



Volunteers in Detroit feed the homeless. The homeless are workers who have been discarded by a system that no longer needs their labor. It doesn't have to be this way. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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FOOD: CORPORATIONS PROFIT, MILLIONS STARVE

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THE STRUGGLE FOR HEALTHCARE AND THE FIGHT FOR A NEW SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) may have given more people access to health insurance who didn't have it before, but this law is not giving the people what they truly need—a guarantee of quality health care for all. Besides forcing people to buy insurance, the ACA uses government funds to subsidize the privately owned, profit-driven health care industry, especially the insurance companies, and it doesn't even cover everyone! We can't fix a broken private system. We need a health care system owned by the people.

In essence the ACA partially nationalized some aspects of the health care industry, but in the interest of the corporations. For example, according to National Public Radio, the ACA “will provide around \$1 trillion in subsidies to low-and middle-income Americans over the next decade to help them pay for health insurance.” Of course, that money ultimately goes to the insurers. We need to nationalize the industry in the interest of the people. We need to eliminate the private health insurance industry and have a publicly owned health care system that provides health care to everyone at government expense.

Other countries have done something similar. According to Henry Blodget, writing in Slate magazine, Britain's National Health Service (NHS) “now costs the UK less than half as much per person as the U.S. system does.” The NHS provides publically funded diagnostic care and treatment for any illness or health concern, from colds to cancer, free of charge to most UK residents. It ensures that anyone can receive the medical care they need regardless of age, their health, or financial circumstances.



Healthcare protest against Blue Shield in San Francisco.

PHOTO/STEVE RHODES

We could have a system where the drug and medical device companies and the hospitals are publicly owned, and the doctors and other health care workers are public employees, and quality care is guaranteed to everyone. This would be a step in the right direction. But it's just the first step on a longer road.

Computers and robots are replacing labor. Many jobs are disappearing and wages are falling for the jobs that remain. Under these conditions, it's impossible to continue with an economy based on people having jobs and using their wages to buy what they need. How can we

truly lead healthy lives without the ability to support ourselves? Out of necessity we will have to move toward a cooperative society, where the people own the means of producing what we need, and everything—including health care—is simply distributed according to need.

We already have the means to produce everything we need. Imagine the society we could have. All of us would have access to good housing, healthy food, and the time and facilities for exercise. We would have access to any preventive care we needed to stay healthy, and we'd get all the health care we needed

if we were sick or injured. We wouldn't have the stress of worrying about being able to feed, clothe and shelter ourselves and our children.

We could truly have the opportunity to be healthy and realize our full potential. Some of the vast resources squandered today on lining the pockets of a wealthy few could be put to work curing cancer and other deadly diseases.

We are not fighting to fix a dying system; we are fighting for a whole new world. Nationalizing health care in the interest of the people is a step along this road.

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.

Visit us on the web at www.PeoplesTribune.org

FOOD: Corporations profit, millions starve

COVER STORY

Our world is abundant. Nature provides. Technology provides. Yet more and more Americans are going hungry. Why?

The question of hunger, food production and food usage is entering the public debate. This is coupled with attacks on basic safety net pieces like Food Stamps, welfare, and school lunches. What little remains of these programs leaves many wondering how they are going to attain basic things like food and water.

From the community gardens and organic farms of California to the land trusts and land reclamations of cities like Flint, Detroit, and Chicago, many activists propose that the solution is taking land and growing food. But the larger question remains: who is to have control over food production, land use and distribution of goods and resources? Who is to determine if we eat and how?

The specter of hunger looms large over the future of this country as 50 million Americans go hungry. Low-wage workers, veterans, students and everyday people scrape to put food on their plates.

This virtual starvation is taking place en masse, and is a clear attack on the working class as a whole. Food stamps are cut at exactly the time when more and more people will need them. Meanwhile, politicians, and leaders in both of the major two parties position themselves as though they speak for the people, or side openly with the corporations, blaming the workers for their poverty. How are we to re-

spond to this daily threat?

Currently, the question of eating rests in the hands of an economic system that is destroyed daily by an objective process. That objective process is the automation of human labor. Everything from farm work, customer service, bank tellers to manufacturing is done by robots. In this economic environment, there are fewer and fewer jobs. People without jobs cannot afford to buy the goods and services that robots are producing.

In essence, more and more people are starving with no options or foreseeable solutions. Meanwhile, corporations and the automated food industry continue to produce tons of food with no regard for anything but its soaring profits and more and more dramatic measures at tax evasion.

We must take over the corporations and nationalize the food supply. We can never build enough community gardens, or establish enough land trusts to address issues of hunger in the nation. Automation, and much of the corporate owned land can and should be owned and used by the people in the interest of the people.

The distribution of resources in the country cannot remain in the hands of a small class of billionaires and corporations who have no problem exploiting and killing people and destroying the planet if it meets their bottom line. The people have to organize in their most basic interests of housing, health care, and even food and water.

With the automation of production, capitalism can no longer meet the needs of a shrinking workforce. Yet there is more than enough for everybody. The



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

technology today can produce enough food to feed the world. No one needs to go hungry! Nationalizing the food industry is an important step toward creating a new society where all necessities are distributed by need.

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

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 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 gifts. Donate via paypal at www.peopletribune.org or send to PT, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

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Our Walmart workers launch November strike wave

By Rommy Pinney,
OUR WALMART organizer

WALMART LISTEN UP! WE ARE FIGHTING AND WE WON'T BE STOPPED!

The workers at Walmart—through their organization OUR WALMART—have just completed three years of continuous and constant struggle to make Walmart listen to their demand that the corporation treat them better. They have been able to continue their actions undeterred on a national level. The original actions three years ago that launched this movement continue to play a role in maintaining this momentum.

The richest corporation in America, with profits equal to the earnings of 42% of Americans, has not listened and has not kept its promises to its workers and to the community in general. They keep opening more stores with ease, at the expense of these unfulfilled promises.

RICHMOND CALIFORNIA STANDS UP TO CORPORATIONS

For the People's Tribune, Sandy Perry interviewed Mayor Gayle McLaughlin of Richmond, California. Richmond is the largest US city with a Green Party mayor and has been the scene of epic battles against Chevron Corporation and Wall Street banks in 2013.

People's Tribune: What was the significance of the Aug. 3 Richmond Summer Heat Mobilization?

Mayor McLaughlin: This was a great gathering of nearly 3,000 people coming together to remember the Chevron Richmond refinery fire of 2012, to support environmental justice for Richmond residents, and the protection of the planet a whole. In Richmond, this mobilization tied in with all our environmental health and renewable energy initiatives. We were number one in the Bay Area in 2010 for solar installed per capita; we have a solar installation cooperative (called "Pamaja"); and we joined up with Marin Clean Energy, a community choice aggregation.

In Richmond, we understand and welcome mobilizing efforts for important causes like environmental justice and climate justice. A coalition of local progressive and environmental groups organized to make it happen: 350.org, 350 Bay Area,

NOVEMBER STRIKE WAVE

November 6 and 7, workers from seven different stores in southern California went on strike, launching a wave of strikes during November.

LARGEST CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE DEMONSTRATION EVER

November 7, the workers completed the largest civil disobedience ever conducted against Walmart, with 54 arrests at 6:05 a.m. outside the Walmart market in the Chinatown neighborhood of Los Angeles. (See photo.)

STRIKE SPREADS

The following Monday, the strike was carried to Seattle, followed by Chicago and Ohio. Another strike occurred the next day in Dallas, followed by Pennsylvania, and finally more strikes in Central Florida and later in South Florida. Everywhere the workers are coming out on strike with one voice:

No more reprisals! We deserve to be treated with respect!

BLACK FRIDAY PROTESTS

Workers in many more cities joined this movement on Black Friday, which has historically been Walmart's most profitable day of the year. Walmart workers in cities in New York, Arizona, Minnesota, and North Carolina joined with the cities where strikes broke out earlier in November to demand:

WORKERS AT WALMART DESERVE BETTER PAY! RESPECT OUR FAMILIES!

Black Friday also saw other demonstrations of civil disobedience at the entrances of Walmart stores in Ontario, Ca., Chicago, and San Leandro, Ca.

CHANGE IS COMING AT WALMART

This struggle is developing—step by step—toward positive changes that can be won at Walmart!

Richmond Progressive Alliance, Communities for a Better Environment, Gathering Tribes, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Urban Tilth, and labor unions.

PT: Comment on the role of Chevron in city politics, how you have been able to combat it, and what are the next steps.

MM: The grassroots movement in Richmond has put forward great pressure on Chevron to pay their fair share of taxes, and some important victories have been achieved. However, we know that this multi-billion dollar corporation should be paying more to the people of Richmond who have suffered their pollution and explosions for over 100 years. Chevron may be our largest employer but only about 5-10 percent of their workforce lives here, so we expose Chevron's hypocrisy and we work to create clean energy and other healthy jobs for our residents.

Chevron has thrown millions of dollars into our local elections over and over again. We see them as polluting our democracy. We continue to expose this fact, organize on a grassroots level, and call on the people of Richmond to elect progressive candidates and not Chevron-friendly candidates.

PT: Explain what is going on in the eminent domain battle over

underwater homes in Richmond.

MM: Richmond has had thousands of foreclosures since 2007 and many more are in the pipeline. We cannot afford to wait for the next wave of foreclosures to impact our hard-working families. So we are moving forward with the Local Principal Reduction Program, to purchase severely underwater mortgages from the banks and refinance them on behalf of our homeowners at affordable rates in line with current home values. We have called on the banks to voluntarily sell us these mortgages at their fair market value. If they won't do it voluntarily, we will consider using the city's eminent domain authority to purchase the loans. The banks sold my community bad loans with their predatory lending practices and now they want to stop the city from providing a much-needed fix to the problem that they have caused. But we are not taking this sitting down. We are standing up to Wall Street and standing up for our community.

Some 3000 people attended the August 3 Richmond Summer Heat rally in Richmond, California, to protest the 2012 Chevron refinery fire and demand environmental justice.

PHOTO/SANDY PERRY



Fifty-four people were arrested in the biggest civil disobedience protests ever at Walmart. The woman was arrested on a picket line in front of the Walmart neighborhood market in Chinatown, in Los Angeles, California. PHOTO/ROMMY PINNEY

Low-wage workers point the way forward!

From the Editors

The People's Tribune opens its pages to the low-wage workers who are fighting for their survival by standing up to a global capitalist class that reaps billions off their labor. Many of these courageous workers are developing into the kind of leaders needed to build a new America. These workers, along with their comrades worldwide who work like dogs for low wages, are pointing the way forward for all workers.

This movement can only grow, reaching broader sectors of the working class. It is driven forward by a new global economy based in the transition from industrial to electronic-based production. Robotics eliminates millions of jobs worldwide. Many of the jobs that do exist are so low paying that workers are going without healthcare, food, and often, housing. Yet there is an abundance of necessities produced today. The problem is that the giant productive processes are today in private hands.

In the end, this movement is about creating a new society where everyone's needs are met. It is about society taking over the giant global corporations and distributing people's necessities by need, not money. We encourage our readers to use the pages of the People's Tribune to help carry the struggle forward.



DETROIT BANKRUPTCY SOCIETY IS BEING REORGANIZED FOR THE CORPORATIONS



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Detройters protest against the bankruptcy filing which allows the city's unelected Emergency Manager greater powers to attack the current and retired public workers.

PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER, STILLSCENES.COM

By Maureen Taylor

DETROIT, MI — Detroit, Michigan has now made new history. Judge Steven Rhodes has approved the Detroit Bankruptcy filing which allows the Emergency Manager much greater

powers to attack the current and retired public workers.

Although the ruling will be appealed, possibly to the US Supreme Court, the power of bondholders and the government merged together against us is becoming clear. Pension funds are

now considered public assets available to be seized to pay the bondholders, while retirees will be forced to suffer.

The 20 plus international news agencies camped out at the Federal Court rushed from the scene after hearing the bank-

ruptcy approval ruling issued by Judge Rhodes, anxious to report this devastating news. What does it mean? It means that we are up against the ruling class like never before. It means that, across the nation, the other 34 states with large metropolitan cities facing declining populations and rising pension obligations had better take heed of this message—nothing is sacred. We have been stripped of our right to vote, and even the Federal courts will not restore that basic entitlement.

What it means is that the “fire sale” of Detroit assets is open to the highest bidder at the lowest cost. What it means is that the rise of technology and its effect on eliminating labor from our workplaces has taken another big bite out of our standard of living. It means that because we are no longer needed in large numbers to produce, our lives are becoming more and more marginalized. Retirees are under full assault because a Federal judge declared that in the Detroit bankruptcy, public workers are not protected. ALL municipal retirees in every American city are now subject to have their health benefits and pensions reduced. Make certain that you understand this... se-

nior citizens are pushed into homelessness!

Food Stamps in millions of low-income households have been cut. Empty houses stand in neighborhoods as homeless families pass them on their way to shelters already too full. As we move toward the final stage of this declining economy, we have to see the totality of what is unfolding in front of our very eyes.

The ruling class tells us that poor people have TOO much money, and rich people don't have enough money. One percent of the nation's population controls the resources of the nation. Elections don't work. Candidates don't hear us. The process is flawed and cannot be corrected in a way that benefits the majority of the residents trying to keep body and soul together.

Objective changes in how things are produced have made a permanent impact on everyone's quality of life. Humanity is being reorganized on a new world order... either the Koch Brothers, the Romney Klan, or the Snyder Group will be in charge of how that new world looks, or working people will take up the mantle of leadership.

My experience inside Quicken Loans



Detрой eviction defense march against Bank of America.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Annie Beaubien

DETROIT, MI — My first thought when entering the Quicken Loans offices in Detroit was: “This has to be a cult.” Everyone seemed so happy and excited—

manically so—to be working; not at all like I expected from standard issue mortgage firm employees. The offices were brightly colored with an open floor plan which, we were told, “encouraged creativity.” Our tour guide

went on about how “fabulous” Quicken Loans was, but quite frankly, I was more than a little freaked out. *Are these people on drugs?* I wondered. *Perhaps they're pumping oxygen into the place, to induce a false euphoria.* Our guide spoke of “the culture” Quicken Loans aggressively encourages among its employees. To my relief, a fellow tour taker leaned over to me and whispered, “They could drop the ‘ure’ and just leave it at cult.” I was not alone in my observations.

We were told about Quicken's “isms,” their core beliefs which are hammered into each and every employee. At the end of the tour, all of us were given books, which are also given to all their employees, that teach the reader about the “isms” with bright colors and pictures; it seemed like a children's book more than anything. In fact, our tour guide told us that he had given one of these “books” to each of his children. Well, you know what they say: get ‘em young.

It was my opinion that all of this friendliness had to be a cover for a fascist state. And that it was; we were taken into the basement of one of their buildings and proudly shown their security rooms.

Quicken has cameras on every single building it owns in Detroit. Dan Gilbert, founder of Quicken, has been buying up dozens of buildings around the city, so that adds up to quite a few cameras. Now, this isn't the only thing they do; they also track any tweet that has the word “Quicken Loans,” “Dan Gilbert” or many other keywords.

I am aware that after publication of this article, I will almost certainly be put on some sort of Quicken Loans “blacklist;” I'm sure it's against the “isms” to say anything bad about the “company” (or cult, depending on who you ask) or their great leader Dan Gilbert. Frankly, I'm flattered that a company as large as Quicken Loans is threatened by me, a 16 year-old-girl.

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Philadelphians unite to defend quality public education



Protest at Moffitt School in Philadelphia. The school was losing its art and music teachers. A community demand is for full and fair funding for schools. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

By Jennifer Cox and Mary Bricker-Jenkins

PHILADELPHIA, PA — Over the past several years, Philadelphians have rallied to save their public education system in the streets, in the halls of government and the school district. The crisis has brought together groups often divided—teachers,

students, parents and community members—to fight one for one common cause—quality public education.

In May 2013, three thousand Philadelphia students walked out of public schools, and marched to the School District headquarters and City Hall. This walk-out united students of every race, language, ethnicity and econom-

ic background, and brought together students from prestigious magnet schools with students from struggling inner-city neighborhood schools.

The struggle continued during the summer, when laid-off staff members held a hunger strike to demand their jobs back, and community members rallied in support. Since school began in September, *Full Funding Fridays* have brought together parents, students, teachers, school employees and community members at local neighborhood schools every Friday morning for vigils to support public schools.

Organizations of poor and homeless families, youth, immigrants and teachers—including the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC), Asian Americans United, Philadelphia Students' Union, the Teachers' Action Group and Youth United for Change—have been deeply involved in this fight, which was recently featured at PPEHRC's World Court of Women in Kensington, North Philadelphia.

In addition to protests and actions, Philadelphians have come together to propose solutions to the crisis. The Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools (PCAPS)—uniting students, teachers, counselors, nurses, parents, community members and advocates—has created the “*Philadelphia Community Education Plan*” for “*Excellent Schools for All Children*.” Based on community listening sessions and other outreach among thousands of Philadelphians, the *Plan* demands quality conditions for learning, safe schools, support for struggling schools, support for students that is holistic, turning school buildings into community hubs, and the restoration of Philadelphia's local school board. The *Plan* also includes a “*Student Bill of Rights*.” PCAPS and many others are working together to demand and develop community schools.

The people of Philadelphia refuse to allow schools to be privatized, or turned into charities or the graveyard of organized labor. Despite well-funded PR cam-

paigns by the city and the state to blame the crisis on teachers—and to weaken the union and to force the teachers' union to give up valuable benefits and pay—a recent poll showed that Philadelphians understand that the blame for the crisis belongs with the system and its representatives in government, not with teachers. Philadelphians recently protested at a national conference of philanthropists in Philadelphia aimed at further privatization and the increased destruction of public education.

The destruction of public education is going hand in hand with the building of prisons and other means of controlling our class—the class that has no future in capitalism. But the fight for public education in Philadelphia and across the country is bringing together our class across all of the lines that the capitalists have developed to divide us, uniting us in a struggle for a system and society that meets the needs of all of its people.

Fight for quality education in New Orleans

The *People's Tribune's* Joseph Peery interviewed DJ Markey, a leading advocate in the fight for equal quality education in New Orleans. This is part two of a two-part interview.

People's Tribune: What's the solution to what's going on in education?

DJ Markey: Well, first we have to have a public conversation. The privatizers, like “*New Schools for New Orleans*” are the authors of the initial report to which we responded. Their focus is something quite different. That's the one that says reforming schools in New Orleans is a model for the whole country to use. We know that's not true. Schools must provide a 21st Century education for all children, including children with disabilities and with language differences. Returning schools to local control would be an important first step. The majority of the schools here are run by private boards and are not elected by anybody in the city. Public funds are expended and that's the only

connection we have with calling it public education. Under this arrangement, the tax paying public does not govern these schools.

PT: Local communities are up against a national strategy. If this can be done in the interest of the rich, why can't we do the same thing in our interest?

DJ: That's an interesting conversation. We have been having it here for some time. We have what's called the Minimum Foundation Program. It's the way education is funded. Governor Bobby Jindal has been taking the money directly out of this program to fund his voucher program. If you follow the money, you see that undercutting public education in this way does not portend well for the future. When you look around the country at areas where public schools are being chartered, you see lots of poor kids and lots of kids of color affected by school closures. You don't have charter schools so much in rural areas; privatizers have gone after major urban

centers. The policies coming out of Washington DC have assisted those entities seeking to privatize public education, so it is a national effort. More people are becoming aware that this is not in the long-term best interest of public education.

PT: How can we fund education in a more fair and equitable way for our children?

DJ: As far as policies coming out of the Federal government, there is no incentive to address equity. Re-prioritizing public education by taking money from the military budget to fund real change should be an important topic for our public conversation. We need more teachers, schools, programs, support for all kids to break the school to prison pipeline, more counselors and social workers. This will require more investment, especially from the federal government. We're still struggling with those ideas. In New Orleans, when we talk about rebuilding schools, the question is always: Who will run them? How will they impact the community?



Commemoration in New Orleans of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. The event focused on stopping the violence, police brutality, Travon Martin, and public education. PHOTO/TED QUANT

What's will be taught? Will the quality of life for the kids in this community be better? Is it going to bring communities back together? Those questions are unanswered. Bringing communities around the country together in a different way to demand some-

thing different from the federal government is what it will take.

The People's Tribune will be contributing to this much-needed conversation about public education in coming issues. Please join us.

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

Plan to create military school sparks protest



The Ames School community takes its protest to the Board of Education. The community is against plans to turn the school into a military school. PHOTO/DEBORAH MCCOY

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — I started off at the wrong meeting. A staff per-

son at Ames school sent me to a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) meeting upstairs. I soon knew I was not where I was supposed to

be. Where were the angry parents? I found them downstairs with a Mr. Conner from the CPS who had been sent to “manage” the anger generated by an arbitrary decision to turn Ames into a military school. No one had bothered to ask the parents if this was a good idea.

Ames has an outstanding program of parent mentorship recognized nationally as a huge success. At Ames, every aspect of this beloved community school is monitored by teachers, parents, and students assuring a growing level of positive results. Attendance, academic and every other measure are up. There is that old saying, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

Even with success at Ames, Alderman Roberto Maldonado announced that a Marine and Science Military school would be housed at Ames, fulfilling his lifelong “dream.” He knew full well that the community he is supposed to represent did not

share this dream. Last month, the Mayor ordered a community center in a poor neighborhood in the Pilsen to be bulldozed, over community protests and promises that that it would not happen. Another figurative bulldozer is now aimed at Ames School.

Equal quality education is not on the agenda in Chicago—period. The recent school closings, massive teacher layoffs, and subsidies to private charter schools is the reality. Tons of money is being siphoned out of the public schools and used to advance a corporate agenda. The Department of Defense is always looking for youngsters to “be all they can be,” and the City is obliging by budgeting for more military schools.

Turning Ames into a military school is a win—win for Alderman Maldonado (the biggest real estate owning alderman in town.) Will some money mysteriously flow into his coffers? It also allows him to appear pa-

triotic, shuffling off mostly kids from poorer communities on a path to become cannon fodder in the next war.

Privatizing and militarizing education works for corporations who are even willing go to war to maintain their profits and power. For the rest of us these solutions are a recipe for death and disaster. With computers and robotics in all areas of production, especially in the military, only a certain number of working class children need even apply. The others will be warehoused, but not educated.

The parents, teachers, and students at Ames are intent on winning a non-military quality education for their children. The powers that be are determined to have their way and are moving ahead with their plans. The Ames community is preparing by organizing and deepening its understanding of the situation. This struggle is well underway and will continue until we win.

Gale School in Chicago: The Path to equality is through nationalization



Teachers and parents picket at Gale Math and Science Academy during the Chicago Teachers Union strike, September 2012. PHOTO/LEW ROSENBAUM

By Spencer Bey and Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — Gale Math and Science Academy, a K-8 school in Rogers Park (the northeast corner of Chicago), sits in a pocket long devastated by poverty. More than 98% of the students are eligible for free lunches, and more than 95% of the children are African, African-American, Caribbean, Asian or Latino. More than 30 languages are spoken in a student body of less than 500. Half the students will be different at the end of the school year (transfers in and out.)

Last year, Chicago’s Board of Education targeted Gale to be closed. They claimed that there were too few students for the number of classrooms. Nowhere did this estimate take account that 15% of the students already have individual educational plans (IEPs)—undoubtedly many more need IEPs but have not been identified. After parents protested the CPS script and disrupted the CPS sham hearing, the Board of Education did not close Gale. The Board promised that funds saved by closing 49 schools last year would go to the schools still open,

to give them more resources.

Instead, all CPS schools had their budgets slashed: Gale is losing \$800,000!

Occupy Rogers Park Chicago, along with parents from Gale school, have been protesting these cutbacks, comparing the funding for Gale with the University of Chicago Lab School, a private school where Mayor Emanuel sends his children. Education in this country has never been equal for all. There have always been elite schools for the wealthy, and the Lab School is one of them, where tuition costs almost \$30,000 a year.

Not all public schools get equal funding. The more wealthy suburbs on the northern fringe of Chicago have a higher property tax base and therefore have more money per student than Chicago schools. But even within Chicago, the schools that achieve the best ranking (selective enrollment schools) raise large amounts of money from private sources, including the parents who send their children to these schools.

The inequality at Gale is not a mistake, a well-meaning policy gone awry. It is part of a calculated system that originated in

slavery (where education was illegal) and continues today within a society that no longer needs an educated workforce (robots that replace workers do not go to school.) Parents at Gale have voiced their demands: the budget crisis is phony. Shake the money loose! Give us the resources we need! Instead, the city threatens teachers: “dramatically improve” instruction in 60 days or else!

The elected Local School Council in theory controls the purse strings of each school. This is supposed to give the school the local control that determines success. But this is a mockery, when the *tiny amount* of money they have is determined by the city, and the poverty in the community remains the same. The reality is that neither the funding nor the improvement is going to come until the federal government steps in to guarantee equitable funding for all schools, with the resources to help every child reach his or her individual potential. This is what nationalization of education in the interests of the people would look like.

THE MORALITY DEFICIT IN GEORGIA

What's good for business is *bad* for the people



Rally for Medicaid expansion in Atlanta.

PHOTO/JOHN SLAUGHTER

By John Slaughter

ATLANTA, GA — The state of Georgia is now ranked the number one “business-friendly” state in the nation. Tax abatements, incentives and credits have combined to lure companies to Georgia that will provide “hundreds”

of new jobs. (Most of them low-paying) A systematic program to lower tax rates on the corporations and the wealthy, is cutting resources for vital public programs and shifting the tax burden to the least advantaged.

The corporations have taken over state government and are

running it entirely in their interest. Consider the consequences. Georgia ranks 40th in the country in per capita income, and its unemployment rate of 8.7% is 44th in the nation. 2 million Georgians now receive food stamps, 20% of the population. Fifty-seven percent are African Ameri-

can, but 37 percent are white.

There is something morally wrong here. A balanced budget in Georgia means huge profits for the corporations and great misery for the people. The good fortunes of the corporations are matched with a huge moral deficit. People are actually going hungry in Georgia; thousands are homeless; people are dying because they can't afford health care; our children are condemned to a life of no real future as schools are failing; there are no jobs except poverty wages jobs.

The great concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few and the increasing mass of a deprived and suffering humanity is a moral atrocity.

Addressing the morality deficit

The people of Georgia are becoming aware that government does not really serve them. It is not really a government of, by and for the people. They are becoming morally outraged. Moral Mondays are coming to Georgia. When the state legislature opens here on Monday, January 13, the people will be there. And they are saying that it will no longer be business as usual under the capitol dome.

- They will be demanding that the governor accept the federal funding that would add 650,000 to the Medicaid rolls in Georgia. Not to do so is morally wrong.
- They will be demanding that the \$8 billion in education funds be restored, that our children attend school a full 180 days, end the furloughs, reduce class sizes and end the privatization of the public schools at the expense of those who are left behind. Not to do so is morally wrong.
- They will demand that workers in Georgia be paid a living wage and that cuts to unemployment compensation be stopped. Not to do so is morally wrong.
- They will be demanding that affordable housing be provided and that housing be provided for every homeless person. Not to do so is morally wrong.
- They will be standing up for immigrant rights, reform of the criminal justice system, fair taxation, and an end to the attack on voting rights. How else can we call this a democracy? Not to do so is morally wrong.

The people of Georgia have a right to live in a just and moral society. They will accept no less.

MORAL MONDAY'S DAY IN COURT

Racially integrated protests of the 99 percent overwhelm “justice” system

By Melissa Hassard

GREENSBORO, NC — North Carolina's racially integrated Moral Monday protests are continuing—and have taken a new form, their day in court.

Last summer, thousands of North Carolina residents showed up every Monday at the state capitol to protest laws that the Tea Party-dominated Republican Party was pushing rapidly through the legislature—acts aimed at cutting services for the poor and most vulnerable, attacking women's reproductive rights, and restricting voting.

Calling themselves the Moral Monday movement, week after week numbers of protesters refused to leave the building and eventually some 924 were arrested.

Now Wake County District Attorney C. Colon Willoughby, Jr., has offered to dismiss the charges against them in ex-

change for 25 hours in community service and \$180 in court costs. So far only about 50 have accepted the offer—the rest want their day in court.

The North Carolina Chapter of the NAACP has been working to secure free legal counsel, pulling together a volunteer defense network of more than 100 people.

Reverend William Barber II, a major voice in the protests, was arrested with 12 others in the first Moral Monday in April. Charged with second-degree trespassing and failure to disperse, he went to trial in late October. His case has been continued, and trials were slated to resume in early December.

“They want to criminalize constitutional rights and the constitutional right to peaceful and non-violent protests,” said Barber, regarding his arrest and trial. “None of what we have done has been in the dark. Everybody knows it's not rooted

in any form of violence, but in the deepest tradition of the non-violence history of our country and our movement.”

Scott Holmes, a Durham defense attorney representing some of the protesters, asks, “Why would a protester in general want a trial? Because their civil disobedience not only brings light to their political issues, but it also is an opportunity to preserve the freedom of speech in a court of law. Because if we don't fight for it, it disappears.”

Roughly 95 percent of the cases in the North Carolina court system are resolved through plea-bargaining, so the unusually large number of arrestees wanting their fair trial is overwhelming the courts.

Indeed, the Moral Monday protest cases highlight a real problem in the court system: it “settles” most cases instead of taking them to trial. “The number of people asking for a



People gather in downtown Raleigh to protest the immoral policies and laws passed by the North Carolina State General Assembly.

PHOTO/USW PHOTO

trial in these cases is unprecedented in Wake County,” says Holmes, who is director of the Civil Litigation Law Clinic at N.C. Central University. “It really shows how our system of criminal justice is built around people pleading guilty. If a majority of people asked for a trial, it would be like a government shutdown.”

Meanwhile, Moral Monday actions continue around the state, uniting North Carolinians across gender, religious, and—above all—racial lines, a major breakthrough in the South, where the powers-that-be have historically divided the 99 percent by setting Black and white against each other and both against immigrants.

Broad coalition emerges around killing of 13-year-old Slaying by sheriff's deputy ignites mass movement across racial lines

By Shepherd Bliss

SONOMA COUNTY, CA — In Sonoma County, California, a broad-based coalition has emerged over the killing of 13-year-old Andy Lopez by a county sheriff's deputy who fired seven shots into his body, six of them apparently after he was down.

Made up of Latino and social-justice organizations, Greens and progressive-Democrats, and student, civil-rights, and peace groups, the coalition formed in late November to keep the strong response going to Lopez' slaying.

Lopez was killed while walking with a toy rifle near his Santa Rosa home. Like the killings of African-Americans, Trayvon Martin in Florida, and Oscar Grant in Oakland, the killing has ignited the community to demand justice.

Dozens of large, peaceful actions ranging from marches and vigils to a flash mob in a local mall indicate the rise of a mass movement. They could change how the largely Latino working-class neighborhoods in Sonoma County are treated by law enforcement.

"The Lopez family wants justice for the killing of Andy Lopez, which would be the prosecution of the law officer," the family's advocate, attorney Arnoldo Casillas, told the initial coalition meeting.

The coalition will focus on demanding prosecution while District Attorney Jill Ravitch completes her investigation of the killing and decides whether to file charges. She must do so by January 20, Martin Luther King Day, when another demonstration is planned.

The deputy's killing of Lopez is being investigated by the Santa Rosa Police Department at the same time that a killing by Santa Rosa police is being investigated by the Sheriff's Office. Ravitch, whose early December fundraiser was greeted by demonstrators banging pots, was endorsed by both county and city officers' associations in 2010.

At the coalition's founding meeting were members of the American Civil Liberties Union, North Bay Organizing Project, Latino Democratic Club, Peace and Justice Center, 100 Thousand Poets for Change, Green Party, Police Accountability Clinic and Helpline (PACH), Peace and Freedom Party, students from

Santa Rosa Junior College, and Lopez family friends.

The coalition endorsed making the vacant lot where Andy was killed into a park. The neighborhood has already constructed a large memorial for Lopez there, where it holds regular prayer vigils. Other demands include creating a transparent Civilian Review Board to investigate complaints about the police and outfitting police with cameras that document their actions.

Casillas and the Lopez family have launched their own, independent investigation. "The [official] investigation is a white-wash," he explained. "I believe their decision has already been made. The conflict of interest is clear."

The Andy Lopez killing "is intimately implicated with the militarization of the police," notes Sonoma State University sociology professor Noel Byrne. It encourages police to view themselves as an occupying force—"most of the general public is seen as like the populations of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan during wartime," he says.

"Andy Lopez is not going to be forgotten," Casillas noted near the end of the coalition's founding



More than 200 people demonstrated outside the campaign fundraiser of Sonoma County District Attorney Jill Ravitch, calling on her to return an indictment against Deputy Sheriff Erick Gelhaus in the shooting death of 13-year-old Andy Lopez.

PHOTO/COURTESY NEW PRESS, PRENSA NUEVA

meeting. "There is something that resonates deeply in the hearts of people about the killing of Andy."

California campaign for homeless bill of rights kicks off

By Dan Bluemel

LOS ANGELES, CA — Homeless advocates in Los Angeles helped launch a statewide campaign on October 5 to get California to adopt a bill of rights for the homeless.

Citing efforts by local governments to use laws and business improvement districts to target the homeless and mold poorer neighborhoods in the interests of businesses and the wealthy, advocates say a state law is necessary to protect the basic rights of homeless citizens.

"Here in Los Angeles, and cities across this state, laws have been passed to criminalize the fact of being poor and homeless," said Adam Rice, an organizer for the Los Angeles Community Action Network. "The Homeless Bill of Rights has five basic protections that allow for a minimum standard of living even though you are on the street."

According to advocates, the Homeless Bill of Rights would ensure the right to:

- Move freely, rest, sleep, pray and be protected in public spaces without discrimination.
- Occupy a legally parked vehicle that is one's home.
- Serve food to the homeless and eat in public.
- Legal counsel if being prosecuted.
- Twenty-four-hour access to hygiene facilities.

Rice cited Los Angeles Municipal Code section 41.18 (d), which prohibits a person from sitting, lying or sleeping in a public space from the hours of 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., as an example of a law written specifically to target the homeless.

"In Los Angeles, if you are arrested for being homeless, it is called a 'quality of life violation,'" he said. "Now how insulting is that? Because they are not talking about our quality of life. They are talking about the quality of life of some imagined person that may see us on the street in our most vulnerable position and decide that perhaps downtown LA is not a good place to

invest their money."

According to Paul Boden, director of the Western Regional Advocacy Project, the top three criminal offenses the homeless are committing are sleeping, sitting and standing still. He said laws that cover "quality of life" issues, such as LA's 41.18 (d) are thinly disguised codes that mirror previous discriminatory practices of local governments, such as anti-Okie laws, sundown towns and ugly laws, which targeted the homeless and disabled.

"Local governments have the authority to police 'time, place and manner restrictions' in local communities," he said. "The track record of using those laws in a discriminatory pattern is undeniable. We are trying to push legislation to say you've abused it, you've done it in racist and discriminatory ways, so we are taking that authority away from you."

This is California's second attempt at a Homeless Bill of Rights, but Boden is hopeful in organizing, what he calls, "the incredible power" of the poor and homeless.

"The thing with homelessness is: what do we have to lose?" he said. "Your ability to stand by your principles and what is right should be ten times greater. "And, if you don't fight," he adds, "you're going to be out of your neighborhood. Bottom line."

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People with disabilities: Fight to take control over our lives!



Emma Denice Milligan at a protest and rally for BART workers in Oakland, CA. PHOTO/RANA HALPERN & DIONE JOHNSON TYSON

By Emma Denice Milligan

OAKLAND, CA — Listening to the radio the other day I came across this report talking about people with disabilities and how they were being mistreated in our own state, in California. It was about caregivers who go into disabled people's rooms and have sex with them because they had no voice. Can you imagine not being able to talk and this is happening to you? Just think if it was your child or loved one and you didn't know what was going on when you went home.

Sometimes it seems like people can do any and everything to people with disabilities. As a person with a disability I think it is a hard enough life to go through without living in fear. It takes a lot just to get up in the morning. Most people that have disabilities don't even get enough doctor or dental care.

I have had some bad caretak-

ers who were in it just for money, but I was lucky, I have a good support system on my side, a family who takes care of me at home for love, because they really care. This has given me a chance to go back to school. I will graduate next year, and if someone would have told me years ago that I could get my Masters degree I would not have believed it. At the same time, independent people with disabilities are an easy target because we often go places by ourselves. I have not been going anywhere by myself for a while because I'm scared and my family is scared also.

We talk about the system breaking down and the safety net falling apart. This can cause the people who are suffering - either as people who need care or who just need a decent living - to hurt each other. The thing that we all need to do is take back the things that the system has taken away

from us, because all the system is doing is making us suffer and kill one another, so they could say that we were fighting with each other. As long as we believe that, the less work they have to do.

And its not only one race, it's all races. Take the case of the man who shot Trayvon Martin to make sure he would never walk the streets again. This goes for our elderly too because they are being mistreated by the system as well. A common defense is that society gives people with disabilities too much help already. In my way of thinking society needs to take care of the elders and people with disabilities. It's a basic right.

So in closing let me say let's take care of those people that we love and take care of those who can't take care of themselves. Everyone has a right to be treated like a human being and not treated just for the money.

COMING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER SOCIETY



Rally to protest Philadelphia's Governor's plans to reduce safety net programs. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

By Galen Tyler

PHILADELPHIA, PA — I am a formerly homeless man, husband, and father. I grew up in a rural area in Virginia called Ordinary. Poverty was something people just didn't talk about. I was taught to be thankful for what you had and if you worked hard enough, you could have all you wanted.

The majority of people in the county were white, so growing up I heard all the stereotypes about non-whites. I read books about Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and listened to music by Bob Marley. I was trying to figure out a way to beat back the stereotypes about Blacks

taught in the schools. By the time I was in seventh grade I was labeled a trouble-maker for not believing in the history and the stereotypes taught.

After graduating from high school, I went into the military as a medical specialist (91A) to get the GI Bill to afford higher education. I had many ill feelings toward the US government for how it treated people, especially Blacks and people of color around the world. The ruling class has used racism to keep the working class from uniting around issues that they have in common.

There were a lot of open-minded people in Philadelphia willing to look past color, gen-

der, religion, etc., to work on life threatening issues. So when I talk about being poor, there are people of all races able to share some of the same experiences. Kensington, a neighborhood in Philadelphia where I live, is 1/3 Black, 1/3 white, and 1/3 Hispanic. I can state my views and people are willing to build on them, not just shut me down.

A family member told me about the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU), a multi-racial organization led by the poor, organizing to put an end to poverty and homelessness. That was the day I started thinking about something bigger than my own issues.

I have struggled with the question of how do we as a people come together to create a society that is for and by the people. We at the KWRU don't have a blueprint, but with collective struggle and critical thinking, we pulled back the curtain of the wizard. We are empowering the poor of Philadelphia to be in a movement for real change. Philadelphia is called the city of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection, but the name doesn't apply. It should be called the city of What Have You Done for Me Lately.

So, we move people from a point of where you are, not from where we would like you to be. This allows us to identify people for this movement for the long

term. Helping people, and highlighting issues that directly affect them, has put us all on equal plane.

Every food or clothing distribution, protest, press conference, and educational moves people from complacency to outrage about the conditions of millions in this country who are hungry,

out in the cold, unhealthy, uneducated, and jobless. This is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. We could have a society based on human needs, not on the greed of a few individuals.

Check out the work that has been done and that is coming up at economichumanrights.org.

'Could We Eat Our Way to World Peace?'

The following are excerpts from a longer poem

We are all hungry for peace
Hungry for the sword
Not to cut us apart
Not to cut into our feast
Stay hungry my friends
Because the problem with the world
Is not
That we do not all hunger for peace
Or that there isn't enough
To go around
But that most of us
Were never meant
To have any upon our plates
So, here's a message to you
That's our food!
We don't want just a piece of the pie
We want the whole enchilada!
That's our food
You drooling gluttons
Fork it over!

— David A. Romero

FREEDOM OF SPEECH THURSDAY



Charles Williams and Stephen King raising the energy.

PHOTO/FREEDOM OF SPEECH THURSDAY

By Charles Williams

LOS ANGELES, CA — Freedom of Speech Thursday (FOST) is more than a moniker or a reference to the 1st Amendment. It is a collective of unique indi-

viduals freely and authentically expressing their creative talents in a supportive atmosphere and endearing creative community.

FOST is located at Sabor y Cultura in Hollywood. The similarity to Tinseltown is that FOST

treats every artist who gets on the mic as a star. It doesn't matter if it's the artist's first time or millionth time performing; everyone gets the love they deserve. FOST acknowledges that it takes a great amount of courage to get up in front of people and be completely vulnerable, to share something very near and dear to your heart. The number one fear is public speaking, the second death; meaning people would rather die than speak in public. FOST realizes the importance of nurturing voices and talent. As a close friend to FOST says, "You shine. I shine."

I produce and host FOST. The technical producer is Claudius West. We have been operating FOST for nearly two years. This wouldn't be possible without the supportive staff and management of Sabor y Cultura. Every Thursday artists from all over have the opportunity to rock out on the mic. There are a couple requirements, but we ask that everyone show respect and love to everyone in the establishment. This creates a friendly and wel-

coming vibe.

When it comes to the artists, there is a large variety to choose from. FOST is an epicenter for a diverse group of artists from all backgrounds. FOST is an artistic collective that includes poets, musicians, songwriters, singers, stage performers, heartfelt sharing, comedians and magic. All the artists share their own original work. There are no feature artists because every artist that performs is the feature. There is no one person above the other. Every artist is sharing something valuable.

The greatest asset that FOST provides is a loving and caring community. The people who walk in the door come in as strangers and leave as friends. Artists have gone on to collaborate, support one another's events and each other. There are artists who have been coming consistently since the inception of FOST. One of the sentiments generally expressed about FOST is that it feels like home. People want a place they can go relax, commune and be entertained.

For those who can't physically attend, FOST broadcasts in real time all over the world to millions of viewers. FOST can be seen online at Ustream from 8pm-11pm Pacific Time. Also, FOST is connecting to the Internet community through its website and multiple social media platforms. FOST's dedicated production team is mainstreaming this effort.

Although FOST was the brainchild of one man, it is the collective that keeps it running. There are no bells and whistles, but the bellow of laughter and the whistling a guitar makes when the cords correlate in harmony. The majority of people attending FOST are looking for that harmony not only as artists, but also as human beings. However, every time they perform they draw one step closer to that place they are seeking. FOST holds the space for them to take those steps and willingly provides the support they need on their journey. All love all the time!

Veterans For Peace chapter dedicates peace pole in Mecca

By Sharon Lee Kufeldt

MECCA, CA — Saul Martinez Elementary School in Mecca, with its 1,200 students, was the site chosen to receive a Peace Pole in honor of a late Redlands WWII veteran, John Coble, who advocated for an end of war. The dedication was made during the annual celebration of the school's name sake's birthday.

Coble played football for Redlands High School, was a sports writer for the Redlands Daily Facts. Son of The Great Y Circus founder Roy Coble, he performed yearly from age five until he joined the Army at age 18. He was a ball turret gunner in a B17 during WWII. He spent six months in a German prison camp after being shot down. For 48 years he taught English at San Bernardino Valley College and died in 2009.

On the 8-foot pole the phrase "May Peace Prevail on Earth" is written in six languages. There are an estimated 200,000 Peace Poles in more than 180 countries. This pole is a gift from Chapter #19 of Veterans For Peace (VFP). "John and I were both very active and supportive of the Veterans For Peace organization," said his widow Sunny Wallick, who still contributes to VFP and donated toward the pole.

She said she felt John per-

sonified the mission of the group. "He really represented what they're about," she said, mentioning that as long as he was physically able they both stood at the corner of Orange Street and Redlands Boulevard on Friday nights to promote peace.

VFP Chapter President Tom Swann said that this was the third Peace Pole erected by the group. He said it was important to honor the WWII veterans. The mission of VFP is to seek justice for veterans and victims of war, increase public awareness of the costs of war and work to abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

Family members of the school's namesake, Saul Martinez, were present. He was an Indio California Highway Patrol officer who was active in the community and considered a local hero. He died in the line of duty in 1997.

Also attending the ceremony were Past VFP National President Elliott Adams, Past National VFP Vice President Sharon Lee Kufeldt, and World War II and Korean War USMC veteran 93yo Harold Kufeldt and other members of Jonathan Castro Chapter #19 Veterans For Peace.

Elliott Adams is on a cross-country tour teaching workshops on effective organizing for non-



Tom Swann, president of the Veterans For Peace Palm Springs chapter with the family of Saul Martinez, former organizer for the UFW, at the dedication of the Peace Pole in Mecca, CA.

PHOTO/RICHARD FINN, IRAQ WAR VETERAN

violent action for social change. He teaches about the stages of movements, planning effective strategies and tactics for the stage your movement is in locally, and how to successfully move it to the next level.

Elliott guides groups nationwide working on Closing Guantanamo Prison and other grave issues facing our nation such as hydrofracking and drones. "We all know what we as human beings need. Real democ-

racy comes from the people organizing to put pressure on the government to be responsive to our needs." We need justice for people and the environment. We need to end war.

www.closegitmo.net



Rev. Pinkney (center) at PGA protest against corporate redevelopment of Benton Harbor, MI which is creating greater poverty. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Should Whirlpool pay taxes?

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The question is: should Whirlpool pay taxes and water bills? Benton Harbor residents must pay taxes and water bills. Why shouldn't Whirlpool, with its annual 2012 corporate sales of \$12 billion, pay?

Whirlpool is headquartered in Benton Harbor but it does NOT pay any taxes or water bills to Benton Harbor.

Recently, Benton Harbor City Commissioners voted 5-3 to reject Benton Harbor's Emergency Manager's deficit elimination plan, which includes a \$2.3 million loan from the state which the city is forced to borrow to pay their bills. Commissioner Marcus Muhammad said he could not support the city taking on more debt. "You can't cut your way out and you can't borrow your way out of debt," he said. These are two basic principles of finance.

Mayor James Hightower and City Commissioners Duane Seats and Sharon Henderson, all strong Whirlpool supporters, want the city of Benton Harbor to take out a \$2.3 million dollar loan so Whirlpool will not have to pay their fair share of taxes and water bills. These three were the only ones to support this \$2.3 million loan. They did NOT support the city income tax (on the ballot in November, 2013) which would have produced

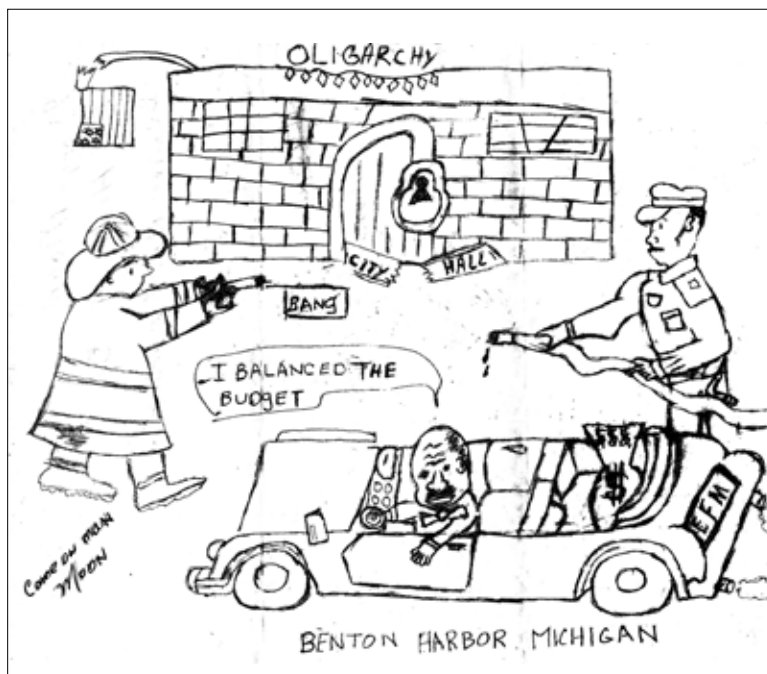
\$3.5 million to pay off the city's debt, and forced the corporations to pay a fair share. Benton Harbor residents must now pay this debt.

In addition, Whirlpool is collecting so many tax credits that it may never have to pay taxes (but you and I must pay.) Bloomberg News reported that Whirlpool has more than "\$550 million in stockpiled business tax credits" that can be used to offset its future income or taxes. This is at the expense of the people. This deal gets sweeter. The tax credits can be carried over from year to year for the next twenty years.

Whirlpool should pay taxes. Whirlpool is among the wealthi-

est, greediest corporations in the world. Somebody needs to ask the Whirlpool Corporation and Mayor Hightower how they can sleep at night. Mayor Hightower continues to support and enable the greed at Whirlpool at the expense of Benton Harbor residents. Because of his corporate collusion, he joins all of the giant corporations who are directly responsible for the severe poverty in the city of Benton Harbor.

When you give power to the corporations and government, it will be used for whatever *they* want, not for what the people want.



Message for the people

By George Moon

On Oct. 10, 2013, Mayor James Hightower told the Herald Palladium that the city income tax legislation on the ballot in the November, 2013 election may be illegal.

A majority of the people I talked to in the city were in favor of the city income tax. The tax would have forced corporations to pay their fair share.

Hightower says he is concerned about the welfare of the citizens, but he failed to tell them the tax was only a penny on the dollar. Tony Saunders, the new Emergency Financial Manager, said he had no public stance on the city tax issue.

They (the mayor and corporate friends) have already stripped us of our political power and now want to strip us of our economic power by pushing for a no vote on the city income tax. The taxes would have provided means for us to improve community service in the police and fire department, provide support to our schools, library, city infrastructure and streets.

Mayor Hightower is marching lock step with Joe Harris, the former Emergency Financial Manager, and now he is walking lockstep with Tony Saunders. They threw some numbers together and put on a dog and pony show to convince the citizens to vote no on the city income tax. Remember Hightower and Harris did the same thing. An independent audit shows, contrary to popular belief, that the city is still in the red.

Other officials were also against the legislation. City Commissioner Duane L. Seats stated he was voting No on the city income tax. Is it because he works for the corporations?

Mayor Pro-Tem Sharon Henderson constantly protested about outsiders coming into the city to assist the citizens in their fight for justice. She said they don't have any skin in the game. Martin Luther King didn't live in Memphis, but he went there to solve a wrong and was assassinated. How much skin did he have in the game?

In addition, on May 20, 2013, Mayor Hightower stated in the Herald Palladium, "Other communities benefitted from a city income tax, I don't see why Benton Harbor won't benefit from a city income tax." Which vote did he truly support? Did someone take him out to the wood shed?

I will leave you with this comment. In due time, a person by his or her motives, actions and words will reveal his or her true character.

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]