



Democracy was denied when Flint's water was switched to the polluted Flint River over the will of the people by the non-elected state appointed Emergency Manager "to save money." As a result, a city of 100,000 people was poisoned. PHOTO/MEGAN E. KREGER

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# MICHIGAN AND THE BATTLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

[Read story on page 3](#)



# The workers' fight for a new society and the elections

## EDITORIAL

As automation of the workplace becomes the norm in America, workers are either out of a job permanently or forced to accept progressively lower wages, unable to provide the funds to put food on the table, pay for housing or receive sufficient health care. As this pattern continues—it's estimated that in 20 years 50% of labor will be performed by machines—growing numbers of people will simply become less and less able to survive in this society.

On the one hand, the ability to *produce* an abundance of goods is enabled by the new technologies of our time. On the other hand, the laws of private property under capitalism will not allow the system to *provide* these resources to anyone without money to pay.

The presidential election reflects peoples' growing consciousness of this serious dilemma festering within our society. The American people are frustrated and prepared for action; they're averse to the clichéd political tactics they've seen employed in every past election and are drawn to the populist candidates who they think least resemble the corrupt political structure. This is especially seen in the candidacies of Trump and Sanders. Although Trump's fascist vision is certainly very different from Sanders' views, both candidates garner support from a critically important section of the working class, those decimated by globalization, automation and plant closures. This is what makes this election so important. Which way these workers go will in no small way influence the thinking of huge sections of Americans. Revolutionaries have to reach these workers.

High-tech automation means the jobs are gone forever. The



The "Moral March" in Raleigh, NC, is part of an important movement in the South for voting rights, public education, economic sustainability, workers rights and livable wages, healthcare for all, Medicaid expansion, the environment, and equal protection for all. PHOTO/KAITLYN BARLOW

small core of corporate billionaires who run the country are well aware that the system cannot provide jobs, and they are determined to maintain their private property and privilege in the face of a dying system. They are united in the need to put down the growing struggle of the people for their survival. Their solution is a fascist reorganization of society.

The only solution for the people is a cooperative society where the now privately owned means of life that produce the healthcare, utilities, water, housing, etc., is taken out of corporate hands and put into the hands of the public. How else can we survive?

Bearing this in mind, the Sanders campaign offers real possibilities for bringing this vision to the people. This is true because

of his use of the word socialism, and also, because of the range of issues he raises, such as universal health care, publicly financed college, and environmental values. The Sanders campaign calls attention to corporate influence over public policy, directing people's anger towards the wealthy, while Trump channels people's anger towards immigrants and racial and religious minorities, in order to push the dispossessed towards a fascist movement backed by the

corporations.

Thus the 2016 election is an important factor in swaying the course of our country. It offers revolutionaries the opportunity to put forward the next step in the fight for the cooperative society we need. That step is that our government actually fulfills what should be its purpose: to provide for the needs of the people, not the billionaires and their corporations.

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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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# Michigan and the battle for democracy in America

## COVER STORY

The imposition of emergency manager dictators in Michigan and beyond is an expression of how far the corporate ruling class has already moved to suppress whatever limited democracy people have in the U.S. This is especially true in the Rust Belt, once the booming heart of industrial production, now with cities virtually abandoned and shut-down, as industry moves its factories to lower-wage areas of the globe and automates, replacing workers with robots, which don't have to eat, be housed or be paid.

As millions are thrown out of jobs forever by technology, people are beginning to demand what they need to survive, whether they have jobs and money to pay or not. This is dangerous for the corporate class and its rule. It must use its governmental power to restructure the economy and society to enhance their profits and protect their power under these new conditions. This demands they strip any methods of recourse from the people by getting rid of our already-limited democracy—the ability to elect our leaders and participate in the political process. Fascism is not a choice for the corporations but a necessity.

The emergency manager (EM) system in Michigan is a fascist political model for the whole country.

Michigan's EM Law was put in place years ago in anticipation of the abandonment of industry and the social unrest the rulers expected as peoples' lives were destroyed. EMs in Michigan replace local elected officials. Their dictatorial powers allow them to privatize and abandon public education, break union contracts, take over pension, transportation and water systems, and change laws to directly benefit the billionaire class and the

corporations they control. This puts government more tightly into corporate hands and further strips away any democracy people once had.

In Michigan, where the workers who once created the great industrial engine of prosperity are now dispossessed and abandoned, 17 cities or school districts have had EMs. EMs forced the city of Detroit into bankruptcy to "restructure" it on behalf of the corporations, and ushered in the shutoffs of water to tens of thousands, while in the process also destroying the

Detroit public schools. Another example is Flint, Mich., its water poisoned by the EM's action, while Gov. Rick Snyder, looked away and fresh water nearby was sold to bottling companies. In Benton Harbor, one of the first cities to fall under an EM, Rev. Edward Pinkney was railroaded into prison on no evidence for standing up to the EM dictatorship and organizing a recall campaign challenging illegalities such as the give-away of public lands to the Whirlpool Corporation. The persecution meted out to Rev. Pinkney is now spread-

ing to water activists throughout Michigan.

Fascism consolidates by gaining victory after small victory in local situations until it has the base to dominate the entire country. Michigan expresses this very process. It is a testing ground for what will be done to the rest of the country. EM laws are now in place in 19 states. If we want to halt the destruction of democracy, and have a government that serves the people's needs, we must confront fascist, corporate power at every turn, in Michigan and across the country.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

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Editorial Board



# Pastors and housing advocates occupy Palm Sunday

By Rev. Bruce Ray,  
Pastor, Kimball Avenue  
Church, Chicago, IL

CHICAGO, IL — The first thing you see at the Julia C. Lathrop Homes, the only public housing development on Chicago's north side, are the fences that surround boarded up buildings. Of the 925 units that are a part of Lathrop Homes, less than 140 are currently occupied. The rest are vacant—and have been for years.

Sixteen years ago, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) announced that Lathrop Homes would be renovated and began moving residents out of their homes in preparation, promising that when renovations were completed, they would have the right to return. Quickly, it became evident that the CHA had other plans for Lathrop Homes.

Instead of renovation, the CHA announced a “redevelopment” of Lathrop Homes into a mixed-income community under the city’s “Plan for Transformation.” The agency selected a team of for-profit and non-profit housing developers to redesign the 35-acre parcel of land that sits along the Chicago River with the stipulation that only 400 units be set aside for low-income resi-

dents. The remaining units would be a mix of “affordable” and market-rate apartments.

When asked about the 525 units of low-income housing that would be eliminated, the CHA responded with a vague commitment to replace the units on the north side as sites became available. Despite strong public opposition to the plan, the CHA and Chicago's Mayor, Rahm Emanuel, have pushed forward. The plan was approved by the City Council on Wednesday, March 16.

Four days later, on Palm Sunday, March 20, over 250 people of faith and justice descended on Lathrop Homes, carrying palm branches and protest signs and crying out for housing justice for the poor. Pastors of the Logan Square Ecumenical Alliance blasted the City Council action, calling it city-sponsored, tax-payer funded gentrification. The crowd demanded that Mayor Rahm Emanuel “Show Us The Plan” to replace the eliminated units. To demonstrate the desperation of families who need housing, 10 public housing advocates, pastors and family who had languished on the CHA waiting list for 20 years occupied a vacant unit. The occupation lasted five hours until the CHA called the

police to arrest the occupiers for trespassing. In a written statement, the CHA condemned the action, calling the occupation misguided and misinformed.

The 750 plus boarded up units bore witness to the truth. The Chicago Housing Authority and Mayor Emanuel have failed the community—breaking promises and re-segregating the north side of Chicago by taking land that was set aside to provide public housing away from the poor and giving it to the wealthy.

Cities across the country have used similar transformation plans to eliminate public housing and displace the poor. The battle to ensure that everyone has a home will continue in Chicago. The battle *must* continue because more and more families are being pushed out of their homes and into the streets.



Palm Sunday brought faith and community leaders together to demand housing justice and an end to takeovers by the wealthy developers.  
PHOTO/FRANK JOHNSON

## People's Tribune contributors speak on the attack on the homeless

“It's hard to be furious with a broken heart, but we have to be broken-hearted and furious,” says Sarah Menefee, about the violent destruction of the homeless vigil by the city of Berkeley, and the police killing of a homeless man in San Francisco, California.

“Their goal is not to help the homeless. It's to remove the homeless. Torture them out of town. And if they don't go, they might get shot,” says Mike Zint, homeless organizer.

Order People's Tribunes to get out to the homeless. Visit [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org).

# The historical importance of Cabrini Green

By Joseph Peery

CHICAGO IL — Our cities are undergoing a profound transformation. Industrial manufacturing is being replaced by high-tech production. But while technology gives us the possibility of a brighter future, in the hands of the ruling class it has brought us poverty, a loss of jobs and lower wages. What follows is an increase in evictions, homelessness and gentrification. Public housing would solve a lot of those problems, but is being systematically dismantled. Few communities illustrate this process better than Cabrini Green on Chicago's Near North Side.

Three-fourths of the Cabrini row houses remain vacant. Fences, cameras and security keep the homeless out. Homelessness, which has been increasing since the 2007 great recession, now numbers more than 125,000 persons according to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Wouldn't now be the time for more public housing? In fact one of the reasons given for why Cabrini was originally constructed

was to help World War I veterans who were made homeless by the great depression. So how is it that public housing is born under one set of circumstances and seems to be dying under very similar circumstances 80 years later?

The answer cannot be found in the partisan politics of Democrat versus Republican. Each president, starting with Ronald Reagan, has done their part to dismantle public housing, regardless of party affiliation. The answer lies in the cold hard economic facts of the job market.

When Cabrini was built after the passing of the 1935 Public Housing Act, real estate companies opposed it, calling it socialist, because it was “bad for their business.” However, industrial manufacturers supported it because, no matter how low the slave wages paid to public housing residents, only 30% of that was charged for rent. This super exploitation brought them millions in higher profits.

As industrialization expanded so did Cabrini with the completion of the Cabrini extensions in 1957 and the William Green

Homes in 1962. By the late 1960s, that expansion ended. The area just south of Cabrini became known as “Ghost Town” because of the blocks of empty buildings that once housed businesses and jobs. The invention of the micro-processor in 1971 paved the way for the permanent replacement of human labor by machines. This was the beginning of the end for industrial manufacturing. One by one, companies like Montgomery Ward, Oscar Meyer and Turtle Wax either went out of business or left the area. Cheap Cabrini Green labor power was no longer needed.

This process is being repeated everywhere. Capitalism does not recognize a human right to housing and is unwilling to house anyone it does not need. So the ranks of the homeless swell alongside empty warm apartments. This same concept applies equally well to the other necessities of life like water, food, education and healthcare as well as ending police murder.

We must understand that when the system forces us to stand up and fight or lie down



Private contractors tear down public housing units at Cabrini Green Projects in Chicago in 2011, paving the way to build more housing for the wealthy.  
PHOTO/JOSEPH PEERY

and die, what we are really actually fighting for is a whole new society that values human life. The new technology offers us the

possibility of that bright future. It will begin to become a reality when enough of us become aware of that.





An officer with the Santa Cruz Police Department places her hand on her gun as she issues a citation to a man sleeping outside of a bookstore. The City Council voted to continue to criminalize sleeping. PHOTO/ALEX DAROCY

# Homeless – Life on the streets

*In America today, the homeless are cast out of society by the economic crisis and then brutalized by the police, the protectors of private property. The quotes on these pages show the compassion of the homeless and their supporters as they fight a mean-spirited fascist ideology of the rich and powerful who care nothing for workers the system no longer needs. If we don't stand up now and demand that the government provide for those in need, who will be next? Demand that the presidential candidates speak about this!*

– The editors, *People's Tribune*

“Becoming homeless was one of the most eye opening and formative experiences of my life. It helped me understand humanity and compassion in a way I had never considered when I was housed. Homeless people are human beings who deserve to have the same basic human rights as any other individual. Instead, our society penalizes them for being poor and not able to afford housing. The city “sweeps” them out of the way and prevents them from performing basic life sustaining activities. From sleeping to sitting to using the bathroom—by far, dogs are treated better than the homeless. I remember seeing cops kick people awake, DPW spraying sleeping people with cold water, confiscating our possessions including bedding and tarp needed for comfort and survival to protect us from the elements, and never have them returned to us because they are evidence of our criminal activities of sitting, lying, sleeping, and lodging. Sleep deprivation and water torture—it’s disgusting and inhumane and it happens every day across the country—that’s the real crime. Politicians and decision-makers truly do not care about the welfare of homeless people, and are working actively to either push them out of the city through constant harassment and torture, or eradicate them by making their attempts at survival so futile they simply die out. Do the right thing, the compassionate humane thing—pass this bill.”

— Julianna Cheng, speaking at the State Capitol in support of a Right to Rest bill for the homeless in California

Order copies of the *People's Tribune* to get out among the homeless at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org).

“The [Santa Cruz, CA] city council voted 5 to 2 to continue to criminalize sleeping... They voted to install nausea-inducing, ear-splitting ‘Mosquito Boxes’ in parks and near bridges where homeless people seek shelter from the rain... Several of the five council leaders mentioned... that compassion would attract hordes of homeless people to their wealthy city.”

— Keith McHenry

“Although I have never been homeless myself, I did get to know many homeless people well. There is a collective and collaborative nature that comes with living on the street. People share what they have. They know and talk to their neighbors every day. My hope is that by giving homeless people a voice in this book, readers will get to know and understand that they are someone’s mother, father, brother or sister.”

— Mike Rhodes, author of “*Dispatches from the War Zone*” about homelessness in Fresno

## Los Angeles homeless can't own more belongings than fit in a garbage can

*Editor's note: The People's Tribune's Chris Venn interviewed General Dogon and Joe Joe about the new law passed in Los Angeles that prohibits the homeless from owning more belongings than can fit in a 60-gallon trash can with the lid closed.*

LOS ANGELES, CA — This is an attack on individual property. This is the confiscation of a person's personal property, which is forbidden by the U.S. Constitution. This is a violation of the *Lavan v. City of Los Angeles* where a federal district court judge issued a preliminary injunction enjoining the City from seizing or destroying per-

sonal property left unattended on the public sidewalks of downtown's Skid Row.

Now the police run people in for warrants based on the “violation” of having a tent set up on the sidewalk; they will then “bootleg” the ticket by backdating which gives a homeless person two weeks to respond rather than the normal, expected three months that is usually required before a ticket turns into a warrant. The homeless individual, wracked by mental illness, drugs or just the wear and tear of living on the street is defenseless in the face of this abuse by the city, enabled by the police.

Even though we forced

Mike Feuer, the City Attorney, to reclassify 150 misdemeanors to infractions (thereby lessening the penalty) the LAPD is again writing misdemeanors for violations that are simple infractions. Jail has become housing for people who are homeless.

The city of Los Angeles will lose. As a result, the city will lose federal funding for projects because the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the removal and immediate destruction of a person's unattended property violates the United States Constitution. But in the meantime, there will be enormous amounts of suffering by the homeless in L.A.

## Eulogy for Matt Day

By Mike Zint

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — In November of 2015, we lost a good man. No one knew it because he was homeless. The man's name was Matt Day, or Mad Matt, as we called him. He died alone and cold in San Francisco. Because he was homeless, we did not find out. We had to look. And he deserved more than that.

Matt cannot be described in the space I have. His story is bigger than a few words. He helped cause change. He had an effect. And only a few know. Matt was totally insane when I first saw him. He was filthy and smelly, running around yelling at no one. We were at the Occupy encampment in San Francisco. After it was destroyed, Matt participated in the 9-month occupation of the Federal Reserve.

During that occupation, we got to know him. And he was accepted into our community as he was. And then it happened. He changed. He was no longer yelling and angry, he was happy and laughing. He cleaned up. He started drawing. And he was good at it. Very good.

So, my friend, rest and know, you showed me community can heal. Acceptance is all you ever needed. And I took that lesson to heart. I helped found ‘First They Came for the Homeless’ in hopes of duplicating that healing and spreading this lesson. And I have. Thank you for that.



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## Emergency managers dismantle Detroit's school system



By Elena Herrada

*Editor's note: Elena Herrada is a member of the Detroit Public School Board 'in exile.'*

DETROIT, MI — Detroit Public Schools (DPS) have been under emergency management for six years. In that time, the elected

**Detroit teachers protest the Emergency Manager dictatorship that is overseeing the dismantling of the schools and strips elected officials of their authority. Massive numbers of schools have been closed.**

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

school board has never accepted losing the right to govern that white districts in Michigan have—despite the repeal of the emergency manager law, despite the District never having met the criteria laid out for takeover—financial distress and student failure.

Detroit passed a bond for construction of new buildings and repair of old schools. When the bond passed, the then Governor Jennifer Granholm sent Robert Bobb to take over the District. This would allow Lansing direct access to federal and state money intended for DPS.

Robert Bobb came in with the full support of the media, which highlighted alleged corruption and incompetence in DPS and praised the no nonsense approach to dealing with Detroit. The racism was palpable; a cursory look at the media coverage shows disdain for Black elected officials. This is even more pronounced now, in the next phase of takeover.

So much corruption has taken place in DPS with no oversight that the district will be generations recovering. During the first takeover under Governor Engler, the locally elected school board was removed and replaced by Governor Engler's appointees, who spent the bond money and entered into contracts that the

elected school board was encumbered with. There was no money left from the multi-billion dollar bond and no audit was ever done. Mike Duggan had a hand in the millions that was taken from DPS, which is why there is strong opposition to his power grab to take over the schools. The voters overwhelmingly voted against the schools being merged with the city, which is a violation of the city charter.

Currently, the elected board is resisting another removal by the governor and Duggan. We have filed federal lawsuits related to the constitutional issue of voting rights. We were told by Judge Rhodes, as he was presiding over the Detroit bankruptcy trial, that we would have to wait until the bankruptcy was over before our case could proceed to court. Before that would happen, Judge Rhodes himself would be appointed emergency manager over the schools by Governor Snyder.

The Education Task Force, a coalition of defenders of public education of all sorts—professors of education, students, parents, have organized a conference of all the districts under emergency management, the first of its kind since the state takeovers. We do not intend to step down, back away or give up.

Learn the ABC's of Dictatorship

### The Corporate Takeover of America FOR DUMMIES

Includes: Detroit, Ecorse, Flint, Allen Park, Pontiac, Benton Harbor

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Learn How the EAA & NCLB Take Schools

What's An Emergency Manager?

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## 'People have a right to water,' says Michigan water warrior

*Editor's note: Radio station WYNC interviewed Maureen Taylor, State Chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization about the right to water.*

WYNC: Maureen Taylor says America needs to wake up. Access to water is a basic human right. She's trying to make it a national issue.

**Maureen D. Taylor:** I don't work in a bankrupt city. I live in a city that was bankrupted. And we continuously hear this phrase, "if you can't pay for this water then you don't need it." But just never forget that this started a number of years ago. An emergency manager was imposed here—these people are able to sell off our assets to their family and friends and make any decision they want. Now the press, except for you, has decided to remove the spotlight from Detroit and move it up the road 70 miles to Flint as if these fights are not connected.

WYNC: If you didn't pay your bill, the Emergency Manager had your water turned off and you made the point that water is not like milk or gasoline.

MT: It's not cookies, we're not talking about buying a bag of Lay's potato chips. You have to have water to live. The fact is that 70% of the people of Detroit live at or below the poverty level. It's very similar in Flint. They said, "If you can't pay for water then you can't have it." In the last six months, the water department in Detroit has disconnected service to somewhere around 34,000 households

WYNC: Do you think the civil right to water will be established or will they continue to be able to turn off water in residences?

MT: We've been in court with a Judge Rhodes who has already indicated in his findings that there is no civil or natural human right to water. We've already lost that

battle in the courts but we won because it put that question out there in the universe. We hope that there will be some kind of a national indication that says, "People have a right to water."

WYNC: What would you say to people who say, "They will never take my water away?"

MT: That's what they always say. I'm sure there were people in Germany who said I've heard about these bad things happening in the next township but 'they will never come after me. They came after the Jews but I was not one... then they came after the union organizers but I wasn't one... then they came after the welfare recipients but I wasn't one of those... then they came after the Detroit residents but I wasn't one. And then one day someone knocked on my door but no one was there to do battle. This nightmare is going to come to a theater near you unless you wake up.



Protesters in Michigan against the massive water shutoffs to 34,000 households in the last six months alone. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM



People's Tribune Radio podcasts are available at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org). Hear from people at the forefront of the struggles for a new America.



## Flint: Two years too long

By Claire McClinton

*Editor's note: What follows is a statement to the supporters and sympathizers of the Flint water crisis at an anti-Veolia rally in Los Angeles on April 25, 2016. This date marks two years since the switching of Flint's water to the polluted Flint River, poisoning an entire city.*

FLINT, MI — After two years, the fight for safe affordable water in Flint, MI, continues. It's like we're living in a third world country, still living off bottled water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. Lead and other toxins in the water have not dampened our resolve.

Michigan's Emergency Manager system, where the governor can send a crony into a city or school district and take over is the untold story in this tragedy. These managers are empowered to sell off public assets as well as priva-

tize public services without a say so by the people. In their zeal to seize our water and water rights, our city was poisoned!

Veolia, the largest private operator of municipal water and sewer systems in the U.S., played a treacherous role in the Flint tragedy. In February of 2015, the Emergency Manager here hired Veolia as a so-called consultant to conduct an analysis of the Flint water system.

For months, the hue and cries of the people with rashes, foul odors, water discoloration, and illnesses, including Legionnaires' disease had been ignored. Yet a few weeks later, Veolia declared "Your Water Is Safe" in its final report, for which they were paid \$40,000 for a month long study. The report reads: "Indicates compliance with State and Federal water quality regulations." At no time did Veolia sound the alarm or

suggest that the failure to use corrosion control in the River water could and did result in the lead crisis we face today. In that regard, the so-called report was another betrayal to the people of Flint.

Veolia jumped in bed with the local government (Emergency Manager), state government (the Governor and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality), and the federal government (EPA) in their abject failure to protect the health and safety of even our most vulnerable citizens, especially the children.

The struggle continues here in Flint and in Michigan. We are seeking disaster relief status from the Federal government to replace all of our lead pipes. We are demanding Medicare for all regardless of age to confront the enormous health challenges. Last but not least, we demand an end to the dictatorship system gripping ours and



Protesters in Flint, Michigan express their outrage over the poisoning of their water. The decision to switch the water to the filthy Flint River was made by the governor appointed emergency manager over the protests of the community. PHOTO/MEGAN E. KREGER

other Michigan communities.

We have received overwhelming love, water, and finances from

around this country and the world. The most powerful support of all is your voices of resistance.

## Outraged Flint residents and supporters speak out!

*Editor's note: The poisonous lead pipes have still not been replaced in Flint, MI.*

"Flint's governor and officials need to be convicted of crimes against humanity."

— Charlene Carr

"I am ashamed as an American that my fellow citizens don't have access to fresh, clean water. Unacceptable."

— Linda Sarsour

"What happened to the water program Hillary promised before Michigan voted? I heard the mayor say the other day that there is STILL no water delivery system."

— Anne Wilkerson Allen

"Some classmates and myself volunteered with this church on Saturday and we delivered a minimum of 2 cases [of water] per household."

— Lindsay Em

"What happened to Snyder's lies of this being his top priority—of seeing that this is fixed as soon as possible and fixed right? Dirty Lying, SOB!!!"

— Kathy Mayo

"[A judge has dismissed a class-action lawsuit over Flint's contaminated water, saying constitutional claims by residents

don't fit.] "This is why each person in Flint needs to sue for millions! You get 300,000 individual lawsuits going and every politician in the nation will be terrified it will happen to them next!"

— Tesser

*The next series of quotes are responses to Governor Snyder's publicity stunt, after filling up jugs of water from a Flint home to take to his home, saying he will drink Flint tap water with a filter:*

"LIAR!! No one can believe a word this SOB says!!!"

— Kathy Mayo

"I hope you choke to death on it!"

— David McKinley

"Who believes this BS?"

— Vivian Jackson

"So he took some of the water home, did he take a drink? How will anyone know that he's drinking that poison? Big deal, he needs to take a big drink of the water without it being filtered!!! GO FLINT!!!"

— Ann Brietz

"Let's see him make HIS grandkids drink it! He should resign as the public doesn't buy this stunt!! AND he should be made to pay his OWN attorney fees not the people of Michigan! He's worth over \$200 million he can well afford it!!!"

— Sandra Carpenter

"Dammit! Wake up. I want his fricking swimming pool filled with what you'll be faced with this summer. I'd like to see before and after pictures. I'd like to see him swimming in Flint

water that was not filtered."

— Showey Howey

"Politicians have made their decisions that got us here. Now,

it's our time. The people with less income will make more of an impact and guide the discussion to make change for the better."

— Antonio Nelson



See our full coverage of the Flint water crisis on our website at [peopletribune.org/pt-news/flint-water-a-crisis-of-democracy](http://peopletribune.org/pt-news/flint-water-a-crisis-of-democracy), where you can also download postcards, like the one seen above, to print and pass out in your community.



### Pinkney: Face of the opposition to emergency managers

Reverend Edward Pinkney is locked up in Marquette Prison as result of leading a fight to recall Benton Harbor's mayor and for fighting for democracy in opposition to the city's emergency manager dictatorship. Convicted without any evidence, the persecution against him is now spreading to water activists in other Michigan cities. We must defend our leaders! See more on Page 12.

# Humboldt Park water warriors show solidarity with Flint

By Pastor Ruben Escobar Pepin

CHICAGO, IL — Flint, Michigan is devastated. Pure evil did this. I mean an evil in government that knew the truth yet allowed disaster to happen. Over 8,000 children in Flint have been poisoned by lead in the water.

In January we traveled to Flint from Chicago with water. It looked as if there had been a natural disaster. One resident told us the highest valued house was worth about \$5,000. It would cost the city \$10,000 for pipelines in each property. The city decided repairs weren't worth it. People could not sell their homes and left. Abandoned homes were left for the banks.

The immigrants were afraid to come out and get water. Authorities had waited for people to come, then rounded them up for deportation. Their crime was needing water.

Evidence of lead poisoning was everywhere. People showed us their rashes and told about blisters in the genital areas, from shower-

ing and using the toilet. I talked to the parents of two young children, four and ten. The four-year-old son had large pus-filled blisters. He cried in pain as they tried to draw the poison out of his body.

Lead poisoning is permanent. A generation of children will grow up with learning disabilities and illnesses shortening their lives.

Robert Torres, who is one of the two founders of Parents for Peace and Justice, and Minister Abel Muhammed from the Nation of Islam, and I worked out a plan to help. We called for donations of water through these two organizations. Enterprise Rental donated a cargo van. Robert was approached by Humboldt Park United, largely biker and car clubs in the Chicago neighborhood who work on poverty and gang violence. They wanted to do something to help with Flint.

We organized the second drive in partnership with Humboldt Park United. These big, rough looking guys and women gathered tons of water. We



Car and motorcycle club members from Chicago's Humboldt Park join with other community leaders to bring water to Flint. PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

received a donation of a 26-foot truck and three cargo vans for the March 19 water delivery. We had over 2,000 bottles of water that we loaded and delivered to Flint.

On the way, the big truck was pulled over for being overweight. Usually it would be a \$5000 fine, but when authorities found out the reason, no fine was issued and we continued. Two miles after they left, they got a flat

tire. Then they were back on the road. The second flat tire came on arrival in Flint, then money for repairs. The owner and driver of the truck paid out almost \$1,000 in repairs. Yet, after he saw the good we were doing in Flint, it seemed not to bother him.

We see this devastation in America while our government and even religious communities ignore it by doing nothing for

more than a year. Don't Flint's children matter?

Flint's citizens suffer and cry out for help but get nothing. People treated us as saviors and were shocked that we had come from Chicago. Big Tough bikers and car clubbers were doing God's work but not through a church. They did it passionately. Many left with a sense of sadness at what they had experienced and seen.

## May Day 2016: 'We must provide the necessities for the people' says union leader

*Editor's note: The People's Tribune interviewed Richard Monje, Vice President of Workers United, about May Day, 2016—the international workers holiday.*

### ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY DAY, 2016

"May Day presents the opportunity to examine what is happen-

ing to the working class—with technology replacing labor. After the 2008 depression, working families were devastated by foreclosures. Prior to that, they were going bankrupt with healthcare costs. It didn't just start in 2007-8. Jobs have been going over seas—only minimum wage jobs remain.

"The workers are increasingly frustrated. We see it in the struggles for housing, education, and healthcare, and in the struggles of women. We can go on and on about what a working class family faces in terms of the quality of life. The principal issue in New Hampshire, a 90% white state, is heroin addiction. In former work-

ing class areas of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, communities are devastated.

### ON A VISION OF THE FUTURE

"The working class is beginning to express itself in activity. Those of us who are leaders—in global climate struggles, Black Lives Matter, and every level of activism—must identify the steps to a new future. Cruz, Trump, Clinton, or Sanders hardly address the issues, at least not in a structural way. Can we show a path to creating a new society for people who are descendants of those who built this country, who sacrificed in wars, creating profits for the capitalist class? Can we restructure the justice, housing, and educational systems so a path for opportunity and a healthy life from the time children are 2 to 24 years old is created? If you don't invest in the family—which means the community—we will continue to degenerate into a country at war with itself.

"So the battle for a regulated economy is key. We can't let the market determine what happens to people—or we end up with homeless in the street, children without necessary nourishment, the Flint water crisis. We have to have a planned, regulated econ-

omy—whether its called socialism or communism—it doesn't matter. Number one is providing for the immediate necessities of life to the people. If the corporations won't provide, government must. The extended period of mass profit and restricting of the economy to insure the capitalists stay in control of the world economy must come to an end. We must restructure the economy and the application of technology to benefit the people. As we build the bridge to a new economy, we must construct a new infrastructure and institutions to guarantee democracy, justice, civil and equal rights for all—regardless of socio-economic status.

### THE NEXT STEP

"The leaders, the practical leaders, must come together. They must embrace an understanding of what the solutions are. You can't do it without study, analysis of social development and educating the people about the true reality of what is happening in the country. We need to take books into the trenches. We must organize the preparation of young people around, science, history, current events. These steps are the path to reconnecting with what we have in common and creating a new future."



Airport workers join nationwide fight for \$15 movement.

PHOTO/FRANK JOHNSON



# Disappearance of jobs demands a new society

By Matt Sedillo

LOS ANGELES, CA — “I do think that... people... over the past century, [have been] replaced by machines and will continue to be.”

— Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google

“You order on a kiosk, you pay with a credit or debit card, your order pops up, and you never see a person.”

— Jeffrey Puder, CEO of Carl’s Jr

“Hon Hai has a workforce of over one million worldwide and, as human beings are also animals, to manage one million animals gives me a headache.”

— Terry Gou, CEO of Foxconn Technology Group

A specter is haunting the global job market and all who must make their way in it. For the past forty years or so advanced robotics have crept into every sector of

the workforce. There are very few labor struggles today wherein the threat of robotics cannot immediately be waged against labor.

The machines are becoming faster, cheaper, smaller and, most threatening of all, smarter.

Jeffrey Puder, CEO of Carl’s Jr., in an interview, recently spoke of his desire to automate all Carl’s Jr. sites. This comes on the heels of labor winning historic victories in the fight for 15.

The connection is clear for anyone willing to make it.

The labor struggles of the past could all be waged on the basis of labor demand. This is increasingly becoming untrue.

It has been increasingly untrue for my entire life.

I was born in 1981. Robotics is not the stuff of some future dystopia. I was born in the future—no one bothered to tell me, though. In high school I was told the econo-

my had changed and that college was the only path to success. In college I was told not to choose a frivolous degree. Returning to a trade school as an adult, I was told I would need to learn several skills and prepare for several careers. This was all within the framework of joining what I was told was the service economy, then later the global economy, and today, the information economy.

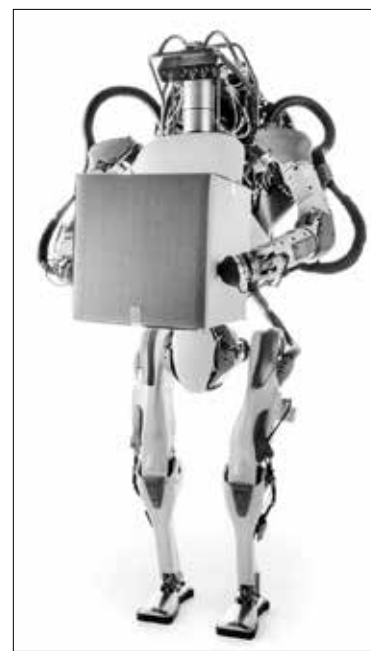
The truth is that Google employs less than 50,000 people. Facebook less than 5,000, Twitter less than 4,000 and eHarmony has more questions of compatibility than people in the building. There is no new economy. That is a damned lie.

Increasingly people are taking entry-level jobs at places not unlike Carl’s Jr. The average fast food worker is not a teenager, but rather, a 28-year-old with a child. Things are worse today for work-

ers than they were 10 years ago. They were worse 10 years ago then they were 10 years earlier. This is not going to stop and it is irreversible.

Under these conditions where machines are making machines and taking the jobs, the old axiom of property, “they who shall not work shall not eat,” means death to the job seeker. We need to abolish the system of private property. We need a new society built around a different kind of economy.

We need a system of distribution that matches this new system of production. It’s just that simple. Get with the program.



“Robots like this one [that stack boxes] can leave humans healthier to contribute time with youth, seniors, etc., in a future where food, shelter and other needs are guaranteed. Or we can just keep dumping the unemployed into poverty, danger and misery when they no longer produce profits,” says *People’s Tribune* contributor Steve Teixeira.

PHOTO/ATLAS ROBOT IMAGES COURTESY OF BOSTON DYNAMICS

## America is slipping into a full-blown fascism: We must act!

From the Editors

CHICAGO, IL — Tens of thousands of us stand in horror as “America the beautiful, the land of patriot’s dreams,” stripped of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment, guns youth down like dogs, drags children off to jail for nothing, and jails people under suspicion of being “undocumented.” Underlying this fascist terror is a small corporate ruling class that aims to safeguard their private property in a new economy that no longer needs many workers. With robotic production, growing numbers of old and young workers, of all colors, without a wage and money to buy, are demanding that the government provide them with their basic needs. As they fight for their survival, they are coming face to face with militarized police who stand exposed as the “watchdogs of private property.” America is slipping into a full-blown fascism. We can’t forget the lesson of Germany: “First they came for the Communists—but I wasn’t a Communist.” The time for resistance is before it happens to you, and time is short.

What follows are just a few of the many recent examples of fascist terror that should alarm us all:

A teen was fatally shot by Chicago police as he was scaling a fence, fleeing police. “They shot him in the air... and he hit the ground,” said a witness. Pierre Loury was an aspiring rapper from the West Side, a once



**Fight for \$15 protesters face police in Chicago. The police are the protectors of the private property of the billionaire corporate class.**

PHOTO/FRANK JOHNSON

thriving community since devastated by plant closings.

Janissa Valdez, a sixth-grade middle school student was body-slammed onto concrete by a San Antonio, Texas, police officer at school. Knocked out by the assault, Janissa said the police thought there was going to be a fight, but she was actually going up to the girl so they could talk.

An Idaho mom called police to report she’d found her missing son—cops came and smashed the boy’s face. “He put my son’s hand behind his back and, lifted him up in the air and slammed his face into the trunk of a car.” The boy suffered a chipped tooth and facial injuries. (rawstory.com)

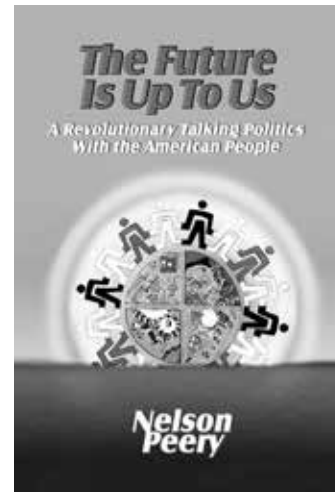
San Francisco police killed a homeless man who was allegedly waving a knife. Police fired four beanbags and then seven bullets at him within 30 seconds of stepping out of their patrol cars. Witnesses say the man didn’t challenge officers, spoke only Spanish and probably didn’t understand what police were saying before he was shot.

To stop a complete fascist takeover of the country, every instance of police violence and attacks on our liberties must be fought. In so doing, we must visualize the new society of peace and freedom that labor replacing electronic technology makes possible and fight for that future.

## The Future is Up to Us

2<sup>nd</sup> printing now available!

Read Nelson Peery’s examination of the past, present, and future of American revolutionary politics.



When *The Future Is Up to Us* first came out, it was read and discussed by many people involved in the fight for a new society where the means of producing our food, healthcare, water and other necessities are owned publicly with all goods distributed to the people. We need more debate and more critical thinking in this country today.

Order your books now. Send a donation of \$15 to Speakers for a New America, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524, or via PayPal at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org).

Nelson Peery, revolutionary, author, and *People’s Tribune* board member, passed away last autumn. Donations in his memory can be sent to the address above or via paypal.

## 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.

Email [info@speakersforanewamerica.com](mailto:info@speakersforanewamerica.com)



# Stop handing public education to corporations

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — On April 1, Chicago teachers, along with parents, students, and other workers—20,000 strong in downtown Chicago—sent a message to Governor Bruce Rauner and Mayor Rahm Emanuel. If Rauner and Emanuel were listening, they couldn't mistake the meaning. Chicagoans are holding their political leaders and the corporations they represent responsible for robbing the people of what it takes to survive.

The day of activities began with pickets at every school in the city. Teachers were joined by supporters from their community. Throughout the day, actions were held at Chicago State University and Northeastern Illinois University, both severely curtailed by lack of funding; by "Fight for \$15" workers who struck several McDonald's restaurants; at police stations and courts, where teachers and Black Lives Matter activists held the city accountable for police murders of unarmed youth; by an alliance of human service workers protesting cuts in necessary programs; and finally multitudes of organized and unorganized workers filling the streets of Chicago's downtown during the rush hour.

Led by those involved in the education struggle, these combatants have learned they cannot attain their goals in school-by-school

battles and even on the school district level. Also, some members of unions and organizations recognize that they can't succeed by traditional narrow approaches—protecting their own turf exclusively. The Chicago Teachers Union has sought a coalition with other groups on a common agenda, organizations that they might not have allied with in the past. But the Chicago Teachers Union has gone out of their way to support and to find the links that bring them together. While it looks like old-time coalition building, an impulse is arising for workers to come together around basic needs.

The planners of the April 1 "Day of Action" demanded funding sources that can only be gained from the State of Illinois. The consequence of this is a transition from scattered economic struggles toward political activity. Corporate giants like Pearson, Bill Gates and charter school corporations are merging with the government, demonstrating how this "privatization" is a merger in the interest of the corporations and making the government the target. Governor Rauner has threatened to take government intervention further, to impose an emergency manager dictatorship to strip union workers of their pensions and rights while taking over the public schools. From Michigan through Puerto Rico to Illinois and California: expanding emer-



Chicago Teachers Union strike on April 1 for public funding for schools.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

gency managers has a stark vision in education—eliminate education for those it no longer needs.

The 20,000 people in downtown Chicago are developing a vision of their own. Their path leads to demanding that the federal government live up to its

responsibility to feed, clothe and educate the people. Many of the demonstrators are fighting for their basic needs to survive, at a level of equality of poverty. They can begin to recognize the common reality that they face. Their unity is necessary in the battle for

the power to end handing over public services to the corporations. Instead, the government needs to nationalize the education-corporations in the people's, not the corporation's interest. That's the only way to carry out a thorough fight for equitable funding for all.

## Chicago State U. fights for its future

By Allen Harris

CHICAGO, IL — Spring break at Chicago State University (CSU) was canceled in April.

The entire workforce—913 employees—prepared to lose their jobs, while its 2016 seniors looked forward to receiving their diplomas not knowing if they would be the last graduating class.

The South Side institution is in crisis because Illinois has become the only state without a budget. For almost a year, multi-millionaire governor Bruce Rauner has refused to approve the budget passed by the Legislature unless he gets the power to break the public-sector unions and make Illinois a right-to-work state.

Without money, state services in Illinois have been forced to cut back, lay off and even shut down. The whole state university system, including schools like Northeastern, Northern, Eastern, Southern and the University of

Illinois itself, has felt the shock.

The public understands that what Rauner and his class are doing to CSU is not just CSU's problem. It is linked up with all the other struggles for public education, especially in Chicago's elementary and high schools.

In fact, the big picture shows that the political fight over public funding in Illinois is part of the same nationwide struggle.

The deadlock in Springfield "disproportionately affects Chicago State University," says CSU president Thomas Calhoun. Students were hard-hit by Rauner's veto of state funding for MAP grants that would enable working-class students to attend Chicago State and the other state universities.

The school's announcement in early 2016 that it may close without state funding sparked action by students who conducted rallies on campus, marched in downtown Chicago and—most dramatically—occupied the traffic lanes of the nearby Dan Ryan

Expressway.

Solidarity has come from Chicago's activist movements and organized labor, especially the Chicago Teachers Union, which staged the tremendous April 1 strike. That strike was a broad-based political action around the slogan "#FightForFunding."

The Illinois 2016 fiscal year will end on June 30, most likely with no budget for it. As of April, there was no sign the crisis will end. Instead, it will continue.

Chicago State University, which will be 150 years old in 2017, says it will be open in the fall, but without sufficient money it will still be in trouble, according to CSU political science professor Phillip Beverly.

As Rauner tries to loot the state's resources that ordinary people need, the issue of public funding becomes a serious matter.

The students' cry of "Save CSU" has been joined by volunteers from the surrounding community who have formed a



Chicago State University activists lead a protest in downtown Chicago at the State of Illinois Building. Without state funding, the university may close.

PHOTO/ALLEN HARRIS

council to help with fund-raising among the university's alumni and the community at large.

Capitalism is dying. Corporations and private property interests are desperate for profits and they are taking over government at all levels in order to steal pensions, break unions and privatize everything from schools to

water.

Gathering against them is a growing class of dispossessed Americans who are forced to unite, but not just for its own defense. The real fight is for all Americans to live in a new society, where this nation's abundance is liberated and everyone has the right to quality education.



# Can a disturbed society be molded into a healthy one?

By Marcia Leister

SEATTLE, WA — I wish that we on the front lines were able to draw from public funds and public support to be able to help our students navigate through the unhealthy world that assails them daily. And that the education system could be more loving and patient, more compassionate by offering multiple pathways for students to feel wanted and competent—where they find and make meaning in their lives, where the educational material offered to them allows them to begin immediately to feel competent and to see their lives have meaning.

Accessible education that makes sense and addresses the underlying needs of our stu-

dents is needed more than ever. To focus on standardized testing and improvement points, or whatever they are called, that our funding is now based on, using curriculum that is so far removed from the actual lives and needs of students is not going to help heal the foundational needs/wounds that are going unmet in a world run by the masters of for-profit enterprise.

How about getting students to question and consider the real problems in their lives that keep them from personal success? I know we have to deal with what we've got, but, one example of an immediate problem in our students' lives is this Pearson GED and, in K12, the Common Core curriculum and testing. This is holding back a lot of students

from achieving success. Even one of my long term tutors, a former engineer, who has been really good at rolling with the punches in our ABE/GED programs, and has written hand outs to help with the new math GED, because, as he reminds me, "we have to do this thing," rolls his eyes at some of the social studies questions he is called upon by students for help, when he is not doing math with other students.

These corporate created educational methods and content could be what is holding back a lot of students from achieving success. This educational system creates another way in this society in which people feel hopelessness and their frustration that can erupt in detrimental ways. Are human beings being molded to fit



Can we have a public education system—not based on for profit enterprises—where all children are happy and prepared for opportunity and life-long learning in a new economy?

PHOTO/WAVEBREAKMEDIA

You can reach the author at [marcialeister@fastmail.com](mailto:marcialeister@fastmail.com)

into a dis-eased society or can a disturbed society be molded into a healthy one?

## Pandemic in Chicago: MENTAL ILLNESS



Closed Woodlawn Chicago Mental Health Clinic.

PHOTO/MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT

By Kathy Powers,  
Advocacy is my therapy

CHICAGO, IL — N'Dana Carter from Chicago's Mental Health Movement organized a Body Bag protest at Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office on February, 17, 2016, to raise awareness of the widespread seriousness of untreated mental illness and the insufficient safety net afforded by the city's Department of Public Health. She sees the Emanuel administration's policies as the cause of Chicago's current mental health crisis. During his early tenure as mayor, Emanuel closed six of 12 public mental health clinics, leaving five clinics open on the south side—and only one on the north side of the city.

"We had over 400 suicides the year our public mental health clinics closed," said Carter. "Things are not getting better."

The Chicago Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, Dr. Julie Morita, refuses to make mental health treatment a priority. When the AFSCME

union and Chicago aldermen unveiled a plan this February to expand services at the city's mental health clinics to potentially steer some troubled youths to treatment rather than street confrontations with police, without increasing city taxes, Dr. Morita said that the plan would not work and would be "counterproductive." The mental health clinics only treat adults 18 and over.

Chicago socially excludes persons with mental illness by shamefully profiling them. Stigmatizing mental health conditions is bad; stigmatizing treatment, worse; stigmatizing clients by therapists, even worse; and "suicide by cop," the worst.

People who receive help are more likely to be in control of their torments than those who have not. Still, stigma about persons who receive treatment serves to alert people away from seeking treatment for mental illness. People think that therapy will be held against them, reasonably so, because when they lose legal and civil rights or become physically abused, this cancels a person's ability to recover and maintain a reasonable quality of life. Chicago encourages denial, medical noncompliance and pretext, thereby destroying a healthy society.

Chicago needs to treat serious mental illness, such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and major depression, like any other medical conditions. To quote the National Alliance for Mental Illness, "Recovery rocks, treatment works!"

**20% of Cook County's correctional population has a mental health condition. Most are in for low-level crimes.**

**57% of Medicaid enrollees have a mental illness. They are expensive because they do not have access to treatment.**

**It is unknown how many uninsured persons with mental illness do not receive treatment.**

Chicago must build treatment capacity using the city's public mental health clinics. Why? Early intervention critically slows illness progression; prevents disability, homelessness and the justice system involvement; and decreases multiple hospitalizations. City investment in rental subsidies to enable affordable housing for homeless people with serious mental illnesses could help at least one third of the homeless population. Housing plus treatment (\$20,000/yr.) is far more humane and cost effective than jailing persons with mental illness, creating more homelessness, or losing precious lives to suicide.

The time for reform is now!

### *Abandoned library*

visiting the library today  
looking at the joy of my friends face  
as memories light their face like electricity  
going to a light bulb  
but looking at it now  
books in boxes  
collecting dust  
for god knows how long  
sitting there untouched like lost dreams

— Peter, 8th grade, Chicago

all shall  
pass away  
heaven & earth  
as they say  
but they'll still be  
sleeping down at  
Mission & Main  
at sundown

— Sarah Menefee



# Don't let this voice for democracy be silenced



Rev. Pinkney and other protest the opening of a private golf course on Benton Harbor land that once was public parkland. In 2012, the public land was sold by the city's unelected Emergency Manager.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

MARQUETTE, MI — Let the truth be told! I will have a hearing in Grand Rapids, MI at the Court of Appeals on May 11, 2016 at 10 a.m. An all white jury, holding a deeply rooted prejudice against the community and me, convict-

ed me. I was charged with voter fraud when there was none. No direct or indirect evidence was presented at the trial. No eyewitness, no confession, nothing that could send me to prison for 2 ½ to 10 years.

In 2015, Benton Harbor residents proposed a 1% income tax

aimed at Whirlpool, the blood-sucking corporation that rules Berrien County, MI. Whirlpool, and their puppet, former Mayor James Hightower, defeated the measure through a massive misinformation campaign. This created the community's effort to recall Mayor James Hightower.

The petitions were turned in with all of the required number of signatures. Then the sheriff's department started investigating the petitions at the request of the mayor, and began intimidating the residents of Benton Harbor who had signed petitions. A SWAT team surrounded my home to arrest me, but I had left 15 minutes earlier to celebrate my wife, Dorothy's, birthday. This was a power move to stop the recall election and to keep the puppet mayor in office. Recently, Marcus Muhammad defeated Mayor James Hightower by a landslide. Let the truth be told.

The prosecutor, Mike Sepic, made a remarkable statement in his brief. He said that Rev. Pinkney's First Amendment activities (right to free speech, petition the government, etc.) could not be prejudicial in nature because my activities involved things like the fight for freedom, justice and equality for all, and for food, clothing, and shelter for the needy. But when the prosecutor argued to the jury he said something entirely different. He said that all these things were not true and that the jury should come to the conclusion that Rev. Pinkney is guilty and that his activity indicated this. This clearly indicates

**Show your support to Free Reverend Pinkney!**

**Come out and attend his Michigan Court of Appeals hearing.**

**Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 10am**

**Grand Rapids Court Room, State Office Building  
350 Ottawa Avenue  
Northwest Grand Rapids  
Michigan 49503**

the prosecutor had an improper prejudicial purpose.

There is no hope for us until we become tough-minded enough to break loose from the shackles of prejudice, half-truths and ignorance. The situation in the world does not permit us the luxury of soft-mindedness. A nation or a civilization that produces soft-minded people purchases it on death. We must confront the corrupt system and the blood-sucking Whirlpool Corporation.

*Show your support for justice for all. Be at Rev. Pinkney's Court of Appeals hearing in Grand Rapids!*

## Free Reverend Pinkney

From the Editors

CHICAGO, IL — May Day, May 1, 2016 marks the 503<sup>rd</sup> day that Rev. Edward Pinkney has spent in jail for a crime he did not commit. No evidence against him was presented in court. Witness testimony that should have exonerated him was ignored. Based on the "evidence" presented, it seems clear that no crime even took place. The real crime is what has been happening to the people of Benton Harbor, MI, for the past three decades.

Like other Rust Belt cities, Benton Harbor was once a thriving community full of jobs. The Whirlpool Corporation, the main employer in the area, began cutting back assembly line production in the 1980s, making Benton Harbor the poorest city in Michigan. Police terrorized the community and the people rose up in rebellion.

The governor promised to

address the city's problems but instead sent in an emergency manager dictator who cut corporate taxes and sold off the city's assets for pennies on the dollar. Whirlpool is now attempting to kick out the poor people it created and turn Benton Harbor into a haven for the rich.

It is Rev. Pinkney who has been a consistent and courageous voice for the growing poor in Benton Harbor and against the corporate dictatorship. He was the first to warn the American people about the dangers of the emergency manager system. His message has been that if they can do it to the African American town of Benton Harbor first, then it won't be long before they're doing it to the rest of the working class, no matter what color you are. That warning came true in Flint.

The facts in the Pinkney case speak for themselves; trumped up charges, a SWAT

team sent to his house to arrest him, no evidence, a prejudicial judge, a rigged jury none of whom were African American or from Benton Harbor and felony time for a misdemeanor crime. Bond has been denied to Rev. Pinkney while he appeals his conviction. He has been moved from jail to jail, put in solitary confinement and cut off from the outside world. These are the lengths the fascist merger of corporations with government in Michigan will go to in order to silence a message and messenger whose time has come.

The persecution was only the beginning of the attack on those who stand up to the Michigan dictatorship. Now those who stand up for water rights for the poor in other cities are under attack too. Join the fight to Free Rev. Pinkney as part of the fight for democracy for all. Contact [bhbanco.org](http://bhbanco.org) or [justice4pinkney.com](http://justice4pinkney.com).

## OCCUPYTHEPGA RALLY&MARCH

May 28, 2016, 11am

City Hall Steps, 200 E. Wall St., Benton Harbor, MI

Democracy and human rights are non-existent here

Murder of Benton Harbor residents  
Gentrification and genocide by Whirlpool Corp.  
Theft of public parks for luxury golf courses  
Snyder's Emergency Manager dictatorship  
Free political prisoner Rev. Edward Pinkney  
Justice for Martell Hadley, found dead in Berrien County Jail

Stand with us in our struggle for freedom

Stop the Corruption in Berrien County



<http://bhbanco.org>

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## Order People's Tribunes!

Get up to date coverage of the movement to free Pinkney. Get timely analysis about the struggle for a new society. Call 800-691-6888 or visit [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org). Donations are 50c per paper.