



Chicago police prevent protestors from entering an area they deemed off limits during the Anti-NATO demonstrations in 2012.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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CONFRONTING THE AMERICAN POLICE STATE

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IMMIGRANT WORKERS ARE PART OF AMERICA'S WORKING CLASS

EDITORIAL

The story is repeated across the world. The breakdown of capitalism forces people to migrate—often at the risk of their lives—from their home countries in order to find work and feed their families. They leave behind children and spouses that they don't see for years. In the US as elsewhere, immigrant workers do many of the hard, dirty, dangerous jobs. They get paid much less than US citizens for doing the same work, and sometimes they aren't paid at all. They work long hours without overtime pay, are subject to sexual violence and abuse of all kinds, and if they complain they run the risk of being arrested, jailed and deported. Husbands and wives can be suddenly separated. Children are separated from their families and jailed. Some 1100 people are deported each day now.

In part, this is a moral question for all of us. What kind of people are we? What kind of society do we want to live in? Do we want a society where some of us have human rights and some don't? And it is also a strategic question. The immigrant workers are fighting for their rights, and workers of all kinds are fighting around many issues—poverty, unemployment, education, lack of healthcare, homelessness, environmental destruction and so on. One of the keys to victory is to recognize these are all parts of the same struggle. We must understand that the immigrant worker is part of the US working class, and their struggle is everyone's struggle. The working class can only win if it unites as a class

around the demands of those who have the least.

Here in the US, as in many countries, a debate is raging about how to reform the immigration laws. Clearly the corporations have their "reform" agenda, which involves preserving their ability to reap huge profits from the labor of immigrants, whether they are farmworkers or software engineers. The corporations also want to keep workers divided. But what does real reform look like, from the workers' perspective?

For the workers, real reform means that immigrant workers have the same human rights that every worker is entitled to. It means they are treated as citizens, and as what they are—part of America's working class.

And for the working class as a whole, this kind of class unity is central to winning all our struggles, because we are involved in much more than a fight for jobs and good wages. Computers and robots are replacing labor, and the jobs are disappearing for everyone, documented and undocumented alike. It is increasingly impossible to have an economy based on a few people privately owning the tools of production and the rest of us working for them and using our paychecks to buy what we need. With the jobs disappearing, we are in a fight for a new society where the people own the tools of production collectively, and we simply distribute to people what they need. We are fighting for a new world without poverty, where everyone's needs are guaranteed.

Class unity around the demands of those who have the least, including the immigrant workers, is key to victory.



Protest in Philadelphia against deportations. The immigrant worker is part of the US working class; their struggle is everyone's struggle. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

SEND US YOUR STORY!

All editorials and cover stories are written by the People's Tribune Editorial Board. The rest of the paper is composed of voices from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. Send us your story.

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

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.

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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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CONFRONTING THE AMERICAN POLICE STATE

COVER STORY

Unarmed civilians with their hands in the air are gunned down like dogs. Nine-year-old children are handcuffed and dragged to jail for pointing fingers and saying, “Bang-bang.” Police beat defenseless, homeless people to death for being homeless. Citizens photographing illegal police activities are beaten and hauled off to jail. Armored battlewagons with “Serve and Protect” painted on their sides patrol our streets. Masked men with battlefield arms, called SWAT Teams, lurk in the police stations of even small towns. Police chiefs, lawyers, State officials (who happen to be Black) are stopped, frisked and hauled off to jail on “suspicion.” Latinos are unlawfully stopped, frisked or jailed on suspicion of being “undocumented.”

Nazi Germany? No! It is America—Land that I love. It is the Beautiful, the land of patriot’s dreams. Stripped from the 4th Amendment, humiliated by cavity searches, she is slipping into the grasp of full-blown fascism.

It hasn’t happened to you? Have we so soon forgotten the lesson of Germany? “First they came for the Communists—but I wasn’t a Communist.” The time for resistance is before it happens to you, and time is short.

In preparation for battle the first task is an estimate of the situation. We are in a war and no war is won simply by fighting battles. Understanding and defeating the enemy’s strategy win wars. That strategy has been to control and exploit the American people by creating a “middle class,” about a quarter of the population, through labor unions, minimum wages, Social Security and home ownership. The ma-

majority of the workers were excluded. The double exploitation of the African Americans, the increased exploitation of domestic, agricultural and non-union labor more than made up the cost of bribing this “middle class.”

Greek philosophers wrote, “Nothing is permanent except change.” The introduction of electronic production with little or no human labor changed everything. With robotics, wealth and poverty polarized. Globalization of production began the end of bribery of the “middle class.” No longer politically or econom-

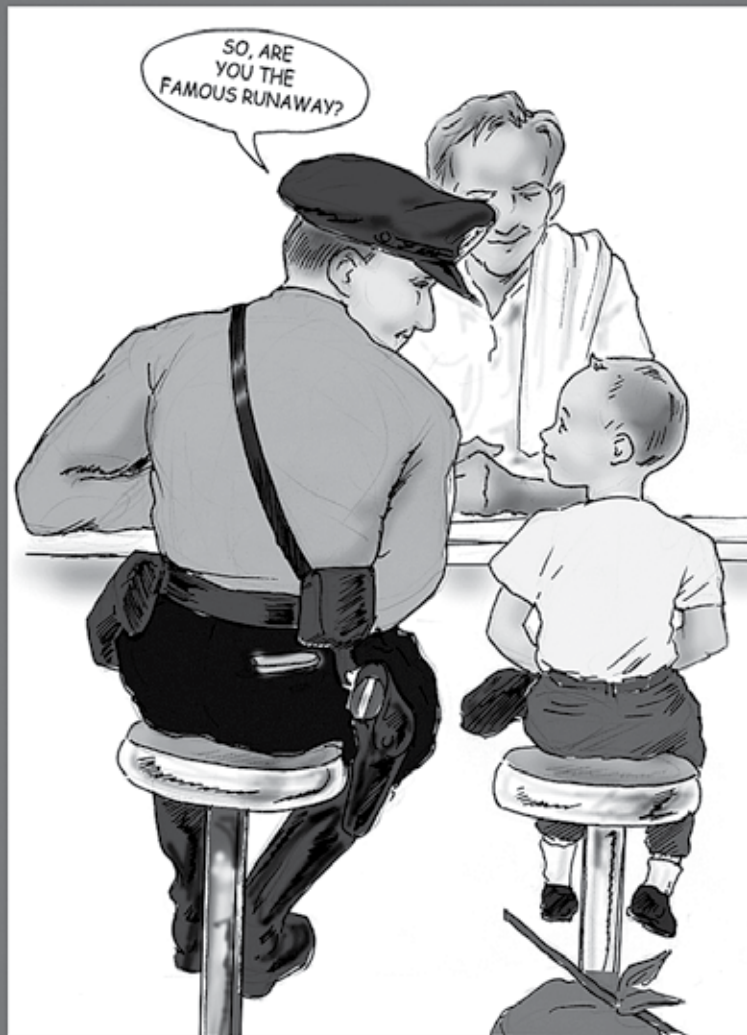
ically necessary, this pillar of social control was discarded.

A new class of workers with decreasing reliance on or relations with capitalist society confronts the ruling class. Dropping the benign mask of “Serve and Protect,” the police stand exposed as the “the watchdogs of private property.” Militarized, divorced from society, striving to become a law unto themselves, their every brutal, illegal act shapes and concretizes an American fascist police state.

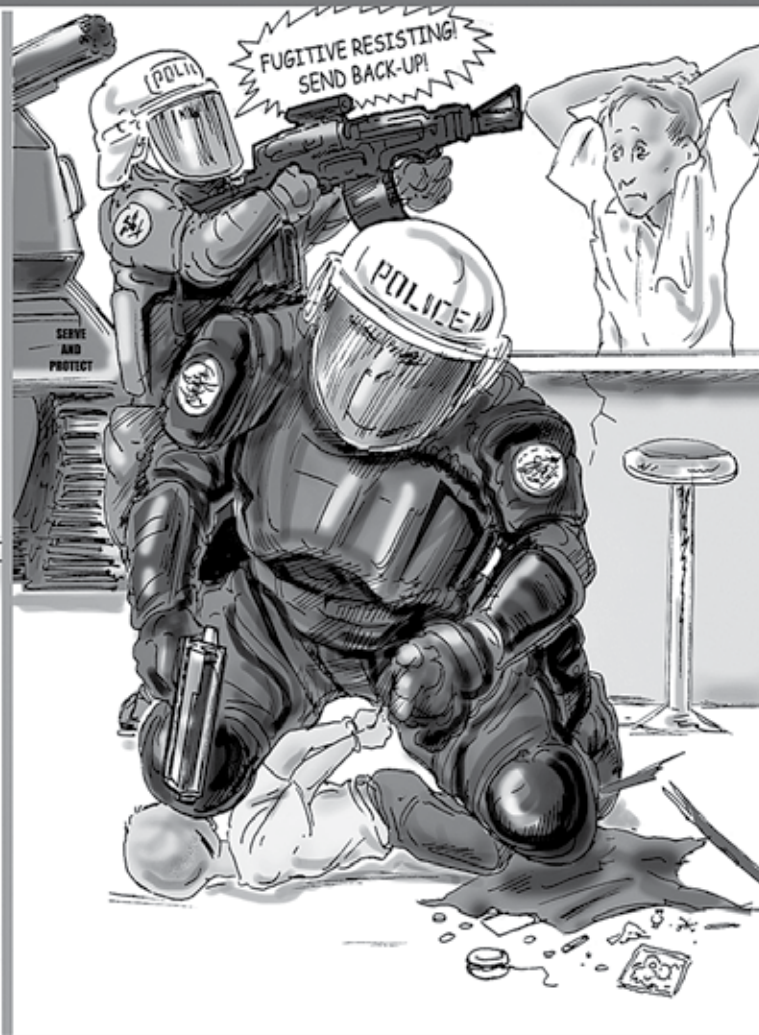
Thousands of Americans are aware of this danger. Even the

liberal writers of the capitalist press are raising the warnings. A thousand scattered voices, politically and ideologically separated, mean nothing. We must confront each and every attack on what liberty we have left.

Most of all, we must see that electronics has fundamentally changed the world. There is no going back. The sad alternative is to re-live the blood soaked horror of the past century. We must visualize the world of peace and freedom that electronics makes possible and fight for that future.



The way Norman Rockwell imagined it 1958 (but not how it was)



The increasing new reality under corporate rule (too close to the truth) 2014

CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

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— People’s Tribune Editorial Board

Reform or social transformation: Which way?

By William H. Watkins, Ph.D.

CHICAGO, IL — Many years ago Marvin Gaye asked us to figure out, “What’s Going On?” Well now we know quite a bit.

The capitalists are waging endless wars killing and maiming our fine young men and women over oil. Despite unprecedented prosperity, poverty and pauperism are spreading as capitalist greed creates financial crises, eliminates public housing, cuts public assistance, closes clinics and destroys public education. Perhaps as many as 50 million people are unemployed and millions more are part of the working poor. We all know people scrambling to keep their home and pay their bills, people

who have NO money. The misery index is sky-high; people can’t take much more.

No help is coming from those elected to help. The Chicago city government is snuggled up and merged with big corporations as they declare war upon the people, closing schools, cutting pensions and privatizing everything in sight. Entire cities, like Detroit, Gary and East St. Louis are being sacrificed and going bankrupt, as the greedy capitalists scour the nation and the world in search of someone who will work as cheap as a robot.

Everything the criminal capitalists do is an ugly performance of self-exposure. For over a decade Chicago politicians have lied, cheated, stolen and con-

nived while they held sham hearings for community input and closed over 100 schools anyway. Now we all know it.

Ordinary people are tired of Republicans, Democrats, and all other schemers, scammers and usurpers. Frustrated people are taking to the streets, protesting, picketing, boycotting and engaging in civil disobedience. The recent Occupy movements, union actions and protests are only the beginning. We all know a better world is possible

We must be serious and thoughtful as our very existence is at stake. Every battlefield we fight on—whether it is the fight for pension reform or school closings or class size or an elected school board—offers

us a choice: bandage the cancer that is capitalism or cave in to increasing attacks against us. For every bandage they offer us with one hand, they knife us with the other, and the capitalists remain in charge. The only choice left to us is to change the system itself.

Deep down, we all hope the rulers are not as cruel as we think they are. . . Despite our prayers, they continue to be guided by profit above people. They have given up on us because we are of no more use to them, and we are beginning to see it. It is time to give up on these people!!!

These vultures will not only kill us, they will pick our bones. Corporate capitalism cannot be reformed. We cannot have a kinder and gentler capitalist sys-

tem. Social revolution is more thorough. It sees our society as pregnant with something new. Starting with the 50 million and more people capitalism has discarded, we are going to have to reconstruct society, re-divide wealth and make some people uncomfortable. Every struggle holds opportunities for analysis and debate about the ideas that serve opposing classes. It hinges upon which struggle will either swing open to the next step toward greater political independence, or swing shut and lock the fighters within the corporations’ vision of the future. Every struggle opens up the question of who holds power.



Protests against Chicago school closures, budget cuts, and for an elected school board.

(ABOVE) PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, (RIGHT) PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

Chicago charters: Make the fight national

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — January 21, 2014, the Chicago temperature sank below zero while dozens of spirited protesters gathered outside the Board of Education office. They endured sub-zero wind-chills in an overnight vigil before the Board meeting the next day, when the School Board was to review the applications of 17 charter schools.

At the meeting, the Board again ignored vociferous community testimony. As expected, the Board approved the applications of seven or the 17. Some of those denied indicated they would appeal to the State to overrule the Chicago decision.

The Board claimed new charters could relieve the pressure in overcrowded schools. However some of the schools approved will open in the same areas devastated

by 49 school closings for “underutilization” last year. Andrew Broy, president of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools, explained another rationale: “I think CPS is trying to add high-quality public schools of choice...”

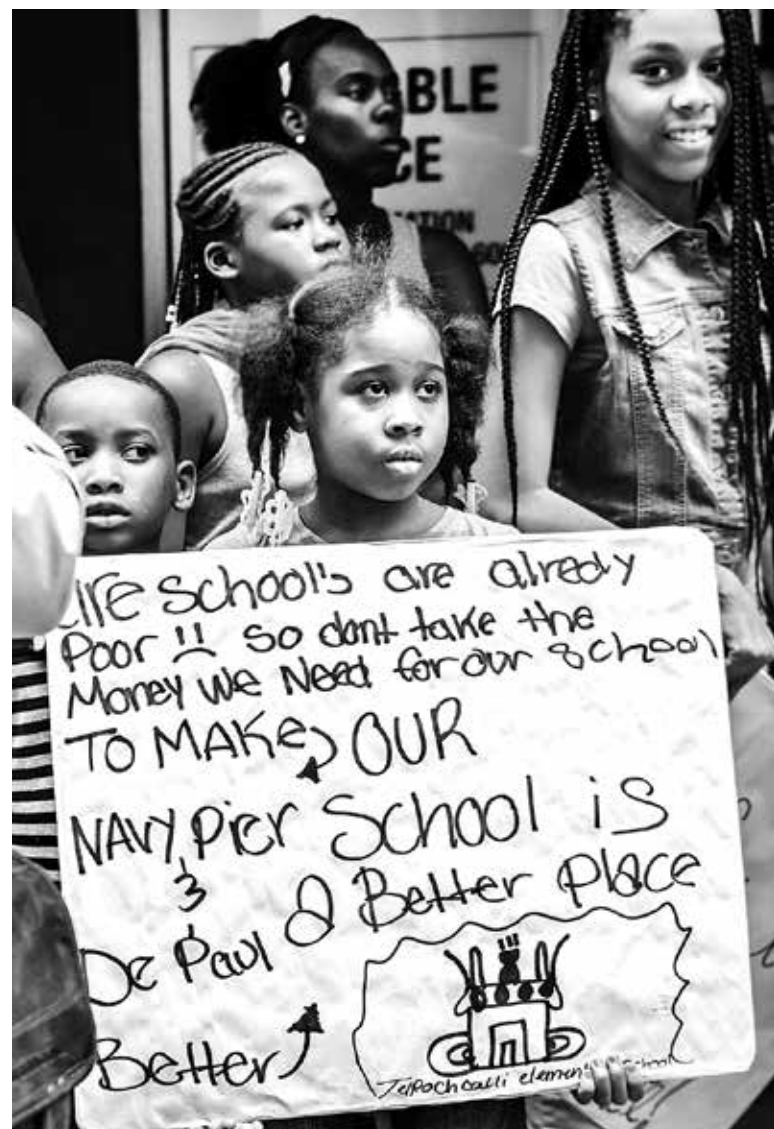
“Choice” is a smokescreen: Charter expansion is intended to turn public education over to private corporations.

“Concept Schools,” run under the auspices of the Gulen movement, won approval for 2 schools. Gulen is the largest charter school corporation in the US with 150 schools (and more in other countries). Gulen runs the Chicago Math and Science Academy in Chicago’s Rogers Park. This year CMSA cooked the figures to show that it performs better than it actually does. Concept Schools approved this year also get additional public funds.

Gulen has done well by court-

ing friends in high places. The Gulen movement leader, Fethullah Gulen, lives in Pennsylvania, but his movement is based in Turkey. Gulen organizations funded four trips to Turkey for Illinois Speaker of the House Madigan, who has supported the expansion of Gulen schools. Rogers Park alderman Joe Moore got two junkets to Turkey. Moore defended CMSA and even went to another ward to support another Gulen school (opened over the objections of the Chicago Board of Education). Bill Clinton and Barack Obama have both praised Gulen schools.

Noble Schools, approved for opening 2 charter schools, boasts that they will have 10,000 Chicago students. Supported by both Democrat Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Republican Bruce Rauner, Noble plans to open up directly across from a traditional



high school.

Charter expansion is a hedge fund and real estate business plan, that treats education like a commodity to be bought and sold. Charter schools are private schools using public monies to make more money. Gulen and Noble schools show how government and corporate interests merge. The school by school battles we have been fighting, these scattered, local, defensive skirmishes can’t answer our needs.

As we come together to hold our political leaders accountable, we need to figure out what

accountable means. We are confronted by nationally connected charter chains like Gulen and Noble schools. The government is already enforcing a national education plan that robs us of the promise of good education for all. We’ll only see the end of phony charter choice when we hold all levels of government accountable to nationalize public education in the interests of all the people, abolish charters and privatization, while providing equal funding and quality education for all students and schools.

Are Flint citizens ready to live without democracy?

Councilman censure begs the question

By Claire McClinton

FLINT, MI — Recent events here underscore the depth and breath of dictatorship as outlined under Michigan's Emergency Manager Law. These "Managers" are dispatched to a city or Township by the Governor *replacing the power of both Mayor and City Council*. Their power allows them to sell public assets, shred union contracts and more. Despite having held recent City Council elections, these Councilpersons serve at the behest of Flint's Emergency Manager, Darnell Earley. The December City Council meeting, for instance, was cancelled by the Emergency Manager.

The recent arrest of newly elected Councilman Eric Mays for drunk driving launched a feeding frenzy by local and national media (CNN). Emergency Manager Darnell Earley called for the resignation of Councilman Mays before charges were even filed! When he (Mays) refused to resign, Darnell Earley issued an Executive Order stripping Councilman Mays of his already diminished powers. The order not only deprives the Councilman of an opportunity to

address constituents' complaints (calls from 1st Ward are to be handled by the City Clerk), but prohibits him from *speaking* to staff or using the City Hall garage. Furthermore, he cannot set foot on City Hall property other than from 8-5:00 PM or for City Council meetings. His communication with the Emergency Manager is limited to emails only.

Last year, Michigan State Representative Bob Genetski of Allegan County who happens to be a white Republican, was charged and *convicted* of drunk driving with NO calls for his resignation or public censure by the Michigan State legislature. Flint residents from all around the city (particularly his predominately African American ward) are crying foul, and are standing up for the outspoken activist Mays and resisting ever more double standards.

Clearly Councilman Mays must accept responsibility for his actions and the courts as well as voters in the 1st Ward will see to it that it happens. On the other hand, it's no secret that he has been a vocal opponent of the Emergency Manager Law—along with thousands and thousands of voters across the State of Michigan who



Protest for an end to Emergency Manager "dictatorship" law in Flint and across the state. People rally on the lawn of Flint's City Hall. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

voted to Repeal PA 4, the current law's predecessor. With all this nonsense going on, we the citizens of the city of Flint have likewise been sent a message.

The first message is that the original Emergency Manager law, signed by Governor Snyder, was driven by the perception that Black elected officials are dysfunctional, incompetent, and corrupt, and cannot be trusted to

manage the affairs of the city. This narrative helps to explain, in part, why despite comprising 13% of Michigan's population, over 50% of African Americans live under Emergency Managers. Under this scenario, the state hopes to keep the city of Flint under state control for as long as they want, playing the Race card, while preparing to take over even more cities, townships, and school districts.

The second message is to the rest of the Flint City Council, using Councilman Mays as an example. Go along with Emergency Manager decisions, no matter how much these decisions impose suffering or are contrary to the will of the people, or you will suffer the same fate as Councilman Mays.

The assault on democracy is alive and well. What, then, will be our next move?



Activists from area Native American organizations and the National Action Network demand an apology from Executive L. Brooks Patterson for statements comparing Detroit to a reservation. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

"Mr. Patterson's comments about the "blankets and corn" have affected more than just local Wayne and Oakland Counties. His comments are far-reaching to over 500 tribal nations in the U.S. Mr. Patterson stated he met with an Indian chief (interestingly enough did not indicate any specific name) that explained the significance of blankets and corn. The blankets that Mr. Patterson referred to represent mass genocide to the Indigenous people across Turtle Island a.k.a. the United States. The U.S. government distributed blankets infested with smallpox meant to eradicate a race of people that had no immunity to the smallpox disease. This atrocity killed many Indigenous people. Mr. Patterson's refusal to acknowledge that he has offended minorities would indicate his state of being in denial. This then, further promulgates oppression which is indicative of the colonial and linear way of thinking."

— Lisa McGeshick

What L. Brooks Patterson means

By Davi Trusty, *Idle No More*

JACKSON, MI — L. Brooks Patterson, the infamous Oakland County, MI executive, or Brooksie as I call him, was recently quoted in *The New Yorker* magazine as saying, "I made a prediction a long time ago, and it's come to pass. I said, 'What we're going to do is turn Detroit into an Indian reservation, where we herd all the Indians into the city, build a fence around it, and then throw in the blankets and corn.'"

Brooksie to me, as Tribal member and a member of Idle No More, was just one more Republican caught being honest. Kind of like when Mitt Romney made his "47%" remark. If we examine Brooksie's quote a little closer we can find it rooted in a history of hatred for the Original inhabitants of this entire continent. First there is the idea of "herding" us into a fenced in area. Of course historically this brought back memories of the government herding my people, the Tsalagi, into fenced in pens before they made us march

the Trail Of Tears. It brings back memories of herding children, elders, women and men at Wounded Knee and slaughtering them wholesale. It reminds me of the countless times we First Nations people were herded like cattle to our doom.

Then on his use of blankets in his diatribe. Blankets were a means of this government's first chemical warfare used against anyone. Smallpox was responsible for the death of over 90% of all First Nations people on the Eastern seaboard. Smallpox infected blankets were used at Fort Pitt during Pontiac's rebellion and were given to First Nations people in the Midwest as a means of population control. It brings back memories of the lengths and the atrocity committed against us in the name of "progress" and the founding of America.

Corn is a staple amongst my people. We revere it as a gift from our loving Creator to help sustain us. We have Green Corn ceremonies where we dance as a tool to show thanks for the harvest and the bounty. Corn has long been a staple of First Na-

tions diet and of course the government somehow turned it into a commodity and a tool in which to further subjugate us.

Some reservations have a per capital income of \$3,000 a year, an unemployment rate of 80-90%, diseases such as Cancer, Diabetes, alcoholism, suicide, rape, murder and more run rampant, affecting us at often three times the national average. Does Brooksie think so damn little of Detroit and First Nations peoples that he wishes these conditions and historical trauma on us again?

Brooksie has thus far refused to apologize or meet with me or any of our elders. I have offered to sit with him, an elder, and a young person, so he can hear from us the impact of his vile words. I offered a visit to a reservation and he has refused. When we protest next do you want to join? These words by this hateful man do NOT represent White people. Poverty affects ALL peoples. At our last rally there were also Blacks, Whites and Latinos. I would love to have you. Contact me at davi49203@yahoo.com.

ACTIVISTS AGAINST TAR SANDS CONVICTED

TRESPASSING AND RESISTING AN OFFICER

Editor's note: The following is a press release issued on January 31, 2014. You can contact Chloe Gleichman, 1-734-474-1974, elkecee@gmail.com or Chris Wahmhoff, 269-910-6495, Whammy737@gmail.com.

MICHIGAN — The trial of peaceful activists from Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands (MI CATS) ended with the jury finding Vicci Hamlin, Lisa Leggio, and Barb Carter guilty of both charges brought against them: trespassing and resisting and obstructing an officer. Supporters are deeply saddened that after deliberation for over 10 hours, the verdict returned as guilty of all counts. The jury was split most of this time, returning to the courtroom several times for clarification. Sentencing was scheduled for March 5. The defendants' bail was revoked and they were immediately taken into custody.

This action which Lisa, Barb,

and Vicci were a part of, was not only aimed at stopping the expansion of Enbridge tar sands pipelines before the next disaster. It was also to stand in solidarity with First Nations land being turned into sacrifice zones to mine tar sands. The activists supported the communities currently being poisoned in Detroit and other places because extraction industries put profit before people. Their actions were nothing less than necessary.

Vicci Hamlin, who became a great grandmother Monday, expressed how for her and Lisa as parents, this is a necessity. She stated, "The threat that tar sands extraction poses to my children, grandchildren and now great grandchild requires me to act." Lisa Leggio, who will be a grandmother next week, said, "I came to Michigan from New York, and fell in love with nature and the water. Seeing up-close the devastation that the 2010 tar sands spill caused to the Kalama-

zoo river and surrounding community, I think about my daughter and her unborn child. What are we leaving them? I did this for them, and we did this for everyone's children."

Prosecuting attorney Danielle Dixon and Judge Collette forbade the defense to mention many of the reasons why defendants were taking this action: such as, the 2010 Kalamazoo oil spill of Line 6B, the largest on-land oil spill in US history that still is needing cleanup, past its deadline. On Thursday, Barb Carter was silenced by Judge William Collette for mentioning that she lived three miles away from the Marathon Tar Sands refinery which affects her ability to breathe when entering or leaving her home. The judge also personally questioned her after both the prosecution and defense questioned her.

The MI CATS has vowed to continue peaceful resistance despite the sentence imposed. As long as Enbridge is attempting



(Left to right) Lisa Leggio, Vicci Hamlin and Barbara Carter, the three women who were convicted of trespassing and resisting an officer in a protest against the expansion of tar sands pipelines.

PHOTO/MI CATS

to pump toxic tar sands into refineries, which are principally located in communities of color, MI CATS will be standing alongside anyone who wishes to stop them.

The charges used have histor-

ically been used to disrupt communities and incarcerate mainly people of color and the poor in Michigan. The fight to challenge Michigan's Resisting and Obstructing statute is going to continue with the MI CATS appeal.

FOSSIL FUEL EXTRACTION CARVES UP THE LAND

Year of action indeed!

By Tabitha Tripp

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS — Fresh life is coming to Illinois in the middle of a long cold winter. Students at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale are meeting on a regular basis to talk about civil liberties, nonviolent direct action, climate change and what they can do about it. Small rooms in libraries across rural counties are bursting with local people who want to find out about voter referendums to protect property owners' rights from industrialized fracking, sand mining, and pipelines carving up the land. Citizens gather in restaurants asking activists for help with coal mining companies who are logging, filling streams with sediment, then blowing up hilltops containing native Indigenous burial grounds only known to the Shawnee Tribal People.

Nonviolent direct action does not have to mean arrests or pepper spray. That's an extreme example that seems to catch the news, but in rural organizing, groups need to be smart and efficient with resources. Peaceful direct actions include petition drives ranging from all-out bans

on fracking, to a localized ban in the New Madrid and Wabash seismic zones, to a pledge of solidarity with frack fighters.

In attempt to stop frac sand mining near Starved Rock State park, a social media action involving a meme listed county board members' phone numbers to call and ask for a halt to permits.

A sustained action with the intent to delay the process, involving submitting daily comments to Department of Natural Resources amounted to a record-breaking 32,000 public comments on faulty fracking rules.

Most recently a video was released about defective class two injection wells contaminating a property owner's water well. There have been a few banner drops, and just for good humor Frackmas caroling posted on YouTube.

Activists are working every avenue possible to avoid the destruction of their communities and surrounding environment, while industry attempts to milk every last drop of fossil fuel from the earth.

Communities are asking to be educated about nonviolent forms



No Pipeline Candlelight Vigil. Students and citizens from around Carbondale protest the pipelines and extraction industries that threaten our future.

PHOTO/ANNA DURRETT

of direct action, how to protect civil liberties, and have been creatively working to eliminate the taboo surrounding nonviolent direct action.

They are asking how to create campaigns and organize in a way that will be effective against the system. Grassroots movements to protect ecosystems and basic human rights, like the right to clean water and air, are growing.

This is not endemic to Illinois.

This is a global pattern playing out in every community that holds clean water and breathable air a priority, by refusing to become the next sacrifice zone destroyed by industries like fracking, pipelines, or frac sand mining.

Activists are stepping out of the box, trying on varying forms of dissent using tools like social media and Twitter, combined with old fashion kitchen table talks, to grow a movement.

Anyone anywhere can join the movement by 1) Hosting civil liberties training in your community, 2) donating resources, time or supplies to local organizational efforts, and/or 3) joining or supporting nonviolent direct action campaigns like rallies, protests or candlelight vigils.



(Left to right) Dwight Gamble and Alfred Brown, who both worked at Koppers, stand at the site of the contamination from the plant. Many of the workers became soaked daily with creosote, a chemical used in treating the wood. Many came down with various cancers, including cancers of the skin and scrotum. They continue to demand restitution. PHOTO/PEPPER HOLDER

Reclaim the Earth

From the editors

We are at a political crossroad. Climate change is real. Artic ice is melting, destructive storms, drought, floods, and extreme temperature fluctuations are now common around the world. More and more scientists concur that the world must rapidly move away from a fossil-fuel powered society to save civilization from ultimate destruction. The global energy corporations won't allow it.

The masses of people must take over the giant corporations and run them in the interests of humanity. We cannot allow the earth to remain a plaything for profit in the hands of private individuals.

The environment has become a strategic battlefield against corporate power and private ownership of things indispensable to society. We have to reclaim the earth from the corporations and build a humane economic system where the environmental and economic needs of humanity are met.

VICTIMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM WANT DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF COMMUNITY

By Pepper Holder

CARBONDALE, IL — From 1902 until 1991, the Koppers Wood-Treating plant ran in Carbondale at 1555 North Marion Street. This site treated wood products to prevent decay of wood to be used as railroad ties and utility poles. Many of the mostly African-American workers became soaked with creosote daily. Many came down with skin cancer or cancer of the scrotum. The plant shut down in 1991 when a concern that the creosote in the wood treatment caused health and environmental issues became public.

The exposure of the chemical was known in 1939 as it spilled

into an off-site area and Glade Creek. It was again addressed in 1962 when contamination was confirmed on nearby land and water. Not until 1981 when two cows died did the EPA do an investigation at the site. The Koppers plant continued to operate for ten more years.

The Carbondale residents affected by this environmental racism have been asking, for some years now, for a longitudinal study of the effects of creosote on the health of the individuals that worked, lived and currently live around the plant.

At the EPA meeting held in Carbondale, Illinois on November 14, 2013 it was stated that: "Health assessments were of-

fered to the area surrounding the contamination. The CDC physicians trained doctors on how to assess the exposures, and also that a Dr. Ellen Rooder offered to be on the 'phone' to do health consultations." Were there ever any health consultations done 'in' Carbondale where the residents of the community were located? It was stated in 2005 that anyone could go to Chicago for health consultations. Why was one required to go to Chicago for a Southern Illinois issue?

The property is now being developed into a solar array. The community affected by the contamination would like the city of Carbondale to consider the following:

- The community is proposing a request for all information regarding the city's involvement to date with the solar array project, as well as future city plans concerning this site.

- If not provided by the EPA, will the city hire a consultant to interpret the soil test results from the 2012 samples for the people to better understand what they actually say?

- How will the city gain through tax benefits from the project?

- What is the actual predicted dollar amount?

- Will this affect personal property taxes? How?

- Will the city consider buying some of the land to create a 'Buffer' to allow more distance

between the solar array and the community?

- How will the legacy of the land be acknowledged? Scholarships in honor of those who have died due to the contamination of the land??

The energy from the array would go back into the grid and cannot be utilized directly by the area that supplies it. Have there been talks initiated by the city with Ameren Electric to visit all options that could not only benefit the community, but the city as a whole as far as cheaper electric rates?

The citizens of this community are demanding that their concerns be met. We are demanding restitution.

LAURA WELLS:

END POVERTY, VOTE FOR CANDIDATES WHO DON'T TAKE CORPORATE MONEY

Green Party candidate Laura Wells gave this speech at the Poor People's Rally held on January 18 in Sacramento, California.

My name is Laura Wells and I am running as a Green Party candidate for Controller. I am calling for a California state bank, so we can invest our money in California and not Wall Street. Ellen Brown is running for Treasurer as a Green Party candidate and she literally wrote the book on state banks. Elect us and we will roll up our sleeves and take care of the money here in California.

The main thing I want to say

is that we the people have so much power. We are not even aware how much power we have, but the 0.1% knows. They spend billions of dollars to try to convince us to vote for their corporate candidates. Their corporate candidates are the Democratic and Republican Party.

I could make a pretty good case for the fact that Jerry Brown is the worst governor in the country. After three years with him in office, California has these two things: the highest percentage of super-super-rich people AND the highest poverty rate in the country. Every single state-

wide office—Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, Public Insurance Commissioner, and Superintendent of Public Schools, as well as both US Senators—every single one of them is a Democrat.

They have a two-thirds majority in both Houses of the Legislature. And how many of the bad parts of Proposition 13 got fixed in the last three years? Zero, zero, zero. They give us half-measures and half-truths.

It is time for us to do what the 0.1% is afraid we are going to do: stop voting for their cor-

porate candidates. And part of that is yes, vote, do vote. They love it when we don't vote. The primary is coming up on June 3, 2014. Don't vote in every race. Some races only have corporate candidates. But vote every time you see a "no corporate money" candidate. That will be a Green or a Peace and Freedom, and occasionally others.

Check out Richmond, California, which is the biggest city in the entire country that has a Green Mayor. Mayor Gayle McLaughlin has not just the guts, but the backing to go up against the biggest corporation in Cali-

fornia, which is Chevron, and now she's going up against Wall Street banks. What does that take? Refuse to take corporate money—that's what it takes. She and her colleagues don't even have a majority, they just have to be at the table—and you know what they say, if you're not at the table you're on the menu.

So what we need to do is vote. Do not obey the 0.1%. Let's vote for people who don't take corporate money, because we really do have as much power as they are afraid we have. Thank you.

'FORWARD TOGETHER – NOT ONE STEP BACK!'

By John Slaughter

ATLANTA, GA — The Moral Monday Movement gathered together a growing movement across the South on February 8 in Raleigh, North Carolina, with a massive rally estimated to be between 80,000-100,000 people. Sparked by the North Carolina Moral Monday movement, the movement is spreading and growing in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee and other states. The rally was staged as a kickoff for 2014, particularly "Freedom Summer 2014," commemorating the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer in the South.

The Rev. William Barber, North Carolina president of the NAACP and leader of Moral Monday North Carolina, spoke about the meaning of the Moral Monday movement to the crowd assembled to launch Georgia's Moral Monday movement on January 13 in Atlanta. Moral Monday GA has gone on to conduct Moral Monday events that demand the expansion of Medicaid and healthcare for all, the repeal of Georgia's Stand Your Ground law, and for quality education for all. Rev. Barber spoke of the movement through the lens of Southern history, particularly the periods of Re-

construction, where Blacks and poor whites came together to pass voting rights, labor rights, education and progressive taxation. That period of the first reconstruction was defeated by the "Redeemers" who moved to turn the clock back to a time of near-slavery. This time, says Barber, we will not go back.

The Redeemers represented an immoral movement whose strategy was a white supremacy designed to cause white workers to vote against their own interests. "Taking back America" meant a reassertion of states' rights, denying voting rights and cutting taxes. As Tim Franzen, a leader of Moral Monday GA says, "Our state budgets are immoral."

OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE: RECONSTRUCT THE SOUTH

This is the meaning of "Forward." Beginning with a vision of a just and moral society, how do we accomplish that? We have to move beyond scattered, defensive battles to oppose the deconstruction that prevails in the Southern states to a reconstruction that puts the people first. Rev. Barber noted that he believed that there was "a longing in the hearts of most Americans for moral justice." Moral Mondays, he says, "is a trans-



80,000-100,000 of all nationalities came together in a massive Moral March on February 8 in Raleigh, North Carolina to protest the state government's immoral attacks on their lives.

PHOTO/SUSAN MELKISETHIAN

formative coalition rooted in the language of a moral movement." To change America, you have to change the South.

The state governments in North Carolina, Georgia and across the South have been taken by an extreme politics (government of, by and for the corporations) that have a common agen-

da. And as Barber puts it again, if we all have a common adversary, then why fight separately? This is the meaning of "Together." An attack on one of us is an attack upon us all. An injury to one is an injury to us all.

VICTORY IS IN THE STRUGGLE

As this movement is begin-

ning to just get underway, and as it grows, it is being met by forces determined not to concede an inch. Not one concession, not one reform. But as state Sen. Hank Sanders of Selma, Alabama says, "You have to keep fighting and the changes will come. Victory is in the struggle." We will not go back.

Homeless veteran goes on odyssey for peace

By Stephen Michael Clift
a.k.a. "Pirate Mike"

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — For several decades now, American citizens have shamefully and quietly passed by thousands of homeless and needy veterans living on the streets of our small towns, the steam grates of our teeming cities, and in the canyons and wilds of suburbia from Washington DC to the shores of California. And all too infrequently have we as a nation stopped to ponder the reasons for this gross negligence of our children. For too long our communities have suffered; not only from budget cuts and a crumbling infrastructure, mass-shootings and increasing police brutality, but from monolithic case loads and the shrinking availability of af-

fordable space.

It is time for the men and women who have returned home from the military to think about the role they played by supporting US militarism, and the opportunities to heal themselves from the damage they have done and suffered.

As veterans, we are uniquely qualified to determine whether or not our government is acting in the best interests of the people.. We have witnessed the deaths of our friends, the mutilations of children, and the horrible environmental destruction of our planet. We were a part of that continuum of violence and the wasteful spending of billions of dollars on the "war effort".

Today we will not spend ANY effort on warmaking, nor will we support a regime hell-bent on the

domination of the earth's people and the annihilation of our environment. As veterans we need to reclaim our lives on our own terms. Some of us have nothing left. Some of us live check to benefit check, lost in the thick fog of addictions and PTSD. Some of us, the so-called lucky ones, are okay. We survived the war, came home to our families, got government jobs, or retired out of the service.

There is never peace, anywhere, with the US government running amok from the sands of the Middle East to the cities of our own nation. With violent police crackdowns on peaceful antiwar demonstrations and movements, with unending racism and poverty, the only peace we can hope to achieve is within our selves, and we can turn this inner peace into outward expressions of love and beauty, and POLITICAL POWER.

Through the techniques of Direct Action and community organizing we can participate in the struggle to get our nation back on track domestically, and reduce the hellish footprint we



Shameful homelessness, which includes veterans, in Washington, DC.

PHOTO/LARRY TIMMONS

leave wherever our abused and abusive military might has planted a flag in our name.

'Pirate' Michael Clift of Occupy Veterans San Francisco and Veterans for Peace is on a March Across America, from San Francisco to San Diego (with fellow vet James Cartmill) and across the US, "challenging

the homeless veteran to stand up for their rights as human beings by taking our bodies and voices to Washington DC". 'Pirate' Mike describes himself as "an army veteran who served during the Cold war. Radicalized by his experience with the military, he has been an artist and activist since 1989."

I asked him if he'd eaten
he said he'd had
a bunch of apples
all day

— by Sarah Menefee

The good, the bad, the ugly: The truth of two cities

By Rev. Dr. Edwin L. Jones Sr.,
Pastor, Living Faith Baptist
Church and International
Ministries, Washington DC, and
David W. Smith Sr.,
President, Deanwood Citizens
Association

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The mayor of Washington DC, Vincent C. Gray, presented as his vision for the city the “One City” plan. This plan would insure all of our community’s (citizens) a better quality of life. Our city’s elected leadership has adopted the noble and righteous policy of creating “One City”. The reality, however, is far from this mantra. DC’s west of the river has benefited from city government investments that provide(d) tax breaks, \$1 land deals, construction cost related to infrastructure, pre-development funding, and the icing on the cake guaranteed 20 plus years of government leases. These subsidies have cost the DC taxpayer billions of dollars in the last 10 to 15 years. More often than not, investors/developers receiving taxpayer dollars and subsidies agree to provide jobs, low-income housing, and other benefits for DC residents. These promises are often broken or just plain never

alized. Inversely, Ward 7 development projects rarely receive comparable investments.

“The Good”: Recently, there have been a plethora of articles in local newspapers using graphic illustrations depicting a grim tale of two cities in our nation’s capital. Often these articles display charts, tables and data that tell a story of two cities divided along color, race, and social economic lines reminiscent of the prejudicial days of the Jim Crow era. The question is; how is this affecting our communities’ quality of life?

“The Bad”: To answer this question, I read multiple articles and reports which provided detailed maps and charts showing drastic population shifts of low income and African American families. These sources did a fantastic job of showing the correlation of demographics in graphic color and the direct relationship between race, income, educational levels, poverty levels, employment rates, health challenges, and the state of education/schools where these shifts were taking place.

“The Ugly”: Projects like the New Communities Initiative (NCI) were designed to model the idealistic goals of the federal



Community rallies to revive historic theatre through “visual protest.” #saveourStrand

PHOTO/KIMBERLY C. GAINES

HUD program Hope VI in Washington DC (Lincoln Heights and Richardson Dwellings public housing sites) in anticipation of the current economic trends and gentrification effects. NCI was intended to minimize displacement, provide one-to-one replacement housing, help families return and stay, create mixed-income housing and improve the quality of life for families living in and around the

targeted communities. However, the Washington Post recently reported that the city’s leadership has considered not continuing with the NCI, despite the large number of families that have been displaced already.

We’re at a critical juncture now. Our community’s quality of life is at risk and in the balance. There is a growing number of Deanwood (Ward 7) residents who are demanding that the

fruits of the mayor’s “One City” vision happen for our community as well. They won’t accept excuses and broken promises! They know that what we do now as a city, as a community, as human beings, will define our future, write our history and leave our legacy. We must solve this economic disparity and achieve the objective of realizing “One City” for DC’s Deanwood and Ward 7.

The Battle for CCNV Shelter

By Eric Sheptock

WASHINGTON, DC. — The historic CCNV shelter (Community for Creative Non-Violence) is slated to close in a few years, and homeless leaders are mobilizing to ensure that the homeless are not left out in the streets with nothing. A group of homeless advocates called SHARC (Shelter, Housing And Respectful Change) has been effective in getting city officials to form a taskforce which is presently discussing the future of the shelter and its residents. We are pushing for a mixture of affordable housing and shelter to replace the 75-year-old deteriorating building.

The CCNV building was built in 1940 as a World War II army barracks, then became Federal City College, and then sat vacant for several years. In the early eighties, homeless folks began to go in and squat in the building. When the Feds came to get them out, a guy named Mitch Snyder actually organized the homeless to do civil disobedience. Mitch went on a hunger

strike and almost died from it. Fifty-one days into his hunger strike, it was election time and Reagan agreed to turn over the building. After the election, he broke his campaign promise and Mitch went on another hunger strike. Reagan finally caved in and had the building renovated and turned into a shelter that was completed in 1986. Snyder and Reagan signed a restrictive covenant saying the building would remain a shelter for thirty years until 2016. As 2016 draws near, the homeless are talking about what’s going to happen to them. Some forces out there are trying to get around that covenant and have it closed down early.

It was the battle of hundreds of advocates and activists that created CCNV, which has held as many as 1700 people (until its capacity was decreased to 1,350 due to over-crowding). The homeless have fought to retain the shelter over the years, but they have not done as well with affordable housing, because rents are going up and we’re actually losing whatever affordable housing we had at one time.

Five groups of advocates recently came together to form an umbrella group called DC Hope. We are making it a point to learn from the past and develop a collective understanding of the system we are up against. Whereas the 1980s activists confronted the federal government, most present-day advocates are approaching the local DC government for whatever concessions they can get. Of late they have realized that we are getting less and less. They ask questions such as, “In whose interest does the mayor rule?” or “How can we organize better and have a greater impact?”

Some are questioning the Democratic Party, which controls DC politics and is chiseling away at our much-needed local social safety net and giving away our public land. The politically conscious advocates are developing the understanding that government and the Democratic Party are not working in the interest of the poor and dispossessed. This is the starting point for the next stage of our movement.



This is the historic CCNV (Community for Creative Non-Violence) shelter. It is slated to close in a few years. Homeless leaders are mobilizing to insure that the homeless are not left out in the streets with nothing.

PHOTO/ERIC SHEPTOCK

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'The story of Kelly Thomas hit close to home'



A march to protest the not guilty verdict of two Fullerton, CA police officers after their acquittal in the Kelly Thomas trial. Thomas was a homeless, mentally ill man who was murdered by police. A video recording showed the deadly beating.

PHOTO/ETHAN HAWKES, DAILY TITAN

By Patti Beers

LOS ANGELES, CA — In January 2014, two Fullerton police officers were acquitted of charges on murdering Kelly Thomas, despite video evidence showing that Thomas was not a physical threat to them. Kelly Thomas was living on the streets and was suffering from Schizophrenia and was refusing any medical treatment at the time when he was killed.

While most victims of police brutality are people of color, an alarming percentage of people who are killed by police suffer from some form of mental illness. Forty-two percent of people shot by police since 2000 and fifty-eight percent of those who died from their injuries had mental health problems.

The story of Kelly Thomas really hit close to home for me as a Mom who raised an adult son who has struggled with mental illness issues. I raised

him knowing that the likelihood of him being killed by a cop is much higher than average. Statistically, white males are far less likely to be killed by police than men of color. Eyes with color didn't protect Kelly Thomas or the hundreds of other white men who deal with mental illness from the brutality of cops who are not held accountable for their murderous actions. My son doesn't know that his Autism makes him vulnerable to police abuse.

One day I came home and went into a panic when I found that my son, Mat, was not there. Even though I knew exactly where he was likely to be, I was terrified of what might have happened on his way there. What if a cop stopped him and gave him multiple orders and he became confused not knowing which one to follow? Would my son be the next statistic? I immediately walked in the direction of where he would have gone to

get a taco or an energy drink. I found him and he asked me why I met up with him. I said I was worried. He didn't leave a note. He said, "Mom, I'm a grown adult. This is not appropriate." He was right. I completely over reacted. He is perfectly capable of going out and buying a snack.

Raising a son with Autism is really enough struggle for one mom. My adult son is able to function just fine on his own as I raised him well. I shouldn't have to worry about him anymore.

I would like to live in a world where people like Kelly Thomas, my son Mat, and all people will be safe to go out of the house and live safe from police brutality.

Patti Beers is a citizen journalist. She was arrested with 13 others by police in riot gear at the protest after the acquittal of the police officers who murdered Kelly Thomas.

Autoworker retiree healthcare

'YOU MEAN WE DIDN'T GET ANYTHING'



John Williams, Chairperson UAW Region 1 Retiree Council, participates in a demonstration against cuts to the safety-net in Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Al Gladysck

DETROIT, MI — The UAW Voluntary Employee Beneficiaries Association (VEBA) in the end is just a hoard of money disconnected from production. That hoard must be gambled on penny stocks and junk bonds in the hope of hitting it lucky. That is the consequence of UAW autoworker retiree healthcare being permanently separated from UAW contract obligations and the corporate accounting regulations governed by the Financial Ac-

counting Standards Board.

HOW WE GOT HERE

In December of 1992, the Financial Accounting Standards Board issued a rule that all publicly traded companies must account for retiree health care benefits on an accrual basis. They must carry all of their future retiree health care costs on their books at the present day cost as an imaginary liability.

In 2005, the UAW was confronted with this imaginary liability created in 1992 and the

2003 contract was reopened. The UAW agreed to GM and Ford's offer to begin funding internal VEBAs at those companies in order to eventually shed themselves of their contractual obligation to provide healthcare for their retirees.

The 2007 contract resulted in the underfunded VEBA that would open its doors on January 1, 2010, the freezing of wages and pension benefits for employees hired before September 27, 2007 and no pension or retiree healthcare benefits for employees hired on or after that date. In addition, the two-tier wage system was established in order to increase their profits. And the UAW agreed to never negotiate for the retirees in the future.

VEBA AND THE GREAT RECESSION

Early in 2009, Congress and the Administration demanded that the UAW reopen the 2007 contracts at all three companies and accept 50% of the underfunded VEBA in company stock in exchange for the partial nationalization of GM.

Before the ink dried, GM and Chrysler filed for bankruptcy. All three companies began shedding their overcapacity. GM ownership transferred to the Government and the GM VEBA. Chrysler ownership was transferred

to Fiat and the Chrysler VEBA. And the Ford VEBA received 50% of its funding in the form of Ford stock. This increased burden of underfunding is making it even more cash poor.

In the 2011 contract negotiations with the auto companies, no funding gains to the VEBA were achieved. The company waived the 2007 agreement with the union— NO MORE BARGAINING FOR RETIREES.

In the words of one retiree after the 2011 contracts were ratified: "You mean we didn't get anything?"

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

The healthcare of all of us, not just UAW auto retirees, is being separated from production to increase profitability. We are in a period of economic transformation. Machines that made us more productive are being replaced by machines that produce with little or no human labor involved.

We must support an independent political direction for a new social relationship based on production and distribution for the general wellbeing of everyone and not the select few owners of the new means of production.

In crying out
I have learned not to scream
but chant, in vibration
with my heart
the earth
my sisters
my brothers
and struggle
and dance in violence
like love at war
like freedom rising
like us as one
undefeatable

—Ayat Jalal-Bryant

Robots in the fields: Farmworkers are not disposable objects

By Salvador Sandoval, M.D.

MERCED, CA — A wine-grape pruning robot that does the job of manual labor at half the cost. A strawberry-picking robot that works day and night. A lettuce-thinning machine in development that can do the job 20 to 40 times faster than a person. An orange-picking machine that is nearing implementation and already cheaper than a live picker.

All this may sound like science fiction. But these and numerous other innovations are already under development.

Agricultural interests and public universities are developing new technologies that will replace farm laborers. Included are drones that can herd cattle and spray chemicals. Already in use in green houses are robots that can sense the need for watering a particular plant, and others that can determine when a tomato is ready to be picked.

Guided by laser sensors and gyroscopes with mobile arms, this technology is fast invading the fresh-fruit and vegetable market that has long eluded mechanization. Experts estimate that robotization in the fields is from two to ten years away from full implementation.

Mechanization in the fields has historically lagged behind that in industry by at least 40 years for various factors, most notably the availability of a cheap, vulnerable, and abundant labor supply, which to a large extent is undocumented. The fact that agricultural interests clamor for a guest-worker program attests to their dependence on cheap labor. Growers claim that labor shortages are spurring on this new drive to replace workers in the fields. Although there is much truth in that statement, there is more to the story. Driven by foreign and domestic competition, capitalist interests in agriculture are forced to introduce robots in the fields in order to stay ahead of the competition.

What does this mean for the 11 million undocumented workers currently in the United States? Most certainly, it does not mean job security. Although the majority of the undocumented immigrants do not labor in agriculture, the gap between labor-replacing technology and the cost of labor in the cities and in rural areas is narrowing quickly. And it is having profound consequences for all workers, not just the immigrant worker.

Following WWII, technology such as the mechanical



Robots promise a wonderful world, but for whom?

PHOTO/ROBOHUB.ORG AND VISION ROBOTICS CORPORATION

cotton harvester displaced millions of agricultural workers in the rural South, but these internal migrants were absorbed into new industrial jobs. What is happening today in the fields is much different from the early days of labor-enhancing technology. Early on, the introduction of mechanical grape harvesters was used to break unioniza-

tion drives in California fields to keep wages low. Now actual jobs are being eliminated forever.

The new technology promises to provide an abundance of food, as well as eliminate back-breaking labor. But the way production is currently organized; the benefit goes to the capitalist and not to working people.

We are not disposable ob-

jects to be used and discarded when no longer exploitable. Our media, like this newspaper, are offered as tribunes of the people to discuss how society as a whole should benefit from **public ownership** of this new technology. It should not just benefit a handful of owners of that technology.

STOP POLICE DEPARTMENT SPYING



Action at the LA Fusion Center.

PHOTO/STOP LAPD SPYING COALITION

By Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

LOS ANGELES, CA — With the recent spotlight shining on the National Security Agency's (NSA) spying apparatus, unnoticed is the government's continued expansion of spying, surveillance, and information gathering programs in partnership with local law enforcement. One key program—the nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) initiative—is now active in 46 states with the participation of over 14,200 local law enforcement agencies, every federal agency, and various corporate partnerships.

Launched by the LAPD in March 2008, the SAR (Suspicious Activity Report) program, Special Order SO 1, requires all police officers to file a SAR, based on the observation of several non-criminal activities such as taking pictures, videotaping, using binoculars, and drawing diagrams. Such innocent behavior can lead to the opening of secret files, followed by a formal investigation with the file's entry into the LAPD Major Crimes Division database. The majority of these files are also sent to fusion centers (an information gathering and sharing spy center) to be

accessed by every local, tribal, campus, transit, federal law enforcement agency, and private contractors. Furthermore, in October 2009, the LAPD launched iWATCH—the “See something, Say Something” program that essentially promotes and encourages neighbors to arbitrarily report suspicious behavior.

SO1 and iWATCH assume that if you are photographing or videotaping in public you may be engaging in what is termed “pre-operational planning.” The suspicion cast on such benign, daily behaviors opens the door for racial profiling and privacy violations. It is important to realize the fundamental premise of these programs is that each and every person is a potential suspect. This concept completely contradicts the long held legal principle of *innocent until proven guilty* and turns it into *guilty until proven innocent*.

Another major concern is that the SAR program operates without applying constitutional standards of suspicion. SAR uses the standard of “reasonable indication” established under the National SAR Initiative (NSI) rather

than the constitutional standards of “probable cause.” NSI defines suspicious activity as “*observed behavior reasonably indicative of pre-operational planning of terrorism or other criminal activity.*” This highly vague and overly broad standard of “reasonable indication” enables police officers to base their investigations on hunches and stereotypes. In October 2012, the US Senate Permanent Subcommittee issued a scathing report stating intelligence gathering at fusion centers, that originates from local law enforcement like LAPD, is “flawed, useless, irrelevant, duplicative.”

In 2013, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition led a 7-month effort demanding that the LA City

Human Relations Commission (HRC) hold public hearings on the LAPD SAR program. On October 10, 2013, the Los Angeles HRC passed a motion to host public hearing on LAPD's “Suspicious Activity Reporting Program, Gang Injunctions, and other public safety issues” with the overall theme centered around profiling. This will be the first local public hearing in the nation to focus on the government's SARs program. These hearings are tentatively scheduled to begin in late spring.

For more information please go to www.stoplapdspying.org or email us at stoplapdspying@gmail.com.

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State of Michigan forces greater debt on Benton Harbor

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The State of Michigan forced a \$2.3 million loan down the throat of the citizens of Benton Harbor.

The loan will keep them in debt. If you make a loan to pay off debts you are not getting rid of your debt. You are putting your city on the line to cover that debt and could possibly fail. This is

a Quicken loan deal, where our city is put up as collateral.

Benton Harbor has a lot of financial problems. It is one of many cities in the Union that have lost their industrial tax base. Like other cities, the city continually bleeds residents while doling out financial give-a-ways to the corporations that remain, like the Whirlpool Corporation. Many municipalities like Benton Harbor, due to budget cuts, have abandoned their police force and many services. This allows the county and State agencies to come in and take over.

Governor Snyder signed an Emergency Manager bill that allows him to take over or even eliminate whole cities, schools and locally elected officials. Then puppets are installed to help giant corporations like Whirlpool take over cities. Whirlpool is like wild horses. They run you down, destroy your city or town and take your job to China or someplace else if you do not tame them. Whirl-

pool is unrestrained by Benton Harbor's Mayor James Hightower who allows the corporation to dump their costs on city residents. This is one way that Whirlpool maximizes profit for shareholders at the expense of the people of Benton Harbor.

Commissioner Marcus Muhammad told the Herald Paladium, "After four years of emergency, quote-unquote 'management,' the city has been subjected to a loan... debt is slavery. And a move as such only cripples the city of Benton Harbor and places us in a neo-colonial or apartheid state in relation to the state of Michigan." He added, "It's gravely unfortunate that the state opted to support the loan and oppose revenue by undermining the city income tax... if the city of Benton Harbor does not generate revenue, bankruptcy is inevitable." Commissioner Trenton Bowen told the Herald Paladium he was "also unhappy to hear the loan has been approved... the city needs to gen-

erate revenue, not take on more debt... you have an opportunity to bring in revenue and you encourage the residents to defeat it so you can go get a loan to put the city in more debt."

It's unfortunate that Mayor Hightower opted to support this loan and oppose revenue by undermining the city income tax. It is time for the residents of Benton Harbor to take a stand against elected officials who have the best interest of the corporation at heart—not the best interests of the residents. Mayor James Hightower is desperate and panicking. The recall signatures for him to be removed from office are in with more than enough signatures. He is out intimidating the citizens to force them to lie. Is this the type of Mayor you want? We must say enough is enough.



Rev. Edward Pinkney speaks at a Detroit event to discuss plans to fight the mess banks and corporations have forced on the cities.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY

Appeal to People's Tribune readers

As an independent press, we rely exclusively on donations. The People's Tribune offers its pages to those in the movement who want to get coverage of their struggles out to others. At the same time it offers analysis, direction and solutions to the problems our society faces. We tell the truth!

We operate on a shoestring budget, with a dedicated all-volunteer staff. Printing, shipping and mailing costs have continued to rise. While donations and sustainers are increasing, they are not meeting our expenses.

Simply stated, we need money. We need to raise \$15,000. Your regular donations, large and small are the only solution. For instance, 26 sustainers at only \$25 per month, plus 60 sustainers at only \$10 per month equals \$15,000 annually.

Please become a consistent, regular donor to the People's Tribune. Become a monthly sustainer now. Donate via pay pal at www.peopletribune.org or send check to PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

Thanks in advance.

— The Editorial Board of the People's Tribune

THE FUTURE IS UP TO US!

Editor's note: Below are excerpts from the book, "The Future is Up To Us: A Revolutionary Talking Politics with the American People," by Nelson Peery, published in the year 2000.

The stability of America has always rested upon that huge section of the population that had just enough to give them the hope that they were going to get some more. So long as they had that hope, they wouldn't change the system no matter how hard they were hurting. They believed there was a golden egg up there somewhere. They were the ones who stabilized America.

All of us have seen the magazines that speak frankly to rulers about the danger of this polarization of wealth and poverty continuing. It's one thing as long as you can say that poverty is colored and it's related to lack of industrious, Protestant habits. When you have the poverty spreading out, people look at one another and say, "You know, it's not true this is a Black problem, or a brown problem. It's a problem of a growing section of society." Now, the problem becomes—how do you stop it?

The polarization of wealth and poverty isn't somebody's idea. It's a result of changes in the mode of production. When products made by robotics are sold as if they were made by human beings, the capitalists get rich, and I mean fast! You don't

have much of a labor overhead and you are kicking these products out. Now, how do you spread out that wealth? You can't, and you cannot stop the process. Some years ago, there were eight billionaires in America. Well, it's now 154. The number of millionaires doubled between 1995 and 2000. Imagine where that money came from. Another million people lost a good portion of their livelihood.

What are the billionaires to do? How do you stop being a billionaire? Go back to the old means of production? Go back to a drill press or a typewriter? You can't. Either he is going to be a billionaire tomorrow or he is going to be homeless. The capitalists have to continue to accumulate. That's the way the system works. You can't decide to quit. You've got to make more money and more money and more money or you are going to lose the money you've got.

This polarization of wealth and poverty that's so rampant in the western world and especially in the United States, is going to continue. Little by little, the poor are going to recognize themselves as poor and propertyless. We have to help them understand that they are part of a new class. Any deep political response to the economic and social revolution depends on agitators and propagandists providing this knowledge to the movement.