illegally discharged.

‘DRAGGING THEIR FEET’

Warner and her fellow unionists traveled to Rite Aid’s shareholder meeting in June to demand a contract. Warner said it’s “almost going into a year and a half since we won the vote and have been bargaining, and they’ve been dragging their feet, and they’re trying to decertify us. This would not have happened if after 90 days we did not have a contract, a mediator would have stepped in, and we would have gotten a contract by now.”

Just the threat of going into arbitration can help, says Josh Goldstein, spokesman for American Rights at Work, a union-supported group in Washington. He explains that arbitration is an option in many states, particularly in the public sector, and in those instances “80 percent of those negotiations come to a first contract without the use of arbitration. And just having that as an option helps to create bargaining between employers and employees.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups funded by big business fight back with huge pools of money — and misinformation.

The chamber’s resources are seemingly limitless. In a February report, the Center for Responsive Politics found it spent more than \$144 million trying to sway Congress during the 2007–2008 election cycle. Adding in other allied business groups, that figure tops \$215 million. That buys a lot of political support.

Despite its carefully cultivated “Main Street” image, the chamber is dominated by large corporations and opposes any centrist or progressive regulation that could threaten these companies’ short-term profits. Climate change, healthcare and labor law reforms are all targets.

Using front groups with names like “The Alliance to Save Main Street Jobs,” the Chamber wages a propaganda war to make unions seem un-American. It doesn’t just go after a policy. It goes after unions’ very ability to fight and have credibility with the public.

The National Right to Work Committee, which formed in the 1950s took the gloves off in its recent ad campaign against labor law reform, implying that union leader are thugs who will take away American’s freedom and that unions destroy the economy: “Millions of workers and small businesses will be forced under big labor control in the blink of an eye. And during these tough economic times, that’s something we literally can’t afford.”

Another piece of misinformation was generated by the Alliance to Save Main Street

Jobs. It released a study saying the Employee Free Choice Act would kill 600,000 jobs. The report, written by a woman with no credentials in this field of economics, was easily debunked by Center for American Progress and the Economic Policy Institute, but its message made waves.

The claim that big business has the interests of small businesses at heart has been a successful talking point for big business over the years. Home Depot, Bank of America and Koch Industries are some of the big corporations opposed to labor law reform. The Chamber of Commerce is by definition a coalition of businesses of all sizes, so it wraps its anti-union ads in the message that it is protecting small business.

New School Visiting Economist Rick Wolff points out the irony. “All statistics in economic history show [that] the greatest enemy of a small business is big business. That’s who



screws them, that’s who exploits them, that’s who wipes them out when it’s convenient because they have the resources to do it. In a competition between small and big business, big business wins, and small business loses.”

‘PROTECTING WORKERS FROM UNIONS’

NYU historian Kim Phillips-Fein, author of *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*, hears in today’s fight the echo of anti-union messaging going back to when the National Right to Work Committee started.

She says the organization took a new approach in the 1950s by “talking about the fight against unions in terms of rights ... translating what had previously been just a reactionary dialogue into something that sounded positive and forward looking. This group was going to come in and protect workers from unions.”

“The focus had always been on employers stopping people from joining,” says Phillips-Fein. The National Right to Work Committee “turned it around to say that unions are coercing people to join them.”

Today, adds Phillips-Fein, “We have employer groups saying unions are exercising this coercive power, they want these card check movements, they want to take away your right to a union election, and it’s really overlooking the whole framework in which it’s so difficult for workers to choose to have

a union. It’s really brushing that aside, and saying, ‘No, actually, the problem is that unions are undemocratic.’ So it’s the same kind of language.”

The weakness of unions makes Americans more inclined to believe anti-union messages. This in turn serves to further hinder union battles against misinformation, says Phillips-Fein. “I think many people feel as if they’re not part of any collective organization, they’re not part of a union, they’re not sure that they can actually challenge the power of their employer.”

Labor groups are fighting back. American Rights at Work showcases small-business owners who support unions and labor law reform. There’s a new pro-union small business association. And the community and labor coalition Jobs with Justice had local affiliates request meetings with local Chambers of Commerce asking them to repudiate the national

organization’s anti-union organizing.

Organizing Director Ricardo Valadez said the 25 Jobs with Justice coalitions in 23 states had mixed success. “Some have held meetings and have had fruitful discussions. Others were denied meetings and others were invited to a debate which was good, which was healthy.”

But a lot is at stake for big business — and its Republican allies. White men in unions were twice as likely to vote for Barack Obama as white men in general, who went for John McCain by 16 points. You don’t need donations from Wal-Mart or Home Depot to convince you to get on board if you are a Republican counting votes.

Nor do you want to give unions the ideological advantage in a downturn when people wonder, maybe for the first time, whether companies really have their best interests at heart and whether they as individuals really have the economic power to control their own lives.

Will pro-labor Democrats be able to summon the 60 votes to overcome an inevitable Republican filibuster? We may know as early as December.

Abby Scher is a sociologist and editorial director of the progressive think tank Political Research Associates.

Labor Needs to Bring the Street Heat

By JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

A few days after the AFL-CIO convention wrapped up in Pittsburgh last month, I had lunch with Mike Stout, a rank-and-file leader of the first order, a man who back in the 1980s was at the front of the United Steel Workers fight against US Steel’s mass shutdowns in Pennsylvania.

We were in Homestead, at a place called Mitchell’s Fish Market, which occupies the exact spot where all those years ago once sat the management office of the gargantuan Homestead steel works. The restaurant is about midway in a miles-long stretch that once held one of the greatest steel-producing operations in the country, the place that made the structural steel for the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center, the Verazano Narrows Bridge and the Golden Gate, and that was seized by FDR in 1942 to produce armor plating for World War II.

Mike recalled the phone banking and other political apparatuses that labor set up in Pennsylvania’s Allegheny County for last year’s election. It was very elaborate, very well funded and organized. It is what labor does extremely well.

Obama probably won Pennsylvania and Ohio because of that organization. There are a lot of old, white union people in both states, and as the now-president of the AFL-CIO Rich Trumka said from the podium, old white labor people supported Obama by more than 70 percent, as opposed to old white non-labor people, who supported McCain by almost the same margin.

You would think, Mike Stout said, that all that organization and proven expertise could be leveraged for favorable policy on key issues, yet today even progressive Democrats have complained to him and other supporters of single-payer healthcare legislation that they wished labor would organize something besides letter-writing campaigns and phone-ins to counteract the army of industry lobbyists who pound the halls of Congress every single day.

At the AFL-CIO convention there were long hushed moments when all the delegates were busy phoning their representatives, calling or texting Congress to push for labor law reform, to push for healthcare reform.

There were no appeals from the stage to take to the streets or even to clog congressional halls with bodies of workers. There were no demands or even apparent inclination to mobilize workers to march.

While the front page of the local papers carried pictures of tens of thousands of right-wingers massing in Washington, the proceedings in the hall were abstracted from any version of what the AFL used to call Street Heat.

“I wish they’d at least threaten to get militant,” Mike Stout said. “At least they could say, if you don’t do A, B and C you don’t get this political operation, you don’t get one cent; you get opposition. Organized labor still has a club, but if they don’t use it soon they’re going to be like the old-timers reminiscing about the old times in the back of a bar.”

The hope of using a club, defined as making labor’s case to the wider public,

COUNTDOWN to COPENHAGEN

BY JESSICA LEE & MIKE BURKE

CANADA — Shell Canada temporarily shut down its Albion tar sands oil mine in Alberta Sept. 16 after 25 Greenpeace activists chained themselves to giant earth-moving equipment for 30 hours on the eve of a meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Harper and President Barack Obama. Indigenous groups including the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation have sued Shell Canada to protect threatened traditional lands. The U.S.-based Indigenous Environmental Network joined a coalition of other groups to sue U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in an effort to block the construction of an oil pipeline that would carry crude oil from Alberta to Wisconsin.

NEW ZEALAND — Twelve Greenpeace activists secretly boarded a large shipping vessel outside the port of Tauranga on Sept. 16 and locked themselves to the ship's anchor chain and four cargo cranes to prevent the company, Fonterra, from unloading palm kernel animal feed. Indonesian and Malaysian rainforests are being cleared to make way for palm crops. "Fonterra's involvement in rainforest destruction and the massive climate impact this causes are criminal," said Jo McVeagh, an activist who locked herself to one of the cranes. The environmental

WEST VIRGINIA — The campaign to end mountaintop-removal mining continues to gather steam as four activists and a journalist were arrested Sept. 9 for blocking a road outside the regional headquarters of the coal company Massey Energy. In September, two Climate Ground Zero activists were arrested after staging a tree sit demonstration that temporarily halted work at a Massey mountaintop removal mine. Last June, NASA's top climate expert James Hansen was arrested in West Virginia during a mountaintop-removal mining protest.



group is also urging the country to curb its dairy farms, since cows are a top source of methane, a greenhouse gas.

THAILAND — People representing more than 100 indigenous communities worldwide rallied at the U.N. Climate Change Talks in Bangkok Sept. 28 to Oct. 9 to urge delegates to reject a provision in the proposed climate treaty that would make forests a commodity in a new global carbon market, and to recognize the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The groups are targeting the U.N.'s Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) and the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) programs that would allow for forests to be sold as carbon credits to fossil fuel-burning polluters who seek to offset their carbon footprint. "Using the forests of the [Global] South as a trading commodity within REDD initiatives gives a ... permit to the polluters of the North to perpetuate toxic pollution, genocide and the violation of treaty rights in the homelands of our communities," said Environmental Indigenous Network Executive Director Tom Goldtooth.

NEW YORK — Less than three months before Copenhagen, the Sept. 22 U.N. Summit on Climate Change brought in some 100 world leaders to New York City for a day of speeches that were heavy with urgency, while at times drowning in rhetoric. Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed gave a passionate appeal for the world to act before their Indian Ocean islands disappear under rising sea levels. "If things go business-as-usual, we will not live, we will die," Nasheed said. Bolivian President Evo Morales criticized the global economic order, saying, "Climate change is not a cause, rather an effect. It is a product of the capitalist system, which favors the obtaining of the maximum profit possible." Across the city at Columbia University Sept. 24, activists with Climate SOS and Rising Tide North America presented a 14-foot "\$2 trillion bill" during a lecture by Danish Climate and Energy Minister Connie Hedegaard. The bill is the estimated size of the new market in carbon dioxide emissions allowances that would be established by the Waxman-Markey climate bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives in June — a plan that would prove lucrative for the largest polluters.

All eyes will be on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change this December as global leaders descend on Denmark to pass what many hope will be the monumental resolutions needed to confront the consequences of human-caused global warming. Environmental groups worldwide, however, have been cranking up the heat through direct actions ahead of the conference in an effort to push politicians to adopt more aggressive stances. They say it is time to use people power to confront the governments, economic policies and corporations that stand in the way of real change.

UNITED KINGDOM — U.K. Climate Camp activists blockaded the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) headquarters in London Sept. 1, while a dozen others dressed as construction workers glued themselves together on the second floor to protest the bank's investment in the fossil fuel industry. "RBS is 70 percent owned by the public, but it is completely against the public interest for our money to be used to fund climate change," activist James Clarke told SkyNews. On Oct. 17-18, the Climate Camp plans to target a top U.K. coal-fired power plant located in Nottingham. A blogger at Earth First! Action Reports noted that E.ON, the owner of the power plant, has been installing a new 12-foot chain-link perimeter fence.

PITTSBURGH — Greenpeace struck again Sept. 23 ahead of the G20 summit. Nine activists were arrested after they rappelled from the West End bridge to unroll an 80-by-30-foot banner reading "Danger: Climate Destruction Ahead: Reduce CO2 Emissions Now." "It is imperative that developed countries' world leaders do not fail again in Pittsburgh," said Damon Moglen, Greenpeace USA's global warming director. "They must put money on the table to support developing countries." But the G20 nations failed to do that, as leaders from the world's biggest economies couldn't agree on how to help developing nations fight climate change.

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ALASKA — The Inuit Circumpolar Council hosted the Indigenous People's Global Summit on Climate Change in Anchorage last April to prepare statements and recommendations to the U.N. Copenhagen climate conference. The declaration, which was issued before the September Bangkok meeting, stated, "Mother Earth is no longer in a period of climate change, but in climate crisis. ... Indigenous Peoples have a vital role in defending and healing Mother Earth. We uphold that the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples ... must be fully respected in all decision-making processes and activities related to climate change." The conference follows the Seventh Annual U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2008, which focused on climate change. Indigenous peoples say they bear the least responsibility for global warming. "For generations, we have managed ecosystems nurturing its integrity and complexity in sustainable and culturally diverse ways. Our customary resource management systems have proven to be ecologically sustainable, low-carbon economies," the declaration said.



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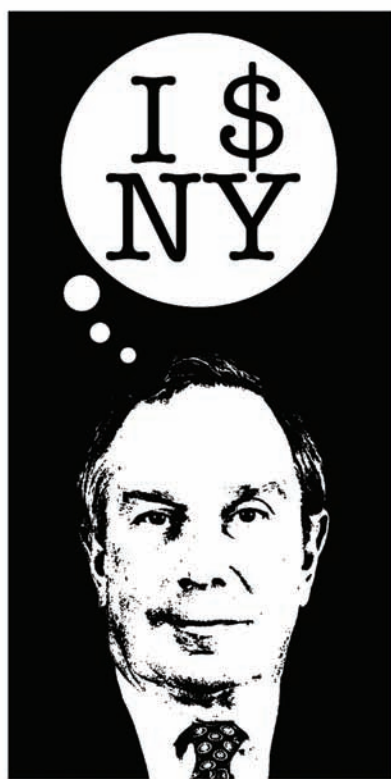
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NATIONAL

Kristol, NeoCon Man

JACLYN SINQUETT

BY STANLEY
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Irving Kristol, who died at age 89 in late September, was emblematic of the drift of many radical and liberal intellectuals to the political right after World War II.

He was the inspiration of the movement known as neoconservatism, which may have been the ideological spark of the Reagan Revolution. Kristol was a writer, publishing executive and editor, but his huge influence in U.S. politics was as a supreme networker, organizer and fixer.

His main achievement was to unite two wings of the conservative movement: social conservatism connected mainly to fundamentalist religious groups and fiscal conservatism, the old line of the right.

For years, the secular conservatives disdained working with religious fundamentalists. Most conservatives were not necessarily opposed to abortion, contraception and sex education. Their main beast was “Big Government” and its “mad” spending, especially on the poor. For them poverty was a reflection of personal failure or, since the New Deal, was due to government programs that fostered dependency rather than self-reliance. But to bring these historically opposed groups together, the socially liberal intellectuals had to swallow their conventional beliefs and tolerate or adhere to such traditional values as the sanctity of the family, the right to “life,” rejection of pre-marital sex and divorce.

Kristol organized and promoted conservative think tanks, helped his son William start a conservative paper, *The Weekly Standard*, and was a major force recruiting intellectuals to conservative causes and, more important, conservative positions on public issues, even when, like the late U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), they remained self-professed liberals. A confidante of leading politicians, including presidents, Kristol did not show his face to TV cameras very often, preferring to operate behind the scenes, a spot that was far more comfortable because it kept him out of the line of fire.

Like many neoconservatives, he started out as a participant in the cauldron of 1930s radical politics. As a City College student he joined radical organizations, mainly the small but spunky movement that gathered around exiled Russian Bolshevik Leon Trotsky.

After serving in the U.S. military during World War II, Kristol worked as a writer and



editor, prominently for the liberal monthly *Commentary*. Within a few years he shifted his allegiance to liberalism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt

became one of his heroes, but under the pressure of the Cold War against communism, he was attracted to conservatism.

As managing editor he transformed *Commentary* into a conservative magazine; Kristol was soon well known as a leading anti-communist intellectual. Some, like his friends philosopher Sidney Hook and journalist Melvin Lasky, were willing to forge an alliance with and accept money from the U.S. government, particularly the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

Kristol spent some time in Great Britain helping to start *Encounter*, perhaps the leading English-speaking pro-Cold War magazine, and became the executive vice president of Basic Books, a publishing house that, for a time, shared the conservative laurels.

But Kristol was not content being an editor and manager. He was a man of vision and, at a time of resurging religious fundamentalism, was dissatisfied with the tendency of the conservative movement to stew in its own juices. His friends were not especially opposed to the social benefits enacted during the New Deal. After all, they were beneficiaries of Social Security and had enjoyed a largely free public higher education that was only ended in the late 1970s.

Kristol and his fellow neocons began their journey to the right after concluding that many fellow liberals were wishy-washy about the necessity of fighting shooting wars against Soviet “satellite” states, had come to favor nuclear disarmament and seemed to value civil liberties above national security.

In the face of these “unpatriotic” sentiments, Kristol became a vigorous opponent of

Continued on page 15

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Street Heat

Continued from page 9

activating the membership and punishing Democrats for betrayal, is what delegate after delegate to the convention, from union presidents to rank-and-file leaders of small labor councils, told me they saw in the coronation of Trumka.

It became almost a prayer: Trumka's very presence and style will animate the unions; his eagerness to be seen and heard might change the way Americans think about unions. The pageant before Trumka's formal pronouncement as president was full of sentimentality and tears.

The great Pittston strike of 1989-90, which took place during Trumka's tenure as president of the United Mine Workers, was given a passing mention, but overall, as Jon Flanders, an alternate delegate from Troy, said, the message was of "the worker as iconic victim, and the great leader who will raise them up."

For all the expressed hope and Trumka's occasional sabre rattling, there is no sign yet that a Trumka-led AFL will be different from its predecessors, and without a heightened political energy and organization coming from the ranks, it can't be different.

Despite all the money poured into elections — possibly as much as \$350 million counting all of organized labor — unions don't have the stroke in Congress and the White House that money is supposed to buy. People wonder why unions don't hold the Democrats' feet to the fire, but the belief

that money must necessarily buy influence misses the harder point.

As Communication Workers of America President Larry Cohen put it, "We have expectations that come from an earlier time. I inherited a political culture based on a strong labor movement. We don't have that. What it means to win an election in Brazil, even with the huge problems they have there, is different for unions than it is for us here. Brazil is 30 percent organized. ... They have a different kind of alliance building. So they get different results [from a favorable election outcome] than we're going to get here."

Yet even with dwindling percentages, American unions represent 16 million people. That many people, if educated, animated, organized at the shop level, and unified in strategic alliances, have at least the possibility of presenting a formidable force.

Will they? The convention offered no sign that labor as a whole was interested in its membership's potential power outside elections. Here amid the worst economic catastrophe since the Great Depression it was almost as if that wider crisis didn't exist.

The Machinists were handing out T-shirts saying "Jobs Now" and had a room with close-up photographs of some of their 30,000 members who have lost their jobs in the past eight months. A resolution approved by the convention reminded everyone that real unemployment, affecting some 31 million people, was the worst in U.S. history and a second stimulus of job creation, modeled on the WPA, is necessary. Otherwise, you would not have known there is disaster



Oakland General Strike, 1946.

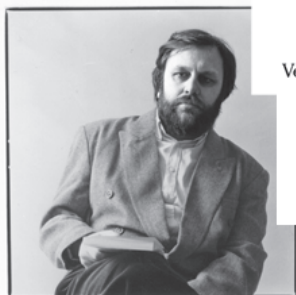
spreading in the working class.

I didn't hear any call at the convention for workers to rally, just as I didn't hear any evocation of labor's fighting history to inspire a renewed fight today. Mike Stout suggested that the convention might want to do a cultural program for delegates built around McCollester's terrific new book, *The Point of Pittsburgh*, about the way in which the working classes of Pittsburgh paved what became the future not just with their sweat but their intelligence and militancy. That never happened.

People said there was no sign at the convention of what Trumka's program might be, other than belt-tightening at the financially strapped federation.

Meanwhile, the Steel Workers were the only union that marched before the G-20, demanding jobs and proclaiming that "the unemployed, the homeless, the hungry and the poor must no longer be invisible and silent."

JoAnn Wypijewski writes for CounterPunch, The Nation and other publications. Reprinted from counterpunch.org



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Kristol's Impact

Continued from page 12

those liberals he viewed as "soft" on communism. It was not long before Kristol and his collaborator, the sociologist Daniel Bell, inaugurated *The Public Interest*, a journal of opinion that began to focus on both foreign policy and a sweeping re-evaluation of the welfare state and other domestic matters. The magazine had a minuscule circulation but was highly influential among intellectuals and policy makers.

One of *The Public Interest's* major innovations was to offer a more sophisticated version of anti-welfare politics. Saying that the poor were caught in a "culture of poverty," among whose features was family disorganization, the neocons argued that throwing money at the problem was counterproductive. Instead, with a view to ending dependency, they advocated that the poor be made to work in order to receive a check. This position soon became conventional wisdom for city, state and national governments of both major political parties. Through this moralistic approach, Kristol had led his flock back to quasi-religious ideology, and by the 1970s the ground was laid for an alliance between two unlikely partners.

Kristol's ultimate domestic policy triumph came during the presidency of Bill Clinton. When Con-

gress passed the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which wiped out the only guaranteed income program in the United States by ending income assistance after five years, Clinton dutifully signed it.

Neither the prosperity bubble of the first six years of the new century nor the current economic depression has impelled any leading politician to ask the country to revisit welfare "reform." The powers that be still adhere to the proposition that chronic poverty is not a problem for the system, but a deficit of the poor themselves.

Kristol and Bell were also riled by the rise of 1960s radicalism. Though sympathetic to the demand of blacks for full civil rights, they were hostile to the sit-ins, mass marches and violent rhetoric of young radicals who, in alliance with Martin Luther King, were pushing the movement to the left.

What irked them more were the antiwar movement and the anti-capitalism of the New Left that rebelled against the war policies of Democratic and Republican administrations and often expressed support for Communist-led anti-imperialist struggles in China, Vietnam and Cuba.

For Bell, Kristol and their fellow neocons, America was in the throes of mass defection by an entire generation from its sacred values and policies. They felt nihilism, cynicism and anti-establishment sentiments were turning

the entire country away from the patriotism that had made it great.

Bell finally resigned his co-editorship of *The Public Interest* because Kristol had taken the magazine too far right, but, ever the happy warrior, Kristol kept moving further rightward. Toward the end of his life he found religion, a belief in what was once a strategy. Kristol gloried in the Reagan Revolution, whose ideology, if not always its policies, reflected those of the neocons.

During the administrations of the two George Bushes, Kristol was celebrated as a great sage and a "godfather" of the neocons. Like his long-time wife Gertrude Himmelfarb, the historian and rabidly conservative polemicist, his writings, ever more strident, became required reading in wide circles of the right, religious and secular alike. He must have taken satisfaction in the national security policies of the Obama administration, which were, for the most part, continuations of those of his predecessor George W. Bush.

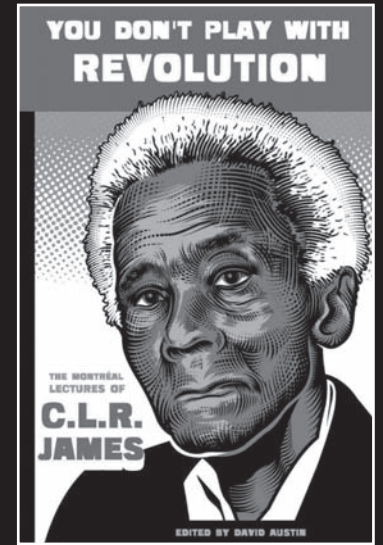
Kristol also had to be pleased with Obama's refusal to reverse Bill Clinton's ending of "welfare as we know it," despite the economic crisis and looming double-digit unemployment. Of course, Obama is no neocon, but Kristol wanted mostly to make its ideology and policies the common sense, and in this his legacy remains large.

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The Weather Will Kill Us All

The Dark Heart of Meteorology
A PLAY BY STEPHEN AUBREY
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Franklin Elijah White is a meteorologist, as were his father and grandfather and great-grandfather before him. He used to be a TV weatherman — tagline, “You can trust me” — until the day he tried to tell Channel 7 viewers the frightening truth: The weather is out to get us.

White (Richard Lovejoy) understood the depth of Nature’s malice only when he read his late father’s manuscript, *The Dark Heart of Meteorology*. Now he crisscrosses the country delivering lectures about it. Humankind may be destroying the Earth, he says, but “the Earth started it.” In other words, “the weather will kill us all. So let’s do it ourselves first.”

The lectures, along with White’s videoblog on the same theme, make up the substance of this more-or-less one-character play by Stephen Aubrey, on stage at the Under St. Mark’s Theater in the East Village through Oct. 14.

The ocean, White says, is a hurtling tsunami with ravenous sharks on its crests; the sun is “a bow that shoots arrows of

slowly falling apart as he relates, between impersonal tales of fire and flood, the history of his own, weather-cursed family. He describes the lightning that struck his mother and father during their wedding, the snowstorm in which his mother disappeared (because she hadn’t heard White’s father’s warning), and the flood that drowned his father. No wonder he’s afraid of the weather.

Yet now he’s confronted by hope. His lover is pregnant, and he has to decide whether to run away — because he’s “not strong enough for two” — or to make a home with her and their child, in which to “weather the storm” he sees on the horizon. (Meteorology is actually a one-and-a-half-character play; the voice of Sarah, White’s lover — played by Audrey Crabtree — coming to us on his message machine.)

The Dark Heart of Meteorology steers resolutely away from politics. Even a passing reference to Hurricane Katrina avoids mention of the human contribution to the Katrina’s disastrous impact. This is a play about life’s fundamental unpredictability and our existential response to it, which in other hands have often been heavy, not to say grim, subjects.

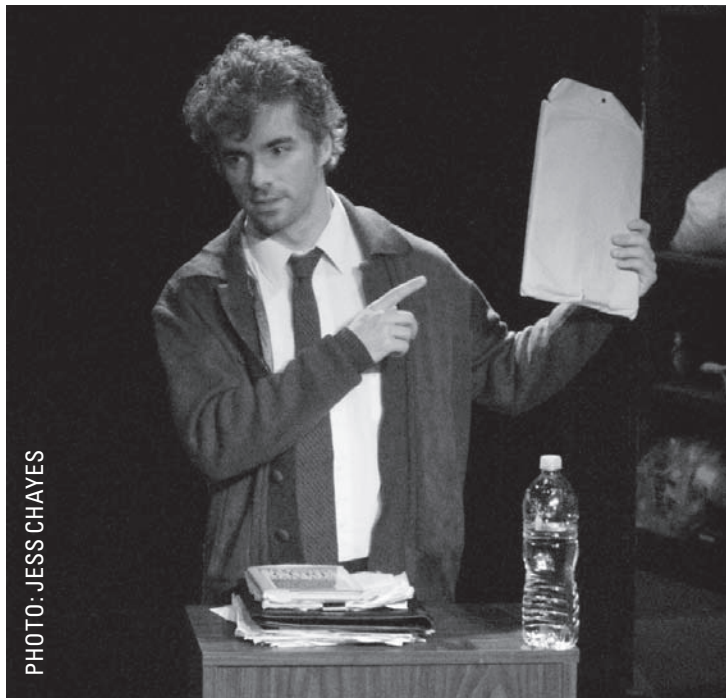


PHOTO: JESS CHAYES

cancer at you.” Interwoven with accounts of mass devastation — floods, tornadoes, typhoons, and deadliest of all, fogs — are tales of smaller and stranger natural phenomena, like a bolt of lightning that fused the genitals of a pair of teenagers making love on a mountaintop. (On second thought, he muses, “[T]his story might not be true.”)

With each lecture, White’s vision grows bleaker. Lovejoy convinces us that White is

Yet *Meteorology* is neither heavy nor grim. On the contrary, it is, in turn, hilarious, charming, and, ultimately, tender and touching. As Franklin used to say when he had a job, you can trust me.

—JUDITH MAHONEY PASTERNAK

At the Under St. Marks Theater, 94 St. Marks Place, through Oct. 14. Tickets \$12-\$15.

Music to Take You to the Streets

Few lyrical sentiments are as direct as “dump the bosses off your back,” as the late singer U. Utah Phillips said when he collaborated with Ani DiFranco on an album of old Industrial Workers of the World anthems. Activist singer Anne Feeney has gone to that same vein for her new album, *Dump the Bosses Off Your Back*.

The album runs through an eclectic mix of musical styles, but the lyrics are all political. The title track gets

for the Life of a Miner?” — one of several songs from the play *Buried: The Story of the Sago Mine Disaster*, which Feeney arranged the music for — sounds like it could have been written 100 years ago, despite the lines about “PR spokesmen orchestrate deniability.” It combines emotional power and black humor — “Each state has a preset cost/For every arm or leg that’s lost.” This music would probably sound best at a demonstration.



ANNE FEENEY

a rollicking accordion groove Feeney calls “danceable thrash polka”; the corrido-flavored tune is about Santiago Cruz, a union organizer murdered in Mexico in 2007; and the a cappella gospel-quartet number has lyrics like “You cannot serve God and Mammon/If it’s Mammon that you choose/You will answer on that Judgment Day.” She does Joe Hill’s “Preacher and the Slave” as a Western-swing boogie, with piano by George Frayne, the long-absent leader of Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, arguably the best hippie-country band ever.

It’s not easy to write political songs that sound natural. Many leftist and liberal singer-songwriters are annoyingly sanctimonious or sound like they’re reading leaflets. Feeney doesn’t fall into those traps, but not every track here works; interspersing the verses of “Hallelujah, I’m a Bum” with a radio-news voiceover about layoffs belabors the point a bit too obviously. And maybe it’s my ingrained cynicism or defective brain chemistry, but I’m a little put off by the optimism of “How Long,” based on a 1965 speech by Martin Luther King.

Yes, I know she’s trying to give people hope instead of despair, but the arc of the universe can plummet into the abyss just as easily as it can bend toward justice. And it’s not going to bend toward justice unless people push it a lot more effectively than they have.

On the other hand, “How Much

compilation from a rich but little-remembered vein of American music history, the “jump blues” of 1946 to 1954. The riffs were big-band swing and boogie, but the anarchic energy prefigured rock ‘n’ roll, as sax players like Illinois Jacquet and Willis “Gator Tail” Jackson strutted bar tops, honking and screeching and blowing their brains out. The artists here are more obscure — by far the best-known cut is Jimmy Forrest’s bluesy bump ‘n’ grind “Night Train,” later speeded up and funkified by James Brown — but the music is still great.

Rocket from the Tombs was a seminal Cleveland proto-punk band. A hybrid of arty rock-poet types and crude hard-rockers, they splintered into factions before they ever did a proper LP. Singer David Thomas and guitarist Peter Laughner went on to Pere Ubu, while guitarist Cheetah Chrome and drummer Johnny Blitz formed the Dead Boys. Laughner, who bridged the two factions, drank himself to death at 24. “I’m never gonna kill myself again” proved a less prophetic lyric than “ain’t it fun when you know you’re gonna die young.”

The CD contains demos and live recordings from 1974–1975: early versions of Pere Ubu and Dead Boys songs (including the eerie, dissonant “30 Seconds Over Tokyo” and the punk anthem “Sonic Reducer”), Velvet Underground and Stooges covers, and originals like the seething minor-key jam “So Cold.” Even 35 years after the fact, it’s still the most exciting rock record I’ve heard in the last year.

The Cuban tracks compiled on *Revolución* come from a time when the Castro government was cracking down on foreign cultural influences. Musicians like Irakere and Los Van Van responded by turning inward and working with Cuba’s African-rooted traditional rhythms. The results were brilliant. They paralleled what numerous Latin and funk bands were doing in the States, but with their own original and distinctive flavor. Generoso Jimenez’s “El Contrabajo Fantasma,” which segues from a Bachesque bowed-bass solo to a deep salsa groove, lives up to its title.

—STEVEN WISHNIA

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Labor Debates Its Dilemma: Democracy or Power?

Embedded with Organized Labor: Journalistic Reflections on the Class War at Home
 BY STEVE EARLY
 MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS

Veteran union activist Steve Early's collection of essays, *Embedded with Organized Labor*, offers a comprehensive look at the past and current state of the U.S. labor movement. Central to the book is organized labor's division over the use of different organizing philosophies. Some unions, such as the California Nurses Association, support "union democracy," while others, like Andy Stern of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), think it's best to organize the unorganized by consolidating resources to run industry-wide campaigns.

Early, an attorney and labor journalist who worked as a labor organizer with the Communication Workers of America for almost 30 years, spends most of the book fiercely defending union democracy, the need for a worker-run and bottom-up movement.

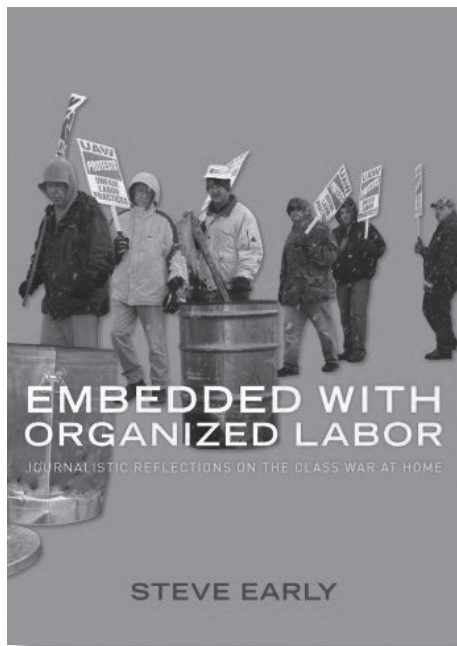
Early argues convincingly for local unions run by workers who coordinate cultural and political activities that benefit the working class and examines union-run cultural programs such as theater and art exhibits, as well as triumphant, and more often losing, labor strikes.

While he reserves fire for the SEIU's organizing model, Early lauds the "Bread and Roses" program that the giant New York-based 1199 SEIU local has inspired for decades.

The book is at its best when it dissects union militancy, including three simultaneous high-profile strikes in the mid-90s in Illinois.

Those ended as losses, and signaled the further weakening of the labor movement.

Early also uncovers long-forgotten labor activists like Powers Hapgood, who was instrumental in the development of industrial unionism. It seeks to organize all workers in the same industry in the same union, regardless of their specific skill or trade. Early disparages a long list of business union types — crusty, Cold War AFL leaders like Lane Kirkland and George Meany are favorite targets.



Criticism of business unionism — the philosophy that unions should restrict membership, bargain contracts and service members with no organizing and political agenda (or worse, a reactionary agenda) — is a litmus test for Early's generation of labor activists.

Early at times becomes snarky — settling old scores and critiquing other labor books. He skewers leftist labor activist Bill Fletcher's *Solidarity Divided* as "sketchy

and incomplete" and faults the book for not mentioning the Communication Workers of America and Early's beloved *Labor Notes*, where Early is a member of the magazine's policy committee.

Labor Notes, and to an extent Early, favor union democracy as an alternative to the "organize the unorganized" approach by the SEIU. Early relentlessly criticizes the SEIU's model of staffing union campaigns and merging smaller union locals into geographically sprawling unions.

Early also lambastes the SEIU's tendency to place college-educated organizers instead of rank-and-file union members as presidents of locals and to centralize decision-making and resources in order to wage immense, often successful, union campaigns, like "Justice for Janitors." For Early, the SEIU model is essentially top-down business unionism repackaged. A union should be a worker-run institution, for better or worse.

Early, to his credit, does not idealize the working class; the labor movement has its share of folly. But the flip side is how, with limited resources, can the best worker-run local union defeat globalized corporations that have vast resources with which to destroy unions?

Early offers only limited praise of SEIU's impressive growth — it has doubled its membership over 10 years to more than two million members, while most other unions have lost members. Can't we strike a balance between union democracy and organizing the unorganized? That should be Early's next book.

—BENNETT BAUMER



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READING: DOUGLAS A. MARTIN *ONCE YOU GO BACK*. Douglas A. Martin reads from his new novel "Once You Go Back," which relates the tension of a working-class household transplanted to the American South.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23RD @ 7PM - Free

READING: LILLIAN POLLAK *THE SWEETEST DREAM*. Lillian Pollak, a 94-year-old Raging Granny, relates life during the Great Depression, a decade she declares was most fabulous. *The Sweetest Dream* is about love, dance and radical life in the 1930s.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24TH @ 8PM • \$5 Sugg

DISCUSSION: CLIMATE JUSTICE PANEL. The proponents of clean energy are offering 'solutions' to the specter of global climate change that are rife with inequities. Come for a panel discussion between Sergio Oceransky, Ashley Dawson, Michael K. Dorsey and Janet Redman. Moderated by Brooke Lehman.

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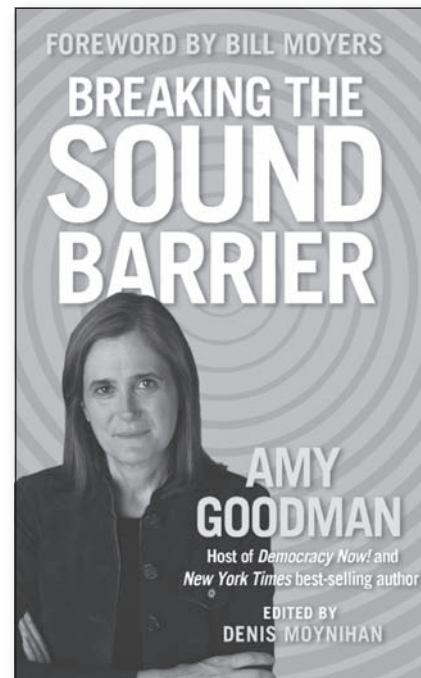
PRESENTATION: LES CRIME. The East Village History Project will present "A Criminal History of the Lower East Side," a glimpse into the underbelly of the "melting pot."

For a complete list of daily events or to purchase a gift card, visit www.bluestockings.com. Please support your local bookstore!

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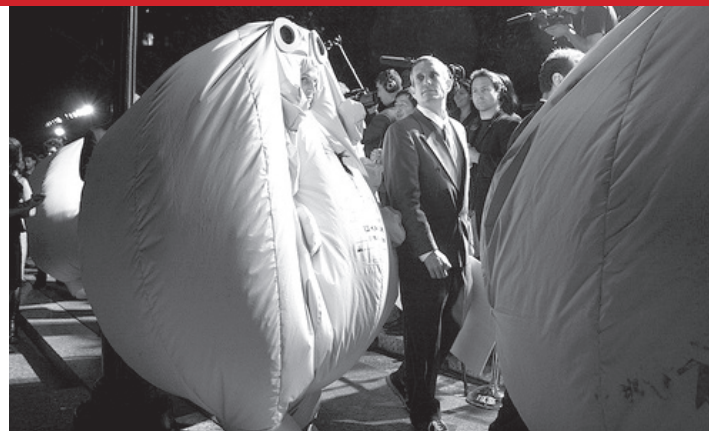
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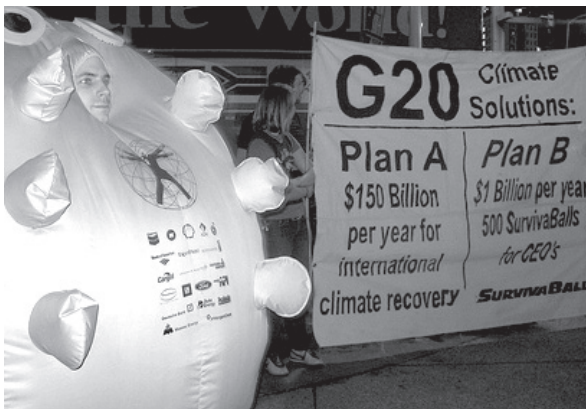
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Clockwise from center:

In Trafalgar Square, London, Survivaballs compete with older symbols of power and privilege; during the Pittsburgh G-20, Survivaballs demonstrate for a sane climate solution, one in keeping with market principles; Survivaball spokespeople demonstrate the safety that comes with power; one of many opportunities to present corporate America's solution to climate change to a throng of paparazzi; the Survivaball's inaugural voyage, during the Lexis-Nexus Catastrophic Loss Conference in Amelia Island, Florida, 2005; a Survivaball proves that survival can be glamorous; Heather Graham cozies up to the future of CEOs; looking steadfastly forward, Survivaballs see only what is in the future, never what is in the present or past.

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