

DROP THE DEBT

Spring 2004

NEWS and ACTION from Jubilee USA Network, Washington, DC

G-8 Leaders Coming to Georgia This Summer

by Jakeya Caruthers

FROM JUNE 8-10, THE LEADERS of the 8 richest countries will converge in Sea Island, Ga. for their Annual Summit. It will be the first time the G-8 has met in the United States since 1997.

The Group of Eight (G8) is an exclusive grouping of the world's most powerful industrial countries which meets annually. Founded in 1975, the group includes the governments of United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Russia (the Group of Seven informally added Russia at the Denver Summit in 1997).

The decisions made at G8 summits affect billions of people, but their meetings are often criticized by citizens groups for not taking into account the input of the people they most affect. Civil society groups argue that G8 leaders, by failing to take action and live up to commitments, and by promoting a neo-liberal economic agenda, perpetuate poverty and environmental degradation in the world's most impoverished countries. Jubilee USA Network has been critical of the G8, because the leaders have failed to live up to promises made at the Cologne summit in 1999 to cancel the debts of the world's poorest nations, much less support Jubilee's call for complete and unconditional debt cancellation for all impoverished nations.

An Eight-Finger Grip on Debt

The scope of the G8 countries' economic power is broad. These countries, through their contributions to international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, are able to have strong influence over the economic and social policies of impoverished countries. Further, through bilateral lending and export credit agencies, G8 nations are directly responsible for many of the world's illegitimate and odious debts.

The agenda for this year's summit is predicted to include issues of Middle East democracy, the war on terrorism, and undoubtedly Iraq reconstruction. Jubilee would argue that if Iraq is to be on the agenda, an issue to discuss would be how to cancel ALL of Iraq's odious debt, and then extend the principle to dozens of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The illegitimate debts of other countries in the global South will likely be ignored at the summit, as the proposed agenda does not include discussion of international debt nor issues of economic and social injustice in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (the Global South).

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Reflections on the 2004 World Social Forum in Mumbai, India

by Marie Clarke



MY HEART SWELLED with pride as I walked through the gates of the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai, India this past January. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I was practically carried through the gates as throngs of people flooded into the WSF venue on opening night. More than 100,000 people took

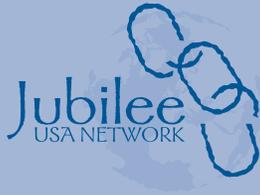
part in the World Social Forum this year. My pride was not in the sheer numbers of people, but rather from the fact that the very first thing I saw was a huge Jubilee South banner that stretched across the road at the entrance of the WSF proclaiming: "Freedom from Debt is Freedom from Domination." The debt was a strong theme of the WSF.

As I made my way to the stadium I noticed many more banners, all proclaiming things like, "No to IMF and World Bank Water Privatization," "Don't Owe, Won't Pay," and "Repudiate the Debt." Throughout the WSF venue Jubilee South banners addressed issues of debt, trade, privatization, gender, and access to services like water, health care, and education. You could not attend the WSF and miss the fact that Jubilee was there and that the international work for debt cancellation and repudiation is alive and well.

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"...proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants; it shall be a jubilee for you..."
– Leviticus 25:10

Jubilee USA Network began as Jubilee 2000/USA in 1997 when a diverse gathering of people and organizations came together in response to the international call for Jubilee debt cancellation. Now over 60 organizations including labor, churches, religious communities and institutions, AIDS activists, trade campaigners and over 9,000 individuals are active members of the Jubilee USA Network. Together we are a strong, diverse and growing network dedicated to working for a world free of debt for billions of people.

In the Jubilee Year as quoted above in Leviticus, those enslaved because of debts are freed, lands lost because of debt are returned, and community torn by inequality is restored. Today international debt has become a new form of slavery. Debt slavery means poor people working harder and harder in a vain effort to keep up with the interest payments on debts owed to rich countries including the US and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Jubilee USA Network brings together people to turn this reality around by active solidarity with partners worldwide, targeted and timely advocacy strategies and educational outreach. Please join us in working for Jubilee justice.

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POLICYUpdate

Keep Watch For the New Jubilee Bill!

We are expecting that new Jubilee legislation will be introduced in the House by the time this article goes to print, or shortly thereafter. We can already announce that Jubilee has been working on legislation that will call on the IMF to cancel from their own resources 100% of the debts owed to them by a list of 50 of the most impoverished nations – without harmful conditions! Please keep watch on our website at www.jubileeusa.org for more details and we will send out alerts as soon as we have a bill number. In the meantime, it never hurts to educate your congressional representatives about the debt crisis and the imperative for full debt cancellation. Get them watching out as well and ready to support debt cancellation legislation when it comes out.

Iraq's Odious Debt

Jubilee USA Network has been supporting HR 2482, the Iraqi Freedom from Debt Act. With 28 co-sponsors, this continues to be the only legislation on Iraqi debt that addresses the odious nature of the debt. Jubilee continues to work towards its passage into law as a first step in addressing odious debt in nations around the globe. Jubilee is also working on a statement regarding Iraq's debt that supports Jubilee South's views on Iraq. Jubilee South's statement can be read at www.jubileesouth.org.

After the Summer Blizzard...

Follow Up from Legislation Passed Last May

After our Summer Blizzard Campaign where we "snowed" in Secretary Treasury Snow with 10,000 postcards last summer, the Secretary has finally released a report on the cost and implications of implementing the law passed last May that would double the amount of debt relief provided to date. Not surprisingly, the Treasury argues that the proposal will be too costly and not advisable for several reasons. But the cost they quote comes to just under \$50 million a year for three years! This amount is pocket change in relationship to the U.S. budget at large – and when compared to the billions spent on war and defense, refusing to invest \$50 million to build right relationships through debt cancellation is telling about the priorities of the administration. The other reasons given by Treasury for opposing the law are equally problematic. They include concerns that the U.S. has not fully funded current promises for debt relief, that the deeper debt relief under the proposal is not "the best" way to achieve sustainable levels of debt and that instead emphasis should be placed on grants more than debt relief and on broader and deeper conditions attached to loans and trade agreements.

Latest News from Debt and Development Coalition in Ireland (DDCI)

Research published by DDCI proves that the IMF and World Bank do have the resources to cancel all the debt owed to them by the poorest countries. The report clearly shows that rather than being poverty stricken as they vigorously claim, the IMF and World Bank are richly endowed with huge reserves. In addition they earn enormous profits each year. The World Bank profits have increased from \$1.2bn in 1996 to \$5.3bn in 2003.

Read the report at www.debtireland.org. ▲



IMF/World Bank at 60:

Time to Drop the Debt!

2004 Is the 60th Birthday of the IMF and World Bank...

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are two of the most powerful financial institutions in the world. This year, they will celebrate their 60th year. Sixty years ago this summer - on July 1, 1944 - the Bretton Woods Conference began in New Hampshire, leading to the creation of the IMF and World Bank.

But It's No Time for A Party...

These institutions have left many harmful legacies over the past 60 years, but perhaps none so debilitating from the perspective of human development and justice as the debt. In a world where AIDS is claiming more than 8,000 lives a day, and literacy rates are falling, the most impoverished nations today are still siphoning desperately needed resources for health care and education to pay the wealthiest nations and the IMF/World Bank service on a debt that they have already paid many times over.

The legacy of the IMF and the World Bank is that today:

- **Africa** pays \$15 billion in debt service each year to the IMF, World Bank, and rich country governments. This is more than the continent receives each year in aid, new loans, or investment;
- Debt service to creditors including the IMF and World Bank accounts for almost half of the **Philippines'** annual budget, double the amount the government spends on social services;
- **Haiti**, the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere, pays twice as much on debt service as it does on health care including HIV/AIDS, while the IMF/World Bank have denied Haiti access to even limited debt relief; and
- Harmful conditions, such as privatization of water and other basic services, and the elimination of subsidies, are attached to most IMF/World Bank loans and all debt relief.

...It's Time to Drop the Debt!

On their 60th Birthday, Jubilee USA Network calls on the IMF and World Bank to cancel 100% of the debts of impoverished countries, without harmful conditions, using the institutions' existing resources. We furthermore call on the U.S. Treasury department to use its power within the IMF/World Bank to enact this demand. When a nation has more access to its own resources as a result of the initial debt relief won by the international Jubilee movement, there are dramatic results. Health and education spending in eligible countries increased by 40-90%. However, the relief under the World Bank and IMF's Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative has been partial, heavily conditioned, and for only a select number of countries. Full debt cancellation without conditions is urgently needed!



GET INVOLVED

TAKE ACTION: Sign An Unhappy Birthday Card to the IMF/World Bank on their 60th!

On the institutions' 60th birthday, Jubilee USA Network is organizing an unhappy birthday card campaign to the IMF and World Bank. We have developed unhappy birthday cards that call on the IMF/World Bank to cancel 100% of impoverished country debt without harmful conditions, and we have distributed the cards to activists across the U.S. and around the world – we have sent out more than 20,000 cards!

We will deliver the signed cards to the IMF and World Bank at an unhappy birthday party in Washington, DC on April 21, just before the institutions' spring meetings!

Get involved in this exciting campaign:

1. You can sign an unhappy birthday card right now on our website!

Just visit www.jubileeusa.org/sendacard.htm We'll print out your name, city, state, and country on a birthday card and deliver it to the World Bank on April 21st. Forward this link on to your friends and colleagues today! If you have any questions contact Jakeya Caruthers at 202-543-0692 or e-mail jakeya@jubileeusa.org.

2. Join Jubilee in DC this April for an Unhappy Birthday Party, and much more...

You're invited to an "Unhappy Birthday Party" for the World Bank and IMF on April 21, 2004 from 12-2 pm. The event will take place across from the World Bank and IMF at 18th and H St, NW, in Washington, DC. We will bring attention to the devastating legacy that 60 years of unjust policies and ever-growing debt have had on countries of the Global South. The event will feature speakers from the Global South, religious leaders, and even birthday cake. We will also deliver the thousands of "unhappy birthday" cards Jubilee USA has collected from around the world demanding that the World Bank and IMF cancel 100% of the debt of impoverished countries. Watch this list and www.jubileeusa.org for more details.

Come for the unhappy birthday party, and then stay for a week of educational events, demonstrations, and other events around the IMF/World Bank spring meetings. For more information on events from April 21-25 in Washington, DC see the 50 Years is Enough Network (www.50years.org) and the Mobilization for Global Justice (www.globalizethis.org).

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Making Local Links to Break the Chains of Debt

President Bush has chosen to host the meeting in Sea Island, an elite property off the coast of Georgia in the US South. To broadcast our demands for debt cancellation and justice to the G8, the media, and the public, Jubilee USA is working to connect the debt issue with the people, specifically the people of the US South, and the people of Georgia.

True to ironic form, the leaders of these enormously rich countries will meet on lush, prime property that was promised to Black Georgians through post-Civil War Reconstruction plans as reparations for the exploitative system of slavery that built this country. The summit site is also located within a county that is home to 17 toxic waste sites and four Superfund sites – many of which are located in residential areas housing poor Black families.

The history of the G8's broken promises together with the apparent failure of this year's agenda to include critical issues in the struggle for global economic justice affect the US public both directly and indirectly. We are excited to be partnering with Georgians who are working to spotlight the G8's failings, and to show other populations in the US and around the world the importance of speaking out to affect change.

Already, a number of groups in Atlanta, Savannah, and Brunswick, Georgia (the town nearest to secluded Sea Island) are planning or are engaged in efforts to educate the public about the G8's agenda (or what's missing from it). Already, they have scheduled numerous film screenings, teach-ins, and even environmental clean-up projects that highlight for the media and local populations their stand with regards to the G8's historical legacies of econom-

ic, political, and environmental injustice. See www.g8carnival.org for information on planned events.

Jubilee USA Network, along with several network partners, such as Africa Action, the American Friends Service Committee, 50 Years is Enough Network, Global Justice, Center for Economic Justice, Health GAP, and others have begun to meet regularly to make plans for the G-8. Jubilee USA will participate in local educational forums at the time of the G-8 summit, and we are planning actions to reach the media with our message.

Jubilee USA Network is also encouraging activists and organizers across the country who will not be in Georgia to organize local solidarity actions at the time of the G-8 meetings in their towns, churches, or campuses to demand that the G-8 take action to support complete debt cancellation and to contribute much, much more to the fight against global AIDS, especially in Africa. Watch the Jubilee USA website at www.jubileeusa.org for updated action ideas and specific calls to action in the weeks ahead.

Jakeya Caruthers is Outreach Fellow at Jubilee USA Network. ▲

Give securely, Give with ease...Become a Jubilee Monthly Sustainer!

What is a Monthly Sustainer?

With Jubilee USA Network's Monthly Sustainer program you can arrange to make monthly donations – big or small – using your debit or credit card.

Why become a Monthly Sustainer?

- **It's Easy.** You give us your credit or debit card information just once. We take care of the rest.
- **It's Secure.** Jubilee USA uses a secure and trusted service to do all our monthly donations.
- **It's Satisfying.** Each month you know that you're making a contribution to the success of the Jubilee campaign. Even a little bit goes a long way!

If you're ready to become a monthly sustainer, fill out the donation form. Make sure you mark how much you want to give each month and if you want to give on the 1st or 15th of each month.

Return this form to:

Jubilee USA Network
222 East Capitol St., NE • Washington, DC 20003

YES! I want to invest in Jubilee justice every month by making a monthly donation of:

- \$10 \$25 \$50
 \$100 Other \$ _____

I authorize Jubilee USA Network to charge my credit card on the (check one) 1st / 15th of every month. I understand I can change my monthly pledge at any time by notifying Jubilee USA.

Please Charge my credit card:

- Visa MC Discover AMEX

CARD NUMBER _____ EXPIRATION DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

While the international Jubilee movement was exceptionally present at the World Social Forum, several other themes were dominant as well. Perhaps most noticeable were calls for peace and an end to war – specifically the war on Iraq. The Israeli-Palestine conflict was also a hot topic for participants.

A defining feature of WSF Mumbai that differentiated it from previous forums in Porto Alegre was the tremendous number of marches. It seemed like there was always a march going on somewhere in the venue -- with drums and singing, dancing, props, and more. There were marches about issues of disability and disfigurement in India, issues of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered people throughout Asia, issues of globalization, of gender, of violence, of democracy, of socialism and communism.

In Mumbai, the disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished in the city was a stark and visible contrast. A huge megalopolis, Mumbai is home to approximately 18 million people. Fourteen million people live in poverty, and 7 million live, literally, in the streets. 60% of the people in Mumbai have no access to drinking water. At the same time a tiny elite also live in Mumbai, which is the home to Bollywood – the Indian movie center. I was struck by the sight of a driver in a Jaguar practically running over the legs of a man sleeping on the side of a highway with his legs pointing towards the traffic. The driver didn't even slow down.

Looking back at my notes from the forum, I am reminded what I found to be most life-giving about my experience there. My week in Mumbai was a constant update on all of the magnificent work around the world on debt cancellation. In returning to my notes after the trip I found that I had taken copious notes on what is going on in debt cancellation movements in dozens of countries around the world. I also jotted down some inspiring quotes that speak to the economic justice analysis of people around the world. I invite you to take a moment to review my notes from the forum at large and the notes from the Jubilee South meetings in particular on our website at www.jubileeusa.org. I want to you to share in the excitement of being updated on the incredible work being done to challenge debt around the world through testimonies of international partners. It was very inspiring to hear that campaigns for debt cancellation are alive and well across the globe.

In Mumbai, Jubilee USA Network joined Jubilee South in preparing a workshop on Illegitimate and Odious Debt, and co-sponsored several other workshops prepared by Jubilee South. These workshops were well attended and participants expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for working on the issue of debt, and for



One of the marches at this years World Social Forum in Mumbai.

making links between the issue of debt and trade, peace, and development.

During the WSF I had several opportunities to share with audiences about our plans at Jubilee USA to recognize the 60th anniversary of the IMF and World Bank with an unhappy birthday party in April. I had also had the opportunity to share our thinking towards the G8 meetings in the state of Georgia in June, legislative opportunities throughout the year, and some analysis of the 2004 US elections. People from around the world responded with excitement about our plans and were eager to discuss opportunities for future partnership. Since most sessions at the forum ended up being primarily educational, several people were very excited to think about the strong prospects for effective action in 2004 on the debt issue.

All in all, it was a colorful and engaging event, filled with powerful speakers, meaningful meetings, and marches, marches, and even more marches!

For more information on the World Social Forum in India and reports on debt campaigns from around the world, see "Report from World Social Forum 2004" online at www.jubileeusa.org. ▲

DEBT • TRADE • HEALTH • PEACE

Making the Links To Break the Chains

Educate...Motivate...Activate!

Jubilee USA 2004 Organizing Kit

Jubilee USA Network has created an action and organizing kit for 2004. The kit links the issues of debt, trade, health, and peace so as to "make the links to break the chains." School of the Americas Watch, Witness for Peace, Africa Action, the AFL-CIO, and many others contributed articles, flyers, and analysis to create a kit full of materials that address the critical links between the issues. The documents are easily copied to be used for outreach in local communities. We have also put together resources on taking action in 2004, including action tools on the IMF/WB 60th anniversary, the G-8 summit in Georgia, and the elections. E-mail Jubilee USA at coord@jubileeusa.org, or call us at 202-783-3566 and we will send you your very own "Making the Links to Break the Chains 2004 Organizing Kit!"