

West Philly tenants' struggle exposes affordable housing crisis



By Ben Sears

We have an affordable housing shortage in this city." So said University of Pennsylvania professor Dennis Culhane to the local press. Residents of the University City Town Homes, threatened with eviction, used stronger language.

Melvin Hairster, resident and protest leader, told a crowd of supporters and residents, "This is a humanity issue. Housing is a human right. My message to the people at the top is, 'If you all don't make change, the people will make it for you.'"

The occasion was the removal by sheriff's deputies of around 15 tents that tenants and supporters had set up on the property to highlight the threat of imminent eviction. A judge had ordered the site cleared by 9 a.m. Monday morning. The order was carried out at that time, even as protesters vigorously urged deputies to stop and leave the encampment.

The University City Town Homes complex is owned by IBID Associates LP, which has leased the units under a federal housing contract for over 40 years. IBID now intends to sell the property for redevelopment in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania in West Philadelphia.

Long-time residents have been offered vouchers with which to find alternative housing, but the

search has been proving difficult or impossible for many. They have been given an early September date to vacate the property.

The spirited demonstration included residents and supporters from the community, among them university faculty and students. Some argue that the university bears a major share of responsibility for gentrification and the resulting lack of affordable housing in the area, once known as the "Black Bottom," or simply "The Bottom," by long-time

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residents.

One of the residents' demands is that the city purchase the property, which has not yet found a buyer. Among the chants that reverberated across Market Street: "Stop the sale; buy the block" and "People over profit."

Labor rallies around Black-majority neighborhood targeted by gentrification.

Demonstrators targeted IBID principal owner Brett Altman, who announced the pending sale, which would probably mean the demolition of the Town Homes. Among the speakers was Pam Africa, who was present in the first MOVE house when police stormed it in the summer of 1978.

She said of those responsible for gentrification: “You, raped, you robbed, you stole from this community for years and years.... Let people know what is going on and what Altman has done here.”

The sale and demolition threatens 70 families and residents with eviction.

The tenants’ determined, persistent, and disciplined struggle has generated considerable coverage in the local media, as well as support from the community.

Among the supporters present on Monday were members of the Labor for Black Lives Coalition, who circulated a statement calling on city leaders “to block the sale of the UC Townhomes and commit to preserving affordable housing of low-income

seniors and families.” The statement said, “Securing safe and affordable rental housing is a constant struggle for working class people of color in the city. As a coalition representing our city’s Black union leadership and members, we believe unequivocally that housing is a human right.”

The statement was signed by SEIU 32BJ, SEIU PA State Council, Unite Here Local 274, APWU Local 89, AFSCME District Council 33, National Writers Union, Einstein Nurses United, and PASNAP, BMWED-IBT Local 3012, National Domestic Workers Alliance-PA Chapter, and others.

Washington’s Ukraine weapons aid tops \$9bn; report reveals U.S. companies armed Russia, too

By Morning Star

Washington has announced a record \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, including extra HIMARS long-range missiles, Javelin rockets, and other ammunition.

The latest delivery of arms from the Defense Department brings the total amount of U.S. military aid to Ukraine to \$9 billion since February.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the U.S. “stands by Ukraine” and praised its soldiers for resisting the Russian invasion over the last six months. “As this war stretches on, the courage and strength of Ukraine’s military and its people become even more evident and even more extraordinary,” he said.

While Washington has been criticized by anti-war activists for continuing to pour arms into Ukraine rather than push for peace talks, a new report reveals that U.S. firms had also been arming Russia.

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) defense think tank found that critical components had been supplied to Moscow from 450 companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia in recent years.

Two-thirds of the components were manufactured by U.S.-based companies, RUSI found, based on

weapons recovered from the Ukrainian battlefield over the past five months.

Products manufactured by the U.S.-based Analog Devices and Texas Instruments accounted for nearly a quarter of all the Western components in the weapons.

Analog Devices said that it has closed its business in Russia and instructed distributors to halt shipments to the country. Texas Instruments said it follows all laws in the countries where it operates and that the parts found in the Russian weapons had been designed for commercial products.

Research found that the Russian Kh-101 cruise missile, which has been used to strike Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kiev, also had 31 foreign components, with parts manufactured by companies including U.S.-based Intel Corporation and AMD-owned Xilinx.

The companies said they abided by relevant legislation and followed all global export control laws. According to RUSI, more than 80 Western-manufactured microchips were subject to U.S. export controls since at least 2014, meaning they would have required a license to be shipped to Russia.

Selling to both sides: U.S. government continues pumping weapons into the war zone, while a new report confirms U.S. companies have been arming Russia as well.

We must use our right to vote, not lose it!



By CPUSA PA Commission

We the people are under attack. Corporate America, allied with religious extremists and growing fascist forces, like those who stormed the capitol on January 6, are out to destroy every gain the American people have made since the Civil War.

Nothing is sacred. Their Supreme Court's abortion decision violates a woman's right to govern her own healthcare, and to outlaw all abortions everywhere.

They no longer acknowledge the legitimacy of the electoral system and are working on ways for states to overturn election results. People of color are especially targeted for disenfranchisement.

Public education, our most basic democratic institution, is being shredded with funding cuts, charter schools, and forcing college students into massive debt. Teachers and school board members are under attack for teaching the history of all Americans.

Congress, the seat of American democracy, was violently attacked by a fascist mob directed by the former president. Apparently the Vice President, the Attorney General, nor the dozens of others who knew of the plot reported the crimes to authorities.

If this isn't scary enough, think of global warming, which, if not confronted, threatens to wipe out human life on our planet.

There is still time to turn things around. There is hope because more and more Americans are seeing through the right-wing lies. People are learning that government policy has to be based on reality. That

healthcare policy should not be decided by people who deny COVID exists. That our planet won't be saved by politicians who deny climate change or by politicians bankrolled by the industries responsible for the catastrophe. That people who support overturning election results and deny verified results should not be in offices that govern federal, state, or local elections.

The amount of money our government spends on weapons, wars, and military bases in over 100 countries could be slashed to fund human needs and create millions of jobs needed to tackle global warming.

A huge fightback is taking place across the country, including the wave of unionization, resistance to attacks on abortion rights, organizing against attacks on voting rights, growing demands for action on climate change, and a fair immigration policy.

A big turnout by us, working people, voting in our own interests can result in a Congress and state legislatures with a people's agenda instead of a billionaires' agenda. We can expand democratic rights, protect and universalize healthcare including reproductive rights, tackle the proliferation of guns and the associated gun violence, and enforce and expand protections for all Americans regardless of race, religion, gender, or other identity.

Let's not be fooled by the big corporate-owned media that tells us the right wing will win this election. They are trying to discourage us from voting in our own interests. We must use our right to vote, not lose it!

People of color are especially targeted for disenfranchisement.

July jobless numbers all the way back from pandemic crash

By Press Associates

The big news in the employment data for July can be summed up in one phrase: Jobs are all the way back from the coronavirus-caused crash.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the official unemployment rate in July was 3.5%, tying the pre-pandemic low which the former Republican Trump regime touted—before that Oval Office occupant did little to stop the widespread closures due to the pandemic.

BLS reported 5.67 million people were jobless in July, 242,000 fewer than in June. In February 2020, the last full month before the crash hit, 5.717 million people were unemployed. How steep was the slide? In March 2020, 7.165 million people were jobless—and that figure more than tripled that April, to 23.04 million.

There were a few other negative notes, including one big one not in the jobs report: Two weeks before, BLS reported inflation was running at a 9.1% annual rate through June, the latest data available. In this report, average weekly earnings rose at half that rate.

Bill Spriggs, the AFL-CIO's Policy Director and chief economist, seconded one other point witnesses tell Congress: The coronavirus-caused depression was a "she-cession." "More women who were unemployed in June dropped out of the labor force in July than found jobs. It was the reverse for men. That's a mixed signal," he said.

Memorándum secreto de Amazon expone un plan para contratar solo a los 'vulnerables'

By Mark Gruenberg

Ya conocida por gastar millones en reprimir sindicatos—con un éxito desigual—la monstruosa empresa minorista y de almacenes Amazon planeó ir mucho más allá para prepararse contra la campaña de los Teamsters para sindicalizarlos, especialmente en un área clave, el sur de California. Su target a explotar: "Personas vulnerables".

En un memorando filtrado a Recode, los mandamases de Amazon dijeron que contrataría a estudiantes de hogares pobres y personas que acaban de salir de la cárcel después de cumplir sus condenas. La implicación es que estarían desesperados por encontrar trabajo y unirse a Amazon. Incapaces de permitirse avanzar en la universidad, por ejemplo, se verían atrapados en permanecer en Amazon. El memorando dice que esos "trabajadores adultos vulnerables se convertirían en oradores a favor de la empresa".

Y para California, el memorándum de Amazon prevé un "conducto de la escuela al almacén", según sus palabras, para canalizar a los jóvenes estudiantes de secundaria de Los Ángeles y graduados de colegios comunitarios a sus monstruosas instalaciones. Amazon también propuso eliminar las preguntas de sus entrevistadores de empleo a los solicitantes de empleo sobre el uso de marihuana. La implicación racista es que los jóvenes de minorías que usan la droga serían aún más vulnerables y propensos a la sobreexplotación.

Incluso podría aumentar el salario de los trabajadores a \$ 18 por hora.

La estrategia de Amazon no sorprende a Shane Gusman, el Director Legislativo de Teamsters para Cali-

fornia, hablando por JC42, en una entrevista telefónica con People's World. Los sindicatos del consejo representan a los trabajadores, entre otros, del puerto más activo del país, Los Ángeles-Long Beach.

Incluyendo el esfuerzo de relaciones públicas y "la compra de grupos comunitarios", Gusman dijo que el memorando describe una "estrategia corporativa clásica para encontrar cualquier forma de eludir la sindicalización".

El memorando caracteriza a ambos grupos como "personas vulnerables" abiertas a un mensaje de Amazon de empleos inmediatos. Según el plan de Amazon, se convierten entonces en defensores de la empresa frente al sindicato.

Gusman señaló que "No hay ninguna razón por la que los ex encarcelados no puedan conseguir un buen trabajo sindical", ya que los contratos sindicales a menudo prohíben las preguntas de los jefes sobre los delitos penales anteriores de un trabajador. Algunos también excluyen preguntas sobre el uso de marihuana.

"Y lo mismo con los jóvenes" que pueden sentirse atraídos por trabajos sindicales bien remunerados, en particular mediante la creación de aprendizajes y capacitación en sindicatos, dijo. Los Teamsters, un miembro de los Sindicatos de la Construcción de América del Norte, realizan este tipo de aprendizaje.