



Auto workers and their supporters show their international solidarity by protesting at the GM building in downtown Detroit.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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NO TO AUSTERITY: TAX THE RICH AND CUT THE MILITARY BUDGET

[Read story on page 3](#)



A protestor opposed to "right to work" laws is arrested in the Rotunda at the Michigan State Capitol by Michigan State police in Lansing, MI.

PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

'Right to Work:' Another step along the fascist road

EDITORIAL

Unions across the nation were shocked by the passage of the Right to Work law in Michigan. It is the second state (after Indiana) in the Rust Belt, the bastion of unionism, to pass this law. It is a wake-up call for all persons seriously interested in defending the rights of labor to take an objective look at what happened in order to prepare for the future.

No problem just happens. It has a beginning, a process of maturing and finally an environment that allows it to burst forth. In 1664, slaves represented one fourth of the labor force. The first labor law established slavery for life based on color. Ever since, labor in a white skin has been controlled through its separation from labor in a Black skin. In 1677 "free" strikers were imprisoned.

The assault by capital upon labor after the Civil War was accompanied by the widely accepted slogan that "this is a white man's country." The result was the inability of Northern unions to organize and defend themselves since they often excluded African Americans or limited them to the production or labor gangs. This included the acceptance of a wage scale in the South that amounted to 50 percent of Northern wages.

Things began to change somewhat with the birth of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and industrial unionism. At that time, around 1936, the capitalists came up with the idea that since they could not legally stop unions, they could legalize non-unionism. The birthplace of Right To Work was the South, where the concept that unions meant communism—and the end of segregation—had

deep and historic roots.

Implicit in the acceptance of the organizing drive was the understanding that the Unions would not disturb the South. In return the "Solid South" Senators, who controlled almost all the important committees, allowed some of Roosevelt's "New Deal" legislation to pass.

There were heroic efforts to organize the South on an integrated basis. The struggles of the Furniture Worker Union, the Sharecropper Union, the Tobacco Workers Union (which gave birth to the Civil Rights anthem "We Shall Overcome") and especially the Mine Mill and Smelter Workers (which was instrumental in the formation of the National Negro Labor Council), are to name but a few.

The deep, entwined anti communism and racism, coupled with post WWII prosperity, spelt the

end to any serious union expansion after the McCarthy period began. The way was now open for the passage of the Taft-Hartley law, which laid the basis for the Right To Work legislation. Fragmented, disarmed and tied to the system they were trying to fight, globalization and robotics were the final nails for union expansion.

The Michigan Right to Work law puts the Union movement at a fork in the road—not a crossroad, but a fork. They cannot for long continue business as usual. It is either continue on the path to a fascist labor front or reshape the movement on the basis of class interests and class solidarity. It is a big order, since this calls for a conscious moving away from anti-communism. It calls for politicizing the working class on the basis of social consciousness. Here as never before, the future is up to us.

An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe and house its people must be and will be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of those struggling to create such a new economic system. It is a vehicle to bring the movement together, to create a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it.

Labor-replacing electronic technology is permanently eliminating jobs and destroying the foundation of the capitalist system. The people's needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where the socially necessary means of production are owned by society, not by the corporations.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

The People's Tribune, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

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Deadlines for articles and art: The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 500 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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WHY THE MOVEMENT NEEDS A PRESS

From the Editors

We are sometimes asked "Why does the movement to build a new America need a press?" The answer has to do with this moment in history. People are struggling just to get the basic necessities of life. Historical forces beyond anyone's control have set the stage for a new society to be built, but from this point on, how things turn out depends on what people think. This means that those of us who are seeking fundamental change are engaged in a battle of ideas, a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the people. If we don't raise the consciousness of the people and unite them around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it, then we'll fail in our effort to build a just and free society. To win the battle of ideas, we need a press.

Visit us on the web at www.PeoplesTribune.org

No Austerity: Tax the rich and cut the military budget

COVER STORY

The recent “fiscal cliff” wrangling in Congress over the federal deficit was a hoax—a charade—a scam, created to scare us into accepting ground-breaking cuts to Medicare and Social Security, and the further gutting of Medicaid and other social programs. The phony crisis was directed, scripted and acted out by the White House and Congress, while it was simultaneously narrated and delivered 24/7 to the American people by the corporate media machine.

In the name of austerity and sharing the pain, our U.S. corporate-government is once again robbing our public treasury, transferring billions of dollars into their corporate coffers—billions formerly used to provide for the basic human needs of everyday people. Austerity for us is prosperity for them, forcing us to pay for the economic crisis they created.

Consider that last year there were 2 million home foreclosures in the U.S., while 46 million people needed food stamps, an increase of 50% from 2008, when it was 31 million. Today, the real unemployment rate is 17-20% and much worse for the young, who are trying to find first-time jobs. All this suffering exists in the richest country in the world—a country awash in wealth.

Last year the 400 richest people in the U.S. had a total net wealth of \$1.7 trillion. In the first year after the 2008 recession, a startling 93% of all new income went to the richest 1%. Today, the lowest three-fifths of Americans—60% of the population—own just .2% (one-fifth of one percent) of all non-home ownership wealth.

Corporations who contract with the Department of Defense and the military decide where

budget allocations are made. Sixty percent of the federal budget goes to the U.S. military and its corporate partners like Lockheed Martin, Boeing and General Electric to name a few. The military budget totals nearly \$1 trillion. The U.S. war machine is an integral part of the economy and the twin parties of the corporations. The corporations have totally merged with our government.

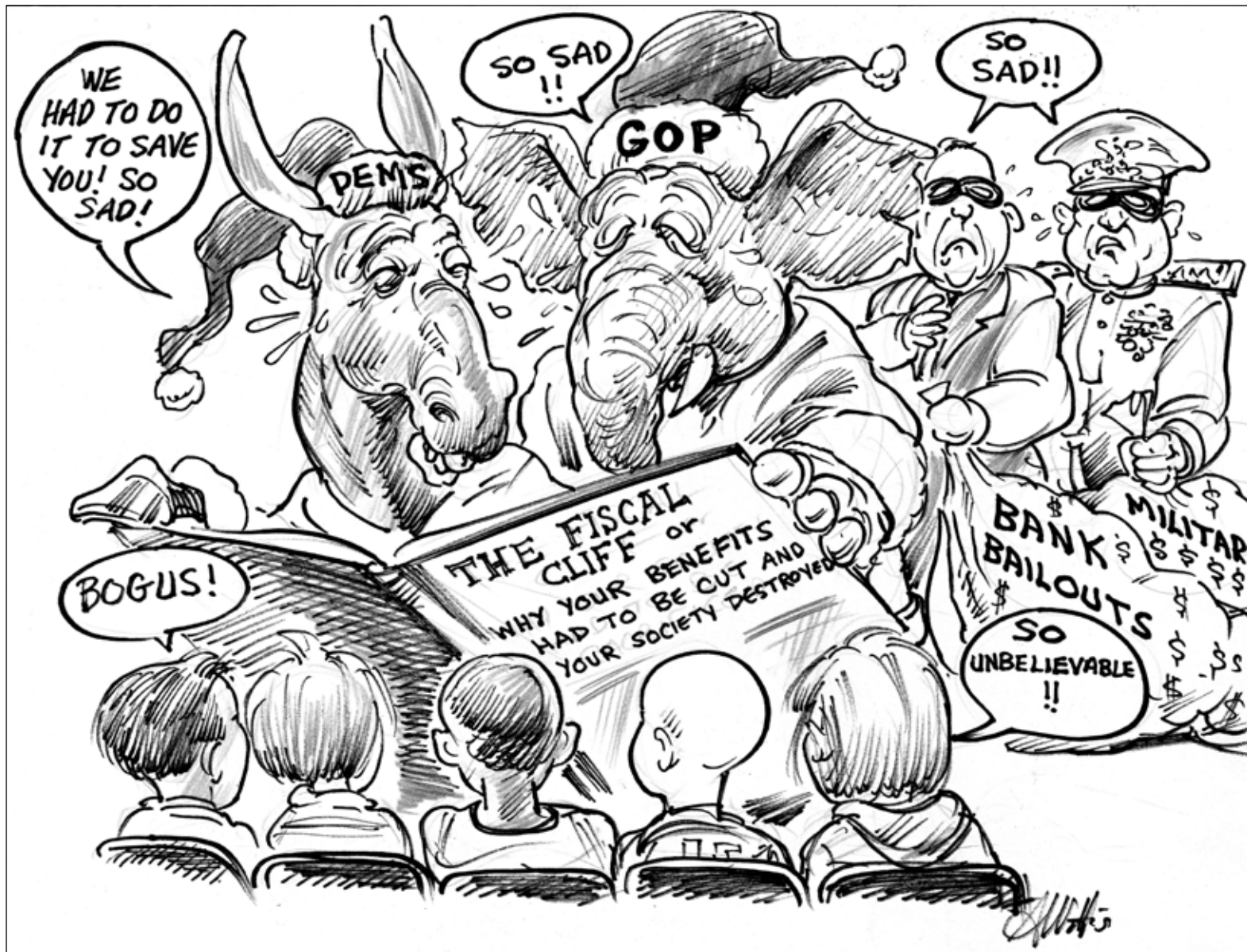
We are being swindled. Only we, the vast majority of the American people can determine if we can have a government of, by, and for the people, or if we

continue to allow the government to remain of, by, and for the corporations.

A movement is developing in opposition to the corporate criminals. However, we need to go on the offensive, armed with a program that expresses the economic and social interests of the American majority—a program that includes saving the planet from ecological disaster, with income security, affordable housing, free quality healthcare, and education for all. To accomplish this requires building a political movement and a political party that is independent of the

corporations.

Four years ago the economy of Iceland collapsed. Icelanders let the banks go bust, nationalized them, arrested and jailed the criminal politicians, bankers and others who were responsible and bailed out the people. Jailing our political and corporate criminals and bailing out the American people by taxing the rich and cutting the military budget would be a step in the right direction. Our future is up to us.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

FROM OUR READERS:

Dear People's Tribune,
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General Manager for
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Green Party presidential campaign manager speaks to next steps

Sandy Reid, for the People's Tribune, interviewed Ben Manski, Campaign Manager for the Jill Stein-Cheri Honkala presidential campaign.

People's Tribune: What are the main lessons of the Green Party presidential campaign?

Ben Manski: It's clear coming out of this election that the Green Party is the electoral voice for the people's movement in the US. Second, that a serious, well-organized effort will find a receptive audience. People want Green politics. They want a radical break from what this system has been giving us. A half million people voted for Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala and that represents a big step forward.

PT: Internationally known conservative scientists are speaking out about global warming. Is this a significant development?

BM: I think the ruling class is

done pretending that climate change is a question mark. The only question is what will be done in response to climate disaster? Who will pay? Who will suffer? Who will be protected? Our campaign made climate change the main issue just days ahead of Hurricane Sandy. We were already saying that we needed to move to a new economy that is built around the realities that Mother Nature has given us. Hurricane Sandy hit and re-informed that message. Now we see this report from the International Energy Association (IEA) that says what all of us have already known—that climate change is serious. The Green New Deal is about climate and austerity. Dr. Stein and Cheri Honkala understand that our economic system is the source of



Green Party Campaign Manager Ben Manski speaking in Madison, WI.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

poverty, mass unemployment and climate change, and unless we change our economic system, our problems will just get worse.

PT: Speak about the Green Party

program on poverty.

BM: The Green Party New Deal calls for an end to poverty in America. It includes an end to home foreclosure, and an end to unemployment through the creation of 25 million jobs; 16 million would be government jobs. The Green New Deal also calls for a local democratic socialized system of providing energy, telephone and other services to everyone. It would provide food programs on a much larger level through the local and federal government.

These are the needs of the country, not only in terms of ending poverty, but to move to a new sustainable economy.

PT: What will be the Green Party activities for the coming year?

BM: We are working to make sure that the new energy that was attracted to Jill and Cheri's campaign becomes part of the Green Party for the long haul. We are holding organizing campaign schools around the country to teach the skills involved for running for office and for running election campaigns. Our first campaign school is planned for Minnesota and Chicago in January. We are also very focused on continuing the role that Dr. Stein and Cheri Honkala played in the larger movement in the course of the campaign. That is, taking on Wall Street, fighting for a Green New Deal and supporting movements against climate change. Carrying forward campaigns for human rights in the cities and dealing with the issues of poverty and workers rights are in our plans.

For more information about the Green Party, visit jillstein.org.

Move to Amend: Fighting the corporate grip on power

David Cobb is a spokesperson for Move to Amend and was the 2004 Green Party presidential candidate. Bob Lee, for the People's Tribune, interviewed him in mid-November.



INTERVIEW: DAVID COBB

People's Tribune: Can you give our audience an overview of Move to Amend?

David Cobb: Move to amend (MTA) is a multi-racial coalition of groups and individuals coming together to demand a constitutional amendment to abolish two illegitimate court-created legal doctrines that serve as the lynchpin for how the ruling elite have stolen our sacred right to self-government in this country. The first doctrine is called corporate personhood, a shorthand to describe corporate constitutional rights by which corporate lawyers can go into court and overturn democratically enacted laws that attempt to control the corporations.

The second doctrine is that money equals speech [which al-

lows] the wealthy to basically buy and sell our elections to the point that we have auctions, not elections.

We intend to amend the United States Constitution to abolish both of these two illegitimate court-created legal doctrines, which would allow economic democracy to be practiced in the United States of America. We believe that ordinary people must take up this struggle and articulate their vision of the society we would have if we eliminated the mechanisms by which the small ruling elite are controlling the political, economic and legal institutions.

PT: How does Move to Amend go about its work?

DC: The thread is a commitment to deep political education, whereby ordinary people can come to better understand why it is so that we're not living in the world that almost all of us want. Our commitment is to provide people an analytical framework to understand how the small ruling elite has hijacked our government.

Our mechanism is to create local affiliates across the country that will work on resolutions first at the local, then moving up to the county, state, and federal level. We'll be engaging in political work that will ultimately require that people run for political office on this analytical



Move to Amend the Constitution protest in Spokane, WA.

PHOTO/PUBLIC CITIZEN

framework, willing to challenge directly the ruling elite that has taken control of both political parties, to the point that ultimately we will have literally a new and different Congress, state legislatures, county executives and city councils all across this country.

PT: How is it going?

DC: We are experiencing what late-stage corporate capitalism looks like, both ecologically and economically. There is no going back. The system is turning on itself. But this crisis also presents an opportunity, and I think the fact that MTA is well positioned,

just in terms of historic timing, explains why we are growing faster than anything I've ever been part of.

We didn't even exist as a coalition before 2010, and today we just rolled over 244,000 supporters at movetoamend.org, and that number continues to tick up. Today we have over 150 local affiliates. We have over 1000 endorsing organizations, about 20 of them putting real effort and energy behind the coalition. We've passed resolutions and advisory opinions at the local, county and state level already. Over seven million voters in November had an opportunity to weigh in on

MTA and we won every single vote, almost every one by supermajorities – 60, 70 and in some cases 85 percent.

PT: Where do you think it goes next?

DC: It's becoming more obvious that there are systemic problems with the economic, legal, and political systems. These systems are repressive and exploitive and must be replaced. I'm hopeful that we'll win not just a constitutional amendment, but that we'll have the cultural and political revolution we so desperately need and so richly deserve.



The photos on this page show what the fight for Democracy looks like in Michigan! Traverse City activists organized a grassroots campaign to overturn the dictator law. They stand in support of Benton Harbor, one of the first cities to experience the wrath of an Emergency Manager.

PHOTO/REJECTEMERGENCYMANAGERS.COM

Governor Snyder: Take this law and shove it! MICHIGAN VOTERS DEFEAT DICTATOR BILL

By Claire McClinton

MICHIGAN — A statewide bus tour, letters to the editor, TV ads, big donors, and more, did not keep Michigan's Governor Snyder from suffering a stunning defeat on November 6 when Proposal 1—the Emergency Manager (Dictator) Law was struck down by Michigan Voters. All but six of Michigan's 83 counties said NO to martial law.

The law allowed the governor to dispatch "Emergency Managers" (EM) to municipalities including school districts. Empowered by the law, "Managers" displaced local elected officials, revised union contracts, sold public assets, or even dissolved a city or school district altogether. The seven localities under siege by Managers are majority Black and the home of formerly behemoth industrial giants such as those in Detroit (the Big 3), Flint (General Motors), and Benton Harbor (Whirlpool).

Michigan Forward, an advocacy group of Detroit that spearheaded the drive, was joined by Stand Up for Democracy (supported by AFSCME) who led

the court battles. Acting on behalf of the state, pro-EM groupings did everything they could to keep the proposal off the ballot, including challenging whether the proposal was written in the correct font size. The Michigan Board of Canvassers became the "Font police" and the Court of Appeals backed them up. It got so ugly that even the Detroit Free Press, which supports the EM law, said that the decision was "making a mockery" of the judicial system.

During the course of the year-long battle, labor groups began to retreat from the fight for Democracy when the Michigan legislature threatened to pass "Right to Work" legislation. Funds and manpower shifted to another ballot proposal for a Constitutional Amendment to guarantee the right to bargain collectively. However, the grassroots, independent groupings that had emerged against the dictatorship legislation continued to mobilize against the law. Cities like Traverse City, and Ann Arbor had their own local organizations even though their cities were not saddled with Managers them-

selves. Also, Republicans in areas such as Bay County amassed a network to overturn the law.

Michigan's Mackinac Center for public policy (a statewide right-wing think tank) where the Emergency Manager law was largely cultivated and promoted, also took a huge loss. Their quest to help establish a post-industrial model without "Democracy as we know it" was soundly rejected. Not satisfied with what voters said, and refusing to take NO for an answer, the legislature vowed to reintroduce a similar bill.

In the Emergency Manager world, bondholders continue to be paid while public assets are privatized and public unions are crushed. In the end, Michigan voters could not reconcile financial crisis as a pretext for martial law. As the nation and the world watched, we did the right thing.

(Right) Over 100 people join Concerned Pastors for Social Action and PA 4 Task Force to protest oppressive water rate hikes via dictatorship at the world famous Crim Race in Flint, MI.

PHOTO/CHAD RICHARDSON

WATER FIGHT HEATS UP IN MICHIGAN

By Marian Kramer

The water fight is heating up again in Michigan. The state, which is the representative of corporate interests, is now trying to take over the Highland Park and Detroit water departments. This is happening amongst all the other activity taking place—the legislature just voted to make Michigan an anti-union, right-to-work state. Corporate fascism in Michigan is creeping in.

The State of Michigan is trying to have private corporations take over the Detroit Water Department. If they are successful, then the Highland Park water will not be safe. Further, if the water in Detroit and Highland Park goes private, so goes the Great Lakes water supply. So if they get Detroit, they get the nation.

Since there is so much opposition to privatizing the water, the state and the corporations have to maneuver behind the scenes to accomplish their goals. Recently, the Highland Park, Michigan water service was transferred to Detroit supposedly on a temporary basis for four days due to a malfunction in the water pumping station. This action happened without the State person and the Mayor of Highland Park notifying the City Council, the body that is head of the Highland Park Water Department.

Residents found out because their drinking water suddenly turned yellow or brown. Residents were not notified to boil their water.

We finally got an official notification by the Mayor after some ten days. He stated he did not know when our water would be transferred back to Highland Park. These decisions are being made by the advisor to the state who works for Gov. Snyder and the Mayor of Highland Park. Their ultimate goal is to take the water from the residents. As far as the Mayor is concerned, we are better off staying with Detroit providing the water or privatizing the water.

The State of Michigan is trying to put the Detroit Water Department under private management. Detroit is operating under a "Consent Agreement" with the State meaning that the State has a lot of power within the city. This action with the water is also the key to opening up the Great Lakes to them. The Great Lakes is the best fresh water in the nation. Imagine the profits that could be made. Right now the residents own the water in Highland Park and Detroit. This is the problem they face.

We must continue the fight against the corporations taking over our water. The future of our ability to protect our water is in our hands. We must protect our water.



FIGHTING CORPORATE ‘RIGHT TO WORK’ LAW



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Protest against anti-union right-to-work legislation in Michigan.

PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

By Darryl “Waistline” Mitchell

MICHIGAN — In the face of 12,000 protesters, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder signed a right-to-work bill December 11, 2012, making Michigan the 24th state to become right to work.

“I don’t view this as anti-union

at all...I believe this is pro-worker,” Snyder said. Right to Work is pro-worker in the same way the Fugitive Slave Act was pro-labor. Right to Work means a person can work in a unionized workplace and receive all of the built up rights, entitlements and wage levels without paying dues.

Right-to-work laws exist in 23 other U.S. states. Such laws are allowed under the 1947 federal Taft-Hartley Act, Section 14b. All of the former core Southern slave states and a number of states in the Midwest, Plains, and Rocky Mountain regions have right-to-work laws (with five

states—Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi and Oklahoma—going one step further and writing right-to-work laws in their state constitutions).

Labor, union and nonunion, view the initiative as a direct attack on unions and an indirect attack on all labor designed to make Michigan a low-wage state. Right to Work legislation comes as retribution for Proposal 2, a failed Nov. 6 union-backed ballot initiative that would have barred a right-to-work law in the state constitution.

On December 12, 2012, thousands of union and non-union members rallied and protested against Right to Work in the state capital. Groups as diverse as Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Occupy “Michigan” groups, notably Detroit, church groups and transitional unions joined hands in united action against the corporate agenda to reduce the whole working class to the wage level of the the lowest paid worker. This new level of united action is a wonderful follow up of activity of UAW members supporting the welfare rights agenda and protesting against Snyder’s actions to throw defenseless women and children off welfare and into the streets.

We can and must build upon united activity and grassroots organizing such as the November victory in recalling the Emergency Manager Act. Although there remains much to be done, the growing new class of unemployed, underemployed, and impoverished can learn basic organization, how to work together and behave as an organized group from our union brothers and sisters. The battle lines are drawn. Legislation to reintroduce the Emergency Manager Law, the transfer of Public Education into corporate hands via the notorious Education Achievement Authority (EAA) laws, attacks on Planned Parenthood coupled with the dismantling of the Safety net for poor women and children, the rip off of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the taxing of Retiree pensions, push the workers lower and lower. These laws are corporate sponsored with we the people on the losing end.

We must find ways to bring the struggles together. Only then can we beat back the fascist attacks and return Michigan to its rightful place as a leader in the causes of labor and humanity.

Walmart workers strike on Black Friday

By Chuck Parker

LA QUINTA, CA — In November, Walmart workers at the La Quinta store joined the historic wave of Black Friday actions that took place at over 1,200 Walmart stores in cities across the U.S. Early on Black Friday morning, shoppers woke up to a vibrant scene in front of the La Quinta Walmart store as demonstrators lined up to protest against Walmart and renewed their call for respect, improvements in working conditions, and an end to retaliation against Walmart workers who speak out.

At about 6:30 a.m., members of the Organization United for Respect (OUR) at Walmart began passing out lime-green t-shirts, leaflets, and hot drinks to striking workers and their supporters staging outside the Walmart store in La Quinta. Walmart was ready with security guards, Sheriff’s officers, and managers in suits behind barricades that blocked off the area directly in front of the store, between the two main entrances. Joining the Walmart strikers were members of the United Food and

Commercial Workers union, as well as Occupy Coachella Valley, and the Comité Latino—an immigrants’ rights group.

By 7 a.m., the group of about 50 workers and their supporters marched past the barricades and began to picket the store, shouting slogans and waving signs: “WHAT DO WE WANT?” “RESPECT!” “WHEN DO WE WANT IT?” “NOW!” and “WE WANT FULL-TIME, NOT PART-TIME!” Television cameras were also there and several Walmart workers bravely walked up and told their stories to the reporters.

“It’s not easy standing up to the biggest company in the U.S. which tries to silence us with intimidation and firings,” said Maria Ledesma, a striking Walmart worker. “We are here because we want good jobs, full-time with good benefits. Thousands have joined us because we can’t continue to work in such a hostile environment. We refuse to be silenced!”

Lew Stewart of Occupy Coachella Valley spoke to the crowd of striking workers and their supporters, highlighting the



Walmart workers protest in California’s Coachella Valley on Black Friday.

PHOTO/DAREL PROBST

importance of supporting striking Walmart workers in a time when basic workers’ rights are being rolled back and attacked by the richest 1% of the population.

Mario Lazcano of the Comité Latino also spoke to the assembled workers and stressed the importance of organization and unity, and reminded them of the famous statement by the historical Mexican figure Emiliano Za-

pata: “It’s better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.”

After the rally, strikers drove into Los Angeles County to join a larger protest of over a thousand people at a Walmart store in Paramount, California. Nationwide, major demonstrations were also held in Dallas, the San Francisco Bay Area, Milwaukee, Washington D.C., and Miami.

Black Friday’s national day

of action comes as a response to Walmart’s unwillingness to take responsibility for its illegal and unfair treatment of workers. Walmart workers are fighting back by creating alliances with labor unions and community groups, and by utilizing the Internet and Facebook to build their movement.

To learn more about OUR Walmart visit Facebook.com/OURWMT or ForRespect.org.

Teachers continue fighting for the children

Interview with Karen Lewis, President of Chicago Teachers' Union

Prof. William Watkins, University of Illinois in Chicago, interviews Karen Lewis, President of the Chicago Teachers Union.



INTERVIEW: KAREN LEWIS

Prof. Watkins: How did the Chicago Teacher's Union prepare for the strike?

Karen Lewis: Preparations for the strike started before the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE) took office. We attended school closing hearings, charter school opening hearings and Board of Ed meetings. We formed relationships with teachers, paraprofessionals, clinicians, parents, students and community organizations in the affected schools. We spent time listening to people's concerns and working together to plan direct actions, discuss ways to reframe the narrative about Chicago's schools and neighborhoods. That took years. In addition when we took office, we organized a community board that provided advice and feedback on our many campaigns.

By the time our contract campaign came along, we had built solid relationships. On a more focused level, we had organizing conversations in all of our school buildings and involved our members in writing proposals to go into a contract they wanted to see. We had a 35-member bargaining team that represented all of our members. We had constant feedback with our members and held frequent meetings that updated the delegations on negotiations.

PW: What lessons can we take away from the teacher's strike?

KL: That going on strike does not mean not going to work. It means that collective voice means collective action and we can no longer sit by while backroom deals that don't involve membership get done. Labor power means something and we've been asleep at the wheel for years.

PW: Mayor Emanuel and the political leaders will say the teachers have busted the bank and caused hardship. Teachers will be blamed for closing schools and cutbacks. What is your response?

KL: Teachers have been blamed for EVERYTHING that ails this system. But parents know the truth. 79% of parents ACROSS the country, including Chicago trust their teachers. But blaming,



Parents and students supporting Chicago Teachers Union strike.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

shaming and naming is a distraction from what's really going on. Schools have been underfunded and neglected for years. Chicago is hyper-segregated. The child poverty rate is 87%. All these are untenable and must be addressed.

PW: Your union masterfully focused on the conditions of learning rather than salary. Please comment on what is going on in Chicago schools.

KL: Most people in Chicago had

no idea, including the Mayor, that these schools are un-air conditioned and in miserable physical shape. People didn't know that 160 schools are without public libraries, 92 elementary schools with no playgrounds, less than 450 social workers for 450K students. These are issues we brought to light and continue to go unanswered while the elite in this city want to scream about bad teachers.

PW: The "haters" say schools

are stale, teachers are lazy and we need the "fresh" ideas of charter schools for a re-birth. What is your view?

KL: Clearly there are problems that need to be addressed, but turning over public assets to private interests are not a panacea. Curriculum needs to address individual student needs and billionaire reformers need to check their egos at the door and look at research that doesn't co-sign to their neo-liberal worldview.

PUT THE 'PUBLIC' BACK INTO PUBLIC EDUCATION

By Fran Huckaby and Todd Alan Price

On November 6, 87% voters in the affected precincts found their way to the end of the ballot and voted yes for an elected school board—this despite some irregularities in which precinct ballots did not include the measure at all.

CHICAGO, IL — "Put The Public back into public education," stated Sarah Simmons, a Chicago Public School (CPS) parent and co-founding member of Parents4Teachers, when interviewed after a Town Hall meeting. Organized by CODE (Communities Organized for Democracy in Education) and moderated by Logan Square community organizer Will Guzzardi, an expert panel advocated replacing the mayor-appointed school board with an elected, representative school board. Enthusiastic supporters reveled in the recent community support—demonstrated

during the Chicago teachers' strike. Still, the panel and supporters acknowledged the steep challenge ahead to slow if not set back the corporate-school reform agenda.

Karen Lewis, President of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), started the panel presentation by pointing out that this non-elected school board is composed of members—several of whom are CEOs, bankers, and real estate developers—who do not have children in CPS. Subsequently, she claimed, they are willing to close schools without even "stepping foot into them." The unelected school board will announce in March which schools it plans to close—perhaps more than 100.

Parent-teacher alliances have produced tangible results. An advisory referendum was placed on the November 6 ballot in 327 precincts calling for rescinding the 1995 amendment to the Chicago School Reform Act, 1988. That law gives the mayor "unfettered



Ames school parents unveil signatures gathered for stopping school closings.

PHOTO/FRAN HUCKABY

authority" to appoint the School Board.

Acknowledging that an elected school board will not fix all CPS problems, University of Illinois-Chicago professor Pauline Lipman argued that getting past square one is impossible with a mayor appointed school board.

The panel discussion stressed that getting a bill before the state legislature would be the next step. CTU president Lewis made clear that the political work for public schools is a never-ending quest for justice and stressed that these legislative efforts for an elected and representative school board

are just one piece.

The panel's clear message: Dalia Bonia, the parent and elected Local School Council member emphasized the importance of community involvement in the schools. "We need to elect the people that will govern the education of our children." Ms. Bonia showed a banner of signatures surrounding the statement, "Ames belongs to the community." Ben Joravsky of the *Chicago Reader* outlined how under mayoral control TIF (tax increment financing) shortchanged the students, making it clear that schools are used for political and economic gain.

This article is part of the effort to inform teachers, parents and community members in preparation for the next stage of the battle. In Chicago "square one" for bringing public accountability into public education starts with the elected school board.

Texas Special Election: Green Party in ballot battle to stop toxic TransCanada XL Keystone Pipeline

By Maria Elena Castellanos

HOUSTON, TX — On November 29 the Green Party launched a special election campaign for Texas Senate District 6 and to mobilize voters behind Maria Selva, a strong working class Latina candidate who staunchly opposes the completion of the TransCanada XL Keystone Pipeline. Stopping the pipeline is now a primary focus for environmentalists nationwide and worldwide. It is an ecological catastrophe in-the-making, a potential “game-over” factor that would pour so much CO2 and other hydro-carbons into air, water, and soil that it would make the earth uninhabitable for human beings and other living things.

Texas Senate District 6 is at the terminal end of the pipeline. The XL would bring toxic tar sands oil and corrosive fluids from Alberta, Canada to Texas petro-chemical plants situated on the Gulf of Mexico. The pipeline would pass down through the ecologically sensitive mid-section of the U.S.—whose people and agriculture depend on underground aquifers for life-giving

clean water—and then across Texas to Houston’s petro-chemical plants located in District 6. It would terminate in the severely polluted Latino neighborhood of Manchester in Houston’s east end near the petro-chemical plants along Houston’s ship channel.

This is a monumental struggle and the Texas Greens need your help with media, campaign leafletting, funding, phone-banking, internet bloggers, block-walkers, and voter car-poolers during January, 2013.

Maria Selva has lived near Manchester for many years. “I want Texas to stay as an energy mecca, but through new, clean renewable energy technologies. Innovation will increase jobs. We need to be on the leading edge of the future of energy instead of the worst of the regressive, toxic methods of production.”

The Democratic Party-backed contenders in the Senate 6 race justify their support for TransCanada by claiming it will create many new jobs in Houston’s plants. Not true! The petro-chemical plants that process fossil hydrocarbons have already been largely taken over by computer-



Green Party activist, Maria Selva, candidate for Texas-Senate Dist. 6, takes part in the blockade at a Valero plant in Houston, while protesting the XL TransCanada Keystone Tarsands Pipeline under partial construction in Texas. PHOTO/SELVA-FOR-TX-SENATE6-CAMPAIGN

ized, electronic technology which continues to displace thousands of human workers in the fossil-fuel driven energy industries. Giant campaign donations from oil supporters tie both Democrats and Republicans to TransCanada’s lies about more jobs, American energy independence, and safety.

“Our task is first to find and rally the oppressed that don’t benefit from the pipeline, and expose the lies about job cre-

ation,” said Texas Green Party leader Alan Apurim. “Second, it is to build an organization on the ground and on the web that will show how Maria Selva is addressing the people’s demands for a clean, safe environment, and how she would be a true people’s Senator. The largely Latino votes will be divided between several Hispanic-named candidates, splitting votes and giving us a good chance at a run-off. Regard-

less of the outcome, this campaign will give the Green Party big-time publicity as the ONLY party whose Senate 6 candidate staunchly opposes TransCanada’s land-grabbing pollution.”

Contact the Green Senate 6 campaign through Don Cook at zenblews@hotmail.com. Send donations to the campaign’s treasurer, David Courtney at david@chandrakantha.com.

LATINO VOTE — TODAY AND TOMORROW

Editor’s Note: This article appeared in our sister publication, the Tribuno del Pueblo, in their December 2012 edition.

By the Editors of the Tribuno del Pueblo

With immigration and jobs the main issues on their people’s minds during the election, Latinos overwhelmingly voted Democratic to elect Obama for yet another term.

As regards immigration, the choice was meager at best. Romney’s rhetoric was hardline and uncompromising, holding out no hope of amnesty. With Obama’s Deferred Action decree, and his promise that “Immigration Reform” will again be a top priority in his second term in office, Latinos were swayed to the Democrats. This happened despite that Obama deported more immigrants than his Republican predecessor, and his failure to deliver on the promise of comprehensive immigration reform during his first term in office.

Job security is a top issue for all workers, and yet, neither Republicans nor Democrats have a plan to solve the problem of jobs. All workers, regardless of gen-

der or color are looking for answers. As the economy worsens, and jobs disappear, workers are not getting straight answers from the main political parties.

The reality is the economy is based on less and less workers’ labor, due to technologi-

cal advances in the production of goods. This is an era where capitalism is trying to survive by removing all obstacles to maximizing profits, i.e. by laying off workers and replacing them with machinery run by computers. No employer is going to buy

the workers’ labor power when a computer or robot will do the job cheaper and with no complaints.

Under capitalism, having no jobs means poverty and starvation. Furthermore, the corporate-run government has made it clear that there will be no more safety net.

What can workers do? Currently 23.7 million Latinos are able to vote, and it is estimated that by 2050, Latinos will be 132 million and represent 30% percent of the population. The Latino vote counts. However, Latinos and the entire laboring class of Americans must make it count for their class interest.

This election is over. But the issues of jobs and immigration reform are not going away. Disillusioned, some workers broke with the Democratic Party in this past election, and some couldn’t. One thing is clear, there’s a fight brewing over a real political alternative to represent worker’s interests, a third political party.

This doesn’t happen automatically. Latinos and all workers need to fight for it and to continue raising the awareness that there are two classes in society so as to distinguish friend from foe. One of our readers, put it succinctly, “We have a future to guard and not simply hand it over to legislators who think they can decide whether or not I get to have a better future for myself and future generations.”

The Tribuno del Pueblo couldn’t agree more.



Young people and educators join 2012 May Day rally in Chicago.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

DEBT IS THE TIE THAT BINDS THE 99%

By Steve Miller

OAKLAND, CA — Debtors Assemblies are rising across the country. People come together in public spaces to discuss how we all are ensnared in debt. The natural question always comes up: how are we going to deal with this?

The complicated concept of debt is clarified by a few simple yet profound facts:

- The average person owes more in debt than they do in taxes.
- You must pay your debts (every month) before you pay taxes (once or twice a year). The Law massively favors lenders over debtors.
- You pay debts to the financial industry, which has already been bailed-out. Consequently, personal debt is one of the main engines of Wall Street profit.

In 2008, Taxpayers bought corporate debt by bailing out Wall Street with at least \$16 trillion dollars. This is far more than all individual and government debt. Since we still pay debt to these corporations, we are in fact paying twice!

Now it becomes clear why we are constantly barraged with the idea that we should reduce taxes for “Big Government” — i.e.,



People protest in Chicago against the growing personal debt owed to the corporations.

PHOTO/FB.COM/OCCUPYROGERSPARK

government that helps people, not corporations.

Obviously, if taxes are reduced, we could pay more in debt for the same privatized services. Attacking government “of, by and for the people” is a good marketing strategy for Wall Street.

In the 1920s, real estate tax, mostly on corporations, accounted for 2/3 of urban revenue. Today it is 1/6 for the US as a

whole. Taxes have been shifted from property to labor to make up the difference.

Individual debt takes many forms: student debt, mortgage debt, medical debt, consumer debt, credit card debt. We are also forced to collectively pay off municipal debt, state debt, federal debt and pension debt.

There can be no debt if there is no collateral. Your house is your collateral for mortgage

debt. When you can't pay the mortgage, the state seizes your house and turns it over to the bank. Collateral for student debt is your capacity to work in the future. This is one reason why it is illegal to go bankrupt for student debt.

Financial corporations have used “Credit Default Swaps” and “Interest Rate Swaps” to force most local governments closer to bankruptcy. Municipal debt is

guaranteed by collateral in public property: city buildings, water and sewers, roads, parking meters, port and airport property.

Wall Street demands privatization of public property when cities cannot pay their debts. People can occupy the public collateral and refuse to turn it over to the banks.

Government at every level is supposed to benefit the public. Today, city and state officials are trying to abandon their accountability to real people in order to service corporations. We cannot allow them to take this step. Debt in all forms is rampant criminality.

People must force our elected officials to stand with the public and refuse to sacrifice public resources for debts that we have already paid off. They asked to be elected to defend the interests of the public. That's what we must make them do.

A system that can't go on, won't go on. Instead of exhausting ourselves to win one, single reform that gives the public a tiny amount of relief, we need to begin the only conversation that is worth having today: how can we transform society to benefit human cooperation, not human exploitation?

March to end Monsanto's genetically engineered food system



Occupy Monsanto Global Day of Action. Protesters raise awareness about lab-created genetically modified organisms.

PHOTO/SEAN SUDDER

By Effe Slayer

ATLANTA, GA — Standing outside an Atlanta Kroger grocery store, food advocate Steven Wing reads lyrics to a crowd of protesters and curious shoppers.

“If you're gonna play God with my food. If you're gonna play God and leave organic farmer's screwed. If you're gonna

play God with my decisions.... If you're gonna play God I want a new religion.”

In a moment that is being referred to as “the food fight of the decade”, the lyrics to “Tell Us What You're Growing”, written by an Arizona songwriter, Celia, couldn't be more poignant.

The group of protesters is participating in the “Occupy Mon-

santo Global Day of Action.” They're on a mission to raise awareness about lab-created genetically modified organisms (GMOs) within the food supply. With rally stops at five “Monsanto Points of Distribution” locations—Publix, Kroger, Home Depot, Whole Foods Market, and McDonald's—the Occupy Monsanto Genetic Crimes Unit (GCU) declares each location a genetic crime scene for their sale of Monsanto's toxic products.

“This is a decontamination zone,” declares Vince C. through a megaphone. He is dressed in a biohazard suit. “If you've been contaminated by Monsanto's toxins, you'll need to be tagged.” Shoppers are outfitted with special hospital wristbands to symbolize a health biohazard.

“There's something wrong when the chemical manufacturer Monsanto, the same company that made Agent Orange, owns our commercial food supply,” says Food Supply Rescue Coalition's (FSRC) Jaye Crawford. A fitness professional, mother, and food advocate, Crawford formed

the FSRC to educate the community on the dangers of genetically engineered food. “Consumers have no idea they're eating Frankenfoods contaminated by Monsanto's GMOs. Consumers don't know because our government is corrupt. FDA, USDA, Monsanto are one and the same. We want a Monsanto-free food supply. We want labels. We want what 50 other countries and 40% of the world's population has, which is the right to know, and the right to choose what we eat,” says Crawford.

This “food fight” over genetically modified organisms has recently gained the national spotlight. In November, Californian's are poised to vote “yes” for the labeling of genetically engineered foods. Prop 37, a ballot initiative, would require food manufacturers to label products containing GMOs by 2013.

“We already have food labels showing nutrition, allergy information and other facts consumers want to know. This measure simply adds information telling us if food is produced using ge-

netic engineering, which is when food is modified in a laboratory by adding DNA from other plants, animals, bacteria or viruses”, says Nina Roark, a concerned grandmother from Atlanta. “We're hoping that the seeds of change blow from California to put an end to this GMO food insanity.”

With over \$32 million in opposing donations to Prop 37, Roark reminds consumers, “Now more than ever, it's crucial for consumers to choose manufacturer loyalties wisely. We have to vote hard with every food dollar we spend.”

Update: As of December 5, 2012, the absentee ballots for California's labeling initiative are still being counted. The vote in favor of Prop 37 has inched its way up to a 48% “YES” vote. The deadline for the final vote count is December 14, 2012. Such a narrow margin may lead to a total vote recount, which will be good news for food and our democracy.

A Green New Deal for America

By Charmaine (Shark) Barros

“You can tell a great deal about a society by the way they treat their elderly” (Unknown)

DENVER, CO — I am a Colorado native and a disabled senior. Today I received notice from the state that an “Administrative Error” was made and I was overpaid in foodstamps. So effective immediately, my benefits are cut from \$40 a month to \$30, and I have to pay back the overpayment amount. Wow! News flash!

The recent Presidential campaign spent six billion dollars on the campaign. I watch daily as our economic crisis worsens and see the destruction of this failing system. With disbelief, we witness hundreds of billions of dollars spent on tax breaks and bailouts for the rich, while we lose our homes, jobs, schools, livelihood and go hungry...all in the richest nation in the world.

We are affected by gentrification in our communities and

stand by as Corporate Giants steal our land to build empires off the backs of the poor. Corporations like Coors in Golden, Colorado, or Whirlpool in Benton Harbor, Michigan, or the numerous corporations fracking all across our nation, are disrespecting, stealing and destroying our land and water. Everyday we are affected by the fascist laws that have been put in place by the Patriot Act, the Authorization Act, the Arizona Immigration Act, and the New Dream Act that tells us we can go to school, but not to the doctor. We let immigrants build our country, raise our kids, clean our houses, do the yard work and then tell them, “go back to where you came from.” This is the nation we live in. It values control and war more than salvaging human dignity.

Recently, I listened to and met with the Green Party’s Presidential Candidates Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala. They spoke of a plan for an economy that would serve everyday Americans. This

would involve restoring our housing supply, bringing jobs while working towards halting climate change and, most importantly, calling for the 1% to pay their fair share. Cheri is a pioneer in the struggle for change and equality and is known all over the country for her passion and commitment to this country and its people. She doesn’t just speak change...she is that change. I’m proud to know that both Jill and Cheri have the experience, passion and strategies necessary to follow through with a vision to create a better nation. We have the political will to change this society and free it from unnecessary suffering and poverty.

The days of flipping a coin to pick between the lesser of two evils, or having to choose between who will shoot you and who will stab is over. I vote for Hope and Change, a better world! This is The Green New Deal.

Contact Shark at Sharkbarros11@gmail.com or call 720-629-6177.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM *Corporations are filling millions of jobs with second-generation robots*

By Dave Ransom

SANTA ROSA, CA — Last fall’s presidential election was all about the economy, specifically how to create good-paying jobs.

But the candidates ignored the elephant in the room—the increasingly sophisticated robots now replacing workers in industry after industry.

In the heat of the campaign, Republican candidate Mitt Romney said he could create millions of new jobs by cutting taxes on corporations and the rich. Democrat President Barack Obama promised to create millions of jobs through spending on infrastructure—roads, bridges, schools, and the like.

But neither candidate addressed the looming loss of millions of jobs, as corporations replace human beings on the job floor with fast, mobile, second-generation robots.

That would have required them to explain that new, computerized automation means corporations increasingly have no need for workers.

They would have had to explain that this world-changing shift underlies the economic cri-

sis as a whole.

And they would have had to explain that the most important political question today is this: how to reorganize society so that everyone benefits from the new mode of production—and no one is left out in the cold.

Sophisticated robots have been replacing thousands of workers in production jobs for some time now. But only recently has this earthshaking change been given serious attention in the press.

The shift is too big and too obvious to keep hidden any more—not when the Chinese company that assembles iPhones with the world’s lowest paid workers announces it is buying a million robots to replace them.

The new, second-generation robots can multi-task with pinpoint accuracy, and they are so fast they must be shielded for the safety of their human attendants.

“With these machines, we can make any consumer device in the world,” an engineer at the Philips electric-shaver plant in the Netherlands told the New York Times.

The Times compares production workers’ replacement by robots today to the 20th-century

mechanization of agriculture—which drove 95 percent of agricultural workers off the land and into the factories.

Today, there is a big disconnect between opening new factories and creating jobs.

“Bringing Jobs & Manufacturing Back to California,” proclaims a banner at a new solar-panel factory in Milpitas, just outside of San Jose.

But “in the state-of-the-art plant, where the assembly line runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there are robots everywhere and few human workers,” the Times reports.

In nearby Fremont, path-breaking Tesla Motors has reopened the old GM plant, where legions of workers once assembled half a million cars a year.

But Tesla’s assembly is done by squads of robots performing as many as four jobs—welding, riveting, bonding, and installing.

With robots replacing workers, creating jobs is not the problem. Creating a new way to share the bounty is the problem. Tied to the 1%, the Democrats and Republicans can’t address that problem.

But any party of, by, and for the 99% will put it front and center.

SPEAKERS FOR A NEW AMERICA

CHERI HONKALA



The 2012 Green Party Vice Presidential candidate, Cheri is a leading advocate for the poor and homeless in America. She co-founded the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign. She organized tens of thousands holding marches, demonstrations and setting up tent cities. Cheri became the first woman to run for Sheriff of Philadelphia and the first and only Sheriff candidate nationwide pledging to stop home foreclosures by the big banks. Her platform was to “Keep Families in Their Homes.”

MATT SEDILLO



Matt is a two-time national slam poet, grand slam champion and author of “For What I Might Do Tomorrow.” He writes from the vantage point of a second generation Chicano born in an era of diminishing opportunities and a crumbling economy. His writing, a fearless, challenging and at times even confrontational blend of humor, history and political theory reflects those realities. Matt’s poetry is a sobering call for the restructuring of society in the interest of people not corporate profits. It is a clarion call for those who know a new world is possible and inevitable.

DARRYL ‘WAISTLINE’ MITCHELL



Darryl, now a retired Detroit autoworker, became politically active at the age of 11. He joined the League of Revolutionary Black Workers at age 16. He was also a founding member of MERUM, Mound Road Engine RUM (Revolutionary Union Movement.) A participant in the 2010 Detroit Social Forum and Occupy Detroit, the Peoples Tribune published his pamphlet “Detroit: A History of struggle. A vision of the Future” in 2010. He is currently a member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

If you would like to bring a speaker to your city, contact Speakers for a New America at 800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com.

STRANGE FRUIT REAPPEARS IN SILICON VALLEY

By Robin Yeamans

SAN JOSE, CA — Billie Holiday sang in 1939: “Southern trees bear a strange fruit, blood on the leaves and blood at the root.”

Recently, suspicious deaths of African-American men have occurred in the South and across the US. When victims are discovered hanging—their deaths rapidly termed “suicide”—families call for answers. On Feb. 21, 2012, ID TV exposed this in *The Injustice Files: at the End of a Rope*.

In San Jose, CA, Gregory Johnson, Jr. (nicknamed “Junior”) was reported found on Nov. 22, 2008, hanging from a pipe in the Sigma Chi fraternity

where he lived.

No adequate investigation of Johnson’s death occurred. As the house was connected to San Jose State University, campus police—ill equipped to investigate a possible murder—took charge. They never called on the San Jose police.

Campus cops made inquiries only when pressured by Junior’s mother, Denise Johnson, delaying most significant interviews until February 2009. Questions asked of witnesses were designed to buttress the suicide theory.

Questions arose about the autopsy. Although bags had been placed on Junior’s hands at the scene, the bags were discarded at

the autopsy. Also, the report does not indicate that any x-rays were taken. Denise said Junior’s skull was cracked, and there were no ligature marks on his neck.

The campus police report that Johnson (6’2” tall) was hanging from a pipe which is only 5’10” high. The family feels suicide was impossible, as Junior was supposedly found in a seated position, his buttocks only 6” off the floor.

Like any mother, Denise struggles to find out what happened. The campus police provided a copy of their report—with several pages and all photographs missing. The autopsy report was provided—again no photographs. The FBI

checked on the case but took no action. Denise tried to obtain FBI reports. Although the FBI told her there were 300 pages, she received only ten. This mother deserves answers and a real investigation.

Denise said, “There is no good reason for the coroner, police, and FBI to withhold photographs and reports. I don’t have a college education, but I do have common sense. I feel shame not for my wonderful son but for the due process that has been denied me for four years and counting.” See <http://strangefruitatsigmachi.com>.

Not only for Denise, but for everyone, having the police investigate a suspicious death is a

civil right and a decent standard of justice. If someone’s child is found hanging, the family deserves a thorough investigation.

The *Injustice Files* exposed suspicious “suicides” of hanged Black men which may have been lynchings. One 60-year-old man was found hanged about 35 feet off the ground in a tree. As a fascist culture is created, is lynching again showing its ugly face in America? All of us have to do everything we can to stop it.

If people know of similar cases, please email or write the *People’s Tribune*, and send letters of support to the People’s Tribune for Denise Johnson to have her son’s death reopened and investigated.

Bangladesh garment factory workers killed by Walmart’s low prices

By Andi Sosin & Joel Sosinsky, Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition

NEW YORK, NY — One day after “Black Friday,” when shoppers rushed to stores to buy holiday gifts and *OUR WALMART* rallied to raise salaries and increase full-time jobs with benefits across the US, a fire killed 112 apparel workers at Tazreen Fashion Ltd., a garment factory in Bangladesh that had *no* emergency exits. In an eerie similarity to the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire of 1911, many workers jumped to their deaths from the eighth floor to escape the flames. Three managers are accused of disregarding fire alarms and locking workers inside, where they were trapped by heavy smoke and suffocated or burned. Wal-Mart has disavowed implications of guilt for the fire because it had officially ceased using the Tazreen factory, although Wal-Mart’s private label clothing was found in the charred remains.

As Wal-Mart and its retail competitors seek the cheapest prices from dependent countries, they systematically contribute to the negligence of government officials and factory owners who cut corners on safety precautions. This fire was Bangladesh’s deadliest, but according to the International Labor Rights Forum, unsafe buildings and lax safety regulation enforcement have re-

sulted in the deaths of approximately 700 Bangladeshi apparel workers since 2005, and of hundreds of other deaths in Pakistan and other cheap labor nations.

What connects the fire in Bangladesh to the Black Friday strike by US workers is Wal-Mart’s insistence on low prices at any cost. Despite its happy face rhetoric, Wal-Mart pays most of its US workforce minimum wage without health benefits or job security. It has fiercely fought off labor unions in the US and around the world. *OUR WALMART*’s Black Friday actions concentrated on improving conditions for Wal-Mart retail and warehouse workers in the US have been met with general public approval. While global labor solidarity is admittedly difficult to achieve in the current dire economic climate, commonalities between US workers and those elsewhere in the world are clear. Global solidarity among workers is the only way to reform labor practices in a power struggle with multi-national corporations. Bangladeshi workers are paid pennies in comparison with US workers, but their struggle for safe working conditions and living wages has consequences for workers in the US. As *OUR WALMART* gains public support it must consider lending its voice to support the struggles for safe workplaces undertaken by workers in Wal-Mart’s glob-



Walmart workers and supporters protest in Chicago on Black Friday, joining hundreds of coordinated Walmart protests across the country.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

al supply chain, and not countenance a sordid and deadly race to the bottom.

The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition regards the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire of 1911 as the prime motivator for today’s stringent workplace safety requirements and the progressive labor laws that created the US middle class. The lessons of the Triangle fire must not be forgotten at the peril of workers around the world. Designs for a Triangle Fire memorial are now being sought. For more information, visit rememberthetrianglefire.org.

Note: this poem was written on a cardboard sign at OccupySF

When society, as a whole, is oppressed:

- * The act of rebellion is the only true sign of intelligence.
- * The course of love is driven to resonate from its core, humans being humane to each other.
- * The rich will fight against whatever threatens their wealth.
- * i.e.—the poor will come under attack.
- * Those among us who are awake will take to the streets, sharing visions.
- * Those who are not yet awake will smirk and continue feeding the killing machine.

—Ayat Jalal-Bryant

BENTON HARBOR'S EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGER SHOULD BE TERMINATED

Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from a statement by Marcus Muhammad, Commissioner-at-Large, Benton Harbor, MI.

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Since Mr. Joseph Harris arrived in Benton Harbor, the city operating deficit, list of unpayable and pension plan deficits have increased significantly. Elected leaders, citizens and stakeholders are all getting less information than they ever received from the Finance Department.

The information that has been received has proven to be largely false and/or inaccurate. Several lawsuits and unpaid vendors have now surfaced. The staff morale is at an all time low. Staff competency and training is nearly non-existent. Relationships with neighboring municipalities and corporate leaders have been severely strained. Public procurement and new hires processes in city government under Mr. Harris' leadership have consistently violated state and federal regulation. Mr. Harris has manipulated public procurements and hiring by lowering standards and qualifications to justify his personal preference and selections.

If the officials in Lansing truly have Benton Harbor's best interest at heart, then they must remove Joe Harris immediately for negligence, false statements, Federal and State procurement violations, increasing the budget

deficit, failure to act on correcting the pension deficits and default in duty.

There are ten reasons why Joseph Harris should be fired. (1) Failure to prepare and/or train local elected leaders to competently manage Benton Harbor. (2) Fiscal failures. (3) Political liability and antagonism. (4) Failure to collaborate with elected leaders regarding the Community Benefits Package (CBP) grant funding. (5) The Closing of 200 Paw Paw (Carl Brown Economic Development Center) (6) Negligent management of NSP grant funding. (7) Wasteful spending. (8) Gross fiduciary negligence. (9) City sued due to non-payment. (10) Inaccurate and deceitful communications.

Benton Harbor should return to the power of democratic self-rule, just as free people the world over experience government. Benton Harbor has had enough of a government imposed grossly incompetent dictator.



Protest against the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) and Whirlpool Corporation's takeover of prime lakefront property in Benton Harbor, MI. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

“The Emergency Financial Manager, Mr. Harris, has destroyed all of the homeless camps in the city of Benton Harbor and violated the constitution rights of the homeless. His recent press conference excluded the Mayor and citizens by way of a massive police presence. Lastly, it is shameful that more than 4300 Benton Harbor property owners will be affected by a special assessment if a proposal by the city's Emergency Manager goes through. There will be a petition to sign to stop the assessment. It will be circulated in the community.”

— Rev. Edward Pinkney



Dear Readers of the *People's Tribune*,

We've had a tremendous year and look forward to the start of a new year! We continue to publish articles written by leaders of the movement from every part of the country, building vital connections across our nation. We feature editorials that give strategy and insight for transforming our society into one that meets the needs of all people.

With an all-volunteer staff, we are able to circulate nearly 10,000 *People's Tribunes* every month! It has all been possible with the donations from our loyal readers. As 2012 comes to a close, we find ourselves \$2,000 shy of reaching our much-needed \$15,000 fundraising goal. We call on five of our readers to give \$100; 10 to give \$50 and 100 to give \$10. This will insure that we have the resources to continue bringing you the *People's Tribune* every month, the best it can be and free of corporate influence.

Visit www.peopletribune.org and click "Donate" to make your donation now. Or send a check to People's Tribune, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

— *People's Tribune Editorial Board*

SYNCHRONICITY

(Progressive Collective Unconscious)

Carl Jung

Robert Bly

Perfect Strength

Meeting of the minds

On the same page

Birds of a feather

Under the same umbrella

The big tent

In sync

e.g.

Anti-Imperialism

Environmentally friendly world

Comprehensive health care, human rights,

Prison, Immigration and public school reform

Equitable distribution of wealth and fair social programs

If we agree on the most important issues

And can make the public aware

SERENDIPITY

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