



Community people listen intently to speakers at a rally and protest around the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin in Detroit, MI.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MURDER OF TRAYVON MARTIN

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Volunteers feed the hungry at Cass Park in Detroit.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Forced starvation in a world of plenty

EDITORIAL

Editor's note: Since this article was written, the House passed a bill to subsidize agribusiness and deleted the food stamp section from the bill.

On June 20, the House of Representatives voted down the Farm Bill with its cruel \$20.5 billion cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Some Republicans voted no because they want an even larger \$40 billion cut instead. If it had passed, two million victims of hunger would have lost access to food stamps and 200,000 children would no longer receive school lunches. The bill included amendments that would force people to take drug tests, have no felony convictions, or even arrests, and a requirement to work in order to be eligible for the program.

While that part of the bill rep-

resents austerity from the ruling class to tighten the belt on the most vulnerable workers, other parts guarantee risk free profit making for giant agribusinesses. Most of the revenue of these super-rich companies would be provided through large subsidies and insurance against natural disasters, crop failure and falling market prices—making them recession proof.

On the other hand, our failing capitalist economy has left nearly half of all households below, at or near the poverty level. At least one in six, a record 50 million people including 17 million children, are food insecure. Many have no idea where their next meal is coming from. Freeway exits are lined with human beings bearing signs, "WILL WORK FOR FOOD." Homeless moms beg for nourishment so they can produce enough milk to breastfeed their infants. Parents skip meals, pushing food off of their plates onto that of their chil-

dren. Ten-year-olds looking for work, elderly on fixed incomes, and college students in hyper debt—all this is the silenced face of hunger in America.

In the face of such misery, the not so silent mouthpieces for the ruling class in Congress point fingers at each other for the defeat of the bill. These silver-tongued professional liars, trying to shame the destitute, argue that people aren't working because the "nanny state" is taking care of them. They know that all food stamp revenue is processed through the poor before ending up in the bank accounts of their rich masters. Republican Congressman Steve King of Iowa referred to the growing numbers of "people that are hungry" as the "dependency class."

In fact, the most rapidly growing section of our population is not a racial, ethnic or immigrant group. It is an economic class of workers—many of whom are dispossessed. They

are being thrown outside of a system that won't feed anyone it can't profit from, even though there is an abundance of food.

A handful of monster corporations like Monsanto and Archer Daniels Midland own and control automated food production worldwide, using little human labor. Everything from seed to dinner table is their private property. They dump so much food on the more profitable world market that it creates scarcity here, forcing food prices up, and again they profit.

Not needed at the job or market place, more of us will join the ranks of the dispossessed. Once the shell shock has passed, the realities of class war will become clear. Do we starve and perish, or do we save ourselves and indeed the rest of the world by taking over the corporations and guarantee that everyone gets the food and other necessities they need?

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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Publisher: People's Tribune
ISSN# 1081-4787

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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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The historical significance of the murder of Trayvon Martin



PHOTO/MIKE FLESHMAN

COVER STORY

The murderer of Trayvon Martin has been set free. A shocked and angry people have taken to the streets in protest. Articles condemning the on-going racism and injustice fill the social media while the president calls for calm and a respect for law. We are seeing the beginnings of a new stage of a powerful spontaneous movement, the natural and inevitable social response to oppression.

Revolutionaries cannot impact history without becoming part of and bringing clarity to this cry for justice. They cannot, however, impact history if that is all they do. The passion of the revolutionaries in struggle must be reflected in their ability to sum up—to understand the significance of such events—to see where such events fit in to the unfolding revolutionary process. Only then can they plan ahead and organize for the inevitable coming battles.

What is the historical significance of the murder of Tray-

von Martin? Since nothing can be understood outside its social and economic context, we see this murder as part of a process that involves the entire country, not only the African Americans. America has irreversibly entered the path to revolution. Wage-less electronic production is destroying our society, which is based on wage labor. The government cannot solve the problems of permanent unemployment and the decline in our standard of living. The Supreme Court has become a joke, an open defender of the corporations and against the people. Only 10% of the people have confidence in Congress. The first stage of revolution is the people losing confidence in the government. That process is well under way and the freeing of Zimmerman adds fuel to the fire.

Looking back to the upsurge of struggle beginning in the 1950's we see that amongst the dozens of brutal murders and lynchings at that time, a few, such as the murder of Emmitt Till stood out and mobilized the entire movement. These mo-

bilizing events took place at a critical time of changes in the economy and wide spread social discontent. The murder of Trayvon Martin reflects this on a higher level.

We revolutionaries must bring clarity to the movement. There are those who are content to shout "racism" as if that will solve the problem. Racism is so deeply entangled in our history that it cannot be crushed without crushing the entire system. As society polarizes, racism tends to become the form rather than the content of the struggle. That content is more clearly seen as class oppression and exploitation.

Trayvon's murder marks the end of one stage and points the way forward. The American people face a long and difficult struggle. The contours of the enemy are becoming clear to all and simply fighting back is no longer enough. We have to win the people over to the concept of reclaiming our country and rebuilding it on the basis of common ownership of the means of life, which will end forever the freedom to murder our children.

Economic democracy is key to real freedom

The American people have always held high the ideal of democracy, and fought and died for it. From the American Revolution and the abolition of slavery after the Civil War, to the Civil Rights struggles for voting and other rights, people were led by the vision of the democratic rule of 'we the people.' Yet despite the aspirations and the bravery of generations of visionaries—who have indeed won many triumphs—true democracy's promise has not been fulfilled. Instead, we see many of the rights we fought and died for stripped away.

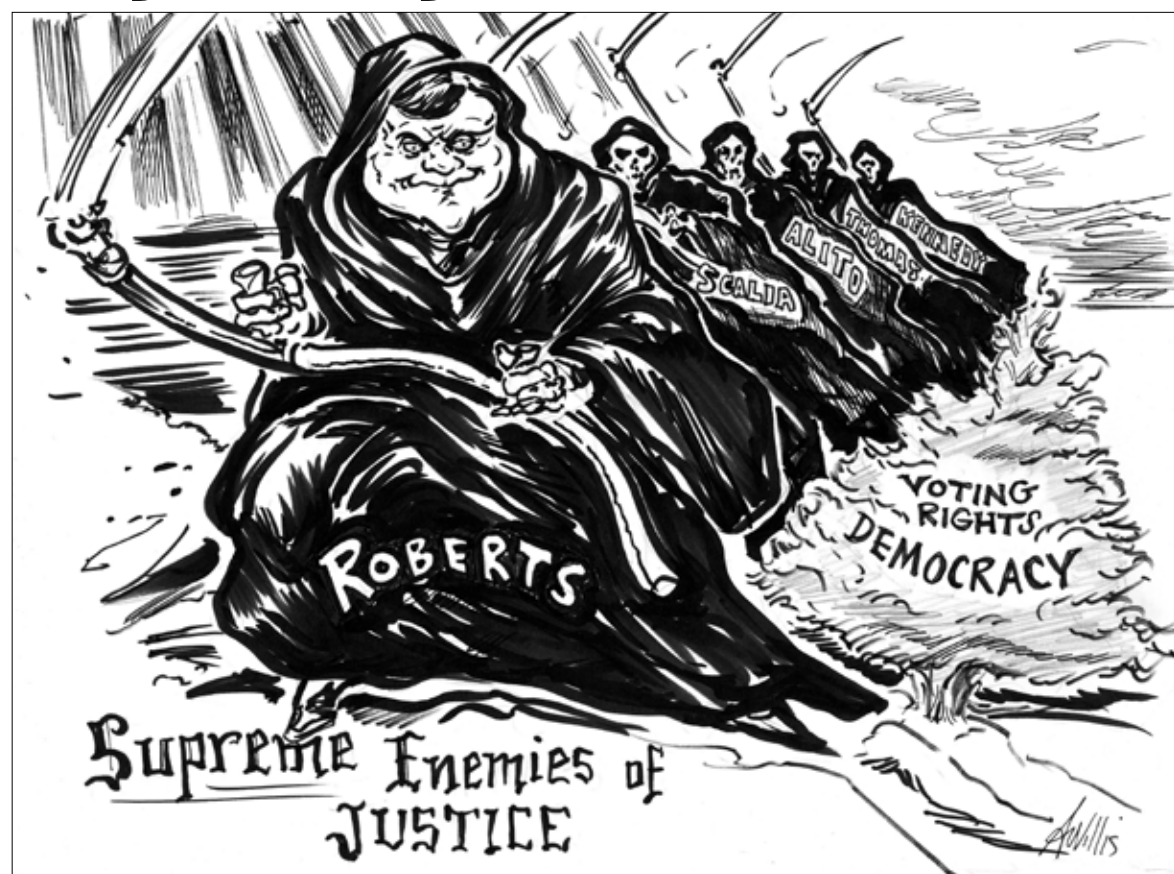
The recent Supreme Court decision striking down a key part of the Voting Rights Act eliminates many of these hard-won rights. Detroit and other cities and towns in Michigan have come under 'Emergency Manager' dictatorships, whole local governments thrown out and replaced by non-elected corporate interests. Schools are being shut down and teachers fired in a push to privatize education. The Supreme Court and the Citizens United decisions have given the rights of citizens to corporations—'corporate personhood'—and the corporations the right to buy elections, while stripping individuals of Fourth Amendment privacy rights, changing

the laws to allow indefinite detention, stripping the right not to self-incriminate, and many other reversals. We are seeing the rise of fascism—the takeover of the government by the corporations.

Fascism arises from the changes in the economy and the needs of the rulers. A growing mass of workers, thrown out of the economic system by vast labor-replacing technologies based on automation and computers, are dispossessed and disenfranchised. These workers and former workers can no longer depend on selling their labor to get what they need to survive. The capitalist class can't allow democracy under these conditions, or the politicians that don't represent the people's interests would be voted out of office. Even the limited form of democracy of the past period, when politicians of both parties represented the same exploiting class, is being dismantled.

The bottom line is that there can't be political democracy without economic democracy. Whoever controls your bread and butter controls you. People are waking up to the fact that they are going to have to fight to be in control of the means of their survival.

Only with an economic system that no longer depends on exploitation can we fulfill the prom-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

ise of democracy—a cooperative society based on distribution 'according to need,' collective control over the necessities of life. This will be the fulfillment of the dream of the ages, and of the demands of the movement on all fronts of today's struggles.

The many struggles today are

actually a struggle for the bigger picture, to gain control over what sustains us, led by a vision of what kind of a society and world we need. The struggles of people for education, health care and housing, the gatherings of people in the upcoming Democracy Convention in Madison WI, the

Occupy Gathering in Kalamazoo MI, and the Washington DC rally to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr's 'I Have a Dream' speech, are all expressions of people's desire to come together around this broader vision of democracy and social transformation.

700 ARRESTED IN NORTH CAROLINA BATTLE FOR 'MORAL HIGH GROUND'

By John Slaughter

ATLANTA, GA — We are all aware that throughout the country the corporations and the wealthy have taken over government and continue to enact a program that serves their interests at the expense of the majority, who are being pushed more and more into joblessness and poverty. Nowhere is this more the case than in the South. Now, the people of North Carolina are rising up and challenging this mean-spirited agenda.

For the first time in more than 100 years Republicans have gained a majority in both houses of the state legislature, and in 2012 they increased their majority and added a Republican governor. They have been pursuing an agenda of a tax plan that would cut income taxes on the rich and the corporations and drastically increase the sales tax, cut unemployment benefits, expand school vouchers for private schools, refuse Medicaid expansion and pass a package of voting changes that would restrict the votes of minorities and the poor.

A broad coalition of representatives of the poor, civil rights leaders, ministers, educators and union members are standing up to resist what they see as a moral

atrocious. "These people have lost their constitutional minds and their moral minds," says NAACP president Rev. William Barber. For the past 6 weeks a series of "Moral Monday" demonstrations have been conducted, when crowds of up to a thousand file onto the floor of the state legislature and remain until they are arrested. 700 have been arrested so far, and the number continues to grow. Says Rev. Barber, "If you are going to change the nation you have to change the South, and if you are going to change the South, you are going to have to focus on these legislatures."

"The states are the new front line in politics," says professor Jedediah Purdy. The fight to turn around the political trends in this country that are designed to strengthen the hold that the corporations and the wealthy have over our lives, and to maintain control over a growing restive mass of those who are being excluded and left out of the main stream of society, proceeds on many fronts. North Carolina is one of those fronts, and all of us can take inspiration from their courageous action. It gives us hope that if we can stay the course we can win not only the battles but the war.



A broad coalition of the poor, civil rights leaders, ministers, educators and union members are standing up to resist what they see as a moral atrocity by the wealthy. PHOTO/MATTHEW LENARD

Corporate giant holds West Virginia retirees hostage

By James Fassinger

DETROIT, MI — Nearly one year ago, Occupy Century Aluminum retirees were standing on this very spot, the median on Route 2 just outside of town, breaking down their winter encampment at the entrance to Century's aluminum shelter in Ravenswood, West Virginia. Back then, as they packed up camp, they were celebrating a great victory in the fight for the return of their retiree health care benefits, cancelled by Century after the facility closed in 2009.

Today, Century has yet to fulfill their end of the bargain and return those benefits. Refusing to wait any longer, the retirees are back out here, again taking up the fight against the company. This 24-hour protest was just the start of new efforts to pressure the aluminum giant to honor the agreement reached with them on March 1, 2012.

In 2010 Karen Gorrell, wife of Century retiree Mike Gorrell, decided to take up the fight against the company after meeting Bryce Turner, also a retiree, and his wife at a local union meeting. Turner had just been diagnosed with leukemia and

was uncertain how he was going to manage without health care. "They knew they worked in extremely hazardous conditions, so they knew that when they got older, they were desperately going to need their health care," says Gorrell. It was then, she says, that she realized something had to be done, although taking on Century seemed impossible.

After seeing the Occupy movement take to the streets of cities across America in the fall of 2011, the retirees decided to occupy the entrance to the Century facility, camping out for 75 days straight during that winter. Eventually, Century came to the bargaining table.

Century, with the help of the retirees, then managed to negotiate new favorable tax legislation with West Virginia lawmakers, in addition to a deal with the Public Service Commission of West Virginia (PSC) that would potentially save the company over half a billion dollars in energy costs at the plant over the next decade.

Even after receiving promises of discount rates from the PSC, Century walked away from the deal in October.

The retirees are hopeful for a settlement but the reality of the



For 75 days, the Occupy Century Aluminum retirees braved the winter cold and snow, camping out at the entrance to the Century Aluminum facility in Ravenswood, W. Va., staying until Century agreed to return their healthcare benefits. PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

plant's reopening slips further away while Century continues to hold out on returning the health care it promised to give back. Now one year on, Occupy Century Retirees are tired of waiting.

"The retiree committee stands ready to commence negotiations

necessary to put a new settlement into place which would restore retiree benefits, settle the litigation and get the plant up and running again," said Gorrell. "It is now in Century's hands.

Bryce Turner, the man who inspired Karen and the others to

stand up against Century when this struggle began, died before he ever had his benefits returned. And now, with the clock ticking for all of them, Gorrell and the others continue their struggle once again to fight for their lives, in his honor.

DEMOCRACY CONVENTION IN MADISON, WI

“If you want to strengthen democracy where it matters most—in our communities, our schools, our workplaces and local economies, military, government, media, constitution—you will find something inspiring in Madison in August, 2013. Democracy is coming... to the U.S.A.”

For the People's Tribune, Sandy Reid interviewed Adam Porton, one of the organizers for the upcoming Democracy Convention.

People's Tribune: Adam, what is the Democracy Convention?

Adam Porton: The Democracy Convention is a gathering that brings together people from around the country who want to strengthen and build the democracy movement. The overall goal is to leave people, whether experienced organizers or regular folks from around the country, empowered to continue organizing around these issues in their own communities.

PT: Could you speak about the destruction of democracy that is going on today.

AP: I think the way we have the convention set up speaks to this. There are actually nine conferences and each one deals with democratizing a different part of our society. So, for example, there is an Economic Democracy Conference, an Earth Democracy Conference, a Constitutional Reform

Conference, a Media Democracy Conference, a Race and Democracy Conference, a Local Democracy Conference, etc. At each of these conferences, participants and session organizers will talk about how we can build a democracy movement that brings democracy to these different areas.

PT: What role do the corporations play in the destruction of democracy?

AP: I think the unchecked power of the corporations over the last 100 years has played a key role in the destruction of democracy in many, many areas. That's everything from the consolidation of major media organizations which restrict access of different points of view to the massive amounts of money that corporations are now allowed to spend to influence our election, to the massive influence corporations are able to have over our political process by lobbying to deregulate pretty much every industry we have.

PT: What is the relationship between economic and political



Uprising in Madison, WI in 2011 denouncing the attacks on public service unions.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

democracy?

AP: Economic democracy underpins true political democracy. In our economic democracy conference, we will explore these themes further, talking about ways that regular people can fight for things like participatory budgeting, state and locally owned banks and the expansion of worker and community owned cooperatives.

PT: What's your vision of a democratic society?

AP: I think it's one where in all of the areas we have discussed, and that the convention will address, we have true democracy. That means that in those areas, at the end of the day, the people rule, the people are the ultimate decision makers, not just on paper but in reality. A democratic society would lead to everything, both civil and political liberties, being respected, but also their social and economic rights: food, education and healthcare would be met.

PT: How can people get information about the Convention?

AP: You can find out more about the convention and register at democracyconvention.org. Also, some of the bigger name speakers scheduled are Gar Alperovitz, Debra White Plume, Dr. Jill Stein, Cheri Honkala, Tim DeChristopher, and Cindy Sheehan. Most likely, Jeremy Scahill will also speak. And many other terrific organizers will be speaking and presenting from around the country.

IMMIGRATION REFORM, 2013

With the American Dream becoming a nightmare even for the native-born, what can immigrants expect?

Editor's note: This article was excerpted from our sister publication, the Tribuna del Pueblo. As we go to press, the U.S. Senate passed an immigration reform bill with a vote of 68 to 32. Yet this is not the immigration reform millions fought for. Since 2006, millions of people took to the streets to demand a just immigration reform. “Citizenship for all,” the heart of their demands, is missing in the new proposed bill. What's not missing is an additional \$5.5 billion to “secure” the border. Corporations such as Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics are lining up to take their cut.

Today's immigration debates are occurring in an environment of enforced austerity at home, where even previously comfort-

able U.S. born workers are sacrificed to corporate profits. At the same time, the globalization of capitalism is displacing millions from their homelands and forcing them to emigrate to the U.S. or other countries.

For a long time it seemed like the U.S. was the land of opportunity. The U.S. seemed a beacon of hope and plenty to many from abroad. It appeared that the U.S. worker shared in the bounty and was part of a social contract between employers and workers. Many immigrants longed for this.

But this is rapidly changing.

The U.S. now has one of the highest income disparities of industrialized countries. We live in a time of unprecedented abundance and polarization of wealth, where the top one percent own more wealth than the bottom 40 percent. The social safety net is in tatters. Unions are weak.

Labor-replacing technology has caused this, because of who

owns it—the one percent not the 99 percent. (In the hands of the 99 percent, the new technology would be a benefit, not a curse.) It is in this context that we look at the current immigration reform.

Immigrants seeking legalization are played as pawns in an enormous game of chess, in which immigration is only one part of the game plan. The extension of the guest-worker program from agriculture to industry is part of the politics of immigration reform. Jobs not yet taken over by robots are increasingly done by a temporary workforce.

If the American Dream is becoming a nightmare even for U.S. born citizens, what can immigrants expect out of immigration reform? On the positive side, polls show that a large majority of Americans support a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. today. But even if legalized,

immigrants will be excluded from receiving health care under Obama's Affordable Care Act for up to 14 years. This occurs despite numerous studies showing that immigrants always paid more into social security than they collected in benefits. This year's proposed farm bill would exclude half a million eligible people from food stamps—not counting the undocumented or those in the process of legalization, who are not even eligible. Seventy-five percent of those affected are children.

We are headed towards perilous times. Until U.S. born and immigrant workers see themselves as members of a unified, single class—with a right to full and equal access to the bounty that the modern world provides—there will be much suffering. But once we awaken to class consciousness—native-born and immigrant alike—we will be poised to achieve the good life for us all.



Protest for immigrant and workers' rights on May Day in Chicago. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

Taxpayer funded voucher schools for the wealthy

By Todd Price

CHICAGO, IL — The plan by Governor Scott Walker to expand vouchers across Wisconsin is a direct attack on public education, the latest in a reign of destruction. Rather than negotiate with labor and the community to create family sustaining jobs, the governor has given away federal funds, and the Republican controlled-legislature has produced significant tax giveaways to the corporations. Vital services have been cut to the bone. Public employees have been gouged, collective bargaining demolished, and teacher's benefits slashed, with many teachers consigned to working as seasonal labor. All in the name of making Wisconsin "open for business."

Now the governor and the Joint Finance Committee aim to provide vouchers for the wealthy. Walker and his corporate sponsors are preparing to misallocate the public monies to pay for voucher tuition. They are preparing to undermine and dismantle the foundation on which the state public education system stands.

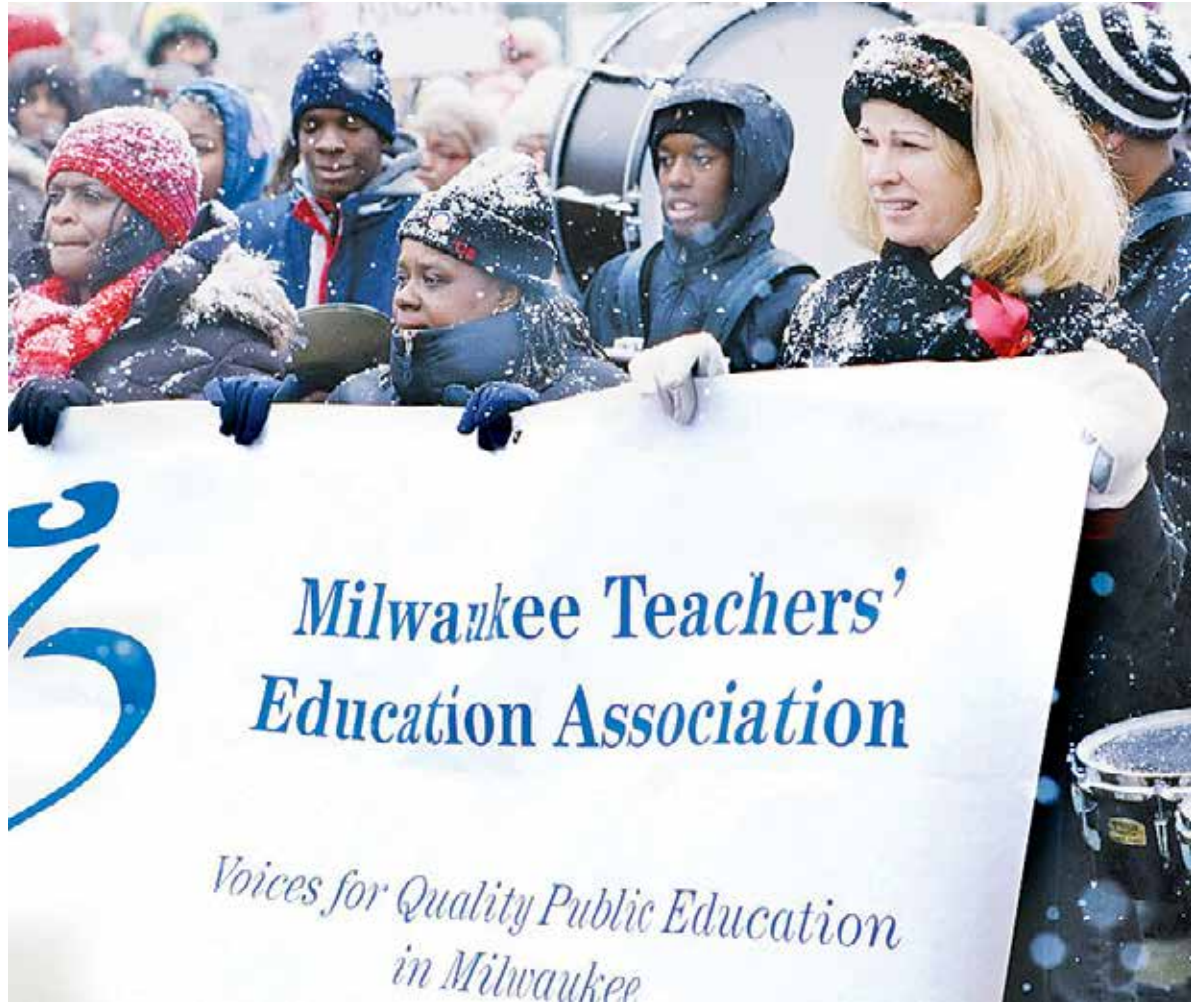
Wisconsin's legislature has done little to nothing to fix the situation; the regressive school funding formula, based on the property tax, places the burden of payment on homeowners and renters. There is much to be angry about, and Walker's plan to cut taxes exacerbates the issue.

Walker avoids confronting the underlying problem that corporations are not paying their fair share.

Vouchers began in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with the claim that competition would provide children from poor families with the same 'choice' available to children from wealthy families: to attend another school where they could be better served.

But the effect has been just the opposite. Robert Miranda, contributing author to *Defending Public Education from Corporate Takeover* notes, the promise of choice was a "pipe dream." What has returned is "separate but equal education" which, he argues, "is now being practiced in the private voucher educational system funded by public dollars." Furthermore, Miranda points out an example: "St. Anthony's voucher school in Milwaukee is the largest private school choice program in the nation. With 1,700 students, of which [only] 30 are not of Hispanic origin, it is also an example of segregation thriving in a private apartheid education system established with public funding."

Governor Walker is opening the door for voucher expansions, to Educational Maintenance Organizations (EMOs) which are certainly lining up to get a piece of the public pie. Indeed the EMO charter schools grew precisely because vouchers as pub-



Milwaukee teachers education Association protest school cuts in Madison. PHOTO/CHRIS HOPPE

lic policy were failing to win support when brought to public referendum. As Jack Gerson, another contributing author, writes: "Charter schools receive public funding but are privately run—in effect, they are back-door vouchers. It's more than a coincidence that the real push for charter

schools across the country began just after the national campaign for vouchers was defeated more than a decade ago."

Charter schools and vouchers, two sides of the same worthless coin, are part of a process of wrecking the obligation of society to provide education to its

people. This amounts to nothing less than short-changing Wisconsin's children. It calls for a national political solution that recognizes that public education should be available for all, funded equitably.

CHICAGO: SCHOOL WARS CONTINUE

By William H. Watkins Ph.D.

CHICAGO, IL — In recent weeks the unelected and corporate sponsored Chicago school board has stepped up its attack on the public schools. In addition to the draconian closing of 50 schools, massive budget reductions have been ordered. On June 14, the Chicago Public Schools sent layoff notices to 850 school employees, including 550 teachers.

The cutbacks have been met with protests by teachers, parents, students and community people trying to save our schools. The anger thermometer is rising as emergency meetings are called and further protests are planned. The outrage has extended to a group of "progressive" city councilmen (aldermen) who issued this statement:

"As elected representatives of the communities of Chicago, we are alarmed by the stripping of basic necessities which define a school. The neighborhood

schools have been reduced to beggars, lacking such essentials as sanitation supplies, library book funds, field trip money, playground supervision. The principals have been given the new budgets and told to 'do more with less.'

In addition to the skirmishes in Chicago, the national corporate gangsters have dropped another stink bomb on public school teachers claiming they are inadequate. On June 18, 2013 the self-appointed National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its "report" entitled Teacher Prep Review. Its website says, "Based in Washington, D.C., the National Council on Teacher Quality was founded in 2000 to provide an alternative national voice to existing teacher organizations and to build the



Protest against the closure of almost 50 public schools in Chicago. PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

case for a comprehensive reform agenda that would challenge the current structure and regulation of the profession."

We learn immediately that

the document is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Gleason Family Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Searle Freedom Trust, the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the Teaching Commission and other anonymous funders.

The document begins with the same old tired song: American schools have slipped into mediocrity. Presumably we have fallen from world leader to somewhere in the middle of the pack. While issues such as lean budgets, poverty and crowded classes are acknowledged, this document blasts "poor teacher preparation." They argue that the colleges and universities produc-

ing America's traditionally prepared teachers have become an industry of mediocrity, churning out first-year teachers with inadequate knowledge and classroom management skills. The problem, the report concludes, is bad teachers rather than a disastrous economic situation.

NCTQ is no Bible. Similar to other corporate propaganda, it claims to be based on years of research and a large number of cases: 1,130 colleges and universities with teacher training programs. Presented as a consumer guide, closer examination finds their "ratings" are arbitrary and meaningless poppycock. While this is not the first attack on the education of teachers, it is joined to the larger offensive against public education.

Instead of a national campaign to close schools and against teachers, we need a national program to provide equitable funding for all.

Save Our Schools!
Save Our Teachers!

HEALTHCARE AND CIVILITY SPIRALING OUT OF CONTROL

Editor's Note: This is part two of a three-part series.

By Maureen D. Taylor,
State Chairperson, Welfare
Rights Organization
and Michael Berger, R.N.

DETROIT, MI — Patriots and lovers of the American people, this message is for you! The rise and powerful control that technology has over the lives of us all is a harbinger of things to come. The technology that used to enhance labor, today replaces labor which means millions of working hands are no longer needed. Therefore, corporate entities in charge of our lives have taken yet another step toward the destruction of millions.

Few are talking about the “sequester” that is causing pain and havoc coast to coast. Seniors who depend on federal funds to help pay for their chemo-treatments, are now passed over. Section 8 certificate holders are evicted across the country. Children are tossed out of Head Start. No healthcare for seniors, no housing for families, no early education for youngsters. Do you see

a pattern? In a nutshell, we are sicker, uninsured, unemployed, undernourished, poorer, and under attack.

The Detroit Medical Center (DMC) was once known as the hospital of last resort. Treatment was available for all—insured or not—before it was sold to Vanguard Health Center. Promises were made to maintain access to healthcare by indigent persons—these were offered to get the “buy-in” needed by both community and current DMC employees. Vanguard later announced that it sold DMC to a new corporate pirate, Tenet Healthcare, that has NO ties to those former commitments and no intentions of maintaining the agreements. Now the limited access to healthcare left is in jeopardy.

It should be obvious that profit/cost containment/concern for the ‘bottom line’ has no place in the delivery of health care. NOT SO.

In Chicago’s Southside, there are “trauma deserts”—medical centers that have closed their trauma centers to certain emergency categories to save money, not lives.

Detroit is no different. Here

is a current example—a call was placed to 911 requesting emergency help. After waiting an hour, the family is instructed on how to perform CPR on the patient. After waiting another hour, the patient is transported to a DMC facility. The patient is suffering chest pains requiring the placement of a stent to open up the coronary artery. The patient declines service due to a concern about quality of care, and requests a transfer to another hospital. Request was denied. The patient is sent home without oxygen by taxi.

The siege in Michigan continues, so learn from our lessons. Life, limb, civility and the common good is at stake. Unless we take control of the direction the country is headed, we are doomed. Our standard of living is dwindling, the cost of living is going up, and the chances of living are going down. The only way out is to organize. The industrial cities will fall first, because we are the closest to the fires of societal destruction, but we will hold out—waiting for the rest of the nation to take heed and come to our rescue. Time is of the essence.



Protest in San Francisco. The people need to demand that the government provide quality healthcare for all. PHOTO/BILL HACKWELL

VOTING RIGHTS ALREADY CRUSHED IN MICHIGAN

MESSAGE TO THE RANK AND FILE

By Maureen D. Taylor,
State Chairperson,
MI Welfare Rights Organization

DETROIT, MI — The economic foundation of society creates conditions for change based on what that society needs to maintain life. If a society is unable to produce what the population needs, then it must restructure itself so that humanity can continue. History is full of examples that demonstrate this fact, including the Roman Empire—today long gone, the African dynasties—today long gone, the slave system in America—today long gone, and the many societies that passed into history because of the need for change.

There is a current alteration that we are recognizing today, and that is the role technology plays relative to how our world now must respond. Work existed

A statewide movement protests Michigan’s Emergency Manager (dictatorship) law. Even though the people voted to repeal the law in a referendum, the governor continues to install emergency managers in Michigan cities. PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

before jobs, but for many years, employment is the only profile that we understand—you work, you get paid for that work, you run out of money, you return to work, and so on.

Employment tied us all to certain benefits—our residence could be paid for, our transportation, our health coverage, our personal purchases plus our self-esteem were tied up in what we earned. That familiar profile is shattered because the technology that used to aid and enhance labor now replaces labor and laborers. We are so tightly tied to what WAS, that we are slow to recognize what IS.

No longer are we needed in large numbers to work, so we are left with nothing or less than nothing. Our quality of life is assaulted, and even the democracy that we cherish has been crushed. The first violation of recent voting rights was quietly and successfully launched against the “rank and file” throughout Michigan.

This rape of rights took hold in Highland Park, MI years ago when the Chrysler Plant left that small city, starting the collapse of their tax base. Since then,

Michigan has a history of Emergency Managers (EM’s) forced on separate cities as a solution to financial stresses. Pontiac, Benton Harbor, Flint, Hamtramck, Ecorse, Detroit, and several school systems all have EM’s imposed that effectively nullified elections held in those same cities. EM’s sell city and community resources to corporate interests, then give those dollars to banks and lending institutions to address debts owed. Water Departments, recreation centers, city services, funeral homes, parks, city-owned buildings, and pension funds are eyed as fair game in this selling frenzy. Detroit is being sold on the auction block like slaves used to be. The EM is an unelected dictator with vast powers to dismantle our beloved Detroit, so we call-out to the “rank & file” of the country to see what is happening and be prepared when called to come to our aid. What happens in Detroit will not stay in Detroit. The needs of the many must always outweigh the needs of the few... let us make this a 99% season! No mas... (No more...)



Public workers' struggles in Oakland, CA: A NEW STAGE OF WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

By Shamako Noble

OAKLAND, CA — On Friday, June 28, community members including Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) joined workers from public workers unions including SEIU 1021, Our Walmart and Bay Area Regional Transit (BART) on the steps on Oakland City Hall to deliver a powerful message that the city must "reinvest" in the people of Oakland rather than pay on corporate debt that has reached well over \$500 million to businesses like Goldman Sachs. The group then marched into downtown Oakland's city bank, chanting "Wall Street banks, you owe us!"

The struggles of Oakland public workers mark a new quality. SEIU Local 1021 reports they have not engaged in a strike since 1946. This BART strike is an Oakland strike, and not simply a union strike. After many years of being tied at the hip with the capitalist system, labor unions are working in coalition with other impacted members of the community to take a concrete stance against Wall Street,

corporations and disrespect of humanity. While the city looks at cutting jobs, reducing benefits and rolling back valuable city services, it refuses to address privatization and the robbing of public coffers.

The startling reality is that corporate debt in the United States far outweighs public or individual debt, yet it is the public and individuals who are forced to cover corporate costs. The workers of SEIU Local 1021, and the members of the Oakland community who support them, represent a changing tide in the social and political environment of the United States, an environment rooted in the economic revolution that has taken place in the American workforce. The fundamental shift towards robotics and automation, along with the expansion of globalization, has made the worker less than disposable. The social contract that maintains their quality of life is no longer valid.

Benito Mussolini defined fascism as the "perfect merger of corporations and state." US struggles around the corporate take-over of education and

health care, austerity measures of the Sequester, and the constant attack on public ownership, all represent the undermining of democracy in the forms of Emergency Managers, Citizens United and rolling back the Voting Rights Act. In essence, this moment and the many struggles we face as they intersect, represent the need for class-consciousness, a class program and a class-based strategy to resolving the challenges we currently face.

We live in a world of abundance. The distribution of basic needs like food, water, shelter, housing, democracy could be met with a different system of collective ownership. Technology, in the hands of the capitalists, can never be used in balance with the sustainability of the planet or the humanity that inhabits it. Siloism and individuality have been used to divide movements, keeping the people from creative and collective solutions that can address many of our issues on more holistic basis. This moment represents a significant point in time, to present class-based solutions to the struggles before us.



Oakland workers rally in support of SEIU Local 1021.

PHOTO/WEAP

Dark Alliance: the CIA, the Contras, and Crack Cocaine Explosion by Gary Webb

Book Review

By Chuck Parker

This book is really three stories in one. Firstly, it is an expose of the CIA involvement with the Contras in Nicaragua. They set up a huge cocaine smuggling ring to finance their war against the popular Sandinista movement, which came to power in the revolution of 1979. Secondly, it is the story of the spread of crack cocaine in the Black communities of Los Angeles during

the 1980's, which resulted from this smuggling. Finally, it is the story of how the major media attacked the author to try to suppress these first two shocking stories.

This cocaine trade caused widespread destruction to the neighborhoods of L.A., which included not only addiction, crime, and gang warfare, but also the imprisonment of many thousands of small dealers and people arrested for simple possession. Meanwhile the millionaire cocaine smugglers, who en-

joyed the protection of the CIA, walked away free men, and the trade went on unimpeded.

It would not be the first time that harm comes to the American people when our government attacks the people of other countries. We all know veterans who have returned home from foreign wars disabled, or people who have suffered and died because of cuts to healthcare and other programs which were caused by the billions of dollars spent to finance those wars. However, in this instance, the

damage was swift and direct—our government at the highest levels teamed up with criminals and terrorists to bring massive amounts of crack cocaine into our communities while cynically promoting a "war on drugs."

This book also exposes how phony the government's "war on terror" is, because the CIA employed known terrorists as Contra's in this war. Many Central American people fled to the U.S. to escape the violence. So we see an example of how one of the roots of the so-called "im-

migration problem" is this use of force to impose the will of big corporations on the small countries of Central America. Whether we live in a community plagued by illegal drugs, or a community where undocumented Latino workers fear deportation to the countries they had to flee because of the wars and violent crime that our government brought there, the solution for all of us lies in a united struggle for justice.

The author, Gary Webb, was viciously attacked by the corporate media, which even led to his death in 2004. We owe it to his courage and integrity, to reject the politics of fear. Politics which has been used in both the "War on Drugs," and the "War on Terror" to win public support for criminal wars in Central America, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and to justify the imprisonment of thousands of young Black men in America. This book helps to expose these frauds for what they really are: a War on Freedom.

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Total media blackout on anti-corporate proposition



By Mark Lipman

LOS ANGELES, CA — It's no surprise, trawling through the media on the 22nd of May, to find that not a single mention was made about the passage of Proposition C on the Los Angeles ballot. [Editor's note: Proposition C is a resolution calling for limits on political campaign spending and that corporations should not have the constitutional rights of human beings.] In fact, it was only after tracking it down on the County Registrar-Recorder's website that I discovered that it had sweeping support with 76.52% of the vote — the highest margin of victory for anything on the ballot. Yet, all we heard was silence.

In these sad and troubling

Protest against Monsanto in Detroit. Proposition C recently passed on the Los Angeles ballot. The proposition calls for limits on political campaign spending and says that corporations, like Monsanto, should not have the constitutional rights of human beings.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

days, when we see the Koch Brothers eying greedily the Los Angeles Times to be the next mouthpiece for their extremist right-wing corporate propaganda, it is no surprise that many right now do not even remember what Proposition C is ... the declaration of Los Angeles that corporations are not people, and the demand for a constitutional amendment ending corporate personhood to be enacted.

This vote—like so many similar votes across this country—is a bold testament to the overwhelming consensus in the United States that the foundation of our modern economy—and with it so too our government—is contrary to the intent of our founding fathers and the well being of our nation.

With this let us also compound the effect our misguided economic system has on the rest of the world, in the form of the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund—run by the same corporations and banking executives that this vote confronts. Think of how trade agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA—enacted to lift all

trade restrictions to these same corporations, while destroying local economies throughout the hemisphere — are implicitly balked at in this vote—a vote that decries the infamy of injustice that is embodied in corporate personhood against real life, living, breathing human beings.

Pulling the rug from underneath corporate personhood is a deep blow at the root and causes of all the suffering and poverty that we see today.

Returning to the original law of this country—150 years ago—when only human beings were considered as people — when corporations were chartered and legislated by law to serve a specific function for the benefit of society, under the supervision of the government and strictly regulated, would essentially overturn capitalism as we know it.

The idea is so powerful, so profound, that it is revolutionary in nature. That is what Los Angeles just voted for in a landslide election. This story is so big that it has the potential to change our entire world. It is so big in fact that the only story bigger is the total media blackout around it.

Los Angeles City elections

By Eugene Hernandez

LOS ANGELES, CA — The campaigning for the L.A. City Mayor and a number of other offices and Propositions is over. Now that the dust has settled, we find that Los Angeles City Councilman, Eric Garcetti has clearly won over his opponent, City Controller, Wendy Gruel.

Despite the bloated support of ex-President Bill Clinton, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer and the former Mayor Riordan, Gruel managed to lose. Part of the voter anger was directed against the Boss Tweed kind of union leadership at the Department of Water and Power, which controls both the Mayor's office and City Council—a union that has never displayed any working class solidarity with the other city unions or other labor struggles in Los Angeles.

One outstanding victory of the L.A. Unified School Board race was that of Monica Radcliff a genuine teacher and lawyer over corporatist Antonio Sanchez, protégé of Mayor Villarraigosa who is leaving office with the city in tremendous debt.

Billionaire Mayor Bloomberg, billionaire Koch Brothers and a host of big business and others

put millions into Sanchez's campaign while only volunteers from the United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) put the foot-work and effort into the race for Monica. UTLA endorsed both candidates and were warned by State Teacher's leaders in Sacramento that failure to support Sanchez would bring about a series of bills to weaken teachers unions and seniority. Therefore UTLA could not donate any money to the campaign.

Los Angeles also passed an advisory vote against the Citizens United Supreme Court decision-Prop C and other measures regarding the marijuana industry.

Another important victory was in the Los Angeles Community College District race—former Green and environmentalist Nancy Pearlman emerged the victor despite the AFT and Democratic Party supporting her opponent with millions of dollars.

Finally, despite the low turnout in the Primary, it stands as a record that—out of 4 million people in Los Angeles—only 200,000 bothered to vote. This reflects that voters were turned off by slick flyers, TV ads, etc. It must be said that elections don't prove there is Democracy—Democracy would have campaign

finance reform, ranked voting, and proportional representation. Also, in California a draconian bill, Proposition 14 passed, which only allows the most heavily financed candidates to proceed to the General Election—surprise! That leaves out the third parties. This is a dictatorship of the two-party system.

girl

she's asleep in the niche
of a door next to
the Drumm St Starbucks
on her short cardboard bed

I see from my table
the elbow of a cop
who's harassing her to
leave

she stumbles by in her
young beauty
chased by another demon
in a black short-sleeved
uniform
protecting our human
spaces
from those of us they
belong to

— Sarah Menefee

The People's Streets

I write to you today with hope that somehow you will see
the lies they spread before our eyes we can not just let be
we must rise up, we must fight back, we mustn't let them win
they use us for their building blocks yes time and time again
the 1% are rich and strong and own everything in sight
they write the laws, own the police and tell us wrong is right
using corporate media they spread their lies as truth
and lock away the whistle blowers without a drop of proof
they turn the masses into sheep and make them all believe
that they are not just slaves but sheep are easy to deceive
we must rise up, we must fight back, we mustn't let them win
the 99% must stand to take the streets again

— Nick Anthony Shaw

[Nearly Pantless Nick]

OccupySF

GREEN SHADOW CABINET AT THE LEFT FORUM

By Cathleen Williams

SACRAMENTO, CA —As protesters in Istanbul flooded the streets in opposition to a plan to destroy a beloved city park and erect a shopping mall in its place, a protest that evolved into a call for political representation and freedom from an authoritarian, pro-business regime; scholars and activists at the annual Left Forum, held in New York in early June, called not just for social change, but for ecological and economic transformation, the theme of this year's conference.

Part of the world wide movement against the deepening financial and corporate domination of all public institutions, the richly diverse offerings of the Left Forum featured panels and workshops by the Green Shadow Cabinet. Though not well known to Americans, shadow cabinets, or alternative government structures, are established in many parliamentary systems by parties that are not in power in order to formulate, and advocate for, policies in opposition to the governing regime.

The Green Shadow Cabinet

has brought together almost one hundred progressive policy experts equipped to explain and publicize new policies and alternative strategies to deal with the environmental and economic crises we face as a country—a far reaching, environmentally sound and socially progressive Green New Deal, which will benefit people facing dispossession and loss under the current system.

As explained by the Green Shadow Cabinet representatives on the panel, including Jill Stein, Cheri Honkola, David Cobb, Kalilah Collins, and others, the Shadow Cabinet has stepped forward to play a role, moving from “fight back” to a strategic plan for political empowerment. As one speaker commented, “The point is that we are moving from a ‘harms based’ movement—like the campaign against hunger, for example—and even from a ‘rights based’ movement—like the call for housing—to a struggle for democracy itself, which is something deeper and all embracing. This is a fundamental shift in our thinking. A larger conversation. We need to turn

to the folks who are living this stuff, those dealing with poverty or experiencing the loss of a future, and break with the two party system.”

The first project of the Green Shadow Cabinet is to expose and raise opposition to the current secret negotiations by the U.S. for the “Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP),” an agreement involving Canada and many Pacific na-

tions in Asia and Latin America. While it is called a trade pact, the TPP is actually a means to consolidate corporate control and create new rights and privileges for foreign investors in a broad array of policy areas.

In challenging the TPP, the Green Shadow Cabinet combines visionary clarity with expertise applied to the practical context of policy making.

As we organize locally to create new visions in all areas of activism—joining together to form deep, broad, militant movements—we will find in the Green Shadow Cabinet an important means for developing independence from the two party system and generating our own forms of political organization and electoral expression.

Interview with Hugh Moore: The Green Party and a Real Peace Movement



San Diego County Green Party gathering. From left to right: David Morison {Co-Chair San Diego County Green Party (SDCGP)}, Masada Disenhouse (Member, County Council, SDCGP), Aida Abril (Member, County Council, SDCGP), Jill Stein, (2012 Presidential candidate, Green Party); Hugh Moore (Treasurer, SDCGP), Mariah Gaylar (Member, SDCGP), Dick Eiden (Member, SDCGP)

PHOTO/MICHAEL-LEONARD CREDITOR

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Chris Venn, a *People's Tribune* correspondent from Los Angeles, interviews Hugh Moore, Treasurer of the Green Party of San Diego County.

Chris Venn: Talk about the “lesser of two evils.”

Hugh Moore: The selection of the “lesser of two evils” is still choosing evil. Every time I talk about the Green Party I hear about the lesser of two evils. The Democratic Party has really pushed the idea that George W. Bush won in 2000 because the Ralph Nader campaign cost the Democratic Party the election. This is all lies and deceit and I hear it every day. This all goes back to the question of political education. We're led to believe that there are two parties contesting each other's policies whereas in reality they are just the same corporate party with two wings.

CV: What does it mean to build a broad, mass movement for Peace?

HM: It is my observation that in the late 60s you had enough

people involved in the anti-war movement so that the movement obstructed the military industrial complex. When Brian Wilson, a Vietnam Veteran, in 1987 laid down on the train tracks in front of a train carrying weapons to Nicaragua and had his legs cut off by the train... that obstructed the war. The day he awoke from the accident 9,000 people showed up at the tracks and ripped up 300 feet of the tracks. A large peace movement would obstruct the omnipotence of the military.

CV: What role does political education play in expanding a core of Green Party activists?

HM: Education is the key. At the ground level, at the beginning it's key. Some people say the public education system is only for indoctrination, but I don't believe that. In the 1950s good education led to a peace movement in the 60s. The real key to the future is education. The California budget for funding education is 49th among all states in the country. This has hurt more

than anything else and has led to destroying the peace movement in this country.

CV: What is the importance of an independent third Party?

HM: To me, the importance of an independent third party is that it can be more real about the Democratic Party. An independent third party can complain about both the Republicans and the Democrats. I was a Democratic Party Club president. I worked extensively for the election of Bill Clinton for two reasons, health care and making it legal for gays in the military. Under the Clinton presidency, neither of these things happened, and he could have accomplished making gays in the military legal with the stroke of a pen.

I believe we can change this country. We need to prepare for the movement when the movement is there!

Hugh Moore has been a member of the Green Party for 15 years, and is also a member of Veterans for Peace, San Diego.

Poor criminalized while rich criminals get off

By Joe Peery

CHICAGO, IL — June 2 marks the two-year anniversary of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) residents' Town Hall meeting protest at the Charles Hayes Community Center. That protest was strong enough to defeat unwarranted mandatory drug testing of CHA tenants, but was only partially successful. Drug testing continues for those who live in the newer mixed income developments like the areas that were once part of Cabrini Green.

All 18-year-olds and older in the public housing parts of mixed income buildings are drug tested. This is especially demeaning to the elderly. If you've never used drugs, never had a drug problem, never been arrested or convicted of a drug related crime, you are still tested. The powers that be argue that this is a deterrent; a crime fighting tool and a necessary condition because the poor receive the benefits of federally funded housing. Yet, condo dwellers right under the same roof in apartments next door are not tested.

A teenage member of a public housing family in mixed income was accused of smoking pot. The police were called, investigated, and left, saying there was no evidence. That family had to fight tooth and nail to stop their eviction. Around the same time, a man in a condo unit in the same building dropped dead of an overdose from hard drugs and



Town hall meeting in Chicago in 2011 at Charles Hayes Family Support Center to challenge unfair CHA mandatory drug testing of residents. Drug testing is an attempt to criminalize residents and throw them out of public housing. PHOTO/LIEZL ALCANTARA

was carried out in a body bag to the morgue. Plenty of evidence, but no eviction was attempted on that family. A drug test may have saved that man's life.

Unemployed, under-employed, minimum wage, and low wage workers living in public housing, still suffering from the recession, are being targeted, criminalized and made homeless, while a free pass is given to the privileged professionals, business owners and bankers in

condos.

Speaking of bankers, last December, HSBC Bank was caught laundering drug money. They admitted doing it and yet no one went to jail or even a courtroom. They just paid a fine. This is not surprising since two years earlier, Wachovia Bank and others were caught doing the same thing and they avoided the law buy paying a fine. Government officials said they couldn't prosecute them in both cases because

it would threaten the world economic system.

Wasn't it the banks that were given trillions of dollars in federal funds to put America back to work? Unbelievably, mainstream media tried to justify this by reporting that drug money that found its way into these banks was good for the troubled economy.

Instead of getting drugs out of the community, and helping people who have drug habits re-

cover, the CHA is selectively using drugs to get rid of the poor in order to gentrify. If the CHA tenants continue being drug tested, then owners of the private management firms getting CHA contracts and their families, as well as condo dwellers should also be tested. Either that or drug test no one.

Whichever way it goes, there must be equality for public housing residents in the mixed income buildings.

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

By Raymond L. Smith

Editor's Note: This is part two of a four-part series.

NORTH LITTLEROCK, AR — In later years, Scipio Africanus Jones continued his law practice and periodically collaborated with the NAACP in other cases. In doing so, he worked with the future Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall.

S. A. Jones was very dedicated to the local Little Rock community. He was a devout member of Bethel AME Church and a staunch supporter of the Mosaic Templars.

The Mosaic Templars was a fraternal organization in Little Rock that was started in the late nineteenth century by former slaves. The organization consisted of several divisions including, but not limited to, an

insurance company and a financial institution. The book *History of the Mosaic Templars of America*, edited by A. E. Bush and A. L. Dorman, reveals that Scipio Jones became a very active member of the organization in the early twentieth century. "He served as the Templars chief legal counsel, holding the title of National Attorney General." After the organization's old building burned, a new building was built on the same site at Ninth and Broadway. Opening in 2009, the building now houses the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, highlighting and promoting African-American history. It is operated by the Department of Arkansas Heritage.

After Jones filled in for an absent judge in a case involving all African-Americans, many people thereafter affectionately referred to him as "Judge." Be-

cause of his work within the law and the dedication to his people, Jones was highly respected by Blacks and whites. On March 31, 1943, at Bethel AME Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, many whites attended Jones' funeral to show their last respects. An exclusive section of the church was reserved for this highly welcomed group of citizens. S. A. Jones was buried in the historic Haven of Rest Cemetery in Little Rock.

Decades after his death, he continues to receive accolades. The U. S. Post Office branch located at 17th and Main Streets in Little Rock now bears his name. In North Little Rock, a stretch of East Ninth Street, which is one block south of the street where Scipio A. Jones High School was once located, was renamed S. A. Jones Drive.

In the book *On the Laps of*

Gods, written by Robert Whitaker, Cornel West, an African-American philosopher and Civil Rights activist, called Jones, "a man whose name surely deserves to be known by all Americans."

Scipio – The School

Prior to the 1960's, African-Americans were limited to attending all Black schools in all

Black communities. These institutions, paired with the church, were the center of the social and cultural life for Blacks. It was in these schools and churches that educators provided an adequate education with inferior equipment and supplies to tens of thousands of deprived American citizens.

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GENTRIFICATION IS ALIVE IN BENTON HARBOR

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



BENTON HARBOR, MI— Benton Harbor, Detroit, and other cities—

a total of six, plus three school districts—no longer have voting power in the state of Michigan. They are under the vicious, undemocratic, Emergency Manager law. Over 50% of the state's Black voters are under this law.

Benton Harbor is being gentrified by Whirlpool, the corporation that controls the city and its school district, and by Harbor Shores, Whirlpool's development company. The Emergency Manager law assists their effort. As a result of the redevelopment, thousands of residents have been displaced, and many people have been falsely arrested and imprisoned. Most Michigan residents are unaware of this human devastation. And, some in the city even deny gentrification is going on.

Benton Harbor's Mayor James Hightower stated at a recent city council meeting, "What I have seen isn't gentrification. It is rebuilding the community." In reality, the plan is to rebuild the community without the Black residents.

Gregory Vaughn, Senior Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of Cornerstone Alliance, a division of Whirlpool, stated at that same meeting, "I can't think of one project we have done that led to gentrification."

Rev. James Atterberry said,



Hundreds of Michiganders rally in Benton Harbor to protest the city's Emergency Financial Manager. The Managers strip power from elected officials in the city. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

"Part of the problem is that the people will resist change even if it improves the community under gentrification." This is a common "blame-the-victim" argument.

In addition, Harbor Shores is pumping water from the Paw Paw River without paying for it to irrigate their Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course. Jeff Noel, Vice-President of Whirlpool's Communications and Public Affairs, said at the same meeting

that, "We have a permit to pump water out of the Paw Paw River. We do not have to pay 99.4% of all of the golf course's pumped water from rivers and streams." However, according to Whirlpool Watch, the residents of the city aren't as lucky. Residents, according to Whirlpool Watch, were metered and "water rates for a typical household in Benton Harbor have burgeoned from \$30/month to more than \$100/month."

These examples show that democracy is incompatible with a system based on the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a tiny elite. There is no section of the elite that will defend democratic rights. That task falls to the people.

We are living in a time when voting rights are gutted, affirmative action is killed, American citizens are targeted, and explosions of urban uprisings amid joblessness are taking place, un-

necessary deaths occur from a lack of healthcare, and there is failing education, coupled with mass incarceration of youth. And, yes, gentrification is alive and well. These are just a few of the crises in Benton Harbor, Michigan and around the country.

We are living under the power of the corporations and dictators, and the city of Benton Harbor is a good example. We must organize, organize, and organize. We must say we have had enough.

Whirlpool and Benton Harbor School Struggles

"Superintendent Seawood and Whirlpool plan to drive students from public schools into privately run charters. Whirlpool wants the lakefront land the Benton Harbor High School sits on to build condominiums. Timothy Harris, who was to be appointed the school's Turnaround Principal refused to go along with the plan, and with the hiring back of only those teachers who were allied with Seawood and Whirlpool. Below is an email intended for Superintendent Seawood from Harris."

— Rev. Edward Pinkney

"It is unfortunate you did not honor the conditions you promised me before I took the job as Turnaround Principal. I question your integrity, character and morals as to what's best for the students. You compromised the integrity of the education experience by rehiring teachers and administrators due to politics. In my eyes that is criminal. You sold out our kids. Well, my soul is not for sale. I will not cave in to politics or just to get a paycheck. The young people mean so much more to me than a paycheck and deserve our best."

— Timothy Harris

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— The Editors