

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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Around 5-6,000 students marched from the school administration headquarters to Philadelphia's City Hall to protest the closing of 25 or more schools.

PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

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# EDUCATION MUST SERVE THE PEOPLE, NOT THE CORPORATIONS

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# Detroit: Harbinger of the future?

## EDITORIAL

Detroit, once the preeminent and most thriving industrial city in America, is now one of the poorest cities in the country. It exemplifies the plans of a corporate ruling class for making the economic transition from industry to electronics, while preserving its private wealth and property.

With the appointment of corporate attorney Kevyn Orr as Emergency Financial Manager in March 2013, Michigan's governor negated the authority of Detroit's elected officials. In July, Orr dictated that Detroit file for bankruptcy, the largest U.S. city ever to do so. With its tax base declining, due mostly to the loss of industry—and along with it, decent paying jobs, homeownership and resident population—Detroit has financial and pension debt obligations totaling \$18.5 billion. If the bankruptcy filing succeeds, it is certain to set a precedent for other American cities and counties, where unfunded pension liabilities total \$574 billion. Though the corporations and wealthy could easily be taxed to pay the debt, the debt is being used as an excuse to restructure Detroit and other cities in the interest of the corporations.

As Detroiters are dispossessed of everything they once had, including city pensioners if the bankruptcy succeeds, the corporations are raking it in. The profits of the Big Three Detroit automakers have reached record highs, with reported combined earnings of \$13.5 billion last year. Detroit has plunged from 1.8 million residents in 1950, supported by an industrial base of 200,000 factory jobs, to a population of only 700,000 today. Only 20,000 factory jobs remain, while 36 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line.



Community members protest at Chase Bank in Southwest Detroit to get them to stop unlawful evictions of residents. PHOTO/ DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

All public property in Detroit is being turned into corporate private property. With more than 70,000 abandoned buildings, 31,000 empty houses, and 90,000 vacant lots, most of Detroit has become a wasteland, with global corporations gobbling up land and property at bargain basement prices. One of Detroit's newest corporate initiatives is *TechTown Detroit*. It seeks to lure high technology start-up companies (that hire relatively few workers) to downtown Detroit with state subsidized tax breaks and incentives, including cheap office rentals and low real estate prices.

Detroit is a prime example of how electronic production

with robots and computers has replaced wageworker production. This electronic-based job replacement keeps accelerating throughout society. Jobs are being eliminated everywhere. Wageworker production is becoming obsolete and the American landscape is being littered with boarded up cities and towns.

Yet this electronic production is creating unlimited abundance for the first time in human history. The rub is that under a capitalist economy, those of us who are jobless or under-employed are still required to buy things the same way we did when we had jobs. There is no need to accept this kind of corporate

enforced scarcity in a world of plenty. This epochal advance of laborless production has given us the wherewithal to distribute social production according to need.

Will Detroit be the harbinger of America's future? There is no going back to the past. Forward is the only direction for the American people. We must go on the political offensive to take over the corporations and use that vast productive power in the interests of our entire society. If not, a tiny minority of corporate multi-millionaires and billionaires will continue to take us over. The future will be what we choose to make it!

## PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## 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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# Education must serve the people, not the corporations

## COVER STORY

The corporations and their government have been telling us for years what kind of education our children should be getting—one that will prepare them to “compete” in a “knowledge-based, globally competitive economy.” We’re told we need an education system that de-emphasizes the humanities, and instead emphasizes science, technology, engineering and math. Of course, as it happens, this is the very system the corporations need to train their 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

So the corporations years ago declared a “crisis” in education and set about “reforming” the system to suit their needs. The only thing they care about is training the small high-tech workforce that they need to make money, and profiting from the \$1.3 trillion education “market.”

But what is education really for, from the people’s perspective, especially in a world that is being completely transformed by technology? It can’t just be about getting trained for a job—the jobs are disappearing rapidly as they are taken over by the computer and the robot. The new technology means we can no longer have an economy where most of us sell our labor power to private employers and get a paycheck. There won’t be enough jobs to support that kind of economy. We are going to have to move to a new kind of society, where the people own society’s means of producing the things we need, and we simply distribute what is produced, according to need.

Technology in the hands of the corporations means mass

unemployment and mass poverty. Technology in the hands of the people would end unemployment and poverty. It would open up a whole new world for all of us, and allow us to create an education system that does what education is supposed to do—create a cultured, thinking person who can analyze the world around them and contribute to taking humanity forward.

As novelist and journalist Earl Shorris noted years ago in arguing for an education in the humanities, “The humanities are a foundation for getting along in the world, for thinking, for learning to reflect on the world instead of just reacting to whatever force is turned against you.” The humanities infuse our minds with great ideas and equip us to think and argue. And as educator Marion Brady has put it, through education, “The young should be exploring the potentials of humanness.”

Parents are rightly concerned that their children should be able to support themselves, but being trained for a job when the jobs are disappearing doesn’t offer anyone a future. We have to take the tools and the opportunity that history has handed us and build a new society where we no longer compete against one another, but cooperate to take care of each other.

The first step in putting our education system on the right track is to guarantee everyone food, housing and health care so they can learn. At the same time, we need to nationalize education in the interests of the people. By this we mean a publicly owned education system that provides education all the way through college and beyond for free. And a system that guaran-



tees all the funding necessary for every school to serve every student.

This will help us reach our ultimate goal—a cooperative

society, where all our needs are met, and where we can truly begin exploring the potentials of humanness.

## PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE READING GROUPS!

The *People's Tribune* encourages our readers to form groups to study and discuss, especially our cover stories and editorials. Call or email us to find out if there is a *People's Tribune* reading group in your area, or to start one. (800) 691-6888 [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)

## People's Tribune annual subscription drive

The *People's Tribune* brings clarity to the growing movement. It strives to unite the movement around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it. The *People's Tribune* is financed solely by its readers. We can never allow corporate funders to tell us what to say or not say. Our annual subscription drive in October and November helps with our ever-rising production costs. We need your support! Please renew your subscription today. If you are not a subscriber, please subscribe. Order subscriptions as holiday gifts. Donate via paypal at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org) or send to PT, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

— *People's Tribune* Editorial Board

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# Message to elected government officials: People are dying in Gulf region from BP's negligence



**BP oil spill health forum, Lower Mississippi.**

PHOTO/DUBINSKY PHOTOGRAPHY FOR LEANWEB.ORG

*Editor's note: Cathy Talbott interviewed Lori Borsage, a mem-*

*ber of Alabama Coast United, a grassroots organization formed to fight Big Oil. Government officials are not confronting the real issues affecting the Gulf residents because over 35% of the revenue for just Alabama comes from tourism in Mobile and Baldwin counties alone. Meanwhile, residents are ill, homeless, and jobless. And the water and beaches are still damaged.*

*People's Tribune: Can you tell me how you were affected by the BP oil catastrophe?*

**Lori Borsage:** I live one quarter mile from Portersville Bay, off the Alabama coast. One morning after the spill, I heard air boats going up and down and crisscrossing the water so I went out to see what was going on. As one of the boats passed by, I

was sprayed with a substance; a chemical I later learned was Corexit (a dispersant used to sink the oil below the surface). Not long after I developed severe lung disorders, asthma and then pneumonia. I got hypertension. I coughed up bloody phlegm. I also had swelling in my legs and sores on my skin. I know at least 50 to 60 in my community who are ill. Many of them are fishermen, crabbers, and shrimpers. They're sick and out of work. Kids are having seizures. People are dying. We were not told about the dangers of this chemical.

*PT: How has BP treated the Gulf Coast residents?*

**Lori:** Well, people who do not live here see us here as not educated. These are some of the

hardest working people you'll ever meet. They keep to themselves and don't complain. They don't go to the doctor. BP gave millions of dollars for a Gulf study. The working people here thought they were going to help us. But the lawyers, doctors, clinics, and universities are getting paid, but those of us affected haven't been compensated enough. \$25,000 paid to a small fisherman doesn't get him back to work and doesn't pay for health care. And many who are sick don't qualify.

*PT: What about the workers who worked for BP on the clean up?*

**Lori:** This is what happens. They were sent to a BP clinic. And if they complained about anything, BP would tell them we don't need you anymore. So they need

a job and don't speak out.

*PT: What are you doing to organize?*

**Lori:** My main focus is to stop the dispersants. A lot of the people here in my community, which is not a tourist area, don't have cell phones or computers; some don't have televisions. The ones who are ill have not gotten the right medical treatment. They're being treated for the symptoms and not the cause. I try to educate. I had a biometrics test done to see what chemicals I was exposed to so I can help others. My goal is to get funding for a clinic that really wants to help us. There's a doctor but he needs the funding to do it. We're also working with Riki Ott and her Ultimate Civics Campaign. ([www.ultimatecivics.org](http://www.ultimatecivics.org)).

## DRAW THE LINE Resistance against tar sands and dirty energy

By Jarret Schlaw

DETROIT, MI — Folks from across Michigan came together on September 21st in Southwest Detroit to peacefully form a human line of resistance against tar sands and dirty energy. This gathering took place on the International Day of Peace and was part of the National Day of Action against tar sands called "Draw the Line" that was spearheaded by 350.org. Actions were organized locally by various groups in over 200 places across the US and in Detroit we came together in front of the Marathon Tar Sands refinery.

We drew the line because if we want our children and grandchildren to grow up on a planet with a stable climate, biodiversity, breathable air and drinkable water, we need to quickly cure our addiction to dirty energy and transition towards clean universally accessible energy for all. It's our duty as human beings to not stand idle as exploitative economic systems fueled by dirty energy benefit some of the world's largest corporations at the expense of marginalized communities, from indigenous people in Alberta, Canada to schoolchildren in Southwest Detroit. It's unacceptable that Marathon's bottom line created the 3rd most polluted zip code in the

country while turning surrounding neighborhoods into sacrifice zones for the sake of corporate profit.

Scientific consensus states that there is 5x more carbon stored in proven oil, coal, and natural gas reserves than our atmosphere can handle if we are going to avoid catastrophic climate change in the coming decades. Keeping this stuff in the ground gets interesting when those reserves are valued at 27 trillion dollars and the fossil fuel corporations will do everything they can to hold onto their power. The fossil fuel resistance is challenging that money and power with people power and truth. These destructive forms of energy have no place in our future and we will not let the greed of a few wreck the future for us all.

There is much work to be done, and some of the systems in place can aid us in this peaceful {r}evolution. The US patent office for instance could release the 5,000 sequestered patents it's holding, that include energy innovations that could make localized universal energy a reality. We are willing to fight for a new a way of living, which works in harmony with natural systems, does not disproportionately impact people of color and low-income people, and does not



**The Detroit Coalition Against Tar Sands, Ann Arbor 350 Local, Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands, and others from across MI, protested in front of the Marathon tar sands refinery where they formed a human chain, delivering the people's demands.** PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

force individuals to choose between a paycheck and a job that harms human health and natural ecosystems. Over 15,000 young people from across the US will converge in Pittsburgh this October for the Power Shift conference to discuss how we can amplify the movement to ad-

dress the climate crises and win back the right to our future. The movement is growing by the day and is being led by young people across the globe ready to transition beyond this materialistic, market-dominated society focused solely on the pursuit of profit, towards one aligned with

community resilience, racial and social justice, and preserving climate stability and biodiversity.

*Jarret Schlaw is a volunteer at the Detroit Coalition Against Tar Sands (D-Cats). Contact the writer at [Planit4Planet@gmail.com](mailto:Planit4Planet@gmail.com)*



# Rebel Diaz: A hip hop history with a future



Backstage in Chicago with members of the Rebel Diaz Art Collective Bronx (RDACBX).

PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — This is an interview with the hip hop group Rebel Diaz, consisting of Rodrigo Venegas (known as RodStarz), and his brother Gonzalo Venegas (known as G1. We met up at Martyrs' nightclub in Chi-

cago prior to their Sept 11 show. It was the 40th anniversary of the coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile—a coup sponsored by—you guessed it—the CIA. Both Rebel Diaz's parents and other survivors of torture under the govern-

ment of General Pinochet were happily with us this evening, as well as a host of members and performers of the Bronx and Chicago Hip Hop communities. Victor Toro, veteran Chilean revolutionary who is fighting extradition back to Chile, was present and on the bill. It would be a his-

toric and informative night.

Sitting down with RodStarz, G1, and Subverso of Detroit and Chile, we got into a brief but wide-ranging discussion. I asked what about their experience of traveling throughout the world performing and speaking was revealing. Rod Starz stressed how privileged he felt to do the work they are doing, discovering that all over the world, pockets of resistance are developing. Love of Hip Hop worldwide expresses the feelings of oppressed peoples—especially the young. Rodstarz pointed out that, rather than thinking of themselves as “Conscious” Hip Hop artists, they see themselves as 21st century artists true to Hip Hop's cultural history and functions as a major art form connected to the poor especially in the cities of the world.

Rod Starz pointed out that this year is also the anniversary year of what many regard as the birth of Hip Hop in the streets of the Bronx. Today Rebel Diaz lives in the South Bronx and works with many of the pioneers of Hip Hop, such as Kool Herc to teach and instill a sense of the importance of this culture to the young people who love it.

G1 pointed out the distinction

of Hip Hop from the Rap music industry, which as he said, is “corporate pimping our beautiful culture.” Subverso grew up both in Detroit and Chile and cited the shock he felt of seeing the Motor City decline under governance of for and by the rich to the level of a poor “third world” country.

We pretty much agreed the system was failing people miserably and endangering the future of life itself. Life itself though is what Rebel Diaz is about. Whereas with such heavy thoughts as global poverty, pollution and destitution on their mind, you might expect their music to be gloomy—but it's quite the opposite. Rebel Diaz brings the party full blast. Everybody up and bodies moving and smiling joyously. The lyrics rock the mind with impressions of life from the point of view of the oppressed. Gee, they act like they are already winning, perhaps, because they are. Gee, it feels good to be a Rebel!

Click on the Audio on the Peoples Tribune Web page at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org), under Arts and Culture, to enjoy the entire interview.

## Slaying of unarmed people by police

By Richard Peery

CLEVELAND, OH — Congress should take a lesson from the Cleveland City Council, where they opt for silence instead of endorsing the slaying of unarmed people.

The House of Representatives, on the other hand, applauded with a unanimous vote of thanks after a mishmash of federal police agencies riddled a dental hygienist with bullets in front of her 17-month old daughter in Washington, DC in October. No one asked why the weaponless woman was gunned down, and there was no expression of concern for the long-term psychological needs of her traumatized child. There was just a thanks for executing someone who may have been a confused tourist who fled when weapons were pointed at her toddler, or at worst, a mentally disturbed person in need of medical help.

After a similar bungled chase, in which more than 100 Cleveland police participated last November, officers fired at least 137 shots to kill two un-



Capitol police slay unarmed dental hygienist.

PHOTO/PAN AFRICAN NEWS WIRE

armed people. One policeman even stood on the hood of their car and shot through the windshield as he reloaded and discharged 47 bullets at them.

In fairness to City Council, there were some confused questions at first, followed by a sudden and long-lasting hush. None of the 13 police who were identified as shooters has been disciplined. At least 12 returned to regular duty. The Cuyahoga

County prosecutor is supposedly investigating, but there is no evidence that anything has been presented to a grand jury. A call to the prosecutor's office just gets a “no comment,” as if it is none of the public's business. (Update: Some supervisors who were on duty have been disciplined and one was fired for the way the chase was handled. A number of patrolmen are facing administrative

action, but not the shooters because of the criminal investigation by the prosecutor.)

The apparent indifference of City Council looked incredibly insensitive until Congress showed how callous such bodies can be.

Here's how the DC police killing and the House's standing ovation looks in another part of the world: <http://iranian.com/posts/view/post/21969>

### Where Are You?

I tell you the problem  
You just wonder why  
You say it's a lie  
I show you the homeless  
You pass on the street  
You just keep on walking  
Who controls your feet?  
You are too complacent  
You must understand  
We are all worth nothing  
Without our fellow man

Ignore  
Us  
And lose  
Yourself  
Along the  
Way

— Nick Anthony Shaw  
[Nearly Pantless Nick]



### New Orleans school privatization – A warning for us all

*Editors Note: While mass public school closings, with public funds diverted toward private charter schools, is relatively new to many cities, this has been going on in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina, eight years ago. A report entitled, "New Orleans Education Reform: A Guide for Cities or a Warning for Communities?" (Grassroots Lessons Learned, 2005-2012), berkeleyreviewofeducation.com/journal-issues.html, offers a glimpse into the future for the rest of the country. The People's Tribune's Joseph Peery, interviews DJ Markey, Director of Pyramid Community Parent Resource Center in New Orleans, a leading advocate in the fight for equal quality education in Louisiana, and one of the coauthors of the report mentioned above.*

*People's Tribune: New Orleans is so important because of the number of schools that have become charters, and that they took advantage of Katrina to do it. It's important that people know the lessons in your report.*

**DJ Markey:** The report is something that we undertook because there has been so much misinfor-

mation put out. We tried to make the case that so called reform wasn't doing what they were saying. New Orleans has become the first charter district in the country. Close to probably 85% of the students here are in charter schools.

**PT:** Tell us more about problems with corporate brand education.

**DJ Markey:** The big thing going on is a by product of the privatization of public education. The first thing that goes is democracy. We still have the Orleans Parish School Board operating. But above that is the RSD (Recovery School District), the state entity established after Katrina that basically took over most of the public schools. When the state came in and took over the system, they wanted to change everything. They wanted to get rid of the teachers union and privatization became the vehicle they used. In the brochures that come from the Federal government, they all say that charter schools are public schools, but in reality they're not, because they're not run by the public. There was no real transition, there was a take over and installation of a private system that really doesn't care about



New Orleans protesters at the Save our Schools March and National Call to Action, Washington DC. PHOTO/DJ MARKEY

democratic principles. It is set up for profit and that's about it. We work with kids with disabilities, and the plight of the kids with disabilities is outlined in the lawsuit by the Southern Poverty Law Center. The one thing we are sure about is that kids with disabilities are short changed dramatically.

**PT:** What is the cause of the problem?

**DJ Markey:** Katrina gave the state the opportunity. Its not like they hadn't thought about it before. I think it's obvious that in New Orleans the plan was to create charters and privatize the system, and the state legislature went after it. When we go back and look at it... especially in areas with high minority populations in the district, the schools were under resourced. You have

high poverty in these schools. You certainly had all kinds of problems in them. But at the same time, privatization is not about education, it's about somebody making a profit. The incentives, the money, all that is tied up in whatever school you seek to create here has to be a charter school to get off the ground.

### Will Philadelphia become the graveyard of public education?

By Jennifer Cox and Mary Bricker-Jenkins

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Recent headlines about schools in Philadelphia say it all:

*"The Aftermath of 3,783 Layoffs: What Will Philadelphia Schools Look Like?"*

*"One counselor, 2,820 students"*

*"Dozens remember young girl, call for rehiring of Philadelphia school nurses..."*

Twelve-year-old Laportia Massey died from an asthma attack that began at a public school where the nurse visits only twice a week. Philadelphia has cut 100 nurses from the city's schools in the last couple of years. Some schools see nurses only one day a week.

Philadelphia closed twenty-four schools this year. Sixty-four were slated to be closed, but public pressure saved many—for now. But 4000 staff were laid off, leaving schools across the district with few librarians, counselors, nurses, assistant principals,

secretaries, and non-teaching assistants. Music, arts and sports programs and ESL services were cut. Schools opened with a decimated teaching staff. In the city boasting the nation's first public library, neighborhood libraries have closed; now school libraries have been shuttered as well.

Children are enrolled in split-grade classes because of teacher layoffs. In schools still open, students and staff are coping with the addition of hundreds more students, some from formerly rival schools, to already crowded buildings. In most cases, the receiving schools experienced cutbacks like those across the district, in which assistant principals, counselors and secretaries have been all but completely eliminated.

To compensate, parents are volunteering as secretaries in schools. The mayor started a fund drive to raise money for school supplies and other needs for the schools. Schools must apply for support from the fund—which

should be a right, not charity.

Philadelphia has emerged as *ground zero* for the wholesale destruction of public education across the U.S. It is both ironic and politically significant that Philadelphia play this role. In 1749, Benjamin Franklin—Philadelphia's noted statesman—argued that public education should be controlled by the state, not the church, and that public schools should impart the practical skills needed for participation in public service and, significantly, in "commerce." Ben Franklin's secular, occupationally-oriented public education was to become an integral part of the welfare state—the form of state created in the next century to promote the interests of industrial capitalists. Throughout the industrial age, public education served an overarching purpose: to prepare a skilled and disciplined workforce for the industrial capitalist enterprise.

What happened? Simply put, with the transformation from

industrial production to labor-replacing electronically-based production, the capitalist class no longer needs the kind of labor force it did. In fact, it doesn't need huge sections of a labor force at all. So why spend money educating workers you don't need? Moreover, an educated working class today is a dangerous class.

But the class displaced by the historical movement from the industrial to electronic age says that

the abundance produced today should be available to meet people's basic human needs, distributed through a truly democratic state. That requires a new public education system with a curriculum suited to the new period of history. Resistance to the destruction of Philadelphia's schools is mounting—resistance that has the potential for building that new system.

*We will report on that resistance in part two of this article.*





On these pages we are publishing stories on the fight for education in America. An education system is needed that does what education is supposed to do: that creates a cultured, thinking person who can analyze the world and take humanity forward. It can't just be about getting trained for a job—the jobs are disappearing, taken over by the computers and robots. We need a free, publicly owned education system that guarantees all the funding necessary for every school to serve every student. This will help us reach our ultimate goal—a cooperative society, where everyone's needs are met and where we can truly begin exploring the potentials of humanness. Let's talk! — *The People's Tribune Editors*

# Chicago Students Union: Voices that must be heard

By **Low Rosenbaum**

CHICAGO, IL — Israel Munoz was a senior at Kelly High School in Chicago when the teachers strike broke out last September. “Their courageous stand would change my life forever,” he said in an essay on the on-line blog, *Student Voice*. “For me, this strike was as much about the students as it was about the teachers. It was about students being forced to wear clear backpacks and being told by security guards to walk through metal detectors every morning, having to sit in 90 degree, overcrowded classrooms, using ripped books, the 50% drop-out rate, taking standardized tests, the lack of necessary resources, and, of course, the ‘gourmet’ chicken patties, along with all other forms of systematic inequality. But most importantly, the strike was different for me because I felt that my voice had finally been heard.” (<http://stuvoice.org/blog/2013/08/29/stuvoicestories-expanding-the-chicago-student-union/#sthash.91KbQ3Zw.dpuf>)

Munoz and others around the city formed Chicago Students Organizing to Save Our Schools (CSOSOS). They organized, confronted the School

Board, marched and petitioned to stop the threatened school closings. In the end, Chicago closed an historic number of schools and then slashed school budgets (affecting Kelly and other Chicago schools to the tune of \$90 million). Then Chicago fired over 2,000 teachers and 1,000 other school personnel. During the summer students formed the Chicago Students Union to get students as equal partners in the education fight.

From Munoz' statement, the students organized against school closings not simply to preserve the status quo and to keep the schools open. School should not make students feel like criminals. A month after the school year has begun, many classes still have no textbooks! CPS promised last spring to bring more resources to schools slated to “welcome” students displaced from closed schools; but many still do not have libraries. CTU organized an “operation book drop” to deliver books to schools like South Shore Fine Arts Elementary School, a south side “welcoming school,” which has a library but where budget cuts eliminated the librarian!

Ross Floyd, co-founder of the Chicago Student Union, is from



Students protesting outside Chicago Public School's headquarters after getting thrown out by security guards, July, 2013. PHOTO/DONATED

Jones, one of the top schools in the city, not in danger. He got involved anyway, as he said on MSNBC's Education Nation (Oct. 6, 2013): “When you see 49 schools being closed, at the same time charter schools are coming in, and at the same time teachers are being fired and \$90 million being cut from our budgets, you know in your heart that that's not right.”

In other cities throughout the U.S. students are forming student unions to make sure their

demands are heard. This is how Munoz articulates it: “The recent actions in Chicago epitomize this necessity and make it clear that the fight is far from over... We need change. And when I say ‘we need change’ I mean ‘we need a revolution.’” Not a revolution of guns and violence, but rather a revolution of new ideas, youth empowerment, and student leaders.” (from *Student Voice*)

Politicians in Washington are nationalizing education in

the interests of the corporations as they institute Common Core standards and turn over taxpayer funds to private charter schools. We need a movement to guarantee that education is nationalized in the interests of the people, with equal funding for all, so that every student reaches his or her full potential; so that the student demands, so well articulated by the CSU, are guaranteed.

Contact the writer at [rosetree@mindspring.com](mailto:rosetree@mindspring.com)

## TIFS STEAL FROM CHILDREN, GIVE TO CORPORATIONS

By **Jim Ginderske**

CHICAGO, IL — Looking at Chicago's Tax Increment Finance districts is like staring at a spider web. Both are elegant, complex, and sinister: seems like there is more here than meets the eye. Unless you are a predator, nothing good can come from this.

That lengthy name is usually shortened to “TIF.” The acronym helps diminish what for many is an instinctive aversion to tax policy discussions. Often, Chicago politicians and their benefactors who access TIF funds insist the citizenry lacks the specialized knowledge to understand how it all works.

The biggest secret is that, like a spider's trap, the elaborate structure of TIFs serves just one simple, often brutal purpose.

Chicago TIFs occur when

politicians designate an area of the city, for a 23-year period, a property tax TIF district. That section pays its property taxes as usual. Once the district is created, the tax dollars *above the amount paid when the district began* go into a special fund. The diverted funds, since taxes typically rise each year, quickly add up, while property taxes that would go to public schools are frozen.

According to the latest available figures (2011), there were almost 1.4 billion dollars in Chicago TIF accounts, even as the City claimed a budget deficit of over 630 million dollars.

TIFs were intended to spend the diverted funds for economic development in “blighted areas.” The criterion for funding is in the very something called “but for”: a TIF award should only be made if the project would not occur “but for” the TIF contribution.

Control of the funds, which many feel should rest with the communities whose taxes are diverted, was instead shifted to the mayor's office. Accounting for the funds is made difficult, since the amount of tax property owners pay into the TIF fund is not shown on their tax bills. What portion goes to the TIF is, incredibly, listed on the tax bills as “0”.

Because of the dogged efforts of a few local reporters, most notably Ben Joravsky of the Chicago Reader and the non-profit Civic Lab's TIF Illumination Project, we now have some idea of where that money has gone. Here are some examples of the TIF dole:

Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently announced that he had gifted 55 million dollars to Depaul University, a private religious institution, to build a sports stadium.

A few years back, about 47

million went to Jesuit Loyola University.

The downtown block that includes the Sears (now Willis) Tower, was deemed blighted so the Tower could siphon off 37 million in TIF dollars.

There are now 170 TIFs in Chicago, diverting an estimated 1.5 billion dollars.

Schools beg for toilet paper, while the Pritzker hotel empire receives TIF money! Here is the key point: TIF districts make worse an already inadequate method of funding schools by diverting money from public projects to private capital developments, closely guarded by the mayor's office, which continues former Mayor Daley's policy of targeting most TIF funds to politically connected, often wealthy entities.

Contact the writer at [ginderske@gmail.com](mailto:ginderske@gmail.com)



(Above) Chicago school protest. TIF districts make an inadequate method of funding schools even worse by diverting money from public projects to private capital developments.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

(Left) Principal of Fairhill High School in Philadelphia which is being closed. She had been principal for 17 years.

PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLEY



# DC VOTERS GET BEHIND LIVING WAGE ADVOCATES READY FOR ROUND 2

By Rev. Dr. Edwin L. Jones, Sr;  
Pastor, Living Faith Baptist Church and  
International Ministries, Washington DC



WASHINGTON, DC — The closing rally for support of the Larger Retailer Accountability Act 2013 (LRAA), was held at the John Wilson Building in Washington, DC, where approximately 150 people attended. The bill would require large retailers that grossed more than \$1 billion a year and had stores larger than 75,000 square feet to pay workers \$12.50 per hour. As the city council voted 7 to 6 in favor of the bill, a vote of 9 to 5 was needed to override the veto of the bill by DC Mayor Vincent Gray. Speakers represent-

ing clergy, retail workers, unions, and other civic groups spoke and were in agreement that we had not lost this fight, but were actually betrayed by our elected officials, and that they were more influenced by corporate interest than the citizens that they were elected to represent.

It's not over. We did not lose because many elected officials were exposed for who they really are, shown by the votes against this bill and the veto. Surveys conducted by advocate groups, civic groups and one by Hart Research Associates, reflected clearly that the citizens (registered voters) of Washington DC, first, did not want the mayor to veto the bill and, once he did, they wanted the city council to override the veto ([www.hartresearch.com](http://www.hartresearch.com)).

DC voters supported the LRAA (71%) and wanted the

City Council to override the mayor's veto. A very strong statement in the Hart Research Associates report says, "We can identify no significant group of D.C. voters—by age, education, geography, race or party affiliation—that supports the veto." Our coalition that has worked toward the passing of the LRAA has surveyed persons in the communities that, according to our elected officials, would be affected in a negative way if the bill passed (they called it a job killer.) They also complained that large retailers would not want to come to DC. Once the facts were honestly presented to the community regarding \$8.25 vs. \$12.50 and issues concerning benefits, at least 85% of those we interviewed wanted the mayor to sign the bill.

Supporters of the LRAA are saying loud and clear, "It's Not



DC Rally for Living Wage in front of Mayor's and City Council's offices.  
PHOTO/TIM D'EMILIO

Over." We see our elected officials trying to cover their abuse and neglect of the citizens of DC, now introducing three proposed bills for a new minimum wage, and another bill establishing a commission for the purpose of making recommendations to the mayor and city council concern-

ing the revising of the minimum wage. All I can say concerning these attempts is LOL. The supporters in DC of Living/Livable wages are prepared to take this fight forward. It's not over.

# HUNGER IS GROWING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

By Ramanda Lazaris

WASHINGTON, DC — On September 19, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation that would cut the food stamp program by nearly \$40 billion over the next decade. President Obama has promised to veto the measure in the event it is passed by the Democrat-led Senate. But no matter what ends up happening in the ongoing battle over food stamps, come Nov. 1, more than 47 million beneficiaries will need to start doing more with less.

That date marks the scheduled end of the boost in food stamp funding provided by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. As a result, a family of three can expect to see \$29 less per month in food assistance. The loss of assistance will leave families with roughly \$1.40 per person to spend per meal, according to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The reduction will have a real impact on poor families, say food advocates, who are trying to get out the word to the households they serve.

"On Nov. 1, things are going to get painful for families," predicted Catherine Benvie, of D.C. Hunger Solutions.

In the District, more than 144,000 people participate in the program, up 3,353 beneficiaries (or 2.4 percent) from the previ-

ous year.

Nationally too, food stamp rolls have burgeoned since the 2008 recession. But the rapid growth in spending on the food stamp program, officially known as SNAP for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, has prompted demands from conservatives for a sweeping overhaul.

The House vote to cut the program, through passage of legislation titled the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act, is being seen as a victory for Majority Leader Eric Cantor, a Virginia Republican.

In addition to deeply cutting spending for food stamps, the bill would restrict the ability of able-bodied childless adults to receive the benefits without meeting work requirements. It would also allow states to impose additional work and job training requirements on such beneficiaries.

Conservative supporters of the bill say such steps are necessary to reduce waste and fraud in the program.

"The House Nutrition Bill will close up some loopholes. It gives to those who truly need it," said Rachel Sheffield, a policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation. Yet at the same time, government statistics point to continuing problems with hunger across the country.

The Department of Agriculture just released information and a survey reporting that an estimated 14.5 percent of Ameri-



Occupy Wall Street Protest 44 million on food stamps and millions losing homes in New York.  
PHOTO/JIM KIERNAN

can households were food insecure at least some time during the year in 2012, "meaning they lacked access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members."

And advocates for the poor say more spending on such programs is needed, not less. They said even the reduction scheduled to go into place Nov. 1 will take a serious toll.

"I think this will be hurtful for folks because they are used to having a certain amount of food in their homes and if just two dollars were cut, you would still actually see a difference in how

much groceries you can buy," said Reggie Black, a Street Sense vendor, writer, and activist.

Ramanda Lazaris is an Editorial Intern for Street Sense newspaper, DC.

## Provide food for all: Nationalize the giant food corporations

With the wonderful technology being introduced every day into the productive process, we now have the abundance to feed, clothe, house and provide health care for every person on the planet. What stands in the way is a tiny class of corporate billionaires whose only motivation is maximum profits. The first step in solving the problem of hunger is to nationalize the giant food corporations and run them in the interests of the public. This will set conditions for creating a new cooperative society where everyone's needs are met simply because they are a human being. — People's Tribune Editorial Board



*Hip Hop Congress has partnered with the People's Tribune.  
For more information, contact [hiphopcongress.org](http://hiphopcongress.org)*

## Hip Hop's fight for a healthy culture challenges capitalism



**Fueled by events such as MTV's VMA fiasco to Dave Chappelle walking off the stage -- this has become a moment to reflect on the current state of culture in America.**

CARTOON/SILICON VALLEY DE-BUG

**By Shamako Noble**

SAN JOSE, CA — Structurally, technologically and culturally speaking, there is no “music industry” any more. There is also no “movie industry” any more. Those two things have been consolidated into a more generic and all encompassing, “entertainment industry.” Technically, the entertainment industry is now a sub-division of a much

larger and more insidious industry known as the “telecommunications industry.” This is the delivery system under which all media and cultural distribution is being consolidated.

When I talk about the industry, I'm not talking about the hardworking artist or the record producer who really believes in what he or she is doing. I am talking about the corporations and colonial structure that has been

looting and pillaging cultural production since art, music and culture could be commodified. I am not talking about DMX, T.I. or Kendrick. I am talking about the CEO's and large stockholders of Warner Bros, Comcast, Disney, and the other rapidly consolidating future monopolies of media and global cultural distribution. I am talking about the larger imaginary structures that are spying on us through our Youtube surfing as we speak. Artists are not the problem.

In fact, as much as the world fails to really engage this truth, artists are the victims. And so are the people who benefit from healthy culture.

It is economically important for our current corporate structure to ensure that you do not see yourself in the cultural production and exchange process, because, by separating us from the process, someone can determine and direct who and what is considered legitimate and valuable in the realm of culture. This way, not only can the creative thought

of a society can be controlled, but then the rewards of culture can be organized and harvested by those who may or may not have even planted the crops. The reason it is ideologically important to separate people from the process of cultural production and exchange is because art is human. Culture, itself, is how we socialize, interact with and collectivize our understanding of humanity. Those who control culture, control definition. Those who control definition, control determination.

In general, our society is isolated from art and artists, even though our clothes, logos, commercial jingles and pop hooks tell a different story. In the industry, artists, in general, are considered incapable of managing their own affairs. This is often chalked up to their inability to think in structured terms. While generally accepted as a truth, this is both historically inaccurate and extremely dangerous.

The struggle of the artist of America is the struggle around

the means of ownership and distribution of cultural production. The contradiction between the origin of Hip Hop and the current state of on coming fascism is the question of who will wield the power of cultural democracy and self-determination. Hip Hop, in it's instinctive rejection of corporate domination, both in the industry and movement work was a natural target of the fascist state.

A culture that, when healthy, challenges the institutions of capitalism and colonialism by virtue of it's very existence, can't just be allowed to exist un-tampered with.

*Shamako Noble is Emcee, Executive Director of Hip Hop Congress and serves as Secretary of Culture in the General Welfare Branch of the Green Shadow Cabinet of the United States. For the complete article visit [www.siliconvalleydebug.org/articles/2013/09/05/pedagogy-hip-hop-media-consolidation-black-manhood-and-art-america](http://www.siliconvalleydebug.org/articles/2013/09/05/pedagogy-hip-hop-media-consolidation-black-manhood-and-art-america).*

## Austerity, police terrorism and mass incarceration

**By Asantewaa Boykin**

OAKLAND, CA — From the beginning, this country was built on the backs of the poor. Despite what some call social and technological advancements, the survival of this country in the ways that it exists remains dependent on the existence of a working class poor. Industrialization seemingly freed African slaves, labor movements appeared to give workers the right to bargain, the Civil Rights Movement made us “equal” to the oppressor, the emergence of the “middle” class fooled the masses into trading in the pursuit of freedom for the pursuit of goods and services. While the poor remained poor, wars continued, education dropped, corporations became people, and people are sold in stock markets instead of auction blocks. Overseers traded in horses and whips for pistols and patrol cars. The game Chess is comprised of a checkered board with pieces that have specific names. If the names of

those pieces are changed, would you still be playing chess? Yes. Is it the establishment's intention to change its oppressive institutions because it now calls slaves, prisoners, renames the poor, working class, and calls overseers, police officers? No, the game is still the same.

What stands between the people and the establishment, the poor and the rich, the oppressor and the oppressed? Under the guise of public safety, police have the ability to harass, terrorize and kill without consequence. In fact they are employed to do so, to protect the establishment from the people and protect the status quo. Police terrorism occurs when your heart skips a beat upon hearing sirens, when an officer is verbally and/or physically violent towards you as means of intimidation, murders our loved ones without cause, use their access to resources to commit crimes or cover up the crimes of others, including recording and monitoring citizens without permission.



**San Francisco BART protest, 2011.**

PHOTO/RYAN ANDERSON

Terrorism is defined as: the use of violence and or intimidation in pursuit of political aims.

Most crimes committed in Alameda County are considered crimes of poverty, meaning, crimes that result in achieving one's basic needs: crimes like burglary, robbery, auto theft, petty theft and prostitution. While being poor is not a crime, the symptoms of poverty can be. The

homeless are ticketed for sleeping on the street and the charitable are ticketed for giving them water.

Jobs are scarce, schools are closing, public assistance is limited, college is more expensive, while over 40% of our city's budgets goes to law enforcement. Is it possible that these conditions are related? A person who is uneducated or under educated is more likely to commit crimes of pover-

ty, as are those who do not earn a living wage (employed or not.) So what then does the establishment do with these so-called criminals? Under the 13th Amendment, Title XIII Section 1, it says: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”



# CLASS UNITY GROWING

*Editor's note: This article appeared in our bilingual sister publication. Visit them at [tribunodelpueblo.org](http://tribunodelpueblo.org).*

Across decades-old racial divides, our class—the working class—is beginning to unite.

We are at a turning point. Something very serious, very significant, very beneficial for our class—the working class—is under way.

For a good many years, the *Tribuno del Pueblo* and the *People's Tribune* have argued that if the working class in the United States wants to survive it must unite across the racial divides that the oligarchy has carefully cultivated over the decades.

Now just such unity appears to be developing, and it is developing in places where joining hands across racial lines has been most difficult to achieve and where it is most threatening to the powers that be—in the South and the prisons.

In the Moral Monday demonstrations in the North Carolina state capitol, thousands of Anglos have joined thousands of African-Americans under the banner of the black civil-rights organization, the NAACP.

For whites to march behind black leadership is historic in the South, where the oligarchy has

for centuries bought the loyalty of whites with just enough privilege to keep them a step above blacks.

In the Dream Defenders' long sit-in at the Florida governor's office, the united struggle of Black and Latino youth is equally historic.

In the California state prisons, the hunger strike of 30,000 inmates—united by a peace agreement among warring Black, Latino, and Anglo gangs—threatens the very foundation of the state's prison system.

Courageous leaders for years have attempted to create this unity and failed. Why now?

Our class is uniting across old divides because conditions have changed—and changed fundamentally.

For many people, it is becoming clear that the economic system—capitalism—is collapsing, that it can no longer provide the things people need, and that there is no shortage of those things, just of the money to buy them.

And it is becoming clear that the oligarchy's response is to come down on us hard, take what remains of our money, deprive us of our democratic rights, and leave us bleeding in the gutter.

In this critical moment, class unity is the new idea that germi-



May Day march in Chicago.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

nates, takes root, and flourishes to feed an increasingly conscious

need to rise up—as a class—and take charge of our future.

Let us all now grasp that new idea.

## Poetry can be the greatest weapon in revolutionary struggle

By Jack Hirshman

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — Upon hearing of the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the Trayvon Martin travesty of justice, the Revolutionary Poets Brigade of San Francisco decided to take a cultural step forward in behalf of the struggle for an end to racism through economic democracy.

It used Heartfire, its recent 385-page international and multilingual Anthology as admission to a poetry reading in the Alley Cat Bookstore in the heart of San Francisco's mission and it raised \$419 for the Trayvon Martin Foundation, founded by his parents, Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin after the murder of their son.

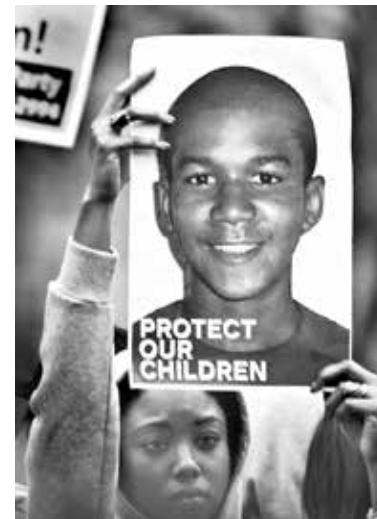
Moreover the evening was charged with many poems to and about Trayvon by such distinguished African-American poets as Maketa Smith-Groves, Dee Allen, Gary Hicks, the emeritus Poet Laureate of San Francisco, Devorah Major, as well as the current Poet Laureate, Alejandro Murguía, Adrian Arias, Sarah Menefee, Judith Ayn Bernhard, John Curl, and other members of the Revolutionary Poets Brigade, including Martin Hickel, who curated the event, and the editors of Heartfire, Agneta Falk and Jack Hirschman, who also read.

The capitalist class would like nothing better than that poets go die. Not only will the Revolutionary Poets Brigade not die, but it has migrated to Los Angeles, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Burlington, Vermont; Paris, France and Rome, Italy.

We know the old cultural avant-garde today is the avant-garde, the acceptance of the hustler existence that Wall Street and the Corporate State has forced every creative soul into.

We know the real avant-garde is the current new-class generation of young people the world over whose future's been blocked by today's economic fascism and who will not stop fighting to overthrow the unjust system of which the Trayvon Martin tragedy is but a recent glaring example.

Poetry can be the greatest weapon in revolutionary struggle.



Trayvon Martin.

PHOTO/MIKE FLESHMAN

gle. Truth and Beauty are its strong pillars. So, poets, let's organize, form Brigades and unite with the motion to end the monstrosity that the capitalist system has become.

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### *The New Klan*

discarding the sheets  
 they wore at night  
 opting in stead for the clean shaven head  
 hoping the glare from the sweat on his skull  
 will hide his shames  
 In the sunlight

— *Ghetto Prophet*  
 Co-Chair of the Onyx Coordinating Committee



# THE FIGHT FOR WATER IN HIGHLAND PARK, MI



The Highland Park Human Rights Coalition joined forces with The Citizens for Highland Park Public schools to fight both the water crises and the dismantlement of the children's educational system in Highland Park. PHOTO/DONATED

The People's Tribune's Sandy Reid interviewed Shirley Turner who is a leader in the fight for water rights in Highland Park, Michigan. She discusses the deplorable state of the Highland Park schools as well.

HIGHLAND PARK, MI — I have been involved in the water struggle since early 2000. Some people here haven't received a water bill for over two years, but now they are being sent to various parts of the city. People will not be able to pay. Also, I don't understand how they can send out a water bill when, one, the machines they use to read the meters are not working properly. Two, they cut the water coming into our reservoir and switched over to Detroit's water. When they did this, the mayor bypassed the City Council, and didn't inform the

City that he was doing this. Now, no one knows how their bills will be calculated. The Mayor fired everybody that knew about the water plant, from plant to office. Now someone is coming up with a new billing system. Also, the Mayor didn't inform anyone that they need to boil their water, which is brown and yellowish.

People need to know how much they are charging for every 1,000 cubic feet of water and for the sewage. My bill is \$8 shy of \$2,500 and \$1,900 is for sewage. On my block alone, bills are almost \$50,000. There are a lot of people here that receive only one check a month. They can't afford to pay these bills.

I don't know what the mayor is trying to do. I feel like there is a conspiracy going on. It's like with our schools—we don't have a school district, we have char-

ters—but we still pay school taxes. All of the high schools have been torn down or are at the point of no repair. The school Financial Manager and his team came in and threw away a lot of books. They are not saying they are going to replace the books.

The whole city is in a mess. Now, if they put all of these water bills onto our property, people will lose their homes and be in the street. A lot of elderly people own the homes—where will they go? The City Council and the mayor don't want to fight for our City and represent us. We elected them to take care of the City. People are angry. We, the citizens, have to stand up.

For more information, contact the Highland Park Human Rights Coalition at Michigan Welfare Rights, 313-964-0618.

## DETROIT IS BETTER THAN THAT, PART TWO

By Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony

This is the second part of an interview that ran in the October 2013 edition of the People's Tribune.

DETROIT, MI — Illinois has the worst credit rating of any state in the nation. An overall pension debt of nearly \$97 billion and a backlog of unpaid bills nearing \$10 billion. The City of Chicago recently saw its credit rating downgraded because of a \$19 billion unfunded pension liability that Moody's puts closer to \$36 billion. The City of Los Angeles could also be facing a liability of more than \$30 billion. Yet no one, including Mr. Orr, has referred to these cities as dumb, lazy, happy and rich.

Mr. Orr has only seen fit to castigate and denigrate the people inside the City of Detroit. Mr. Orr, Detroit is better than that. Our workers are better than that. Our leaders are better than that and the people who live here are better than that! As a matter of fact, it is these same people who now, after federal loans to GM and Chrysler, have worked to see the US auto industry back on top where it properly belongs. This does not sound like lazy nor complacent workers.

It is unfortunate that a man given such responsibility and unlimited power by a governor who disregarded the will of 2.3 million Michiganders by cir-

cumventing the NO vote to this entire process, can be so out of touch with reality. Mr. Orr just got to Detroit five months ago. He has no stake in this city. He does not live in this City. He will be leaving this city in a matter of months. This is a dramatic indication of what happens when an unelected, not responsible to the people in the community, so-called "benevolent dictator" (in his own words) is left to run loose among the people he is supposed to serve. We who remain here will be forced to pick up, clean up and fix up after Mr. Orr is long gone.

It must be said that the real culprit in all of this is the governor of the state, Rick Snyder who made this ill-conceived appointment. For it is the governor who is allowing Mr. Orr to disrespect an entire city. The governor has turned a deaf ear to the name calling, throwing dirt on past accomplishments of a great city and thus negating our coming together as one community. Is this what he considers a Pure Michigan? Quite frankly these actions are in fact polluting the entire great lakes region.

It is these types of comments that make it most difficult for Detroit and this region to come together as one. It is tantamount to throwing gasoline on an already inflamed community. Yet I am reminded of the very motto of the City of Detroit which is Speramus Meliora; Resurget Cineribus (Latin for We Hope For Better Things; It Shall Rise



Detroiters fight school closures. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

From the Ashes).

Mr. Orr, we hope and pray that through a sincere apology to the people of Detroit (which you

have not given) and by stepping away from your current responsibilities (which you need to do) that the City of Detroit can once

again rise up from the dirt and the ashes thrown against it by these most thoughtless and slanderous remarks.

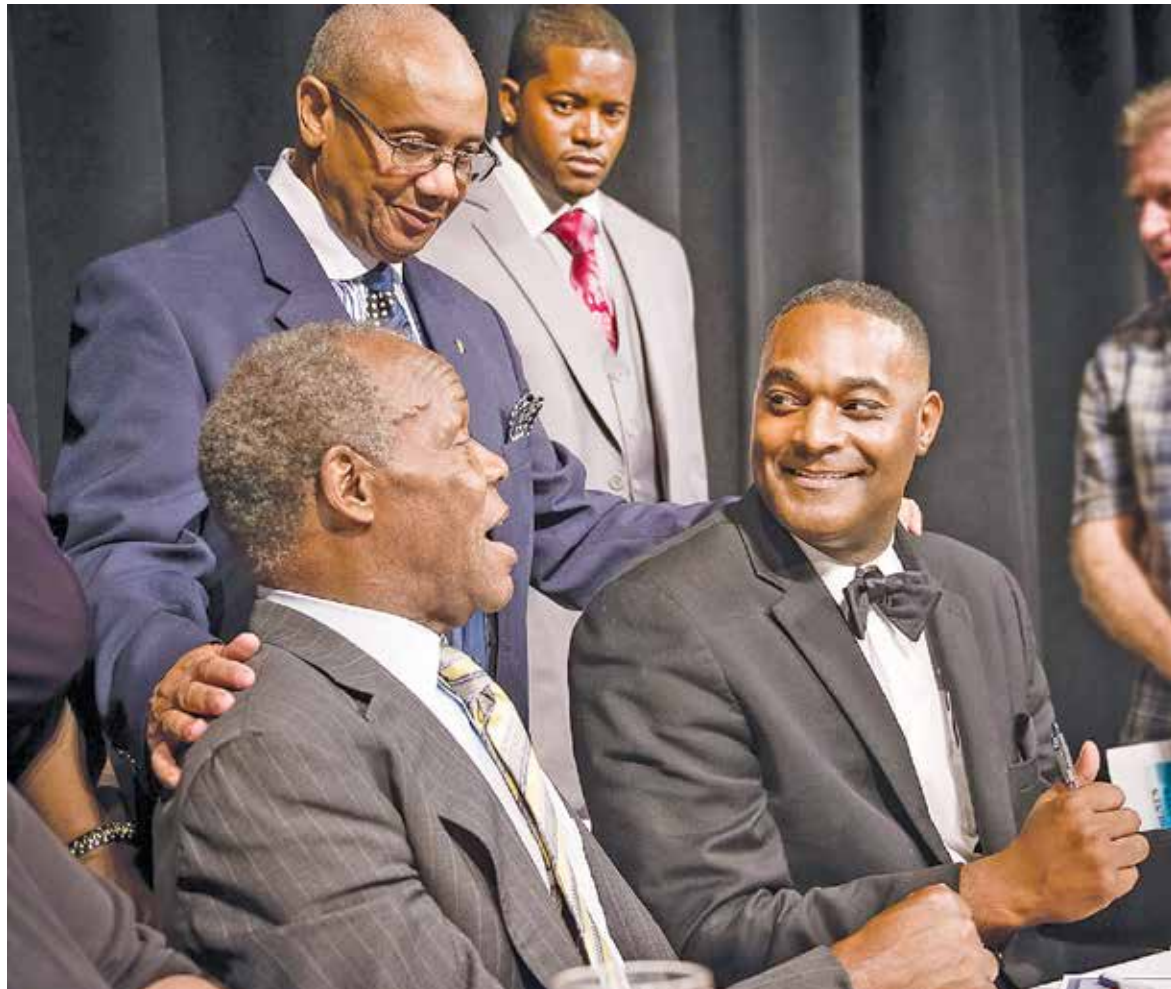


### Momenpopcast

This is a brand new podcast by Andy and Leslie Willis. They've tackled subjects like the roots of morality, the electronic revolution, and public education, interviewing leaders on the front lines. Tune in through their Facebook page "Momenpopcast," or link directly through [buzzsprout.com/12831](http://buzzsprout.com/12831). Send feedback to [momenpopcast@gmail.com](mailto:momenpopcast@gmail.com).



# Actor-activist Danny Glover speaks with the *People's Tribune*



Left to right: Danny Glover, Marcus Muhammad, Rev. Edward Pinkney, Reggie Brown.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

The *People's Tribune's* Sandy Reid and Bob Lee interviewed Danny Glover at the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization Justice Fund Dinner in Benton Harbor about his vision of a new society. Here are

excerpts from that interview:

Like Dr. King said, we have to become a more people oriented society, rather than a thing oriented society. The society, the community I imagine—a friend

of mine, author David Korten talks about his life growing up in small town America. What he fails to realize is that, even though life may have been simple, they were pretty racist, too. They leave out that part. Au-

thor Bill McKibben talks about smaller based companies where food is within close proximity. When 90% of food production involves some form of fossil fuel, all things are possible. There has to be something that gets us off fossil fuel. My concern is that everything we see here in the US is a microcosm. Imagine what is happening in Iraq where large companies like Monsanto and others are planning a whole different thing around farming. If traditional farming began 15,000 years ago in places like Iraq, farmers have a whole culture with farming. They have an understanding of the seed, the soil, and they know what crops you plant here or next year. That is out of the question now. By the end of the first gulf war there was depleted uranium and neutron bombs dropped, with all of the birth defects. What do we look like to the rest of the world?

I went to Venezuela because the president elect is a good friend of mine. I wanted to come back to a small African descended community to see what they have been doing with their chocolate and banana coops. I wanted to hear how their lives and community have changed as a result of the Bolivar revolution. I wanted to hear about the idea that you are entitled to healthcare, that it's not a privilege, and that you're

entitled to a decent education. People will always try to move toward this, but that's the part that is always cut out. The objective of this country was never to have anything succeed, whether it was the farmers in Guatemala or people forming other ways of living like in collectives. There used to be four ideas about development. One, sustainable job development. Two, checking the earth. Three, equitable distribution. Four, elevate the status of women. These were millennium goals. The question is how do people get back to that? How do we even get an initiative called quality education as a civil right? The US is the only country in the world that doesn't have a national education plan; the state's dictate. That's the reality.

Whether things evolve into another political party or not, young people are key. Young people pushed King and he was compelled to come out with a statement on the Vietnam war. How that happens now in a technologically advanced world, I don't know. Where is the leadership, and how can that leadership not be bought out and compromised? Young people come with so much idealism and ideas. How do you keep nourishing that toward a radical outcome? How do we deal with this world — *it has to function for all of us.*

## RECALL BENTON HARBOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Benton Harbor School Board's key function is to be flexible and responsive, to provide leadership, policy development and communication to the community. Three school board members, Willie Lark Sr., Lue Buchana, Martha Momany and Superintendent Leonard Seawood have failed in their duties and obligation to the community. The problems in the schools are communal — they beset the entire community. We must improve our public education system.

It is evident that the best way to improve public education is to allocate more resources for public schools to improve technology, to expand professional development opportunities for teachers, to buy classroom supplies, and text books which Benton Harbor School system does not have. Good books and other materials come with

good education.

I, and many members of the community, including the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO) are not ready to give up. The education that can be received in our public schools is at the heart of the American Dream. Instead of starving the Benton Harbor school district, or turning to privatization of education, we should work to improve it.

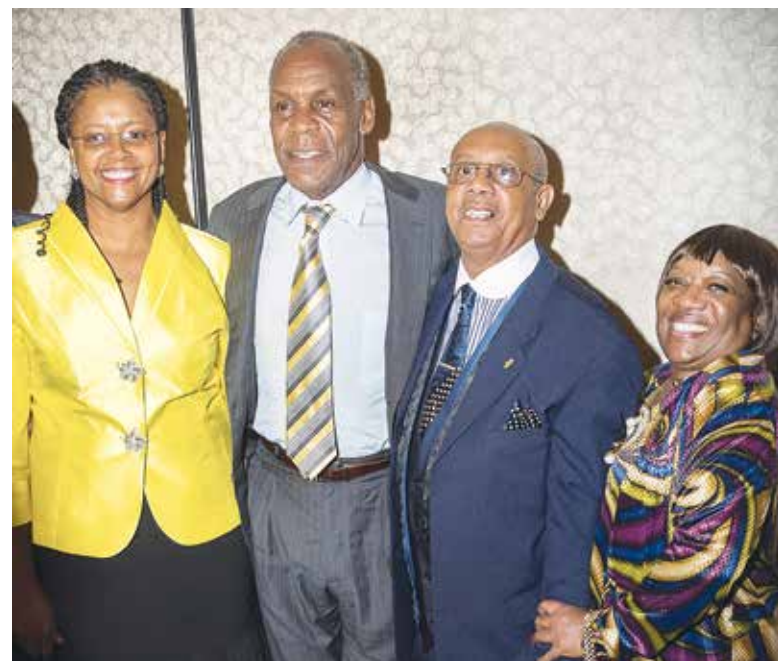
We must demand that the state and federal government guarantee free, equal, quality education for every child. We have to ask why schools in wealthy areas like St. Joseph have high quality schools while schools in poor communities like Benton Harbor have poor schools. Wealthy areas have a large tax base and can afford to tax themselves to guarantee high quality schools. This is unfair.

We must also get rid of all officials that stand in the way of our children getting a high qual-

ity education. BANCO filed recalls against the Benton Harbor Area Schools (BHAS) Board President Martha Momany, trustees Lue Buchana, and Willie Lark who voted against Ms. Brown during its Aug. 26 special meeting in which a motion to seat Ms. Brown died. On October 9, a clarity hearing was set and the wording was approved. Leonard Seawood indicated at the Aug. 20 school board meeting that additional cuts couldn't be avoided this year. Seawood said he had not heard one viable solution. I have a solution: Seawood, you should resign.

The Benton Harbor community has a favorable situation. An entire nation is asking for clarity on how to save our public school system. As we have in the past, we will meet this challenge. Time is short and at stake is the future of our children. Demand a free, equal, quality education for every child.

The future is up to us.



Belinda Brown, Danny Glover, Rev. Edward Pinkney and Dorothy Pinkney at the BANCO Justice Fund Dinner in Benton Harbor.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

### Rev. Pinkney urges Benton Harbor voters to approve city income tax

On November 5, Benton Harbor, Michigan voters will go to the polls to approve a city income tax that would tax the corporations to save the city. Rev. Pinkney urges voters to vote yes on the city income tax.