

THE PEOPLE SAY 'NO' TO A GOVERNMENT OF BILLIONAIRES

[Read the story on page 3](#)



Millions marched to protest the policies of the billionaires that threaten democracy, equality, and humanity (Lansing, MI, above). See more on pages 6-7. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

JANUARY 21: 5 MILLION PEOPLE MARCHED IN OVER 500 CITIES WORLDWIDE
WASHINGTON, DC NEW YORK LOS ANGELES CHICAGO SEATTLE
SAN FRANCISCO DENVER BOSTON OAKLAND PORTLAND ST PAUL
MADISON AMSTERDAM ATLANTA AUKLAND AUSTIN BERLIN
COPENHAGEN LONDON MELBOURNE NAIROBI OTTAWA PARIS
PHILADELPHIA CHARLESTON SEOUL SYDNEY TOKYO TORONTO RALEIGH

Inside: The women's marches, healthcare, water, the environment, immigrants, and fighting homelessness

Nationalize healthcare as a human right

EDITORIAL

The fight for quality affordable healthcare for all as a human right is once again heating up. Demonstrations and rallies are taking place across the country against repeal of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and in defense of Medicare and Medicaid.

Neil Yonts, Democrat, a coal miner for 35 years from Kentucky, voted for Trump because he said he'll bring coal back. Now Neil, who has Black lung, thinks it might have been a mistake. If Obamacare is nixed, Black lung benefits for miners and widows could disappear. And healthcare for miners like Neil would be unaffordable. Thus thousands, from retired coal miners in the coal fields of eastern Kentucky and West Virginia to increasingly dispossessed auto workers in Macomb County, Michigan, parents and young adults, doctors and others are voicing their opposition to appeal.

On the other hand, for millions more, healthcare is not affordable even with Obamacare and extension of Medicaid. Premiums, deductibles and co-payments have increased, forcing choices between healthcare and other necessities. Millions, including many migrants and undocumented workers, are excluded from healthcare insurance. And some states have refused to expand Medicaid, leaving millions who are most in need uninsured (75% of those are in the South). The poisoned people of Flint have yet to all receive healthcare. For these workers, the fight is for public healthcare that includes all, whether they can pay or not.

Our current system is the most expensive, bureaucratic, wasteful and ineffective in the world. According to key indi-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

cators—life expectancy, infant mortality, and preventable deaths—we don't even rank in the top ten. We spend \$3.2 trillion a year on healthcare, double what the United Kingdom spends. So while the healthcare industry makes hundreds of billions a year in profits, tens of millions of Americans have totally inadequate coverage and many suffer and die unnecessarily.

Originally designed to guarantee profits for insurance companies, corporate healthcare providers and pharmaceutical companies, Obamacare came under attack by those same interests as profits fell. Backed by insurance companies and their paid representatives in Congress (hundreds of thousands of dollars in hush money), a campaign was waged against the Affordable Care Act, first by associating it with the Black president by labeling it "Obamacare." By

telling those with rising costs and high premiums that they are "paying for the poor," i.e., "underserving Blacks," the entire population became immobilized in fighting for quality healthcare for all workers.

As the representatives of the healthcare corporations move to guarantee that they have access to the trillions of healthcare dollars—providing healthcare to only those who can pay its skyrocketing cost—we, the people, must demand that healthcare not be sold as a commodity to profit corporations. Healthcare must be a human right provided to all.

As technology eliminates

more and more jobs, we will have to move toward a cooperative society where we, the people, not a handful of billionaires, own the means of producing what we need, and everything, including healthcare, is distributed based on need.

We can take a step in that direction by doing what most other advanced countries have done: create a publicly financed health system that nationalizes every aspect of healthcare—doctors, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, emergency services, etc.—and that guarantees high quality healthcare to everyone.

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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.

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.

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The people say ‘no’ to a government of, by, and for billionaires



Demonstrators at the Chicago women’s protest, and throughout the country, defend healthcare, education, and other social programs threatened by the billionaire class.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

COVER STORY

In January in Portland, Ore., Karen Batts, 52, froze to death in a parking garage. She had been evicted from a downtown Portland apartment building in October for being overdue on paying \$338 in monthly rent.

Also in January, another Portland woman, who was both homeless and mentally ill, gave birth to a baby boy in the street in freezing temperatures and the baby died. A man found her wandering the street, barefoot and only partly clothed, with the baby under her coat.

These horror stories are just two among millions that could be told across the country. They’re an indictment of a dying system. They’re also testimony that the safety net of public aid programs that might have helped those who are suffering has been getting shredded for 40 years.

On the other side of America in January, we saw the hideous spectacle of Trump’s \$200 million inauguration as the gold-plated billionaire took office. And Trump is bringing into the government people who have promised to further destroy the social safety net. This process didn’t start with Trump. Big business merged with government years ago, and it structures government to serve its needs.

The public welfare programs in the US, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and food assistance, have their roots in the industrial era. Under the old industrial economy, which existed up to about the early 1970s, the billionaires and their corporations needed tens of millions of workers to carry on production. The welfare state was created to keep workers healthy during economic downturns, so they would

be available for work later.

Today, technology is eliminating the jobs. Fewer and fewer workers are needed, and the corporations won’t have the government spend money maintaining workers they don’t need. What’s more, the greater efficiency of robotized production means the billionaires have a shrinking number of places to invest to turn a profit. This is another reason why the wealthy want to divert government spending into their pockets through tax breaks and privatizing public services.

You can bet they are not going to cut the \$1 trillion a year that goes to the profitable military-industrial complex. Instead they will take food out of the mouths of our children, condemn old people to live in poverty, and leave the unemployed, the homeless, and those without healthcare to fend for themselves. This has been policy for both the Democrats and Republicans for years.

Though Trump pledged during his campaign to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, his cabinet appointees and prominent Republicans in Congress have said they want to privatize or otherwise cut these programs. They’ve already started revamping the Affordable Care Act, and there is little doubt that the ultimate result will be more people without coverage, higher prices and less care for those who are covered, and higher profits for the healthcare industry.

While the homeless die in the streets, the billionaires use the government as their private piggybank. Who will the government serve—billionaires like Trump, or we the people? People are demanding that the government serve the people’s needs. If the corporations cannot provide us with food, water, housing, healthcare and all the other necessities, then the government must.

Billionaires own most of world’s wealth: We’re fighting for a new society

Form the Editors of the People’s Tribune

According to a recent study, 8 of the world’s richest individuals now own as much wealth as half of the rest of the human race. This polarization of society into extreme wealth and poverty, where the few live like kings while more and more of the world’s children starve, has been accelerating for the past few years. This is happening as a result of advancements being made in the technology that is eliminating jobs, which increases the ranks of the poor while creating abundance. What gives them the right to use this technology to make themselves so rich and the rest of us so poor?

If we, the poor, the many, publicly owned that same technology, instead of they, the rich, the few, then we would certainly use it to build a cooperative society that would restore the human right to food, healthcare, water, education and shelter for us all.

The People’s Tribune is your paper! Help circulate it

People’s Tribune distributors were out during the inauguration marches in dozens of cities. Here are some comments about their experience. Contact us about becoming a People’s Tribune distributor at info@peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888.

“When I distributed the People’s Tribune I showed whoever I was talking to an article related to what that person had on

a sign—Black Lives Matter, environment, water (a big issue here and around New Orleans and Louisiana), Native American rights, healthcare, poverty and homelessness. I showed the page of the paper that says who we are and our purpose and tell them they can write for the paper about what their organization is doing so people can see the connections and learn from each other and build unity. The response was mostly, “Thank you!” Some asked

where to send articles and I referred them to the information on Page 2 of the paper. Some people asked for extra papers to give out.”

“The rain slowed to a light drizzle and the temperature was 45 degrees with no wind. Good conditions. I started at the bus stops where people boarded to go to D.C., at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 9 a.m. I shouted, ‘People’s Tribune!’ Get the ‘News on

Standing Rock,’ ‘Learn about the Homeless struggle.’ ‘The homeless are being forced to wear yellow wrist bands to eat’ or ‘Water is Life.’ People donated. I ran out of People’s Tribunes!

The People’s Tribune is all-volunteer. We get no grants. We rely on our readers for contributions. Donate at www.peopletribune.org.

Homeless leader writes about his Poor Tour arrest

Editor's note: This article was written as an impact statement for a lawsuit against the city of Berkeley, California, for the destruction of personal property during an arrest at one of the 15 raids (so far) on the "First they came for the homeless" four-month Poor Tour traveling tent community.

By Mike Zint

BERKELEY, CA. On the morning of November 4, 2016, at about 5 a.m. I was awakened by Berkeley police officers violently shaking my tent.

Barely awake, I tried to get them to wait a minute. I have breathing issues and I need to medicate to breathe. The police refused to listen and instead ordered me to perform tasks that would risk my life. They gave me no choice.

I entered into a breathing episode where I feel like I'm

suffocating. Instead of listening, the police dragged me out of my tent and arrested me. They put me in a paddy wagon where I continued to struggle to breathe and I said so.

They took me to jail and refused to let me hit my inhaler. I had to wait 20 minutes for an EMT (emergency medical technician) to hand it to me. After I got out of jail, I discovered that all my personal possessions were missing, including what was on me when I was arrested. All my personal possessions were gone. I owned nothing. No ID. No food stamp card. No cash.

It took over two months for me to replace my food stamps and ID. I still have nothing. I can't shave. I can't clean my ears. I can't clip my nails. My medicine is gone. The medicine had been effective for years and just over a month after it was taken, I was hospitalized. I have

never needed a hospital before.

I was reduced to sleeping on a piece of cardboard under a light blanket for days. With no resources and no ability to get resources, over two months went by before I received any cash to buy a change of clothes. My shoes got thrown away, so the jail gave me unlaced shoes. I cannot buy laces yet. I won't ever be able to replace some of those possessions. They had history. The technology had photos and videos that can never be replaced.

Loss of all personal possessions in a fire gets you all kinds of help. Losing them in a tent gets you arrested.

Since my arrest, the Poor Tour has continued. The Berkeley Police have raided the group of disabled protesters 15 times and stolen their possessions and medicines. These raids include dozens of cops, city workers, vehicles and city officials. All



Brett and Ben at the "First they came for the homeless" Poor Tour tent action that has lasted four months and survived 15 police raids. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

to move fewer than a dozen disabled people. All raids occur at 5 a.m. So far, the police have injured a city council candidate, a senior, the camp mom and, by stealing my medicine,

they have ended up hospitalizing me. I am writing this from my respite care facility. I had to leave the occupation and my friends because of my health. But this is not over.

'We beg you to wake up' – Pregnant women thrown out in the cold



Three individuals cited for illegal camping in Denver pled not guilty. Two are homeless and were seen in videos when the cops tore blankets off them in freezing weather to be used as evidence against them. They call this a prime example of the criminalization of the poor. One has a separate suit challenging constitutional issues in calling people's property evidence. PHOTO/CHRIS WALKER

By P.J. Damico

DENVER, CO — I am a citizen of a country that does not yet exist. In Denver, the Samaritan House, a shelter program of Catholic Charities, threw pregnant women out into the freezing rain. Two women who were sleeping outside on the sidewalk adjacent to Samaritan House had miscarriages. One was expecting twins. I have twins.

My sister asked me why they miscarried, I told her it

was because the unborn thought better of coming into this world. The Samaritan House is literally pressing trespassing charges against these women and all homeless people without shelter (they have designated an 18-inch line along their property so that if you rest up against their wall you can be arrested). I am a citizen of a country that has chosen to be blind. I am begging you, America, for the sake of these three martyred babies. Wake up!

I am begging. We see them begging, disheveled, and wonder what happened to them. We are invisible, subhuman. Don't be so sure. The cost of disassociation is your very humanity. We are not begging you for food or your pocket change, we are begging you to remember that you are human, too, and that we are your neighbors. We are your gift, inviting you to wake up. We beg you to wake up.

When I was homeless, it was not you who saved me, but the homeless. It is the homeless who are the most compassionate human beings on the planet. Who feels it knows it. The Jesus I pray to says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

But how would you know if any of this is true? If you watch the local news, I am sorry, but they are lying. If you speed past the folks on the corner, how could you listen long enough to know their stories? If you listen to our mayor, well ... I won't go there. But be careful: "You take the red pill, you leave Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes and we welcome you back to your humanity." Until then, you will find us at Larimer Street and Park Avenue next to the pregnant woman under the blue tarp.

Trump cabinet pick: History of fraudulent foreclosures



This woman spoke at a rally at Leimert Park in Los Angeles at Steve Mnuchin's Brentwood mansion. She describes how OneWest Bank fraudulently foreclosed on her home. Mnuchin, Trump's nominee as Treasury Secretary, is the former CEO of the notorious bank called a "foreclosure machine." PHOTO/CHRIS VENN

Homelessness shows we need a new society

From the Editors of the People's Tribune

We have a dying system that's throwing millions of us to the curb and will not care for us unless we demand it. Just look at the number of our fellow human beings left to die in the cold while the "authorities" sic the police on them, taking their meager means of survival. Witness the recent birth and death of that baby in Portland whose mother was abandoned to the streets, barefoot in the snow, suffering with mental illness.

No matter who is elected, this system, based on making maximum profits for the billionaire class, is structured to kick ever more of us unneeded workers out into the streets.

We have strength in our unity and this is the key to overcoming the perils we will face as society continues to transition from an industrial wage-labor base to robotics, eliminating nearly 50% of the remaining jobs by 2040.

What we need to grab hold of is that this same technology is also creating a world of abundance. The cause of our misery is the private ownership of the technology that produces this abundance. If that technology was publicly owned, we could guarantee everyone's needs and no one would be homeless or hungry. Our first step toward that new society is to demand that every family be placed in a home—vacant government-owned homes or ones taken back from corporate owners.

The *People's Tribune* is committed to bringing you the voices of the leaders of this growing movement to create a new society. Order copies. Donate. Send articles. Visit peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888.

gypsy woman
went downstairs
into the station with
her cardboard sign

small cold rain

— Sarah Menefee

The American Nightmare

Welcome to the "America dream", where the President uses drones to kill people, robots replace human labor, government agencies spy on the American people, the police are militarized, activists are labeled terrorists, and an orange monster with a toupee is elected president. This is not a dream, it's reality.

— Keenan Putansu



In October 2016, the homeless, camping under Chicago's Lake Shore Drive in Uptown, and supporters, marched on Lake Shore Drive and set down tents to stop traffic and shut it down. The city threatened to confiscate the tents they live in, just before winter. They aim to pressure Chicago Housing Authority to spend its stockpiled \$440 million on housing vouchers rather than have it sit unused, allowing the city to gentrify further. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

Chicago's homeless to city government: Back down on harassment

By Mark Saulys

CHICAGO, IL — Another means of attacking the homeless in Chicago, and now the Uptown viaduct encampments, is by conducting frequent encampment "cleanings." If done at a moderate frequency of, say one every 6 weeks, the cleanings could help keep the viaducts clean. But when done at an unreasonable frequency, like weekly or biweekly, their only purpose can be to harass the homeless and make their lives as difficult as possible.

The cleanings can be a tremendous hardship for residents of the encampments, some of whom are elderly and infirm, but are an undue hardship for all. It requires that everyone take much of a day—or all of one morning, at the least—to move their tents and all their possessions to the embankments of the Drive and wait for the city crews to either power wash—strongly hose down the viaducts—and drive through with a sweeper truck. Or the city might send 20 people, usually convict labor from the Safer Foundation, with brooms and rakes through the viaduct to sweep it manually, which we would have already done anyway. Meanwhile, city officials present

might seize property they think the homeless do not deserve to possess (mattresses, chairs, cook grills or anything they don't consider "portable").

It can be extremely difficult to carry one's possessions 50-100 yards and then back again for some elderly and infirm encampment residents, even in mild weather. The "aggressive cleanings", as city officials call them, were promised to be conducted every week or every other week, whether in rain, sleet, snow or subzero temperatures throughout the winter, just because they hate us.

The encampment cleanings are but another needless impediment heaped upon the homeless to getting ourselves out of homelessness. Encampment residents must postpone doctor or other appointments for cleanings. Recently, one gentleman was certain he had pneumonia, but had to wait until the following Monday to go to the free clinic (he went later to the ER). Job schedules can't always be worked around it.

On the morning of the scheduled encampment cleaning of Friday, January 6, the temperature at Chicago's Lake Shore Drive promised to be 5 degrees before

factoring in the wind. The residents of the Wilson and Lawrence Avenue viaduct encampments held many discussions that week as to whether to comply with the cleaning orders and move our belongings or whether to refuse.

On Thursday the decision was made to refuse—and to refuse thereafter whenever the temperature went below 40 degrees on the morning of a scheduled cleaning.

Friday, at 8:45 a.m., only one resident of either viaduct had moved his tent and belongings in compliance. The 46th Ward superintendent of Streets and Sanitation then drove through the viaducts and announced that the cleaning had been cancelled after apparently first having waited to see if we would move.

This we considered a victory and our residents' group, (Uptown) Tent City Voices Heard, went ahead with the scheduled press conference, initially meant to head off our action of refusal, and announced our intended continued refusal.

Whether that prevails is to be seen and a showdown between city government and the encampment is certain and coming soon.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The *People's Tribune* welcomes your comments on our articles, especially on our covers and editorials. Your feedback helps us stay on course as a paper that points the way forward to a new cooperative society. Email info@peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888 toll free.

— The Editors



Los Angeles. PHOTO/JOE FENSTERMAKER



Charleston, West Virginia. PHOTO/CHAD CARPENTER



Chicago. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM



Washington, D.C. PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA



Chicago. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM



Kansas City. PHOTO/AILECIA RUSCIN



Austin, Texas. PHOTO/KAREL RILEY

Marching for a New World

From the Editors

On January 21, millions of women, grandmothers, mothers, daughters, families with men pushing babies in strollers, and young people, turned out to protest in cities across America and the world. By one estimate, over 5 million marched worldwide, including more than 1 million in Washington, D.C. They marched for women's rights, against poverty and hate, and for unity, equality, democracy, the environment and peace. They marched for everyone's rights.

Underneath all of it—underneath the elections and the polarization of our society—are huge historical forces that are throwing the whole of humanity into crisis. Globalization and technological change are wiping out the jobs and driving down wages worldwide. In the age of robotic production, a tiny billionaire class—at the moment led by Trump—is fighting to dominate and maximize profits in a shrinking world market. Production without human labor is creating an obscene wealth alongside of growing poverty among workers of all colors and nationalities, including those who had previously been economically secure.

This is not the poverty of the past. Automated production is destroying the jobs. Those whose lives are being destroyed include the marginally employed and permanently unemployed; it includes those of us who are just getting by, and people who are already homeless and destitute.

The existing system based on buying and selling of our ability to work is dying. The people have no choice but to fight for a whole new society, where the means of producing our necessities of life—food, housing, healthcare, etc.—are publicly owned, and what we need to live is distributed according to need—a society where the government serves us, and not a tiny class of billionaires.

The billionaires, on the other hand, need an increasingly repressive society where the democracy that we once knew is replaced by dictatorship. Sections of workers are now being targeted. This is the rulers' entry into imposing a dictatorship on us all, if not stopped, and many people can see this.

The first step in the creation of a new world is for all of us to unite around the demands of the poorest among us. Why? Because to survive, those with the least are forced to fight for everyone's necessities and human dignity. The struggle is against a corporate-controlled system that is the real enemy of us all. We are not in a fight to reform a dying system. We are fighting to get the power to build a whole new world.



Washington, D.C. PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA



Washington, D.C. PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA



New Orleans. PHOTO/TED QUANT

Thank you to the many photographers who contributed photos for these pages. We hope these images give our readers a sense of the vision of a new America that is emerging. We regret that we were unable to use all of the photos we received.

— The People's Tribune



Washington, D.C. PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA

‘Don’t forget us! We need some help!’ say Flint women

Contributed to the People’s Tribune by a Flint activist

FLINT, MI — As the Flint water crisis surpasses 1,000 days since the disaster began, a busload of Flint women decided to take the issue to the Million Women March. This was just days before a Town Hall meeting was held to update the Flint community on the status of the situation. The panel of EPA, DEQ, along with other “experts,” tried to assure residents that the water is now safe. Residents erupted into verbal outburst along with using empty water bottles as noisemakers in a show of resistance.

A busload of primarily women from Flint arrived in Washington, D.C. and blended in with the exuberant, awe-inspiring March. With signs, postcards, and T-Shirts, they made their way to

the grand event. Also, Flint’s own Melissa Mays of “Water You Fighting For” got an opportunity to address the Washington, DC event, telling the audience the truth about the poisoning.

Following are some reflections from the women:

Carrie Younger-Nelson said, “I decided to come because it’s a Women’s March (a ten-hour bus ride) and women know how to get things done! We have a cause and our cause is our bad water in Flint. It’s been almost three years. We have to take a shower, cook, or whatever in bottled water. Trump came to Flint back in the summer and said he was going to help Flint and we’re here calling him out, asking where is he at.

“We saw fellow citizens with rashes and hair falling out. I took a show-

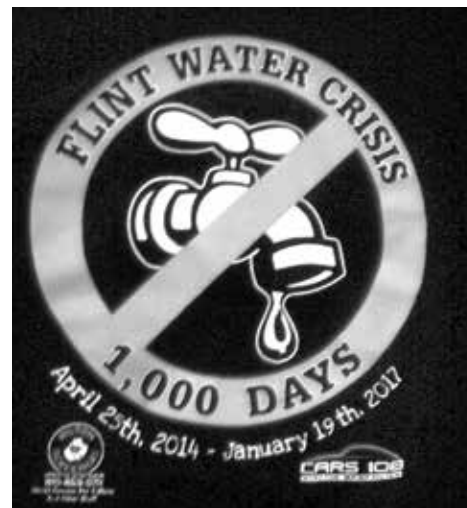
er and broke out all over my body. After that, I got respiratory problems and must see a lung specialist. Kids are having problems in school with developmental problems and behavior problems. We have been to the State Building, and more. We’re here to say we’re ready for you (President Trump) to take care of Flint.”

Helen Brock said, “They don’t care. They really don’t care. They... fixing a few (pipes) but it’s still just as bad. It’s like we’re the forgotten city now. You know the news is off it so they don’t care.”

Ms. Brock was also there to support the Affordable Care Act for her son. “I don’t need him off of health insurance. He has hypertension. So what is he gonna do?? Her sign read: “DON’T FORGET US! WE NEED SOME HELP!”



PHOTO/JACKIEWALKER-MIMMS



PHOTO/MLIVE.COM

Top: Flint, MI women show up and show out at the historic Women’s March on Washington. Above right: Melissa Mays, of Water You Fighting For, spoke at the Women’s March on Washington, telling the audience the truth about the poisoning of a whole city and that the crisis is not over. Above left: People in Flint wear this t-shirt in defiance of the EPA and others who declare an end to the Flint emergency.

‘We need a moral movement to revive the heart of American democracy’

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from a column by Rev. William Barber, the leader of North Carolina’s Moral Monday Movement and the author of a new book, “The Third Reconstruction.”

By Rev. William Barber

GOLDSBORO, NC — On election night I felt a great sadness for America. While we face a dire situation, this is not new.

We faced it during Reconstruction, amid the wreckage of the Civil War.

The experiment of the First Reconstruction faced powerful and immoral opposition. Former Confederates organized the Ku Klux Klan. They said “we came to redeem America.” They used moral messages for immoral activity. By the turn of the century, all the gains had been overturned.

This same pattern repeated itself during America’s Second Reconstruction—the Civil Rights movement.

Inside this long, sad tale lies a road map for today. I believe we are witnessing the birth pangs of a Third Reconstruction.

But just as there’s been a Moral Movement in every era to raise dissent against extremism, we’ve seen in North Carolina what a 21st century Moral Fusion Move-

ment can look like.

What have we learned?

First, we must build a movement from the bottom up. Helicopter leadership by so-called national leaders will not sustain a moral movement. The nation never changes from Washington, D.C. down. It changes from Selma up, from Birmingham up, from Greensboro up.

Secondly, we need to use moral language, like the devotees of the First and Second Reconstructions. A moral movement claims higher ground than a partisan debate. We have to begin to re-frame the conversation.

There would have been no abolition movement without William Lloyd Garrison and other people of deep faith. Without strong voices from the social gospel movement, there may have never been a New Deal. There would have been no Civil Rights Movement without the moral framework. There would not have been a critique on poverty and unchecked capitalism, labor rights, healthcare, criminal justice reform, climate change, and raising the minimum wage, without a moral premise underneath it.

Finally, we must insist on connecting economic issues with our racial histo-



Moral Monday protest in North Carolina. Moral Monday is a grassroots movement against the immoral social cuts and discriminatory actions by the state legislature.

PHOTO/KEN FAGER

ry. Yes, Trump appealed to real economic fears among working people, blowing the dog whistles of race to divide poor and working people. Any resistance to Trump that doesn’t address his divide-and-con-

quer tactics cannot offer a real political alternative.

We need a moral movement to revive the heart of American democracy and build a Third Reconstruction for our time.

West Virginia mother sends a message to the powerful

By Paula Swearingin,
interviewed by Sandy Reid

I am very happy about the protest of thousands at our state capital. Donald Trump brought a lot of unity here. On election night I felt anger not only because of Donald Trump, but also because of what happened in West Virginia. One of the most polluting coal barons—Jim Justice (D)— was elected governor. He is well known for polluting people's water supply and men have been injured and killed in his mines because of poor worker safety. Most of the people here in the southern coal areas don't like him.

I'd like to send a message to Jim Justice and Donald Trump: Although West Virginia and our nation have been divided—we will not fall short to the false promises any longer. Hear us loud and clear. We want clean water. We want clean air. We want safe jobs. We want our children and grandchildren to have a clean, safe and sustainable future.

People have fought and died in the

social justice movement to save Appalachia. The struggles have gone on far too long. Children are getting sick with diseases and illness from the water and air pollution in coal mining communities. Asthma, cancer and black lung have not only plagued our workforce. People are dying from coal. Now fracking is coming into play. That is not an acceptable alternative.

The people in Appalachia are tired of sacrificing to power in this nation. If coal mining ends, who is going to clean up the mess? The Appalachian Mountains are the birthplace of rivers. Our sacred life force (water) is left in polluted conditions comparable to what it would be in a third world country. The Cherokee Nation settled here. Most of my lineage is Cherokee. Our sacred places have been blown to bits with dynamite because of a destructive mining practice called Mountaintop Removal. Nobody's cemetery or burial grounds are safe in areas where there is mountaintop removal. They will blow them up with dynamite and have no

respect for our loved ones that we laid to rest. The only protection to burial sites and cemeteries is if they are registered with the state. Then the coal industry has the ability to blast around them, leaving families to ask permission to visit their loved ones surrounded by a barren moonscape with the escort of guards.

Everything that is of value to us has been unjustifiably taken away. There is irreversible damage to our water, health, heritage, land and communities. The platform for genocide laid here has spread all over the nation. My ancestors settled here before the coal industry did. They have more than worn out their welcome. Appalachia stands with Standing Rock, Flint, Alabama and everybody else in the nation dealing with the same struggles we are. We are ready to rise as a nation and stand together and actually make America great again. (To be continued.)

Editor's Note: Paula Swearingin is a leader from Appalachia and the mother of two children.



An unprecedented 3,000 people came out for the Women's March in Charleston, West Virginia. PHOTO/CHAD CARPENTER

The Truth About Fracking—part 2

Editor's Note: This article is continued from the January 2017 People's Tribune. The first part explained the corporate origin of "fracking" for underground natural gas, a process that is exempt from environmental laws that protect the public.

By Bill Bunting

Not only is fracking unsafe and secret, it is often done by major water supplies. When the chemically induced water is retrieved – and only about 30% is actually brought back – it is reinjected into the ground because it is too toxic to reuse for any other purpose.

In places like Oklahoma, this causes earthquakes and contaminates water tables. In other areas, where they do not reinject it, they use evaporation ponds. These are plastic lined ponds that allow the water to evaporate and the chems to stay. But many of the chems are dispersed into our atmosphere along with the water. This sludge is then reinjected into the ground.

Fracking also releases methane. This methane, as they claim, is trapped underground and does not affect the water table. Yet where fracking is done, millions of people see their tap water catch fire. They become sick from methane poisoning and this has even taken out whole herds of cattle and other farm animals all across the world where they frack.

The main concern I have and millions of others have, is that this fracking is not used for a new fuel source, but for control of our water. If water is contaminated, it comes under control of FEMA



ART/BRANDI MEROLLA

or the EPA – that is, the government. It then becomes theirs by attrition. And, as with the leasing of our national forests to the energy companies, the rights to this water are also sold to other corporations such as Nestlé, which, for the record, has said that water is not a right but is a commodity to be sold.

Now do you see our concern?

When you see an oil spill from a train wreck, or chemicals spilled into a river from pipelines or rail systems, you will see the government take over that water supply and even the land around it. And with fracking being exempt from the law, they can do it where they wish, damage the earth and water, and control it through FEMA or the EPA.

At this time in our history, when we see water protectors out West fighting for

Save the Earth from the corporations

From the Editors

In a single day, Trump green-lit the Dakota Access and Keystone XL Pipelines, which threatens the land and water for millions of people while making billions in profits for energy corporations, and put a freeze on Environmental Protection Agency spending which includes climate change research, water safety studies, and environmental disaster response and cleanup.

Even before the Trump presidency, our environment has been under attack by the corporations. In Standing Rock, we see that government is serving the oil corporations and banks, using militarized violence against water protectors who are protecting their drinking water and the water of millions downstream. In Flint, the corporations in unity with government stop at nothing to completely control and extract profits from everything public, poisoning the water of a whole city. The billionaires will destroy the planet and the people to preserve their wealth, profits, and power, even as the ecology and economy faces collapse.

Corporations are taking over America. The energy industry is being nationalized on behalf of the corporations: the government, which the energy industry controls, guarantees its profits by makes laws to allow the raping of the land. The whole of government, police, and military are part of the apparatus of control that they use to guarantee corporate control. The merging of corporations and government are the political and economic foundations of fascism.

We need a government that serves the people. We need government to take over the corporations and run them in the public interest. This is a fight for the fundamentals of all life: clean water, air, and earth. We must demand a government that will take over the corporations and guarantee they work for all of society, not the profits of the few.

water, maybe now you can see why they do. Maybe now you can see that governments take care of corporate interest before they take care of ours. And these interests are now for water and land since they already own the food. And by controlling the very things we need just to live, they control us.

So, please, research and educate yourself on fracking and pipelines. I am

sure that, as the bright people you are, you will see where this is going and join the growing number of people who see this as an attack on us as well as on our planet.

I have always said if it is not good for the planet, it is not good for us. In these days of greedy corporate rule, I think that is a good way to look at what is going on.

The battle ahead for healthcare

By Retirees for Single Payer Health Care, Detroit, MI

DETROIT, MI — In the words of Health Care for ALL Oregon in their December 2016 mailing:

“We spend more per person on healthcare than the next 10 biggest spending nations. You’d think we’d have better healthcare outcomes. We don’t. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has done some good, but it hasn’t made us healthier. It’s too expensive, too complex, and too bureaucratic. It’s been a gift to the medical-industrial complex.”

In 2003, U.S. Representative John Conyers, Jr., introduced a bill in Congress called the United States National Health Care Act (HR 676). He has introduced it in every session of Congress since. Today it is called the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act (HR 676).

(The purpose of HR 676 is to Nationalize Health Care Access in this country, (meaning that the government guarantees the people get healthcare. Google HR 676 for more information.)

In 2008, then presidential candidate Barack Obama campaigned on Medicare For All. After taking office in 2009, President Obama turned his campaign promise over to Congress to implement. Instead of Medicare For All, Congress passed the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 and President Obama signed it into law on March 23, 2010.

In 2009, U.S. Representative Tom Price introduced the Empowering Patients First Act (HR2300). He has reintroduced it in every session of Con-



Protesters fight for healthcare at the women’s march in San Francisco. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

gress since. Today it is the bill that is the heart of the “new” government’s attack on our healthcare. It repeals the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and repeals all the healthcare provisions of the Health Care and Education and Reconciliation Act of 2010.

The Empowering Patients First Act (HR2300) also establishes a Cadillac Tax on the employee who has employer provided healthcare insurance. It establishes tax credits (\$1,200 to \$3,000) for individuals who buy their own insurance. And it encourages all individuals to open a Health Savings Account (HSA) by offering a \$1,000 tax credit to anyone who has or opens an HSA.

It is no wonder that Representative Price has been chosen to run the Federal Health and Human Services Department by the “new” government. Since the “new” government does not have the 60 votes in the Senate to out-

right repeal the Affordable Care Act, their supporters in Congress will proceed to defund parts of it. The big target for this strategy is the Expansion of Medicaid provision (to low-income people.) It is one of the few successful parts of the ACA that we must defend and fight for in the states.

Over the next few months we must insure that U.S. Representative Conyers reintroduces the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act (HR 676) bill in the House of Representatives. You can contact him through this website, Members of the U.S. Congress/

The same holds true for Senator Sanders. He must introduce the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act as a companion bill in the Senate. You can contact him through the website of the Members of the U.S. Congress.

African American History Month 2017: Building a society of true equality

From the Editors

As we celebrate African American History Month, 2017, millions of Americans continue to “baptize” President Trump with sustained, massive protests against his racially divisive rhetoric. Some of those protesters correctly decoded Trump’s rhetoric by carrying signs that read that what Trump is really saying is: “Make America hate again.” On the occasion of African American History Month, let’s look at the past that Donald Trump, and his billionaire class, want to take us back to. And most importantly, let’s draw lessons from that past that will help our movement today.

In the year of 1640, three indentured servants, “Victor, a Dutchman, the other a Scotchman called James Gregory,” and “the third being a Negro named John Punch,” escaped from their master. When they were captured and brought to court, they received “the punishment of whipping and thirty stripes apiece.” In addition, the two Europeans each had their indentured service extended four extra years. However, John Punch, the African, was sentenced to indentured servitude, “for the time of his natural life.” (Source: McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia*, P. 468. July 9, 1640—Pun-

ishment for Runaway Servants.)

There was no statute in British Common Law causing the court to make this decision. But the effect was clear. Those men entered that courtroom united by bonds of class and left with those bonds effectively torn apart.

The slave owning ruling class of 1640 feared that any cooperation between African and European slaves would lead, not just to running away, but open rebellion. They solved their problem that very same year by passing the first laws mandating slavery as the permanent condition of Africans. These laws would later spread throughout the colonies.

The American Revolution,

Voices in the fight for healthcare for all

Editor’s note: What follows are quotes from participants at the recent NYC Single-Payer Strategy Conference: *Building the Opposition: Fighting for Healthcare Justice in the Era of Trump.*

By Rita Valenti

ATLANTA, GA —

“The coming attacks on Medicaid, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) plans, veterans’ healthcare and even employer-based plans must be opposed. While some mainstream organizations will fight to defend the status quo, we must ‘play offense while playing defense,’ fighting back in a way that acknowledges the inadequacy of the current healthcare system, and calling for an universal, equitable, and affordable solution: Medicare for All!”

— Single-Payer Strategy Conference, January 2017

Scores of ‘healthcare horror’ stories were shared at the January strategy conference *Fighting for healthcare justice in the era of Trump*. Some testimonies were unimaginably painful like the one from the woman who spoke of her 21-year-old nursing student daughter dying in her arms from a diagnosed blood clot after being turned away without treatment from an emergency room. This testimony along with stories from Standing Rock, Flint, Michigan, and many more punctuated the gathering convened by Healthcare-NOW, Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare and One Payer States in New York City.

The standing room only crowd of nearly 500 healthcare activists were working through their own collective trauma, angst, and outrage about the national election results and cabinet choices that position rabid foxes in the proverbial chicken coop of critical government agencies, especially the nomination of Tom Price to Health and Human Services (HHS).

It was clear that the only way out of this nightmare was to go forward on the offensive and demand that the government guarantee healthcare for all! Everybody In and Nobody Out!

Plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), gut Medicaid through grossly inequitable block grants and end Medicare through a privatization voucher scheme are terrifying and threaten the lives of millions. The Strategy Conference vibrated with a heightened sense of urgency that repealing, gutting and privatizing these systems must be immediately replaced by a publicly funded government secured single-payer national health insurance system that guarantees access to the healthcare people need regardless of immigration status, gender, income, age or any health condition.

From tactical action plans to seeking long-range strategic alliances with those most dispossessed and in the crosshairs of the fascist administration, a transformative vision for a just and equitable healthcare system is being fought out and it demands that the government, not unaccountable corporations, be responsible for guaranteed, universal, comprehensive healthcare for all!

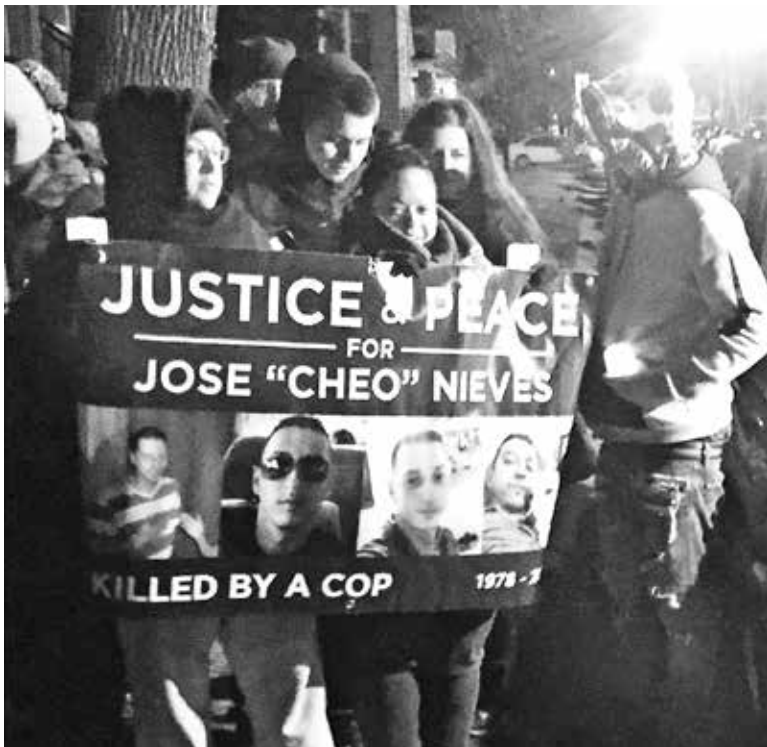
the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement were all leaps in American history. And yet we are still haunted by the legacy of slavery.

As Americans, we have been conditioned by our ruling class to be race conscious instead of class conscious. Unequals could not unite. However, there is a permanent economic equality of absolute poverty growing, most obviously seen among the homeless and those not far from it. They possess neither property nor privi-

lege. There, unity is most possible. Their survival depends on it.

Trump and his corporate class friends are trying to resurrect the ghosts of racial hatred handed down by the slave masters of old. Their goal is the same: end resistance and rebellion. As humanity enters the next historical leap brought on by the technological revolution, let us forever bury those ghosts with class unity and build a society of true equality where the human needs of all are met.

End police terror: Justice for Jose ‘Cheo’ Nieves



Family and friends of Jose Nieves gather at a community memorial and vigil in the Hermosa neighborhood of Chicago near where he was gunned down by an off duty policeman. PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

By Leslie Willis and Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — One hundred people huddled together in the severe cold, gaining little comfort from the tiny candles cradled in their hands. The Hermosa neighborhood held a vigil for Jose “Cheo” Nieves, called by Parents for Peace and Justice, a Chicago group formed to organize for an end to violence and for justice for the families of youth cut down by shootings in the streets.

Mr. Nieves, 38, was moving furniture with his girlfriend when an off duty cop, Lowell Houser, gunned him down in the street. The police in the Chicago area have killed two unarmed young men in the first week of 2017. Apparently, all the calls to clamp down on violence by the Mayor and the police department do not pertain to police officers. In the

media, Chicago is now characterized as home to criminals—a city gone wild with lawlessness. Working class families and youth are characterized as gangbangers. If a cop kills an unarmed person, they are seldom punished. These killings are often recounted in the news as if an “investigation” will exonerate the police and prove that the individual must have done something to “deserve” being killed in this fashion.

Why are the police a law unto themselves and not held accountable to the citizens? The police are used to enforce the ever-growing inequality in the city. With jobs disappearing because of new technologies, our neighborhoods are falling into decay or turned into moneymaking projects for property developers. Our struggling neighborhoods, deprived of good jobs, resour-

es and funds, are being ruled more and more by an “iron fist.” With such police terror on top of the poverty, one way or another, working class families are being driven out of the city.

Community people, forced to grieve yet another loss— have had enough! They call for an end to police terror and justice for Jose “Cheo” Nieves!

Breaking news: As the *People’s Tribune* goes to press, Officer Lowell Houser has been charged with murder. This charge comes in the midst of a scathing report on Chicago police violence made public by the Justice Department. This charge of murder is a step in the right direction, but we will have to remain vigilant until justice is served in this case, and until we end the police terror plaguing our city once and for all.

Sanctuary Cities: Defending our neighbors

By Jennifer Morales

MERCED, CA — Merced County advocates are gearing up to face a Trump administration. On December 15, 2016, about 35 members came to a presentation at the Merced Multi-Cultural Arts Center to discuss recent immigration policies and Sanctuary Cities.

Advocates are strategically planning how local ordinances can be put in place to directly oppose any inhumane policy laid out by a Trump administration. Specifically, the Merced community members want a city-county ordinance passed stating that they support and stand with the undocumented, LGBTQ and Muslim communities.

Also, this ordinance would limit the amount of collaboration between our local law enforcement and federal authorities under any federal legislation that would target these communities.

In a CNN interview with Anderson Cooper on August 25, 2016, Donald Trump stated:

“We are going to deport many people, many, many people. We’re going to do that vigorously, we’re going to go with the laws that are existing, but we’re going to have a very strong border and we’re not going to have people pouring back in.”

According to California’s Public Policy Institute, California is home to 2.67 million undocumented individuals. California’s legislature responded to Trump’s election by passing several laws that will create state-funded pro-



The mass marches all over the US expressed an overwhelming sentiment that the American people will not allow themselves to be divided by hate, and will stand united by our common interests and humanity. This sentiment is forcing mayors in cities across the U.S. to declare their city a sanctuary space for immigrants. These cities will not comply with police in rounding up and deporting immigrants. The people are saying NO to division and NO to attempts to separate us into warring factions. We are one working class and we must defend one another in the face of a police state that will be aimed at us all. United we stand. Divided we fall..

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFF

grams to train defense attorneys and public defenders on the impact of criminal convictions for undocumented individuals. Other legislation will fund programs to provide undocumented individuals with legal representation during their deportation proceedings.

Although these state measures aim to provide the undocumented community with important due process, it is entirely up to communities to monitor law enforcement. For years, states like California have passed legislation aimed at protecting undocumented individuals from unlawful detention and depor-

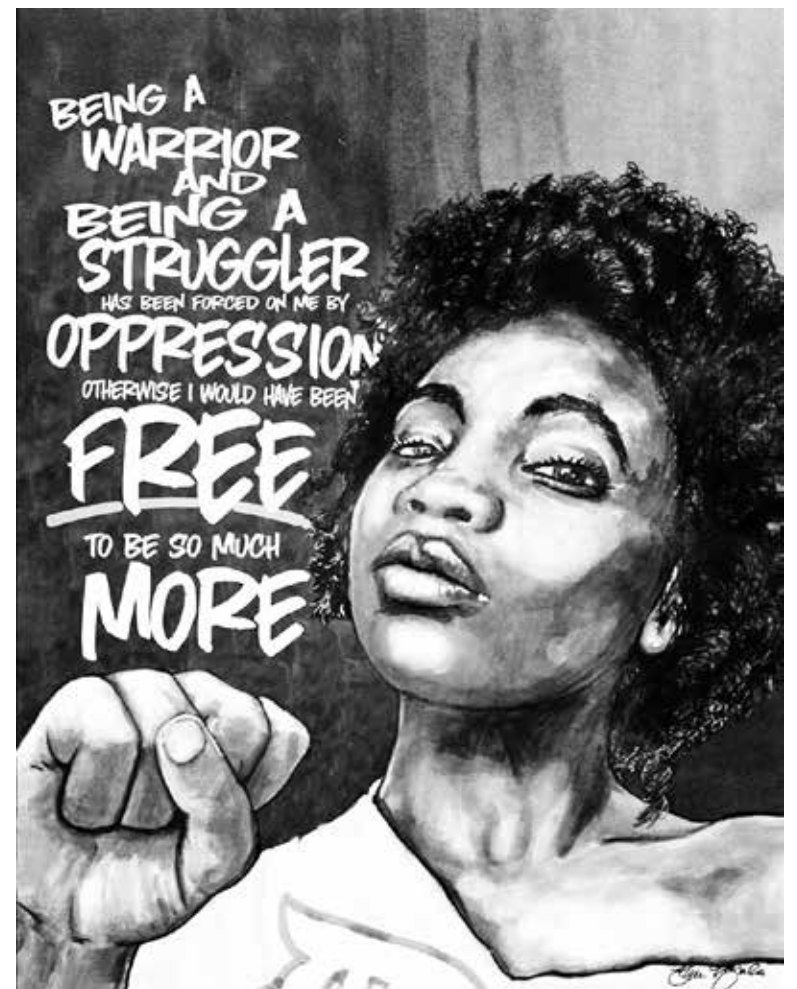
tation by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). Unfortunately, local law enforcement sometimes does not implement and/or adhere to the law and allows ICE to come in and out of their jails with no questions asked.

Declaring the city of Merced as well as Merced County to be sanctuary spaces for immigrants, LGBTQ and Muslim community members improves public safety. Saying that the city and/or county stands against the federal government will provide peace of mind to the 22,000 undocumented individuals who live in Merced County.

Muslim Ban: Another step toward fascism

In Germany in the 1930’s the Nazis united a large section of the German people around fascism by fomenting hatred of the Jews (and others.) Today we see our government following a similar path by attacking Muslims, immigrants and others. We should not let history repeat itself. If we allow sections of our population to be targeted like this, fascism will be imposed on all of us.

— The Editors



ART/EBAN MORALES

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‘Whirlpool is a dictator in Benton Harbor, MI,’ says Rev. Pinkney

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BROOKES/FREMONT PRISON, MI — The Whirlpool Corporation has committed genocide in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Genocide is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a group of people, especially of a particular ethnic group.

Benton Harbor is over 90% Black and over 60% of the people live in poverty. Benton Harbor has rich lake Michigan beachfront property and parks. The Whirlpool Corporation, which rules the region, joined forces with the government to steal the town’s property and to systematically eliminate the residents

of Benton Harbor by any means necessary.

Whirlpool is known for its leading role in the gentrification of the city. Gentrification is a process of renewal and rebuilding with an accompanying influx of affluent people to a deteriorating area. Gentrification often displaces and destroys poor residents.

US Congressman Fred Upton, heir to the Whirlpool Corporation’s fortune, voted to give Whirlpool a welfare check of \$500 million to save the corporation. This shows the merging of the corporations and government. We call it fascism. What do you call it?

Whirlpool is among the major corporations that control the state legislature—which passed Public Act 4. This act turned the Emergency Financial Manager into the Emergency Manager, giving corporations broader powers to overrule elected officials and take control of cities and school districts.

Benton Harbor was one of the first cities to have an Emergency Manager, thanks to the power of Whirlpool. Emergency Managers can replace local officials, sell public property and assets, privatize public services, dismantle collective bargaining agreements and more. They are dictators in the service of the



Reverend Edward Pinkney.

corporations. The Whirlpool Corporation is a dictator in Benton Harbor.

The Benton Harbor Parks Conservancy Board works directly with Whirlpool against the people of Benton Harbor. The board is a potentially disastrous instrument used against the people of Benton Harbor. It is a non-profit organization created by Whirlpool to manage and dissolve 13 parks in the city.

Whirlpool controls all of Berrien County: the courthouses, Benton Harbor commissions, Benton Harbor city government, the Conservancy Board, even the fascist media, Herald Paladium. Whirlpool is a poster child of the post industrial destruction of the manufacturing we once knew.

As the economic crisis continues to deepen and grip America,

people in working class communities across the country, especially in former industrial towns like Benton Harbor, are beginning to stand up and demand that the government serve the people’s interests, not the corporations. As the people stand up, they come under fire from the corporate-government. This is especially true in Benton Harbor. The city of Benton Harbor and leaders of the people, such as myself, have felt the wrath of Whirlpool Corporation. We must confront the corporations.

Rev. Pinkney is currently serving a 30-month sentence, convicted without evidence of changing dates on petitions to recall a corporate backed Benton Harbor mayor.

What the corporate takeover of a town means for our youth

By Marvin Haywoodbey

BENTON HARBOR, MI — There has been a lot of strategic planning to dismantle the economy and school system here in the city of Benton Harbor. A lot of individuals have bought in to this, not knowing it was an illusion of inclusion.

Twenty years ago they announced that Benton Harbor would be a world-class city. But without education, how can people succeed? They took the skill and tech centers which taught trades to young men and women. Now there are children in the 4th and 5th grade who don’t know how to read and write. The strategic plan to take over the city of Benton Harbor was to spend \$100 million on golf courses and not let the schools get even a million.

Over the last 10 years, we had Emergency Managers (governor appointed officials who serve the corporations) come in and, instead of aiding the city, worked in conjunction with Cornerstone Alliance (Whirlpool) and the Chamber of Commerce to finish the takeover.

They shut down manufacturers that were a viable source of income for individuals in the city. Everything was outsourced—including jobs within the school system, from bus drivers to secretaries.

How is it that the city of St.



Benton Harbor youth at a protest in 2013 against Governor Rick Snyder, who put a non-elected Emergency Manager in Benton Harbor to complete the corporate takeover of the town.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

Joseph across the river functions quite well and this city is neglected for the last 20 years? I’m not in disagreement with change, but they should have educated people 15 years ago when they knew about this change. They refused to allow these children to be educated. Without an education, children don’t know what is going on in politics and government, the source of all that’s being done.

The Emergency Managers have been let go because the takeover is complete. The downtown is revamped, but the buildings are owned by private entities. The people in authority are taking areas of the city and pushing everyone out. The high school is

in the process of being relocated 3-4 miles away. How will parents with no vehicles get children to school?

They’re building corporate, world-class communities, but you have to have world-class education to survive. They will allow a few to become economically secure at the expense of the many. It’s not about helping the kids—they miseducate them and allow liquor stores to be on every corner in the city. This is not acceptable in St. Joseph. What do people do? The takeover is a done deal. We have to get the progressive young Americans to demand change. Change comes from the people.

They try to fit us into the mold of the perfect student. They try to create the leaders we already have in the new generation. But don’t they see they aren’t working with the generations now? We’re not the same.

They base things off of a number on a test that is clearly objective. They put us into sections that has nothing to do with the type of person we are. They try to create the same people our parents are by enforcing the same rules.

The system is like a faulty pipe. They leak problems until it just explodes causing everything to drown in debt and misled kids. Yes this is saying that there are no such thing as bad kids only kids that don’t know any better that legitimately show that we aren’t the same.

The system – the education head – says one curriculum for all students even the students that have learning disabilities. But we aren’t the same.

— Stephanie Johnson, 10th grade

See more poems like this at projectode.org

STUDENTS: Submit writing on education to revolutionarypoetsbrigadechi@gmail.com