

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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March to the home of Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to protest Michigan's emergency financial manager law. The law allows Snyder to give complete control of a financially-troubled city or school district to an emergency manager, replacing elected officials. PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

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## ***INDEPENDENCE DAY: BREAK WITH THE PARTIES OF CORPORATE AMERICA***

**Read story on page 3**



Protest on May Day in Detroit, Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

# We can prevent the coming world war

## EDITORIAL

World War III is beginning. It is starting in the Middle East. The war being waged against Syria by the US and its allies is in fact a proxy war between the US on the one hand and Russia and China on the other. If we don't act, the world war that is developing could well destroy humanity and the earth. The American people have the key role to play in stopping this war.

War is politics by other means. War is inevitable under capitalism because of the competition among capitalists. The world war now getting under way is about the competition between the US, Russia and China for markets and resources, and it is a struggle for survival among the world's major capitalist classes.

The competition among capitalist countries, and thus the drive toward war, is even more pronounced today than in the past because the world market continues to shrink as a result of advancing technology eliminating jobs.

The various wars and interventions by the US and its allies across North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, and the repositioning of US forces in the Pacific, is about encircling Russia and especially China militarily. It's about disrupting markets for Russian and Chinese goods and controlling China's energy supply. It's about capturing markets for US corporations.

If the MidEast struggle continues to escalate, it will eventually lead to a nuclear war that will kill hundreds of millions and perhaps destroy the world.

This is not a question of which

country to side with. No country is the "good guy" in this process. We must take the side of humanity against capitalism, against the greed and lust for power that would destroy humanity and the world.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2011—the most recent year available—the United States led the world in military spending at \$711 billion, or 41 percent of the world total and more than the next 12 nations combined. The US investment in military spending not only helps fuel the drive toward war, it consumes resources we need for feeding people, ending poverty, providing health care and educating our people.

The American people can stop the coming world war. We can take our country away from the corporations and build a cooperative society. This is not a

choice for the people, but a necessity, given that technology is wiping out jobs and markets and thus wiping out the foundation of capitalism. If we try to continue with capitalism and private property, then growing poverty, fascism, and another world war are inevitable.

If we in America take the political power away from the corporations and turn their private property into public property, we can build a cooperative society. By doing this, we can not only guarantee that our economic needs are met, we could literally save the world. Our daily struggles should be guided by the understanding that we are fighting for a cooperative society, and we should demand that our country's resources be diverted from war to meeting our people's basic needs. 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.

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# July 4<sup>th</sup>: Break with the parties of corporate America

## COVER STORY

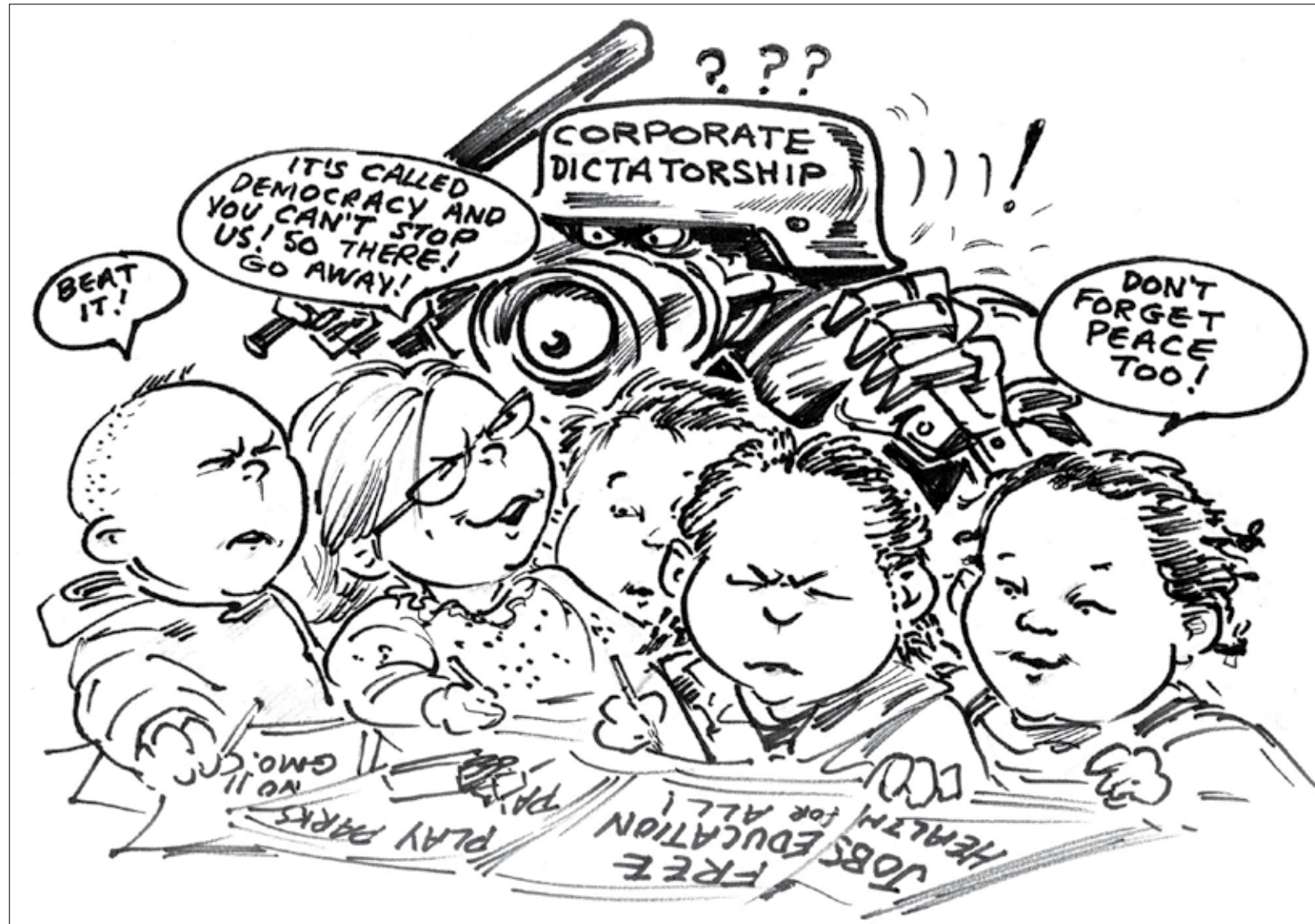
On July 4, 1776, during the American Revolution, the Second Continental Congress of the Thirteen Colonies approved the Declaration of Independence. While we are no longer the subjects of the British Empire, we are now the subjects of the corporations.

Today, the American people are governed by a corporate-government dictatorship that serves and protects only the private interests of the corporations and the wealthiest Americans. The democratic and civil-rights of the people have been eliminated. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> century definition of fascism. Our freedom requires we declare our independence from a system that is impoverishing the American people.

Recent reports from the Internal Revenue Service show that nearly 50% of the American people are living at or near the federal poverty level. One-third of working Americans earn less than \$23,000 a year, not to mention the millions of unemployed. Youth unemployment is “officially” 16.1% and gets worse by the day.

While American poverty rapidly increases, it is also criminalized. A recent example is 44-year-old homeless Navy veteran James Kelly, who was looking in a garbage dumpster for something to eat. He was charged by the Houston police with breaking a city ordinance: “disturbing the contents of a garbage can in the business district.” Kelly said, “I was just basically looking for something to eat.”

Congress, state and city governments across the country continue to cut life-sustaining, public, government sponsored programs, while at the same time selling off all public property and resources



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

to corporate privateers. In Detroit, the city-owned Detroit Institute of Art announced its intention to sell up to a billion dollars worth of precious paintings. In Chicago, 49 public schools will close to open the way for more corporate owned and operated schools. Efforts are underway to privatize the federally owned Tennessee Valley Authority, the U.S. Post Office and the government controlled mortgage giants, Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae.

This July 4<sup>th</sup> is a time for all people of good will to politically unite to confront these dangerous conditions and go on the offensive to ensure our rights to life,

liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It requires a new declaration of political independence from the twin-parties of corporate America, and a struggle for a new cooperative society where everyone's needs are met.

This past April 22, on Earth Day, Dr. Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala, the 2012 Green Party presidential and vice-presidential nominees, announced the formation of the new Green Shadow Cabinet that will serve as an independent voice in U.S. politics, putting the needs of people and protection of the planet ahead of profits for big corporations. The Cabinet will operate in the

tradition of shadow cabinets in other countries, responding to actions of the government in office, and demonstrating that another government is possible. The People's Tribune unites with this effort.

The world is undergoing a global, electronic-based, economic revolution. It is birthing a new epoch of human history. As such, it is ushering into American society the conditions for a political struggle. This requires that we recognize and fight for our commonly shared, basic economic and social interests that represent the public welfare and the common good.

**Contribute to the People's Tribune:**  
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The *People's Tribune* brings clarity to the growing movement. It unites the movement around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it. It has no paid staff and gets no corporate grants. The paper is financed solely by our readers. We need your support to continue telling the truth.

One-time donations are welcome. If you can spare \$20 a month or more, you'll be a hero. Please make donations payable to People's Tribune and send to P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. You can also donate via Paypal at [www.peoplestribune.org](http://www.peoplestribune.org).

— People's Tribune Editorial Board

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# SCHOOL CLOSURES SHOW NEED FOR PEOPLE, NOT CORPORATIONS, TO CONTROL SOCIETY



Caption: One of the many, ongoing protests against the closing of up to 49 Chicago public schools. PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

By Lew Rosenbaum

The sledgehammer came down on the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) on May 22: the school board voted to close 49 schools, “turn around” another five, and “co-locate” 11 more schools. This largest school massacre in the country followed six

months of mind-numbing hearings across the city, in which those threatened by potential school closures begged officials to stop them. Finally, from May 18-20 parents, teachers and students marched across the city, circled many of the schools to be closed, and converged on May 20 at city hall. Laying the blame at

the feet of Mayor Emanuel, 26 protestors were arrested as they sat down, blocked elevators and refused to leave.

This phase is over, but the war goes on. The Chicago Teachers Union and its allied community organizations are beginning a legislative push to overturn Mayoral control and institute an elected

school board. They have also started a voter registration drive to unseat legislators unfriendly to their education program.

What is the strategy of the enemy?

Throughout the fall and winter, the city argued that closing schools would allow CPS to concentrate *more* money and resources in a smaller number of schools. Now CPS has released school-by-school budgets for next year. Sources with access to budget information have already reported substantial cutbacks (e.g. Foreman High School will lose \$1.7 million).

At the same time, Barbara Byrd-Bennett released a report June 10 calling for a “five-year plan” to improve Chicago education, filled with ambitious goals and plans, requiring non-existent funding, backed up by platitudes. We’ve seen this smokescreen before, with previous school administrations.

When school opens in August, parents will be told to accept the school closings. The city is counting on the summer respite, rosy promises and more limited “school actions” (like charter schools and turnarounds) next year to blunt the opposition.

Meanwhile, the cost cutting is likely to include massive teacher

and support staff layoffs (note that Philadelphia just announced closing 23 schools and laying off 3,000 teachers). The two main tactics of the city continue to be isolating the teachers and their union; and splitting the growing unity among different communities and ethnic groups.

Civil disobedience may greet returning students in the fall. Legal and legislative challenges will also wind their way through the appropriate channels. These efforts to retard the attacks on our rights must continue. But the persistent actions of the Mayor and his political and corporate cronies show us that the arena of trade union bargains, appeals to politicians and school-by-school fights cannot resolve the issue.

Our tactic must be to fight for the ever-growing union of the class in its fight for its immediate needs. Education “reform” aims to destroy public education, the only form of education for the poorest section of our society, regardless of ethnicity. It is the end of the social safety net for those who are the most expendable in our midst.

This is a political fight for whether the people or the corporations will control society, and thus provide a world-class education for *all* of our children.

## STOP THE CLOSING OF OAKMAN ELEMENTARY

By James Fassinger and Daymon J. Hartley

DETROIT, MI — Students, parents, teachers and supporters have held several protests to stop the closing of Oakman Elementary Orthopedic School which specializes in teaching children with disabilities.

Last month, Detroit Public Schools Emergency Manager Roy Roberts announced he will shut Oakman Elementary Orthopedic School. One of four Detroit public schools listed to be closed, Oakman, offers special services and facilities for children with a wide range of disabilities that mainstream schools cannot provide.

Although Detroit Public Schools (DPS) spokesman Steven Wasko states attendance is down, according to parents, the school’s enrollment has actually increased over the past two years. Wasko also claims that the school needs an estimated \$900,000

worth of improvements in order to operate properly, which has been disputed by staff, parents and other observers from outside of the school district.

Oakman elementary is the only school for the physically disabled students in Detroit. It specializes in educating physically disabled or otherwise health-impaired students from Head Start to fifth grade. It is a jewel of Detroit and a good example of the need to nationalize education.

In an apparent effort to quell dissent about the school’s closing, DPS informed parents, students and staff that the school building had been sold off, when in fact they had only just put it up for sale. The price tag: \$46,000. After the protest, parents and supporters started taking up a collection to put a down payment on the school and avert the sale. They also plan to file an injunction in an effort to block DPS action against the school.”



Students, parents and supporters protest the planned closing of Oakman Elementary Orthopedic School which specializes in teaching children with disabilities, outside the headquarters of Detroit Public Schools. PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

# Healthcare and civility spiraling out of control

By Maureen D. Taylor,  
M.S.W., MI Welfare Rights  
Organization and Michael  
Berger, R.N.

*Editor's note: This is the first of a three part series on the Detroit crisis.*

DETROIT, MI — As Detroit continues to be one of the “poster child” cities of corporate America’s exercise of total control, each day presents another challenge to basic rights. Democracy in Michigan was destroyed under the guise of repairing a broken economy. The right to vote was crushed under the concept that residents were too stupid to make critical budget cuts. The right to form unions was cancelled by suggesting that these justice organizations had outlived their usefulness. Healthcare is next. The limited access to medical care is now disappearing under the notion that it costs too much. Pensioners at the age of retirement are denied this benefit as a part of the “sacrifice” retirees must make because the banks and lending industries must be compensated for legacy loans that go back almost sixty years. Nations around the world have debts forgiven routinely, but these corporate banks are “Shylocks and thieves to the bitter end.”

Almost every day we see stories plastered on the news about

families trying desperately to raise funds to pay for hospital procedures. In the richest country in the world, Americans still do not have the right to visit healthcare centers if they don’t have healthcare coverage... sad. Among healthcare providers who bring services to those in private homes, conditions are equally as bad.

The role of corporate America in healthcare is becoming ever more aggressive in their desire to profit on the misery of those most in need of care. Medicaid, long the “last best hope” for the uninsured, has become a money-making machine through the denial and elimination of services. Who in their right mind would send a human being home from a hospital with wounds and not even a bandaid to cover the area? When the nurse was asked by a home-bound patient, “can I have a few 4x4 wound pads and some tape, the answer was, “no, your insurance does not cover that.” People confronted by an utter lack of compassion and reasoning will resort to whatever they can. Patients have wrapped up leg wounds with napkins from McDonalds and circulars left on the porch from the neighborhood market. These unsanitary treatments result in re-infection and re-hospitalization—the expected outcome of the drive to maximize profits in the health industry.



Protesters against the take over by Detroit’s Emergency Manager, Kevyn Orr, demonstrated outside the entrance where the Manager held his first public meeting. Officials only allowed a portion of those standing in line to attend, locking the doors on those remaining, stating that space was limited.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Corporate America continues to flex its unholy muscles. A recent suggestion that the blood alcohol limit, which defines a person as legally drunk, should be lowered from .08 to .05 was roundly challenged by the alcohol producing industry. Why? They shamelessly stated they would fight any concept that

suggests they sell fewer alcoholic drinks, which might result in lowering profits. Conclusion? It is better to make profits by selling more alcohol than to consider the possibility of reducing the number of people maimed or killed in alcohol-related accidents. Horrible, uncivil, and unacceptable.

Progressives everywhere

believe that “the needs of the many must outweigh the needs of the few.” We will continue the fight for democracy, the fight to make every vote count, the fight to protect workers, and the fight to have universal access to healthcare for every man, woman and child in this country. Why? Because it’s the right fight!!

## 500 homeowners storm Department of Justice

By Debra Savitt

WASHINGTON, D.C. AND LA QUINTA, CA — I was one of the many homeowners, now an x-homeowner, who has battled with Bank of America and Fannie Mae since 2005 when the housing market began to crash. Approximately four months after purchasing my home, the housing bubble started to burst. Within one year, its value was approximately one-half of what I owed. I spent approximately five years fighting with the banks and Fannie Mae. Angry, frustrated and mad that the banking industry blamed people for purchasing homes they couldn’t afford, trying to shame the middle class and people of color while they were stealing from us, I decided to go to Washington D.C. on a scholarship offered by the Home Defenders League, Occupy Our Homes, and ACCE.

On May 17, I left for Washington, D.C. with 500 homeowners from all over the U.S., who

were struggling to keep their homes. The plan was to march to the Department of Justice, and demand that Eric Holder, 82nd Attorney General of the United States, arrest the criminal bankers and reduce home principals. On May 20, we marched from Freedom Plaza after homeowners gave speeches and shared their stories. Then we blocked the front doors of the Department of Justice and the two parking lots, and were surrounded by every type of police officer—Home Land Security, D.C. police, and the federal building police. News teams were on the scene, police cars were parked up and down the streets, helicopters were hovering, all because grandmothers, mothers and families wanted an answer now.

Eric Holder never met with us, nor did he make a statement. He simply allowed homeowners who were peacefully protesting to be tasered and arrested. After the first 17 arrests, the protest continued for three more days.



The Home Defenders League and others march to the Department of Justice in Wash., D.C., to demand that the government hold the “too big to jail” banks accountable for the ongoing home foreclosure crisis. Over twenty demonstrators were arrested for peaceful acts of civil disobedience.

PHOTO/STEPHEN MELKISETHIAN

Homeowners stayed and spent the night on the steps of the Department of Justice demanding that bankers be arrested not homeowners. The police continued to taser and arrest protesters. Some

of the people who were arrested were told they “had no rights” in jail, and were not given water or toilet paper for almost two days.

The purpose of the protest and the arrests was to bring greater

awareness that foreclosures are not down as you are hearing on the news. There are still 13 million people underwater. In addition, the news is stating that the housing market is going up again. The statistics are manipulated to make us think things are getting better. The bankers have not changed their practices, so we are at risk of another crash—while they get richer again! Guess who suffers from the crash, not the bankers, we do!

Homeowners who have lost or are losing their homes are planning on educating our communities and going back to the Department of Justice with thousands of people demanding the arrest of the true criminals and reduction of home principals. It is up to us to make the change, and it takes the people to make the change. If you wish to share your story you can contact me at [debravereend@gmail.com](mailto:debravereend@gmail.com)

See the People’s Tribune online edition for more on Debra’s struggle. [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org)

# Green Shadow Cabinet: Stop the Trans-Pacific Partnership



Jill Stein, 2012 Green Party presidential candidate, stands next to an enlarged photo of a Houston high school that was built on a toxic dump site. The school is in a severely polluted neighborhood, near the Valero Oil Refinery, which is slated to process 60% of the dirty tarsands oil via the XL TransCanada Keystone Tarsands Pipeline.

PHOTO/MARIAELENA CASTELLANOS

By Sandy Perry

SAN JOSE, CA — On June 10 the Green Shadow Cabinet released an urgent call for resistance to the Trans Pacific Partnership

(TPP). The TPP is a massive new free trade agreement currently being secretly negotiated by the United States and ten other Pacific Rim countries. On May 24, Arthur Stamoulis of the Citizen

Trade Campaign gave a briefing to a special meeting of the Green Shadow Cabinet. He pointed out that global corporations are dissatisfied with ongoing, worldwide political resistance to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and seek the TPP as an end run around political constraints built into the existing pact.

Although the TPP now involves primarily the US and several smaller countries, it will include a “docking agreement” to allow other countries to sign on later. Stamoulis projected that ultimately 40% of the global economy will be covered. Although some 600 corporate lobbyists are working on the TPP text, US trade representatives have flatly refused to release it to the public. Senator Ron Wyden, chair of the Senate Trade Committee, had to introduce a law to gain even partial access to the very agreement he is supposed to oversee.

It is easy to understand why. Provisions of the TPP are so dangerous to our economy and our democratic institutions that it will never see the light of day

if the people ever find out what is in it. Mainstream media has not disclosed that it even exists. The Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable have begun a campaign to stampede congress into passing fast track legislation that would slam it through without hearings, testimony, or any public involvement or commentary whatsoever.

According to partial texts leaked by international sources, the TPP would radically step up offshoring of jobs to countries like Vietnam where workers earn only a third to half of what workers in China are paid. It would block our governments from regulating banks, protecting the environment, requiring adequate food safety measures, or accessing affordable generic medicines.

The political implications are even worse. Ratification of the TPP would mean the death of American democracy as we know it and evisceration of our constitution. Corporations complain that the WTO is ineffective because it only allows complaints between one country and another, and

political considerations then enter the process. The TPP on the other hand will include an “investor-state” provision that empowers global corporations to directly challenge any law or regulation of any country that reduces their profits as a “regulatory taking.” That country would then be taken to a private international tribunal that entirely circumvents all public judicial authorities. This tribunal would be authorized to force countries to either rescind their laws or pay “damages” from their treasuries directly to global corporations.

If the TPP passes, the transition to fascism—the total merger of corporations with the state—would be complete. The Green Shadow Cabinet and others are pledging to resist fast track legislation and torpedo the treaty.

*Sandy Perry is Secretary of Housing on the Green Shadow Cabinet, an opposition cabinet formed out of the Jill Stein and Cheri Honkala 2012 Green Party presidential campaign.*

## Why we need to end ‘corporate personhood’

### Senate votes ‘no’ on labeling GMO foods, despite clear mandate from constituents

By Abraham Entin

The need for the constitutional amendment against ‘corporate personhood’ advocated by Move to Amend was demonstrated clearly by a recent vote in the U.S. Senate.

On the eve of the late-May worldwide protest against Monsanto, some 71 U.S. senators voted against guaranteeing states the right to enact laws requiring the labeling of foods containing GMOs (genetically modified organisms), part of this year’s farm bill.

They did this despite the fact that 90 percent of the public have made it clear they want labels on foods containing genetically engineered ingredients.

Why would so many senators disregard the desire of 90 percent of their constituents simply to know what’s in the food we eat? Why are they more responsive to the companies that create these Frankenfoods than to the people they are elected to represent?

We all know the answer—it’s money. It takes a ton of money to become a U.S. senator, and the best way to get it is from rich people and giant corporations.

Asked why he robbed banks, the famous Depression-era bank robber, Willie Sutton, famously replied, “Because that’s where the money is.” Our politicians are just as smart as Willie. They know where the money is and how to get it—by becoming good and loyal employees of Global Corp and representing its interests in the halls of government.

That used to be called “taking bribes.” No more. Bribes have been reformulated as “campaign contributions,” and we are not surprised when companies contribute to politicians on both sides of the aisle. That’s “being impartial,” not bribing everyone in sight.

All of this has been enabled by the court-created doctrines of corporate constitutional rights and decision after decision equating money with free speech.

That’s the legal basis for the takeover of our government, our media, our schools—all aspects of our lives—by enormous economic entities that do not have our best interests at heart. Indeed, they have no hearts, one good indicator they are not human beings and shouldn’t have the rights the Constitution reserves for people!



An estimated two million people in over 52 countries peacefully took to the streets to say NO to biotech giant Monsanto on May 25, 2013. These protests were in Detroit, MI.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Any successful strategy to end corporate control must address corporate constitutional rights and money as speech. The courts are constantly used to defy the will of the people when it is in conflict with the interests of corporations.

The 2012 debacle around California’s Prop. 37 (to label GMO food) is a prime example. Because the courts have ruled

that “money is speech,” the corporations behind the “No on 37” campaign were able to pour \$45 million into saturating the airways with false and misleading ads in the month before the election, creating enough confusion to narrowly defeat the proposition.

Move to Amend is the national coalition campaigning for the “We the People” Amendment that

establishes that “corporations are not People” and “Money is not Speech.” A grassroots organization, Move to Amend will help you start an affiliate in your area if there is none already. For more info, visit [www.movetoamend.org](http://www.movetoamend.org).

*Abraham Entin founded the Sonoma County affiliate of Move to Amend.*

# MARCH AGAINST MONSANTO: END DICTATORSHIP OVER SEED, LIFE, AND FOOD

By Valerie Jean & Tia Leberz

DETROIT, MI — On Saturday May 25 2013, an estimated two million people in over 52 countries peacefully took to the streets to say NO to biotech giant Monsanto. When asked why they marched, people expressed outrage over the U.S. Congress and the President for having passed what is now being called the “Monsanto Protection Act.” It, among other things, bans courts from halting the sale of Monsanto’s genetically modified seeds. The act also protects Monsanto from ever being legally sued for health complications from eating GMO foods.

In Detroit we intentionally

planned our march in Detroit’s historical Eastern Market, where regional farmers have always gathered and to serve the communities of Detroit real food. It was important to the organizers of the event that the farmers could see the numbers standing in solidarity with them and their way of life and for them to see the strong demand for non-GMO food. Increasingly, as companies like Monsanto control more and more aspects of our food system, from seed to grocery store, our small and mid-sized farmers are struggling to survive. We wanted to stand up for the very important role our Michigan farmers play in our families’ lives. We intended our march to be very

family-friendly because we believe this is an issue of food security for future generations.

Around 600 people came out to support the cause that day. We had children dressed as bees, adults as beekeepers and flowers and we created the infamous Monsanto Man. Our evil villain was taken down by the bees in a fun skit. We took action and phoned Senator Debbie Stabenow, the Chair of the U.S. Senate Agricultural Committee and long-time bedfellow of companies like Monsanto, during our rally to tell her in mass to “break up with big ag!”

The day left us all feeling empowered, ready for the next step, with a real feeling of what is

possible in this fight. GMOs and Round Up are devastating to our environment, our public health and to bee populations worldwide. With countries all over the world banning GMO corn crops it has become clear that we must stop this chemical company that has already taken control of the world’s food supply. As there have been no long-term studies on the health impacts of GMOs, we are quite literally the lab rats for this biotech giant’s dangerous experiment. This is going to take a full food system revolution. Regulations won’t fix anything as the Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), the agency tasked with making sure our food is safe, is indeed run by ex-Monsanto

executives. So we must go forward, stand up, speak out and demand our food is safe and sustainably produced and our small farmers protected for generations to come.

“When Hitler came to power and the Nazis came to power, with their kind of genocide, people created resistance movements everywhere. Today, this new fascism is over life itself, in all its diversity. It’s not just controlling one religion, one race. It’s wanting to outlaw all diversity of all life on earth... This march against Monsanto is a call to end the dictatorship over seed, over life, over our food, and over our freedom.”—Dr. Vandana Shiva, Navdanya



People at the Monsanto protests expressed outrage over the U.S. Congress and the President for having passed what is now called the “Monsanto Protection Act.” It, among other things, bans courts from halting the sale of Monsanto’s genetically modified seeds. The act also protects Monsanto from ever being legally sued for health complications from eating GMO foods. PHOTOS/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

## San Diego march against Monsanto

By Jerry Malamud

SAN DIEGO, CA — On May 25—Stop Monsanto Day—as worldwide actions were taking place, those of us in San Diego mounted one of our most successful actions since the First Occupy Assembly in support of Occupy Wall Street! Over 1000 people (some reports put it at between two and three thousand) assembled at the Main Fountain in Balboa Park! The action was sponsored by Food and Water Watch, with the support of all of the progressive groups in San Diego, including the Peace Resource Center, the San Diego Occupiers, the

Green Party, PDA (Progressive Democrats of America), Earth First Movement, Labor Unions, United for Peace and Justice, and Occupelas (Women occupiers of San Diego Choir). Our new progressive Mayor sent a very supportive message!

After assembling in the park, listening to rousing speeches regarding the evils of GMO’s, Monsanto, and “Round-Up”, and some inspiring folk music, the group headed out for a six-mile march. Waving clever signs and chanting and drumming through the Hillcrest area and Little Italy and then returning via the Gaslamp area to the World Beat

Center at Balboa Park, additional speakers engaged the demonstrators who were also entertained by more music including some very original songs by the Occupelas! The entire action was covered by all of our local TV stations. Of course—we were accompanied by many police officers on foot, motorcycles and paddy wagons—all “to protect us.”

Why protest Monsanto? It is the globe’s largest seed purveyor—and its dominant vendor of genetically modified traits. How dominant? Here’s National Public Radio on the company’s mastery over the US GMO market: “More than nine out of ten soybean seeds

carry [Monsanto’s] Roundup Ready trait. It’s about the same for cotton and just a little lower for corn.” It also sells nearly \$1 billion worth of herbicides every three months.

For all its clout, Monsanto is a relatively new player in the Big Ag game. As recently as the late 1970s Monsanto was known mostly as a chemical company; herbicides were a relatively small sideline, and genetically modified seeds were just the gleam in the eye of a few scientists in the R&D department. Its flagship chemical business had plunged into crisis. In 1976, Congress banned the highly toxic industrial coolant PCB. To make matters worse, the company was heavily invested in the toxic pesticide DDT (banned

in 1972) and the infamous Vietnam War defoliant Agent Orange. How did Monsanto pivot from teetering, scandal-ridden chemical giant to mighty high-tech (though still quite controversial) agribiz firm?

A young consultant called Mitt Romney helped push the firm on its highly lucrative new path—selling off big chunks of its legacy chemical businesses and reinventing itself as ag-biotech firm. Of course, Monsanto 2.0 remained quite ruthless in its pursuit of profit. The metamorphosis merely meant trading one set of environmental controversies for another. Perhaps the agrichemical giant, too, will one day see its regulatory fortunes turn.

# 'Every social process moves to the beat of consciousness'



**Father Alejandro Solalinde, a Mexican priest, headed a caravan through the U.S. to denounce the brutality suffered by our migrant brothers and sisters from Central and South America. Thousands of migrant victims are killed and/or disappeared.**

PHOTO/DAVID SANDOVAL

Laura Garcia, editor of the *Tribuna del Pueblo*, had the privilege of talking with Father Alejandro Solalinde who headed a Caravan through the U.S. to denounce the brutality suffered by migrants from Central and South America. He gives perspective on the importance of the development of consciousness in part one

below. In part two, he discusses strategy and building unity.

**By Father Alejandro Solalinde**

CHICAGO, IL — I bet on organization. I bet on developing consciousness. I bet on unity.

The *Caravan Opening the Doors to Hope* was well received

in some places more than others.

The church is showing some trepidation, not because of me, but because of what I represent. I represent pressure to change, a dissident voice. It makes them uncomfortable. Like a pebble in their shoe, they don't know what to do with me. But I love them and I respect them. My desire is always to get close to them, to help them not be afraid, to encourage them to change, to try to take that urgent step forward.

But I know consciousness is a process. Not everyone has the same level of consciousness and therefore not the same level of values. All social processes, even within the church, move to the beat of consciousness. The number one thing that one has to move in a person is consciousness. With social consciousness, people support each other, and have the foundation that allows them to succeed.

But if there's no consciousness, people won't succeed.

I am totally against any action of authority or power that manipulates people. Manipulation does not take into account people's consciousness. For example, I grab you and move you here and

there. At the end, I replace you. The same with paternalism. It's a way to replace your consciousness, to make decisions for you, to take away your freedom. It's another form of not taking you into account. Or worse yet, it's authoritarianism. I instill fear in you. I pressure you and make you move anywhere I want.

The Caravan is shaking people's consciousness, making people think. We do not know when they'll react, but we know some day they're going to. We're setting the foundation and bringing consciousness.

The Caravan is teaching me about the bowels of this system in the United States. It has helped me see the famous "rule of law." What barbarians! They have used the law as a weapon. Let's take the Native Americans. The colonizers make their law, and automatically declare that the Native Americans have to submit to it. If not, they break the law, and the colonizers, legally screw them over.

It's the same with the immigrants. They have made laws to criminalize immigrants. These immigrants, who heroically insist in coming, are merely incidents



**Pedro, from Honduras, was part of the caravan. Due to violence and the economic situation, he decided to migrate. In Mexico, he climbed onto the bestia (train) and his leg was cut off.**

PHOTO/MARY KAY YARAK

to them. They call it a crime for immigrants to fight for their families. But they're the ones who drafted these laws to make the poor criminals.

This is what we need to expose. If the laws are standing in the way, we need to organize to overthrow and get rid of those laws. But we must do it with intelligence.

## San Jose immigrant-labor rights march shows the way

**By Peggy Elwell**

SAN JOSE, CA — One of the largest May First immigrant-and-labor-rights marches in the country was in San Jose, California this year. As many as 20,000 people marched the three miles from the East Side to San Jose City Hall downtown.

The march was a success because every organization in the May 1 coalition worked hard to turn out their constituencies, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow church members. They were unified under one voice behind three demands: the end of deportations and the unification of families, an immediate pathway to citizenship, and the respect of labor rights for all workers.

Marches represented a wide spectrum of people—day laborers, church groups, unions, community organizations, students and many members of the general public. There were Aztec dancers, a children's drumming class, girls wearing dresses and aprons with slogans. Water was handed out all along the way, from supportive organizations, stores, and

individuals.

The marchers brought hundreds of banners—there was a huge banner with the signatures of thousands of people by Voluntarios de la Comunidad; a banner with handprints, carried by a youth group from Guadalupe Church; banners announcing the presence of the Laborers Union, Sacred Heart Community Services, Unite HERE, Somos Mayfair, the United Food and Commercial Workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Plumbers and Pipefitters, the Low-Income Self-Help Center, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and many more.

The United States has long been known as a country of immigrants. Currently immigrants make up about 13 percent of the population. One hundred years ago immigrants made up even more, 14 percent of the population.

California's Santa Clara County, where San Jose is located, has one of the highest immigrant populations in the country. Indeed, San Jose's population is

estimated to be 10 percent undocumented. Two of every three residents are either immigrants or children of an immigrant.

However, there are many class differences among the immigrants—some are well educated and well off, coming to work in Silicon Valley as engineers from India, China, Taiwan, and Europe. Silicon Valley executives such as Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg are fighting to keep these "desirable" immigrants in the country as a plentiful supply of technical workers without having to shore up the U.S. educational system.

Other immigrants have come to escape persecution, aggression, war, destruction of their lands and their ability to survive, precipitated by our military industrial complex.

Still more immigrants are at the bottom of the economic ladder, mostly from Mexico and Central and South America, but also the Philippines and other Pacific Islands, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Fleeing hunger in their homelands and often undocumented, many work for minimum wage or less.



**As many as 20,000 people marched in one of the country's largest May Day immigrant and labor-rights marches this year.**

PHOTO/JOAN SIMON

These were the people taking to the streets in San Jose on May 1, fighting for the strongest possible immigration reform.

The march was organized by the May 1 Coalition, including AFSCME, Anakbayan, Californians for Justice, MAIZ, NAFCON, PAWIS, Sacred Heart Community Service Agency,

Santa Clara County Building and Construction Trades Council, SEIU USSW, SIREN, SJPJC, SJSU SAHE, South Bay Dreamers, the South Bay Labor Council, UFCW Local 5, and the Voluntarios de la Comunidad.



# Why the Chicago Sun-Times fired its entire photo staff

By Daymon J. Hartley

CLARKSTON, MI — In late May 2013 the entire photo staff of the Chicago Sun-Times was fired.

The global economic crisis is evident in the newspaper industry.

The up and coming generation “Z” is totally based in robotics and electronics and have been raised on pixels. They were born into laptops, iPads, smartphones, texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

They have no affinity for ink on paper. This is the market the corporations have to concentrate on to realize maximum profits.

In an earlier period in U.S. history, from the transition to industry from agriculture, U.S. capital needed a nation-state in the form of a democratic republic. Key features included free public education, the franchise and popularly elected legislative bodies, the separation of church and state, a somewhat independent press and the capacity to mobilize a standing citizen army.

Such innovations were necessary for the development and defense of the national market and to ensure for capital the existence of an indoctrinated working class

capable of functioning in an increasingly complex industrial factory system.

Today, under conditions of global electronics based production, speculative capital and giant corporations, the days of the bourgeois republican form of government are numbered.

Without a need for democracy there is no need for a free press. It is also dangerous to allow those who would expose what is really happening in society to do so.

With the robotic and electronic revolution in the economic base well under way, we are replacing manual/mental labor. We are also producing untold abundance, but robots cannot buy back what they produce. With an economic system requiring one to have a job to earn a wage to buy the necessities of life, you have an irreconcilable contradiction. The value, profits and market system can no longer function to meet the needs of society.

Globalization and spreading technology brings about an evening up process. Rather than bringing the rest of the world's workers up to the living standard many U.S. workers have enjoyed, our standard of living is being driven down to the level of the lowest paid worker anywhere.



Fired Sun-Times photographers and their supporters picket in front of their offices to demand their jobs back. PHOTO/ROB HART

The 1% have no control over this system as it implodes. The capitalists only response is an open fascist terroristic police state to contain the response to the destruction wrought by this implosion.

Democracy in this country has been reduced to merely casting a vote. Every four years they let us decide which of their leaders is going to mislead us for another four years. To enjoy the

fruits of democracy the average person needs access to the tools of democracy: television, print, radio. The only folks who have that access are the billionaires.

Dr. Martin Luther King was right in demanding economic democracy: the democratic right to a job, house, food, healthcare and that elusive right to human happiness.

The only solution is another American revolution. This

revolution has to take place in our minds first. An intellectual leap by the 99% and the working class is needed, as is a vision of a new society where all people's needs are met.

*Daymon J. Hartley is former staff photographer for the Detroit Free Press and is presently the photo editor for the People's Tribune.*

## Laid off Chicago Sun-Times photojournalist speaks

By Rob Hart

CHICAGO, IL — When I heard Jim Kirk, Editor in chief of the Chicago Sun-Times, say the entire photography department was being eliminated I looked to my hero, my mentor, my friend John H. White, and my heart broke. After 35 years and a Pulitzer Prize, he was out of a job without even a thank you.

I walked out of the conference room in the Holiday Inn. The carpet was a dizzying swirl of colors and I felt sucker punched. Did I just lose my job with 27 other extremely talented photojournalists? Did he really say their audience wants more video content and photos would be shot by reporters with iPhones? Why are the producers of visual journalism being shown the door? All these things would have been good questions but I didn't do anything but what I do best. I started shooting photos with my iPhone, pictures that I felt needed to be made.

After 12 years of working in the company's suburban Oak Park office, I was happy to be

free. I shook hands with John and the other Sun-Times guys, grabbed my manila envelope with my separation agreement on it and headed for the BillyGoat, the world famous journalist hangout, at 9:30AM.

My co-worker, Curtis Lehmkuhl, and I sat there and just shook our heads. My phone started ringing and it wouldn't stop for over a week. People from all over the globe were calling, texting and emailing. I was asked to prognosticate on the future of newspapers and photojournalism.

My biggest fear was facing my students. I teach Photojournalism at the Medill School at Northwestern University and how could the person who is supposed to inspire them be the one who is out of a job? So that night we looked at two pictures. After giving an interview to Crain's Chicago the reporter asked to take a cell phone picture. We all got the irony of the situation. The Chicago Tribune's Pulitzer Prize winner John J. Kim showed up and was making photos of us. My wife walked through the door and in one of the greatest moments

of my life she brought me a cell phone. I hugged her and cried. John walked around us and made photos of us embracing, tears streaming down my face. I had been on the other side of that situation so many times.

That single situation sums up my entire argument that great visual journalism takes the viewer into the emotional center of the situation, draws them in, and delivers the gut punch.

By letting go with so many great photojournalists I hit the layoff jackpot. Had I not kept shooting and found a new way to tell my story this might have died. Had the union not had our backs and organized pickets and rallies we would have been deflated. The photojournalism community rallied around us and picked us up. My friends have done everything possible to introduce me to new clients, new revenue streams, new ways of storytelling. I'm so blessed to have worked in a job and a community that I love.

<http://laidofffromthesuntimes.tumblr.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/Laidofffromthesuntimes>



Fired Sun-Times photographers and their supporters picket in front of their offices to demand their jobs back. PHOTO/ROB HART

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# Illinois Democrats sell out to Big Oil and gas

By Cathy Talbott

CARBONDALE, IL — Horizontal hydraulic fracturing will now be allowed in Illinois as the much touted regulatory bill passed the legislature. This is despite the tireless efforts of health and community opposition groups such as S.A.F.E., Illinois Peoples Action, the testimony of Dr. Sandra Steingraber, and the challenge to Governor Quinn-D by Josh Fox (Gasland and Gasland II) to visit Pennsylvania frack sites and talk to those harmed by the process.

The regulatory bill was drafted with representatives of labor, industry, and national environmental groups. Because of the inclusion of the latter who benefited from corporate money, people are being misled.

According to Dr. Steingraber, an Illinois native and Distinguished Scholar in Residence in the Department of Environmental Studies and Science at Ithaca College, “The fracking emperor has no clothes. The regulatory bill was drafted, under the guidance of Illinois Attorney General (Lisa Madigan-D,) behind closed doors with no public hearings, no public comment period, no input from scientists or physicians or public health officials, without environmental studies or a health impact assessment. These rules are arbitrary compromises



based on negotiations with industry. They guarantee neither public health nor environmental integrity.”

After eighteen months of attempting to gain an audience with Governor Quinn, Tabitha Tripp and Dayna Conner of Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing Our Environment, were granted

an 11<sup>th</sup> hour meeting with an aide to the governor. “(He) confirmed there is no contingency plan for our children or their health and well being down the road in the land of Lincoln,” Tripp said. “When the jobs don’t pan out and the water is toxic, we will have traded away our children’s future for fossil fuels.”

Because Illinois Democrats have touted this as a jobs bill, labor groups have embraced it. As S.A.F.E member Richard Fedder points out, the Chamber of Commerce estimates 1,000-47,000 jobs will be created, however, empirical evidence from states such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia actually show few jobs

created and many more lost. Both states have high unemployment and suffer from environmental destruction.

As the Koch funded organization, Americans for Prosperity, continue to show their pro-industry propaganda film “Fracknation” to local communities facing the fracking nightmare, opposition groups are regrouping and strategizing. As Dr. Steingraber declared, “The anti-fracking movement is growing into a nationwide citizen uprising. We will be escalating our actions in Illinois (with) plans for statewide education and outreach campaigns. We will remember and call out those who dismiss the moratorium bill as a pretty guest towel. It is not something to admire and walk away from. It is a basic human right.”

The Illinois legislature also passed a water privatization bill, which, like fracking, is part and parcel of the move to privatize all public resources for the private gain of the 1%. Educating local communities is the urgent task now. We need to call for the nationalization of energy, water and the land in the interests of the people, not the corporations. We need a government that guarantees we have a society free from exploitation and environmental destruction; a government that is truly of, by, and for the people.

## War is not healthy for children

By Al Gladysck

DETROIT, MI — Every time I see Vice-President Joe Biden on TV talking about “warriors” and smirking, it really bothers me. Now I know why.

This morning, I opened the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) and a headline on the front page caught my eye. It said: “**Last Marine Standing: A Life Tormented by Survival.**” It reminded me of 48 years ago. We were the children back then.

The article said, “Marine Lance Cpl. Williams is the sole survivor of his 12-man squad. His comrades were wiped out by a roadside bomb in Iraq, leaving him physically unharmed but with psychological wounds that remain unhealed seven years later.” (WSJ)

I’m sure Joe and the other politicians who “support” these warriors have no idea what they have done to them.

“Cases like that of Lance Cpl. Williams might constitute a different kind of mental injury from

war, some clinicians are concluding, one that falls into less-understood categories of ‘traumatic loss’ and ‘moral injury.’” (WSJ)

Or maybe they do.

“Those who suffer traumatic loss, by contrast, often experience guilt over surviving and tend to isolate themselves. Among Dr. Maguen’s patients are a vet who killed a child who reminds him of his own son; a medic who, after saving a comrade’s life, killed an enemy fighter in self-defense; and a veteran who was ordered to shoot into a crowd of unruly civilians.” (WSJ)

USA Today, on February 13, 2013, reported that the VA estimates the suicide rate among veterans is 22 per day.

“In 2006, he left the Marine Corps. On his 23rd birthday, he and a Marine friend, Wes Dudley, ended up drinking at a Missoula bar. Lance Cpl. Williams went to the alley to urinate. His thoughts flashed back to the moment he nearly shot the Iraqi boy. When Mr. Dudley found him, he was banging his head against

the brick wall “to stop thinking about it.” Then he ran up an exterior staircase and launched himself over the railing some 18 feet to the alley below, breaking an ankle. To the extent he can parse his drunken intentions, Lance Cpl. Williams thinks it was a suicide attempt.” (WSJ)

On December 28, 2012, NextGov.com reported that there are more than 900,000 backlogged VA disability claims.

“The government pays him \$300 a month for his PTSD. Over the years, doctors have prescribed Adderall, Prozac, Wellbutrin, buspirone, Ritalin and amitriptyline. Some pills made him sleepy. Others kept him up. Some made him famished. Others killed his appetite. One helped him concentrate, but also made him feel like vomiting.” (WSJ)

So Joe, the next time you have the urge to say warriors, say instead “I support Universal Single Payer Health Care For All because war is not healthy for children”. And shed a tear for your vote to go to war with Iraq and Afghanistan.

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# Remember the Triangle Fire to protect workers today

By Andi Sosin & Joel Sosinsky

NEW YORK, NY — Most Americans already own way too much clothing, but when the department stores bring out their new styles for the next season we experience an irresistible urge to buy that shirt, that dress, that sweater or whatever makes us feel attractive. And when it comes to desiring the latest fashion trend, as families strive to live within their household budgets, it is hard to resist a “good bargain.” With that in mind, it is troubling to ponder why American consumers don’t seem to care about purchasing new clothing that comes covered with the blood of Third World workers.

The most recent tragedy at the Rana Plaza factory complex in Bangladesh where over 1100 workers died and thousands were injured in a horrific building collapse is once again an example of how cutthroat international capitalism puts the health and safety of workers behind an insatiable lust for profit. The Walton family, the owners of Walmart, whose combined wealth is greater than the bottom 42% of American families, surely has the blood of Third World workers on their assets. Yet Americans, whether by desire or habit, or lack of other options, continue to shop at Walmart. This fact begs the real question of why Americans, the beneficiaries of governmental regulations that insure their safety on the job, don’t care enough about their brother and sister workers half a world away to stop shopping for cheap clothing.

Perhaps Americans choose not to remember that during the



The Rana Plaza factory complex in Bangladesh where over 1100 workers died and thousands were injured in a horrific building collapse is once again an example of how cutthroat international capitalism puts the health and safety of workers behind an insatiable lust for profit. PHOTO/ILRF

early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the USA, the cost of their immigrant great grandparents’ labor was ridiculously low and the profits of industrialists obscenely high. Or perhaps Americans have forgotten about sweatshops because capitalists have purposefully hid the story of labor’s struggles from the general public. In order to recognize their solidarity with overseas workers, Americans may need to be reminded of the sacrifices of earlier

generations of US workers who perished in preventable factory fires like the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire of 1911. The Triangle fire is still credited with igniting social activism, inspiring unionism, and reaching the public to place pressure on politicians and government to regulate wages and working conditions in the United States, thereby creating safer workplaces and a prosperous middle class.

With each new overseas

garment factory tragedy, the need grows for a way to remember our moral obligation to demand that the lives of workers have greater significance than a corporation’s bottom line. A permanent memorial soon to be erected at the site of the 1911 Triangle shirtwaist factory fire, America’s most horrific workplace disaster until the World Trade Center collapsed on September 11, 2001, will remind Americans that they too were once victims of capitalism’s

insatiable desire for profits over people. The *Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition* mourns the loss of life at the Rana Plaza garment factories in Bangladesh, and hopes that the Triangle Memorial will inspire workers worldwide. For more information visit <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org>.

*Andi Sosin and Joel Sosinsky are with The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition.*

## From the darkness of night, the light of a new day: Scipio Africanus Jones

*Editor’s note: This is part one of a four-part article.*

By Raymond L. Smith

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR — Scipio, a child of a fifteen-year old slave girl and her slave owner and master, was born before the abolishment of slavery in late 1863. While pursuing his education, according to some sources, Jones attended Walden Seminary in Little Rock, which is now Philander Smith College. He also attended Bethel Institute in North Little Rock, which later became Shorter College.

After many hardships, he became an educator, businessman and attorney. Although his

accomplishments were many, none exceeded the role he played in the notorious Elaine, Arkansas race riot of 1919. This was a time in American history known as the “Red Summer.” This uproar started when a group of White men descended upon a Black church where a group of Blacks were gathered. The Blacks, who were mostly sharecroppers, were meeting to form a union to protest unfair wages. A massive fight resulted and many, mostly Black men, women and children, were killed. A White posse man was also killed. Hundreds of Blacks were arrested, including twelve Black men who were tried and sentenced to death within hours. During this history-changing case, Jones interacted

with founders and other high-ranking officials of the NAACP, which intervened in this extremely unjust case.

At the beginning of this working relationship between Jones and the NAACP, a degree of friction existed. All of this worked out as each side realized the importance of the other. It was said that Mary White Ovington, one of the founders of the NAACP stated that while Jones worked on the case in Elaine, he had to spend each night in a different location because of the dangerous and threatening racial climate in the angry and hostile town.

This was a different era and America was a racially divided country. Lynchings and other

mob violence were not uncommon. Although Jones was the mastermind in this case and the attorney from whom most of the legal strategies derived, he endured denial and humiliation. Arkansas law at the time prevented African American attorneys from appearing before the Court unless a Caucasian attorney was listed as lead counsel. A White man named George W. Murphy was hired by the NAACP. Murphy had significant political connections throughout the State. Ovington later wrote that Jones’ legal procedures and techniques demonstrated in the case had been “masterly.” Jones is credited with preparing the legal brief in this landmark case (Moore et

al. V. Dempsey) which ended up in the U. S. Supreme Court.

Another founder of the NAACP, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, wrote in the “*Crisis*” magazine flattering statements about Jones’ legal performance. DuBois also urged citizens to donate to a legal defense fund set up for the men in this case.

Another representative of the NAACP, noted human rights activist and journalist, Ida B. Wells Barnett, also ventured to Arkansas to investigate this tumultuous event. In her report, Barnett was complimentary about Jones. In the end, this nightmarish ordeal concluded with the men saved from the death penalty. It was an early and very significant victory for Civil Rights.

# Say no to corporate control of Benton Harbor

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



BENTON HARBOR, MI — We must say no to the dictator and slave master, Whirlpool.

They are destroying the city of Benton Harbor by stealing land and by driving the people completely out of the city to build a Kingdom for the rich.

Many residents feel they have no control over the direction of the city because their vote doesn't matter. They see the disappearance of a democracy that they thought was embedded in U.S. society. Many feel trapped by a lack of options because of Whirlpool's control of their city. In addition, our elected officials are bought by corporate contributions and seem incapable of constructive action.

Through the city's new governor-appointed Emergency Financial Manager, Tony Saunders, Whirlpool has absolute power to do whatever it wants. Saunders represents the Whirlpool Corporation, not the citizens of Benton Harbor. Saunders has now come up with a new scheme to steal still more land from the poor without their knowledge.

To carry out Whirlpool's program, the Emergency Manager fired six of Benton Harbor's top



**Benton Harbor is the first municipality where new dictatorial emergency powers of a Financial Manager were used to strip power from all of its elected officials. Hundreds of Michiganders from across the state came to Benton Harbor to protest the governor's enactment of this law.**

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

employees in the last two months. Saunders said more firings at City Hall are coming. There is nothing the residents can say or do about this.

The termination of Regina Sistrunk is an example. Her firing

was political. The commissioners approved a motion during a special meeting on May 28 demanding her immediate reinstatement, but she remains fired.

Regina Sistrunk questioned the Emergency Manager, who

wanted to use some Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to purchase Benton Harbor land. Regina refused to use the funds because it would have been illegal to do so. The (CDBG) money can only be used

for specific purposes such as for subsidized housing, etc. The witchhunt was on.

Regina Sistrunk was replaced by Nicole Rodden Brown, who previously worked for Capital Access, a Philadelphia's-based Company contracted by Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Brown was over the \$13.8 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 grant money which was divided up between the Land Bank and Cornerstone Alliance (Whirlpool Corporation). Cornerstone received \$6.4 million. No resident from Benton Harbor was hired to do the community work that this grant made possible. The three-year contract ended in May.

This process shows that private corporations such as Whirlpool, financial interests and the Governor are all behind the effort to get complete corporate control of Benton Harbor. The Emergency Manager, Tony Saunders is just a flunky for the Whirlpool Corporation. He has betrayed and abandoned our community and our economic and educational needs for corporate money.

The Black Autonomy Network Community Organization protested at City Hall against the dictatorship of the Emergency Manager. The protest was a major success. The power of the people is more powerful than the people in power.

## art

I have to break a coin and a tattered bill  
to squeeze some cheese from it and some bread  
that is my art form now: there's no fooling it

a twenty dollar bill dropped mysteriously yesterday  
and today a ten: I am so distracted  
trying to squeeze it out  
ground down to the end of accounting

I can't buy the Street Sheet from  
the street artist who says he's been living outside  
for three weeks and it was hard  
and he has a place tomorrow  
in the Tenderloin: I've been going around  
the block to avoid him  
because I'm so broke  
not even a word to spare

I wonder if all his paintings have been lost  
I threw all mine away  
down the years: they're  
fantasies now: out in the world  
with its radiance and space

and he with the least resources  
is the one who is still making it

— Sarah Menefee

## Mama, I Can't Sleep

In my dark and lonely fight, when all I  
have is just my right.  
Who knows the truth, and if they care, to  
take my burden or just share.

I am a warrior for truth, you taught me  
well, my skills to hone,  
The need is great and I am strong, this  
fight is constant and prolong.  
However short my time; every child is  
mine and I their shield for truth  
Looking to ease their reality from sup-  
posed, safe houses of abuse

Every child should have and know a place  
where love, safe care abounds  
Not just survive abuse, misuse, disdain at  
hands of persons who confound  
I see their faces, feel their distress, but I  
grow weary and need rest.  
I come to you my source of life, to gain  
my strength, renew my quest.  
Cause Mama, I can't sleep.

What if the world could stop and troubles  
freeze in space?  
We could feel ourselves surrender to the

innocence misplaced.  
Grab that solemn, scared ground and find  
that special moor;  
Where children flourish, their minds  
thrive, and their spirits soar.  
But Mama, I can't sleep.

Hold me in your arms and let me feel the  
peace you trace  
Could I not, just take some time, engulfed  
in your embrace?  
May I, lay my head awhile against your  
tender cheek?  
Have you touch me on my brow and sing  
your song so sweet.

It's what I want for every child, your love,  
your grace and safe,  
I feel myself surrendering, no will, no  
time, or pace.  
Cause in this majestic citadel, where truth  
and love reside,  
The words, "I Can't" shall not endure or  
will abide.  
Cause Mama... I can sleep.

— Yetta Aikens