



Crowds gathered in Ferguson, MO, a year ago to protest the police murder of teenager Mike Brown. People marched in Ferguson recently to mark the one-year anniversary of his death. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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WHY POLICE TERROR IS ON THE RISE

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Vision for a cooperative society

EDITORIAL

For the first time ever, we can eliminate poverty, homelessness, and hunger. For the entirety of human history we have been hampered by scarcity, yet today exists abundance. Technological advancement has made it possible to produce all that we need to live, the necessities of life, for everyone on the planet. The means of producing this abundance are owned and controlled privately by corporations. We need to liberate this abundance for the people. In a different society with a cooperative economy—where the necessities of life are owned publicly—humanity can prosper.

Today, automation and information technology have become so productive and efficient because the capitalists need to cut costs and maximize profits. The most effective way to do that is by introducing technology that eliminates human labor. Advanced technology is pushing millions of people out of work, and driving down incomes of those who still have jobs. Capitalism, an economic system based on the buying and selling of our ability to work, is coming to an end.

The ruling class will not provide for people who are being permanently pushed out of the economy, despite the overabundance of resources. Eight hundred million people suffer from hunger while a third of the world's food goes to waste. More than 18 million homes stand empty in the U.S. while nearly one million people are homeless. Millions fill the prisons and police gun down thousands in our streets.

Those who suffer the most at the hands of the ruling class, those who are losing everything, will be the primary force for building a cooperative society that benefits everyone. No longer pitted against each other, people of all nationalities, skin color,



Demonstrators protest the closure of 49 schools in Chicago, 2013.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

and gender can unite in common cause, to build a world where everyone's quality of life is just as important as the next person's.

No longer will we toil away to make someone else rich while we struggle to make ends meet. Society's abundance can be distributed to all to meet our needs. Our skills and talents can be put towards the greater good and to pursue our passions. We can focus our energies and humanity's greatest minds on building a sustainable future. We can restore the planet, end disease, and explore the cosmos. The human spirit, no longer bound by scarcity and grinding work, will be unleashed so that we may fulfill our highest potential.

This cooperative society is not a utopian dream; it is now possible, and a necessity. Capitalism cannot continue, and the ruling class is already scrambling to figure out how to reorganize to preserve their power and ownership—they only have fascism to offer. A new kind of system based on abundance, that is cooperative and puts human life first, is the

only way to stop fascism and to insure a just and peaceful future. The next step in building this society is to join with all those who have nothing left to gain in the current system, and unite around a vision of the new world that we need.

Church raises funds for People's Tribune

Dear Readers,

As a result of consistent work with the People's Tribune (distributions and discussion groups) a church is donating 5% of their general offerings in August to help insure the "people's voice is never silenced." The church sees the People's Tribune as the "voice of the poor, the homeless and the oppressed" and says that "the cry of the oppressed must be heard."

We welcome your fundraising experiences, too!

—People's Tribune Editorial Board

Do you like what you see in this paper?

If you like what you're reading, the People's Tribune needs your help. We have no paid staff and get no grants. The People's Tribune relies entirely on its readers for financial support. Make a donation today. When you distribute this paper to others, ask for a donation. If you hold a discussion group around the People's Tribune, ask for donations. The People's Tribune not only opens its pages to the voices of the movement, it puts forward a vision of a new, cooperative society where everyone's needs are met and a strategy for getting there. From this point on, the direction our country takes depends largely on how people understand the problem and the solution. We need a press to win the battle of ideas. This paper can only continue to exist with your help. Make donations payable to People's Tribune and send to P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL, 60654. You can also donate via Paypal at www.peoplestribune.org.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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

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

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

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

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY: Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

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

People's Tribune Editor: Bob Lee

Editorial Staff: Brett Jelinek, Sarah Menefee, Joseph Peery, Nelson Peery, Sandra Reid, Cathy Talbott

Photo Editor: Daymon Hartley

National Office:
People's Tribune, P.O. Box 3524
Chicago, Illinois, 60654
e-mail: info@peoplestribune.org
Phone: 773-486-3551
Toll Free: 800-691-6888
Fax: 773-486-3552
Web: www.peoplestribune.org

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Reach us locally at:
Chicago, IL: 773-486-3551
peoplestribunechicago@gmail.com
Ann Arbor, MI: zetlir@gmail.com
Atlanta, GA: atlanta@peoplestribune.org
Carbondale, IL:
carbondale@peoplestribune.org
Denver, CO: info@peoplestribune.org
Detroit, MI: 313-438-6115
Houston, TX:
P O Box 231281, Houston, TX 77223-1281
Los Angeles, CA: 310-548-6491
Oakland, CA:
oakland@peoplestribune.org
Washington, DC:
pt_in_dmv@yahoo.com

Why police terror is on the rise

COVER STORY

In Cincinnati in July, Samuel DuBose, a 43-year-old Black man, is shot dead after being pulled over for not having a front license tag on his car. In July, police in Seneca, South Carolina kill a white youth, 19-year-old Zachary Hammond, during a minor drug bust. Daniel Robert Avila, a 55-year-old Latino, is shot dead by a San Diego deputy in August after extending his arm at police during a confrontation. In July 2014, Jeanetta Riley, 35, a pregnant, homeless Native American woman with a history of mental problems, is gunned down by police in Sandpoint, Idaho after she refuses to drop a knife.

The sickening list goes on and on—men, women, children, of every color and nationality. And we can be sure that all or nearly all of them came from the ranks of the poorest part of America's working class.

The police are out of control in America, and no one is safe. Yet many of the people have learned a different lesson from their experience and from the news media. A nationwide poll in mid-July found that nearly three-quarters of Black respondents consider police violence to be an extremely or very serious problem, while less than 20 percent of whites feel the same. Most whites polled felt race has little to do with how the police decide to use deadly force, while most Blacks felt police were more likely to use deadly force against Blacks than whites.

Given the country's history, it's not surprising that official violence falls disproportionately on people of color. But most people have been deceived into think-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

ing that the campaign of police terror is all about race. In fact, it is aimed at the poorest workers, who today are of every color and nationality. Over the last 50 years, labor-replacing technology has steadily wiped out the jobs in America and impoverished tens of millions. A new section of the working class has been created that has little or no place in the economy. They share a common poverty regardless of color. Sooner or later they could unite and rebel against their conditions and demand a society that serves their needs, and so from the view of

America's wealthy capitalist rulers, this section has to be divided and controlled by force. Thus the stage is being set for an open, fascist police state.

The campaign of terror is designed to prevent the people from uniting in a fight for their interests. The rulers' aim is to get the majority of the people to accept unlimited violence against a part of our people. Once this idea is accepted, then the police state can be imposed on everyone.

At the same time, our rulers know that the police crackdown

is an embarrassment to them in the international arena. They need a police state, but without the extremes. Thus we see the president and other officials appearing to speak out against it. But the working class must follow its own course. The question today for the workers is, how do we move toward a whole new society, free of poverty and repression? We must fight every instance of police terror, and fight together as one people, one working class. We cannot allow them to pick us off group by group and one by one.

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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.

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

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Editorial Board

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Homeless organizers speak out



Homeless leaders march against criminalization of the homeless in San Francisco in July.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

By Sarah Menefee

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — On July 31, WRAP (Western Regional Advocacy Project) brought activists with homeless-led member organizations from all over California and the West, from as

far away as Denver, to protest the criminalization of homeless people and demand the Right to Rest and the adoption of a Homeless Bill of Rights.

The first quote below is from one of the speakers at the spirited march and rally:

“People are getting arrested for looking for a decent place to sleep. What does that tell you? It tells you they don’t care about us. We got to stand up and fight back. You walk down the streets here, how many people sleeping on the streets, how many people without

housing? Even people that work, they can’t afford it. And the shelters are the new prisons.”

—Ibrahim Bilal Mubarak, WRAP and Right 2 Survive, Portland OR

The two quotes below are from two Bay Area members of ‘First they came for the homeless’ which has organized multiple direct actions against unjust laws and harassment, including an ongoing one-year vigil against the stealing of the commons and for the right to sleep, among other issues:

“Sleep is not just a right, it is a necessity. To quote a recent case brought by the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Director, ‘sleep is a life-sustaining activity’, along with others that are being criminalized. They are trying to drive homeless people away by harassment. What they don’t realize, the problems this causes makes things worse. Sleep deprivation causes mental distress and illness. Then when people act out the system will crack down harder, causing even more problems. This is inhumane. It’s a vicious cycle that makes everything worse.”

—Mike Zint, ‘First they came for the homeless,’ Berkeley and San Francisco

They are scapegoating homeless people using the same methods the Nazis used to set people up for genocide and make it socially acceptable. This goes from criminalizing laws, to the drumbeat in the media about ‘quality of life’, to police harassment, brutality and outright murders of unarmed homeless people.

The defense of homeless rights is the defense of our whole class against the brutal rule of the billionaire capitalist class and its fascist agenda. From sit-down resistance to the so-called ‘sit/lie laws’, to organized squatting and housing takeovers, to defying these injustices on every level, the battle for the program of the homeless for rights, dignity and homes is a fight for all of us. ‘We only get what we are organized to take’. Right now we need to organize to take the power to guarantee that the wealth created by society belongs to all of society, and is distributed according to need. That is the remedy for homelessness.

—Sarah Menefee, ‘First they came for the homeless’ and the People’s Tribune, San Francisco

We need a communal society

By Matt Sedillo

LOS ANGELES, CA — Most people when they talk about class have some deep misconceptions. We so often hear about class in terms of rich, poor and middle class. Even the middle class is said to be divided into upper and lower middle class. Under this definition class is determined by income and or personal assets. It is around this false consciousness that a wide majority of people define their class position and their politics of how classes should interact within society.

This is a false consciousness because class does not break down along lines of income but rather along the lines of ownership and labor. It’s not just that the poor shouldn’t be so poor. Or the middle class should be bigger. Or that the rich should do more to help both. No. There really shouldn’t be this division between labor and ownership in the first place.

The world for the overwhelming majority of us is organized in a chaotic manner, where nothing is guaranteed to those who own nothing. Meanwhile virtually every human institution

is set up to maintain the rule of law, which is really the legal rule of property, which by definition bolsters the rule of the propertied class. The majority of us need to learn to read so that we can be exploited. We need trash picked up so we don’t get sick.

But what happens in areas where there is no work to go around? What happened to Philadelphia, Detroit, Youngstown, Gary or the Southside of Chicago? What happened to the industrial belt, now called the Rust Belt? The schools close. The water gets cut. And the garbage piles up.

In America, at least in the 20th century, we know only the reform struggle. The struggle is to make things a little better, fairer—but anything beyond that is thought of as foolish and dangerous. The reform struggle itself cost many, many lives, i.e. in the struggle for unions, civil rights etc. But the reform struggle is conditional. The struggle for reform can only be waged on the condition that production is labor dependent. The struggle for reform revolved around the ability to enter into exploitation, i.e. against discrimination, around

changing the rate of exploitation, i.e. a higher wage and for safer conditions as in worker safety laws. But if instead of a worker, production is dependent on a machine, then you have no ability to wage that struggle.

That is what is happening today and for about 35 years now. It is accelerating. It will redefine how and what we struggle for.

More and more, the struggle of our day and future will be to get an economy that matches current production. Meaning we need a system of distribution that matches the system of production. Meaning we need to abolish this way of doing things and replace it with a communal society. This is not utopian thinking. And in the future, it is the most practical solution, as the owners of capital



Every morning, men and women line the sidewalk outside the San Francisco Community Recyclers center with their shopping cart or bags of bottles and cans to redeem for their survival. PHOTO/WRAP

will not pay you to stand in front of machines.

Human beings struggle around material things, for what

is actually in front of us. Our struggle must keep pace with how society is materially changing. The future is up to us.

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

Homelessness is a stark example of the degeneration of an economic system based on the private property of a billionaire owning class. Automation is replacing workers. The rulers will not provide for workers they can no longer exploit. The only solution is a cooperative society where the needs of all will be met.

Order bundles of papers. Send stories about arrests for assisting the homeless or the criminalization of the homeless. The PT opens its pages to this fight. Call 800-691-6888 or email info@peopletribune.org

Uniting with the demands of the poor

By Bruce Wright

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — At the US Social Forum in Philly, one of the gatherings was a People's Movement Assembly that centered on the importance of Faith and it's intersection with Justice. It happened on the heels of Spiritual gatherings and workshops at the Social Forum.

One of those workshops, that I conducted, on "Solidarity with Movements of the Poor," particularly around the idea of Liberation Theology, was among several, that informed our discussion on the last day of the US Social Forum. Though a small crowd in attendance, it was a very committed and excited group of people, ready to promote change from the bottom up. It included both lay leadership and clergy. Several ideas came from this group to further promote the creation of the new world that is

necessary.

Some of the discussion focused on the Pope's Encyclical on the Environment and Poverty, and his impending visit to Philadelphia. There was also discussion about the role Faith must play in uniting with the dispossessed class of the Poor, and the necessity of being informed and led by this class. And, that all the sacred texts of the various faiths reflect this understanding. Further, there was an understanding that Churches, Mosques, Synagogues, Temples, and other places of worship, should also be centers for organizing and uniting with the demands of the poor.

It is also significant that emphasis was placed on the role that arts and culture must play. Among this small group were artists and performers that suggested the Biblical references of musicians leading the oppressed

into struggle was an important function of Social Change. One group represented called, "Carnival de Resistance," a production of Holy Fool Arts, travels around the country as a Carnival, Village, and School for Cultural Transformation (www.carnivalderesistance.com). This group is one method of Social Transformation that the Interfaith group is considering utilizing.

We also discussed community gardens, alternative economies, and human rights approaches to social change. In the end, we determined to continue dialogue, networking, sharing readings, and resources ideas. We also determined to approach all of work with a solidarity model in mind, seeking direction, input, and leadership from the class of the poor. We also came out with an understanding that we are living in a revolutionary time and that all efforts must be centered



"Three words to describe how we keep our love strong while homeless: We got each other—when it's cold at night at least we have each other to keep us warm," said New York and his wife, Cat. The couple previously lived in "The Jungle," the largest homeless encampment in the US, which was destroyed by the city of San Jose.

PHOTO/SILICON VALLEY DE-BUG

and focused in local, regional, national, and international fields of struggle. And, that Spiritual practice is vital to this growing and ongoing struggle and movement.



Wish It Was True

Country, I was a soldier to you.

I did what you asked me to.

It was wrong, and you knew.

Country, now I'm just a stranger to you.

A number, a name; it's true.

Throw me away when you're through.

Home of the brave and the free; the red, white, and blue.

I wish it was true.

— White Buffalo

Reprinted from thefreethoughtproject.com

'We as a people must become one'

By John Kaniecki

NEWARK, NJ — The address, 405 Chancellor Avenue is inner city Newark, New Jersey. It is the location of the Church of Christ where I attend. The predominantly African American area is impoverished and full of crime. At least two people have been killed on the corner by the church. This is a spot where drugs are openly bought and sold. The illegal nature of drug dealing fosters violence, whether it be from other drug dealers or the police.

I recall when we started the work in 2008. Without fail, every time my wife and I visited the building we would see the same t-shirt. The one depicting the newly elected President Obama with the word HOPE underneath. Now we don't see that shirt worn at all. While there is still pride in having a Black president, the anticipation of change for the better has vanished.

At the church, we are not wealthy people by any means. Most of us have jobs so we are doing better than the average person. We have the *luxury* of being able to drive and to live decently. To serve the community we give out clothes and school supplies. We don't charge for our services. Admittedly it is very little we

can provide compared to what is needed.

But we provide a spiritual relief. We bring a message of hope and acceptance. Change in society does not come by a mass conversion. Rather, it is by individuals one at a time. Christianity is at best a misconstrued notion. It has been used to justify brutal chattel slavery and genocide. Today the Republican Party uses it a guise for fascism. But read the New Testament with understanding. In it are the most profound revolutionary words ever uttered.

"The love of money is the root of all evil." In this statement alone, capitalism is rejected. "Turn the other cheek," "Love your enemy." Slavery is abolished, as is war. "Whatever you have done to the least of me you have done unto me." A formula to assist those in need.

No message, even a divine one will be communicated without hard work. To quote Joe Hill,

"Don't mourn, organize." The state is a vastly organized beast. It has a chain of command and diversity of functions. It is a cruel juggernaut that will either crush you or slowly drive you insane. The first step in revolutionary change is becoming aware that there is an alternative method. That there is some other way to live your life.

Some people on the left would like to categorically reject any notion of God. In turn, I categorically reject intellectualism. I see a lot of people talking about change but I don't see many people doing anything to bring it about. It's time to either be real or quit the criticisms.

If revolutionary change is to be successful, we as a people must become one. If nothing else, at the Church of Christ, we go amongst the people. We hear their voices and share their sorrows.

Speakers for a New America

Invite speakers to your city who fight for the right to water, homes, health care, against police terror, and for a new society where everyone's needs are met.

Call 800-691-6888.

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From Watts to Ferguson: Poverty is the common thread



A diverse crowd gathered for the one-year anniversary of Mike Brown's execution by (former) police officer Darren Wilson at the site on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, MO, August 9th. PHOTO/PEPPER HOLDER

By Cathy Talbott

FERGUSON, MO — August 9 marked the one-year anniversary of Mike Brown's death. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Watt's uprising of 1965 and the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. From Watts to Katrina to Ferguson, we witnessed the growing impoverishment of a section of workers who

cannot survive in this economic system. They are discarded from a system that demands maximum profits at the expense of human lives. As corporations replace workers with computerized production, millions are tossed aside, barely subsisting at the margins of society. In response, the police state has been consciously erected by our ruling class to contain this impoverished mass of humanity

while protecting the wealth of the millionaires and billionaires.

As I stood on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri, Sunday, August 9, 2015, at the site of Mike Brown's execution, listening to the speakers honoring the memory of the 18-year-old who became the symbol of 'Black Lives Matter' and the struggle against police terror, the faces of many of the fallen flashed by my eyes. In those faces

I saw the common threads of poverty and racism; a racism that says these lives of the poor of all colors don't matter to a ruling class that is remaking the world in their image. A world that is only for those who can pay—the wealthy of all colors and nationalities. As a formerly employed worker who lost his job and is now homeless commented, "The police in St. Louis don't discriminate. If you're poor and homeless, they kill you no matter what color you are."

The truth is that the police are killing the poor of all colors, ages and genders in increasing numbers. It is difficult to come up with exact figures. There is no official national database keeping a tally. But it is acknowledged that in this year alone, police have killed on average over three persons per day. And that doesn't include those who have died in prison under suspicious circumstances.

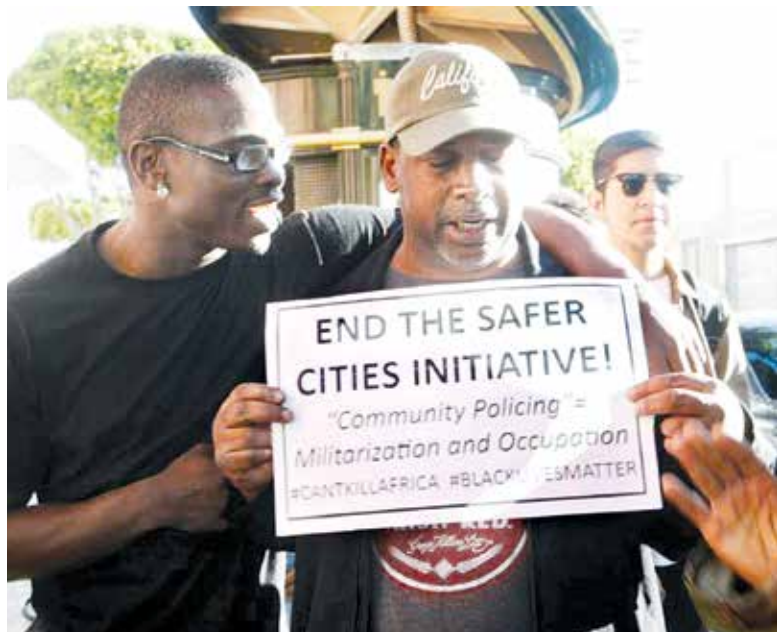
'Racism' was the weapon the ruling class created to keep the poor whites from uniting with the black slaves in common against

their rulers. Today, the computer and robot, which are eliminating our labor, are setting the stage for us to unite across the color line as we descend into poverty together. These tools also offer us the way out of our common poverty.

These tools also offer us the way out of our common poverty. Owned in common by society as a whole, they could produce what we need to not only survive, but thrive. They could produce a world of abundance without the backbreaking toil and mindless labor of yesteryear. If we collectively owned the means of producing the social products, we could distribute them based on need and not money. There would be no need for a 'ruling class' and no need for police.

The first step is to recognize that we cannot win a world of peace and freedom from want if we fight as isolated groups. The struggle against the police state and for a new society must include all the victims of this predatory system. The time is now.

'Safer Cities Initiative' creates most heavily policed area in world



This rally is protesting the police killing of "Africa," a homeless man living in a tent on Skid Row, the most heavily policed area in the country where homeless people are cited for "crimes" like walking too fast or slow, eating or standing. PHOTO/LYNN ROSSI

By Chris Venn

LOS ANGELES, CA — September 26 is the 9th anniversary of the Safer Cities Initiative (S.C.I.). This "initiative," under the guise of "fighting crime," has increased the number of police in the Skid Row section of downtown Los Angeles with its 12,000 residents, to create the most heavily

policed area in the world, higher than Baghdad, Iraq.

In its first year, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) issued 12,000 citations, primarily signal ("walk"/"don't walk"). The LAPD also made 750 arrests each month, mostly for drug violations, many resulting in plea bargaining and leaving the violator with a criminal record, thus ineligible

for drug treatment or even food stamps.

In the Skid Row community of Los Angeles, "Walking too fast, walking too slow, eating and standing have all been criminalized." (Clyde Woods, *Traps, Skid Row and Katrina*)

This stepped up police presence in Skid Row is the only answer the state has to the plight of a new class of poverty-stricken, formerly productive workers. These residents are not so much castoffs of the old society, but a new class created by robotics and the crumbs from McJobs. According to the Los Angeles Times, county-wide, the number of people sleeping in outdoor encampments or vehicles jumped 85% in the past two years.

Deindustrialization and new automated technologies in Los Angeles, of auto, rubber and shipbuilding, have created extremely powerful groups of real estate and financial speculators who are promoting a militarized police department through the Safer Cities Initiative to protect private property.

LACAN, a civil rights organization located in Skid Row, demands the LAPD immediately: 1. Stop the tickets. 2. Downsize the

of police. 3. Use "Smart Teams" (mental health professionals) for response to possible violation by persons with mental illness.

S.C.I. "legally annihilates the very spaces the homeless must rely on for everyday life in the post-welfare world" (Don Mitchell, *Homelessness, American Style*). S.C.I. has also been used in other parts of Los Angeles such as Venice and Hollywood.

The city's budget for homelessness is \$100 million with \$87 million of this money going to the police. With each economic downturn in Los Angeles, the response to homelessness and poverty becomes more militarized, with the LAPD's tanks, sound canons and violence increasingly used on every protest and independent action.

Thinly veiled "democracy

for the rich" has become violent police rule for the poor. With every small improvement in the economy, "progressive" Democratic politicians such as Mayor Eric Garcetti, promise to adjust the harmful aspects of S.C.I. but not to abolish it. The "improvements" are cosmetic, inconsequential or never followed up on. Just last week Garcetti informed civil rights activists that he would not abolish the S.C.I.

On Skid Row, with the greatest number of police per square mile of any community in the city, SCI has been ineffectual in its supposed purpose of "fighting crime." Across Los Angeles a nascent movement is recognizing the battle lines for a city where the hungry are fed, the homeless are housed and young people are taught.



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

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 minorities. History also shows that as this brutality becomes accepted by the majority, it is inevitably used against everyone.

Justice for Heriberto Godinez, Jr. – 1988-2015



Heriberto Godinez, Jr. was 24 years old. He died in police custody. The family is seeking answers. PHOTO/
FB.COM/JUNIORGODINEZ88

Editor's note: Heriberto Godinez, Jr. was 24 years old. He died in police custody. The family is seeking answers. The following plea for information was posted on Facebook.

CHICAGO, IL — On Monday July 20, 2015, at 1:30 a.m., my fiancé got murdered by Chicago police officers at District 9 for

a crime he did not commit! The police story was that when they arrived at the scene, they saw a man breathing heavily and sweating. They called paramedics, but when the ambulance arrived, he became “unresponsive.” Then he died on the scene.

We don't believe the story the police gave. We know there is more to it and information was hidden. On the day of my fiancé's autopsy they said, “there was no cause for his death.” Then, later, it was said, “he may have a broken neck.”

We were told that a heavy-set police officer put his knee into the back of his neck while he was lying on the ground.

My fiancé deserves justice!!!! He did not deserve for his life to be taken like this.

Nothing will bring him back to us.

HE DESERVES JUSTICE.

HIS STORY NEEDS TO GET OUT SO THESE POLICE OFFICERS WILL PAY FOR WHAT THEY HAVE DONE. THEN HE WILL GET THE JUSTICE HE DESERVES!!

I know there are other families who have suffered the same tragedy as Heriberto's. I would like for anyone to share this story to help us get his justice. PLEASE LIKE AND SHARE THIS FACEBOOK PAGE: fb.com/Juniorgodinez88

PLEASE, IF ANYONE WITNESSED THIS TRAGEDY OR HAS ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE SPEAK UP AND HELP US GET THE JUSTICE THAT HERIBERTO GODINEZ JR. DESERVES!!!

REST IN PARADISE MY SWEET LOVE. 1988-2015

FOREVER IN MY HEART.

Justice for Zachary Hammond

Editor's Note: Zachary Hammond, 19, was killed by Seneca, South Carolina police while assisting a woman with purchasing a marijuana plant. He was not armed, was shot through a side window “in self-defense” according to Police Chief John Covington. However, the family's attorney, Ronnie Richter, says that the autopsy report “indicated that the first shot went into Hammond's left rear shoulder, throwing him forward in the car, and the second one went at a downward angle into his side from the rear, through his heart and lungs and leaving out his lower right side. The entry wounds were five inches apart. The shots were so close in proximity to each other that it would be physically impossible unless the car was stopped and the officer came up very close to an open window... From the evidence that we reviewed, it's clear that the shot that killed Zach Hammond came from behind not from in front.” (freethoughtproject.com)

“We must continue to keep the brutal [police] murder of Zachary Hammond on the fore front. If you cannot tell 100 people about this injustice then just tell one. If you can't tell 100 people about the marches and rallies then just tell one. Your voice is a powerful weapon and never think you are too small to make a difference in this world. Justice is a lot like freedom; it is never voluntarily given by the oppressors. It must be demanded by the oppressed.

We must continue to struggle, fight, and strive for better conditions, not only for our generation but for future generations. A family should not have to attend a funeral and be in mourning over the violent death of their loved one. Meanwhile, the killer is allowed to roam the public and live in comfort and draw a paycheck at the expense of the American taxpayers. Never underestimate persistence. The power of the people is stronger than the people in power and in cases of injustice they should expect resistance.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. Nothing strengthens injustice and corruption so much as silence. Speak the truth even



Zachary Hammond, 19, was killed by Seneca, South Carolina police while assisting a woman with purchasing a marijuana plant. PHOTO/
FB.COM/PAGES/
JUSTICE-FOR-ZACHARY-
HAMMOND/412252348985873

if your voice shakes and together let's continue to seek justice for all victims of police violence.

Unity and solidarity, wisdom and encouragement, the streets should be filled with protest until justice has been met. We see it daily in the streets of America, yet people want to complain about the protest or in many cases not even take part. This shouldn't be. A life is gone from this world forever and a few minutes of your day is not much to ask. #justiceforzacharyhammond

In Memory of Sandra Bland

From cops killing the poor
On the streets, to now,
Two supposed “suicides” of
African American women in jails:
One, Sandra Bland, for not signaling
A turn on the road in Texas,
To Keandra, a day later,
Another African American woman
Dead while in police custody

I know, it's not just African Americans
Who have been killed by cops
But let's get to the kernel
Of the thing,
The core of the matter
Policing in the US started in the 1830s
To catch African American
Runaway slaves and to protect
The property of plantation owners
There's a racial legacy of the cops
Going after African Americans

The police are the arm of the State
Which protects the rich
The police protect the property
Of the billionaire class

Let's demand
That cops stop acting
Like judge, jury, executioners
And fight for Black lives
For then, when we stand up
For African Americans
Who are at the bottom of the ladder
We stand up for all of us
Not one more life killed
At the hands of the police!!!

—Yolanda Catzalco



Marchers on the “Water Justice Journey,” a 70-mile march from Detroit to Flint, MI to unite people statewide in a fight for water as a human right. PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN

Judge drops bomb on illegal water rate hikes in Flint, MI Ruling breathes life into fight for water rights

By Claire McClinton

FLINT, MI — After months of demonstrations, public forums and court challenges, residents of Flint, Michigan, are emboldened by a court decision in their quest for quality, affordable water. Water shut offs, coupled with over 13,000 property liens caused by exorbitant water rates, have become too common in a city known for its labor legacy.

Now a decision lawsuit filed by ordinary citizens, with an extraordinary local attorney, Val Washington, gives residents hope. The suit charged the city with illegally raising water rates 35% in 2011 under the auspices of the then Emergency Manager regime. Relying on a recent Court of Appeals decision, which found that Emergency Manager’s do not have the authority to violate or neglect local ordinances, despite their dictatorial powers. (This could have implications for other municipalities and school districts trapped in the mire of dictatorship.) The suit also charged that the city raided water and sewer funds in 2007 to pay off a lawsuit.

Judge Archie Haymon’s deci-

sion was bold and decisive. The temporary injunction highlights:

- Suspend All Water Shutoffs
- Suspend All Property Liens
- Suspend Water Service Fee (Average \$60.00 per household)
- Reduce Water Rate 35% to satisfy illegal rate hike in 2011
- Return \$15 million to Water and Sewer illegally taken in 2007

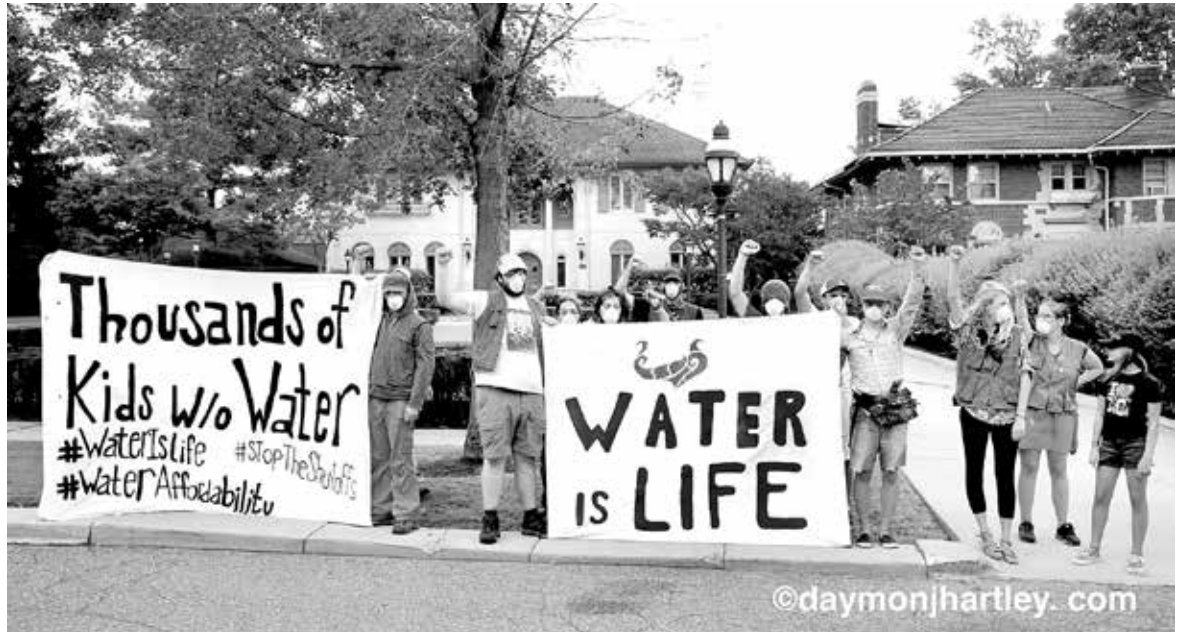
With the dismantling of Democracy taking place all over the state of Michigan, with the end game to totally expropriate public assets, particularly water, citizens have been forced to turn to the courts for relief. Unfortunately, there has not been much success in this arena. The Federal courts have made it clear that we have no Constitutional right to water (including the bankruptcy judge in the Detroit case.) Yet, the struggle continues and it’s no surprise that Flint found that needle in the haystack even for this partial victory.

Due to the flurry of appeals, and with the city playing the “bankruptcy card,” the victory may be short lived, but inspires us to fight on, recognizing water is a human right.

Water is a human right!

The denial of clean, running water to anyone is unconscionable. Water is the most essential requirement for all life—*nothing* can live without water. Corporate investors have a goal to make billions in profit by privatizing the public’s water, making it available only to those who can pay the skyrocketing price. This is legal under capitalism, an economic system based on the private property interests of the few. In a cooperative society, water and all other necessities of life, would be publicly owned and a basic human right. Water is a battlefield where we can make the need for a new society clear.

— People’s Tribune Editorial Board



Detroiters take water from the mayor’s residence and redistribute it to some of the residents facing water shutoffs. The Mayor chose to arrest community members who resist the water shutoffs rather than support a water affordability plan. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Activists share water from mayor’s mansion

The following is a press release from the Detroit and Michigan Coalitions against Tar Sands.

DETROIT, MI — Yesterday, activists with the Detroit and Michigan Coalitions Against Tar Sands (DCATS/MICATS) took water from Mayor Dugan’s residence, the Manoogian Mansion, and redistributed it to residents facing water shutoffs.

Activists attached a hose to the Mansion’s external spigot and filled jugs of water.

Participants say they are taking today’s action because of Mayor Dugan’s refusal to support a “Water Affordability Plan”.

“While real Detroiters live in a crisis, the Mayor lives in a city-owned Mansion. Today

we’re forcing Mayor Dugan to share his water with the people of Detroit,” Said Detroit Resident Valerie Jean.

As Detroit’s water crisis worsens community members are demanding the Mayor support a “Water Affordability Plan” adopted by the City Council in 2006.

More than 40,000 households have had their water turned off, a crisis that has triggered a UN human rights investigation.

However instead of dealing with the crisis, Mayor Dugan has chosen to arrest and prosecute community members who resist the shutoffs in an attempt to survive.

“Denying tens of thousands of people the right to water ought to be criminal, doing it

while living in a publicly funded, city-owned mansion is just despicable,” said Jean.

Activists point out that the Mayor’s current 10-point payment plan is woefully inadequate and fails to address the fundamental issue of unreasonably high water bills. In April, an ACLU study showed that only 1.2% of Detroiters in the Mayor’s plan could pay their water bill, leaving 98.8% to default and face shutoff.

“Detroiters need a Water Affordability Plan to reduce bills and stop the shutoffs, not another failed payment plan,” said Valerie Jean

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A movement to put people and planet over profit

Moral Mondays Illinois

By Pastor Tom Gaulke,
First Lutheran Church
of the Trinity, Chicago

CHICAGO, IL — I hate that faith has been co-opted by the political right.

I hate that my faith tradition, begun in a radical ethic, claiming to love people *is* to love God—and, in fact, God is Love—has been distorted into a hateful, oppressive, backwards-facing body of cranky, racist, homophobic, immigrant-bashing, poor-hating individuals and communities. It's a shame. It's hypocritical. It's downright *sinful*. The church is in bondage to the sin of fear and hate. The Body of Christ needs to repent!—just like our governor, and all who put profit before people and planet and Love.

May 18, 2015, in front of some tables piled up with money bags and other resources proposed to be cut by Bruce Rauner, between large statues representing agriculture and industry, with a backdrop of an ever-flowing fountain, just outside the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Toby Chow, vicar at First Lutheran Church of the Trinity and a leader with Fair Economy Illinois, pro-

claimed to Gov. Rauner:

“Not only do these tables... represent your hoarding, your greed, and, as of yet, your unwillingness to repent and share God's abundance which was meant for all; these tables also represent a great divide between rich and poor, a great chasm you have fixed. You may think you are rising to the top, but the eyes of faith see that you are pushing yourself deeper and deeper into the flames of hell.”

Chow then instigated the crowd gathered to topple the tables and to redistribute the hoarded wealth, demonstrating what repentance, for Rauner, is to look like—it *looks like sharing*, not hoarding. It looks like taxing corporations and the 1%, not cutting government services to the most vulnerable in our state.

This particular action, asking, “What Would Jesus Cut?” and shouting “Rauner, Repent!” was the first of what would become a steady stream of Moral Mondays Illinois direct actions on billionaires, corporations, and contributors of millions to Governor Rauner. Actions have always included acts of civil disobedience and interfaith testimonies. As the movement has grown, we've



Pastor Tom Gaulke (right) and Pastor Dwayne Mystro Grant with other clergy leading protests in downtown Chicago. PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

added the occupation of corporate offices and spaces, and the disruption of the marketplace as a central marker of who we are as Moral Monday Illinois. We are growing in number. We are serious about building a movement that puts people and planet over profit. We disrupt business as usual.

Moral Mondays is a call for Rauner, corporations, politicians, and the ultra-rich to repent: *No cuts! Tax corporations and the 1%!* It is also an opportunity for faith traditions to return to their roots of love, liberation, and deliverance from bondage. For leaders willing to take a stand, or willing

to take arrest, Moral Mondays is an opportunity to free themselves and their communities from the strong grip the political right has had on their traditions—an opportunity to turn around the faith that has been so badly distorted and distracted from Love, and to create change in so doing.

Respect, not violence!

By the Logan Square
People's Tribune Discussion
Group in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL — On July 28, two men, Darren Thomas and Kenneth Wallace, were killed in their car in Humboldt Park on Chicago's West side. In a video made in the aftermath and seen by hundreds of thousands on YouTube, police can be seen towing the murder vehicle away with the victims' heads lobbing out the window. By these actions, no pretense was even made of protecting and investigating a crime scene. When neighbors, friends and family protested the disrespect shown by police, they were met with hostility and cruel jokes about the victims.

Such disrespect for the victims of violence is an everyday occurrence in Chicago's poor communities. Memorials for the dead are routinely destroyed in an aggressive manner. “Why do police officers destroy memorial sites? Smash candles, take pictures, etc? I've seen it more than once and I don't get it. We need

it explained to us!” says Amy Williams, a Gang Intervention Specialist.

The police, who we expect to serve and protect us equally, whether we are rich or poor, are instead a deadly threat to the community. According to newly released statistics by the Better Government Association, Chicago police kill more civilians than what happens in any other large city in America.

“I thought the kids and the violence would be the hardest part but it turns out that the police are,” said Tamar Manesseh of Mothers Against Senseless Killings (MASK). Manesseh is a leader in a group of South Side mothers who have started their own patrols to prevent violence in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago.

Mothers wearing pink t-shirts with “Mom Patrol” written across the top, set up card tables and cook food for neighborhood children. “Once, we were singing happy birthday to a kid and an officer drove by and flipped us off. Another time, an officer



Vigils like this one in the West Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago are asking questions and trying to unite to protect the lives of people in the communities. PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

accused a 14-year-old boy of saying ‘f**k the police!’ Before we knew it, the kid was pressed against a car and four other police cars, each containing four officers had driven up... I wanted us to bridge between the police and community, but that isn't possible. We are there to protect the community and I tell the kids that—I'm here to protect you from both yourselves and any outside enemy, including the

police.” (*The Observer*)

To stop violence in our communities, we first need to get involved. Parents for Peace and Justice in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago hold regular vigils on the streets to honor the dead and bring reconciliation and support to their community.

Community groups like these are leading the way. Parents who have lost children are turning

their grief into action, and faith leaders are leaving the safety of their sanctuaries for the streets to make a difference. We must visually and vocally take a stand to uphold the value and dignity of human life. We urge you to step forward and become involved.

Learn more about these organizations at www.ahopedealer.org, MASK website or Facebook page, and www.parentsforpeace-andjustice.org.

Fight for 15 and Occupy: Waves in a continuing struggle

Editors note. This article is excerpted from a longer version published in the Tribuno del Pueblo.

CHICAGO, IL — On April 15, 2015, fast-food workers held rallies in 236 U.S. cities in their biggest protest yet for higher pay and union rights. In addition, tens of thousands of people from 40 countries across the globe came together for fair wages and the right to organize and as a part of the Fight for 15.

The Fight for 15 arose on the heels of the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011. But, it had been stewing since the 1980s, when government and corporations united in their attack on the workers and their unions by demanding concessions. Though the corporations won the concessions struggles, in the 1990s, a new force entered the struggle. Low wage workers led massive demonstrations of janitors. This resulted in tens of thousands of workers joining unions.

The massive recession, beginning around 2001 led to huge demonstrations over immi-

grant rights that were not only about “documents,” but about earning decent wages and rights on the job, schools and in communities. Then, the great depression of December 2007, which worsened in 2008, spread around the world. Home foreclosures and job loss exploded while opportunity and hope disappeared across the country.

The wave after wave of shocks caused by an increasingly worsening economic crisis called forth both opposition and various individuals and organizations who attempted to represent today’s burgeoning movement. We are the 99%. Profound. A demand to raise the minimum wage could not be contained. In Illinois, the minimum wage raise struggle began in 2006 and increased over the following two years. In California, Massachusetts, Maine and Maryland, legislatures introduced bills to increase their state minimum wages. This movement influenced the 2008 elections of “Hope and Change.”

Fight for 15 congealed a vast



Struggle for minimum wage in New York City. Recently, Los Angeles, CA became the largest city in the U.S. to raise the minimum wage to \$15. The fight for \$15 is part of a growing movement worldwide.

PHOTO/THE ALL NIGHT IMAGES

movement for low-wage workers, and has given life to other workers not in “low wage” sectors. It has generated a movement of workers and created a more broadly renewed class awareness not seen in the U.S. in some time. Its demands include not only a fair wage, but raises questions over health care, jobs, housing and education, what should be a standard

of living for the U.S. and world.

Unfortunately, organizations behind the leadership and direction of the Fight for 15 have their own separate goals. One is to control this massive movement within corporate needs in spite of the many well-intentioned forces around this movement. Some would prefer to impel the movement into the arms of the Demo-

cratic Party with its limited goals and limited desire for transformational change.

The 99% need strategy, vision and organization to distribute ideas class-wide. These are essential tools in fighting for control of the direction of our country and a new stability in a new economic system that can meet our needs today.

Gentrification attacks Oakland

By Steve Miller and Peter Brown

OAKLAND, CA — Redevelopment, privatization and gentrification are stalking Oakland. As condos spring up everywhere, corporations and billionaires with bags of money are buying up massive amounts of property in the city’s arts district, threatening to evict the unique multicultural creativity that has flowered despite Oakland’s poverty. At a meeting of Oakland Creative Neighborhoods Coalition people discussed strategies to prevent displacement from homes and studios (fb.com/KeepOAKCreative).

Silicon Valley has transmogrified into Silicon Bay. The rise of San Francisco as a tech center has raised rents through the ceiling—\$3500/month for one bedroom in San Francisco, \$2500+ for Oakland. Such rents drive severe gentrification, dispossessing traditional communities and families, driving out well over 50,000 low-income Oaklanders (mostly African American) since 2000. As developers reconfigure neighborhoods for profit, the African American population has dropped from 50% to 28%.

Oakland, like other cities in California, is victimized by predatory Wall Street schemes to profit by dispossession. Before 2008,

sub-prime loans “racialized” the housing market as minorities were sucked into predatory home loans. Then came the massive wave of eviction that hasn’t ended. Now corporations like Oakland’s Waypoint (over \$20 billion in distressed East Bay homes) are buying up foreclosures to turn them into rental property. The new “rentership society” is funded like the eviction crisis—by securitizing housing payments. But now it’s rents, instead of mortgages. Already many public workers in San Francisco and Oakland cannot afford to live in the cities they work for.

Massive property grabs are transforming public spaces in Oakland into commodified territory controlled by militarized police and private security forces. The southeast end of Lake Merritt park has been modernized and Oakland’s City Council just voted to privatize the Kaiser Convention Center on this land. The massive building publically owned since 1914, will be filled with shops, entrepreneurs and trendy eateries, rather than the original plan by a local, community-based group to make it into a multi-purpose community center with adjacent Laney Community College to produce 1700 jobs, many for students!



Gentrification in Oakland, CA targets Lake Merritt and the Kaiser Auditorium, as seen from Laney College.

PHOTO/PETER BROWN

Recently Oakland’s City Council knowingly illegally attempted to sell juicy property on the edge of Lake Merritt to build a luxury hi-rise without low-income housing. This criminality was thoroughly exposed and blocked when East Lake United for Justice took over the council meeting, demanding the use of public land for public benefits.

Now the context becomes clear for the 2009 murder of Oscar Grant and Alan Blueford,

as well as the brutal suppression of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Corporate developers live by the formula that police create security, security creates investment, investment creates markets, markets demand the militarization and privatization of public space.

The simple ability of an African-American (or any low-income person) to walk down the street in peace in America requires ending killer cops, militarization of police, the prison-industrial com-

plex, the militarized border, the school-to-prison pipeline and the New Jim Crow legal system. Now gentrification must be added to the list. Incremental change won’t work here. Just wanting to live in peace demands the transformation of society. A struggle of this magnitude requires the broadest possible unity of our working class; the foundation for such unity lies in championing the rights of those most devastated and dispossessed by this system.

Under the bridge: A Culture of resistance



Initiated by sculptor Roman Villarreal, *Under the Bridge Artists Studio* opened Nov. 9, 2012. Victor Montanez said this at the opening: “We see ourselves as part of a movement, a culture of resistance, of self empowerment. . . Our blood has no borders. We’re all part of the same race, the human race.” *Lew Rosenbaum of the People’s Tribune visited with Roman De Lion, executive director of Under the Bridge, to find out more.*

Lew Rosenbaum: Why did you want to have the June 21 community event to celebrate Steelworkers’ Park and also Roman Villarreal’s sculpture, “Tribute To The Past”?

Roman De Lion: The event was with Make Music Chicago. I curated the event so I wanted to honor the men and women who gave their blood, sweat and tears to the steel mill [U.S. Steel’s South Works] which was once where the park stands now. I am also a Local 73 Sheet metal worker so I have great respect

“Tribute To The Past,” a sculpture by Roman Villarreal, celebrates the contributions of steelworker families to the building of Chicago.
PHOTO/LEW ROSENBAUM

for all my union brothers and sisters.

LR: The talent at the event was really extraordinary. Can you describe the grassroots art movement on the Southeast side of Chicago?

RD: The arts have always been around, just never really promoted well. Technology has made it very easy for artists and musicians to get heard and promoted, yet there is still a strong need for the traditional way of promoting.

We at Under The Bridge have formed a collective of artists and musicians that support one another and share resources and opportunities with each other, which is rare in the industry. We are one big family that feels a sense of pride when anyone of us succeeds, because the arts are being represented one way or another.

LR: What role can art play in bringing people from different communities together?

RD: Art plays a huge role because everyone can relate to art. There is no restriction on race, gender, age or location when it comes to art. People from different races and neighborhoods can work together on a community art project or crafts.

LR: You are planning a Labor Day weekend festival. Can you tell our readers about this?

RD: I formed a nonprofit company with Erik Hoelzeman (owner of Agri-Fine) and Daniel Velasquez (owner of Grillers Restaurant). The main purpose of forming this company was to bring festivals to our community and neighboring areas.

We are planning a four-day festival on 118th street between Ave O and Ewing Avenue. We will have food vendors, organizations, Art area, Carnival, Live music and other activities. The new Alderman Sue Garza is also having a Labor Day Parade on Sunday, September 6, which will start on 102nd Ewing Avenue going down to 118th ending at the Festival.

We want to bring positive events to our neighborhood that show how our community can come together and have a great time.

Under the Bridge Artists Studio is at 11032 S. Ewing. For more information about the Studio, the Labor Day festival, or other events contact Roman De Lion at roman@utbchicago.com

‘Justice on Wheels’ – Restoring Community

By Adam Gottlieb

CHICAGO, IL — On July 25, community members came together to connect peace circles with bicycles. While this may seem an unlikely partnership, the combination weaves together two distinct yet complementary approaches to strengthening community: Restorative Justice (RJ) and resource sharing.

The Recyclery, an educational community bike center promoting sustainability through access to tools and skills, planned a route touring RJ landmarks on Chicago’s north side, lending bikes and helmets to any who needed.

Circles & Ciphers, an RJ organization led by young people of color from across Chicago that fuses peace circles with Hip Hop arts and culture, facilitated peace circles at each stop of the ride to discuss RJ and its applications. Twenty-eight diverse participants rode from Rogers Park to Uptown and back, stopping

to engage in discussion which focused as much on listening as on sharing.

As a gesture of solidarity with Baltimore following the Freddie Gray uprising, the event raised funds not only for The Recyclery but also for the Baltimore Youth Kinetic Energy Collective (BYKE), a youth empowerment after-school program dedicated to personal and professional development through learning bicycle mechanics, safe ridership, community values, and respect.

Tzipora “Tzippy” Rhodes, Recyclery staff and lead organizer of the event, says that the purpose of the ride was not only to throw a creative fundraiser to support community bike programs, but also to raise awareness about the two main movements at the center of the event: Restorative Justice and cycling. One of the measures of success, for her, was to see that the event exposed many people to the idea of RJ for the first

time – and also exposed some of the RJ people to the value of bikes. Stopping at locations that directly related to the conversation about restoring justice to communities helped people draw connections between different kinds of solutions for community empowerment.

At one point the group stopped outside of a police station to discuss the question: “Are police necessary?” This is a central questions within the Restorative Justice movement. Circles and Ciphers believes that RJ, far from just a good idea, is a necessary alternative to the official “justice” system, which has never served the economically and racially oppressed, but rather functions as a system of targeted state violence, which increasingly threatens the whole American people as poverty spreads.

When asked “Why bikes and Restorative Justice?” Tzippy notes that The Recyclery and Circles & Ciphers are both guided by philosophies emphasizing

collectivity, consensus, and addressing basic social needs. Both organizations, she says, approach community empowerment as a disciplined practice. When asked about her vision for society, she said she would base it off of The Recyclery, which she describes as “a horizontally-run organization, governed by consensus, based on resource-sharing and knowledge-sharing, with radical inclusivity. I

envision this for every aspect of society.”

Partners in the event included Alternatives Inc., Family Matters, and the Peterson Garden Project.

To find out more, visit thercyclery.org or contact Tzipora at tzippy@thercyclery.org

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Boycott Whirlpool and Major League Baseball's 'Filthiest Play'



Benton Harbor under the dome

By Pati Heinz

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Benton Harbor is like many cities across this country. The people have less faith in the system to do right by them. Not just in the courts, but housing, the job sector, and education, to name a few!

In May, I appealed to the City Commission to help me organize a "Get Out the Vote Rally", to which only two out of nine expressed interest! This proved what I already knew: those holding elected seats don't really care if the citizens vote or not.

As a result, a little over 800 people voted in the primary mayoral election, less than 10%! Marcus Muhammad received 374 votes. Hightower got 272, claiming he would have gotten James Atterberry's 167 votes, if he hadn't run!

Ironically, Mr. Hightower's temper flared on July 20 during an open Benton Harbor City Commission meeting, having Commissioner Mary Alice Adams escorted out of the building by a police officer. She was expressing her views on an issue. He felt she took too long, and didn't like what she was saying! He also told the officer to ticket her for "disturbing the peace," which the officer did not do. Apparently, the First Amendment is under fire here.

In another attempt to keep the truth from the people, Benton Harbor Police Department Chief

McGinnis has been denying Freedom of Information Act requests from ABC 57 (South Bend, IN) concerning crimes committed in the community. McGinnis was upset after a story about a gun/robbery at the high school on June 9 was released by the station, and that's when the requests began being ignored. By withholding this information from the people, the Benton Harbor officials are putting residents at risk. And, this is not the only example of information being withheld.

Many residents won't speak up for fear of retaliation by police, landlords, courts, etc. A lot of people have gone to Rev. Pinkney over the years, not just about court issues, but for housing, discrimination, school issues, etc. They KNEW he stood for them, and I believe Berrien County hoped when they (wrongfully) imprisoned him, it would also silence the community by spreading fear that it could happen to them.

It comes down to a simple choice: will you do NOTHING, and be imprisoned by fear of uncertainty? Or will you stand up and fight this system that only desires to enslave and imprison ALL working class, poor, homeless, and of course, those of us who speak out, regardless of your race? As for me, I will stand up for and fight for EVERYONE'S RIGHTS, until the day I leave this Earth.

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

COLDWATER, MI — Maytag, owned by Whirlpool Corporation, is corrupting Major League Baseball through its "Filthiest Plays of the Week" promotion. They have enlisted 12 time all-star Barry Larkin as spokesman for the campaign. Barry Larkin does not have a clue about what Whirlpool Corporation really represents.

I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, speak out against Whirlpool and Major League Baseball, not in anger, but with anxiety and sorrow in my heart, and above all with a passionate desire to see our country stand as a moral example to the world.

Ferdinando Imposimato, the Honorary President of the Supreme Court of Italy and former candidate for the president of the Italian republic says this about Whirlpool, Benton Harbor and my imprisonment: "I have seen the beginnings in Italy of the same process of urban deg-

radation and economic impoverishment which has ruined the city of Benton Harbor. Whirlpool has bought up large chunks of our splendid Italian appliance industry, including especially the appliance manufacturer, Indesit. Now, Whirlpool executives have issued a proclamation from [their headquarters in] Benton Harbor announcing they intend to wipe out about 2,000 Italian jobs, more than a third of the current personnel of the Italian branch of Whirlpool. This mass firing would be a devastating blow for the Italian cities that Whirlpool is targeting. We have to ask if Whirlpool is trying to drive these Italian cities down to the same level of plantations of despair which we observe today in Benton Harbor? The Italian government should call in the American ambassador in Rome and demand explanations about the Pinkney case, emphatically reminding him that the U.S., as signatories along with Italy of the Final Act of the Helsinki Trea-

ty (1975), is required to respect human rights and civil rights, with voting rights at the top of the list—meaning exactly the right which Reverend Pinkney was attempting to exercise."

These are revolutionary times. We must move from words to deeds. We must organize against gentrification in our communities all around the country, against Whirlpool Corporation (including Maytag), against poverty, against racism. We must begin to organize the ghettos for control by the people against exploitation. Exploitation and racism do not only exist in this nation's foreign policy, but right here in the streets of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Make your neighbors see the other side of Whirlpool. Have mass protests at every Major League Baseball park to protest against poverty, job loss, and racism. Let's stand together.

The movement must defend its leaders Free Rev. Pinkney!

From the Editors

As Americans, we are taught that our government is "of, for and by the people." Many of us even brag that our justice system is the fairest in the world. No recent court case shatters that myth as thoroughly as that of Rev. Edward Pinkney of Benton Harbor, MI.

In the latest example of justice denied, the Michigan State Court of Appeals denied Rev. Pinkney's motion requesting bond pending appeal. That was the 232nd day he has languished in prison, where in his words, he is, "paying a debt to society I do not owe." He was tried, convicted, sentenced and jailed by a court that admitted it had no evidence that he changed dates on petitions in a recall campaign of a corporate backed mayor. Instead, years of community activism were presented as "proof" he committed a crime.

What kind of activism brings the government down on you like that? The kind that warns you that a corporate state is taking over government. In Benton Harbor, that corporation is Whirlpool. When Whirlpool closed production in Benton Harbor in the 1980s, it permanently laid off its workers. From that point, the Whirlpool Corporation no longer needed the Benton Harbor working class. Benton Harbor

became the poorest city in Michigan.

The police and courts went on a reign of terror. Open rebellion sparked by a police killing followed with the city occupied by the national guard in 2003. The state legislature later passed the Emergency Manager Law, giving the governor the power to appoint dictators that replace mayors and city councils. The first of these was sent to Benton Harbor. The Emergency Manager facilitated the privatization of all things public into the hands of Whirlpool. The workers resisted this process every step of the way, and continue to do so.

Under capitalism, the purpose of government is to guarantee and protect the maximum profits of the corporate ruling class. Benton Harbor unmask the masquerade of government as an unbiased mediator between the interests of the growing impoverished masses and the corporate elite.

Rev. Pinkney has been the most consistent voice in the interests of the poorest masses. Sending a SWAT team to arrest him, using a virtually all white jury to help guarantee his conviction, and sentencing him to 2 1/2 to ten years in prison, shows the lengths to which the corporate state will go to try to stop a movement.

The movement must defend its leaders. Free Rev. Pinkney!

Write to Rev. Pinkney

His address is: Rev. Edward Pinkney # 294671,
Lakeland Prison, 141 First Street, Coldwater, MI 49036