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Why Does High Unemployment Persist?— The Cause & Ethical Solution

by Carol Driscoll

As a frequent visitor to Downeast Maine, I had a deeper sense of the suffering of people in Washington County when I read Ruth Leubecker's compassionate front-page story in the *Machias Valley News Observer* about the struggle to supply food pantries with basic necessities (8/29/2012). She quotes advocate Susan Farley: "Homelessness has increased in Washington County...it's getting harder and harder to help people." That so many people, including children, are homeless and hungry in this rich, bountiful nation is appalling and shameful. I will be making a contribution to one of the food pantries mentioned in the article, but that's a stopgap measure that does not solve the problem of the rampant unemployment, which has led to such misery. I love the beautiful state of Maine, and feel passionately that every person has a right to decent housing and adequate, nutritious food, and that means, having a good paying job! I very much want your readers to know what has been described in *Aesthetic Realism*, the education founded by the American philosopher Eli Siegel.

In the journal *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known*, Editor Ellen Reiss wrote: "An economy which cannot supply jobs to the people of a nation is a failure.

Today, the cause of production, of jobs, is the profit motive: how much money can some private individuals squeeze from the labor and needs of their fellow citizens? Along with the fact that it no longer works, this way of thought as an engine of economics was always ugly and cruel. The solution for our economy is not a matter of political parties, of left or right: it is a matter of ethics and practicality. One of the ways Mr. Siegel put it is: 'Jobs for usefulness, not for profit.'

"With such a basis, a person in America can feel: 'I can do something; I can fix a computer—or design a garment—or play an instrument—or paint a house—or teach a language. What I can do is good for my fellow citizens. It can make them stronger. And they can do things that will make me stronger. None of us is being exploited by somebody—someone who's not doing the work. And we are all being respectfully compensated.' When this *good will* is the cause of production in America, no one will be unemployed. And there will be pride, and means for people's true expression."

This is true kindness, and is what needs to be for our country to be truly strong, our economy to prosper, and our people to thrive.