

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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DONATION \$1



Retirees march in Detroit against deeper cuts to pensions of city workers. Today's corporate-government will not provide for the aged or for any unneeded worker. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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MAY DAY 2014: FIGHTING FOR VICTORY OVER THE CORPORATIONS

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Assault on pensions demands a new society

EDITORIAL

The national attack on pensions for US workers has surged from Detroit to Chicago. These two cities are setting precedents that will be used to attack pensions across the country.

Pensions are deferred wages and thus belong to workers. In the Detroit bankruptcy, the judge ruled that public worker pensions are merely a contractual agreement, no different than any other “bill” that the bankrupt city owes. This sets the precedent for converting pensions as property of the working class into the property of the banks.

Immediately following Detroit, Illinois reduced future pensions benefits by 43 percent, a \$160 billion cut over the next three decades. However the City of Chicago, and Chicago Public Schools, are each soon required by the State Constitution to make separate payments of about \$600 million to city worker and teacher pension funds.

Like governments everywhere, the city claims that it doesn't have the money and that pensions will mean cuts in basic services as well as increases in property taxes. Like governments everywhere, Chicago refused to contribute to pensions over the years and borrowed against them, running the pension funds deeper into debt.

Chicago and other cities could easily cover pension expenses by raising taxes on corporations and cutting corporate subsidies. Corporations doubled their profits and cut their tax burden by half in the last decade. Each year states and cities spend about \$80 billion in corporate subsidies. If you count money lost to offshore tax loopholes, corporations receive \$120 bil-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

lion a year directly from taxes. This is more than enough to pay for pensions.

But that's not how capitalism works. Driven by the economic law of capitalism to make maximum profit, corporations are simply not going to provide pensions for workers they do not need. Historically, the pension system was established in the era of Industrial production in order to create a stable workforce. Pensions were part of the “social contract” that also guaranteed a modest amount of health care, public education, a social safety net and Social Security.

The Industrial Era is over. Production is increasingly handled by robots and software in the new Electronic Era. Traditional jobs that can sustain a family are vanishing. Temp jobs are the largest sector of jobs that are expanding. Capitalism today—organized by a merger of corporations with the state—is

aggressively redesigning society for their own benefit. This necessity is behind the all-out assault on pensions, both for public and corporate workers. US pension funds currently have about \$9 trillion in assets. Stealing this will boost capitalist profits, big time.

The attack on pensions means that the capitalist system will not support anyone who gets old. After working for more than 40 years, you are on your own. Public workers and Bill Gates are all free to buy all the support

and health care they need! The problem for the public workers is they won't have Gates' money. In your “Golden Years”, you better have the gold!

The pension attack is a naked exercise of its political power by the ruling class. A new society, without corporate property, where the livelihood of every human being is guaranteed, is the only solution. The first step is building unity of the working class in the struggle for our common survival.

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WHY THE MOVEMENT NEEDS A PRESS

From the Editors

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

Visit us on the web at www.PeoplesTribune.org

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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

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

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

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

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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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May Day 2014: Fighting for victory over the corporations

COVER STORY

As we mark International Workers' Day May 1, the ruling classes of the world are attacking the working class everywhere. People demonstrating against the unemployment and poverty that characterizes the capitalist world today are beaten and arrested. The police are waging a campaign of terror and murder against the poor and anyone who voices opposition to the rule of the corporations. The "anti-terrorism" laws are used to strip us of our rights and subject us to unlimited surveillance and arrest without charges. The government ignores our pleas for help and offers us bullets, billy clubs and budget cuts instead. We are living under the fascist dictatorship of the corporations.

But what appears to be our enemy's strength is really proof of their weakness. History is on the side of the people today. We have the possibility of throwing off the rule of the corporations and building a whole new society that serves the people. What we need is a strategy for victory.

May Day has its roots in the May 4, 1886, Haymarket affair in Chicago, where the police fired on a public assembly of workers during a general strike for the eight-hour workday. Over the next 100 years or so, the struggle between worker and capitalist in the US was basically to get a bigger share of the pie for the workers. It was a fight for reform, and the capitalists periodically granted reforms when it suited their interests.

Today, the reforms have been stripped away, and there is no going back to the old days. No more reforms are possible, because the electronic revolution has transformed the economy. Robots and computers are taking the place of human labor, eliminating one job after the other. Millions are now permanently



Retirees march in Detroit against deeper cuts to pensions of city workers. We must continue to demand that the government guarantee the necessities of life to every one of us. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

unemployed or underemployed, and their ranks grow daily. The spreading permanent unemployment shrinks the market, and the corporations take steps to boost their profits—they cut more jobs, cut wages, cut benefits, cut government services. They go to war to open up markets. Everything they do to boost profits makes things worse and invites resistance. They are reduced to protecting their wealth and power by force. This is why they attack the people.

Yet the same electronic rev-

olution that is producing mass unemployment has given us the possibility of unlimited abundance. If the people owned and controlled the economy—the banks, the factories, the mines, the offices—we could create everything we need and simply distribute it to people. And in fact, we have no choice but to fight our way forward into such a new, cooperative society. Electronics spells the end of every economy based on private ownership of the social tools of production.

The people cannot win with-

out a vision of what they're fighting for. We must continue to demand that the government guarantee the necessities of life to every one of us, not because we expect the corporate government to grant those demands, but because we know the corporations' refusal to do so will teach us what we are really fighting for—a cooperative society, where the people are in charge and the abundance we produce is distributed 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. We need your support to continue telling the truth.

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Protest of police murder of James Boyd, a homeless man living in the foothills. This is the 37th police shooting in Albuquerque in four years, 23 fatal. PHOTO/FRIDA SALAZAR, DAILY LOBO

Confronting the American Police State

From the editors

The police murder of James Boyd, a homeless man living in the Albuquerque foothills, is a wakeup call for the American people. As the economy automates and uses less human labor, the government is abandoning its responsibility to meet the needs of its people. Many become homeless, but instead of helping them, the system isolates, scapegoats, and attacks them. Police murder is the most violent and vicious form of that scapegoating. The homeless all across the country are in imminent danger from the escalating police state. When we defend them, and other victims of police violence, we defend ourselves. We must confront each and every attack on what liberty we have left, and we must recognize that we are in a fight for a new society. Today, the police are the street enforcers for the corporate dictatorship. We need a society where the people, not the corporations, are in charge. *Contact us to order People's Tribunes to distribute in your community.*

'Crying for mercy'

"I watched firsthand, standing toward the front of a crowd of perhaps a hundred unarmed protesters on the edge of Civic Plaza late Sunday night, as we were almost completely surrounded by literally an entire police force prepared not for a group of dissatisfied citizens but for war. And that is not an exaggeration. There were hundreds of armed police, all with riot shields, batons, gas masks and guns, in row upon row upon row. The smell of tear gas was everywhere, stinging everyone's eyes and throats; and on every side but directly behind us, I could see police with their faces hidden; machine guns or assault rifles in their hands; police cars; flashing lights; and armored vehicles, the kind you'd typically see in Iraq or Afghanistan."

— **Mike Smith**, excerpted from his article, *APD Ad Absurdum*, on alibi.com

"Like many of us in Albuquerque, I was horrified, again, at the APD shooting of another citizen. This time it was captured on video which I first saw on national TV. I was initially embarrassed that Albuquerque was in the news for this institutional murder, but then I watched the video. I was heart broken as I watched and heard [the now murdered] James clearly say, 'We have an agreement... don't worry about safety. I'm not going to harm you.' Then a voice says, 'Do it' and the shots ring out. Ralph DiPalma, the minister who worked with James, known as Abba, said at his vigil: 'That's where he ended up: Crying for mercy, crying for mercy... And he didn't get it.'"

— **Meta Chaya Hirschl** (For the rest of this article, visit peopletribune.org)

Envisioning a society where children grow up safe

Editor's note: *This is an interview with Emma Sandoval, a community organizer with SWOP (Southwest Organizing Project) in Albuquerque, New Mexico about the police murder of James Boyd.*

People's Tribune: Can you tell us about the police murder of the homeless man?

Emma Sandoval: The Albuquerque Police Department has a culture of violence that dates back about ten years. The department has repeatedly been under review. There have been 37 shootings since 2010 and 23 resulted in death. That's per capita on a par with New York even though Albuquerque has a much

smaller population. The APD is known to escalate situations that don't need to be.

PT: The guy was just camping out in a park. Why did they shoot him?

ES: That is why everyone is so outraged. The man was mentally ill. He was camping out in the foothills and was not a danger to the public. He told the police that he would come down if they didn't mess with him. He was trying to comply and his back was turned when they shot him.

PT: What has been the response of people?

ES: There have been large protests, candle light vigils and a

large turn out to a city council meeting. People are angry because they don't feel safe. Two more people were shot by the police since this incident; one died and the other was shot but didn't die.

PT: What are some of the conditions that may be contributing to how the police are acting?

ES: We have a large population of communities of color and poverty here. We're at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to hunger, education and health care. There is a lot of racial profiling. I am raising a 5-year-old. It's kind of scary as a parent that you have to teach your child to be worried about the police.

When is murder justified?

By **Monika Monje**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — When is murder justified? When you carry an Albuquerque Police Department (APD) badge, or so it seems? A homeless man, James Boyd, was killed for allegedly threatening officers in the desolate mountain area where he was camping out. The justification, according to the police department, was that the knives in his hands posed a threat to the six or more officers (including K-9) on the call. Or, as the mayor stated, it was "a mistake."

Since 2010, APD officers have been involved in 37 shootings, 23 fatal.

Following the incident, citizens of Albuquerque took to the streets. More than 1000 protesters marched downtown to APD headquarters demanding justice. "Another Person Dead" was the running theme of the protest. Sadly enough, hours after this protest, APD was using excessive and deadly force again.

The protests have created a division among citizens: supporters of APD or police officers and those that are unsupportive. It has become such a debate among many (even our own friends and family) with crazy justifications

for the Department.

The question is not supportive versus unsupportive of the police. But rather, we're fed up with the injustices that the police badge signifies. A police officer is supposed to serve and protect the community but, instead, citizens are afraid of what behavior they will receive when encountering APD.

For years, it seems, that the mayor, governor, and chief of police brush whatever situation occurs under the rug by claiming these shootings are justified, and that the officers' behavior is justified. Officers of APD have been enabled to act as though they are above the people they are paid to protect.

Numerous complaints of officers have been filed while on duty and off duty but there are never any repercussions for their actions. Despite internal investigations, the excessive force by officers continues and it seems it has become stronger in recent months—but not this time.

Since the Boyd shooting, there have been three protests. Citizens of Albuquerque are not casting a blind eye; they have spoken, risen and will continue to fight for those without a voice until something is resolved.

PT: What is the next step?

ES: I think the Albuquerque Police Department needs new stewardship. The police department needs to be overhauled. Police who have committed these murders should be held accountable, and charged for the murders they committed.

PT: What vision do you have of a new society that wouldn't have these things?

ES: I envision a society where my son can grow up feeling safe, where police live up to their mission of protecting and serving for all communities.

Moral Monday moves against politicians who don't listen

By Gloria Slaughter

ATLANTA, GA — On Saturday, April 5th, Moral Monday GA joined forces in Atlanta with other organizations and supported the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR) rally to oppose deportations taking place under the Obama administration. Then Moral Monday GA rallied at the Governor's mansion April 7 and the group delivered a petition containing 65,000 names to the governor demanding that he veto the bad bills passed by the Georgia Legislature.

The bills are immoral and are attacks on the workers, women, the poor and the disenfranchised. There have been nine mobilizations of Moral Monday GA in opposition to these and a call for support during the legislative session for: Access to Healthcare; Economic Justice and Workers Rights; LGBTQ Equality; Protecting Public Education; Racial Justice and Ending Stand Your Ground; Voting Rights; Women's Rights and Reproductive Justice and Stop Guns from going into restricted areas like bars, Churches, and Airports.

One of the bills that Moral Monday GA wants Governor Nathan Deal to veto is HB 990 and to Expand Medicaid Now! It's a matter of life and death—10 people die everyday in Georgia



Moral Monday rally at Georgia Capitol.

PHOTO/STEVE EBERHARDT

for lack of healthcare. The final version of HB 990 requires an act of the Legislature before Medicaid can be expanded via the Affordable Care Act. But there are other bills that are just as contentious. One of the bills would subject some food stamp recipients to drug testing and another takes away unemployment compensation to seasonal public workers such as school bus drivers.

As in other states, the regressive legislators are influenced by the corporations to privatize public entities such as prisons, public schools, probation, child welfare, etc. There is constant media attention on those who “take” from the system. Yet, taxpayers are asked to fork out \$17 million for the parking lot at the proposed new Falcons stadium. The media doesn't analyze how the rich get richer with tax rebates and that

they are the real “takers.”

Moral Monday GA will continue to rally around issues, even though the Legislature is no longer in session. This summer the group will implement Freedom Summer 2014 in recognition of the 1964 Freedom Summer actions that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. In Georgia, this year, the state legislators passed legislation putting restrictions on

voting.

Tim Franzen, one of the leaders of Moral Monday GA says “The Moral Monday movement that started in North Carolina and spread across the region is just the beginning of a new era in the South, as more and more people are rising up against politicians who aren't listening and don't represent the will of the people.”

HOMELESS STAND UP TO CRIMINALIZATION



By Mike Zint

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — So now I'm a criminal. My crime is poverty and being homeless. I'm a wanted man in San Francisco. Or to put it more accurately, the city doesn't want me, or thousands like me.

San Francisco's city government and their police force are waging war on the homeless. This is how it's being done.

The Sit-Lie law is their primary daytime weapon against the homeless. No sitting or lying down between the hours of 7am and 11pm. This is discriminatory and a violation of our rights. There is no equal protection here. SFPD targets the homeless while the housed are allowed to sit just feet away. SFPD also targets protesters such as OccupySF occupiers. The exemptions exist only for the housed. Look up Prop L

for the law and its exemptions.

The state's illegal lodging law is 647e. SFPD will use this to wake you up repeatedly throughout the night. The SFPD will confiscate everything you own as “evidence of lodging.” The law clearly states “without the permission of the owner,” so how is it SFPD is issuing tickets to people sleeping on the public sidewalk?

The other major problem is the Department of Public Works using very dangerous chemicals in the areas the homeless sleep. The warning labels clearly state the chemicals are not to be used in inhabited areas. Reactions that I and others have experienced are extreme breathing issues and vomiting. This is during or immediately after sidewalk spraying.

Going into a shelter is even worse. You will be forced to sit

in a chair for days until a bed opens up. Once you get a bed you will get head and body lice and bed bugs, and are exposed to MRSA staph infections and perhaps TB. The SROs are no better. Many are dangerous and not up to code.

So your choice is to get sick, tortured, abused, be criminalized, or leave.

San Francisco seems to be leading the nation in the torture and inhumane treatment of its poor. The SFPD does not believe in following the laws. They instead enforce the policy of driving the homeless out.

Mike Zint is a long-time organizer with OccupySF and of the Sit-Lie (pictured) and other actions in the Occupy the Sidewalks and the 'First They Came for the Homeless' campaigns.

Mike Zint, homeless, spent 5 days in jail for sitting. The Sit-Lie law makes sitting or lying down between the hours of 7am and 11pm illegal in San Francisco for the homeless.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

'Louder Than A Bomb' An educational revolution

By Adam Gottlieb

CHICAGO, IL — Louder Than A Bomb (LTAB), the world's biggest youth Poetry Slam festival, held in Chicago every year during February and March, is truly a revolution in education. Having just completed its fourteenth year, LTAB has made Chicago a leader in the global youth spoken word movement, which has a unique and critical role to play in social change.

This year, over 1,000 young people ages 12-19 from all over the Chicago area gathered to listen to each other deliver passionate poems about their day-to-day lives, struggles and dreams. Over 120 teams participated, including a third of all Chicago high schools!

What makes LTAB revolutionary? First of all, it is desegregating one of the most segregated cities in the nation. Also, from an educational perspective, it "turns the tables" of the traditional teacher-student paradigm: by placing the lived experiences, stories, and words of the youth at the center of the conversation, it empowers young people to name and tackle the problems they face daily. This places teachers in a position to offer guidance and challenges by *listening* and posing ques-

tions. These ideas, popularized by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, were already being practiced in LTAB before we had "Critical Pedagogy" theories to illuminate them. To quote Kevin Coval, LTAB co-founder: "Hip Hop was Freirean before we read Freire." This kind of pedagogy cultivates critical thinking, dialogue, and leadership.

Important since its founding, LTAB means even more today, in the wake of the greatest attack on public education our city has ever seen: 50 public school closings. LTAB has risen as Chicago's *real* public forum on the school closings — and real public education for our youth. The students of Maine West High School declared it in their group piece: "Our education is not a commodity."

Responding to the community's calls, Young Chicago Authors (the non-profit organization which runs LTAB) chose the theme "Freedom in Education" for this year's festival. At "Crossing the Street," the festival's orientation, Coval asked students to consider where and how they get educated.

"At LTAB you get educated about things that are outside of your sphere of witnessing... you just get to learn and hear about



Team Vox Ferus performing their group piece at Louder Than A Bomb 2014, the world's biggest youth festival held in Chicago every year. PHOTO /BLYTHE BAIRD

things you've never thought about."

— Micah Hicks, age 16

"I heard this amazing piece, it was called 26th street... which is an area I would never commute to — it's so far from me. And I feel like LTAB brought 26th street to me."

— Baylee Champion, age 17

This year I worked with students from the far west suburbs. Jenna Pitstick, age 18, remarked: "When you live in a community where everyone is white and Christian—not that that's a bad thing—but when everyone has this... privileged life, you're not gonna know to not judge

people." She and the rest of our West burbs crew are grateful for the opportunities LTAB offers to learn from others' perspectives.

Baylee summed it up: "That's why I love Louder Than A Bomb: because it can make you listen like nobody else can."

LEADER OF 'BAD ASS MOMS' SPEAKS OUT



Rousemary Vega, with daughter Zamara, is a mother of four, and a leader in the battle to save our public schools.

PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

By Leslie Willis

CHICAGO, IL — "How can you celebrate anything when you kill schools and over test our children... Stop threatening students and teachers, stop over testing and closing schools... stop making it rain with our tax dollars!" These words took aim at Mayor Rahm Emmanuel at a public event on March 4 to celebrate Chicago's 177th birthday. Rouse-

mary Vega, a mother of four children and a leader in the battle to save our public schools, was forced to use this method to address our mayor with grievances she shares with thousands of parents and teachers across the city. "This was an action of frustration," she explained during an interview for Momenpopcast,* "because the mayor is not listening and he needs to know what he is doing to the community."

The movement to "opt out" of taking yet another test (in this case the ISAT) grew into a city-wide protest with over 80 schools reporting that parents were refusing to let their children be tested. "This vigorous testing is taking away the children's creativity and their ambition of wanting to be educated. Our schools are becoming testing camps. We're crying over this money we don't have and yet we have tests raining on our children. Why can't we make good use of this money we are spending on tests?"

Rousemary became active attempting to stop the city from

closing Lafayette Elementary, in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, where her children were happy and doing well, and taking advantage of a great music program. The heartbreak of losing that battle has prompted Rousemary to deepen her commitment to seeing this struggle through to the end. She is a founder of the group Bad Ass Moms (BAM), a group of Moms with diverse backgrounds and coming from all parts of the city. "We believe in equality for the children."

Momenpopcast talked to Rousemary about the present inequality in education, and the process of sucking the funds from public schools and selling schools to corporations (charters). "What they are creating is hunger games in education... a competitive environment." She explained that charter schools attempt to "weed out" children they deem problematic or not able to get college and career ready. "How many of these jobs will be around when our children become college and career

ready? We tell our kids to get an education if you don't want to work at McDonald's and now we are telling our kids—hey McDonald's is working—it's the only job available."

Explaining the misuse of our tax dollars, Rousemary said, "TIFF money is given to corporations for all this job creation that we never see... we have all these companies coming to the South Side, yet the South Side is still starving for needing jobs. All they are creating are factories completely full of machines—

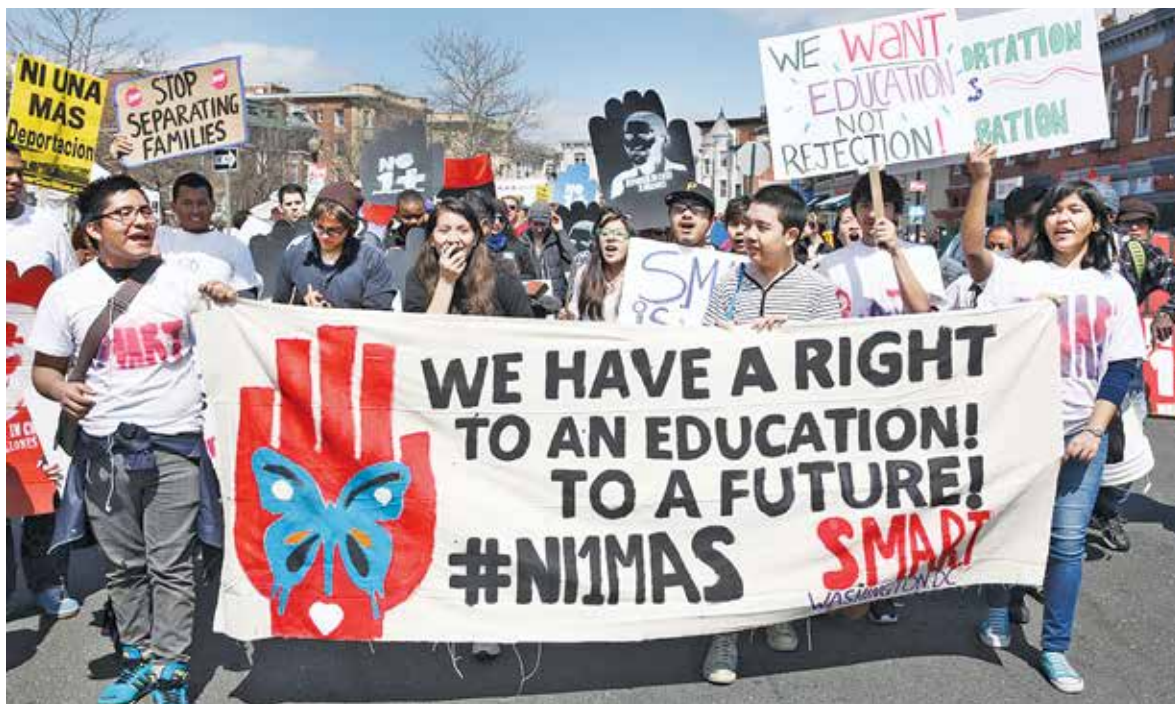
eliminating the workers."

Parents like Rousemary are the hope of the future in education for our children. Her message to you is to get involved and informed, join your local school organizations, and prepare to lock arms with each other to see this fight through till victory is won.

*Momenpopcast is a podcast. Listen online at www.buzzsprout.com/12831 or go to Momenpopcast on Facebook.

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March to White House to protest President Obama's approaching two million deportations since he became President. PHOTO/RICK REINHARD

Immigrant students won't sell out their communities

By Steve Teixeira

LOS ANGELES, LA — Across America, undocumented high school seniors prepare to leave school not knowing what's in store for them. President Obama's DACA order allows many young immigrants to work now, but will it expire, or be replaced by a new federal law? And what about the deportations, which have reached two million people during the Obama Administration?

If these seniors go to college, will their state allow them to pay

resident fees like Texas and California do, and Florida's House voted for on March 20th? Or will their state charge them at the much higher non-resident rate? Will it let undocumented students receive state grants? Will the federal government finally let them get Pell Grants?

Instead of waiting for answers, undocumented youth are taking action, like millions of young Americans before them. They've held marches, government sit-ins, and rallies. When even arrests didn't stop their

movement, officials tried pulling them from the rest of the immigrant rights movement. States began programs to help undocumented students only, and the federal DACA order gave young students and soldiers rights which other immigrants lack.

It was a warning that although some young people may be free from deportation, they should accept that their families won't be. But student leaders know that their movement only became stronger after the protests by millions of immigrants of *all* ages and oc-

Flipping the City: The Battle for the City College of San Francisco

By Steven Miller

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — A wave of gentrification is hitting San Francisco, with real estate speculators "flipping the rents" by evicting entire buildings. Average rent in the San Francisco is now \$3500/month and rising. Tech corporations in the city now receive tens of millions of dollars of tax breaks. Tech workers roll in on ever-present Google busses, making huge salaries and often working 75 hours a week. Meanwhile residents are often reduced to temp workers who cannot afford the new rents.

The changes in the San Francisco reflect the transformation of the economy in the US and across the globe. Capitalism is reorganizing urban space to "flip the city." Foreclosures and high rents pushed a majority of the Black community into the outer suburbs, and put tremendous pressure on the majority Latino Mission district. The largest

working class institution in the City—City College of San Francisco (CCSF)—is under intense pressure to downsize radically, and convert to a precariously employed all-part-time faculty.

Two years ago the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)—a private corporation—suddenly charged that the school was failing and announced their intention to disaccredit the school in July 2014, even though CCSF consistently receives the highest ratings for its educational programs. Withdrawing accreditation is a death sentence for any school.

The school's "crime" was that it resisted the corporate redesign. CCSF guaranteed life-long education for everyone. It refused to allow super-sized CEO salaries. Governance was in the hands of the faculty. It stood squarely in the way of changing the mission of higher education in California.

Now the state has appointed an emergency manager, who has the unilateral power to cut anything and everything. The Special Trustee with Extraordinary Power gave out generous raises to new administrators, while faculty and staff were handed deep pay cuts.

Now students lose their class registration if they cannot pay up front, or if they are unable to get access to a counselor to help them draw up an educational plan. Classes in arts and languages are being cut back severely, putting a priority on narrow career education. Nine diversity departments won by previous movements—ethnic studies, women's studies, LGBTQ studies and labor studies—are now being stripped of their coordinators.

The community, faculty and students have not sat by passively to watch the school be destroyed. They have exposed numerous conflicts of interest on the part of the ACCJC and

The Education Fight

On these pages are stories about the fight for an education system that creates a cultured, thinking person who can take humanity forward. Education can't just be about getting trained for a job – jobs are disappearing, taken over by computers and robots. A free, publicly owned education system that guarantees equitable funding for every student is needed. Our ultimate goal is a cooperative society, where everyone's needs are met and where we can truly begin exploring the potentials of humanness. Let's talk! — From the editors

cupations on May 1, 2006. They continued to fight for the rights of all immigrants with protests, such as those at the Milwaukee courthouse organized by Voces de la Fontera, and at Hilary Clinton's March 5 speech at UCLA, where Seth Ronquillo, co-chair of IDEAS (Improving Dreams, Equality, Access, and Success) said "we want to hold the Obama administration accountable for the promises that they have made to our undocumented community for a pathway to citizenship."

After the huge May 1, 2006 rallies, liberal politicians steered the movement into backing their election, using the slogan "Yesterday We Marched, Today We Vote." Six years into the Obama Administration it's clear that an independent movement can build political influence, but influential politicians won't build an independent movement. Instead, undocumented activists must link up with documented workers who are struggling for education and jobs just like they are.

Though it looks like citizens

and immigrants in every country are in competition, they are actually both competing with global capital for control of the future. Capital uses hi-tech tools to move and produce goods throughout the world, forcing millions to migrate to find work. They go from farms to city factories and from country to country, from unionized jobs to precarious underpaid ones—or no job at all. They suffer terribly, for their children, for their future.

Knowing this, undocumented students will not sell their loved ones out. As they learn more about their class brothers and sisters, they will unite with those loved ones, too. Together they can build the world that the musician Santana calls "sin fronteras, sin banderas, y sin carteras" (without borders, flags or wallets).

Steve Teixeira has been part of the struggle for immigrant rights since the 1970's and in 2013 was invited to speak at Mexico's UNAM on the issue. He works at California State, L.A.



The community, faculty and students of San Francisco City College protesting to save their school. PHOTO/GWYNND MAESTRE

revealed that it is funded in part by the Lumina Foundation, a creation of the largest student-loan corporation in the country. Pressure from a broad Save City College movement and the faculty union has resulted in six bills to rescue the college, and four lawsuits. Activists have written an Education Justice statement based on the principle of "everybody in, nobody out" and are

building close ties with a movement to stop evictions.

The fate of CCSF waits on the progress of the movement and the resolution of the lawsuits in October 2014. But the larger economic forces at play cannot be avoided. We must fight forward, rather than backwards. The question arises: how do the people of San Francisco want to "flip the city?"

It's Fighting Time

By Diane Johnson,
Poor People's Economic Human
Rights Campaign Leader

PHILADELPHIA, PA — If not now, then when is the question everyone should be asking today. We can no longer sit on the sideline and say this is somebody else's fight. No, this is my fight but it is your fight too! My children no longer go to public school so you may wonder, why should I care if they close public schools down? I care because my grandchildren now go to public schools and I worry what kind of education they are getting in such horrible conditions. I worry about a government that decides a \$10 an hour minimum wage is too much for a poor person to have. We are talking about \$400 a week, \$1,700 a month and \$20,800 a year before taxes. That is what congress probably makes in one month for working about seven hard days in that month.

The fight is mine, but it's yours too. I am thinking about

health care for everyone, but what would that do if the health centers and mental health facilities are shut down in our neighborhoods? There is a time when people are going to look around for the things that they need to survive on and nothing is going to be here to support them. Is that what we are waiting for in order to join in the fight for our lives? Yes, our very life!

Please do not keep listening to the same old lies. They say, vote for me I will save you! No, vote for me, I will free you! No, vote for me I will bring jobs. Vote for me and I will make housing affordable. They are all liars, liars, liars. You have to wake up, stand up, and actually be counted for something or else you will just keep standing on the sidelines and we will all die together quietly.

I will not be on the sidelines. I know how great this country is and what it can do with all the technology that we have. I am going to fight for education,



Feeding the homeless at Cass Park in Detroit. The homeless are discarded by a capitalist system that no longer needs their labor. It doesn't have to be this way. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

health care, affordable housing, livable wages, and good food. I am going to fight against building more jails, closing schools,

laying off workers, and not extending the Unemployment Act. I am going to fight because I have no choice but to fight. My

grandchildren are at stake and my great grand children are at stake. What about you and what about yours? Get up and fight!

Rakiba Brown – May you rest in peace



Editor's note from People's Tribune, Detroit: Rakiba Brown was an activist involved in the Occupy Detroit movement from its inception in October of 2011. She could be loving and disagreeable at the same time. But you always ended up with a hug and feeling better about yourself after any discussion. This tribute appeared on her Facebook page after her death.

By Emma Howland Bolton

DETROIT, MI — Oh Rakiba. You were, with me, almost equal parts sharp and cutting, and warm, soft, and loving. You sugarcoated nothing, conceded rarely, and loved fully.

I knew when I got a hug from you (and you were a fantastic hugger for a lady that never

minded cutting folks down to size, haha!) that you meant it, and it was real, and your biting retorts and jabs made your immense well-spring of tenderness all the more powerful and generous.

You never, never, shied away from speaking your truth. And similarly, you never missed an opportunity to extend real compassion, in the moments when you could do so honestly and without inhibition.

THAT is love, YOU are love, and I will never be the same for having met you, struggled WITH you and ALONGSIDE you, and been granted the tremendous opportunity and gift to hear your voice, and thoughts, and through those, the undercurrent of your song, which you sang out with such strength and sureness and

beauty.

You changed me, and taught me, and brought me (sometimes kicking and screaming), just a little bit closer to truth and light.

And so today, is a terribly sad day, a day of great loss. There's a Rakiba-shaped hole in the world and my heart, and that's a mighty hole indeed, and since nothing and no one is shaped quite like you, it's not a hole that can be filled.

It's not the first time you've made me cry Rakiba, and it won't be the last I bet, and I love you.

And I love that you were HERE, and always will be, on this planet, in this time, in such an indelible, TRUTHFUL, powerful way.

You are a woman I will always look up to, now I just have to look up a little higher. Rest in power Rakiba, you are so loved, and for just exactly who you are. You are, were, always will be... tremendous.

Thank you. For never once trying to hide it.

Thank you for you."

Emma Howland Bolton was also a founder of Occupy Detroit and is a teacher in the Detroit Public School system

No Sleep for the Poor

No sleep for the poor.
Only sleep for the rich.

*

As people walk,
as people ignore,
as people stand oblivious,
a man is arrested
for sitting..
on a sidewalk!

As we sit on our chairs
having a structure to sit on.
We don't think of the man
who has nowhere to sit.

*

Human right?
What is that?
No such thing as that
in the City by the Bay.

— Maria Johnson



Cassandra Ford, UAW Local 22 Retiree Chapter Financial Secretary demonstrating against foreclosures in Detroit.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

We need medicare for all

By Al Gladysck

DETROIT, MI — In 2010, Congress passed and the Administration signed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) into law.

In 2010, the 35th UAW Constitutional Convention supported the ACA. It's exclusion of 12 million undocumented immigrants from medical insurance was ignored. Half of the states have rejected the expansion of Medicaid, the other half want to privatize it. It appears that out of the 100 million uninsured and underinsured (most of whom are in low wage jobs) in this country, ACA may cover 10 million of them at best this year.

Ezekiel J. Emanuel's book, published this year, is entitled *Reinventing American Health Care*. New York Times writer John Harwood observed this about Ezekiel's thinking in the book - "Now Mr. Emanuel thinks that a number of well-known national companies will break the mold and begin a trend. By his estimation, the proportion of private-sector workers who receive health care from

employers will fall below 20 percent by 2025. Currently, just fewer than 60 percent of private-sector workers get health care from employers."

The future is here

We are in a period of epochal economic transformation. Automation and globalization are eliminating jobs at a record pace. We are being replaced by new machines that produce with no human labor involved. This means that the basis of our social relationship – jobs and the benefits associated with them – are disappearing.

The leadership of the UAW and the delegates to 36th UAW Constitution Convention must begin to deal with this reality.

In 1979 the UAW reached its peak membership – some 1.5 million active members. Today the union has a little more than 400,000 active members. Since 2000, the UAW has lost over 55,000 active members at Ford, GM and Fiat-Chrysler alone.

Over 800,000 UAW auto workers retired and were not replaced. These retiree's are in

the UAW Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association (VEBA) and it is a healthcare disaster. GM, Ford, Fiat-Chrysler and the Administration in Washington, D.C. have successfully removed auto retiree medical insurance from auto production. Medical insurance for them now consists of investing in penny stocks and junk bonds.

We must build a new society where our social relationship does not depend on us having a job. A new society based on the production and distribution of healthcare, housing, education, food, clothing, transportation that cares for the general wellbeing of everyone.

Looking back to move forward

We need a new independent political direction. What should come out of the UAW 2014 convention is unequivocal support for *Medicare for All*. This was endorsed in the 34th UAW Constitutional Convention in 2006. This is the first step in achieving not just medical insurance, but healthcare for all.

People of Detroit to bankruptcy court: We object!

By Tom Stephens

DETROIT, MI — On April 1, 2014, hundreds of Detroiters, retired pensioners and unionists picketed the federal courthouse in Detroit to object to the corporate 'plan of adjustment' filed by Detroit's Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr and his corporate law firm, Jones Day, on behalf of Michigan Governor Rick Snyder.

April 1 had been the deadline for filing such objections. Although Judge Steven Rhodes extended the date until April 28, Detroiters didn't wait. Hundreds of objections have been filed by individuals and organizations, with over 100 more filed en masse on April 1.

The Jones Day/Snyder 'plan of adjustment' would cut pensions by up to more than a third, plus loss of health care benefits and cost of living adjustments, for a total of over half the value of earned pensions, including police officers who don't receive social security. Although the corporate press is full of lies and distortions about contributions from the State, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and foundations 'softening' the blow to pensioners, Detroiters know the real deal: for people barely surviving on an average of about \$19,000

per year, these cuts (if ever finalized and imposed) to state constitutionally-protected public pension benefits would force cruel choices between necessities like heat, food, medicine and shelter. They are the kind of austerity policies that kill.

The objections filed by Detroiters Resisting Emergency Management (D-REM) state:

"Detroit's bankruptcy was caused by revenue collapse as a result of capital flight, speculative and predatory investment by banks, including subprime mortgages, residential racial housing segregation, withdrawal of state revenue sharing and associated factors beyond the control of the city itself, including the Wall Street banking, bondholder and bond insurer interests who are making claims in this proceeding. The failure to address these structural causes of bankruptcy, in lieu of brutally unjust social austerity measures imposed on Detroit's People, evidences the absence of meaningful, fair or equitable solutions in the plan of adjustment." (See: www.d-rem.org/bankruptcyobjection/ for the whole document)

In the long run, merely speaking out against the bankruptcy will not solve Detroit's issues with corporate dictatorship and plunder. The call has gone



Protest against pension cuts for city workers.

PHOTO/JAMES FASSINGER

out for shutting down the city on May Day: <http://www.d-rem.org/shut-down-detroit-may-1>. Also on May 1, a Peoples Grand Jury will issue summons for Crimes Against Democracy by the Governor, Emergency Managers and their institutional co-conspirators, followed by Peoples indictments and hearings in the summer. Between now and then,

the bankruptcy proceedings will refine the latest amended 'plan of adjustment' issued on March 31, further putting the screws to workers and Detroiters. The fight back is escalating.

"The restructuring and rebirth of Detroit will not be delivered by a state-imposed Emergency Manager, nor through Chapter 9 bankruptcy proceedings, foun-

dation contributions, closed door deals, or other devious and misleading corporate schemes. Detroit's rebirth will be the result of the people's unrelenting demand for democratic self-governance, equal access to and management of the natural and economic resources of the city." (www.d-rem.org/peoplesplan/)

'Imagine a New California' Luis J. Rodriguez for Governor

From the Luis J. Rodriguez campaign

LOS ANGELES, CA — The Luis J. Rodriguez campaign for California governor is heating up!

After fielding teams of supporters, we obtained close to 5,000 signatures of registered voters and fund donations in a little more than two months to make the June 3 primary ballot. The only Green Party endorsed candidate for governor, Luis also has support from Chicanos Unidos of Orange County, PODER of Santa Barbara, Corazon Del Pueblo of Boyle Heights, Brooklyn & Boyle magazine of Boyle Heights—and people like Rudy Acuna, Chicano Studies at California State University, Northridge; Jeffery Martin, poet and Open Mic host, Sylmar CA; Jose Castaneda, Salinas City Councilperson; Francisco Estrada, Monterey County School Board; Jose Lara, Pico Rivera School Board; Ana Barrera, Salinas teacher and union leader; Alejandra Mojica, San Francisco student and community activist; Tiny Gray-Garcia and Tony Robles, Bay Area poor peoples advocates; Watts youth; and more.

So far the campaign has journeyed up and down the state seven times and recruited more than 200 volunteers. Our coordinating committee is made up of Chicanos, Salvadorans, African

Americans, European Americans, South Asian Americans, LGBT, Spanish speakers, including students, teachers, workers, and organizers, among others.

Besides speaking, Luis also supported the Santa Rosa community after the unjustifiable murder of 13-year-old Andy Lopez by a sheriff's deputy. Luis took part in an anti-fracking demonstration in Fresno and was on the steps of San Francisco's Hall of Justice to protest the evictions of elderly people by greedy landlords. And Luis stood by Aloni Bonilla, a young college student from Pomona that a burly California Highway Patrol officer beat, although she was unarmed and handcuffed.

In addition, Luis sided with tens of thousands of Southeast L.A. and East L.A. residents being poisoned by Exide Technologies, a battery recycling plant—which is located in the same lead facility in Vernon that Luis worked at during the late 1970s.

A question often asked is—why should people vote? Isn't this so-called democracy a farce, controlled by political parties that are two sides of the same coin, fueled by vast corporate monies, failing to address the real interests of the poor and working class?

A major aspect of this campaign is to pull the veil from over the lies of the political process. It's to prove that the capitalist system can't do anything about



Luis J. Rodriguez, candidate for California Governor.

PHOTO/DONATED

poverty, the poisonous environment, a bloated and failing prison system, costly healthcare, declining education, or the lack of arts-filled thriving communities.

On the other hand, we aim to win. Revolutionary ideas are expressed in the growing and deepening revolutionizing practice of workers and the poor. We need to learn how to strategize,

how to unite, to mobilize and organize for a California we all deserve—one that is integral and healthy for everyone.

The primary election is June 3. We urge people to get out and vote, demonstrate to the powerful and wealthy ruling class that we can go against the odds, with no corporate funding, with no major media, and still become the sec-

ond highest vote getter challenging Governor Brown all the way to the November elections.

If we don't, the only ones in the dialogue, cutting out viable voices again, will be Democrats and Republicans, which represent the 1 percent against the rest of us. Go to www.rodriguezfor-governor.org to find out more, to get involved and to donate

We were conned: Big business funded California's shift to 'top-two' primaries

By Dave Ransom

SACRAMENTO, CA—If the Republicans field enough candidates in the June primary to severely split their vote, Green Party gubernatorial candidate Luis Rodriguez could place second and face a run-off with Governor Jerry Brown.

That would be an important step in the battle for a political party of, by, and for the 99 percent—as the one percent changes the rules.

When Californians adopted the state's "top-two" primary system in the 2010 election, they were confident it would strengthen democracy. That's what they'd been told.

What they hadn't been told was that the measure had been bankrolled by some of the state's biggest corporations, among them Chevron, Walmart, Oracle, Intel, and PG&E.

They probably had not realized that they were voting to ban

write-in candidates in the general election.

And only veteran Sacramento watchers were aware that the corporations were covertly funneling their contributions through a political finance committee put together by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, his "California Dream Team."

In fact, the people of California were being conned into undermining their own democracy and remaking their electoral system to best serve the interests of the richest one percent, the capitalist ruling class.

Under the new system, every candidate of whatever party runs in an "open" primary in June. The top-two vote getters go on the November ballot.

Publicly, supporters of the "top-two" system told voters it would give independent voters a voice in the primaries and give non-traditional parties a better chance to win.

Privately, they sang a differ-

ent tune: the system would assure that only "moderate" candidates would appear on the November ballot.

"Moderate" means pro-business, pro-corporate, pro-capital-

the Republican or Democratic primaries.

In the "Super Tuesday" primary of the 1988 presidential campaign, Republican George H.W. Bush faced Democrat Jes-

What people hadn't been told was that the measure had been bankrolled by some of the state's biggest corporations, among them Chevron, Walmart, Oracle, Intel, and PG&E.

ist—the candidates of, by, and for the one percent.

In fact, the top-two primary that the one percent has crafted is eerily similar to the "cross-over" primaries in the South, where voters can vote in either

se Jackson in the South, winning racist cross-over votes—and then he used the notoriously racist "Willie Horton" ads to defeat Michael Dukakis in November.

California is more and more taking on aspects of the South.

When the cost of living is taken into account, for instance, it has the highest level of poverty in the country, nearly 25 percent—and the 99 percent is restless.

Historically, Californian's look first to the ballot box to make change. Now corporate California is using sleight-of-hand to erode that possibility. Now the same forces that engineered the top-two system are talking about ending California's ballot initiatives.

The one percenters deeply fear that in a true democracy, candidates of, by, and for the 99 percent would win—and that such a government might well expand political democracy into economic democracy and run the economy for the good of the 99 percent.

All that can still happen. But, as a first step, it will take building a true, active party of the working class and turning out California's millions in primary elections—starting this year.

California drought

By Salvador Sandoval, M.D.

MERCED, CA — This has been the driest year in recorded history. The Sierra snowpack is 12% of normal. Delta water may be unavailable for many Central Valley farmers. In some counties ground levels are sinking as groundwater is pumped out. With fields left unplanted, up to 20,000 farm workers won't have work this year. School districts will lose money as children move with their families in search of work. Beef prices may rise by 40%, and milk prices by 50 cents per gallon. Seventeen valley towns may go without water as pumps run dry. Five billion dollars in loss of revenue to farms, trucking, and food processing have prompted a state of emergency by Governor Jerry Brown and a visit to the Valley by President Obama.

In this irrigated desert, the most productive agricultural area of the world, water is on the verge of being privatized and sold to the highest bidder.

Into the third year of the drought, a political fight that has long been simmering is starting to boil over. Various blamed

on environmentalists, bureaucrats, fishermen, greedy farmers, wasteful homeowners, all sides are clamoring for relief.

Lurking behind the scenes, however, is a potentially more ominous player at the water trough. And that is the oil companies, who utilize enormous amounts of water to extract oil and natural gas from deep under the ground in a process called fracking.

It is suspected that the Westlands Water District is selling its water to oil companies. The water was obtained at subsidized prices and then sold at a profit to farmers and to Southern California. If farmers are charged \$30 per acre foot of water and oil companies are prepared to purchase water at \$3300 per acre foot, who is likely to get the water, particularly since Kern County where the Westlands Water District resides is called "oil land"?

All of the proposed "solutions" to the water crisis, whether Democrat or bipartisan happen to benefit the Westlands Water district, which is 49% controlled by Beverly Hills billionaire Stuart Resnick, who has



The massive San Luis Reservoir in California, a major water source for Silicon Valley, is only 17 percent full. PHOTO/PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

made financial contributions to both political parties.

The drought and the upcoming elections signal that we are at a crossroads. One road enriches billionaires and career politicians, as it impoverishes and indebts the rest of us, and further degrades our environment. The other is a radical break from the two-party system.

The Green Party platform, for which Luis Rodriguez is California gubernatorial candidate, is the only one which recognizes that we exist in a fragile balance with our environment upon which our survival depends, as well as promoting an economic bill of rights of sustainable jobs, financial reform, and real democracy where production is

planned to nurture us and our future generations.

Vote in the June primary so that Governor Brown is forced to debate a candidate with a platform that serves our real interests and not those of profiteers who don't care about us and our children's future.

Toxic waste sites and the need for new leadership

By Eric Peterson

GARDENA, CA — My name is Eric and I have lived in Gardena, CA for almost ten years. It is a friendly city with a special and unique farm history, multicultural residents, and open-minded treatment of all its residents. On the other hand our city really needs new representation in government for the health and safety of its residents.

Gardena has many toxic sites known as Brownfields. In 1999, the Gardena City Council spent \$10,000 to inventory the cities brownfields, in order to qualify for an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant. Gardena initially received \$200,000 to perform environmental assessments on selected sites and then do some clean up.

The City of Gardena hosted meetings up until 2013 for the Brownfields Community Relations Committee, however it no longer provides funding for this committee. Without the city's support we are in a state of flux. Myself and other Gardena residents are in the process of forming the Brownfields Community Relations Committee (BCRC) into an official non-profit, a

501(c)(3). I really believe that by becoming an official legal non-profit, the BCRC will be heard by the Gardena City Council.

The truth is that Gardena and California need a true change in leadership, a voice that really represents the voice of the common people, the working

people, a party which can bring jobs and a cleaner environment to our state. That party is the Green Party of California, and this will bring real changes not just to Gardena, but to all of California.

In Gardena, the school buildings are aging and adjacent to

freeways and toxic sites, and there is not enough recreation space. Yet land next to the local high school is used to build apartments, putting money and profits before the wellbeing of our youth.

As a recovering addict, I have learned that one must first learn

to be honest with self and this will transcend to honesty with others. This is what really resonated with me with Mr. Luis Rodriguez, the Green Party candidate for governor. He proved to me that he is a man who is capable of standing before others, telling the truth about themselves and what he really thinks, that is why I listen to him.

Some in our city want to truly do whatever it takes to permanently clean the city, yet some in our leadership don't even believe that climate change is real. Interestingly in the local environmental groups I have been affiliated with, real progress is often hindered by internal strife.

The other day I went to the Food 4 Less, known for its cheap and unhealthy food, not organic and from cheap GMO and other toxic food production places. Ironically I was able to help put the name "Luis Rodriguez" on the ballot for the June 2014 elections. Each person who stopped, recognized that we really need to change our city and our state.

You can reach Eric Peterson at ecplot@gmail.com



This photo is of a brownfield, a toxic waste site, in the middle of a residential community. Nothing has grown here for at least 40 years. PHOTO/ERIC PETERSON

Benton Harbor is becoming a police state

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Berrien County Sheriff's department has created a police state surrounding the legal recall of Benton Harbor's Mayor James Hightower.

A Benton Harbor resident, James Cornelius, said, "I finally felt the sting of voter harassment in Benton Harbor. The people, who signed the recall petition for former Mayor James Hightower, were extremely upset about the Sheriff's harassment, but said this will not prevent them from signing another recall petition and going to the polls to vote."

In the last six weeks, they [sheriffs] have knocked on doors in Benton Harbor, under the guise of an "investigation." Similar harassment practices were used in the city's 2011 mayoral election. Emergency Manager Joseph Harris deployed police officers to voter precincts to intimidate residents.

In the current election, the Benton Harbor City Clerk verified 440 recall signatures as valid. The Berrien County Clerk verified 402 recall signatures as valid. The required amount to re-

call James Hightower is 392. In spite of these results, the Berrien County Prosecutor is conducting a false investigation. This voter harassment by the Sheriff and Mayor is intended to have a harmful impact on eligible voters who are trying to exercise their constitutional rights.

Unfortunately, the media has turned a blind eye. New Buffalo, a white neighboring town, is having a recall election on May 6. The Mayor of New Buffalo, along with a Council member, was recalled. However, the Berrien County Sheriff and his deputies are not roaming the streets of New Buffalo intimidating voters. They have not knocked on one door in New Buffalo.

There is a clear double standard. There have been numerous Herald Palladium stories on the Benton Harbor recall, but none on the New Buffalo recall. This is an issue of race. It is also a result of a Whirlpool land grab by any means necessary. The Benton Harbor recall is directed against Whirlpool's control over the city. The New Buffalo recall is not anti-corporate.

All citizens have the right to recall or initiate a referendum by



One of many protests in Benton Harbor for democracy and against the corporate takeover of the city. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

way of petition. To intimidate, harass, accuse, or use Gestapo tactics to infringe on a citizen's civil rights is a federal crime.

These issues will be addressed in a class action lawsuit against James Hightower, Ber-

rien County Sheriff Paul Bailey, Prosecutor Mike Sepic, and County Clerk Sharon Tyler.

At the root of all of this is the growing poverty of the people of Benton Harbor while corporations profit. "An economic sys-

tem that doesn't feed, clothe, and house its people must be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people." (People's Tribune)

How it feels to be homeless

By Orlandis Cage

BENTON HARBOR, MI — I want you to know how it feels to be homeless, sleeping up under a bridge, in vacant houses and doorways; and how it feels to never know who is coming. In the long, sleepless nights, you doze off in fear and without comfort. Street people always carry some kind of weapon out of fear—fear of enemies, fear of others who want their spots, fear of fear itself.

As the long night begins, the homeless ask the Lord to look over them while they sleep. It seems like days later the night finally ends. Thank God for daylight.

You wake up and look around, and you want water to drink and long to wash your

face and body. Then the hunger sets in. You have no money, so you walk, looking for something to drink and a place to eat.

You see others on the street and ask them for change. Some help, others are just as poor as you. You know the stores take bottles and cans, so you start dumpster diving for those and anything else you can find. Some people see you and judge you. They have no idea of the hunger in your stomach or the threadbare clothes on your back.

The community says, "Get a job," but who will hire a homeless person? Hire me! Even if I sleep in doorways at night, I will show up to work. I want to work. But I'm dirty, my clothes are dirty, my ID is long gone...

who will hire me?

I am not homeless because I want to be. I am trying to survive this life. I'm not robbing or breaking into homes or killing anyone. I'm just trying to survive.

Homelessness is not an epidemic—not until it happens to you. Then suddenly, the invisible people on the streets become visible. When you had money, you didn't see them.

Homeless people look for one another; they find and share food and love and care for each other. Most of all, homeless people are in touch with God. They know God in a way most normal folks don't because God is all they have. He is there to shelter them in a storm, in fear, in sickness and in the long hours of hunger and loneliness.

Editor's note: Like so many workers, Orlandis Cage became homeless after his job shut down. He later became handicapped after falling off three stories, making work difficult.

Appeal to People's Tribune readers

With tax returns coming in, some of us find ourselves fortunate to have some extra cash on hand this spring. If you find yourself with some extra money and are in a position to share, the People's Tribune will put your donation to work. 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. As an independent press, we rely exclusively on donations. 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

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