

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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Sheriffs and the Special Response Team remove Keith Sadler, a UAW member, from his foreclosed home in Ohio. Keith and supporters from the Toledo Defense League had been inside the boarded up home for five days before being forcibly evicted.

PHOTO: J.D. POOLEY/SENTINEL-TRIBUNE

## WHICH WAY FOR AMERICA: Corporate Rule or Rule by the People?

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Thousands converge in Phoenix to protest Arizona's fascist legislation, SB 1070, that could affect everyone's future.

PHOTO/RUDY CORRAL

# NATIONALIZE THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

## EDITORIAL

The catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico makes more clear than ever that we have to nationalize—take over—the giant corporations, including the energy industry, in the interests of the people before the corporations destroy the earth itself with their lust for profits. To do this the people are going to have to get control of the government.

Estimates of the amount of oil pouring into the Gulf each day have ranged from 210,000 gallons up to 2 million gallons. It reportedly takes only one quart of motor oil to make 250,000 gallons of ocean water toxic to wildlife. Scientists say that if the spill is left unchecked it could destroy the world's oceans and thus threaten all life on earth.

How is it that one corporation is allowed to have such power over the rest of us? Clearly the corporations have merged with the state—the government is nothing more than an instrument in the hands of the corporations. Evidence of this abounds. Countries like Norway and Brazil require deep-sea oil drillers to have in place a \$500,000 piece of equipment that helps prevent blowouts like the one that produced the catastrophe in the Gulf. The U.S. government has exempted firms drilling in American waters from this requirement. And in the month following the spill, the government has granted to firms wanting to drill offshore 27 exemptions to the requirement that an environmental impact study be conducted. And when the U.S. Senate recently tried to consider a bill that would have increased the maximum liability for oil companies after an oil spill from the current \$75 million to \$10 billion, a single senator from an oil-producing state—Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska)—was able to block the bill.



The oil companies could easily have afforded the \$10 billion limit. In the first three months of this year, the top five oil companies amassed \$25 billion in profits. (BP, the company in charge of the rig that exploded in the Gulf, had \$6 billion in profits in the year's first quarter.) These oil companies are on the road to make perhaps \$100 billion in profits this year. It's no wonder that they jealously guard their ability to make money, and no wonder that they have the influence that they do.

BP, Halliburton and the banks and investors that finance them have made clear by their actions that they don't care about their impact on the environment or the future of humanity. All they care about is money and power. The production and distribution of energy is too important and too potentially dangerous to be in private hands. The energy companies cannot even guarantee a reliable supply of energy to us at a price we can afford.

The energy industry has to be nationalized in the interests of the people. Of course this implies that the people must assert their control over the government. With the bailout of the banks and the auto industry, we have already seen that the corporate government that rules our lives is fully ready to nationalize or partially nationalize industries in the interest of the corporations. We need nationalization in the interests of the people. The question that is more and more coming to the fore is, whose interests will the government serve—the corporations or the people?

In the long run, we are fighting to build a new society free of corporate domination, where no one is denied what they need to live and prosper. Nationalization of the giant corporations in the interests of the people—and the related fight to get our government out of corporate hands—is the next step along the path to that new society.

## PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

The People's Tribune is devoted to the proposition that an economic system that can't or won't feed, clothe and house its people ought to be and will be changed. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is the voice of millions struggling for survival. It strives to educate politically those millions on the basis of their own experience. It is a tribune to bring them together, to create a vision of a better world, and a strategy to achieve it.

We find ourselves at a historic moment as labor-replacing technology leads us on a path toward the decisive reconstruction of society. Who will win — the capitalists or the growing mass of poor — will depend on winning the hearts and minds of the people to create a society whose fruits benefit all.

We offer our pages as a vehicle for the new ideas rooted in our reality, and to be the voice of those who seek to raise the consciousness of society. Let us gather our collective experience, intelligence and commitment to bring forth a vision that changes America into a society "by the people, of the people, for the people."

**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 600 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

**People's Tribune Editor:** Bob Lee

**Editorial Staff:** Bob Brown, Shamako Noble, Nelson Peery, Sandra Reid, Julie Chang Schulman

**People's Tribune, P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, Illinois, 60654**  
e-mail: [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)  
Phone: 773-486-3551  
Toll Free: 800-691-6888  
Fax: 773-486-3552  
web: [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org)

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**Reach us at:**  
Chicago  
773-486-3551

Atlanta  
[atlanta@peopletribune.org](mailto:atlanta@peopletribune.org)

Detroit  
313-438-6115

Oakland  
[oakland@peopletribune.org](mailto:oakland@peopletribune.org)

## Why Revolutionaries Need A Press

From the Editors

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

Visit us on the web at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org)

# WHICH WAY FOR AMERICA: CORPORATE RULE OR RULE BY THE PEOPLE?

## COVER STORY

The American people are approaching the fork in the road where they must decide what kind of country they want and how they intend to achieve it. We cannot for long continue the path we are on. Five banks practically control the economy, racking up billions in profit every month while 25 million workers are unemployed or under-employed. Industrial production is declining around the world as millions find themselves unable to buy more than bare necessities. Labor replacing electronic technology in the hands of those interested only in profit is accelerating the polarization of wealth and poverty. Today, America's richest 1 percent holds more wealth — over \$2 trillion more — than America's entire bottom 90 percent.

This polarization of wealth and poverty forces polarization in society and its political life. This concentration of wealth had to come from somewhere. Part came from taking more from the defenseless poor in the form of cutting services. Most of it came from the ongoing destruction of the broad eco-



Public Education Protest in Los Angeles, CA in March.

PHOTO/PABLO SERRANO WWW.PABLOSERRANO.ORG

### Sister/Brother, can you spare \$20?

The People's Tribune brings clarity to the growing movement. It unites revolutionaries around a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it. It has no paid staff and gets no corporate grants. The paper is financed solely by our readers. We need your support to continue telling the truth.

One-time donations are welcome. If you can spare \$20 a month or more, you'll be a hero. Please make donations payable to People's Tribune and send to P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. You can also donate via Paypal at [www.peoplestribune.org](http://www.peoplestribune.org).

People's Tribune  
Editorial Board

conomic middle class. This middle class played an important role in the shaping of America. They worked in their small businesses or at stable well paying jobs. They purchased property as well as dabbled in the stock market. With one foot in the capitalist class and the other in the working class, they held the nation together, making democracy both possible and necessary.

This concentration of wealth creates privilege and privilege is hostile to democracy. Each stage of polarization chipped away at what democracy there was until today it threatens to completely destroy it.

The destruction of democracy comes through the merger of the corporations and the government. This merger isn't someone's idea. As wealth

concentrates it has to buy up the government as it buys up the nation. It is the only way the capitalist system and private property can continue.

Economic polarization is expressed politically. The ruling class would like us to think that the deepening political polarization is between the two major parties. It is not. It is between the whole political establishment and the growing, discontented mass of people who are beginning to understand they are threatened by an economic system that has turned against them.

The American people are awakening. As with all awakenings there is confusion. The people are used to listening to and following their enemy. This time, their actual conditions—losing their jobs and homes—makes

them open to other views. This is the moment for revolutionaries to boldly step forward and explain to the people where each of these forks in the road will lead. One fork—the fascist road advocated by the spokespersons of the corporations—leads to the destruction of democracy, to political repression, to the destruction of the ecology and unending war. The other fork, the road to socialism, leads to co-operation instead of competition, to peace and an orderly world where humanity can finally separate itself from the animal kingdom.

This is the moment of decision. Will the corporations take over society and run it in their interest or will the people take over the corporations and run them in the interest of society? The future is up to us.

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# INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BAKER

## A LEADER OF THE 1960S

### DETROIT REBELLION

By People's Tribune

**PT:** General, what's the overall situation in Detroit today?

**General Baker:** Detroit is deteriorating. People are becoming more destitute. Large sections of the population are just living off of unemployment. We've got fires almost every night, houses burning down, increasing the blight in the city. We've got the police killing of seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones, with half of the community really outraged. Looks like the militarization of the police is taking place. The latest figures are that unemployment went down a little bit which indicates some sections of auto are beginning to call in more people – but at \$14 an hour from \$28.

On June 14, the UAW will open its 35th constitutional convention in Detroit. This marks the 75th anniversary of the UAW. We will elect a new president, and 11 of the 18 Executive Board members will be new. So we have a whole new level of leadership coming out of this convention. The UAW membership fell 18% last year to a postwar low of 355,191. The membership has tumbled by nearly 1/2 since 2001 when the union had 701,000 members. In 1979, it peaked at 1.3 million. So it is a real crisis. I saw a figure where we had 450,000 members in 1941 and no retirees. Now we have over 600,000 retirees. The union has really been reduced in terms of its strength and I don't know where it will reach out to for growth. Meanwhile the activity of the corporations over the past four years has been tremendous. The contracts now hire at 1/2 of the rate that the older workers make. The question has been raised — is a \$14 starting wage at the Big 3 enough to afford a vehicle that workers build? No. The only way is if you have a two-family income. New employees cannot buy back the cars. Way back in the 1920s Henry Ford offered \$5 a day so workers could buy back the car. In 1914, a car didn't cost but \$500 and they were offering credit.

**PT:** Can you speak about the retirees?

**GB:** One result of the auto crisis is that the retirees greatly outnumber the active employees throughout the union. This is important because the union is now handling our health care. The corporation no longer handles it. GM and

Chrysler retirees already lost their optical and dental care. The new healthcare legislation that just passed does not restore that. Part of our fight is to keep pushing for HR 676, the single payer



**Thousands of Detroit residents fight their way inside Cobo Center trying to get applications for housing and utility payment assistance from the city of Detroit.**

PHOTO/ANDRE J. JACKSON  
DETROIT FREE PRESS

national plan. It is the only way to restore our losses, and that has to be won through a fight for legislation in Congress, not at the bargaining table.

**PT:** What is the next step in this battle?

**GB:** One of the critical things is that GM and Chrysler are both partially nationalized. We have to push forward to demand that the government nationalizes the whole of both companies and that they don't return them to the stockholders. Nationalization has to be done in the interests of the worker and the community. First of all it would mean some real financial accountability. Nationalization would offer controls over the financial handling of the company so that we could stop all of the theft of the profits going to the CEO's. Profits would be invested back into the community and to the employees.

# THE NATION THROUGH OUR EYES

By Janice L. Carolina

I am a single PARENT with 3 children... I am a productive employee with a full time job that I am on time for each day. I am a HISPANIC-AMERICAN who works hard, pays my bills and my TAXES on time. I am an AFRO-AMERICAN man who loves his family, his community, and who has lost four jobs this year...I am a renter who has paid rent on time for ten years. My landlord didn't pay his house note and now I am homeless with no rights. MINORITY...WORK FORCE, MINORITY HOMELESS (ALL COLORS, ALL DENOMINATIONS, ALL SEXES). I AM AN AMERICAN!!!

I am an AFRO-AMERICAN, HISPANIC, LATINO, MEXICAN AMERICAN, FILIPINO, VIETNAMESE, CHINESE, JAPANESE AMERICAN who simply wants to walk downtown and have lunch or dinner with my family WITHOUT POLICE HARASSMENT. Whatever happened to serve and protect? Not profile and harass and terror. I AM AN AMERICAN. I am a 401K carrier with AIG who wants a bail out for the money I lost.

I AM AN AMERICAN!!!!!!  
VOICES

Everyday... I wake up and the palpitations start, the anger, the fear, all over again just like yesterday and the day before ...

What will happen today...? Will the gun-toting, hate-spilling, Christian-Americans come after me, my children, my grandchildren, my neighbors, my co-workers? Will the gang-bangers accidentally shoot me, my children, my friends my co-workers today?

Who will protect us...? Who will fight for us...? People are shouting, carry your guns wherever you go... let me get a gun and carry it... instant death by the police, neighborhoods taken over by the National Guard.

Who will give me a bail out? Who will supplement my retirement money? What will I receive ....

I do not need my country to hand me a hand out. I'd prefer a bailout. What can we call that ....RICH PEOPLE WELFARE... CORPORATE WELFARE?

I would like to have a government credit card... that should take care of all of us for years... let me see, I have \$50 in my checking account. So, with a government credit card... I can charge trillions...

US

There are no easy solutions . Please

hear my cry!!!! Americans of all nationalities must come together NOW!!!!!! Million man marches should be surpassed by the millions of American March to the Mayors, to the Governors, to the White House!!!!!!

We must unite in multitudes, people.... The worst is yet to come...

No housing, no food, no jobs, no education... We have the power to effect change... We have an obligation to effect change...

Each and every one of us must do as the generations before us did. We must stand up as AMERICANS and let the world know this is our country too!!!!!!

Whining, excuses, not acceptable... For you... For me ... For your children... For your country... Stand up... Profiling in Arizona...One million of us should be there to say NO!!!!!!

No child left behind, substandard education for our children...passed a grade up anyway...one million of us should be at each and every school district saying no more... Don't blame the teachers. They should be with us. Pay attention. Somebody wants you and your children ignorant ...KNOWLEDGE IS POWER...thus the less access they allow us ... the happier they are.

Police and racial profiling...one million of us should be at every police department, city council meetings, across the country... saying NO MORE... We are Americans!!!!

Every single family that loses a home as a tenant or owner due to subprime loans, every credit card holder with 400% penalty and interest rates should be outside the credit card companies one million strong saying financial discrimination and "NO MORE... WE ARE AMERICANS...

This is our country... WE believe in the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Everyday without our voices ... we are losing ground... Our country is going into a backwards trend. Unless we get our heads out of our ASSES we are doomed to repeat the most horrendous part of our history...

I say lets call, fax, e-mail, face book, twitter, text and organize HUGE!!!! This is our America too. Unless we stand up in numbers...we are doomed.

My brothers and my sisters...I issue the battle cry... for us, for our parents, for our forefathers... for our children... This is our America and their America... Let's let them know...

Blessings and Power!!!!!!

# Defense of the Immigrant Is The Path to Democracy for All

From the Editors

With the escalating assault on immigrant workers—most recently furthered by Arizona's SB 1070—we are seeing not only a challenge to our morality, but an assault on democracy and the advance of fascism in our country.

problems cannot be solved under capitalism. That means they are a threat to the capitalist system and have to be controlled. And that means the corporations have to replace democracy with fascism—the outright dictatorship of the corporations—in order to maintain the system of private property and cor-



Thousands converge in Phoenix to protest Arizona's fascist legislation, SB 1070, that could affect everyone's future.

PHOTO/RUDY CORRAL

The attack on immigrant workers is an attack on every worker.

The racial profiling aspect of the Arizona law is an expression of an old tactic in America. It began with the racial profiling of African Americans. The ruling class of this country has long used the race question to divide workers along lines of color and pit them against one another. Part of what is going on is an effort to obscure the real cause of the economic crisis—to blame the lack of jobs on the immigrant worker instead of a failing capitalist system.

But the assault on immigrants is also part of the process of the development of fascism in our country. Capitalism can no longer offer guarantees to any worker. Labor-replacing electronic technology is wiping out jobs and creating a new class of permanently unemployed and underemployed. That new class is forced to fight for a new society where things are distributed according to need, not money—their

porate profit.

Today, there is a real basis for working class unity. Every worker is facing the problem of labor-replacing technology. No worker—immigrant or native born, of whatever color or nationality—can be promised a job by the capitalist system today. Every one of us is facing the possibility of sliding into permanent unemployment and poverty. The natural impulse of the workers under these conditions is to unite. To pave the way for fascism, the corporations try to turn us against one another to blunt this impulse toward class unity.

Today, for native born workers to unite in defense of the human rights of the undocumented immigrant worker is more than a question of doing what is right. It represents the struggle against a growing fascism, and the building of the fighting class unity necessary to overturn this system and create a new socialist society that can serve the interests of humanity.

## hermano

who came over a desert of his own bones  
who came thru the burning heart of his own survival  
who came to plant illegal kisses on the smallest cheek  
who died coming  
and then outlived his own dying  
to bring his decency  
into the factories of prisons  
to unlock them with his simply human  
and that was his offense  
in the place he graces  
with simple human beauty  
with his coming and being: hermano!  
y tu hermana

—Sarah Menefee

# More Cabrini Green Evictions: Another Outcome is Possible!

By Joseph Peery

On May 18, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) shocked residents of 1230 N. Larrabee by giving all 31 families left in the building 30-day eviction notices.

In a press statement, the Chief Executive Officer for CHA, Lewis Jordan, stated, "First and foremost, our job is to put people in better and safer housing. We can no longer tolerate seeing good people live in deteriorating and unsafe conditions. Anyone who has been staying inside the old Cabrini buildings cannot deny the deteriorating conditions. The families there are at risk and it's our responsibility to see that those residents are moved from that environment as quickly as possible."

Resident after resident have stated in news reports their opposition to both the evictions and the excuses for them stated above. Calvin Royal, a 53-year resident asked, "So if they don't leave in these here 30 days, they gonna put you any place they want to put you?"

**BROKEN AGREEMENTS**—What is little known is that the resident's elected representatives on the Local Advisory Council (LAC) along with their lawyers from the Legal Assistance Foundation (LAF) have been negotiating with the CHA in order to avoid these types of forceful evictions. On July 13, 2009, Lewis Jordan signed his name to a 17-point "Relocation Ac-

riod of social service.

• CHA agrees to a security plan for 1230 Larrabee and other buildings, and will consult with the LAC to address matters including proposed modification of the security plan.

• This Agreement can't be changed, modified or amended except by a writing executed by all parties.

"If the CHA doesn't reconsider these evictions," said Richard Wheelock, the resident's attorney, "we'll take them back into Federal Court." While they were negotiating with us on a voluntary move out process," Wheelock further said, "They were waiting for the occupancy to drop to a certain level so they could serve the emergency notices to vacate."

If this attempt on the part of CHA to empty out 1230 Larrabee succeeds, there will be little to stop them from doing the same thing in the buildings that remain. Private Corporations like HJ Russell, who currently manages the property for CHA, will continue to get lucrative contracts while repairing nothing in the buildings. There's simply no profit in it for them. They will allow the buildings to be destroyed through disrepair, with other companies getting contracts to demolish, rebuild or manage, etc., thus continuing the process of turning public housing into private. They intend to then start the process all over again and go after residents who have moved into mixed income units



A public housing building at the Cabrini Green project in Chicago. What should be a perfectly good building has been allowed to become dilapidated so developers can come in and build condos.

PHOTO/JOSEPH PEERY

tivities" Agreement. The following is a summary of some of the points of that agreement:

• Prior to closing any buildings in the Green Homes, the CHA will negotiate in good with the LAC any involuntary relocation of residents including the timing of any and all appropriate relocation notices

• CHA will provide at least four months of social services in advance of any of issuing 180 day relocation notices to lease holders

• If unable to provide four months of social services prior to issuance of the 180-day notices, CHA will consult with the LAC in good faith over the pe-

or section 8 with harsher measures and again new evictions, until one day there is no such thing as public housing or public housing residents.

**BUT WAIT**, this outcome does not have to happen. Marvin Edwards, the President of the 1230 N. Larrabee Building Council and Carol Steele, the President of the LAC, have both vowed to fight these evictions. If enough residents stand their ground, **ANOTHER OUTCOME IS POSSIBLE.**

Editor's note: As we go to press, it was announced that the eviction is currently on hold. People will be getting evicted. They just don't know when.

# INTERVIEWS WITH SOME U.S. SOCIAL FORUM PARTICIPANTS

The U.S. Social Forum will be held in Detroit, June, 22-26. Thousands of activists from around the country will be attending to meet one another and to discuss “another world is possible.”

## POOR PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign is committed to unite the poor across color lines as the leadership base for a broad movement to abolish poverty. We work to accomplish this through advancing economic human rights as named in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as the rights to food, housing, health, education, communication and a living wage job. We will use this experience as an educational to map out plans for our class. We will address the root cause of poverty. We intend to establish an assembly of poverty organizations.

— Cheri Honkala, PPEHRC

the situation that is attempting to crush poor people in so many ways, from utility shut offs to unemployment to the closing of schools, recreation centers, and the basic sources of life like water. Many of the workshops planned during the forum will address these issues. We look to ourselves for solutions; we are the only ones coming to save us.

We are celebrating the Mexican Revolution's 100-year anniversary with an exhibit of Augustin Casasola's photos of the Revolution on Friday, June 25 from 5-8 P.M. The title is: 100 Year Anniversary of the Revolution:



## CENTRO OBRERO

The mission of Centro Obrero is to support Detroit based international workers on issues of workplace and community justice; to assist in getting stolen wages paid, to organize a workers cooperative, to organize for mutual support and contextualizing the situation we find ourselves in due to economic factors over which we had no control, to create community and recreate family away from home. Centro Obrero came into existence in 2006 after the big marches and does not have a permanent plan of action. We responded to the moment and will continue to do so.

To be part of the Social Forum has meant that Centro Obrero has found new, youthful invigorated and creative leadership. It is a completely volunteer organization and those of us who started it are from another epoch of activism and we are mostly Chicanos. We hoped to be taken over by younger people, immigrants, combining our shared resources and talent. We could not have hoped for what we have come to be: an ever growing, ever changing youthful, thoughtful group of people wanting to work for the betterment of the community through self determination. The organizing of the forum has presented us with this opportunity.

Centro Obrero is one of four anchor organizations planning the Social Forum. We were interested in bringing the forum to Detroit because there are so many people in Detroit who cannot travel and we have a lot to say, to offer and to get from what the forum represents. Thousands of people will come to Detroit to gather and share ideas and plans and act collectively to contest



Still Here, Still Mexican Celebrating Survival, Resistance and Community in Detroit, 121 Gratiot, Skillman Branch Library. Free and open to the public.

— Elena Herrada, Centro Obrero

## PROJECT SOUTH

Project South is a leadership development, movement building organization based in the U.S. South that uses popular education strategies to build and connect organizing struggles locally, nationally and regionally. We build working relationships with organizations and networks across the U.S. and global South to inform our local work and advance bottom-up movement building for social and economic justice.

The USSF is an opportunity for communities at the grassroots of our country to connect, share information, and build solidarity across struggles. This convergence of social movement forces will develop the power of collective action to radically transform our society. It's also an opportunity for our movements in the U.S. to connect local struggles (like in Detroit) to national and global movements.

Participation in the USSF includes work toward the actual event, during, and after the event. We have already reached several of our organizational goals: we

have transferred our experiences as the first anchor organization to the dynamic current organizational anchors in Detroit; we have worked with our partners at Southwest Workers Union to develop a People's Movement Assembly process as an organizing and decision-making process at the center of the USSF process; and we have played a leadership role on the national planning level. We are looking forward to connecting with Southern partners at the USSF about building and coordinating our regional work, learning from partner organizations about how to build real solidarity between Southern and Detroit communities and continuing to develop strong cross regional work between Southern and Southwest communities.

— Emery Wright  
Project South

Top Left to Right: Emery Wright; Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign; Grassroots Global Justice

## GRASS ROOTS GLOBAL JUSTICE (GGJ)

Over a thousand of our members are caravanning and flying into Detroit from Oakland, Albuquerque, Pittsburgh to North Carolina. All are bringing youth members, undocumented leaders, indigenous peoples, single mothers and their children, elders, low and no wage workers—all excited to come learn, share and build with Detroiters, other National allies and international guests. We are helping co-sponsor workshops on building a grassroots internationalist response to the crises with representatives of the World March of Women, the Via Campesina and the Hemispheric Social Alliance. Our members are also organizing the Excluded Workers Congress bringing together day laborers, nannies, housekeepers, workers that have been invisibilized, marginalized and exploited to begin talking about a National Excluded Workers Bill of Rights.

On the heels of 100,000 marching in Arizona to repeal the racist law SB1070, the Immigrant Rights from Below Assembly will strategize on demanding unconditional legalization that does not criminalize people or militarise the border. Our members are also organizing the Environment Justice Assembly—where they will be talking about how to bring Cochabamba Accords on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth to the U.S. environmental justice movement and how we will participate in the

International Tribunal against Capitalism and Transnational Corporations, being called by Indigenous President Evo Morales of Bolivia. Our activities will culminate with an Inter-Alliance Dialogue Townhall which brings together the members of all of the 6 grassroots alliances (National Domestic Workers Alliance, National Day Laborers Organizing Network, Right to the City Alliance, Pushback Network, Jobs with Justice, and GGJ) to demonstrate the “Faces of the Crises” and announce our call to collective actions that we will be carrying out this year. And lastly, we are proud to celebrate our 5th Anniversary as a membership alliance at the USSF at the Leftist Lounge party on June 25, 2010.

One of GGJ's main strategies is to create spaces and processes that promote movement convergence and networking beyond organizations, geography, issues, political ideology and race. We believe that the social forum is an important tool to help meet that objective. Our member's consciousness has been transformed by the experiences at the social forums and we think the movement in the U.S. more than ever needs to come together to begin building that other world because humanity and the planet are demanding it.

— Cindy Weisner, GGJ

## PEOPLE'S WATER BOARD



The fight for clean, affordable water held in the public common continues in Detroit! The People's Water Board is holding monthly demonstrations outside the meetings of the Detroit Board of Water Commissioners. At the U.S. Social Forum, thousands of water activists will gather to strategize on next steps to take in the struggle against privatization and water shut-offs. Detroiters will have a crucial role to take in these discussions, as tens of thousands of households in this area face water shut-offs every year.

— Ann Rall,  
Michigan Welfare Rights Union

# To Get The Healthcare We Need: Build A Working Class Movement To Rescue Precious Resources From The Corporations

By **Ethel Long-Scott and Rita Valenti**

As tens of thousands gather at the USSF in Detroit, MI, it seems fitting to do a review of what happened to the fight for healthcare reform. Many people were galvanized with a sense of hopefulness that with the new administration the fight for a single payer for all expansion of Medicare was possible. There was after all HB 676, introduced by John Conyers, D-MI. Connecting with the existing legislation and fighting alongside Democrats who had previously signed onto the legislation seemed like a logical strategy and a strategy that had resulted in reforms in the past.

What resulted was a mandate for everyone to buy insurance policies from the very corporations people were fighting to get out of the delivery of healthcare. But, politically what is incredibly stunning about this particular reform is that it ties workers even more tightly to reliance upon an employer for healthcare at a time when employers

are shedding any obligations to provide this benefit. Healthcare remains a commodity under this new legislation and the healthcare industry many fought to remove from the delivery of healthcare remains positioned to earn even more profits. At the same time, millions will go without healthcare and remain vulnerable to the rising expense of buying insurance in order to receive healthcare.

## Mandate for the People; Bailout for the Insurance Industry

The mandate guarantees the insurance industry an additional 30 million new paying customers, paid for by subsidies from tax payers; a nice little bail out for the insurance industry. Employers will continue to shed any obligation to workers for this benefit since the financial responsibility is shifted nearly entirely to tax payers. And the government (which should represent those who elected it) aided the insurance industry in guaranteeing their continued profitability while pro-

viding next to no reform for the people.

## Political Consequences

Fighters for healthcare reform are not deterred. They are prepared to continue the fight for healthcare for all. There is growing realization, however, that this fight will need to become an independent one; independent from either of the parties of the capitalists. Without political independence, the struggle for healthcare for all will never be fought for by either the Democrats or the Republicans.

## If the government won't represent us then what is our alternative?

People will either reconstruct society and establish a government that is run in their interests or the capitalists will complete the corporate take over of the government and move toward harsher and more divisive tactics in order to maintain their rule. An independent political movement that puts the demands of the millions that have

lost homes, jobs and benefits (and the millions more facing foreclosure, insecurity and instability) at the center, guarantees that the movement for healthcare for all will not be side-tracked.



San Francisco healthcare protest

PHOTO /BILL HACKWELL

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**GENERAL BAKER**  
A leader of Black auto-workers in the 1960s Detroit wildcat strikes. Chair, Standing Committee, League of Revolutionaries for a New America.



**ETHEL LONG-SCOTT**  
Executive Director, Women's Economic Agenda Project, Oakland, California. A leader in the fight for healthcare for all.



**RICHARD MONJE**  
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**CHERI HONKALA**  
National Coordinator, Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign.



**REV. EDWARD PINKNEY**  
Leader of the struggle against the takeover of Benton Harbor, Michigan by the Whirlpool Corporation and local government.



**STEVE MILLER**  
Public school teacher active in educational reform. Speaks on the corporate attack on the "public" nature of education and solutions.



**LAURA GARCIA**  
Editor of bilingual newspaper, the Tribuno del Pueblo. Co-editor of the book, "Teatro Chicana, A Collective Memoir and Plays."



**SHAMAKO NOBLE**  
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**WALDA KATZ-FISHMAN**  
Professor of Sociology at Howard University and serves on the U.S. Social Forum National Planning Committee.



**JEROME SCOTT**  
Serves on the National Planning Committee of the U.S. Social Forum, active in social justice movement organizations.

# MARCH FOR OUR LIVES

By Shamako Noble

This is a brief update and summary of some of the activities taking place on the March For our Lives. Our caravan, which will end at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, has now traveled to over 18 cities. We've marched, auctioned off the banks, held cultural events, interviewed folks, taken documentation, posted film and video to the internet, maintained a blog and managed somehow in all of this to have fun! Here are some stories and reflections:

## New Orleans and Waveland, MS:

Recovery?: We visited New Orleans and Waveland, MS. While the demographics of both cities were different, they both had something in common. They were not being supported in their fight to rebuild or to stay in their homes. New Orleans, Louisiana's (NOLA) Lower 9th Ward is still decimated by the effects of the shattered levees. Mississippi's Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) created a cottage program that was actually beneficial to the residents of Waveland, Mississippi and other cities and counties that were impacted by the hurricane(s). After deciding they didn't want to be in the business of providing housing, they began evicting people from their homes, leveraging impossible financial situations with endless bureaucracy.

## Mobile:

In a world of big banks contrasted by tent cities, a worker stands up among the silent to tell the truth about exploitative conditions in Mobile, Alabama. A contractor hires homeless folks to work in asbestos filled conditions for five dollars an hour. A trip to OSHA and a phone call later, the contractor's lawyer is attempting to settle. The worker speaks of the ridicule and lack of support, along with threats and intimidation he faced when it was discovered that he was going to OSHA. The investigation is ongoing and looks favorable for the workers at this time.



Nashville is devastated by flooding. About two thousand homes have been identified as damaged. About 150 homeless people living in a tent city lost everything.

PHOTO/PPEHRC

## Nashville:

A few days after the storm, families, friends and scores of volunteers began clearing out the homes of those overcome by the flood. On the side of the road is a combination of memories, furniture, damaged materials and a combination of determination and sadness. The immediacy of the crisis makes consideration of the future difficult to contemplate. An 87 year old woman contemplates what it means not to have flood insurance and a large paycheck at this phase of her life. More volunteers are needed. What role FEMA and other government agencies will play remains to be seen.

## Moraine:

HBO airs the movie, "The Last Truck." This movie tells the story of a GM plant that was shut down during the government purchase of the company. After viewing the film and realizing that we were only minutes from that town, we headed over to the factory to see if we could meet any of the workers. We were successful. We are told of GM's breach of contract, of the failure of government and unions to protect the worker, and six lawyers who all agreed that a class action law suit was a sure thing, only to change their mind 24 hours later. Workers are still organizing and are using social networks like facebook to do it.

## Final Reflections:

It is hard to imagine that there is not some commonality in all of these situations. Whether Black or White, Woman or Man, we are all confronted with a truth that indicates that the deep problems that are presented by the American system of capitalism and thought is struggling to survive locally, regionally and nationally. Americans everywhere are aware of the problems. What is called for now is very aptly described in the slogan of the U.S. Social Forum: "Another World is Possible."

# POLICE EVICT TOLEDO MAN FROM HIS FORECLOSED HOME

By Sandy Reid  
People's Tribune

Keith Sadler, cofounder of the Toledo Defense League, and a UAW member, faced eviction from the home he lived in for 20 years. He and six supporters boarded up the house and remained in-

fore foreclosure starts.' I had been in contact with the bank all along and they told me they were trying to work out a plan. The next thing I knew I had to get paid up in 30 days. In March 2009, they filed a foreclosure law suit."

Keith protested the sale of his home with a sign that said, "Don't steal my



Members of the Wood County Sheriff's office and the Special Response Team remove Keith Sadler from his foreclosed home."

PHOTO/J.D. POOLEY/SENTINEL-TRIBUNE

side for five days until a sheriff's SWAT team forcibly evicted them. The Stoney Ridge Seven, as they are called, were charged with criminal trespass and obstruction of official business, "for being in your own home," says Keith.

The action gained support. "Several workers I know came out to the house to protest. We drilled a two-inch hole in the front window to run electrical cords for a public address system. That hole was our lifeline. One person put chocolates through there, crossword puzzle books, and fruit rolls," said Keith. (The group tried to contact UAW Local 12 but they wouldn't return their calls.)

Joblessness and foreclosures are growing in the Toledo area. "The unemployment rate is around 14% in Lucas County. Many working class folks who had some kind of sickness or injury on the job are losing their homes. There are a lot of layoffs. The Ford plant completely closed down," said Keith.

Keith's troubles started with an on the job injury. "I've been a factory worker for most of my adult life," said Keith. "I developed osteoarthritis in both hands. I have no joints in my thumbs and wrists. I had a repetitive strain-type injury. I was supposed to go back to work after surgery but had bad pain. A screw was coming loose from the plate in my wrists so I had to have a second surgery. I was only getting 50% of my pay through disability and got four months behind in my mortgage payments. I got a certified letter from the bank saying 'you have 30 days be-

home." At the sale, he confronted the guy who bought the home, figuring that it was the bank. A reporter asked if the bank was afraid of this trend spreading and the response was "absolutely."

The intention of the Toledo Defense League is to have other groups join to stop foreclosures. They were shunned, but this didn't stop them. "We met with the Lucas County Sheriff and asked him to call a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures. He said he was sworn to uphold the law - yet he had just been indicted for covering up a murder in his county jail! After that, I got a visit from the F.B.I. - warning me about my friends, saying they were dangerous people. I told them we had nothing to say to them and they left."

One of the group's goals is for people to start standing up for their homes and taking back control of their communities and they are calling for a bank boycott. At a recent protest they handed out flyers to State Bank & Trust customers. This brought out the President, John Gathman. "They claimed to own part of the sidewalk and harassed us to get off their property. The police were called at least five times but no one was arrested or even warned by the police. Mr. Gathman even claimed we forced his wife to take a flyer while waiting for a red light. Photos are on our website: DefendToledo.org. The Toledo Defense League is going door to door, organizing. The intention is to put homeless people into vacant homes and to build a movement against foreclosures," said Keith.



# Fight For Public Education A Fight For The Future

By Steve Miller,  
Oakland Education Association,  
California

The following article is excerpted from a report to the Trilateral Conference in Defense of Public Education in Montreal.

The United States was the first country to guarantee free, universal public education. It is now moving rapidly to becoming the first country to end it. The well-orchestrated effort to turn over public schools to private corporations is a part of a much larger joint corporate-government campaign to privatize everything that is public in the United



Children at Reach elementary school in Roseville, MI, study together.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

States.

Public education in the US has always been configured to support the job market. However, in this era of computers, electronics and high-technology, routine jobs, both physical and mental, are becoming extinct. Hi-technology is no longer simply “labor-saving technology; it is “labor-replacing”. The well-organized decline in public education quickly followed the introduction of microchips in the 1970s.

## Fighting Forward

No society has ever resisted either the corrosive or the transformative effects of a new technology. The water, steam and electrical powered industrial technology of the 19th century compelled corporations to demand that society shoulder the unprofitable expense of training their workforces.

Similarly, the electronic technology that drives post-industrial economy is compelling the end to public education, at least as it has been conceived of in the Industrial Era. This aspect of technology is an objective force that operates independently of the wills of human beings. For this reason alone, it is impossible to

go backwards to the system of industrial education as structured in the Industrial Era.

The economic transformation, based on electronics, is already underway. The resulting destruction and transformation of the institutions of society is wrenching and tearing life in the US apart. The question is not whether the system will change, but how. The deeper question is what class of people will lead this process.

We have the responsibility to take the propaganda of privatization head on and completely counter it, to negate every assertion, with a new vision of the powers of the public. If you thought Big Government was bad, what do you think about a university system that is becoming an ATM for Wall Street? We can attack with ideas, we can take the offensive, we can win.

Instead of defining education as something that must serve corporations, let's follow the lead of the inspiring “Charter on Public Education”, written by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. Let's define public education properly in the way that it serves human beings, and make this the banner:

“As a community we promise to pre-

pare learners for a socially responsible life in a free and democratic society, to participate in a world which each generation will shape and build. We promise a public education system which provides learners with knowledge and wisdom, protects and nurtures their natural joy of learning, encourages them to become persons of character, strength and integrity, infuses them with hope and with spirit, and guides them to resolute and thoughtful action.”

The Charter also clearly indicates the direction we must take, “We expect: Government to be responsible for fully funding all aspects of a quality education”. ([www.charter.publiced.ca](http://www.charter.publiced.ca))

What was impossible in the Industrial Era—the transformation of society—is now possible in its aftermath, if only because there is no other way to win anything at all. Every battle for the necessities of life today—and public education is certainly a necessity—requires a political battle. Whether we like it or not, we are forced to take up the politics of power. Public education is a fight for the future and should be organized as such! Now it is possible to win.

## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL PROTEST SAYS 'SAVE OUR SCHOOLS, OR CHOP THE TOP'

By Todd Alan Price

On the corner of Washington and Clark, a throng of teachers, principals, parents, children, and others marched together, shutting down an entire Chicago city block during rush hour, sending the message to Mayor Daley and his appointee, Ron Hubermann, the Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools district (CPS): Save our schools, or Chop the Top. One of the teams of veteran teachers on the march described the tension and substance of this sprawling rally on May 25th, 2010, succinctly: “Save our schools, too many cuts. Hubermann needs to go. He wants to cut everyone from the bottom.”

Many onlookers honked in support as yellow school busses dropped off streams of supporters in front of city hall. One pedestrian, however, exchanged words, with a CPS student, asserting the rally was just a big show. The student explained that these weren't just teachers, but parents of CPS students, to which the “man in the suit” (as the student referred to him) became irate:

Man in the suit: “All of the people earning a paycheck from the private sector, they got to pay for all this stuff.”

Someone from the crowd joined in:

“We all pay taxes!” Another cried: “Tax the corporations! (A recent study indicated that for the top corporate executives, barely 15% of their income goes to taxes!)”

A union representative spoke about who would really be hurt given the budget cuts: “It directly affects the kids. We need to work together to really fund human capital and the kids who go along with it.”

And hearing from the parents, the concerns mirrored one another. This from one parent, hoisting her child on her shoulders above the crowd: “We don't want to see a 37 to 1 ratio. Teachers do a great job, and we support them!” And from another parent: “We're from East School. The children should be the priority in this country . . . they're trying to put 35 students per classroom!”

I asked the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President, Marilyn Stewart, for the union's position on Hubermann's plan: “Small class sizes are better for students, especially minority students. When you have larger class sizes, teachers cannot give students the individualized attention. Our schools need smaller class sizes to be effective.” Stewart took a shot at the CPS leadership: “They have administrators who aren't even educa-

tors running our schools, it's absurd.” She was followed by Leroy Smith, Chicago full time bus driver, representing the displaced Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), who joined the march, shouting “Save our ride, save our schools!” He made these observations: “We are laid off CTA workers. We're out here joining forces with teachers and fighting their fight. First we lost parking, then we lost meters. Now you take the rides from us, now you take the kids' teachers from us. You are tearing the city down. Ron Hubermann cut and changed the routes, now instead of doing one street, you're doing two or three streets. He came in and turned around just like he did with the Chicago public schools. From CTA to CPS!”

Stewart returned with: “I have this button that says *Chop the Top*... it's from 1987! And it's still appropriate today?!”

Teachers, youth and unions have had enough of the corporate driven budget cuts that ultimately affect us all. What will it take to make public education a priority? An election to throw out the Mayor and his entourage? More protests? A general strike? One thing is for sure, when public education is under attack, what do we do...act up, fight back!



Public Education Protests in Los Angeles, CA.

PHOTO/PABLO SERRANO  
[WWW.PABLOSERRANO.ORG](http://WWW.PABLOSERRANO.ORG)

# As the Poor Get Poorer Look for Brutalizing Police to Become The New ‘Buffer’ Middle Class Set to Protect the Rich

By Davey D

*Editor's note: The following is part of an article written by Davey D. Part I is in the May, 2010 edition of the People's Tribune.*

For the overwhelming majority of people in this country, getting a nice house and a white picket fence was the goal. Forget being a land baron, just give me a small piece of the pie and I'm straight is how most people thought. Become Middle Class and issues of inequality, injustice and the existence of an underclass would be swept under the rug. We saw this with poor whites who became working class and would show a disdain for Blacks and Browns shooting for the same goals. It was the outspoken voices of the so-called working and Middle Class who shitted on things like affirmative action and welfare. We even saw this amongst Middle class Blacks and Browns who would buy into what has often been described as the illusion of inclusion. The need to continue to struggle for total freedom and equality was abandoned by many 'who got theirs' who would then turn around and arrogantly chastise those who didn't make it.

But as we can see that illusion has all but crumbled and for those who were happy being middle class, the reality has sunk in that they to are not only poor, but they may now be a part of this expanded permanent underclass. This realization is setting in for many as they've seen their 401K's tank, their credit completely ruined, overwhelming mounting debt that



Davey D.

they can't get rid of thanks to new and more stringent bankruptcy laws designed to protect the rich, sky-high school tuitions and jobs permanently gone while more and more workers are being told they are too old or too irrelevant for today's youthful and politically dumbed down job market. Today in 2010 we've seen a collapse of the Middle Class. It's either you're rich or poor. Very very few are in between. Those who are holding on desperately are willing to do whatever it takes to avoid the plight of those around them. Enter the new Middle class.

Private 'security' outfits like Blackwater are increasingly being used to be a buffer between the rich and poor.

To protect themselves from the 'Tyranny of the majority' we are now seeing the formation of a new buffer class made up of law enforcement. Police, prison guards, Border patrol, ICE, private security firms like Blackwater or whatever name they now go by, IRS agents etc... Those who are willing to smash on 'their own' are finding they can escape being part of this permanent underclass by joining up. We're hearing about the formation of more and more gated communities and private police forces being used to patrol them. We're seeing this phenomenon in areas where gentrifica-

tion is taking place and there is concern that newcomers may have to endure the anger of displaced residents.

We're also hearing about how private police forces are being used to 'supplement' supposedly beleaguered police departments. Journalist Jeremy Scahill noted this awhile back with Blackwater mercenaries who has been investigating. What took place in New Orleans during Katrina with them holding down empty hotels, while poor people around them desperate for food and shelter were forced away, seems to have just been a test run for what will soon be commonplace.

Adding to all this is the increasing number of egregious incidents of police brutality. First, many of these incidents seem to be more brazen. It doesn't seem to matter that incidents are caught on film as is shown in the video below. Here a police officer from a Chicago suburb ruthlessly clobbers a driver over a dozen times. The passenger was already tasered.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8WCEAIcaT0/>

Such incidents also seem to be taking place beyond the confines of the hood where police suppression has been an everyday thing. What took place with innocent students many of them white during the G20 Summit at the University of Pittsburgh is one of the more glaring examples. Having experienced being tear gassed and seeing

out of control police running into dorms whupping on students while pursuing 'fictional' anarchists was eye-opening. It suggested that it did not matter that students from this prestigious university who are generally heralded and cuddled by the city were gonna be shielded. Police came after them like there was no tomorrow and left many of us—this is just the tip of the iceberg. Look at what happened to students in California protesting fee hikes. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etv8YeqaWgA/>

In this video notice the officers of color seem to be going off the most. Also note how many people seem to cheer the cops on in the comment boxes. They praised the cops for smashing on students protesting 40% fee hikes at a time when everyone is losing jobs. What sort of backward thinking is that? The type to prevent the 'tyranny of the majority'.. Something to ponder.



**Hip Hop Congress (HHC) has partnered with the People's Tribune to connect Hip Hop and other cultural movements to practical struggles all over the U.S. For more information on how you**

**can get involved, please visit [www.hiphop-congress.com](http://www.hiphop-congress.com).**

**— DLabrie, Page Editor  
Email: [dlabrozia2005@yahoo.com](mailto:dlabrozia2005@yahoo.com)**

## Community must stand up to Whirlpool, Cornerstone, And Berrien County

By Lenette Evans

On May 25 as I was driving along beautiful Silver Beach in St. Joseph, Michigan, I stopped in front of the beach to take a picture of the sunset. I had not been there two or three minutes when a police officer in a gold vehicle pulled up behind me to try to give me a ticket.

I went around the block to see what he was up to and there were two other people who had stopped along the beach. This was through the week and not on a busy weekend where every side street and parking space was taken. There was hardly anyone at the beach. The police officer gave one guy a ticket for \$15 and a guy in front of him turned into a driveway and therefore the officer did not give him a ticket.

Two days later, I was down at Silver Beach. The land is no doubt owned by Whirlpool and so now they are charg-



**New "Pay to Park lot" recently added in Berrien County Beach area.**

PHOTO /LENETTE EVANS

ing people \$5 for parking in the lot at the corner of Elm St/Lions Park Drive. There are three huge blue and white signs in the parking lot that say:

ATTENTION—This Is A Pay To Park Lot

Daily Parking Fee Is \$5.00

Thank You For Visiting

People do not get delusional about what you think Whirlpool does for this community. They DO ABSOLUTELY no good for Berrien County. They have stolen land from Jean Klock Park only to build a stinking Jack Nicklaus golf course and to entertain the Whirlpool executives and the rich Chicago people who vacation here.

People we need to stand up in our community and fight against Whirlpool, Cornerstone Alliance, and Berrien County and its corruptness in our community.

Berrien County is building condos in downtown St. Joseph, Michigan, but where do they expect people to park? Locals have a hard enough time parking when tourist season breaks open. They are screaming for a parking garage but guess what taxpayers ..... YOU will be paying for it, not the tourists. Tourists can park their cars along the bluff and

on State Street downtown and take all their beach gear to the beach and do not have to pay a dime. In the meantime locals drive around and around downtown St. Joseph to find parking to shop or to go to Beachside Deli, Pump House Grill and other restaurants to eat. THIS IS NOT FAIR LOCALS.

We need to bring justice and peace to a community that needs Jesus Christ. All the building and tearing up of land NEEDS TO STOP. We are in a huge recession and this is not benefitting the locals who are native to this community and when there are NO JOBS available around here at all.

*Lenette Evans  
Saving Souls Ministries  
269-876-1848  
[Savingsouls1@yahoo.com](mailto:Savingsouls1@yahoo.com)*

# How Can the Homeless be Foreclosed Upon?

By John Slaughter

Atlanta—Unbelievable, but true. Imagine that you lose your job and soon after, your home is foreclosed upon and you find yourself out on the streets. Because you have nowhere else to go you wind up at the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless shelter at Peachtree and Pine. Now you find yourself facing eviction from the homeless shelter, along with the 500-700 men like you who share the shelter every night! 15,000 people who over the past year have used the facility will now have

no place at all to lay their heads. This is taking dispossession to new depths of absurdity.

The Homeless Task Force has seen their funding cut off as a result of a systematic campaign by the downtown corporate interests in partnership with the city administration. The Task Force has been fighting the city and standing up for the homeless and the poor since the efforts made during the 1996 Olympics to “sanitize” downtown Atlanta and to sweep the homeless off the streets. It has resisted the demolition of all public housing in Atlanta, and it has stood

against the criminalizing of the poor and homeless with the passage of a series of Quality of Life ordinances.

The Metro Atlanta Task Force has now gone into federal court to charge the city/corporate partnership with “tortious interference” – illegally moving to cut off funding for the shelter, leading to the foreclosure of the property and the eviction of the homeless. The developer who has taken over the notes on the facility immediately moved to foreclose.

For some time now, with the funding cut off, the homeless themselves have admirably been running the shelter for no pay. The businesses in the neighborhood surrounding Peachtree and Pine say they want the shelter gone because it is a magnet for crime. The question, though, is who are the real criminals? Central Atlanta Progress, the Downtown Improvement District and the city government of Atlanta are the real partners in crime. It is a moral outrage.

Anita Beaty, the embattled director of the Peachtree and Pine Shelter, along with her board, the homeless occupants and many community supporters, vow that they will not accept the foreclosure, they will resist eviction, and they will remain. This is their home, and as long as there is a need, they will be there.



Supporters at the rally protesting people being evicted from the homeless shelter in Atlanta.

PHOTO /JOHN SLAUGHTER



Supporters at the rally protesting people being evicted from the homeless shelter in Atlanta.

PHOTO /JOHN SLAUGHTER

## Risky Business

By Eric Sheptock

Local activists in Washington, D.C. have been trying to organize direct actions around the human right to housing. We had hoped to be part of Take Back The Land's month of action in May, but knew that we didn't have enough lead-time to organize the effort. So we aimed for June.

ONE DC (Organizing Neighborhood Equity) has offered its space and has facilitated many organizing meetings. We've had people from the Ruckus Society, Take Back The Land and the Center for Constitutional Rights, (CCR), do trainings on tactics, strategies and people's first amendment rights.

However, our path has been full of pitfalls. In April, lawyers from CCR in New York City advised us on the legal consequences of our planned actions. They tried not to discourage us. But the information has caused many people to have second thoughts about doing the planned takeover of a vacant lot that is owned by the city and which the mayor had previously planned to put some affordable housing on, only to eventually break his promise.

People who do civil disobedience (moral obedience) in Washington, D.C. usually only spend a single night in jail.

So long as the civil disobedience is the only “crime” that anyone in the group has committed, everyone usually gets the same charge and is released the next day. However, there are circumstances such as prior felony arrests, too many C.D. arrests and being on probation or parole that can cause certain individuals to receive longer sentences than others. Undocumented people who get arrested run the risk of being deported. Those receiving government benefits such as food stamps, welfare checks, public housing or SSI could lose their benefits by being arrested. All in all, those who stand up to the government run the risk of losing what little bit they have, thus adding insult to injury.

The neighborhood which ONE DC serves and which we hoped would be ground zero for our right to housing campaign is a poor, Black neighborhood. As such, it has more than its fair share of people who receive public benefits and of those with prior arrests (unjust as they may be). Involvement in the direct action might thrust them from the frying pan into the fire.

We support the concept of involving those from the affected community in a direct action that is meant to benefit them. However, the Black community of D.C. is understandably quite reluc-

tant to get involved in social justice and direct action. The result is that most of those who fight against the gentrification of poor Black neighborhoods are lower middle-class whites. While all supporters are welcome, we want at least a simple majority of those involved in the action to be from the affected community. That's easier said than done.

Presently, our plan is to have a block party in July, during which we do a political teach-in and publicize the current housing crisis. While the block party promises to draw hundreds of people, we hope to find a subset of that group who can risk arrest and help us to make demands on our local government through direct action.

And so the story goes. We've faced many obstacles; but, through it all, we are finding the right fit for D.C. I often ask people: “Why is it that we protest according to the rules of the oppressor whom we're against???” I know the answer. It is because people don't want to risk making their lives even less comfortable through jail or loss of public benefits. The powers that be know this and use it to keep us at bay. We've all become as Pavlov's dog.

*Eric Jonathan Sheptock can be reached at (240) 305-5255.*

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# BENTON HARBOR, MI

## What's Behind Racism in Benton Harbor?

Workplace racism and sexism is out of control in Benton Harbor. Kitchen Aid, one of America's most racist corporations, and part of the Whirlpool Corporation, has been named presenting sponsor of the Senior PGA Championship, the most



Rev. Edward Pinkney.

PHOTO /DONATED

historic and prestigious event in senior golf. The sponsorship will extend through 2014 and Whirlpool, which is also known for its racism, will be the official sponsor of the first ever PGA Championship in Michigan.

The golf course that the Championship will use is part of the 530-acre Harbor shores. The project is the leading force in the gentrification of Benton Harbor.

Whirlpool's racist and sexist workplace behavior is well known in this majority African-American city. Their practices create an environment where inhumane treatment is tolerated and even encouraged. Dawson Manufacturing Co. in Benton Harbor, Michigan, is also a workplace steeped in racial abuse. The latest racial attack was the hanging of a noose in an area where fifteen African-American employees could see it. (A similar incident took place two weeks ago. A man living one-half mile from the Dawson plant found a noose hanging in his backyard. (He is not a Dawson employee.)

At Dawson, Black workers are the brunt of racist jokes and sexual attacks on a daily basis. White supervisors constant-

ly touch Black female employees inappropriately. Dawson's owner, Bob Trived, simply fires female employees who complain. Trived has fired over ten employees for reporting racial attacks to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

For African-Americans living in Benton Harbor in 2010, where nooses can hang in plain sight, life is made more difficult. A culture of fear has been created in the city.

Another Benton Harbor company with serious racist workplace violations is AutoZone. Supervisor Brian Waldschmidt uses the "N" word regularly, and his Tennessee home office Supervisor, Gary Bailey, protects him from any charges. Waldschmidt told an employee of Indian descent to "start 'dressing black' so people won't think we're racist."

Why are these attacks happening? Racism has always been used by our rulers to divide the poor. Today, permanent joblessness resulting from plant closures and automation is affecting millions of Rust Belt workers. It is no accident that this vile racism is increasing at a time when unity of all of the poor for a new life is finally possible.

Demand an end to workplace racist and sexist abuse. Thank you for your effort.

Contact: Dawson Manufacturing, 104 N. Crystal Avenue, Benton Harbor, MI 49022-9266 (269) 925-0100 and AutoZone, 1681 Old State Highway 139, Benton Harbor, MI 49022-5715 (269) 925-2288

### COMMUNITY QUOTES:

It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop. We the residents of Benton Harbor must stop the evil blood sucking Harbor Shores project. It will destroy the whole community.

— Rev Smith

## What is Socialism?

From the Editors:

As the Great Recession deepens and all efforts to revitalize the economy fail, a significant number of people are beginning to think the unthinkable – the capitalist system is outmoded by the new electronic means of production and is coming to an end. Since life goes on, people are forced to consider alternative economic systems.

Confused by unending red baiting, many Americans have no conception or have a distorted idea of what socialism or communism is. The main tactic of red baiting was to make the people accept the idea that socialism and communism are political rather than economic terms. The next step was to equate capitalism to democracy and link socialism and communism to fascism. It seems that few even thought of going to the dictionary.

Our starting point has to be clarity on what socialism and communism is. The Merriam-Webster dictionary states:

1 : (Socialism is) any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods.

2 : a system of society or group living in which there is no private property b : a system or condition of society in which the means of production are owned and con-

trolled by the state.

3 : a stage of society in Marxist theory transitional between capitalism and communism.

This general dictionary description is a good place to start. It is more important to understand the force driving toward a socialist transformation of society. Today, the movement toward socialism is not based on some idea or dream. It arises from new, concrete, irreversible economic development.

The world financial crisis, the extreme, unsustainable polarization of wealth and poverty, the BP oil disaster in the Gulf all show that the concentration of finance and production is so great that it can no longer remain in private hands without destroying society.

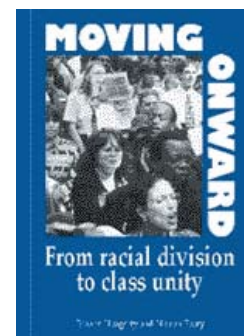
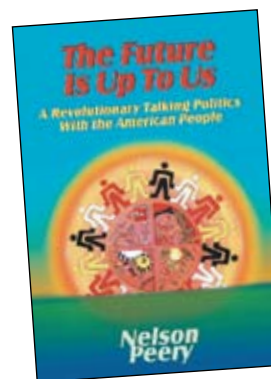
Governmental take over of these giant corporations is inevitable. The bailouts showed the capitalist class is in favor of it so long as it is done in the interest of their class. Popular support for such programs as Medicare and social security show the people are for it so long as it is done in the interest of their class.

The political question comes down to "who will control the government that controls the corporations, finance and distribution?" When the people control such a government the result is socialism. When the capitalists control such a government the result is fascism.

We are at that fork in the road and the future is up to us.

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### MASS DEMONSTRATION:

Place: Benton Harbor, Michigan. Date and Time: Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at 11:00 A.M. in front of City Hall with a march to Jean Klock Park to protest Harbor Shores and Whirlpool's hostile take over. For more information, contact Rev. Edward Pinkney at 269-925-0001 or email [banco9342@sbcglobal.net](mailto:banco9342@sbcglobal.net).