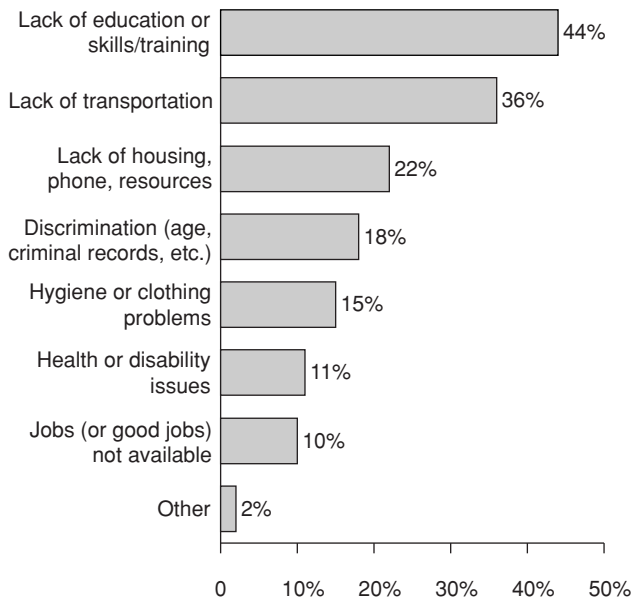


FIGURE 6

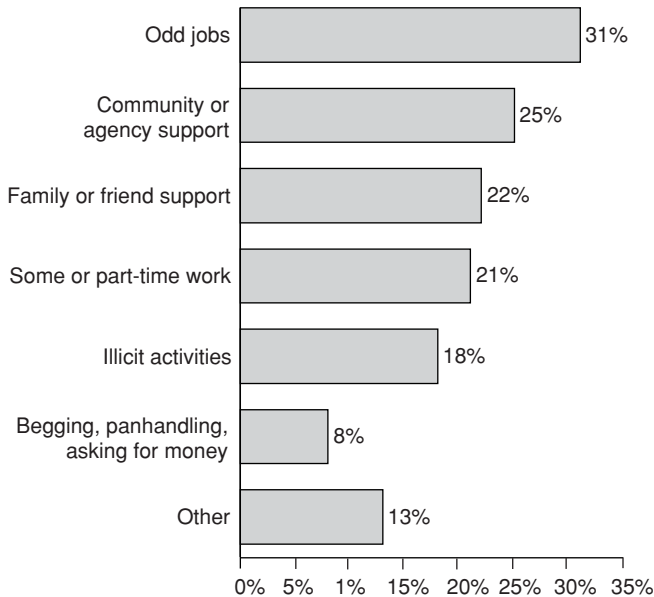
**Barriers to employment, former general relief recipients, Los Angeles County**



Source: UCLA School of Policy and Social Research, Ailee Moon, Ph.D. and Rebecca Hawes, MSW, April 1999.

FIGURE 7

**Management of income loss, former general relief recipients, Los Angeles County**



Source: UCLA School of Policy and Social Research, Ailee Moon, Ph.D. and Rebecca Hawes, MSW, April 1999.

# How a crime against humanity worked in Philadelphia

by Marianna Wertz

As of March 3, 1999, two years after Gov. Tom Ridge's (R) draconian Act 35 became law, any Pennsylvania resident who has received 24 months of welfare cash assistance was required to be working or participating in a work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week, or be sanctioned and potentially lose all benefits. A work activity may be unsubsidized work (i.e., slave labor), subsidized work, work experience, workfare, on-the-job training, or community service, but it does not include any educational component. When Ridge rammed through Act 35 in 1996, Lyndon LaRouche denounced it as a "crime against humanity," prosecutable under the Nuremberg Code, because it would eventually result in the death of thousands of poor, elderly, and sick Pennsylvanians.

An estimated 25-35,000 heads of household in Philadelphia will hit this deadline by December. With a majority of the Pennsylvania Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseload (Philadelphia has 61,000 heads of household and more than 130,000 children), the city's one comprehensive job-creation program, Greater Philadelphia Works, began in June 1998 and plans to move only 15,000 clients into the workforce over the next two years. Finding even those jobs, however, won't be easy. Since 1979, manufacturing jobs in the city of Philadelphia have declined 53%, and the city has lost a total of 250,000 jobs in the last 25 years, while suburbs—to which there is limited, if any, mass transportation—have gained 750,000 jobs in the same period. A significant number of jobs have been lost in the process of mergers and consolidations that have permeated the Philadelphia region, particularly affecting low-wage employment in the health and banking sectors.

Not only are there insufficient jobs available, but as Philadelphia City Councilman Angel Ortiz reported in January to the City Council's Joint Committee on Public Health and Human Services and Law and Government, those welfare recipients who are now in need of work are mismatched for the jobs available. About 30% of Philadelphia's TANF clients are functionally illiterate, 21% lack English proficiency, more than 50% lack a high-school diploma, 40% may be addicted to drugs or alcohol, and thousands have been victims of domestic violence. Despite this, both Federal and state laws place strict limits on the amount of time that a welfare recipient may spend on education and training without simultane-

ously having to meet a work requirement.

Ortiz's report noted that Pennsylvania is considering implementing the kind of Work Experience Program which New York City adopted. New York's WEP involves only unskilled labor, offers no training component, provides no vacation or sick leave, and requires no health and safety training.

Participants in the New York City program visited Philadelphia in 1997 to testify at the first round of City Council hearings after implementation of Act 35. They spoke of being forced to drop out of school in order to work the requisite number of hours, and of being used to replace former paid city employees who lost their jobs through downsizing. Ortiz's report stressed that "the state cannot pit TANF recipients against those already holding jobs. A program that provides no opportunity for training, education, or job-search will do little to prepare TANF recipients to become self-sufficient."

### Inadequate child care

Welfare workers are also parents, and require adequate child care to move from welfare to work. Yet, of the estimated 38,000 children currently in regulated child care facilities in Philadelphia, approximately 16,000 receive subsidies to help with the costs of such care, and the waiting lists for subsidized care in regulated facilities are lengthy. Many regulated providers do not accept subsidized children, often because the Commonwealth reimburses child care providers at a rate well below that paid by private-paying families. Now, following the March deadline, an estimated 30-60,000 more children are being added to this already-overcrowded system.

A further monkey wrench was thrown into the child care crisis created by Act 35's implementation, when Governor Ridge, a couple of months ago, increased the amount of money that non-welfare mothers have to pay for state-subsidized

child care, so that mothers on welfare, who are now forced to go to work, can put their children into child care. Thus, the working poor are having to pay for the cost of child care for the welfare poor.

### 'On the backs of vulnerable citizens'

At March 2 hearings on welfare reform held by the Pennsylvania House Democratic Policy Committee, Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell denounced the Federal welfare reform law and said that he had urged President Clinton to veto it. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA), as Federal welfare reform was called, was \$12 billion short of providing adequate child care, training, and jobs, and was simply a "measure to reduce the government's deficit on the backs of its most vulnerable citizens," Rendell charged.

Although Clinton later restored money for training and job placement, Rendell said, the program is still seriously deficient. There is already a surplus labor market in Philadelphia, especially light of recent mergers in the banking and health care sectors, Rendell said.

In addition, Rendell said, there's the cost to the city if even 14,000 of the estimated 25-35,000 heads of household—which is the approximate success rate in the most successful states' figures on welfare reform—fail to find even part-time work. Rendell cited the following increased annual costs: shelter system, \$36 million; foster care, \$1 million; health care, \$4.6 million; transportation to school, \$1.2 million. The total cost is \$42 million a year.

### No tracking

At the time of the March hearings, *EIR* asked both Councilman Ortiz and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare if there were any mechanism to track those who were

## Philadelphia job loss facts, as of 1996

Philadelphia lost a total of 250,000 jobs in the 25 years prior to 1995.

From 1979 to 1995, Philadelphia lost more than half of its factory jobs, going from 143,400 down to 64,000. Among other trends:

Transportation, utilities, and communications jobs declined by 32%. Retail and wholesale trade jobs declined by 24%. Finance, insurance, and real estate jobs declined by 15%.

Job numbers that increased: government (11%); education, legal, and business service jobs (21%); and health services (51%).

From 1980 to 1995, the Commonwealth of Pennsyl-

vania lost 381,500 manufacturing jobs.

The nine-county area around Philadelphia also lost 19,000 manufacturing jobs from October 1995 to 1996.

In 1995, the Philadelphia region had the lowest growth rate of any major U.S. urban area.

Although health care was still big business in the Greater Philadelphia region in the mid-1990s, employing almost 234,000 in the area, there was a decline of 2,400 health care jobs in the city in 1995; and 1,300 fewer jobs in the suburbs in 1995.

As of 1996, it was calculated that work requirements in the new welfare legislation could add up to 57,000 welfare recipients to the job-seekers market, when it already contained 47,000 Philadelphians unable to find work.

**Sources:** Philadelphia Unemployment Project, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Statistics provided by the U.S. Labor Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

terminated from welfare. We were told the state does not track this, and therefore nobody knows what has happened to them.

On June 11, *EIR* re-contacted Councilman Ortiz's office to see whether, three months after terminations began, there is any information available on those forced off welfare. The answer is, no. Though the press is full of "success stories" about the drop in the welfare rolls, the "Disappeared" are just that — disappeared — we were told.

In the absence of adequate information from the Commonwealth, Councilman Ortiz's office is now taking a closer look at the issue of child care for the women leaving public assistance. Who will take care of the children? Are there sufficient child care slots available in Philadelphia for thousands of additional children, whose mothers work for meager wages, either very early in the morning or late in the evening, at jobs miles away in the suburbs?

### Contacting the 'Disappeared'

Congreso de Latinos Unidos, a social service agency in Philadelphia, is one of a few such organizations to which the Department of Public Welfare, under pressure, has given the names of welfare recipients who are either about to be terminated from welfare or have already been terminated. *EIR* contacted Executive Director Alba Martinez, to ask what has happened with those recipients whom they have contacted.

Martinez told *EIR*, "From our experience, what we are finding is that a number of people are taking jobs that are very entry-level jobs, without necessarily having the skills and the training and the educational background that will help them stay permanently employed. So, folks are being pressured to move into the workforce in ways that don't necessarily help them become self-sufficient over the long term. That's one instance that we have seen.

"Another instance is that people who are required to comply with the rules don't do so because they have a lot of fear or they are in denial or they really don't feel supported in the process, so that they ignore the letters from the welfare office telling them to come in."

It's at this point that Congreso contacts the recipients, Martinez said, and tries to help prevent their termination, while helping them qualify and find a living-wage job, child care, transportation, and all the other elements of job-readiness which are not adequately covered by the city or state.

The reason for this, Martinez said, is that "people may get a job that doesn't pay very much and then they drop their welfare altogether, because they don't want to keep going back, and then they're not getting the health insurance that they're entitled to, or the food stamps. So, they end up becoming poorer than they were before."

While they have seen some "success stories," Martinez said, Congreso believes that "we need to build a different approach to this altogether. We want to see that there are training opportunities and educational opportunities for every adult in our neighborhood and that's really what we're going to aim for. This is not only about helping people who are on

these lists, which we want to do. At the same time, we're involved in a coalition that's trying to come up with an economic plan for our neighborhood that revolves around people, not around business. What are the kinds of educational programs that our people need. What are the training programs that they need and want. And then we're going to try to get them. Because training and education is really what they need."

The population served by Congreso has the additional problem that many are immigrants, most of whom are not eligible for welfare in the first place. For those who are eligible, Martinez said, "the language barrier is very important and needs to be taken into account in three ways. One, is that perhaps they don't always *get* the rules that they're being asked to follow. Secondly, it's harder to find a job when you don't speak the language that most employers require. Thirdly, there are hardly any educational training and support programs that meet their language needs. Three strikes and you're out."

The next several months will test whether the proponents of Act 35 and PRWORA can be forced to provide a humane solution to the crisis that their "welfare reform" legislation has created, or whether those who survive it will have to seek juridical remedy, as LaRouche had warned, for the crimes against humanity which are unfolding against America's "Disappeared" today in Pennsylvania and other states across the nation.

---

### Interview: Henry Nicholas

---

## Repeal welfare repeal, and then begin reform

*Henry Nicholas is International Vice President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO; President of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME; and President of District 1199C, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was interviewed by Marianna Wertz on June 8.*



**EIR:** I want to ask you about the situation regarding workfare and welfare recipients in the third year since the Federal welfare law passed, particularly