

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

FEBRUARY 2014, VOLUME 41, NO. 2

DONATION \$1



A homeless father stands on a busy street in Ludington, Michigan seeking help for his family. Homelessness can be ended overnight in a new society that values human life over corporate property. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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GROWING POVERTY DEMANDS A NEW SOCIETY

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In North Carolina, people of all colors and nationalities are standing up at Moral Mondays protests to resist what they see as a moral atrocity by the wealthy. Over 900 protesters were arrested in last year's protests. They are demanding a government that operates in the interests of the people. PHOTO/MATTHEW LENARD

Black History Month and new ideas of class unity

EDITORIAL

The French author Victor Hugo wrote, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." This holds special significance for African American History Month 2014.

American slavery, and the ideas of white supremacy and racism find their origins in capitalism. But today's new technology is setting the basis for the elimination of these ideas and the development of new ideas of class unity.

New technology is killing jobs and in the process, destroying the capitalist system of buying and selling. This process is creating a commonality of poverty among a new section of workers who are losing their former position in society.

It is now becoming possible to unite a section of the working class, those who are perma-

nently thrown out of the labor market by electronic production, and those who are working for low wages in jobs created by electronics.

Under these conditions, we have to ask how long old ideas of racial division will make sense to those who share a common poverty, destitution and homelessness. However, old ideas don't just go away on their own. New ideas of class unity must be fought for.

Events over the last year serve as constant reminders of the past while also pointing the way forward.

The acquittal of the murderer of Trayvon Martin shocked the nation and sent tens of thousands into the streets in protest. The nationwide massive school closings targeted inner city working class Black communities. The Supreme Court gutted the 1965 Voting Rights Act, opening the door for the disenfranchisement

of Black workers not just in the South, but all over the country.

At the same time, something new is happening.

The "Moral Mondays" movement, comprised of tens of thousands of blacks and whites, continues to sweep across the South. Victims of the lack of jobs and cuts to unemployment insurance, food stamps and health care, are directly confronting legislators in the state capitols. They are being arrested together and going to jail together by the hundreds. Their slogan is "forward, not one step back."

It is clear the American people are beginning to slowly awaken. Society is polarizing around wealth and poverty to an extent never seen in human history. The so-called "middle class," once the pillar of America, is being rapidly destroyed. Dispossessed of full time good paying jobs, home ownership, health care and good education

for their children; they are moving into a poverty that is cutting across color lines.

The fact that an abundance is being produced today, but remains in the private hands of the capitalist class, places this movement in opposition to the private property of the capitalist system.

The role of revolutionaries is to spread the new ideas that reflect the new reality. This means moving people's thinking from racial division to uniting around the demands of the new poor for survival. It means turning the abundant productive power of the country into public property and distributing the means of life equally to all based on human need. And finally, it means that we must not fight to reform the old dying society, but build a new one that will end the legacy of slavery, white supremacy and racism, forever.

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

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

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

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

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

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Publisher: People's Tribune
ISSN# 1081-4787

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WHY THE MOVEMENT NEEDS A PRESS

From the Editors

We are sometimes asked "Why does the movement to build a new America need a press?" The answer has to do with this moment in history. People are struggling just to get the basic necessities of life. Historical forces beyond anyone's control have set the stage for a new society to be built, but from this point on, how things turn out depends on what people think. This means that those of us who are seeking fundamental change are engaged in a battle of ideas, a struggle to win the hearts and minds of the people. If we don't raise the consciousness of the people and unite them around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it, then we'll fail in our effort to build a just and free society. To win the battle of ideas, we need a press.

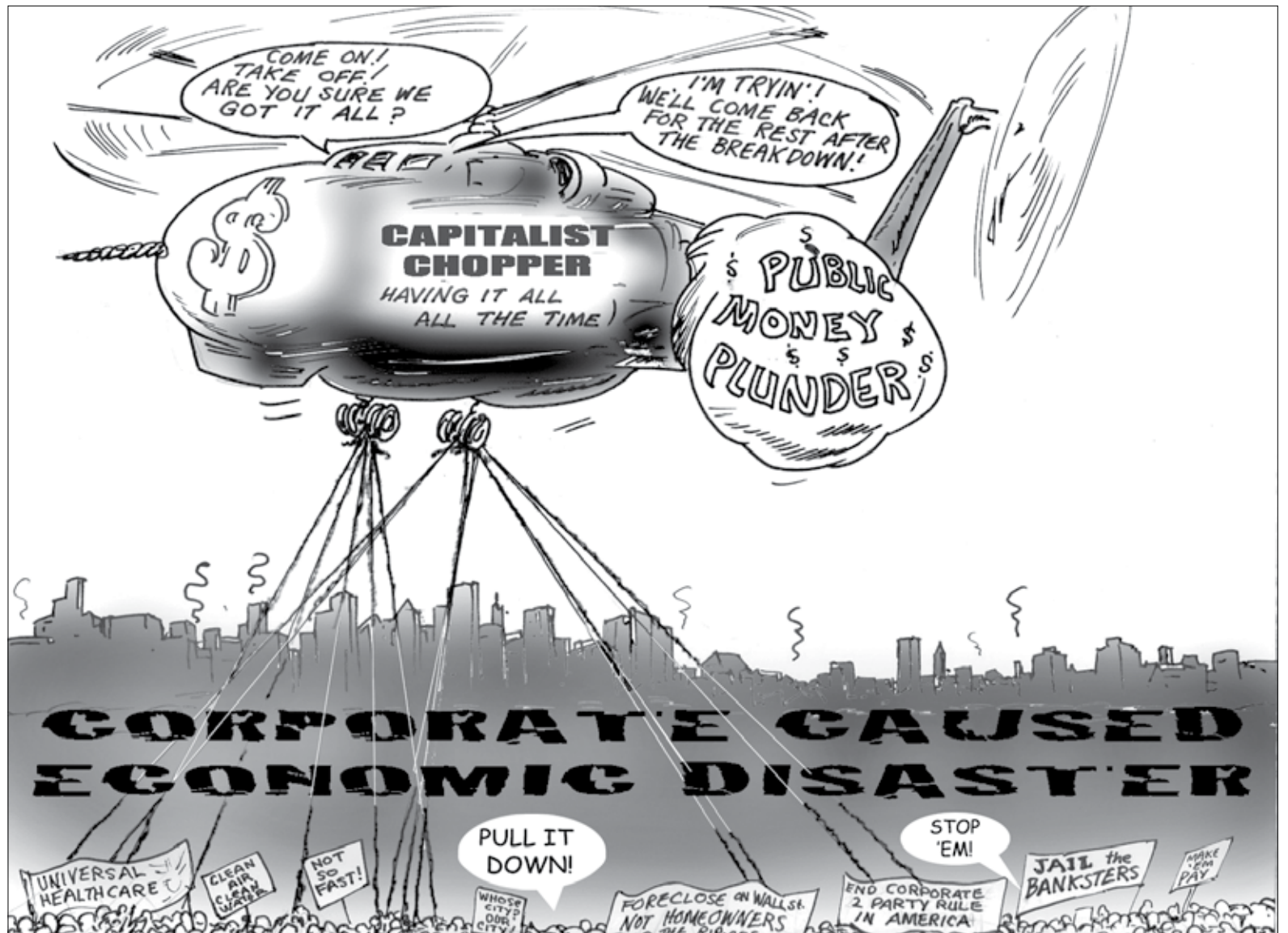
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Growing poverty demands a new society

COVER STORY

Exclusive apartments in downtown Manhattan sell for \$57 million while in the streets near-by people sleep (and die) in doorways. The market for champagne, yachts and other luxury items is booming, while people go hungry and lose their homes. Food stamps are being cut in a country that produces enough food to feed the world. Why, in the richest country the world has ever known, with such abundance created around us, does a small class of billionaires have such a lion's share of this social wealth, while the rest of us are pushed into joblessness, debt and insecurity?

According to one report, assets of the billionaires have doubled worldwide since 2009. In the US, 515 individuals own \$2 trillion, while nearly half the population is below, on or just above the poverty line. The few members of the Walton family, the owners of Walmart, are worth more money than nearly half of the US population, yet their workers are paid so little that they are advised to apply for food stamps. Unemployment benefits have come to an end for millions, food stamps are slashed or taken away, and foreclosures and evictions continue and increase. Millions of lives are being destroyed and the streets are filling with homeless families. Austerity is imposed on the working class, while the owning class revels in luxury. During a recent cold snap seven people died in the streets of wealthy San Jose, CA - home to Google, Facebook and other giant Silicon Valley corporations, and also home to the largest homeless encampment in the country.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

People are reacting to this with moral revulsion. Lives are being destroyed, along with the prospect of a better world for our children. Policies and laws are put into place to increase the wealth of the corporations and the capitalist class, while imposing austerity on the rest of us. The so-called economic 'recovery' is a shell game, another empty bubble inflated from a new round of debt, including student debt. The government is throwing trillions of dollars at the corporations through 'quanti-

tative easing' and other means of guaranteeing the profits of Wall Street and the owning class.

Labor-replacing technology—computers and robots—is eliminating jobs forever. This has thrown capitalism, which is based on the buying and selling of labor power, into a terminal crisis. No capitalist can remain competitive paying for a person's labor when it can be done cheaper by a robot. Politicians make empty promises of 'jobs' and 'recovery,' but can't deliver because they are feeding at the

corporate trough. The capitalist class enriches itself beyond all imagination, while workers are faced with austerity and hunger. The race is to the bottom.

There is no remedy for this under capitalism. People are waking up to the reality that they must unite in the interests of the majority to eliminate impoverishment and gross inequality. The only possible remedy is public ownership of the socially necessary means of production and the distribution of goods and services to all "according to need."

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

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

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Maine wants homeless families to go away



Mother and child grappling with homelessness, fortunate to be in a safe and nurturing shelter.

PHOTO/DIANE NILAN

By Diane Nilan

MAINE — “Open for Business,” reads Governor LePage’s welcome sign as drivers enter Maine. It could read “Open for Rampant Family Homelessness.” This would be bad for business, but true.

I recently received an email from “Mindy,” a Maine mother of two boys. Mindy said, “We have been homeless for over two weeks. And before that we were living in a house with no running water, sewer or electricity for over four months. The house I rented was condemned and we

had no place to go.”

Maine slashed human assistance funding. Current help is woefully underfunded and scarce, especially in rural areas or small towns. She (I’ve changed identifying details for privacy) shared ...

“We are currently staying at a

cheap hotel I paid one week for, and my week is up today. I am trying to pawn some things to be able to stay a few more days. But with no transportation, it’s hard. My middle son is diabetic and my youngest son has the flu so I don’t like to leave them for too long.”

Motels used to be for vacationers and business travelers. Roadside inns, extended stay hotels, campgrounds and rustic cabins dotting highways have become de facto homeless shelters for those with a couple hundred bucks a week. How do they get the money?

“I was able to pawn our TV and my youngest allowed me to pawn his iPad. (He is the most loving, sweet, helpful child I know.) We got \$200 and gave her [the motel manager] that for the room. We only owe \$30 more for this week.”

Family support would keep this family from homelessness. Maine’s homeless student count soared by 58% according to latest counts. Families don’t get help when facing homelessness. Instead, they slink out of view, fearful of being split up because of their plight, caused for Mindy by domestic violence.

“After losing their father, I

don’t want to split us up. But I have thought of surrendering the family dog to the shelter, and calling in DHHS (Dept. of Health and Human Services) to help find a place for my boys. I worried they will come take them away anyways, as they have not been in school this year.”

She added, “My last landlord left us without sewer or running water for four months. He even called code enforcement on himself! When code enforcement came, they told me that landlords ‘use them to do their dirty work for them.’” They also use them for fast eviction through being condemned.”

This family, homeless because of eviction from an uninhabitable house, the only affordable place they could find after fleeing domestic violence, now faces a Maine winter in a tent or other deplorable place because no safety net exists. The current family shelter “system” and supports are beyond beleaguered.

Guv LePage should rethink his welcome sign to read: “Families, don’t come to Maine unless you are wealthy enough to make sure disaster doesn’t befall you.”

That won’t fit. Try: “Homeless families, go away!”

DC’s ‘Living Wage’ is not a livable wage

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

WASHINGTON, DC — In defeating local efforts for a Living Wage of \$12.50/hr., large business and the Mayor argued that wages must be kept low so that businesses can hire young people and give them a start in the labor market. This is a bogus argument in two ways:

One, in all the job fairs my church has sponsored, the most consistent message from companies is that most young people are “under-qualified” for the jobs they’re offering. The past 30 years of public education has poorly prepared them for the workforce. The youth unemployment rate in DC is above 20%.

Two, the low-wage jobs that do exist are occupied by 30 and 40-year-olds who are trying to raise a family of four on \$20-25,000 per year, before taxes. “In the District, an income of \$23,000 puts a family of four below the poverty line” (Washington Post). Older workers responsible for families are thus stuck

with a poverty wage.

Yet, it’s a poverty wage that the Mayor and City Council has settled for under its new minimum wage increase to \$11.50/hr. by 2016: \$9.50/hr. in 2014; \$10.50 hr. (i.e., \$21,000/yr. gross) in 2015; and \$11.50/hr. in 2016. It’s a poverty wage that members of the City Council are calling a great victory for working people. But what does a poverty wage buy? In DC, a two-bedroom apartment, if you can find one, is going for \$3,000 per month. Regarding nutrition, three new 7-11’s have open in my community within the last two months. Too often, health care means a visit to the emergency room, with no means to follow-up or to get needed medicines.

We have heard no complaints from Wal-Mart, the DC Chamber of Commerce’s and the other corporate giants about this new DC minimum wage legislation. Apparently, it’s an expense they can easily absorb without affecting profits. It’s another story for small businesses whose profit margins are much thinner and are likely to be disproportionately affected by the



People demonstrate on the day that a City Council vote was scheduled to attempt to override the mayor’s veto of the Large Retailer Accountability Act.

PHOTO/RICK REINHARD 2013

new wage rates. Meanwhile, the new minimum wage legislation has also served to manipulate public opinion. It has disrupted a citizen’s campaign to put a minimum wage of \$12.50/hr. for everyone on the November ballot. Instead of signing the ballot initiative, people who were originally ready to stand up and confront the government and the

corporations, are now asking, “Didn’t City Council recently give us a raise?”

It’s our job to educate our communities about the facts behind the cost to them by this legislation, and whose interests are being served. People are ready to hear the real story. People see around them the cranes that are building condominiums, and the

developments downtown, and they say to me, “We know what all of this is for, and we know it isn’t for us.” Not yet it isn’t for us. But it can be. It’s time to turn it around and make it be for us, starting with a fight for a wage that provides for good health care, nutrition, housing and a quality education that qualifies our citizens for the DC workforce.

Freezing to death in Silicon Valley

By Chuck Jagoda

SAN JOSE, CA — Five homeless people died of hypothermia in Santa Clara County in the recent record low temperatures. Yet Sunnyvale's armory shelter—in which homeless would not have frozen to death—is set to be destroyed after this winter. The very useful, fine-functioning 150-200-bed armory shelter is slated to be “replaced” by 117 “permanent” housing units.

There is nothing wrong with building permanent housing. However, what is very wrong is the destruction of a viable temporary shelter poor people need to SURVIVE.

I don't know why this needs to be stated, but apparently it does: There is NO NECESSARY CONFLICT between erecting permanent housing and providing temporary shelter.

When Santa Clara County (SCC) housing honchos or “leaders” say, “We can't provide temporary shelter because we believe in providing permanent shelter,” you should think of it as your city council saying to you, “We can't possibly provide police protection AND collect the garbage.”

Is there anyone who seriously believes that internationally-renowned, change-the-world Silicon Valley could NOT manage to provide both temporary AND permanent shelter at the same time? Does anyone think that such shelter won't be needed next winter? If five house-

less folks died WITH the availability of an armory this winter, how many do you think will die WITHOUT that protection next winter?

Is some part of this too complex for Santa Clara County's current homeless housing planners and officials to grasp? Are they awake? I certainly hope this is NOT part of some dark plan to drive us out of Santa Clara County!

From someone who's been homeless in Santa Clara County for four years I have a message to anyone who cares about the survival of unhoused people—please do not continue to remove temporary shelter beds until and unless there are no homeless people who need them.

Some of us used to have some pretty swell jobs at high tech firms like some of you do now. None of it is permanent. New programming languages come along. So do younger workers. So do recessions. One car accident and it can all come undone—car, job, home, marriage, confidence, sanity—gone in sixty seconds.

So we're homeless now. Someday someone you know will be homeless too—maybe even YOU will need the resources that are getting destroyed now!

Don't we all still need somewhere to sleep? Do you really want to live in a society that throws away it's infirm, elderly, mentally challenged, sick, and weak? Do the rich really need to



Chuck Jagoda (center) and others protest against homelessness in Silicon Valley on October 10th. Five homeless people died of hypothermia in Santa Clara County in recent record low temperatures.

PHOTO/SANDY PERRY

save any more money on their taxes? Do the poor need to pay for more war?

Write/call the SCC Board of Supervisors. BoardOperations@cob.sccgov.org 408-299-5001

Tell them to SAVE THE ARMORY and stop using the empty promise of future permanent housing as a justification for removing existing needed temporary shelter.

Chuck Jagoda is a member of Stop the Ban, unsheltered folks, students, and other community residents who are resisting the City of Palo Alto's draconian Vehicle Habitation Ordinance.

STOP THE DYING

From the Editors

Homeless people freezing to death in Silicon Valley is a national scandal. This, the richest area in the United States, is also the location of the largest homeless encampment in the country. Silicon Valley corporations make about \$100 billion a year in profits, while recent estimates show it would cost only \$4 billion to ensure safe, decent housing for every man, woman, and child who lives in Silicon Valley. The people cannot end homelessness because we live under an economic system where a handful of people own the means of producing the basic necessities of life. An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe, and house its people must be and will be overturned, and replaced with one that meets their needs.

BAN FRACKING!

By Tabitha Tripp

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS — *The following is a statement by Tabitha Tripp, a leader of Southern Illinoisans Against Fracturing Our Environment. She and 22 others from Southern Illinois delivered hand-written comments to the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, whose members were responsible for writing the rules based on the supposed “tough” regulatory bill passed by the state legislature June 17, 2013 on horizontal hydraulic fracturing, scheduled to begin in Illinois this year. Over 20,000 comments were submitted by members of organizations opposed to “fracking.” One of the attendees was LeLe, a ten-year-old battling cancer.*

I live in rural southern Illinois on a 5th generation family farm. The road I live on has 17

private wells, including my own, supplying each of my neighbors with drinking water. One fracking induced earthquake could jeopardize my well. The fight to protect water and our communities begins here with us, the locals. Decades ago, activist and environmentalist Don West said, “It's time to realize, no one from the outside is ever going to save us, unless we make our own stand.”

Citizens from southern Illinois stand here today to deliver comments and petitions to state officials demanding protection and accountability. We are making a stand. We have provided substantive comments, research papers, documentation and science regarding draft rules that lack integrity and wreak of negligence, written by officials whose sole purpose was to mirror a law intended to protect citizens and



Tabitha Tripp, who lives on a 5th generation family farm in Southern Illinois, speaks for a ban on fracking. She discusses its contamination of local water wells, and the pollution and radiation left behind by energy companies.

PHOTO/WILL REYNOLDS, SPRINGFIELD, IL

the environments from harm.

These inadequate rules will leave nothing but legacies of disasters to those who voted on this irresponsible law and abandon Illinois tax payers who will indeed foot the bill for public health issues like cancer and leukemia.

Citizens and children like LeLe will pay the price from pollution and radiation left behind by the oil and gas industry.

The incompetency shown in the haphazard writing of the draft rules further validates our concerns that Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources does not have

the interest of the public, nor the environment of Illinois, at heart.

On behalf of so many people and organizations in southern Illinois, we demand: Not one permit be issued. A ban is the only, *ONLY* way to protect Illinois and our environment. The only answer here is a ban.

Gale School and Black History Month:

Nationalize education funding

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — At the far north end of Chicago sits the Rogers Park neighborhood, where the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) celebrates Black History Month—by slashing school funding. What distinguishes Gale Math and Science Academy—one school that serves Rogers Park—is that 60 per cent of the students at this school are African American. The remainder consists of children of parents from many other nations—people from South and Central America and Mexico; children from China, Myanmar, Cambodia and India; children whose parents are immigrants from Haiti, Jamaica, Nigeria, Ethiopia. This school is a United Nations of students.

Yet this school is not given the classroom resources to deal with all this variation, especially the question of students for whom English is not their first language. Combine this with the fact that this school sits in the midst of



People gather in front of Gale School with a light banner honoring the 400 who have fallen to violence in Chicago in the last year. This is a major concern for parents, students and teachers at Gale school. PHOTO /SARAH JANE RHEE

the most impoverished section of Rogers Park, where 98% of the students come from families living in poverty.

This diversity gives CPS a tremendous opportunity: Provide students with an opening into the many rich cultures that are present in the school. That would be one legacy of African American history. Instead, CPS cut \$500,000 from their budget at the opening of the school year and had nothing else to offer except further cuts. This forces the school to scramble to provide sports programs and uniforms and to keep one part-time art

teacher and one music teacher, by cutting corners on things like building maintenance and on supplies as basic as toilet paper.

This month elements of African American history will be incorporated into the classroom. One lesson that should be learned is that African American history is central to *all* American history, and respect for African American history is central to developing *respect for all*. One example of this is that education was legally denied slaves in the pre-Civil War South. After the Civil War, during Reconstruction, the demands of freedmen

created a system that also included many poor whites who had been excluded before.

Education is a basic survival right of all, in order to be able to contribute to society. For the students of Gale School to take advantage of this right, local school funding is inadequate. It's not just that CPS is wicked. It's that CPS is part of a larger state and federal system that is rigged against poor communities and the public schools in them. Property tax funding favors wealthier school districts (e.g. the suburbs that are on the northern rim of Chicago) not Chicago (and the

suburbs on Chicago's southern rim). In Chicago, as in most big cities, that means funding discriminates against African Americans and Latinos, who are the majority of public school students. A national funding system could allocate resources equitably to address classroom as well as other community needs.

This Black History Month let's raise again the historic demand, rooted in the fight against slavery, that education must be for all, guaranteed by nationalized funding for all!

The 'next step' is unity against the corporations



Parents, students and teachers rally in front of the Chicago Board of Education as part of the city wide student boycott. They are holding the politicians accountable by demanding an elected school board. PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

By Allen Harris

CHICAGO, IL — The fight for the future of Chicago's public education continues. Teachers, parents, students and the larger community are growing impatient and angry. People are losing

faith in the Democrats and Republicans to create meaningful social change.

As a new election season begins, in which direction should the "next step" be made? Let us take a look around.

Schools have been closed,

budgets have been cut. Charter schools are multiplying.

The Chicago Teachers' Union voted to keep its militant leadership in 2013. As the March 18 Illinois primary election approaches, it confronts these developments in the 2014 campaign for governor of Illinois, among others.

In November 2013, Democratic incumbent Pat Quinn chose former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas to run with him for lieutenant governor. That was a political slap to the CTU. Vallas had been an architect of Chicago's charter school expansion.

In December, Quinn signed a pension "reform" bill that would cut benefits for retired and current state workers, many of whom are not eligible for Social Security.

Meanwhile, in the Republican primary campaign, investment banker Bruce Rauner looked set to win nomination for governor. Rauner is an enemy of the teachers' unions. He is friend of char-

ter schools *and* of Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel, a Democrat whose term ends in 2015.

In December, Emanuel and his allies strong-armed the Chicago City Council into stopping a referendum proposal for an elected Chicago school board from getting onto the November 2014 ballot. Chicago has an *unelected* school board, appointed by the mayor.

Decades of rust-belt industrial decline, federal prosecution, and voter rebellions have ravaged the 20th century Democratic Party machine in Cook County. Emanuel is from Chicago personally, but politically he is from Washington and Wall Street. They sent him here to do a job for them and he is doing it, with bullying and money.

As Emanuel becomes increasingly unpopular in the neighborhoods, splits with the mayor arise in the City Council over the elected school board and charter expansion. These splits are rooted in grassroots opposition to education cuts.

As old connections to the past break, new connections to the future form. The old unity of employees to capitalists is breaking. A new unity among America's dispossessed takes its place. The "next step" is always unity around practical demands, such as a truly decent education that is publicly funded. Such demands go directly against the power of the corporations.

In 2014, what could that look like?

A third-party campaign drove Paul Vallas from his recent job as school superintendent in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Militant teachers in Chicago have taken notice of that. (Also, during the 2012 CTU strike, Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein picketed with the teachers.)

Impulses toward political independence like that are responses to the corporate attack on public school education. The grip of the corporate two-party system must be broken. The elections of 2014 are opportunities to develop the class unity to break that grip.

Police murder mentally ill homeless man and get off



Top: Protesters march to protest the not guilty verdict given to two Fullerton police after their acquittal in the Kelly Thomas trials.

PHOTO/ETHAN HAWKES, DAILY TITAN

Bottom: Ron Thomas, father of Kelly Thomas, outside the Orange County Court House after two Fullerton police officers were found not guilty on all charges. Family, friends and supporters of Kelly Thomas, walk with Ron to support him and his family.

PHOTO/MARIAH CARRILLO, FOR THE DAILY TITAN

FULLERTON, CA — Below are voices of Fullerton, CA protesters after the acquittal of the police officers in the murder of Kelly Thomas, a mentally ill homeless man. Their stories illustrate the spreading police state in America.

A video shows “police suddenly entering the park and detaining people indiscriminately. The vans would roll up, and militarized police jumped out and snatched people—like the Gestapo.” (teantimedia.org)

Adam Walder said when he was in the paddy wagon, a policeman leaned over and said, “There is a pack of 12 cops waiting to smash your fucking faces in.”

“Patti Beers, a committed citizen journalist, was arrested by Fullerton police in riot gear, in the dark of night, out of the

blue, for, as far as anyone can see, being at a protest, nothing more. Her live stream caught the footage up until they knocked the camera out of her hands. Part of it feels like a scary movie; dark figures roaming around in the night, snatching people. It felt creepy even by Southern California Police Department standards: no bullhorns warning about the imminent arrest of those who don’t clear the area, no lights—just stealth, quiet movements as they cuff people and take them away.” (a Facebook post from Occupy Santa Barbara)

“We were in our car driving away & had been respectfully demonstrating all day, we were not acting like punks, but were arrested anyways under erroneous charges. They were simply trying to make an example of us & anyone they could

catch. I am a US Army Veteran & was zip tied while my child watched in horror. All while trying to leave. My daughter was taught today that freedom of speech does not exist in this country & that standing up for what is right is a crime!” (From J.A., a woman at the protest who posted her story on Facebook)

It is estimated that over 5,000 people have been killed at the hands of the police in the past twelve years. This is more than the number of Americans killed by insurgents in Afghanistan or Iraq alone. However, actual statistics on those killed by police are difficult to get since the FBI is not required to keep records of people killed by the police in the line of duty.

— From the Editors

Police violence shows need for new society

From the People’s Tribune Editorial Board

Kelly Thomas, a mentally ill homeless man was murdered by Fullerton, CA police in July, 2011. A security camera recorded the relentless beating and tasing. Kelly is heard pleading 31 times for his Dad to help him. “They’re killing me,” he says. He is heard 26 times saying, “Help me...help me God;” 30 times saying “Sir, please... okay... okay...” and 15 times “I’m sorry.” On January 14, 2014, two of the cops were acquitted. A third is not going to trial.”

In a statement on a PBS special, Ron Thomas, Kelly’s father, said the police were sending a message to the rest of the homeless: “Get out of Fullerton, or you’ll be next.”

The moral outrage sparked by this blatant

murder must be fortified with an understanding that we live in a dying system. Robotics and computers are replacing workers. The ruling class does not intend to provide a social contract for those they now discard like yesterday’s bad news. The homeless working class youth, those on the edge of society, are criminalized and a fascist culture is cultivated that targets the “ghetto blacks,” the “illegal immigrants,” and the white, so-called “trailer trash.” Then, the police are unleashed to keep people “in their place.”

Only by uniting around a vision of a future free from fear and want, a vision of a cooperative society where the fruits of humanity are available to all, can we move forward. We must and will have a better world.

Public Education

By Detra Aikens, M.U.P.P.

CHICAGO, IL — Public education is in crisis. It supports an archaic hypothesis which assumes: all children reside in stable environments, live at home with parents, who are gainfully employed, earning living-wages, own their home, have health care, retirement benefits; and, the resources to make a financial commitment to their children’s education. Neighborhood schools are replete with students who are truant, sleep deficient, under-fed, missing homework and are resolutely inconsolable and disruptive.

Public education is no longer relevant to, nor is it supportive of the status quo. In Chicago it represents a relic which strives

to educate an ideal, which no longer populates public schools. It thereby calls into question the idea, or methodology of how we teach, or more appropriately how we fail to teach so many students. We do not educate the masses in our neighborhood schools. Education has become irrelevant, outmoded, incapable of providing a total learning experience to those who require it most. The failure lies in 4 areas; Curriculum; Teaching Methodology; Institutionalized racism and, Tedious Obsolescence, or “*The diminished value of an asset because of reduced productivity...*”

Recognize that the Chicago’s public school system is predominantly low-income, children of color, living with one parent/guardian head-of-household,

who are second and third generation poorly educated adults; many of whom are getting-by with some form of public assistance. There are those living with family-members who are involved with street-gangs and those who have addictions; all surrounded by other sources of dysfunction and despair; 18% of students (K-12) are homeless or live in shelters; another 17% are in foster care or Ward’s of the State.

To capture the hearts and minds of our students’ things must change: Black and Brown heroes/ heroines, people who displayed exceptional values, courage, leadership, and dedication, their names do not exist in our historical lexicon. Ask any child (K-12) to list ten black or

brown historical figures that played a pivotal role in the creation of our American values, excluding Martin Luther King, Biggy Smalls, Tupac, A-Rod, or J-lo...you get a vacant stare.

The Euro-centric view of history has left a gaping hole in the minds of most Americans who therefore perceive Black and Brown people as welfare-interlopers...this must stop. It represents an all “Them” and none of “Us” mentality of acknowledgement impossible to justify. An incredulous state of being, when the reality is: people of color have always been a necessary ingredient in the building of American. And, will be needed again to up-left, lead and strategically propel this country through the Twenty-first Century

and beyond.

Education, its model, its ideas, and constructs, must reflect all who are vested; for all to become informed. We must start teaching American History as authentic: diverse, creative, and vibrant. ...“One nation indivisible with liberty and Justice for all...” people who share the historical experience that built this Democracy. We have collectively struggled through a series of events, which allowed the creation of all our American values. Contributions made by people of color must be recognized, re-counted, established as integral to America’s growth, wealth, strategic power and unprecedented creativity.

The unfinished work of healthcare for all!

By Rita Valenti

ATLANTA, GA — A lot of people are tangled up defending the indefensible mess of the Affordable Care Act and its rollout also known as the ACA or “Obamacare.”

Behind the frustrations of technical problems that inevitably come with enshrining the commodification of healthcare lies a deep-seated hope for real access to quality, comprehensive and compassionate healthcare.

It is that vision of what is now possible, free universal comprehensive healthcare for all regardless of documentation status that needs articulation. History is the great teacher for the responsibilities of the present.

The summer of 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the Mississippi Freedom Summer. Throughout the South, numerous Peoples Movement Assemblies, gatherings, marches and rallies brought forward that history to help shape the future.

In 1963, the southern Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR) was forged out of the bloody struggle against Jim Crow and for liberation. African American physicians in Mississippi that supported the

struggle lost segregated hospital privileges, had their student loans recalled and were generally forced to leave the State in order to practice medicine.

Dr. Robert Smith didn't leave. He came together with others and formed southern MCHR. They began to document the brutalities unleashed on civil rights workers, treat injuries and initiate free clinics.

Very quickly the social movement for equality and the burning need for equal access to quality healthcare merged and remained so until the neoliberal onslaught of the 1970's.

One of the most telling points of that history was the 1968 political platform of the independent Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. Two points of that program bear witness to the unfinished matter of healthcare today:

1. *“Place the present Medicaid problem on a national basis with national standards, like Medicare, instead of having it optional for the states.”* And,
2. *“Every person shall receive free and complete medical care from the day he is born until the day he dies.”* From the 1968, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP).



Healthcare protest for Medicare for All in Detroit, Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

What was true then is truer now and more necessary and possible today.

Every southern state has declined to expand a public Medicaid program, leaving nearly five million excluded from a region that has proportionally the most uninsured, who are eligible for Medicaid expansion.

The application of electronics to medical care and the ex-

plosion of scientific and medical knowledge sets the basis for the distribution of healthcare based on need, not money. In the 1960's healthcare was only midway in its transformation from cottage to the corporate entity it is today. Revolutionary momentum in the 1960's was tied to struggles for national liberation, but were 'capped' short of a class struggle for power. The

heart of the MFDP platform of 1968 was its independent political position. Neither the southern states democratic parties then nor the national Democratic Party now can hold a program for a publically run and accountable national health system. The veterans of the fight for equality did not compromise their dreams then, why should our class settle for less now?

UAW VEBA 2012 Report: Gambling with auto retirees' healthcare

By Al Gladysck

DETROIT, MI — From its beginning the UAW Voluntary Employee Beneficiaries Association (VEBA) was underfunded by 36% even by the standard actuarial estimate. In other words, the VEBA was designed to fail.

On October 11, 2013, the UAW Retiree Medical Benefits Trust, known as the UAW VEBA, submitted its report to the Department of Labor for the year 2012. Overall assets for 2012 were \$58.8 billion, overall medical benefits for 2012 were \$4.16 billion and overall administrative fees for 2012 were \$284 million. That means that, at the end of 2012, the UAW VEBA would only last a little over 13 years.

In addition, 2013 medical benefits saw increases in copays and deductibles as well as a shift of prescription drug coverage to Medicare Part D for those eligible for Medicare. In fact, in 2014, deductibles will rise again.

This all contradicts the rosy picture presented in the report to the Department of Labor covering 2012.

The problem now is where to get the cash.

TRAPPED IN THE STOCK MARKET

Sergio Marchionne, (the CEO of Chrysler and Fiat,) told the LaPresse news agency, concerning the UAW trust's suggested sales price, “They should buy a lottery ticket.” (The Truth About Cars 9/16/13).

UAW VEBA's financial problem is further exposed in the New Year's Day 2014 report of Fiat's purchase of 41.5% of Chrysler ownership from the UAW-Chrysler VEBA. This now gives Fiat total control of the company and its cash. Considering that Chrysler's cash was used to pay for 60% of the transaction, Fiat's Marchionne won the \$12 billion lottery and gave the UAW-Chrysler VEBA a \$4.35 billion tip and a wave goodbye.

Getting the cash to pay for insurance premiums for the next year is the vicious cycle that the Trust is permanently caught in.

Gambling in the Stock Market is not the solution.

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM

In 2013, Ford Europe, GM Europe's Opel Vauxhall, Fiat-



Robert Sisler, Chairperson of the UAW Region 1A Retiree Council, leads a demonstration of retirees for Medicare For All in Michigan.

PHOTO/RETIRES FOR SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE

Chrysler and Peugeot-Citroen are expected to lose a combined \$6.6 billion, about the same as they lost in 2012. Both European and American auto corporations see the collapse of Fiat and Chrysler as the solution to the overcapacity in auto in Europe and this country.

We are in a period of econom-

ic transformation. Machines that made us more productive are being replaced by machines that can produce for our needs with little or no human labor involved. The basis of our social relationship, a job, and the benefits related to it, are disappearing.

We must support a new independent political direction for a

new social relationship based on human needs. We need a social relationship based on the production and distribution of healthcare, housing, education, food, clothing, transportation and the general wellbeing of everyone—not the select few owners of the new means of production.

Collective and community rights: Philadelphia World Courts of Women October 2013



The People's Tribune met with four leaders of the World Courts of Women in Philadelphia: World Courts of Women Founder Corinne Kumar, Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign Director Cheri Honkala, University of Minnesota Professor Dr. Rose Brewer, and Green Party 2012 presidential candidate Dr. Jill Stein. The World Courts of Women are public hearings held in countries around the world to document the lives of women, their human rights, their visions, and their strategies.

People's Tribune: What results do you expect to see from this session of the World Courts of Women?

Jill Stein: The Courts are happening at an historic moment. The predatory forces of global capitalism are tightening the noose around communities like Kensington. Poverty is becoming the "new normal", not only here but across the country. Business as usual cannot get us out of this situation. 90% of the jobs created in the next decade will be low-wage and insecure, and the government is pushing austerity plans. The World Courts create a safe space for us to tell our stories. This is unifying and empowering, and more importantly, it is the beginning of courage and resistance.

Corinne Kumar: On the first day of the Courts, we experienced deeper empathy, solidarity, and weaving together of reason and compassion. The Court methodology is one of listening and receiving testimony with unconditional love, not debating it. No one walked in or out of the hearing room during the testimony. The tears and the trauma are a new source of other imaginaries, a new way of thinking. We are not talking about the politics of caring, we practice the politics of caring. This is visionary work.

Rose Brewer: It begins with the stories. Our entire population has been miseducated. We need to extend our outreach and political education, and the Courts

are a profound entry point. They are the foundation of the respectful new political culture we seek. The stories themselves include the solutions: finding common cause through our organizations, collectivity, and connectivity. They extend our reach and subvert the negative ideology.

People's Tribune: How do we carry this process forward?

Corinne Kumar: The next step is justice. Western discourse on rights dates from the Enlightenment and is based on rights of individuals. Individual rights are important, but we dare not stop there. We insist on collective and community rights, whether of the families of Bhopal or the homeless of Kensington. Union Carbide and the government of India sold out the residents of Bhopal by forcing them to file individual claims for compensation for the death and destruction. Of course they could not do that. Our movement is a movement for collective rights. We need to understand our relationality and the connectedness of issues.

Cheri Honkala: The lack of real culture and education is leaving our children defenseless. We have to protect them by helping them to become the best critical thinkers they can be. We cannot guarantee them their economic security, but we can pass on the ability to connect and be a part of a common movement for the future of humanity.



Top: Participants at the World Courts of Women in Philadelphia. The women are (from left to right) Walda Katz-Fishman, Cheri Honkala, Corinne Kumar, Rose Brewer, and Jill Stein. PHOTO/JASON BOSCH
Bottom: Some of the children who participated. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

Statement from Rodriguez for Governor of California campaign

Dear People's Tribune:

For forty years I've been fighting for social justice, a clean and green environment, and a cooperative equitable and peaceful world without want or exploitation. I'm now making these issues the essence of a far-reaching and imaginative campaign for California Governor.

The Luis J. Rodriguez for California Governor campaign has obtained the endorsement of the Green Party of California as well as Chicano Unidos of Orange County, PODER (Power) of Santa Barbara, and Corazon del Pueblo of Boyle Heights/East L.A., among others. We are seeking the support of the Justice Party and other progressives. Our slogan is "Imagine a New California."

My program is to eliminate poverty, to get rid of the prison system as we know it, to create

clean and green communities everywhere, provide free quality education and health care for everyone, and to revitalize every neighborhood with arts education, murals, cultural expression, festivals, and song.

The realities of capitalism continue to prove despairing, daunting and finite, governed by assumptions of scarcity that have led to wars, competitive economic disruptions and a growing disparity between those who have and those who don't. Along with the increasing material poverty, however, is an increase in the poverty of ideas, hope and the imagination. We need a larger and more powerful voice for justice, for revolutionary change, for a new and vibrant politics in the midst of the growing disenchantment and disgust with the country's two-party system.

We have embarked on a sig-

nature-gathering phase—state candidates must now obtain 10,000 signatures of registered voters during eight weeks, ending February 20, to be on the June 3 primary ballot.

After this phase, we aim to be the second highest vote getter in the primary to challenge Governor Jerry Brown and the status quo during the November elections. Despite having a balanced budget, despite being the world's eighth largest economy, California continues to create more poverty—we now have 8.7 million poor with 2.7 million added since Brown has been governor.

My campaign is an uphill battle, but to me these are the ones worth fighting. The climate is ripe for the politics of the unexpected. But it will also require we are good at the art of the possible.



Luis J. Rodriguez speaking to the media. PHOTO/DONATED

Please take part. We will not seek big corporate donations. We will not make deals with the big institutions responsible for the economic crisis. We are a grassroots campaign that is also creating a movement to go beyond this election for the short and long haul. For more information, go to www.rodriguezfor-governor.org. Or you can write

us at Luis J. Rodriguez Campaign, PO Box 328, San Fernando CA 91341.

Every person counts, every giving matters in this potentially historic campaign.

With revolutionary determination,

Luis J. Rodriguez

'Struggling artists' and the right to a healthy culture

By Shamako Noble

SAN JOSE, CA — "I've learned that my people are not the only ones oppressed... I have sung my songs all over the world and everywhere found that some common bond makes the people of all lands take to Negro songs as their own." — Paul Robeson

While it is clear that history teaches us that arts and culture are critical to healthy humanity and potent movement, it is equally clear that there is no solution for the vast majority of "struggling artists" inside of the model of capitalism.

Look around you. How many talented artists do you know? Now look again. How many talented artists do you know that are struggling to make ends meet; trying to figure where their art fits in the structure of paying rent and eating food? It is tough for artists to consider the true potential and value of their work when faced with the reality of the market, which tramples over their humanity and soul daily.

The artist has been struggling to find space outside of commodification and exploitation since the inception of the United States. By contrast, culture played a significant role in slave

liberation with Negro spirituals actually used for code as a part of the underground railroad, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin was utilized as an important part of the abolitionist strategy.

We can gain instruction on the material consequences for challenging the philosophy of the market from the example of Paul Robeson in the 1950's. Robeson was part of an era in which culture was clearly targeted for "purification." Artists that were considered "communist" were blacklisted and many of the cultural institutions who were responsible for this blacklisting continue to grow and expand their control and consolidation over media today. This had nothing to do with the demand for their art. At the time, Robeson was a successful and highly booked performer. His blacklisting resulted in his having to move through the 'chitlin circuit,' or as we would say in Hip Hop today, go underground.

Today, six media companies, and a couple of technology companies, generally have control over what and how we produce, distribute and consume art. Technology continues to automate even the arts, as things like

the mp3, bits trip and youtube, while adding more "freedom" to the artist, also undermine the basis for paying the artist a living wage. Further, in this environment, tools like You Tube, iTunes, and mobile studios, allow for big entertainment corporations to only scoop the material they specifically want, and discard the increasing socially and politically conscious content and high quality of independent, regional and local art.

Artists continue to seek distribution deals, or see alternative business models to supplement their art, but for the hundreds of thousands, if not millions of artists and musicians of the United States, the contradictions between the truth of art, and the truth of the market can no longer be reconciled.

In this case, the question becomes, is there a right to culture, and not simply to culture but to healthy culture? Who determines that, and on what basis. What else is possible?

This group, on May Day, 2012, demonstrated for better wages for artists in New York.

PHOTO/PAULSTEIN



Presented by Speakers for a New America: Hip Hop speakers bring a vision of a new society



Shamako Noble is an artist, organizer and author. He is best known for his work with the Hip Hop Congress, which he co-founded, and he is currently the organization's president. Shamako has performed all over the US. He has participated in numerous events, including Netroots Nation, the March for our Lives, the U.S. Social Forum, National Truth Commissions and the U.S. Courts of Women on Poverty. He was the Racial and Social Justice Organizer for the Jill Stein/Cheri Honkala 2012 presidential and vice-presidential campaign. Shamako's first album, "The Return

of the Coming of the Aftermath", was released in 2004. Shamako incorporates Hip Hop culture into education and youth programs. He speaks and teaches workshops and teaches on the origins of hip hop and organizing and activism in hip hop culture. He brings a vision of a new society where everyone's needs are met.



Mic Crenshaw is the Lead Organizer in the US for the Afrikan Hip Hop Caravan, and he is the Political Director of Hip Hop Congress. Mic uses spoken word, Hip Hop performance and popular education as a form of cultural activism. In his talks, he examines the historical role of race and class division in our society and facilitates a discussion on where we've been, where we are and what the future holds. Mic was an anti-racist organizer and founding member of Anti-Racist Action (ARA) in Minneapolis in the late 1980s. In the 1990's he moved to Portland where he continues to organize in the housing justice movement. He works for HIFE (Housing Is For Everyone.) In 2004 Mic went to Rwanda for an Economic Justice conference and has since led efforts to establish and sustain a computer education center in Burundi through his Global Fam organization.

To book a speaker, call 800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com.
Visit our website at speakersforanewamerica.com.

Poetry of Poverty in San Francisco

Poverty lives abundantly in San Francisco
10,000 homeless call its streets home
1 in 4 children and 1 in 5 adults
Go to bed hungry
Malnourished
Somewhere in San Francisco
Nearly 16,000 families face hunger daily
A city of immense wealth
Shuffles over malnourished children
While on the other side of the world
Seven hundred years ago
In medieval Europe
Children and the poor
Filled the prisons
Because they could not pay taxes
In San Francisco
In the year 2013
Children and the poor
Fill the streets
Because they cannot
Find homes
The world's wealthiest 100 people
Earned 240 billion dollars last year
Their wealth could end poverty
Four times over
No one owns our water, air and land
It is held in trust for all
The gap between rich and poor
Accelerates through miasmatic fog
Poverty lives abundantly in San Francisco

— Karen Melander Magoon

Fresno immigrant youth at forefront

By Eduardo Castro

FRESNO, CA — On December 13, 2013 five members of the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance and I were chained to ladders blocking the exit to the Fresno County jail. We did this to prevent vans from taking undocumented persons from the jail to ICE detention facilities for deportation. We stayed there chained for several hours. Our demand was that Fresno Sheriff Margaret Mims stop cooperating with ICE to hold undocumented arrestees for deportation under the Secure Communities Act, and thus help prevent the separation of families.

One of the organizers stated that his older brother had been deported after being stopped by local law enforcement for driving without a license. A sign was visible at the protest that labeled President Obama “Deporter in Chief.”

Later in the day Sheriff Mims issued a statement reversing her previous hard line position of full cooperation with ICE. As a result of the protest, she declared that she would instead abide with



Protest in front of Fresno County Jail. PHOTO/IRENE SERRANO

the newly enacted state law Trust Act (AB4) signed by Governor Brown. Under provisions of the Trust Act local law enforcement will no longer detain immigrants for deportation if they are arrested for minor crimes. She stated that she would leave enforcement of immigration law to the federal government.

Today we pause to celebrate. However, this victory is only a start in the battle for the rights of all immigrants, whether here illegally or not.

Contact Eduardo Castro at edcastrojr@sbcglobal.net.

Jails and bullets – no prescription for mental illness

By Robin Yeamans

SAN JOSE, CA — “It tears my heart out the way my mentally ill adult son is treated by this system. I fear for his life,” says Anna Griffin in Silicon Valley, CA. “When he’s in jail, as he has been for the last two years, he doesn’t get treatment. When he is released, it’s worse as I can’t find him. I’m terrified he’ll be killed in the streets.”

One judge in San Jose CA attempts to address these cases, but the bottom line virtually always is, “There’s no bed for him”—meaning no available treatment.

There used to be beds for mental patients in San Jose at Agnews Center. Opened in 1888 and authorized by the state legislature, it initially took all types of patients but later only developmentally disabled persons. Around 1950, Agnews had some 5,000 residents and staff.

That was at the height of America’s industrial production, and in the post World War II period, workers received some

share of the prosperity. But by the new millennium, computerized robotic production eliminated many jobs forever. The new competitor was the robot that drives wages—and the value of human life—towards zero. Not only wages, but social benefits such as appropriate care for the mentally ill are now taken away. Capitalism will not provide for any worker whose labor is no longer needed.

In spite of the crying need, the 2003-04 Governor’s Budget directed that Agnews should be closed which it was in 2011.

In 1997 a big chunk of the campus was sold by the state to Sun Microsystems. The remaining land, which is solid gold at the north of Silicon Valley, is now up for sale to the highest corporate bidder.

The mentally ill won’t be making a higher bid. Of course, housing the mentally ill in jails is expensive madness, but where corporate profits are at issue, there’s no contest. The mentally ill are constantly ensnared in the criminal court system. Charisse

Domingo of Silicon Valley De-Bug’s AC Justice Project, estimates that perhaps a third of the cases the group assists weekly relate to the mentally ill caught up in the criminal court system.

Across the US, people are struggling to get treatment for their mentally disabled relatives. Mary Neal, whose brother died in 2003 in police custody, founded Assistance to the Incarcerated Mentally Ill (“AIMI”), advocating for 1.25 million inmates who are wrongly and cruelly imprisoned rather than treated for their mental dysfunctions. These struggles are part of the life-and-death fights for justice; for national health care, and for a new society based on human need where everyone has justice and health care, including mental health care.

The goal is that no family member would again cry out, as Mary Neal did in poetry: “I wish you were a dog, my brother, in my heart I cried. Then more people would care about you and wonder why you died.”



The stage of civil disobedience

By Salvador Sandoval, M.D.

MERCED, CA — All around the country day laborers and largely immigrant youth are challenging the authorities and “business as usual.” Whether chaining themselves to the undercarriages of deportation buses or to the White House fences, fasting, praying publicly, or protesting, they are demonstrating their disapproval of the White House’s and Congress’ inability to advance immigration reform. Where “business as usual” means the deportation of 1100 people per day, more than any Republican ever did, they reject the Democratic line that Republicans alone are to blame for the delay. They insist that President Obama could halt deportations today and force the recalcitrant House Republicans to negotiate by doing so.

When the usual channels of redress are closed, people have always looked for other means, including their human right to protest. Today, extreme times are calling for extreme measures to call attention to the plight of separated families. The Day Laborers and the youth have been criticized for breaking ranks with the established leaders and also for calling President Obama

“Deporter in Chief.” Up to five million immigrants may be disqualified even with the Senate proposal that was passed. Whatever “compromise” bill Democrats and Republicans might end up agreeing upon, will almost certainly be even worse. Meanwhile, the deportations of immigrants who would likely qualify for amnesty continue unabated.

The truth is Day Laborers and the youthful protesters for immigration reform should take heart. First of all, the vast majority of Americans want to see an amnesty plan enacted. Second, the vast majority of Americans are also under attack, although for other reasons. And many U.S. born citizens are also joining in with Civil disobedience actions. A prime example is the Moral Majority protests in North Carolina where people of all backgrounds are being arrested for protesting the elimination of voting rights for many poor, food stamps, and un-employment benefits extensions, among other things.

In truth, we are hearing the opening salvos of a fight for political independence for all working people. The Day Laborers and the youth, we are proud to say, are at the forefront.

Above and below: Since October 2013, pro-immigrant warriors, mainly young, participated in civil disobedience actions to demand President Obama pass a moratorium on deportations. As part of their #Not1More campaign to shut down ICE, they have chained themselves to buses, ladders, the fence of the White House, and blocked the routes of deportation buses to stop ICE deportations. PHOTOS/NDLON.ORG



Unsolved murders, Karrington Penny, and corporate power



Rev. Edward Pinkney speaks at a Detroit event to discuss plans to fight the mess banks and corporations have forced on the city. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Public Safety Department of Benton Harbor, Michigan, is in need of citizen input, an independent evaluation of its servic-

es and employee practices. Public works of Benton Harbor are limited: there is poor snow removal, limited parks, civic activities, and public services. In addition, numerous questions have

been voiced regarding racial profiling, police abuse and unsolved murders. It has recently been revealed that officers plant drugs and get benefits for arresting citizens, leaving residents living in a state of fear.

Nothing in Michigan compares with Benton Harbor's police-like state and the use of tax dollars for this. Peaceful protests are surrounded with police in riot gear. The police videotape and take pictures of participants as a means of intimidation. Now Berrien County has acquired a vehicle with extraordinary military power. This 20-ton armored vehicle can be used for "terrorist-type attacks." It is odd that Berrien County, an unlikely place for a national terrorist attack, would seek such a monolithic machine.

At the same time, African Americans have been found floating in the river in Benton Harbor. A young man of 18 years old, Karrington Penny, was found dead in a snow bank un-

der suspicious circumstances. Such deaths leave many residents wondering why. Where is the thorough investigation and the publicity to expose and understand these horrors?

Gentrification and corporate profits underlie these events—the city sits on Lake Michigan. The corporations are raking in millions as the city is transformed around their interests. With the automation of industry and the runaway plants, the majority of residents are jobless and living in poverty. The police state aims to keep the poor community quiet and "in their place."

What is being created is a different Benton Harbor from the small enclaves of white gentrification that has infiltrated the shoreline in upscale gated-like communities, developments that make millions for the corporations.

It is time for an impartial, non-political, and ethical service to evaluate the use of tax dol-

lars, the need for public parks that serve the community (not the up-scale developments along the beach or the visiting golfing community), the police department, the use of racial profiling, the recreational facilities, and all the amenities needed to increase residential satisfaction and quality of life in Benton Harbor. Benton Harbor should be made comparable to St. Joseph, and any other lakeshore community.

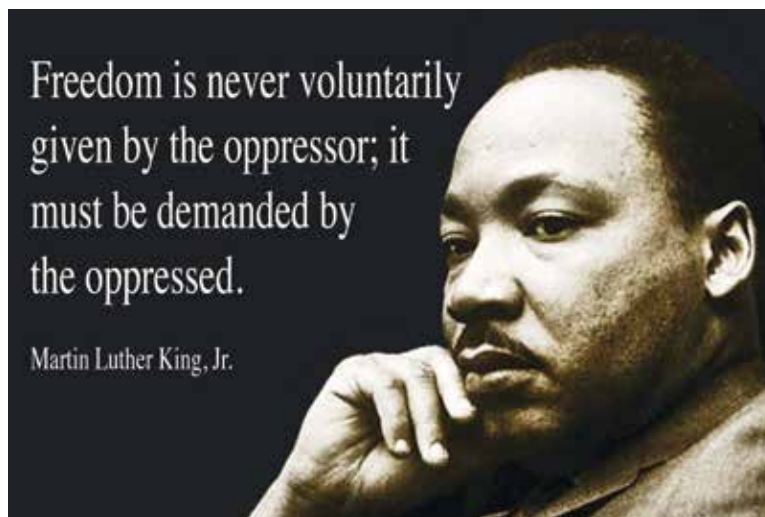
The Benton Harbor story is important because it is a harbinger of the future of all of America. The only way that Benton Harbor, and all American cities, can be given an opportunity to develop the great community they can be, is if the people unite to take over the corporations. A place to start is for the people to stand together to fight the corruption inside the city of Benton Harbor, and to recall Mayor James Hightower. His interests are with the corporations.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision

By Dick Peery

As thousands of articles extolling Martin Luther King Jr., are distributed on his birthday, most will fail to mention the Poor People's Campaign, the most important crusade of his career and, arguably, the real reason he was assassinated. Mainstream accounts will usually stop with his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech. Progressives will include his 1967 anti-Vietnam war speech in Riverside Church. But few will mention his assault on poverty, the logical capstone of his life of compassion.

In his last year, King organized the Poor People's Campaign. He envisioned having low-income families, trained in nonviolence, go to Washington to engage in civil disobedience while demanding an Economic Bill of Rights to end poverty. He had recruited white, Latino, Native American and African American volunteers from across the country. They would demand passage of a \$30 billion anti-poverty package that included a commitment to full employment, a guaranteed annual income measure and more low-income housing. It would be the first time leaders of the two most politically powerful minorities—blacks and Chica-



nos—would unite to confront the government.

This was during the Cold War, when America was competing with the Soviet Union for the loyalty of Africans and Asians so they could have access to their resources. The worldwide exposure of America's economic underbelly—rampant poverty—would have had major international consequences.

King was shot a month before the Campaign was to begin. The Campaign went on, but no one else had the charismatic power to control it. People flocked to Washington and established a tent city on the Mall, but those trained by King were joined by larger numbers of angry demonstrators, some of whom brought

weapons and were not amenable to nonviolent leadership. Demonstrations were held and demands were made, but without King's eminence, they were only partially heard as the media focused on the disorganization more than on the demands.

The dwindling number of demonstrators lingered on the Mall for weeks until one day, when many of the men were away for a demonstration, an army of more than 1,000 police stormed the Mall, made mass arrests and bulldozed the encampment.

And King's greatest dream has been virtually bulldozed from history.

Japan's Education: Following Chicago's Privatizers

From a correspondent in Japan

I think that the Education Reform Movement revealed in Chicago is very much related to the Japanese Education Reform Movement. In our national elections, former Financial Minister Heizo Takenaka said that Japanese public schools should be handed over to private operations. After the election, not only Osaka, but every city of Japan is changing the direction of education, somehow toward privatization.

There is some symbolic news in Osaka.

The Mayor of Osaka decided to surrender the principal post of public schools to the CEO or manager of

private company who knows well about the efficiency and competition.

Eleven new 'private principals' were selected by Mayor Hashimoto, but one of them, from a stock company, resigned only 3 months after.

He said that the reason he quit was that "I want to teach English to kids to survive the global market..."

The "private principal" also said "These public poor schools are not my place. I can't show my business skills here."

This is not a joke. Parents in Osaka are very worried about the policy of Mayor Hashimoto which is based on "Private education is better than Public."