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Hire the unemployed to help clean up the mess left by Sandy

By Jarvis Tyner

New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut are in a crisis after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy which left coastal areas devastated from having been pounded by high winds and overflowing seas.

Whole communities are still waterlogged. Thousands have lost their homes, their cars and all of all their personal possessions.

In one day tens of thousands of mainly working families have lost almost everything they own.

They are heatless, homeless, without power, food and water. If living on one of the islands off of Long Island, New Jersey, or New York City a family has gone from homeownership with all that implies to homelessness and seemingly no way out.

President Obama has come to the rescue and promised the full resources of the federal government, FEMA and has deployed the National Guard to help people survive.

Over 70 people have perished so far and unknown numbers are still trapped in their destroyed homes some probably clinging to life.

On television dozens of people are overwhelmed with emotion; crying out in anguish and demanding immediate help. Temperatures are dropping into the 40's and even 30's in the Northeast this time of year and huge numbers of people have no heat.

There is a severe mass communication and transportation crisis. Millions of people without



electricity also can't power up their cell phones. Only a few lines are functioning in the massive New York subway system, many lower Manhattan stations are still flooded and they can't cut the power on.

The buses are free but overcrowded and the streets are gridlocked. The Long Island railroad and the commuter trains from New Jersey and the northern suburbs are mostly shut down.

People can't get to work assuming their job has power. People are asking, "How long is this going to go on?" The city, state and federal offi-

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cials don't have clear answers to that question.

The president has promised to cut the red tape and expedite the issuing of supplies and checks to

Whole communities are still waterlogged.

assist rebuilding.

It has been estimated that Sandy's cost to the U.S. economy will be in the billions.

The cost for New York City alone has been estimated at \$200 million a day.

Over 4 million people are without power, 2 million in New Jersey alone.

The tragic consequences of Hurricane Sandy takes place on top of the already devastating effects of mass unemployment, poverty, homelessness and hunger magnified by the effects of the Great Recession.

Put these numbers together and there are almost 5 million potential emergency workers to help the hurricane victims. That is an unlimited supply of human labor power that could play a big role in meeting the crisis.

State and federal government must be called on to hire the unemployed to become emergency relief workers to help save lives, deliver food, water, generators and supplies and help transport people to safe shelter.

They can assist in many aspects of relief work and most of all they can speed up the recovery of

so many communities.

And giving the unemployed jobs at living wage with benefits will also help the overall economy.

Sandy by any measurement was a tragedy in human terms but it also exposed the tragedy inherent in the Republican proposal to cut funds to FEMA and their unrelenting attacks on the role of government to say nothing of their stubborn denial of the existence of global warming.

The problems caused by global warming are not going away and like thousands of other social, economic, and human problem facing our nation they cannot be solved by the private sector.

Issues like poverty, health care, housing, nutrition, education and the environment can only be really solved by putting people before profits.

The Obama administration's position on these issues, while not going far enough, do open the door to real solutions.



Jarvis Tyner is the CPUSA Executive Vice Chair.

Stories from Sandy: Rescuing family, restructuring for climate change

A personal account by Gabe Falstta

Fortunately, my neighborhood in South Western Queens (on the borderline of Brooklyn) is a safe haven.

However, not so for my daughter Carmela.

Tina and I had to pick her up from her apartment the following day in lower Manhattan. Her building is right off the FDR drive and the East River.

I lost contact with her Monday late afternoon. Her last comment was "dad, the water is running up Grand St."

As we came off the Williamsburg Bridge into Manhattan, all the traffic lights were out, we saw one police officer directing traffic.

Fortunately, there was very little traffic.

The surge from the East River was roughly four feet. The ground floor apartments were flooded. The complex has no power, no water, no amenities at all!

We needed flash lights to climb the stairwell. It was difficult to tell how many residents were still in the complex.

There were few emergency personnel on hand at the time.

My daughter threw some things into her overnight bag, put her cat Bree into her carrying case, and off we went over the Williamsburg Bridge back to Queens.

I wonder how many people do not have the option to leave.... how many people will try to wait out the aftermath.

Carmela said goodbye to her neighbor who has two small children.

She said she was not sure what she was going to do at this point, "I'm figuring things out."

Tina's daughter, who has a four-month-old baby, lives in Princeton, N.J., and is without power and in the process of figuring out whether to stay or come stay with us or her sister who lives in Brooklyn.

We are in the new reality of global warming.... this has been the baseline to which we will begin to think about how to restructure for the 21st century.

Tina and I had to pick her up from her apartment the following day in lower Manhattan.

Labor movement celebrates with the nation

By Mark Gruenberg

First there was anticipation, touched with a little bit of angst. Then there was exhilaration, as the electoral vote totals mounted for Democratic President Barack Obama mounted and as pro-worker U.S. Senate candidates won.

And then, just after 11:15 p.m. Eastern Time, there was glee.

Those were the stages of emotion as a crowd packed the AFL-CIO headquarters' big main floor meeting room on Election Night, Nov. 6, watching the returns come in from around the U.S. The same emotions, no doubt, existed at union halls and in countless other locations nationwide.

Would Obama, labor's favored candidate, win a second term against anti-worker GOP nominee Mitt Romney, a jobs-exporting venture capitalist with an explicit program to destroy unions? Would pro-worker Democrats retain control of the U.S. Senate?

And would all of labor's work pay off?

The first clue came around 9 p.m. Romney had made a late push to grab Pennsylvania. Its 20 electoral votes were vital to Obama achieving a majority of 270 or more in the 538-vote Electoral College. Courts had thrown out the GOP's tough "voter ID" law in the Quaker State, but there were still reports coming in of Republican voter suppression efforts through demands for identification at the polls.

And then the networks called Pennsylvania for Obama. A cheer went up - mixed with sighs of relief.

The evening wore on and other swing states swung Obama. The margins were narrow, but they were there: Michigan, Wisconsin. Cheers erupted when the GOPer in another tight Senate race, George Allen, conceded to Democrat Tim Kaine in Virginia. A lot of the crowd had walked precincts in Virginia for weeks. And then another cheer: Ardent pro-worker Democrat Sherrod Brown won Senate re-election in Ohio.

Scattered boos arose when expected red states in the Deep South and the Great Plains - the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Texas, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas - went for Romney.



Silence greeted Romney's win in Missouri, and cheers greeted Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill's victory there.

And then, around 11:15 Eastern Time, the networks and wire services called it: Obama wins Ohio. With the entire West Coast added in the minutes before - a foregone conclusion - the president had 274 electoral votes.

Rock music blasted from the speakers, or maybe the TV screens showing the packed flag-waving auditorium at Obama headquarters in Chicago. At the AFL-CIO, people hugged, slapped hands, gave each other high fives. But no victory cigars: Smoking is forbidden inside the AFL-CIO building.

At first, Romney refused to concede the election. He claimed there were too many votes still uncounted in Ohio and Obama's margin was too slim. That didn't faze the crowd. Those who looked at the TV screens ignored him. All those weeks of effort by the AFL-CIO and Working America had paid off. An hour later, he threw in the towel.

And those who looked at detailed returns coming in on computers knew Romney was right - and wrong. Yes, they told others, many Ohio votes are out as of 11:30. But they were in Cleveland, an Obama and Democratic stronghold. With only one-third of the Cuyahoga County precincts reporting, Obama had a 120,000-vote lead there. Ohio was safe - and the glee could continue. Workers would have an ally, not an enemy, in the White House.

And would all of labor's work pay off?

Machinists, workers in S.C.

By Mark Gruenberg

In what would be a fascinating irony, and comeback if it succeeds, the Machinists are quietly sounding out the prospects of launching an organizing drive at the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft construction plant in anti-union South Carolina.

News reports from Everett, Wash., and North Charleston, S.C., said the union sent an informational packet to South Carolina workers and tentatively scheduled a meeting for Oct. 23. IAM spokesman Frank Larkin confirmed the union's interest.

"The IAM has maintained contact with supporters at the Boeing South Carolina facility, and they've maintained contact with us," he said. "The meeting is for employees who are interested in finding out more about their collective bargaining rights."

Boeing, rabid right wing Republican Gov. Nikki Haley and her Labor Commissioner - recruited from a union-buster - all strenuously oppose any IAM organizing drive in North Charleston. In a Republican National Convention speech, Haley, a tea party favorite, bragged how she beat "bullying union bosses."

In 2009, Boeing announced it was moving Dreamliner production from Everett to North Charleston specifically, its CEO said, to retaliate against IAM because the union stood up for workers' rights - even striking at the manufacturer's Everett plant. The announcement came a month after North Charleston workers decertified IAM.

Boeing's announcement and its CEO's justification set off a long political brouhaha after IAM lodged a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), saying such retaliation is illegal.

The mess was solved when Boeing and IAM signed a new contract in Everett, keeping Dreamliner lines open at both plants and directing other construction to Everett.

Obama por cuatro años más

By Granma

El actual presidente de los Estados Unidos, Barack Obama, se mantendrá al frente de la Casa Blanca por cuatro años más, tras vencer al candidato republicano Mitt Romney en una reñida y carísima carrera electoral.

Al cierre, Obama obtuvo 290 votos electorales —suficientes para reelegirse— frente a los 203 alcanzados por Romney, según las proyecciones de los principales medios.

Al cierre de esta edición, el voto popular se mantenía muy disputado, con 49% para cada uno, sin embargo el reelecto presidente tenía una ligera ventaja, refiere The New York Times.

Por lo general, quien gana el voto electoral gana también el voto popular, pero ha sucedido lo contrario, como en las elecciones del año 2000 en que resultó vencedor George W. Bush sin contar con la mayoría de los sufragios.

Por otra parte, los resultados preliminares apuntan a la continuidad del control republicano en la Cámara de Representantes (Cámara Baja) con un escaño extra, mientras los demócratas apuntalan su posición mayoritaria en el Senado con dos nuevos puestos.

Obama, de 51 años, quien hizo historia en el 2008 al ser electo como el primer presidente negro de Estados Unidos, habría conseguido cuatro años más de gobierno para completar algunas de sus promesas electores, como la reforma sanitaria.

Romney, de 65 años, exgobernador de Massachussets (noreste), falló en su intento de interrumpir un segundo mandato demócrata con una agenda centrada en los recortes generalizados de impuestos y del gasto público, así como un alza generalizada del presupuesto militar.

La agotadora campaña, en la que ambos partidos se han gastado unos 6

mil millones de dólares, ha sido considerada como una de las más reñidas de las últimas décadas.

En Estados Unidos el voto popular directo no elige al presidente. Esa función recae sobre un colegio electoral de 538 bancas en representación de los 50 estados y el Distrito de Columbia (la capital), que depositan los votos por el candidato que haya ganado en su estado. Quien acumule 270 o más votos se convierte en Presidente.

Durante la jornada electoral también se reportaron irregularidades relacionadas con el mal funcionamiento de máquinas de votación, largas filas e información errónea sobre los sitios de sufragio, según reportes de prensa.

De acuerdo con NBC, una computadora en Pennsylvania cambió el sufragio por el presidente Barack Obama a su rival republicano Mitt Romney. Luego de una queja del votante la máquina fue "recalibrada" y, tras una prueba, fue puesta en funcionamiento nuevamente, dijo al portal Mother Jones el vocero del Departamento de Estado de Pennsylvania, Mathew Keeler.

Sin embargo en Colorado, uno de los estados claves, ocurrió una situación a la inversa, luego de que una docena de votantes se quejó de que los votos destinados a Romney se contaban a favor de Obama, según la radio local KRDO, esa misma mala pasada le ocurrió a George W. Bush, quien al votar por Romney se encontró que la máquina lo había hecho por Obama.

El inquilino de la Casa Blanca enfrentará una difícil coyuntura económica marcada por el desempleo y una deuda pública superior a los 16 billones de dólares, así como un país extremadamente polarizado y empanzanado en el orden exterior por su política belicista en Oriente Medio.

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