



Protest in Baltimore for Freddie Gray who died while in Baltimore Police custody. The protesters are challenging a rising police state that exists to suppress uprisings of the jobless and near jobless. PHOTO/AARON BRAZELL

Special Coverage:



Dictatorship in Michigan
Fighting for water P. 4
Fighting dictatorship P. 12

POLICE VIOLENCE AIMED AT POOREST WORKERS

[Read story on page 3](#)

Growing homelessness demands planned economy

EDITORIAL

The fact that there is such a thing as homelessness in America is a shameful national crime. Every winter, countless homeless people die from exposure to the cold. While the homeless starve, 21 cities in America now have laws making it a crime to feed the homeless. The homeless are harassed, brutalized and killed by police as they simply sit, lie down or sleep, trying to survive another day. Homelessness is the most glaring example of workers pushed out of jobs by the capitalist economy into permanent unemployment. Is this the only future that a generation of children can look forward to?

“A staggering 2.5 million children are now homeless each year in America. This historic high represents one in every 30 children in the United States. Child homelessness increased in 31 states and the District of Columbia from 2012 to 2013. Children are homeless in every city, county and state.” These sobering facts are from a report entitled *America’s Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness*. (2014). Waltham, MA: The National Center on Family Homelessness at American Institutes for Research.

The top three major causes of child homelessness cited in the report are the nation’s high poverty rate, lack of affordable housing and the continued impact of the Great Recession. These causes are structural, an effect of the labor replacing economic revolution and the capitalist market economy. The electronics revolution is throwing workers permanently out of the job market and therefore permanently out of the housing market on to America’s streets. Whether it is the job market, the housing market or any other market, they operate to guarantee maximum profits for the capitalists as a class, not for the benefit of society as a whole. Fierce competition among cap-



A high school youth learned about the evictions at the “jungle,” a large homeless encampment in the heart of the mega-wealthy Silicon Valley, and felt he needed to act on the problem.

PHOTO/HSYOUNGMAN/SILICON VALLEY DEBUG

italists requires that more profitable, more productive innovations introduced by one, must be adopted by all (or they will be forced out of the market.) Automation in the form of robots brings short-term profits, but kills jobs forever and hence the ability of workers to buy. What begins as an attempt to corner the market ends in a collapse of markets. Why? It is so a relative few can maintain a dying system that makes them billionaires.

Sooner or later, the growing numbers of cold bodies, empty stomachs and children with no future will force society to the realization that production without workers in a world of abundance demands distribution of goods based on something other than money. That something is human

need. If a society has 320 million people, all 320 million need food, clothing, homes, health care and education. Under a planned economy, where the public rather than private interests own the means of producing our necessities, production could be planned and distribution would be by need, not money. Every member of society can then contribute to society based on his

or her talents and skills, according to a national plan.

While the electronic revolution makes a planned, cooperative economy both possible and necessary, it is only conscious people who can make it happen. The role of revolutionaries is to bring that consciousness to the people so that society can go forward. This is the revolutionary content of our time.

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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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Police violence aimed at poorest workers

COVER STORY

Unable to further disregard the growing mass reaction to police violence, spreading poverty and deepening social crisis, the ruling class has taken the tactical offensive.

The government is striving to take control of the growing movement to stop police violence. Their main weapon is to portray the problem as one of color (“racial”) discrimination—thus blocking the next stage in the revolutionary process. That next stage is the fight for the unity of a new class of low-wage, dispossessed, unemployed and destitute workers, created by the electronic revolution. Electronic production with little or no human labor is destroying this society—which is built on the wage-labor system.

An article by the Associated Press outlined the economic reality of America today. “Four out of five U.S. adults struggle with joblessness, near-poverty or reliance on welfare for at least parts of their lives, a sign of deteriorating economic security and an elusive American dream. Survey data exclusive to the Associated Press points to an increasingly globalized U.S. economy, the widening gap between rich and poor, and the loss of good-paying manufacturing jobs as reasons for the trend.”

The fight against police killing and for decent wages and job security cannot be won without a conscious fight to change the system. Human labor simply cannot compete with robotics. No matter what form the struggle takes, the content is increasingly class. In all the recent struggles against police murder and brutality, the people themselves have raised the question of class but too many of the “leaders” keep shouting color only.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

We must spell out the relationship between class and color in this fight. As in any social struggle there is form and content. The form of the social struggle always arises from history. In America, that history is shaped by the 300 years of slavery based on color. Ultimately, the content of the struggle depends on the level of development of the means of production.

For example, with the mechanization of Southern agriculture in the 1940s and ‘50s, the economic need for the rulers’ use of the color factor began to wither away. There was no longer need for the

brutality to keep Blacks in the field since machinery was more profitable than the near slave-like human labor that characterized the rural South. The color factor in ideological, political and social arenas would remain until it clashed with economic realities. Then, the complex, often bloody struggle to align social relations with economic reality begins.

At this point it is possible to introduce new ideas and new visions of a new world. The new, impoverished section of the working class cannot defend itself without destroying the rulers’ use of the color factor and replacing

it with class. The effectiveness of the color factor as a weapon to keep workers divided is already being undermined by the integration of the Black upper strata into the American ruling class. Baltimore proves that changing the color of the oppressor does not solve the problem.

The Black masses cannot win their freedom without making class the leading factor. Class struggle will become inevitable if they do. In short, this is not a fight of the minorities, but prelude for political revolution.

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Coalition for Clean Water: Flint is not in the clear

Group demands immediate change with legal action



People are getting sick, losing hair, having immune system issues and rashes from the water in Flint, Michigan, and all this is on top of high rates.

PHOTO/COALITION FOR CLEAN WATER ON FACEBOOK

Highland Park, MI: Families may lose homes over water bills

Cathy Talbott of the People's Tribune interviewed Eban Morales, a member of the Highland Park (Michigan) Human Rights Coalition about the water crisis facing many towns and cities in the state under the rule of corporate dictatorship. Highland Park was at one time a thriving industrial town built around the auto industry. Today it has about 9,000 residents that are low income, seniors, and retirees.

People's Tribune: Why are the residents of Highland Park receiving outrageous water bills?

Eban Morales: In 2012 the city stopped sending out water bills. The mayor, without the authority to do so, shut down our water plant and put us on Detroit's water and sewage system. The state ordered the mayor to do this after Highland Park got an emergency state loan to pay pensions. Then we were ordered to pay an appointed city administrator who took over the mayor's duties as a condition for the loan. We are now in debt to Detroit because Highland Park wasn't paying Detroit, so we were sued

for \$24,000,000. All this is going on our property taxes.

Now the residents are getting water bills for thousands of dollars. Even though we didn't get bills for 14 months, there is no way we used that much water. There are homes that are unoccupied where the water is shut off and the owners got bills in the thousands. Some haven't gotten water bills in four years. Then, under what they call the "wrap it up program," residents were told to make arrangements to pay it off or their water would be shut off. My bill is over \$4,500 and I could end up with over \$20,000 in liens against my property. We risk losing our homes. And if water is shut off, those with children risk losing them. They've given us to June 30th.

PT: What are the residents doing to fight?

EM: We've reached out to elected officials who should have been there to help us but failed us. We've contacted John Conyers and others. They showed up when we had meetings and stood around long enough to see if we

were a threat. When they found out we weren't, they left. We had a rally among ourselves. I'm not a politician, not even an activist, but when it fell on my doorstep I had to organize to protect myself. That's how we hooked up with Highland Park Human Rights Coalition. We have attorneys helping voluntarily with limited resources. It can only be resolved in court.

PT: What's the next step if you lose in court?

EM: This problem is not unique to us. The water crisis is a state-wide issue because of the governor's attempt to establish this Water Authority. Hamtramck, Inkster, Flint, Benton Harbor, all these cities are facing this. People are living like in a third world country. So we're trying to pull all these cities together. Half the residents here haven't awakened yet. They haven't received any water bills. Technically Detroit can shut off the whole city with one valve.

For more information go to www.facebook.com/hphrc

The struggle for safe, affordable water in Flint, MI is accelerating as local grassroots groupings form a coalition seeking relief from the court system. The dismantling of democracy as we know it, has made this fight that much more challenging. However, learning to live with life threatening toxic water brought on by a toxic system is not an option. The following is a press release issued by the groups:

By the Coalition for Clean Water

FLINT, MI — Multiple activist and support groups, churches, community organizations, concerned citizens and more have joined together to form the Coalition for Clean Water. The goal of the group is to fight for safe, clean, and affordable water for Flint citizens. We are currently not receiving clean, safe, or affordable water and we need to DEMAND action NOW.

With cancer causing trihalomethanes (TTHMs) typically on the rise in the warmer months, the focus of many (at City Hall) is the installation of granulated, activated carbon. Yet, Flint citizens received yet another TTHM violation notice with help not being implemented until later this summer and results to be seen 6-8 weeks later.

However, several citizens have received Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) notices that their water contains Lead, Copper, and many other contaminants and sediments. The water is STILL NOT SAFE. According to 30-year water expert, Robert Bowcock, "lead is coming from your plumbing and fixtures due to the change in corrosive chemistry of the treat-

ed Flint River water. The change from stable Detroit water to the over-treated Flint River water is causing the metals to leach into the drinking water." This is NOT safe and NOT acceptable. We encourage all citizens, even those with clear water, to get their water tested and to see your physician with health concerns.

It has been over a year since the switch to using the Flint River as our drinking water source and many people are still getting sick, losing hair, having immune system issues, rashes and also have to purchase bottled water on top of the high rates. The chemical mix is not right. The water is not right. This is not right.

We have retained attorney Trachelle Young to begin legal action to get us relief from the high rates and low-quality water for Flint. According to Attorney Young, "We are going to go legal," she said. "And we are going to go fast and furious because we are on a mission."

Donations to the Coalition's legal fund can be made at local Credit Union locations under the name of "Coalition for Clean Water." All proceeds go to legal research, legal fees and bringing in experts to aid our case as needed. Donations can also be made through GoFundMe at www.gofundme.com/tshv54.

Research and information can be found at www.WaterYouFightingFor.com

The Coalition for Clean Water is: Concerned Pastors for Social Action, Water You Fighting For, Democracy Defense League Water Task Force, Flint Water Class Action, Councilperson Mays, Mt. Zion Church, Woodside Church and more.



Protest against water rates and shutoffs in Highland Park, Michigan, once an affluent industrial town where workers thrived.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Water is a human right!

From the Editors

Corporate investors have a long-term goal to privatize the public's water and make it available only to those who can pay. This is legal under capitalism, a system based on the private property interests of the few. In a cooperative society, water and other necessities would be publicly owned. Then, we could guarantee clean water and all the necessities of life for everyone. Water is a battlefield where we can make the need for a new society clear.

No jobs – No water:

How much longer do we have to live like this?

By Jim Fite

BALTIMORE, MD — Baltimore City, whose police are under Federal investigation for outrageous cruelty, started shutting off water to 150 families a day. How would you like to wake up and find no water in your faucet? No way to flush the toilet?

If there is no water in your house, social services can take your children. Even if you have paid your rent, which includes water, the water can be shut off when the landlord does not pay his or her bill.

Baltimore City Public Works started raising water bills in 2013 and is hoping to squeeze 42%

more money from the public. But they are not closing off the water for the 369 commercial accounts that owe one-third of the \$40 million in outstanding bills. Instead, Public Works is concentrating on the poor and defenseless people.

One of the biggest unpaid bills is for the closed recreation center at 2601 Tally Street. Here, the Mayor and City Council owe \$16,760. The other is R.G. Steel, (the old Bethlehem Steel) whose millionaire owner is hiding in bankruptcy.

Damian Henson, who was charged a \$3,700 water bill for his house, led a protest outside City Hall to demand an investigation of this money grab by the Public Works. The demonstrators had a

good point. Water should not be shut off. Baltimore City has a history of over-charging. The City had to repay millions after overcharging 38,000 people in 2012. Often, broken city equipment causes water bills to be much higher than what the homes actually use.

There is more to the story. Investigators from *Real News* reported that Baltimore City Public Works was tricked by Wall Street banks into “interest rate swaps.” They are like a payday loan. It appears to be a good deal, but soon you owe two or three times what you borrowed. Baltimore City has recently paid millions to New York banks, including \$40 million to get out of these deals.

Money that was supposed to build our public water system has been shoveled off to greedy banks. Instead of investigating these shady deals, collecting from the city or from R.G. Steel, the city is attacking the grandmothers on fixed income and others who cannot pay the water increases.

Marilyn Mosby, State's Attorney for Baltimore, should investigate the “interest rate swaps,” R.G. Steel and the Department of Public Works. Johns Hopkins, the largest non-governmental employer in Baltimore City, must use its world renowned School of Public Health to protect the health of Baltimore's citizens. The ministers, who last week marched

against violence, must march again, against the horrible violence of denying children water to drink.

How much longer do we have to endure a society that cannot take care of its children and the unemployed? How much longer can we live with cruel and ignorant city officials who try to solve every problem on the backs of those who cannot contribute to their campaigns? Last month we said “NO” to police brutality. This month we must say “NO” to water shut offs.

Contact the People's Tribune with a story about water shut-offs. Order papers to share. Call 800-691-6888.



Protest at City Hall to protest the decision to send shutoff notices to roughly 23,000 Baltimore families for overdue bills. PHOTO/AZEEN GHORAYSHI

California drought affects poor disproportionately

By Dr. Salvador Sandoval

MERCED, CA — Governor Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency in the rich agricultural state of California, which is enduring the fourth year of an historic drought. He demands a 20% reduction in water use, while exempting farmers who consume 80% of the state's water. The Governor is most responsive to corporate interests, including billionaire farmers growing almonds for export to China and oil company executives who use millions of gallons of water drilling for oil in the midst of a drought.

To make matters worse, the water thirsty crops, almonds, pistachios, alfalfa, and cotton, are planted and grown in the desert Westside of the Valley. In the last two years, record planting of almonds on the west side has pumped more water than

Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco combined use in a year.

Residents of East Porterville, an impoverished community of farmworker families, go without water to shower, cook, and clean. Dependent on groundwater, their wells have gone dry as agricultural interests with deeper wells shift to intensive pumping of groundwater.

To make matters worse, some unscrupulous landowners have been selling or diverting groundwater out of the county. They take advantage of the fact that, historically, there have been no state regulations on groundwater use in California. A recently enacted law is weak and does not go fully into effect until 2040.

During drought years, allocations of surface waters from rivers are significantly reduced or eliminated to protect fishing, prevent

environmental damage to the Delta and to protect agriculture in the Delta, which normally drains the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers.

Not surprisingly, the drought has exacerbated long-standing tensions about water use in the state. It has pitted environmentalists, fishermen, Delta farmers, Valley farmers, and city dwellers, north and south, against each other. As usual, it is the poor who suffer disproportionately. Farm workers and other rural poor are used as pawns in a propaganda war to convince the public that private interests can manage the scarce resource of water best, when it is the moneyed interests who are exacerbating the problem.

A total of 17 Central Valley communities like East Porterville had to have bottled water trucked in during the recent drought years. It is anticipated that this summer will be worse. It does not seem



This is an image of the drought in California. Some poor communities are going without water to shower, cook, and clean. The Governor is most responsive to corporate interests.

PHOTO/WWW.TECHNOGYPSIE.COM/PHOTOGRAPHY

to matter that many of them live adjacent to the Kern Water Bank, the world's largest reservoir of water in the world, subsidized by tax dollars and run for a profit. Meanwhile, water rates go up in the San Francisco Bay Area and are projected to increase even

more in Southern California.

We are all in this together. The water crisis in California highlights the need to make water a human right and not something to be sold to the highest bidder. In the process we protect the environment for future generations.

The underpinning of the rising police state is the changing economy and the mass poverty it produces. Given American history, it could not be otherwise that the victims of police brutality are overwhelmingly people of color. History also shows that as this brutality becomes accepted by the majority, it is inevitably used against everyone. To stop a complete fascist police takeover of the country, every instance of police violence must be fought.



Protest in Madison following the announcement that the police officer that killed Tony Robinson would not be charged. PHOTO/LESLIE AMSTERDAM

Police killing of teen ruled lawful

From the Editors

Protests broke out after the Madison, WI, district attorney ruled that the killing of 19-year-old Tony Robinson was a lawful use of deadly police force. Police entered Tony's home after receiving reports that he was behaving erratically in the streets. Eighteen seconds after entering his home, an officer shot Tony in the torso, head and arm, killing him. Police say Tony struck the officer.

The community is outraged

and demands justice. This case shows not only the brutality of the rising police state, but how vulnerable are today's youth. This economic system, based on the interests of a handful of billionaires, is no longer able to provide jobs or a decent life for millions of young people. As we fight to end police killings, we must build a powerful movement that visualizes the world of peace and freedom that is possible and fight for that future.



Jeanetta Riley with her three daughters, Dayna, top, Dolly, left, and Hannah, right. PHOTO/RILEY FAMILY, FACEBOOK

Homeless pregnant woman killed by police

From the Editors

Jeanetta Riley, a pregnant homeless mother of three who suffered from emotional difficulties, was killed by police as she waved a knife outside a hospital in Sandpoint, Idaho. Seconds after their arrival, two police officers opened fire. Police say she refused their commands. Her death was ruled justifiable. Jeanetta's family has not, so far, received even an apology. This case shows that no one is immune from police violence today. Is this the kind of society we want?

Welcome to the new Jim Crow



Skid Row Justice March for Africa, a homeless man killed by LA police. PHOTO/LYNN ROSSI

By Suzette Shaw

LOS ANGELES, CA — Families across this country celebrated Mother's Day, however, there are mothers who will not have praises uttered to them... their sons are deceased. Increasingly, many feel their son's were taken unjustifiably by law enforcement. Some even refer to this overzealous policing as the new Jim Crow!

I listened to a social justice discussion led by California Endowment C.E.O Robert K. Ross, moderated by actress/philanthropist, Rosario Dawson and with keynote speaker, Sabrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin; a young Black male murdered by the infamous community watchman, George Zimmerman. Hundreds of people waited outside in the dreary weather hoping to get into this tightly

packed venue, which was hosted by social justice art exhibitors, Manifest Justice, in the Baldwin Hills suburb of Los Angeles.

Sabrina Fulton, a mother now compelled to activism says, "It's about admitting we have a problem we need to fix. It's time to stop pretending we don't have an issue. My son is not here to speak for himself. I am Trayvon Martin." Mrs. Fulton now heads the Trayvon Martin Foundation where she works with other mothers who have lost their sons to senseless gun violence.

Charly Keunang, a homeless man in the community of Skid Row—known to the community as "Africa"—was shot and killed by Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) on March 1, 2015. His mother recently spoke about how devastated she was learning of the death of her son; initially seeing

the horrific footage of the police shooting of her homeless son. His mother was unaware that her son was the deceased man in the global video until two days later when family members in Cameroon sorrowfully informed her. His mother wept as she told of going to the morgue to view her son's body. He was shot six times. The community even came up with the slogan, "Can't Kill Africa," which symbolizes the killing of all Black people, especially the poor and homeless living in Skid Row. And, just this week, another Black homeless man was shot and killed by LAPD in Venice Beach.

We now have a combination of overzealous politics, as well as military policing which appears to be the new form of lynching. Folks, welcome to the new Jim Crow!

'A spectacle of horror' in Baltimore

By Dominique Christina

DENVER, CO — I'm sort of shell shocked from my time in Baltimore during the unrest. First thing you see is the National Guard holding huge automatic assault rifles in the middle of the city and instantly you know you're not in Kansas anymore. Then police and the military and tanks, are rolling down the streets, and sitting idle next to parks and museums with men in uniforms on top jeering at you and looking at you like you are the imposition and not them.

Baltimore was a spectacle of horror long before Freddie Gray died but it holds an unspeakable hopelessness now. Row after row, block after block of boarded up homes, trash everywhere, no playgrounds, the schools are filthy, their doors boarded shut, no produce in the grocery stores, no money in the ATM machines.

It's helter-skelter and it's all happening in an American city and there are kids everywhere and none of them look clean; all of them were hungry... every single one I met... hungry. But, stoic and resolute. I never saw any victims

in Baltimore. The only thugs I saw were police officers.

I was personally chased by riot police who pepper sprayed me and the students I had with me for defying the curfew by one minute. They pointed their M16's at us. We were sprinting down dark streets in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of Baltimore where Freddie Gray lived, trying not to be captured. I/we ducked into the projects while many, many, people behind us were hit with billy clubs and pulled down by police who then kicked them and tossed them into a van.

I saw them clothesline a girl who looked to be about 13. (That's a wrestling move.) She hit her head hard on the concrete. Two women heard us, came out, and let us come inside their home until much of the chaos subsided, but we still went through hell getting back to our hotel rooms.

I can't stop thinking about the people there. The five-year-old I played basketball with while men with assault rifles were all around... how he couldn't go to school because it had been closed down. How 80% of the children in



Protest for justice for Freddie Gray who died in Baltimore police custody. Six police officers have been indicted on charges in relationship to Freddie Gray's death. PHOTO/EINO SIERPE

that community rely on the breakfast and lunch provided to them at school and so when they closed the school they effectively starved the children.

I can't stop thinking about the 11-year-old in the gas mask I walked with in defiance of a mili-

tarized police state and how he was sooooo much braver than I... how he had been starved and brutalized so long, there was nothing he wouldn't do to escape the degradation. And I think about my own privilege (it's difficult to be radical in Denver... one can be lulled right

to sleep by the idyllic snow-capped mountains and trendy cafes that suggest there is no crisis here) and how I have never been so acutely aware of it in my life. See, I got to leave... look how lucky I am. I got to leave hell... while so many others are burning.

San Jose: 'Protect your people'

By Andrew Bigelow

SAN JOSE, CA — San Jose ended 2014 with problems that mirrored the rest of the country. In the midst of the Ferguson protests, San Jose Police Officer Philip White tweeted threatening messages to the public. One tweet read, "If anyone feels they can't breathe or their lives matter, I'll be at the movies tonight, off duty, carrying my gun." Officer White's comments have to be taken in the context of San Jose. At the time, Laurie Valdez was still demanding justice for her son, Josiah, whose father had been killed in February 2014 by San Jose State Police, and a young man named Lamar Noble was to go to trial for resisting arrest charges after being beaten by Santa Clara Sheriff's Department officers, with it all caught on camera.

With a history of police violence and accountability issues in San Jose, the phrase, "Protect Your People" surfaced years ago through the organizing efforts of Silicon Valley De-Bug and its community. Over time, "Protect Your People" became more rel-

evant in San Jose. Families, students, community, and advocates gathered to march, calling it the *Protect Your People March*.

At the march people wore shirts reading, "Protect Your People" with New York, Ferguson, Oakland and San Jose written in the design connecting the struggles of all cities together. For San Jose, this is important. Being the heart of Silicon Valley, San Jose's identity can be lost in the abundance of wealth or the tech world. But, San Jose deals with police issues, poverty, housing and workers' rights. "Protect Your People" is an ode to these communities who can be forgotten or unjustly treated— "Protect your People," because if you don't, who will? If we don't stand with those in need or unjustly treated, their stories will go unheard and justice will not be sought. Protecting your people is a responsibility.

In San Jose, like the rest of the country, we continue to demand justice. We stand in solidarity with every other city fighting for an end to police violence, protecting their people.

Mothers rally for justice for their children

By Sandy Reid,
People's Tribune

MILWAUKEE, WI — On Mother's Day, 2015, Moms whose children have been killed by police, and who seek justice, rallied in Washington, D.C. under the banner of the Million Moms March. The organizer of the event, Maria Hamilton, of Mothers for Justice United, is mother of Dontre Hamilton, a young man, who was killed by police while sleeping in a Madison, WI park. Maria said the Mother's Day protests, will "continue annually until justice is served."

"I decided to do it after doing protests and rallies, and after the District Attorney said they were not going to charge the officer that killed Dontre," said Maria. "I wanted to take the other Moms who had previously been involved with this particular District Attorney to Washington, D.C., to see if all of the cases he had been involved with could be reopened because he works on a daily basis with the police.



Mothers whose children were killed by police join the Million Moms March in DC on Mothers' Day.

PHOTO/MOTHERS FOR JUSTICE UNITED, MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

The Police Department, coroner's office, medical examiners, all have to be investigated. They have been lying, hiding information, and saying information was misplaced. Dontre had 21 holes in his body; they plugged them up except for nine. The police think they are above the law. To me, they are like organized crime and they are literally getting away with murder."

Maria said she feels the pain in the voices of the Moms when they tell their story. "All I want to do is help them. And I want to make people aware that there is a problem." Maria said she would never call 911. She envisions a new society where we "don't have police in the community," where the "community continues to fix the houses and owns the grocery stores."

'System designed with children's interests at the bottom'



A homeless Mom struggles to get her children back.

PHOTO/DONATED

By Amber Theil

NILAND, CA — On January 3, 2015, my family parked the camper van we have been living in near "Slab City" in Niland, California. Slab City is interesting. Travelers, homeless people, and "slabbers"—people who live there all year around—created a unique community of alternative ways to survive and thrive.

We became homeless after what was already one of the most trying times a family can endure. My husband Krishna had a job and I was a stay-at-home mom when Krishna's mother fell ill with cancer. Doctors gave an estimate of two weeks. We quickly headed to Oregon. She hadn't met her granddaughter, Tara, and I was pregnant with Mira. Hoping to bring her some smiles in her last days, we arrived too late.

After giving birth to Mira we planned to live in Krishna's moth-

er's home until we got on our feet. That didn't work out. We bought a camper-van and headed south (to avoid the bad winter.) Mechanical troubles found us in "Slab City."

Within just a few days, we discovered an entire community of support who came together at the same camp to share resources and meals. I began to feel like everything was going to be alright. Everything changed one day when Krishna took Tara on a ride in the RV. Krishna was detained by police. Tara was taken into custody by Child Protective Services, and the RV was impounded. When finally returning to camp, we were followed by a social worker and an officer who picked up more police on the way. Knowing they were there to take my children, I ran with them into the desert, as dozens of squad cars and fire engines turned their spotlights on, having flashbacks to a book I had

read by a holocaust survivor who had to run and hide through potato fields in Poland to escape the Nazis after they killed her mother.

A judge ordered our children returned and we eventually went to Colorado where friends offered us their guest cabin. It all came crashing down again. We had an appointment to get food stamps and medical. A social worker and police officer came with warrants to ARREST our children. They were taken back to California and put in separate foster homes.

I am very frustrated at dealing with a system that seems designed with children's best interest at the BOTTOM of their priorities, and making money for agencies they have contracted with at the very top, causing the destruction of thousands of children in our country.

Editor's note: Amber's full story can be viewed here: adaptandevolveblog.wordpress.com/2015/04/19/40/

Renters fight for their rights

By Liz Gonzalez,
Silicon Valley DeBug

SAN JOSE, CA — Silicon Valley recently made headlines as the third worst place for renters in the country. Only 21% of families here can afford to buy a median priced home and average rent for a one-bedroom apartment starts at more than \$2,200. Longtime residents are priced out of their homes and new housing developments only cater to the influx of people on the high end of the wage scale.

A recently launched coalition of labor, faith leaders, community-based organizations and workers called Silicon Valley Rising is working to make sure all workers here share in Silicon Valley's prosperity. The coalition aims to raise wages and standards of all workers, get tech companies to pay service workers a living wage, and tackle the housing crisis. They've already won victories in tech, including for Facebook drivers, who won a union negotiated contract.

In mid-March, tenants orga-

nized an initial renters' rights dialogue in one of the city's most impacted districts where families pile into rooms, garages, back rooms and even living rooms. In such a prosperous region as Silicon Valley, these conditions are unacceptable and attendees voiced that the resources are obviously available to adequately house families to work and live in Silicon Valley and thrive.

Richard Babcock is a member of the Affordable Housing Network, an organization dedicated to preserving and expanding affordable housing for low-income community members. He's been part of the move for rent control and, although he is determined to see strengthened rent control, he has a back-up plan of moving to Nevada where he could more easily afford rent. Such back-up plans have become the only option for too many people who do not see themselves included in San Jose's future.

The campaign is focused on increasing renter protections by prohibiting discrimination against



Alma Rosas addresses a gathering of Silicon Valley renters fighting for their rights.

PHOTO/RONALD ORLANDO

Section 8 voucher holders, reducing allowable rent increases, adding 10,000 housing units into rent control, and enacting just cause for evictions. Tenants in

San José are joining other cities who are also taking up the fight for housing across the Bay Area. Longterm solutions to house all people is a matter that the entire

region is facing and one where we have the greatest opportunity to be inclusive and value all the people who contribute to the success of Silicon Valley.

The Truth

Let's consider the truth:
The biggest gang in the world
is the police.
Our tax dollars pay for
no justice and no peace.

— Keenan Putansu

Solution to the housing crisis

From the Editors

The suffering in Silicon Valley's housing crisis is not an aberration or temporary dysfunction. It is the predictable result of a dying system. The private property economy cannot meet the needs of the people today, even in wealthy Silicon Valley. It is only organized to benefit the profits of the owning class. In our daily battles, we have to educate one another about this truth. We will win only when we abolish private property and share society's housing resources as part of a cooperative economy that benefits everyone.



Homeless encampment by river in Sacramento, CA. PHOTO/FRANCISCO J. DOMINGUEZ, ©2009

Protect the right to rest

By Cathleen Williams

SACRAMENTO, CA — “Every day one of the largest concentrations of police power anywhere in the world descends on a small part of downtown Los Angeles. Police officers assigned to the Skid Row section of the city routinely wreak havoc in the lives of approximately fifteen thousand low-income and no-income people who inhabit this fifty-block area that covers less than one square mile of territory. In an area where thousands of people are homeless, where nearly three

quarters of the residents suffer from physical or mental disabilities, police officers issue citation after citation for jay-walking, sitting on sidewalks, sleeping in public, holding an open container of liquid, or for outstanding warrants and drug possession.”

— George Lipsitz, *“Learning From Los Angeles: Producing Anarchy In The Name Of Order, Freedom Now (LA CAN 2011)”*

On April 7, in a lavishly decorated mahogany chamber in California’s capitol, the Right To Rest Act, SB 608, was heard. The bill would protect the rights of

homeless people to move freely, rest, eat, and perform religious observations in public space as well as the right to occupy a legally parked vehicle.

Senator Liu, who introduced the bill, didn’t see enough votes to move the bill out of committee. SB608 will be considered as “two year bill,” and be considered in the next legislative session. Meanwhile, in both Colorado and Oregon, similar bills have been introduced.

Fifty-eight California cities have enacted hundreds of new laws that single out home-

less people; 70,000 Californians were picked up for vagrancy in 2013. Since 2000, statewide arrests increased by 77 percent. More than four out of five homeless people report being harassed, cited, or arrested for sleeping in public, or simply sitting or lying down. From January to March of this year, almost 700 people were cited for sleeping or camping in San Francisco.

Anti-Okie laws, Sundown towns. According to the Western Regional Advocacy Project, the vagrancy laws of the last century—especially during the Great Depression of the thirties—jailed unemployed and migrant working people as they struggled to find work; people of color have always borne the brunt of this attack.

Baltimore Oriole’s Manager John Angelos recently observed that tens of millions of good,

hardworking Americans have been plunged into economic devastation, as the political elite has attacked every American’s legal protection “in order to control an unfairly impoverished population living under an ever-declining standard of living and suffering at the butt-end of an ever-more militarized and aggressive surveillance state.”

Angelos explained that jobs are being shipped overseas—but since 2001, America shed 42% of its jobs (5.8 million). By 2010, only one American in 10 worked in manufacturing. According to one writer, globalization is “just a small ripple on the surface of the ocean—the big trend is automation and productivity.”

Like canaries in the mine, the homeless population is under attack first as jobs disappear and poverty is punished as a crime.

True transformation never ‘closes its doors’

By Shamako Noble

SAN JOSE, CA — In an article written to illustrate the ridiculously rapid and uncontrollable rising rental rates in Mountain View, CA, a writer humorously laments the fact that six-figure techies are now priced out, as are gentrifiers, who are now finding it too expensive to live in the very place they helped make unaffordable. Meanwhile, across the Bay, a substitute teacher that I call friend stumbles dizzily into my garage. He just got off work. His reward: watching a 24-year-old kid die of gunshot wounds. This is his second experience with this, and the hardest thing for him to deal with is that no one came to help the boy. Everyone just watched him die.

Across the land, the flames that engulfed Baltimore’s embattled Black workers have settled. Parents, backwards and the miseducated, turned their son into the police for smashing a police car. He is now looking at life in prison. Only days before, a mother

is made a 15-minute superstar for treating her son like the state would. The beating given is for his decision to take a stand in opposition to the state’s blatant disregard for human life.

Everything is upside down. The Black female mayor and Attorney General (interestingly named Lynch) swear justice upon these “thugs.” Hillary Clinton begins positioning her campaign on the issue demanding the police accountability that she could and would never implement as prospective commander-in-chief. Nevertheless, the 80 percent of Americans who live on the edge of poverty and tragedy every day have no choice but to believe her. Or do they?

The 2015 United States Social Forum (USSF) is taking place in two locations, Philadelphia, PA and San Jose, CA. Cities like Jackson, MS, and Florence, SC, are preparing their own People’s Movement Assemblies. In the backdrop of this motion, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) ominously



These children live in Palo Alto, CA, part of Silicon Valley, which is home to high tech corporations and one-third of all venture capital investment in the country. The city is enforcing the largest mass displacement of people in their history. PHOTO/ARAM JAMES, SILICON VALLEY DEBUG

descends upon the scene, altering the fabric of an already deeply eroded ‘democracy’. The soldiers of Detroit continue to struggle for the simple, historically and internationally established human right to water. California looks like it could be next.

This is the rise of fascism, the rule of the corporation, the domination of the human by the inhu-

mane. Life means less every day, and the full-scale effort to create automatons that cannot see flesh and blood is in full effect. On June 24-28, warriors will fight differently, with vision and for vision under the unifying credo, “Another world is possible, another system is necessary.” This Forum, unlike the previous two, is different in that it is both grossly

underfunded and overwhelmed with the impact of the rapid reorganization of society in the interest of the 1 percent.

But these warriors do not cease. True transformation of society does not close its doors when capitalism tells it to. In fact, it is at these most difficult times that they are flung wide open.

Join us.

Help get the People’s Tribune out to homeless organizations and places where the homeless gather!

From the Editors

Capitalism is causing homelessness, pushing workers no longer needed into the streets. Now the system is passing laws making it impossible for homeless people to survive. Who’s next?

Order bundles of papers. Send stories and information about arrests for trying to assist the homeless or the criminalization of the homeless. The People’s Tribune opens its pages to this fight! Call 800-691-6888, email info@peopletribune.org or write PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

Juneteenth 2015: From racial division to class unity

From the Editors

On June 19, 1862, Congress abolished slavery in the U.S. territories. This historic event is celebrated as “Juneteenth.” Juneteenth 2015 is a fitting moment to look at the role of the color question in American politics. It is a time to look at how it is changing in the era of electronics, and consider the possibility of workers moving forward from racial division to class unity and a new world.

Racism has been fostered by ruling classes for centuries across the world to facilitate class exploitation, and is an integral part of capitalism. Historically in the US, the color form of racism subjected all African Americans, regardless of education or wealth, to oppression, segregation and discrimination. This began to change when the mechanization of Southern agriculture in the 1940s and 50s freed millions of Black sharecroppers from the land and drove them into the cities. This economic revolution was the material basis for unleashing the modern freedom struggle, which put an end to legal segregation and discrimination. Over time, the mass of African Americans integrated into the country’s industrial workforce,

while the Black political, cultural and economic elite integrated into the ruling class and the political bureaucracy. The Black worker and the Black capitalist now had diverging economic interests.

In the late 1960s, another economic revolution—the application of the computer and the robot to production—began to affect many workers. This labor-replacing technology is eliminating jobs permanently and creating a new section of the working class whose labor is no longer needed. Because the Black worker had been forcibly concentrated in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs which were easily automated, they were hit first and hardest by electronics, but over time every section of workers has been hit, regardless of color. Today even white-collar jobs are replaced by technology.

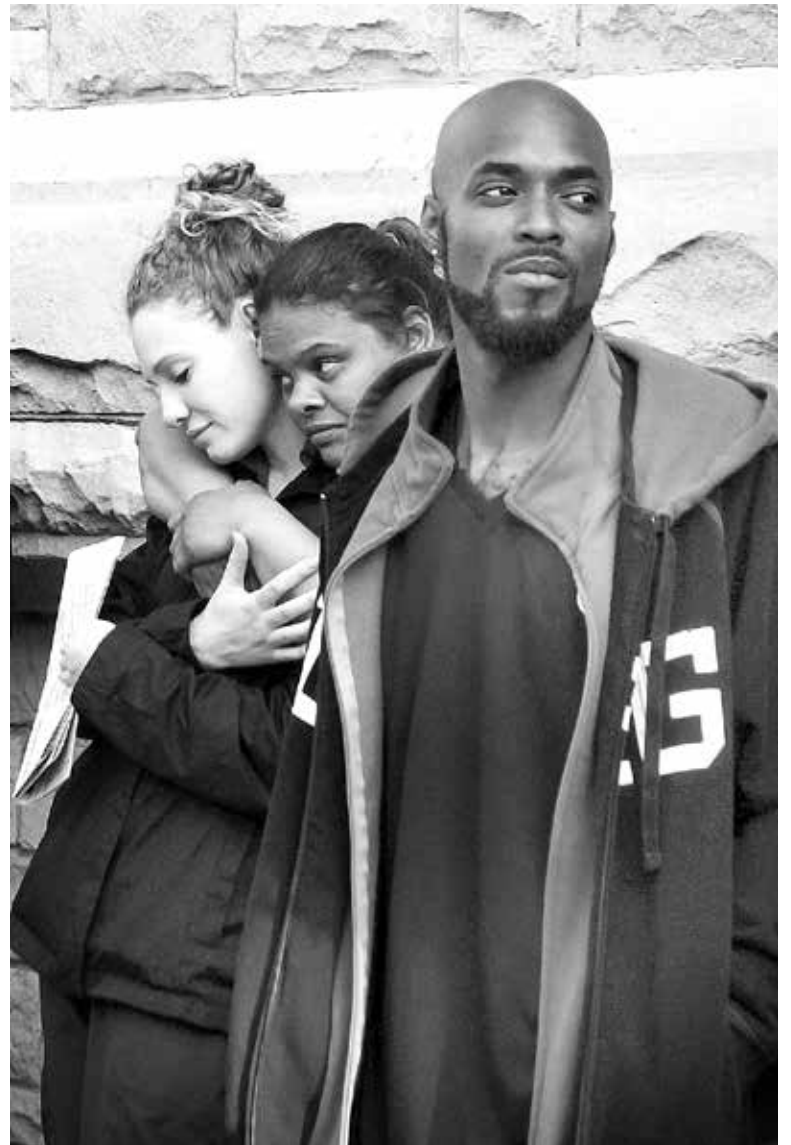
The result is rising poverty and permanent unemployment among workers of all colors. Because their needs cannot be met by a capitalist system based on private property, these dispossessed workers, if united politically, pose a threat to the system itself. Therefore the ruling class must isolate these workers and attack them, and is building a fas-

cist police state to do this. The attack is focused on the Black worker first, but the real target is all workers. The goal is to keep the workers divided and the ruling class in power.

The dispossessed workers, on the other hand, are compelled to fight for a new kind of society or starve. In this sense, Juneteenth, which was a plateau in the struggle for the emancipation of labor, takes on new meaning. Today, for the first time, the possibility of uniting a section of workers across the color line in America exists. Today it is possible to politically unite those who share a common economic condition in a struggle for the political power to create a new, cooperative society free of poverty and racism. The task of revolutionaries is to do the education necessary to make this a reality.

(Right) Participants from Madison, WI get ready to board a bus to the Million Moms March in Washington DC, of mothers whose children have been killed by police and seek justice, on Mother’s Day, 2015.

PHOTO/C.M DESPEARS



Saving rural hospitals is key to health care for all



2014 North Carolina to Washington, DC Walk for Rural Hospitals.

PHOTO/THEWALKNCTODC.COM

**By Rita Valenti,
RN and health care advocates
in the Washington DC area**

ATLANTA, GA — Rural hospitals everywhere are fighting for their existence. Fifty have closed since 2010, affecting the jobs, health, and lives of over 800,000 people. When the critical access hospital in Belhaven, North Carolina, closed last summer, the town’s Republican mayor knew

his town’s fate was connected to a broader fight. With support from the state’s Moral Mondays campaign, a 2014 walk to Washington, DC was organized to address the hospital’s future.

Now 283 more rural hospitals are likely to close. A second walk from Belhaven to Washington, June 1 to June 15, will petition Congress to keep hospitals open and help spark national attention and debate.

(See www.thewalknctodc.com and www.shepscenter.unc.edu/programs-projects/rural-health/rural-hospital-closures)

Planned closures will mean up to 85,000 jobs lost in health care and communities. Rural areas will lose \$10.6 billion in economic activity to support people’s lives. Children, family members, and neighbors die when emergency rooms close. Just ten needless deaths per closed hospital each year will kill as many Americans as died in the 9/11 attack... every year.

All this reflects an upheaval in the financing and delivery system of healthcare. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) and recent changes in Medicare reimbursement encouraged the growth of Accountable Care Organizations—large corporate integrated health systems. Profiting from economies of scale and heavily dependent on technologies, their business model doesn’t work in smaller rural settings. Most rural hospital closures are in states where governors have refused to expand Medicaid and are concentrated in the historic Black Belt of the

South. This area’s rich black soil fed the plantations and the brutal slave system that defined and expanded American capitalism. The closings will intensify the extreme poverty and poor health of the area.

Rural health suffered a blow in the early 1980’s when fixed Medicare reimbursements were introduced. Today Electronic Health Record (EHR) technologies are needed to insure billing, payments and complex data collection under Medicare’s new reimbursement policy. Almost no rural hospitals could afford to implement EHRs four years ago. Medicare’s “outcome based reimbursement” ignores the devastating effects of poverty like lack of transportation, food deserts and lack of money for medications. So closures are accelerating, paving the way for the market to serve only those who are most

profitable.

Each rural hospital closing is a story of people and communities dying and under attack. Medicare and Medicaid are a half-century old this July, won on the wave of the Civil Rights Movement. Today partial solutions are going to be temporary at best and, at worse, will only make healthcare easier to privatize and harder to afford. Only when healthcare for those in the poorest communities is secure will we be able to win healthcare for all.

The “NC to DC Walk” is an example of working people, Black and white, working across party lines to make health care for all a national moral issue. Its vision of saving and improving rural healthcare points toward a federal guarantee for a publicly-owned healthcare delivery system that is accountable to those it serves.

I used to be forever lost
then I built a home in the wind

— Sarah Menefee

Michigan's energy future at a crossroads

By Keith Gunter

DETROIT, MI — Just after the fourth anniversary of the ongoing nuclear catastrophe at Fukushima on March 11, here in Michigan we stand at a pivotal moment in the direction of our state's energy future. We are half a world apart from Japan, but we're really too close for comfort.

DTE Energy's Fermi-2 nuclear plant continues to operate just 30 miles away (the utility is seeking to extend Fermi-2's license from 40 to 60 years). It has the same flawed containment design that failed in March 2011 and has been a major source of controversy for decades.

At the same time, DTE is about to receive approval from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for construction and operation of a Fermi-3, which if built would be the largest single nuclear reactor in the world, right next to Fermi-2. Cost projections are climbing toward \$20 billion, and completion of Fermi-3 won't be achieved without federal subsidies in the billions, plus Construction Work In Progress (CWIP, translated billing customers in advance with the approval of the Michigan Public Service Commission). DTE's 1500-plus

megawatt Economic Simplified Boiling Water Reactor would be the first of its kind built anywhere. It would require more concrete than to build the Pentagon, hardly a carbon-free operation.

Those who will remember will recall that Detroit Edison's Fermi-1 (also a prototype) suffered a partial meltdown on October 5, 1966, chronicled in John Fuller's excellent book "We Almost Lost Detroit."

So as new Environmental Protection Agency regulations are mandating the shutdown of coal-fired power plants, we stand at an energy crossroads. After decades of pursuing the nuclear option at the direction of "experts" and multi-million dollar ad campaigns with no solutions for permanent waste storage in sight, with ever-multiplying reactor safety issues and construction price tags reaching into the stratosphere—at what point do we say "Yes!" in a big way to wind, solar, energy efficiency and conservation and green jobs?

Especially when demand projections by independent analysts agree that electricity from Fermi-3 isn't needed. Especially when there's some 650 tons of intensely radiated high-level nuclear waste in Fermi-2's



Keith Gunter addresses a crowd in Ferndale, Michigan at a "Nuclear Power: What You Need to Know about Price, Pollution and proliferation" conference. PHOTO/ DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

jammed fuel pool with no national repository. Especially when we come to the collective realization that safe, clean, "too cheap to meter" nuclear power has been a government/industry financed mirage all along.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology has estimated that

global nuclear plant construction would have to triple to even begin to mitigate the effects of climate change with nuclear power.

But if DTE and NRC go ahead with their choreographed power tangos for Fermi-3 and Fermi-2, challenges await them emanating from the pub-

lic square—questioning the Certificate Of Need for Fermi-3, and the 20-year license extension for Fermi-2.

From the public square, Albert Einstein once said, should come America's voice about nukes.

The era of antagonism and 2015 contract negotiations

By Al Gladysck

DETROIT, MI —

"When I look at the automation and robotics in our factories, it was that double edged sword. The folks that were running those machines were being killed/worn out because of the repetitive stress and heavy parts. Drop a robot in that costs roughly the wages for the year of one operator, the operator has been replaced. That one operator can run many robots now, so he's productive, but some of his friends are let go."

— *The Source of the Healthcare Crisis in this Country*, "In My Opinion" blog, 3/15/15

In a conversation with a UAW activist late last year, he said the contract negotiations are about getting bigger share of "unpaid labor" into our wages. But he did not understand that the qualitative change in how cars are produced means there is less "unpaid labor" because we make more cars with less labor.

The Era of Contradiction

The assembly line allowed production to move from high paid skilled labor to low paid unskilled labor. It created the need for more and more labor to produce more and more products for sale. Poverty in this country, immigration from other countries, and migration from the South served as the source of this labor.

Labor doesn't own the products it produces. Wages determine labor's ability to buy some back. As the assembly line expanded "unpaid labor" grew at an astounding rate. "Unpaid labor" served to fund the expansion of the assembly line and industrial cities grew. The development of industrial unions served to deal with this contradiction as a struggle over paid and unpaid labor with individual employers.

The Era of Antagonism

The introduction of robotics into the assembly line process is replacing the contradiction with antagonism by eliminating human labor and consequently "unpaid labor." Today less "unpaid

labor" manifests itself by a 354% increase in the number of billionaires in this country.

In 1979, prior to the introduction of "robots" at Ford, GM, and Chrysler, the UAW had 1.5 million active members, including about 1 million at the big three. Today the UAW has about 400,000 active members with about 140,000 active members in the big three and over 700,000 UAW retirees from the big three.

We make more cars with 86% less labor today because of this antagonism.

Billionaires simply have nowhere to invest the "unpaid labor" that they are accumulating so they buy and sell in the stock market instead of buying labor and selling the products that labor produces.

This antagonism is creating the growth of permanent poverty and the resulting destruction of industrial cities in the "Rust Belt." It is the basis of the wave of anti-immigrant propaganda and racist ideology that blames that poverty on the growing number of people caught in it.

2015 Contract Negotiations

Five million members of AFL-CIO affiliated unions have or will be negotiating contracts this year.

The United Automobile and Aerospace Workers (UAW) contract negotiations will begin in June of this year as a very small, but important, part of these over-

all AFL-CIO negotiations with employers.

Under these conditions, the best thing that can happen in these negotiations is that we realize that we need political unity to achieve a society that meets human needs. That means developing an independent political movement.

every day working that corner in the world of free agency with one bad leg and his dear dog

— Sarah Menefee



People's Tribune Radio podcasts are available at peopletribune.org. Hear from people at the forefront of the struggles for a new America.

‘Let’s join together and fight this monster,’ says Rev. Pinkney from prison

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

COLDWATER, MI — Today I am speaking from Lakeland prison. If we assume that life is worth living and a man has a right to service, I will say that the august body of assorted judges and politicians must be held accountable for their actions and inactions of wrongdoing. We must find an alternative to injustice in America. We are living in a day where drones hurl through the air and guided ballistic missiles cause a highway of death, destroying God’s Green Earth and His children.

We must say no more to injustice. We must say no more to this criminal justice system. We have never achieved anything in this life from the oppressor. We haven’t made a single gain without the confrontation of power to power.

I am calling for a rebirth of America itself, given the nation’s initial birth with its genocide against Native Americans, inhuman enslavement of African Americans and treatment of poor whites. We, the people, must reexamine this country, the “land of the free” and “home of the brave.” We must come together and stand

up: Blacks, poor whites, brown, red, yellow and all others—we the people—and we can win.

I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, demand that we reexamine our economic priorities. I insist that the Federal budget is immoral—it pays the outrageous price of reckless military adventures while cutting out the heart of our domestic social programs.

In Berrien County, Michigan, which is dominated by the Whirlpool Corporation, we have a rogue justice system. It is led by the rogue prosecutor, Mike Sepic, a person who in many cases ignores the law when prosecuting Blacks and poor whites. Mike Sepic bases his decisions on unrevealed deeply held prejudices, which results in inappropriate awards, punishment and conviction. His actions are not based on trying to achieve a just or fair outcome, but rather, on representing the interests of the corporations.

Mike Sepic intentionally charged me with a more serious crime to seek a more severe punishment than was proper—a charge that was against my lawful exercise of a constitutional right to engage in the electoral process. I believe the unnamed and uncon-



Rally outside the Berrien County courthouse after Rev. Pinkney was refused bail pending his appeal. PHOTO/SANDY REID, PEOPLETRIBUNE.ORG

ditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why temporary defeat is stronger than evil triumph and victory.

We must say to all the people, Black, poor whites, red, yellow, brown, and everyone else, that we can win this fight if we

fight together. It’s us against them. It’s not one thing, it’s everything. Let’s join together and fight this monster.

How to deal with criminal corporations

By Peter Brown

OAKLAND, CA — In 2010, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) destroyed part of San Bruno, CA, when a main gas line exploded. Since then, weekly reports have documented PG&E’s profiteering, mismanagement, and outright criminality. Pipelines weren’t maintained, weren’t checked, weren’t even up to state standards when installed; reports are “missing” or destroyed. Pipelines are over-pressured without warning, warnings by PG&E’s own workers are ignored. Even worse, it’s widespread, not just local. The company’s response is a PR campaign claiming they’ve “lost their way.” Really? The same company made notorious in “Erin Brockovich?”

Was there a shareholder revolt, demanding that PG&E transform its criminal ways? Not a peep.

What has our government’s response been? The California Public Utilities Commission has covered up and protected PG&E’s ability to maintain profits, at the expense of the public it was charged to protect.

And what would be the response of a government ded-

icated to protecting the people from the corporations?

Revoke PG&E’s Corporate Charter, seize its assets, and operate it as a public resource.

This is a power government has held from the beginnings of our country. The corporate charter is what allows the corporation to exist, and can be revoked. Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and others argued that corporations should hang by a thread.

And is PG&E the only corporation in need of such dire treatment? Hardly: the corporate world is rife with criminal behavior. The new economy driven by the electronic revolution has permanently unhinged capital from productive activity. It will never return to “the good old days.”

The situation we face demands this: that the resources we all need should be under public, democratic control, so that the public can operate them differently. It will require a government committed to the needs of the 99.9% of us who must work to live, the working class.

Will our corporate government as it currently exists do this for us? It is naïve to expect that this government will turn around

and defend us. But to create one that does, we must expect that our government *should* defend us and create a completely new kind of economic system with a new kind of government.

It’s not enough just to pressure or influence our government, or to “scare” corporations into behaving better. We need to take control away from the corporations and create a completely new kind of government. It must be organized to insure we can all make our contributions to this world, and all have equal access to the sustainable, abundant resources needed to live decent lives.

Taking control of our government can only be accomplished by a nationally organized effort based on a unified platform representing just one thing: the needs of all people, and not corporations.

Imagine the world we can create when we unite for that task, bringing together the huge number of organizations we already have within our national community.

We are told we have no rights which corporations are bound to respect. It’s time to turn that around; corporations have no rights which the people are bound to respect.

“Voices from Benton Harbor”

The quotes below are from Benton Harbor residents. The community is deeply concerned about the railroading of Rev. Pinkney for his political activities in exposing corruption and poverty in their city, which is in the hands of the corporations and their lackeys.

— The People’s Tribune

“What’s going on in Benton Harbor is beyond racism—it’s high crime. They locked Rev. Pinkney up on *suspicion* of changing some dates on petitions and Commissioner Bob Wooley *admitted* he had stolen for over seven years thousands of dollars from the Senior Center and got a lighter sentence. Also, Wooley had been auditing himself—and they allowed it. There’s a cover up. They all had their hands dirty. Rev Pinkney talked too much. They locked him up to try to keep their crimes quiet. But it is out in the open now.”

— Emma Kinnard, Benton Harbor

“If the American people want to move forward, they have to unify around common issues like poverty, water, corporate influence.”

— Patti Heinz, Benton Harbor

“Rev. Pinkney is a very good friend of mine. He helped me write an article about homelessness.”

— Orlando Cage, Benton Harbor

Send your stories to:
People’s Tribune, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654
or call 800-691-6888.