

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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Parents, students, teachers, cafeteria and custodial workers marched through the streets of Chicago, protesting plans to close 54 of the city's public schools. Over 100 demonstrators were arrested in front of City Hall on March 27th. Read the story on page 6. PHOTO/BRETTJELINEK

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WE NEED FREE EQUAL EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD

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U.S. citizenship for immigrant workers: CENTRAL TO WORKING CLASS UNITY

EDITORIAL

May Day is a time to sum up the lessons in the struggle for a new world where the needs of all are met.

Undocumented workers are among the most exploited, low-wage workers in the U.S. They are forced to live in constant fear of deportation, isolated in the shadows of mainstream American society. This isolation of the immigrant worker is directed at weakening our entire working class. The legal and extra-legal attacks against this section of the working class are part of the general government assault on all workers. Undocumented workers and documented workers—those who are U.S. citizens and those immigrants with work visas—are part of the same working class.



Dream activists protest at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The courage of the “Dreamers” is an inspiration for the pro-immigrant movement and the nation.

PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

GLOBALIZATION OF PRODUCTION AND LABOR

Global electronic production with robots and computers has been replacing human labor at an accelerated pace over the last four decades. This electronic global integration of the capitalist economies of countries throughout the world is called globalization. Globalization is a free, open market form of capitalism in the new age of electronics. Objectively, the zero cost of electronic production without human labor competes globally with the wage cost of human labor. This economic reality forces the global capitalist class to constantly lower the wage cost of human labor and ultimately eliminate human labor altogether as a cost of production.

Globalization is driving down the living standards of workers around the world. Global

production has created global labor. With globalization, capital is free to move, virtually unrestricted around the globe. It has no national borders. Immigrants—those with or without documents—are global labor that crosses national borders in search of work in order to stay alive. Those without documents make border crossings at the risk of losing their lives.

GLOBAL WORKING CLASS UNITY

Workers, regardless of race or nationality generally have the same, common economic self interests. We need food, housing, healthcare and education in order to live and make a productive contribution to society. These are the basic necessities of life—basic human needs. Capitalism is a wage-labor based, dying economic system. It is in its final stages

of collapse, due to non-wage labor, electronic production. Increasingly the capitalist class no longer provides the basic necessities of life to larger and larger numbers of workers. Under these political conditions, the ruling class is resorting to a corporate-government form of fascist rule to protect their private property and maintain social control over a growing mass of impoverished workers.

Working class unity is the only political defense we have to protect ourselves, our families and our class against this ruling class clampdown and use of force to

deny us our democratic rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Our common class demands for food, housing, healthcare and education cannot be won if these demands are denied to our immigrant class sisters and brothers. The Democratic Party is proposing immigration reform measures, filled with long and drawn out procedures that focus primarily on providing a pathway to citizenship for the most skilled and technology savvy immigrants.

Citizenship now for all undocumented workers is the next step for uniting our working class for the battles that lie ahead.

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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

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY: Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

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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We need free equal education for every child

COVER STORY

“Twenty-five percent of these kids are never going to be anything... and I’m not going to throw money at them.” Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has denied that he ever made this statement to Chicago Teacher’s Union President Karen Lewis. But actions speak louder than words. He is closing 54 public schools in mostly African American and Latino neighborhoods, supposedly for budgetary reasons. If successful, this will be the largest demise of public schooling at one time in American history. The corporate spokesman mayor adds that “poorly performing schools” must be removed so Chicago school children can get “the world class education they deserve.” Similar statements have been made by mayors in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit and Oakland as school closings take place all over the country.

So what does a “world class education” really look like? Finland ranks first among all nations with a literacy rate of 100%. There are no charter schools and no national standardized tests. Class sizes are small and their system is completely run by educators, not business tycoons. Failing students are almost unheard of there. Cuba has the highest literacy rate in the western hemisphere at 99.8%, rated 5th in the world. Education there is completely free, including college, with a drop-out rate of zero. Cuba received the 2006 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Literacy Prize. Every child gets an equal quality education. Cuba has accomplished all this in spite of a 60-year trade embargo placed on it by the U.S.

The mayor’s so-called “world



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

class education,” and quality education based on our working class needs, are two different things. In the past, when industrial manufacturing developed, the ruling class needed a work force disciplined and educated enough to operate the factories. A large government funded public school system grew to meet this need. Now that manufacturing has declined because of the electronic revolution, only a smaller, more technically trained work force is needed. Since the ruling class feels there is no need to educate the children of the unemployed and underemployed,

they are dismantling that part of the school system.

They have used exhaustive standardized testing (No Child Left Behind) and national competition for local funding (Race To The Top) to choke the schools of money and resources. Communities that try to solve the problem through local control can’t because the problem requires a national solution, not a local one. There is no national equitable funding or guarantee of an equal education for all children. So banks, corporations and charter schools get the money, the school districts cry broke, and then your

schools are closed.

But there is no shortage of money—it’s all being diverted to profit the rich. If our children are to get the quality education they deserve, there must be an end to “standards” that destroy public education. There must be national standards that guarantee equal funding and a high quality education for each and every child. Then there would no longer be such a thing as a poor school district. Every school district would be rich: every child would get the best possible education.

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DEATH OF DEMOCRACY DIVIDES DETROIT:

The people vs the corporations

By Maureen D. Taylor

DETROIT, MI — As if we'd been soaked in a bucket of ice cold water, Detroiters and residents of surrounding communities have been shaken and shocked as we witness first-hand what a total State takeover looks like. Knowing that this epic moment was coming, still the reality of what it feels like to have your right to vote stripped away is unlike anything many of us have ever experienced. Elders from the South discuss what their battle for the right to vote was about, and how they too are surprised at this newest attack against working people by desperate corporations in collusion with elected officials.

Detroit is on the auction block, its assets for sale to the lowest bidder. To some, it appears to be a good thing to bring an Emergency Financial Manager (EFM) in to "straighten out" the financial situation the city is in. To others, the horrible truth of what is happening is unfolding before our eyes, and we are concerned about the implications. This financial crisis is exploding nationwide. The great American exodus of recent years is underway, with families searching the country for jobs. Communities once prosperous with high employment are teetering on the brink of financial

collapse, as they are being separated from high-paying jobs in droves, at the hands of the new world boss, "Master Technology." Millions of American workers are separated from jobs and are on the move, taking families, pets, possessions and their pride with them in an effort to somehow start all over again.

Michigan has sustained one half of all the manufacturing job losses in the country—a burden no one state can absorb. The Governor has taken the bold and lawless step of hiring an overseer to manage the "City fire sale", under the guise of managing the crisis. We have many wonderful municipal holdings that are being "eyed", that we fear will soon be snatched away forever. Our beloved paradise called "Belle Isle"—a place where families can take their children and walk through wooded areas, watch deer and ducks, walk by quiet ponds dotted with Mr. and Mrs. Swan and their babies, and stroll down pathways during hot summers—is on the list. Art Deco buildings decorated by artists of every genre are on the list. So are examples of the "Spirit of Detroit", labor movement replicas, religious institutional beginnings, and the many stories of freedom walkers. All this misery to cover up the Great Theft! Detroit is a



Protesters demonstrate against Governor Rick Snyder, the Emergency Financial Manager and Right To Work at Cobo hall in Detroit. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

border city and the site of international commerce. From Canada, resources can be transferred to Detroit, on to the Great Lakes, and to ports in all directions.

Once the EFM makes it clear that he is in charge, that the resident's right to vote is dead, and that he has the authority to sell what he deems necessary, the crisis will come full circle. The jewel in the crown is the

revenue-producing water department, because from there only the oceans stand in the way of mega-profits to be made. The courts are lining up on the side of these corporate pirates, as what is lawful is being re-defined. "Boss Technology" says it is "legal" to destroy the lives of workers, and the courts say "OK!!" "Boss Technology" says it is alright to destroy public education, and the courts

say "OK!!" We are being pushed to the brink, so now is the time to determine how much more can we take. Get busy living, or get busy dying, Detroit. You get what you organize to take.

Maureen D. Taylor is the state chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, (313) 964-0618.

Medicaid for profit: the new normal in Michigan

By Michael Berger, RN

DETROIT, MI — The ability to provide care for the poor has met the reality of the market place. The Medicaid HMO plans are the sole providers for care in Michigan. The guidelines for patients to qualify for Federal Medicaid fee for service payments are arbitrary and extremely difficult to figure out.

Some of the Medicaid plans are designed to create such barriers that patients simply never see their primary care physician, and they do not allow people to use the Emergency Room for any care.

Barriers created by the criminal providers are:

Disenrollment. If you are diagnosed with bone cancer, it's the beginning of the month, and you go to your clinic appointment. The hospital informs you: no coverage. Calling the company,

they instruct the patient: call your social service worker. The response of the patient is "What have I done wrong that they want me to suffer and die?"

The compensation provided to the primary care physician (PCP) is so low that the quality of care is poor or non-existent. Here is a typical exchange: the patient is sent home from the hospital on a type of insulin. The plan needs a prior authorization from the PCP. Multiple calls to the PCP are not returned. The patient's blood sugar goes to 550. The Emergency Room directly admits them to a general medical care floor in the hospital.

Calling the insurance company is a waste of time. For example, family members call Total Health Care, a Medicaid HMO, requesting a prior authorization form that will allow for a type of care. "We sent authorization to the PCP last week" or "I will

take care of that today".

Nothing is done to remediate the problem.

By delaying and denying care, the insurance industry profit margin is elevated. The poor are suffering and dying.

The obvious solution is "Medicare for All" which could guarantee a single, high-quality standard of care for all inhabitants of the USA. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has paralyzed the debate around comprehensive health care as the allies of the Democratic Party have circled the wagons to protect a nationalization of our health care industry favoring insurance companies to the detriment of the population.

The Democratic Party and its supporters are actively preventing the debate around a real solution—nationalization of health care in the interests of the people. Just as the bank bailout was designed to support the bond

market, the ACA health care nationalization favors the insurance industry.

It is time to put the resources of our nation at the service of our people instead of helping the 1%

pile up more useless wealth while we suffer.

Michael Berger is a Health-care professional from Metro Detroit.

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EARTH DAY 2013: GREEN SHADOW CABINET LAUNCHED

By Sandy Perry

2012 Green Party presidential candidates Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala honored Earth Day by announcing formation of a new opposition “Green Shadow Cabinet.” The purpose of the cabinet is to advance a vision of sustainability and prosperity to fight the culture of fear and poverty. It will build unity and action around real solutions to save our planet and the livelihoods of our people.

Now more than ever it is time to challenge the corporate destruction of American life. The bipartisan sequester of March 1 has already begun to shred basic services and endanger the housing of millions of families. The President and Congress are already working on a bipartisan “bargain” to cut Social Security and raise Medicare deductibles up to \$1331.

Now more than ever it is time to resist the corporate destruction of the planet. The battle over the deadly XL pipeline is proceeding apace. Poisonous fracking is expanding into every state.

Now more than ever it is time to build the independent political networks we need to go over onto the offensive. We can no longer pretend we are winning when we confine our battles to the silos of individual issues or movements.

“The Cabinet will debunk the exploitative policies of the duopoly,” said Stein and Honkala, referring to the two-party system. “It will respond to current events in a timely manner, and bring leading progressive activists into supportive collaboration. It will raise the bar for just, sustainable, transformative solutions and demonstrate our capacity to govern – as Greens and independent allies.”

The Cabinet is not formally affiliated with the Green Party. It is called “Green” because it is a project of the Stein/Honkala Green Party presidential campaign. It is also called “Green” because building a people’s movement is inseparable from the struggle for democracy, and unavoidably political. We cannot break the power of the two-party system unless we build a political organization of our own. As the leading national progressive opposition voice for 20 years, the Green Party must be part of the framework for building the political arm of the movement.

The Green Shadow Cabinet includes names of the most prominent writers and activists in America, as well as numerous unsung leaders that battle daily in the trenches to save the planet and save lives.

Some of the Green Shadow



Green Party 2012 Presidential candidate Jill Stein (left) and Vice Presidential candidate Cheri Honkala. They and others sat in at the Fannie Mae office in Philadelphia. PHOTO/JILLSTEIN.ORG

Cabinet members include (organizations for identification purposes only):

Shahid Buttar (Executive Director of Bill of Rights Defense Committee), Michael Rattner (President, Center for Constitutional Rights), Cliff Thornton (a leading anti-Drug War activist),

Ajamu Baraka (Founding Executive Director of the US Human Rights Network), Ethel Long-Scott (Executive Director of the Women’s Economic Agenda Project), Sandy Perry (CHAM Ministry and Affordable Housing Network), Rev. Bruce Wright (Refuge Ministry), Dr. Margaret

Flowers (Physicians for a National Health Plan), Dr. Patch Adams (Gesundheit! Institute), and David Cobb (Move To Amend).

Join with the Green Shadow Cabinet in raising your voice against corporate austerity and oppression! Enter the debate for America’s future!

Hard Lessons

In reality
It feels like school’s against me
Cus no matter what I know,
If I don’t pass that test
Then they won’t let me go.
And if I’m not on time
No matter what’s going on in my life
I will be penalized,
And now there’s tears in my eyes.
I might not walk the stage.
They didn’t teach me the right way.
He didn’t like his job,
I don’t know what he taught,
His only worry was getting paid

Someday they’ll learn to change their ways,
To read the tears of the kids who don’t cross the stage.
Teaching’s not just a job,
It’s like a gift from God,
You gotta do it the right way,
You gotta do it the right way.

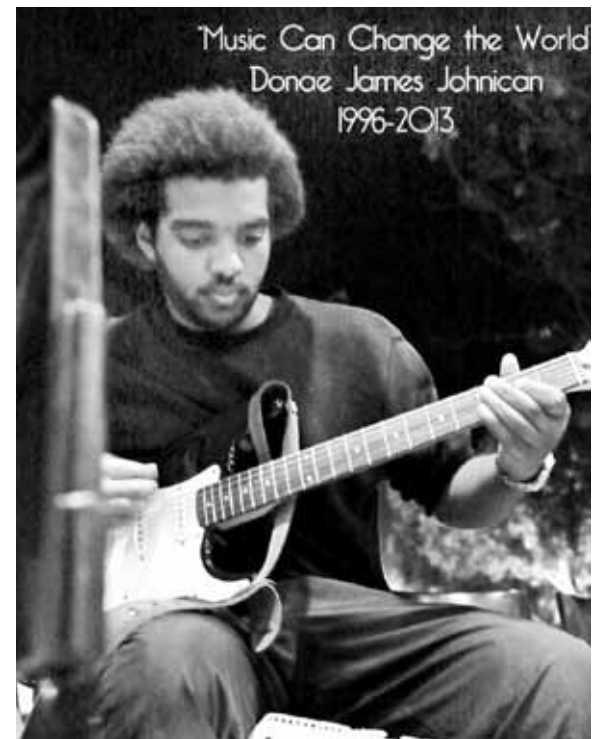
I imagined a school before
Where teachers would make sure
That you were ready for
Any challenge that life would throw at you.

Take time one on one,
So that you knew what to do,
And if you weren’t at school
They would pick up the phone
And call you at home.
If you failed a test
They’d let you take it again,
Go over every question til you got 100 percent.

Between a teacher and a student
There must be a bond,
Where the student is willing
And the teacher flexible and headstrong.
Where money comes last
And education comes first.
But until then I guess we’ll just have to learn

Someday they’ll learn to change their ways,
To read the tears of the kids who don’t cross the stage.
Teaching’s not just a job,
It’s like a gift from God,
You gotta do it the right way,
You gotta do it the right way,
You gotta do it the right way.

— Donae James Johnican
1996-2013



Donae Johnican was a visionary, sixteen-year old musician who wrote this song shortly before he was struck and killed by a train on March 19 in San Jose, California. His passing was mourned and his life celebrated by hundreds of family members, classmates, and friends. His spirit lives on in our hearts and all around us. We love you, Donae!

PHOTO/SILICON VALLEY DEBUG

Demonstrators arrested in fight to stop school closings

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — Against a backdrop of horns and marching bands, thousands of teachers, parents and students streamed into Daley Plaza in Chicago on March 27. Chanting “Save Our Schools,” they demanded that Mayor Emanuel stop the closing of 54 elementary schools and they stood up for public education in the face of hostile corporate forces. The marchers occupied the street outside the Mayor’s office. More than 100 were arrested as they sat down and linked arms blocking the street. After pleading with authorities to keep their schools open, they are recognizing that the hearings are kangaroo courts and the outcome already decided. More and more the focus of political responsibility has shifted to the Mayor, who appoints the puppet school board and the CEO of the schools.

Dr. Todd Alan Price, Professor of Education at National Louis University interviewed some of the rally participants. He asked Jesse Jackson, Sr. about mayoral control of the school board. Jackson responded: “The elected school board is a step in the right direction . . . This fight’s for freedom in our community. This is a top-down oligarchy.”

A recently graduated high school student told Dr. Price: “I think Rahm Emmanuel needs to see the student standpoint on this. He’s thinking for himself,

he’s thinking about his billionaire buddies, . . . Closing schools and merging schools you’ll have students . . . you’ll have 5, 6, and 7 years olds that will now have to cross these gang lines to get back and forth to school everyday . . . why would you subject someone so young to that danger . . .?”

Why is this, the largest mass school closing in the country, happening? Free, public education is one of the last “entitlements” to which people feel they have a right. Such schooling came about as a government subsidy to the industrial capitalist, to prepare the workers for disciplined jobs. Industrial jobs have shrunk and office jobs have become more automated. Now public education is being destroyed. We are being groomed for (mostly) low paid jobs—or prison.

Especially in the Midwest, where industrial economy was so strong, dispossessed workers refuse to accept the cutbacks. This includes many parents living in the communities affected by school closings. The largest sector of still organized workers subject to these changes is among public workers including teachers.

Chicago is a Democratic Party town. Mayor Emanuel is taking the lead and made clear in his election campaign his intent to attack public workers unions. Nationally, Democrats have elaborated a plan, based on the Bush era No Child Left Behind,



Thousands of parents, students, teachers, public school employees and community members rally against proposed closing of 54 public schools in Chicago. (Below) A protester is arrested in front of Chicago City Hall. PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER, STILLSCENES

to further privatize schools with aggressive promotion of charter schools, standardized high stakes testing, and a common core curriculum intended to further the difference between education for rich and poor.

The movement is escalating its tactics in the fight to stop the school closings. That’s why 100 people got arrested March 27. As tactics escalate further, we are keeping our eyes on the national political battle. To thwart the local closings and privatization we’ll need to fight for a national plan to fund all public schools equitably.



Green Party congressional campaign a breath of fresh air



LeAlan Jones.

PHOTO/GRIFFIN-STEGINK METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL

By Allen Harris

CHICAGO, IL — A high school football coach from Chicago made history this spring. LeAlan Jones, 34, of the Green Party, contested the two-party system

in the special election on April 9 for the U.S. House seat from the 2nd Congressional District of Illinois.

His campaign was a sign that the political situation in the Chicago area is rapidly changing,

especially on the city’s far South Side and in south suburban Cook County, an area devastated by school closings, unemployment, foreclosure and violence.

Jones was the only candidate who actually campaigned among the people. He was able to do so because he comes from the people. He showed that by participating in the March 27 citywide protest against the mass public school closings in Chicago.

Skillfully using social media, he brought new ideas, sophistication and a high level of consciousness—something that is extremely rare in Chicago politics.

Here is the background: For the past 20 years, the 2nd Congressional District seat has been a troubled one. One congressman, whose legitimacy was shaky at best, went to prison. His successor, the son of a famous man, resigned in 2012 and is under

indictment.

Routinely, the Democratic Party rummaged in its box of spare parts and found Robin Kelly, an appointed Cook County official, to run for that volatile seat. She was endorsed by President Obama and wealthy New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. She hosted some cocktail parties for the schmooze-oisie far outside the district. She did not have to do or say much else.

The last thing the Democratic Party strategists wanted was a high voter turnout in a district undergoing an economic and social crisis. For the Democrats, the process was not an election, but an auction to the highest bidder.

And so the Democratic Party in Chicago has retained that seat. Candidate Kelly won on April 9 with nearly 70.8 percent of only 81,918 votes cast. Turnout was 20 percent district-wide.

Kelly was sworn two days later and will immediately deliver on Obama and the corporations’ investment in her. She will vote for the White House-Democratic Party “compromise” with big money and help cut Social Security and other programs that so many people in her district depend on.

LeAlan Jones finished third on Chicago’s South Side and fourth in suburban Cook, Will and Kankakee counties. He and Robin Kelly received the largest numbers of their votes in suburban Cook County.

The numbers are what they are, but what matters is legitimacy. The Greens are not part of the corporate-controlled two-party system. They are a party for the increasing numbers of us who place their future hopes in a society built on economic abundance and peace in the streets and in the world.

Corporations are not people! Money is not speech!

The 127th anniversary of corporate personhood



Spokane, WA Move to Amend the Constitution protest.

PHOTO/PUBLIC CITIZENS

By Sarah Scudder

Corporations have been legal people for nearly 127 years, slowly but surely gaining more and more rights under our Constitution and through our legal system. A system that was designed to limit the power and influence of money was used against We, the People to create a system easily corrupted into We, the Corporations or We, the Rich People.

On May 10th, 1886, a court clerk wrote into the Santa Clara County v. Southern Pacific Railroad Supreme Court case that, “corporations are people”, and we have been haunted by that legal fiction ever since. It is a “legal fiction” because corporations are not actual living human beings, but courts have held up the assertion that corporations have similar legal rights under the U.S. Constitution as human beings.

Corporations have secured inherent rights under the Bill of Rights, including the 1st, 4th and 14th amendments. The 14th Amendment was intended to abolish slavery. How ironic that corporations use it to justify their “personhood!” Rights are secured by our Constitution to real people. Legal artificial entities, such

as nonprofits, unions and corporations, are established by law with explicit duties to the sovereign people, not rights under the Constitution.

Move to Amend was formed when about twenty non-profit organizations that had been working against corporate power for some time came together as they saw the Citizens United v. FEC Supreme Court case looming in late 2009. These organizations collectively realized the need for a true democracy movement in the United States.

During the founding of our beautiful nation, only 10% of the population were even considered citizens. Only white males with property could vote. That injustice continues today in the form of racism, sexism and classism, and all forms of oppression. Citizens United asserts that money is the same as speech. But money is property. Today property is re-established as the basis of citizenship.

Move to Amend seeks a non-partisan solution to corporate power and money rule in the United States and we recognize that this movement needs to involve all people, not just the upper middle-class white people who tend to get involved in such movements.

In order to commemorate the anniversary of such a terrible day for democracy in our history, Move to Amend will be hosting Freeway Bannering events across the country on Friday, May 10th to spread awareness of corporate personhood. You can find one near you by going to www.movetoamend.org/may10. You can also plug in with local Move to Amend affiliate chapters by going to www.movetoamend.org/affiliates-list.

We also have exciting campaigns coming up in California for the 2014 election! Please join us to help pass a hoard of county ballot initiatives in support of the We, the People Amendment. Start by signing up to volunteer through our petition at www.movetoamend.org.



‘March 4th: Day of Action’ in Los Angeles. The group with the banner is: The Southern California Public Education Coalition. PHOTO/ISIS STANSBERRY

Los Angeles city elections

Corporate-sponsored candidates win many races

By Eugene Hernandez

LOS ANGELES, CA — Despite a record breaking 16% voter turnout on March 5, there was a clear winner: Special Interest/Corporate-sponsored candidates in most of the races for Mayor, City Council, Los Angeles Unified School Board and Los Angeles Community Colleges Board of Trustees.

First the Mayor race. The three top contenders—Jan Perry, Wendy Gruel and Eric Garcetti—are all ex or current City Council members who vote alike 99% of the time. Eric Garcetti and Wendy Gruel will have a showdown in May. One thing is sure—the citizens of Los Angeles will not benefit. Both Garcetti and Gruel passed a high-density ordinance which removed over 14,000 low-income housing units from their respective districts. Over 5,000 Latinos were forced to move from Garcetti’s

Hollywood District because they couldn’t afford the high rent of condos and townhouses.

The School Board races were more explicit in the reach of special interests. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in his quest for privatizing public education obtained the support of New York Mayor Bloomberg and Robert Murdoch in supporting his candidates. Millions were raised for Antonio Sanchez, a protégé of Villaraigosa and his chosen one for public office. Sanchez is a big advocate for Charter Schools—the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) leads the nation in converting public schools into private money-making schools. The intention of both big city mayors and Murdoch is clear: starve public school education. If Murdoch or Bloomberg were so concerned about the LAUSD why didn’t they donate those millions

for school supplies rather than impose corporate candidates on the electorate? Luckily there was opposition in School Board race #6; progressive candidate Maria Cano drew enough votes from Sanchez to force a runoff with Monica Ratcliff, who is an attorney and a genuine teacher.

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) race was close because the Democratic Party and special interests supported an unknown Latino candidate against outstanding incumbent Board member and former Green Nancy Pearlman. They also will be heading for a runoff in May.

What is needed in Los Angeles is Campaign Finance Reform, to give all candidates a level playing field. Also needed is Proportional Representation and Ranked voting to reduce the millions of dollars needed for runoffs.

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DEFENDING THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

By Jim Frank

BALTIMORE, MD — Recently a friend sent me a story called “Don’t Feed the Animals.” All National Parks have signs warning against feeding the animals because the animals will get use to free handouts and lose their ability to gather food from their natural environment. The moral of the story was we should quit giving people food stamps because they will forget how to work for food. My friend is one of many hard-working job holders who feel government “handouts” are taxing him unfairly for people who are “too lazy to work.”

I used food stamps to feed my family several times over the past forty years so I looked up some facts to help talk about these ideas. Most of the people who get food stamps are in households where people work, they just do not earn enough money to pay their bills and food. One half of the people on food stamps (provided through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program called SNAP), are children. The capitalist economic collapse of 2008 eliminated millions of jobs



Mississippi Gulf residents in Hancock, post Hurricane Katrina.

PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

that have not returned. Almost seven million people applied for unemployment insurance in the month of May, 2009. Almost one half of these people are still out of work. Each month three million more people apply for unemployment insurance because they have lost their jobs. The rising

unemployment has pushed 50 million people, one out of seven of us, into poverty.

The real question is this: Are people not working because there are fewer and fewer jobs or because government and church handouts are making them lazy? Wake up and smell the coffee. We

live under capitalism, a system where profit rules. It is more profitable in the short term to hire the robot. Just last month an assembly line robot was made available for only \$26,000. This is less than it takes to hire a worker for a year. Under capitalism, we workers have to work to live. When

robots take the jobs, it is the end of capitalism because the workers have no way to live.

When I moved to Baltimore in 1977 there were 15,000 shipyard, 50,000 steel worker and 6,000 vehicle building jobs. Today there are 600 shipyard, 2,000 steel worker and 600 vehicle assembly jobs. I cannot believe that anyone would trade a good job for \$130 of food stamps.

How is a person going to live if there is no ‘good job’, one you can live on? If the unemployed are so lazy then why do they line up around the block every time a job with benefits has an opening? Food Stamps are not taking the job: robots, computers and capitalist greed are taking them.

Corporate profits have never been higher, corporate executives earn hundreds of millions and yet the corporations cannot make employment for all of us. Taxing corporations to provide help for the unemployed and poor is just the first step. Society must be reorganized to benefit everyone, where everyone can work, contribute and live well.

Modern sweatshops in the global supply chain

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

NEW YORK, NY — The definition of a *sweatshop* has not changed over the past 100 years. It’s not because hard work makes workers perspire that factories in much of the third world are still referred to as sweatshops.

Tazreen Fashions Ltd., the Bangladesh factory in which 112 workers died behind locked doors in a fire last November, was a sweatshop that operated at the beginning of the *global supply chain*, which is best described as a linking of businesses that deliver products made in low-wage countries like Bangladesh to retail stores owned by giant multinational corporations.

Huge apparel retailers like Wal-Mart, Target, Kohl’s, H&M and designers like Nike, Adidas, and other major US and international clothing brands, routinely source their production through suppliers and other sub-contractors, middlemen who steer work to up to 1,500 factories in different countries. Modern container shipping technology has made it possible for almost any item to be manufactured anywhere in

the world at the cheapest possible price.

To maintain their profit margins, these sub-contractors keep their costs low by countenancing substandard working conditions and by reducing wages to squeeze out greater productivity from workers. For example, garment industry workers find out that instead of making seventeen cents for each shirt they sew, they will be making only sixteen cents per shirt. They then have to work harder and sew more pieces just to make the same amount of money. This exploitative practice is called *sweating* the workers. *Sweatshops* that dehumanize work and exploit workers have always been a feature of *cutthroat capitalism*.

Over a century ago, young, immigrant sweatshop workers had just been on strike fighting for living wages and safer workplaces when they died behind locked doors in the New York City Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911. The public outrage and activism following the Triangle fire compelled politicians to enact safety regulations and social legislation that still protects workers today; enabling a labor

movement that built the American middle class.

Now, as labor unions worldwide struggle to help workers survive, we have to remember that organization is the only way for working people to prevent naked cutthroat capitalism from harming workers through re-imposing *sweatshop* wages and cutting costs by allowing dangerous working conditions.

Extreme poverty in itself is the most pressing human rights challenge of our times. Only by advancing economic, social and cultural rights and the political participation of working people in solidarity all over the world can we make progress happen for our own society.

The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition is leading efforts to install an inspiring permanent public art memorial in New York City at the site of that tragic fire. Remembering the Triangle fire, and how in its aftermath solidarity and activism became a progressive force that bettered workers’ lives, should remind us that when citizens get together in common cause, their lives, their children’s lives, and everyone’s prospects for the future improve. For more



United Students Against Sweatshops supported Indonesian workers’ claims against Adidas’ Y-3 apparel line during NYC’s Fashion Week.

PHOTO/JOEL SOSINSKY

information, visit <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org> or contact the Remember the Triangle Fire

Coalition at Info@rememberthetrianglefire.org.

BUILDING THE ROAD TO A THIRD U.S. SOCIAL FORUM

Another world is possible... Another U.S. is necessary

Editor's note: This article is excerpted from a longer version called "Help to Plan and to Create a third US Social Forum," written by the USSF Accountability and Coordination Team (ACT).

By the U.S. Social Forum Accountability and Coordination Team

PHILADELPHIA, PA — The U.S. Social Forum National Planning Committee met in Philadelphia March 8-10, 2013 to continue to build the road to a Third U.S. Social Forum. Hosted by the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC), the gathering brought together 75 individuals from more than 40 grassroots organizations. The group agreed, *there is an urgent need for a third US Social Forum (USSF III) by 2015. We will support People's Movement Assemblies and other movement gatherings as principal organizing and outreach tools leading to USSF III.*

The USSF is nested within the

World Social Forum (WSF) process which first convened in 2001 in Brazil and imagines, proclaims and demands—"Another World is Possible!" Social Forums are an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society directed towards fruitful relationships among Humankind and between it and the Earth.

More than 15,000 people attended the first USSF in 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2010, over 20,000 people came together for USSF II in Detroit, Michigan. USSF III (location to be determined) will be a new and different Social Forum to continue to create the necessary new world together!

USSF leaders write this about the urgent need for USSF III. "We live day to day in crisis and struggle. For the first time in history we

are experiencing a rapidly deepening crisis of global capitalism affecting millions in the US and billions world-wide —producing austerity policies and massive permanent unemployment and poverty, unimaginable climate, ecological and social destruction, and intensifying political attacks, repression, and the threat of fascism and war everywhere. At the same time, resistance, activism and organizing are on the rise across all continents, sectors, and fronts of struggle.

This moment requires a huge and unified social movement in the U.S. with millions of politically conscious people to ensure victory for the arising social motion in the interests of the oppressed, exploited, and dispossessed—to protect the earth and affirm life. *The U.S. Social Forum can play a role in pushing forward strategic U.S. movement development through the dynamic interrelation of local and regional struggles, and the emergence of a national movement in relation to global movements.*

The USSF process is striving



U.S. Social Forum National Planning Committee held in Philadelphia.
PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

to step up and take its place in history by advancing the interests of working class, low-income, and grassroots struggles. The moment is urgent and the opportunities are great."

There are many important ways individuals, groups, networks and organizations can

participate in advancing the work towards USSF III. To find out more information, go to http://wiki.ussocialforum.net/images/3/37/NPC_Membership_Criteria_and_Roles_and_Responsibilities.pdf or email info@ussocialforum.net.

HARVEST OF EMPIRE: A HISTORY OF LATINOS IN AMERICA by Juan Gonzalez



Book Review

By Chuck Parker

COACHELLA VALLEY, CA — This is probably the best book that you could read to understand the current debate over immigration reform. It shows how the migrant flow has always been tied to the growth of the U.S. Empire in Latin America, either due to a political or military intervention (Cubans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Nicaraguans,) or to an economic need for cheap labor (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Panamanians.) In every country it led to greater numbers of workers being forced to travel north to the U.S. to survive.

Early on, North American capitalists focused on taking land, building huge transportation projects, and importing cheap raw materials. After World War II, the emphasis shifted to moving entire industries from the U.S. to other countries. That offshore production was at the heart of the free trade model which developed in four stages in Latin America:

- 1) Panama and Puerto Rico (1947)
- 2) Mexico's border

industrialization, or *maquiladoras* (1965)

3) The Caribbean Basin initiative (1985) and

4) NAFTA (1994) Instead of bringing prosperity to the region, free trade has created greater poverty and economic inequality. In Mexico, for example, real wages fell 68% between 1982 and 1992 even though productivity rose 41%. This made Mexico and the whole Caribbean region the most desirable place in the world for U.S. direct investment. But it created a nightmare for the workers in these countries, which included horrible environmental degradation and the highest rates of industrial injuries and illnesses in the world.

The book proposes these measures:

- 1) "End the predatory dual labor market in cheap Mexican labor." NAFTA created a common market for goods, but not a common market for labor. A common market for labor could include cross-border labor unions or alliances, and the same environmental and labor laws in both countries. Abolishing the concept of "illegality" among Mexicans, who are overwhelming the largest source of undocumented labor,

will drive up wages at the bottom of society.

2) "End the colonial status of Puerto Rico." This tiny island has been the single greatest source of profits for U.S. corporations in the entire world! Puerto Ricans should be allowed to decide whether they will become an independent country or a state with full rights.

3) "Recognize the rights of language minorities and promote the widespread study of Spanish."

4) "Reinvest in U.S. cities and public schools."

5) "End the economic blockade of Cuba."

In Juan Gonzalez's own words, "My solutions aim directly at that all-powerful and invisible Market and the Empire we have created in its name. Immigrant labor has always been critical to the Market's prosperity. The Market recruits it, exploits it, abuses it, divides it, then ships it back home when no longer needed. Only by taming the Market can the people of the Americas, north and south, move beyond our ethnic, racial, and linguistic divisions. Only then can we grasp our common humanity, realize our common dreams. America, after all, never did end at the Rio Grande."

DEMOCRACY VS EMERGENCY MANAGERS



Protesters rally against Right To Work and for democracy at the state capitol in Lansing, Michigan. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Detra Aikens

CHICAGO, IL — The creation of a new form of government, which was adopted by the Michigan Legislature and recently enacted by Governor Rick Snyder, begs the question, “What is a

representative government?” The independent act of hiring “Emergency Managers” seems to erase the concept of “Individual Rights” as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution... a duly elected government; one man, one vote.

The Emergency Managers

were all chosen by the Governor. Even Warlocks don't have that kind of power, but Wizards do. Yea, the Wizard is the one duly elected, statewide official who can wave his wand, blink his eyes and eliminate sovereignty created by local units of municipal

government.

The Wizard has now chosen to override any and all decisions made by duly elected officials. Humm, that's ODD, because this has only occurred in cities with predominately minority, low-income populations, who vote Democratic. Did I mention that Wizard is a Republican? Oh really you say!

The Wizard of ODD selects a few names and allows the people to choose the EMs they are prepared to work with? Oh no, the Wizard pulls the selections from his sleeves. So in addition to dwindling municipal revenues, due to real estate taxes being levied on a mass of foreclosed homes, devalued Bond ratings, crumbling infrastructure and massive unemployment, the Wizard has added another layer to the payroll. What a feat!

The new EM in Detroit is a Democrat who happens to be Black! Mr. Orr, better known as the “Sacrificial Lamb,” is a Bankruptcy attorney, handpicked by the Wizard, with an annual salary of over \$200,000. What I find interesting is that the entire GOP has about 7 or 8 Blacks they can march out for political functions, but somehow the Wizard selected

a Black-Democrat to save the City of Detroit. Even the Wizard of ODD knows where to go to find real talent.

Well— Well, wouldn't it just be interesting if the good Reverend and a few of the Council members, while having an informal breakfast confab, happened to be in the same place where the new EM is having his grits, toast and eggs. Expectations for the success of the new EM, and the City of Detroit, are at best considered meager. However without some type of support or consultation from informed members of the Council, it may become MISSION IMPOSSIBLE. Could that be what the Wizard is counting on, for history to repeat itself? You know the one about “we” just cannot come together.

So what have you got to lose if the Wizard gets taught a lesson beyond his subjective view of “Plantation Politics?” A lesson about what can be achieved by Black men, real men working together for the people? This is all about taking what was chosen to fail, and turning it into a WIN-WIN for all. Why not? The Wizard likes eggs too; but not on his face.

“Pride-n-Purpose”

Update from the Illinois fracking front



Antifracking rally in front of the state of Illinois building, Chicago. PHOTO/CHARLES E. MILLER

By Tabitha Tripp

CROSSVILLE, IL — Illinois’ “best in the nation” fracking regulatory bill has been stalled due to an amendment. This amendment number 3 would require a licensed, union water-well drill operator, on site at all times, while drilling and hydro-fracking are occurring. It has been reported that the industry walked out on talks, leaving the bill's sponsor Representative Bradley and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local #150 scratching their heads. Speaker Madigan

maintains public support of the House Bill 3086, a two-year moratorium with a scientific investigative task force.

If industry is not willing to have licensed professionals on site to protect Illinois aquifers, do they truly hold the environment and public safety as a top priority?

New reports from the Strata-X Energy stockholders meeting held March 17, 2013 indicates that the targeted oil fields near Peoria are within the Mohamet Aquifer. The website states that drilling will begin soon with the

first appraisal of well's profitability due the second quarter of this year. Strata-X has secured the necessary lands to move forward with the “Vail Oil” Project, is waiting on a state permit, and is acquiring seismic data.

Horizontal drilling and hydrofracking, are currently allowed under the Illinois Oil and Gas Act, which was written prior to World War II. Illinois citizens have long feared that the industry will begin fracking without current, up to date laws, while legislators in Springfield hash out the politics of making legislation.

On the last day of session, March 22, Senate Bill 1418 was referred to Assignments by Senator Jacobs the day it was set to be voted out of the Energy Committee. Proponents of the bill were told by Springfield staffers there was an extension granted and were awaiting a committee hearing date. Unfortunately, that information turned out to be false and the Senate Bill is now considered dead.

For current information, please go to Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing our Environment website: www.DontFractureIllinois.net. To reach Tabitha Tripp, email: saveourwater@dontfractureillinois.net

Celebrate 70 years of struggle



Conversation * Poetry * Q&A * Book signing
Food * Cash bar

Nelson Peery, celebrating his 90th birthday on June 22, 2013, has participated in the revolutionary movement for over 70 years. Discuss with him why it is possible today to create a new cooperative world where everyone's needs are met. Discuss what we can all do now in order to create that new world.

Nelson Peery is the author of *Black Fire: The Making of an American Revolutionary*; *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary*, and the *Future is Up to Us*.

When: June 22, 5-8pm

Where: Workers United Hall, 333 S Ashland, Chicago, IL

\$10 for individual ticket, \$90 for a table (seats 10)

If you are unable to attend, you may donate \$50 or more to receive a signed copy of one of Nelson's memoirs, *Black Fire* or *Black Radical*. Mail a check to League of Revolutionaries for a New America, PO Box 477113, Chicago, IL 60647.

PALM SUNDAY AND A REMEDY FOR VIOLENCE

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — On March 24 for the second year, churches and community groups gathered for a joint celebration of Palm Sunday determined to reaffirm the “Good News” — announcing a better way of living—a salvation.

Violence is a daily occurrence in Chicago and throughout the country. In 2013 the Palm Sunday celebrants were determined to address the causes. No longer willing to accept the status quo, the speakers discussed poverty, joblessness, incarceration, school and service closings, deportation, and militarization as real world causes of violence in our communities; problems that could be immediately addressed by reordering society on the basis of human need.

A few weeks prior to the event, a baby was deliberately gunned down with her father in the streets of the city. Yes, the individual who pulled the trigger was deprived, but he, like the gun, was made in the U.S.A. Just locking him up or executing him does not address the destruction



Palm Sunday gathering in Chicago calls for a real remedy to violence. PHOTO/DEBORAH MCCOY

of society that is going on.

Lisa Lustt, a spokesperson for Alliance for Local Service Organizations (ALSO), explained from first-hand experience how

the schools are increasingly a “pipeline to prison.” Students are taught to get used to being “handled and harassed by the police and criminal justice system.”

They are automatic suspects in and out of school. With the dropout rate as high as 40% in many minority neighborhoods, these disconnected ill-prepared youth

have little chance at jobs and end up in the street. From there it is a short step to prison. The hopelessness only increases upon release. Most employers will not hire ex-offenders and the budgets have been cut in critical areas of rehabilitation.

If we really want answers and a solution to violence we need to deal with reality. Incarceration, budget cuts, austerity, and deportation are currently solutions offered by people concerned only with profitability. These are not answers at all. They just preserve the position of the wealthy.

The people of Chicago’s Logan Square and other communities across the country are opening their eyes. They know that we can’t end violence unless everyone has the opportunity for a safe, healthy productive life with equal access to education. The resources needed to provide this abundance will have to be distributed without regard to who makes a buck off it.

The Palm Sunday gathering believes this vision is possible today. It is the “Good News” that we long to see.

Americans of African Descent: From the cotton fields to corporate offices (Part 3)

By Raymond L. Smith

Editor’s Note: The following is Part 3 of a 4-part article.

LONOKE COUNTY, AR — U.S. Highway 70 was the main thoroughfare connecting Little Rock and Memphis. Driving west, U.S. 70 meandered through Little Rock onward to Hot Springs, a very popular tourist attraction of yesteryear. This was before the construction of Interstate 40; therefore, a lot of traffic passed through “The Corner.” Although the area is less populated now, Union Valley Baptist Church, Belle Grove Baptist, Zion Chapel Baptist and St. Matthews Baptist Churches are still active. Those surviving congregations are now in newer buildings, but next to where the old buildings were constructed.

Now, as in the old days, African Americans have excelled in areas and numbers that would surprise the pessimists and delightfully please the optimists. Their success is recognized and admired by people around the world. People of all races regard the struggles that were overcome

by African Americans from slavery through the Civil Rights movement, as inspiration for other oppressed groups. There is no doubt that many African Americans have reached the upper echelon of society and represent themselves well in all fields of professions.

Another category of successful African Americans fall in the lower income bracket while employed in unappreciated service positions. Many Americans, including African Americans, support the daily existence of America as we know it. Look at the individuals who work in housekeeping in hospitals, the fast food workers, and the home health aides. With incomes hovering just above minimum wage, taxicab drivers and municipal maintenance workers, keep America moving. Sadly, some ill-advised people want to cast these dedicated workers into a large percentage of people that the cynics say are looking for a handout.

A man of African descent is now the President of the United States. Contrary to what some assume, African-American citizens

did not vote for the man simply because he is Black. African Americans, and others, voted for the President because he most favorably addressed the issues that concerned them and the country. In the past, African Americans have voted in block for white candidates for the same reasons. History shows that prior to the mid 1960s, and with the exception of the Franklin D. Roosevelt campaigns, African Americans voted in large numbers for Republicans. Republicans then professed a different social and political agenda.

Looking at segments of Black communities today, we see degrees of chaos and disruption that is uncharacteristic of the legacy left by our ancestors. We are losing the unity that was so profoundly instilled in the days of old. The problems that this race of people now face is not limited to a particular age group. We have disappointments in young as well as not-so-young.

We often hear the question, what is wrong with the young people? One answer is—older generations did not pass along the virtues and standards and heritage



handed down to us by our ancestors. The wavering trend started near the end of the civil rights movement.

A great analogy or example would be the Jews of the Old

Testament. When the children of Israel were finally freed from bondage, some forgot their past and heritage.

SEND US YOUR STORY!

All editorials and cover stories are written by the People’s Tribune Editorial Board. The rest of the paper is written by our readers about the struggles they are involved in. Send us your story.

DICTATORS AND BILLIONAIRES TAKE CONTROL

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Whirlpool Corporation has unveiled a plan to completely gentrify downtown Benton Harbor, Michigan. This is being accomplished with the aid of the new Emergency Manager, Tony Saunders, who has a shopping list of things Whirlpool wants completed. The last Emergency Manager failed Whirlpool's test. Whirlpool went to the governor to have him removed. Saunders was put in his place.

The Whirlpool Corporation designed the Harbor Shores project, hailed by the media and the white business community as a revitalization of the city of Benton Harbor. They told the community that the project would bring jobs. It was really an unprecedented opportunity to make a lot of money at the expense of an impoverished community.

The city of Detroit is facing the very same problems with their new dictator. The city of Benton Harbor and Detroit are under a vicious fascist attack by Governor Rick Snyder and his rich buddies, known as the billionaires.

Dan Gilbert, the multi-billionaire owner of Quick Loans, and a member of the Business Roundtable, has been meeting with Detroit's new Emergency Financial Manager Kevyn Orr under Public Act 436, which gave Orr total control. Gilbert also owns a number of sports teams, including the Cleveland Cavaliers. He has plans to transform several Detroit streets and thoroughfares into pedestrian walkways with shopping districts around 22 buildings Gilbert has purchased.



Protest against the corporate takeover of Benton Harbor.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Several of the buildings are historic. All were purchased at bargain prices. Gilbert's company also is providing seed money for digital companies. Detroit is seen as a major future home for that industry. Such companies hire very few workers.

An Emergency Manager has also been placed in six cities and three school districts across

Michigan. None of the Emergency Managers work for the citizens. They work only for the corporations.

For example, the Benton Harbor Public Safety officer and Chief Roger Lange reduced the Benton Harbor Fire Department down to three full time firefighters from ten. They worked hand in hand with the Emergency

Manager. Recently Lt. Doug Bell was severely burned in an early morning fire at 1034 Jennings Ave. Bell was the only firefighter on duty when the call came in. How can one person put out a fire? The standard procedure is for two fire fighters to be inside a burning structure and for two to be outside monitoring the scene. The fire department has

been destroyed by the cuts. In addition, Benton Harbor city workers saw more benefits cut, including 12 holidays. Their insurance contribution was trimmed and Saunders is promising more cuts in a series of emergency financial orders.

People need to stand up and fight. A new world is possible.

Sing A Song thinking of Jack Micheline

early morning
sun in the sky
big yellow bird
pulls up to the front walk
and the doors open
and a song
falls down the stairs
with kids wearing smiles
out onto the sidewalk
and I ask the bus driver
why she sings songs
with the kids
she brings to school
every day
and home every night

and she said to me
if they're singing songs
they're not fighting
they're not fighting
and I sat down
on a bench
with those words
in my head
and I thought
to myself
sitting in the sun
why can't rich old men
sing songs together
rich old men financing
all these wars
should sing songs together
and all the soldiers
all over the world
should sing songs together
as their bones are bleached

by the sun
out in the battlefields
and all the politicians
in all the countries
under the stars
can get together
and sing songs
they can all sing the same song
a song about the children
a song about the homeless
a song about the hungry
a song about the soldier
whose bones
are being bleached
by the sun
in the battlefields

— Jake St. John
9/19/12