

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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18,000 organizers, activists, revolutionaries, and movement builders converged in Detroit, June 22-26 to declare another world is possible.

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US SOCIAL FORUM 2010: ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

SEE PGS 3, 8, 10

CRISIS SHOWS NEED FOR VISION OF A NEW SOCIETY

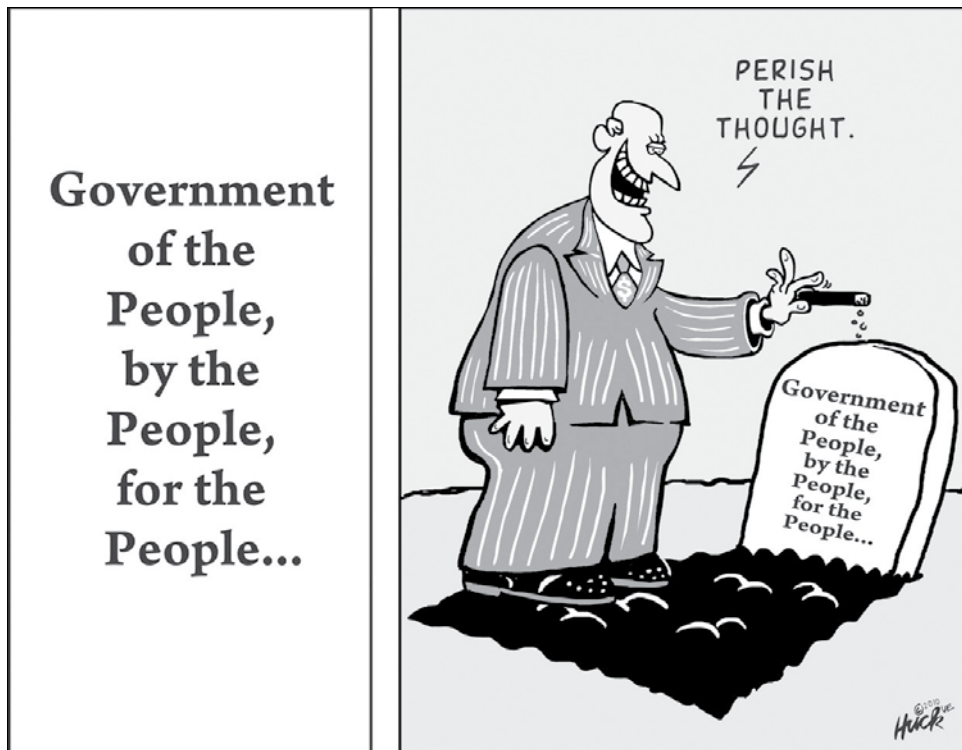
EDITORIAL

The media – the press, the Internet, radio and television — is full of statistics and commentary concerning the fragile condition of the economy. For example the weekly paper Stateline writes that “More than 15 million Americans are unemployed, homelessness has increased by 50 percent in some cities, and 38 million people are receiving food stamps, more than at any time in the program’s almost 50-year history.”

There is a new emphasis on the growing probability of a new downturn in the Great Recession. Times are bad and the threat of them becoming worse is forcing a growing number of people to take the step from grumbling to activity.

This is a crucial and dangerous moment in the revolutionary process. Why? Because the people, guided by ideas of a past period, are beginning to stir, to grapple within an entirely new situation. Consequently their every spontaneous motion moves them to the right instead of to the left. This is expressed in the explosive growth of the Tea Party movement. This contradiction has been the mass basis for every fascist movement. There is no easy resolution to the contradiction. Simply “fanning the flames” will not resolve an intellectual question. We revolutionaries face the daunting task of changing the thinking of literally millions of people.

This is not the first time that crisis has demanded that people change in order to move history forward. As our revolution for independence developed, the old idea that people had to have a king to lead them clashed with their activity in the objective movement. A worker, a former corset maker, Thomas Paine, raised the simple question, “Why



do we need a King?” The answer resolved the contradiction and moved the colonialists onward to revolution.

During the first stages of the Civil War, the majority of Northerners were prepared to fight the dictatorship of the slave owners. However, they were unwilling to fight for the abolition of slavery which was the source of slaveholder power. Their actual activity was in contradiction to their old ideas. The ceaseless propaganda of the abolitionists culminating with Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address changed their minds. With their thinking and their activity united, the North went on to win the war and preserved the United States.

What do we learn from such revolutionary history? First, that old ideas hang on after their economic and social base has been destroyed. Change can

only come if new ideas are introduced. Secondly, that without the intervention of new ideas that correspond to the actual situation, the possibility of creating a new society that reflects the new means of production is lost. Finally, we learn that it doesn’t take “special” people, nor does it take a large number of people to carry out this task. It does demand clarity, courage and dedication.

The deepening economic crisis is giving the revolutionaries a window of opportunity. We have the favorable situation where an entire nation is asking for vision and clarity. As we have in the past, we will meet this challenge. Time is short and at stake is the future of humanity.

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.

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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.”

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Deadlines for articles and art: The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 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

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

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Reach us at:
Chicago
773-486-3551

Atlanta
atlanta@peoplestribune.org

Detroit
313-438-6115

Oakland
oakland@peoplestribune.org

United States Social Forum 2010, Detroit, Michigan: Another world is possible! We're making it happen!

COVER STORY

By Jerome Scott and Walda Katz-Fishman, members of the National Planning Committee of the US Social Forum

The US Social Forum 2010 is a significant step in the US movement building process and bottom-up struggle toward social and economic transformation. 18,000 organizers, activists, revolutionaries, and movement builders converged in Detroit, June 22-26 to declare another world is possible, another US is necessary, and another Detroit is happening. We represented over 2,000 organizations from all fronts of struggle, including grassroots, poor people, organized labor, women, and more. Powerful and united in our diversity, we were majority people of color, low-income and working class, and women, and represented many oppressed nationalities, races, ethnicities, genders, and faiths. Youth were central to the social forum process, as was the queer community, and those differently-abled. We caravanned, biked, and walked to Detroit from the Mississippi Delta, from the Southwest, from Washington, DC, from Chicago, and towns and cities across the country. International delegates hailed



U.S. Social Forum Opening Day March. 18,000 participated in the U.S. Social Forum.

PHOTO/DAYMON J. HARTLEY

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.

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People's Tribune
Editorial Board

from our North American neighbors Canada and Mexico, from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Palestine and the Middle East, and Europe.

Starting with the opening march down Woodward Avenue to Cobo Hall to the closing National Peoples Movement Assembly, we shared struggles and dialogued; expressed our cultural creativity in art, dance, music, song, spoken word, theatre and film. We grappled with the political path forward in over 1,000 workshops and 50 Peoples Movement Assemblies (PMAs).

The social forum gathered as the world is slipping into chaos. The global market economy is in turmoil; society is falling apart; the environment and nature are being destroyed; and our communities and peoples are criminalized and under siege. But our resilience rises and our movement advances, pushed forward by the deepening world economic crisis. Nowhere is this more tangible and visible than in Detroit, the epicenter of these systemic crises.

These objective conditions and the

PMA process of coalescing fronts of struggle are what lead us toward the future. The response and motion across many fronts of struggle energized and informed the PMAs and the plans of action brought forward. We made some history.

The question many of us came with is: "Where are we as a movement in terms of our consciousness, vision, and strategy?"

What the USSF 2010 tells us is that the movement is conscious of the system of global capitalism as the root cause of our problems. Our demands are for our basic needs to be met, the planet to be protected, self-determination and the cessation of all oppressions and wars against our peoples. We will build our power through participation in popular and political education and collective action.

At the same time, articulating a concrete vision of society without capitalism as we move into the future is still a struggle. Even more of a struggle is the concept of political independence from the ruling class and a winning strategy for our movement.

Within the social forum and PMA

processes, the task of the movement is to consolidate the fronts of struggle. This will require building to a critical mass of people to have the political education and discussions necessary, and point the way forward along the strategic line of march toward revolution.

Lines are beginning to be drawn over whether the corporations, the government, and the drive for maximum profits or the needs of humanity and mother earth will prevail. History is on our side.

The US Social Forum 2010 marked a historic moment in the struggle toward a new society – that is cooperative, egalitarian, and collectively organized to meet all human needs and a planet safe for future generations. Onward to victory!

For more information:
USSF 2010: www.ussf2010.org

PMA process and documents:
<http://pma2010.org/national-pma>

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JUSTICE FOR OSCAR GRANT

By Ethel Long-Scott

The murder of unarmed Oscar Grant by a Bay Area Rapid Transit police officer was not just another killing of a young black man by a white cop. Many saw it that way after a jury convicted the cop of involuntary manslaughter, the lightest sentence short of acquittal. But this time it's different because more than race is involved.

Oscar Grant's Uncle, Cephus Johnson, spoke for victims of police murder everywhere immediately after the verdict.

"We knew from the beginning that we was at war with the system," he said "We as a family have been slapped in the face by this system that has denied us the right to true justice. We truly do not blame the jury, but we blame the system. The jury was denied evidence that will not allow them to see the true person that committed the murder."

This time it's different because the system is different. Oscar Grant's murder is not just another racial killing. It's a killing committed in the name of a state that is determined to protect the property and profits of the privileged corporate classes at all costs.

What makes the system different? In the United States today, corporations are pulling out all the stops to make sure that government puts corporate needs first, way ahead of the needs of working people. We see this all around us, from the Supreme Court's trashing of political campaign contribution limits to the refusal by state legislatures to raise corporate taxes to avoid chilling cuts to



Oakland, California youth protesting the verdict in the Oscar Grant case.

PHOTO/YOUTH RADIO

public services. Local governments give tax breaks to developers at the same time they cry about having to cut funds for schools, parks, and infrastructure.

Governments are so eager to turn their backs on workers and suck up to corporations that corporations and the state are virtually merged. The World War II dictator of Italy, Benito Mussolini, an ally of Nazi Germany, declared that this merger is what fascism is all about. The police "serve and protect" the new corporate elite, the 1% of the

population who own 70% of everything. As jobs disappear, employers cut salaries and benefits, public school budgets are slashed, and safety net programs are killed, maintaining public order at all costs becomes a key corporate concern.

The police recognize that the youth who can no longer count on a future are the enemy of this wealthy corporate class. Young people in California face a system that spends more on prisons than it does on higher education. They see the gentrification of cities insuring that

they have no jobs and few prospects. They understand that when Oscar Grant was shot in the back as he lay unarmed and helpless on a rapid transit station platform on New Year's Eve, 2009, it could have been me, it could have been anyone.

Their understanding showed in how they organized for demonstrations in the wake of the verdict. The crowds in Oakland were multi-racial and multi-cultural. The youth reached out to their elders, encouraging them to come, in part to protect the youth from the police, who had made a big advance show of force with training exercises for possible trouble.

The understanding of the youth also showed in HipHop Culture, the most popular form of protest music in world history. Rappers like Boots Riley of The Coup and Street Sweeper Social Club, F.A.B., Zion I, J. Stalin, Beeda Weeda, BRWN BFLO, Rebel Diaz, and far more, all recorded songs or spoke publicly denouncing the shooting.

And the rulers are not yet through with the Oscar Grant case. Sentencing of Johannes Mehserle, the officer who testified that he mistakenly pulled his gun when he meant to pull his taser, has been postponed until November at his defense team's request. That gives them time to convince the judge to give him the benefit of the doubt, furthering the injustice.

Going forward our job is to fight for class rights, in our protests and in our study, to secure justice and help people understand why this time it's different.

CHA Evicts Cabrini Families By Any Means Necessary

By Joe Peery

CHICAGO — Soon after the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) gave 30-day eviction notices to the families left in 1230 N. Larrabee, a federal judge put an indefinite moratorium on the evictions. The CHA then descended upon the building with trucks on June 29 and 30 and forcibly removed residents out in violation of the judge's order. Many feel this was done to avoid any further unfavorable rulings in that CHA was supposed to be in court the next day before that same judge.

180-day notices have now been given to the three remaining highrise buildings, 1230 N Burling, 364 W. Oak and 365 W. Oak. The question is, "What's to stop CHA from doing the same thing in these buildings that they did at 1230 N Larrabee?" At the July 1 court hearing, the judge warned CHA never to do this again. However, without any pun-

ishment, does such a warning mean anything? Certainly, any tenant who defied a court order would be jailed or fined, and immediately thrown on the street.

A case in point is that of a grandmother who lives in the row houses. She neither defied a court order nor did anything to get evicted. But that didn't stop the CHA and H.J. Russell from trying to do just that.

The following are excerpts from an interview with Betty Martin, affectionately known as Miss Betty. She is a grandmother of, as she puts it, "so many I lost count." She has lived in the row houses for 20 years.

People's Tribune: You won your case July 14. What happened?

Betty Martin: Ms. Hinton, the main manager came and brought me an eviction letter on November 20, 2009.

PT: Was she the one trying to put you out?

BM: She's trying to put everyone out. No one likes her. When she comes

through here, she always brings people with her. She's scared to walk around by herself. Someone needs to start a petition and get her out of here.

PT: Why were they evicting you?

BM: Someone used my address. When the police caught him, he must have told them he was visiting me, but he wasn't. We don't even associate with him. He's my neighbor's son, across the street.

PT: Is this part of the 'One Strike' policy of CHA where if someone visiting you is arrested, that alone can get you evicted?

BM: Right, right. First they were trying to say he was here...visiting here. He was never here. The whole time he was on Cleveland Street. He's getting himself out of trouble, his Mom out of trouble, because he used my address instead of his Mom's address. So I got a lawyer.

PT: Did the police ever come here and investigate?

BM: Nobody came, no police, nobody.

PT: Why did the case take so long?

BM: Because of the CHA lawyers. They acted like they were the ones who didn't want to drop the case. They wanted to see if he had I.D. with my address on it. They were looking for anything to prove he was here. Miss Hinton told me, if I come to court, all I have to do is say I ain't gonna let him in here no more. How I'm gonna say that and he was never in my house? Then the crooked CHA lawyer told my lawyer they'll drop the case if I go on probation. They done lost their senses.

PT: What lesson would you like people to get from your case?

BM: It's not just the CHA or the police. Sometimes your neighbor is the problem.

PT: What's the solution?

BM: People come together.

Arizona and Disunity

If we allow ourselves to be divided along racial and ethnic lines, we will all be defeated.

From the Editors

Editor's Note: The following article is an editorial from our sister publication, the Tribuno del Pueblo, <http://www.tribunodelpueblo.org>.

The signing of Arizona's anti-immigrant law (SB1070) in April, followed by the banning of ethnic studies in the state's public schools, has unleashed a fury of controversy across the country and around the world.

Cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco have launched (or are considering) economic boycotts of Arizona. The United Nations and other international organizations have condemned the law as a violation of human rights. And on the weekend of May 29, some 40,000 people from around the country marched in Phoenix in protest.

On the other hand, several states, among them Michigan and Massachusetts, are considering similar laws, alleging that they are bearing undue financial burdens because of illegal immigration. And national polls show a majority of U.S. citizens approve of the Arizona measure.

Some proponents of the law are going even further and proposing an amendment to the U.S. constitution denying citizenship to U.S.-born children of undocumented workers.

The American news media—as well as racist and right-wing demagogues—have been temporarily successful in convincing many U.S. workers that their woes

are caused by illegal immigration, even though that is not the case.

Meanwhile, both sides blame the Obama administration and are demanding that it act. Arizona governor Jan Brewer, who signed the measure into law, claims she was forced to do so because of federal inaction on immigration reform.

To date, the federal response has been unsatisfactory for both sides. While saying that the Arizona law may be unconstitutional and should not be implemented, President Obama has ordered 1,200 to 1,500 National Guard troops to the border, supposedly to protect against drug violence. And as yet, there is no administration plan for legalization.

This is happening while American workers as a whole, including Mexican and Central American immigrants, are hurting from the downturn in the economy. The good-paying jobs are gone forever. Although this has not been caused by immigrants, we ignore it at our peril.

The fate of immigrant and U.S.-born workers alike is linked by the mutual need to struggle for our daily bread. In fact, today we are driven to fight each other over crumbs, while untold wealth goes disproportionately to the rich and



Immigrant Rights protest in southwest Detroit on May 1st, 2010.

PHOTO/DAMONJHARTLEY.COM

their corporations. And all the while, our mutual enemies—the corporations and the politicians that serve them—benefit from our disunity. NAFTA/CAFTA and the bailouts of banks and corporations have put billions in the pockets of the wealthy. But they have severely hurt both native-born and immigrant workers alike.

If U.S.-born and immigrant do not find common ground to work together, their mutual fate is bleak. Robots and electronics are replacing previously

well paid jobs for the U.S. born. And poorly paid guestworker programs that separate immigrant workers from their families are the best they can look forward to.

The future is up to us. We face a common enemy. The battle today is for the heart and soul of America. We dare not lose it. If we allow ourselves to be divided along racial and ethnic lines, we will all be defeated. If we find the means to unite as a working class, a world of plenty awaits us.

Southwest Workers Union Is Target Of Armed Attack

By Maria Elena Castellanos

Editor's note: During the early hours of Sunday, July 11, someone launched an armed attack on members of the Southwest Workers Union (SWU) in San Antonio, Texas. The shooting left a young college intern, James Domingue, in critical condition. The shooting took place at the Solidarity House on the 300 block of Idaho Street, which is part of the SWU complex on the Eastside of San Antonio, and is home to several college students interning at SWU for the summer. The house was sprayed with at least 25 metal-piercing bullets from an AK-47, some of which went completely through the house's front and back walls, terrorizing the 8 people that were inside at the time. In response, a People's Tribune reader wrote the open letter below to James Domingue and the SWU.

Queridos companeros — James Domingue and SWU:

What is more powerful than the terrifying sound of bullets ripping through the walls and windows of SWU's Solidarity house? The love and solidarity of thousands of "companeros" who share your work and your dream that "... a better world is possible."

Your courage, your labor, your insight and your love energize thousands of us to fight with even more creativity and commitment because we know also that "... a better United States is necessary." Your individual and collective efforts have already taken root in the hearts of communities throughout the South, North, East and Western regions of our hemisphere.

After spending hours viewing SWU (Southwest Workers Union of San Antonio) videos and photos of your "roots of change" gardens and social justice work on every frontline of struggle—in your immediate community and beyond—we

stand in awe and gratitude for your labors. SWU is also a MAJOR mobilizing organization of the U.S. Social Forum process which held its second national forum in Detroit in June.

James, may you have a full recovery in the days, weeks and months ahead. You are a strong and remarkable young man in a community of remarkable people.

We will do whatever we can to help. We urge other organizations in the US Social Forum 2010 and in the Houston, Texas region to check out your websites and to respond with love, donations, encouragement, and clarity.

"An injury to one is an injury to all." We will defend you, and all our youth with clear, collective action in carrying out the proposals and initiatives expressed by our communities through the U.S. Social Forum process and through other forums. We unite with SWU's call for an independent investigation into the violent AK-47 shooting attack on their

"Roots of Change Jardin" volunteers on July 11, 2010.

And we join with SWU in demanding initiatives that will support the building of safe and healthy communities in San Antonio and throughout our planet. Nor will we allow this violent event to be used as a pretext for further "criminalizing our youth..." nor will we allow it to confuse nor dishearten us.

You, James, and your companeros there at SWU have created a beautiful and powerful community that blooms far beyond your urban gardens ... your courage and labor bloom in every heart that hears of your story.

Stay strong.

Standing with you,
shoulder to shoulder,
in peace and solidarity.

HOMELESS MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED IN FRESNO

By Sandy Perry

“In Respect to all, and great Honor to those who gave their best to make life for the Homeless people across the Nation a little better, and wishing them success in their continued Journey through out the universe.” – Al Williams.

This was the theme of California Homeless Memorial Day celebrated in Fresno on June 5. It was attended by the Roedding Park crew, Food Not Bombs, and other local groups as well as people from Merced, San Jose, and Sacramento. A special invocation was performed by Aztec dancers from Fresno State University.

The spirit of the event was to honor and celebrate those who have fallen while fighting for housing and human rights for the homeless. Fresno currently suffers under a “Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness”. Ten Year Plans were invented by Philip Manganio during the Bush administration, to provide a public relations veneer to distract people while they CREATED homelessness by cutting funds for housing.

Improved services by themselves



Homeless Memorial Day, Fresno, June 5, 2010.

PHOTO /SANDY PERRY

cannot end or even reduce homelessness. That requires real housing that people can afford to move into. But instead of building, California is now SLASHING affordable housing funds, because the State is stealing hundreds of millions of dollars to help finance the legislature’s multi-billion dollar tax breaks for corporations. Without housing, the entire Ten Year Plan model is

reduced to rhetoric.

Homelessness will not be solved until we break with the social service ideology that describes it as an individual problem. Homelessness is caused by a dysfunctional and morally bankrupt economic SYSTEM. It did not work 30 years ago, when modern homelessness in America began with the massive cuts in housing programs. It is collapsing completely today. Over eight million people in America

have recently lost their jobs, most of them permanently. Up to 13 million homes are being foreclosed. During earlier waves of homelessness, the numbers were not sufficient to create a movement large enough to address the issue. The millions of people being discarded by the system today are a senseless tragedy but they also contain the possibility of

a bigger, more politically aware movement to solve the problem.

A grassroots movement has to include the homeless, but it must be broader to have the numbers to be effective. It has to include the foreclosed, the unemployed, the tens of thousands without health care, the immigrants, the city and school workers losing their jobs, or having their wages and benefits cut, and others. We have to bring people together step by step, by working on plans, projects, and protests where some or all of us have common interests. We also have to build connections on a national level, because all these problems are national in scope and cannot be solved only locally.

The private market has proven it is no longer willing or able to provide for our basic necessities. We need a political movement to demand government ownership and distribution of the resources required to meet human needs. When the government takes over banks, or bails them out, it is time to demand that the vacant homes owned by those banks become public housing for the homeless and poor.

WASHINGTON, DC

A LESSON IN DIRECT ACTION

By Eric Sheptock

The direct action which ONE DC and its partners have been planning as part of the “Take Back The Land” Campaign of the U.S. Human Rights Network has begun. We had the community block party and then a march to Parcel 42 to occupy it. We hung signs and banners on the chain link fence advertising Mayor Fenty’s broken promise to create affordable housing on that vacant lot. And we had fun doing it.

People’s greatest fears — being shut down by the police before we got started and possibly going to jail — never materialized (though the threat of jail remains). A property manager of this city-owned lot stopped by to say he would have us removed the following day. It hasn’t happened.

Close to 200 people attended the block party and approximately 100 marched to Parcel 42. Some have been remaining overnight, going to work in the morning. Another group has been manning the information table and engaging the public in discussion. Dozens have been coming in the evening to spend time with the campers. Several have brought food and drink to share. Many children come by to play on the vacant lot. Some adult chaperones have even brought their children’s summer

activities groups to learn about a pertinent issue. A Georgetown University professor has made arrangements to bring her class who are studying about inner-city issues to the tent city to learn about DC’s affordable housing crisis. People have exhibited a true sense of community and are eager to learn about the issue and get involved.

Going into this, we had a two-pronged goal. On the one hand, we wanted to call out Mayor Adrian Fenty on his broken promise to put 94 units of affordable housing on a vacant lot known as Parcel 42 and to get other local politicians to commit to making good on this broken promise if the present mayor won’t. On the other hand, we wanted to do public education concerning Washington, DC’s affordable housing crisis.

We haven’t had much luck with the politicians. Nonetheless, we have had plenty of media coverage. We’ve done quite well in the public education department. There has been some crass, uninformed remarks from readers of articles on the web. Most notable is the ever-present notion that those who can afford a cell phone or Ipad should be able to pay rent. Some say that gentrification is a good thing or that tax dollars shouldn’t go toward helping the poor live in the city. On the contrary, residents of the Shaw neighborhood had praise for our

efforts.

As we were pressing the mayor to break ground on this promised affordable housing project, we received word that he has altogether nixed those plans. He now wants to erect condominiums on that very lot. We posted a banner on the fence naming the tent city “The Land of Broken Promises”.

Within the present societal structure, the government controls certain aspects of our economy and, short of revolution, we have no choice but to apply to them for certain needs — such as the funding for affordable housing. We have requested a meeting with the mayor. The mayor may be hoping for us to disband through infighting so that he won’t need to meet with us. Win, lose or draw, we’ve succeeded at publicizing and politicizing the need for affordable housing in our nation’s capital. And, while we aren’t certain that we’ll real-



People taking over a city lot in Washington, D.C. in opposition to the Mayor’s broken promises. A tent city has been constructed on the lot.

PHOTO /ONE DC

ize victory by having affordable housing built on Parcel 42, having raised people’s consciousness is a victory. We plan to remain until the police shut us down. We see this as the beginning of something much bigger — a renewed culture of speaking truth to power and of making demands on our politicians. No matter how it ends, we win.

You can reach Eric Sheptock at (240) 305-5255 or at www.ericshseptock.com.

US Supreme Court Gives Corporations The Constitutional Right To Control Elections

By Robin Yeamans

The US Supreme Court in January, 2010, declared void a federal law forbidding last-minute political attack ads by corporations and labor unions within 30 days of a primary election in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Comm'n*. Because it relates only to ads shortly before an election, the decision does not open the floodgates for corporate money to pour into elections—those gates were opened long ago. Instead, the case reflects the triumph of corporations taking open, direct control of the government and elections.

Many complain that the Supreme Court now treats corporations legally as “persons,” with the same rights as humans. The Supreme Court has long treated corporations as “persons” entitled to 14th Amendment due process (1886) and 1st Amendment free speech (1978). In reality courts elevate the rights of corporations far above the rights of flesh-and-blood persons.

When a non-wealthy person wants to affect US politics, he can use the internet (and be ignored) or take up a picket sign. To express political dissent, as at the WTO in Seattle or the Democratic National Convention in 2004, non-corporate persons had to enter fortified pens, resembling internment camps, where they could display their picket signs — far from any delegate to the

event.

To give corporations the same rights as most Americans, the Supreme Court would have to limit corporations to using picket signs, and herd the corporations with their little paper signs into pens cynically called “free speech zones” or “demonstration zones.”

A judge who okayed one “demonstration zone” (“DZ”) described it in *Coalition to Protest Democratic Nat. Convention v. City of Boston* (2004) 327 F.Supp.2d 61, 66-67:

“The ‘designated demonstration zone’ is . . . 300 feet by 90 feet. The . . . eastern edge faces the outdoor parking lot that will be used as a bus terminal for arriving and departing DNC delegates.

“ . . . Most . . . of the DZ lies under unused Green Line tracks. The tracks create a . . . grim, mean, and oppressive space whose ominous roof is supported by a forest of girders that obstruct sight lines”

The judge indicates that although directly under the tracks an adult can stand up, at the tracks’ edges “diagonal girders slope at approximately sixty degree angles to the ground. . . . [I]n practice, the area under the tracks is quite restricted by the girders. . . . [A] person of normal height could not carry a sign underneath the girders without lowering it to head level or lower. . . .” Further the DZ is surrounded by two rows of concrete barriers, and at the top of each



Free speech cage in Boston, MA.

PHOTO/TIM D'EMILIO

“is an eight foot high chain link fence. A tightly woven mesh fabric . . . covers the outer fence, . . .”

This is the DZ the judge found adequate for workers’ free speech.

In *Citizens United* the Court found the limit on last-minute ads was a virtual “ban” on corporate speech. Herding working people into grim pens is considered not a “ban” but a reasonable limit on time, place and manner of speech. This is blatant favoritism in fa-

vor of corporations.

As the economy hardly needs workers, our constitutional “rights” are crashing down while corporations’ “rights” are mushrooming. The Democratic Party’s call for restoring the limits on last-minute political ads is pathetically inadequate to address corporate control of elections. We need to take back our government.

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INTERVIEWS WITH SOME U.S. SOCIAL FORUM PARTICIPANTS

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



Ethel Long-Scott, Executive Director of Women’s Economic Agenda Project in Oakland, California

I think we ought to be celebrating that we are about the business of running this country in a new direction. In California, we have one of the eighth largest economies on the planet and they swear we have no money. The corporations & the politicians who serve on their behalf kick old ladies to the curb, put the disabled and the poor, and people with no healthcare into the streets. All of this so they can take and keep our money & resources, all so they can be richer and so that we workers can keep feeding them up to the top. It can only happen because we have bought the hype. We stay asleep. We stay divided. We allow this B.S. that ‘oh the immigrants must be the problem’ when we can see that these computers are taking the jobs. We need these computers and resources running for ‘we the people’ so we can clean up this mess that these corporations like BP are making. When they can indeed kill a whole ocean, it is time for the working people who built the wealth of this country to take it over and run it in our own interests. It is time to construct a new society based on each one of us having our needs met. We are dealing with global capitalism, with the various ways they tell our people that this crisis is on our back. In my state alone, when they say there is no money, then you know they are lying. In the same year that they took \$20 Billion out of the coffers of the people, they gave billions of tax cuts to themselves. They didn’t come and put it to a vote. They cut the backroom deals. What does this tell you? It says you have to get in the streets. We have to teach each other. We have to raise up that the time is now to eliminate poverty and take this world over, starting with this country. The people who built this country must run it to save humanity.

Maureen Taylor, State Chairperson of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and one of the groups that anchored the US Social Forum in Detroit

There has been all kinds of demonic backward ideas written about the Social Forum -- one from a guy by the name of Noel Finley. He said the Social Forum is a bunch of Pinkos, liberal thinkers, confused people that are insisting that we have social justice, equality and a world where things are nice. I am trying to look for what the problem is with that! What’s the issue? And it’s more than Republican. Don’t think this is about red and blue. This is about in and out. That’s what this fight is about. Not about left and right. This is about top and bottom. . . We need to figure out how we are going make this world into a place where you can die of old age in your bed when you’re 110 — that needs to be the goal. We can deal with all of these separate individual fights all day long. But we better be thinking, ‘somebody made the land, the earth, the water, the trees and whoever did that probably isn’t making any more.’ So we are going to have to figure out how we are going to rule or we ain’t. I’m not even talking about sharing. It’s either we are going to rule or we are not. I think that with our hands in charge, we will treat people nice. Not like what we got now. Oil spills all over the place. . . . we have a lot of problems. But, the folks that can change things are in this room, in this building, and in this city. Detroit is in big trouble. While you are here, share your best ideas. But if we aren’t able to fix this mess here, a theatre like this is coming to a place close to you.

Cheri Honkala, National Coordinator, Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign

We started the March for our Lives on April 4 and have literally been meeting with hundreds and hundreds of people across the country. This march has been a different kind of march for us. On this march we have a homeless electrician, James. We have a homeless trucker. We have wonderful people that we picked up from Chattanooga. We have a wonderful waitress. We have a homeless architect. We have somebody that made six figures on this march. It’s just devastating. We have been at over 25 different stops. We saw the folks that lost everything to the flood in Nashville. Some are here with us. We have met with sisters and brothers who were victims of Katrina first and, secondly as a result of the government. We saw homeless encampment after encampment, homeless brothers and sisters who never thought that they would ever be a part of the homeless population in this country. The root cause of poverty is capitalism. It’s a happy day because that system is being buried in this country. We are going to create a different kind of system that is about sharing. I was able to see on this march each and every day these heroes, people who are amazing. They shared their food stamps when we were going to get citations because we were panhandling for gas to get from one location to the next, slumped out in the rain, listening to story after story. We’re excited to get busy with folks here at the Social Forum.

Richard Monje, Director, Education and Mobilization of Chicago and Midwest Regional Joint Board, Worker’s United

I did steward training down in Cincinnati for some workers who work at a Xerox factory. Three of the five stewards had their homes in foreclosure. That’s just a random example. We do leadership schools. One of the women in the last school, within two months, the plant had closed and two months after that she was homeless, living with her parents. About four months later her parents were homeless and we could no longer find her. This is what we are experiencing and what you are experiencing in our communities. We need to figure out why these things are happening. We need to save the people in poverty. We need to save the jobs. But the fundamental cause is the structure that this country was founded upon. The stealing of the land of the indigenous people, the free labor in the form of slavery, the repression of women, and the repression of workers. We battled for 60 -70 years to try to overcome those differences that were established in economic and later on in political differences. That has been taken away from us over the last 30 or 40 years and if we don’t figure out the cause, we can’t change things.

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PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE WORKSHOP AT U.S. SOCIAL FORUM

THE FUTURE IS UP TO US

By Bob Lee

The following are excerpts from a talk given by Bob Lee, editor of the People's Tribune, at a workshop at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit.

The whole world is undergoing a profound economic revolution. The economic foundation of society is being transformed from the previous industrial period, which was based on giant factories that employed masses of workers, to a foundation based on electronics—on computers and robots—and a system of production requiring little or no human labor. The US has lost nearly six million factory jobs just in the past 12 years, and that represents



Several speakers at the People's Tribune workshop. From left to right, Gerardo Espinoza, Keith Sadler, Cheri Honkala.

PHOTO/DAMONJHARTLEY.COM

one in three manufacturing jobs. While electronics makes possible tremendous abundance for everyone, under capitalism the use of electronics in production creates massive permanent unemployment and underemployment. It results in poverty for the many and unheard

of wealth for the few. Today, America's richest 1 percent holds more wealth than America's entire bottom 90 percent.

Electronics creates a new class of people who no longer have real ties to capitalism. These people range from employed workers who are barely surviving at part-time, contingency and below-minimum wage jobs to the permanently unemployed, millions of whom are utterly destitute and homeless. This new class created by electronics cannot solve its problems under capitalism. Their problems can only be solved by a cooperative society where the necessities of life are distributed according to need, not according to how much money you have. This revolutionary class created by electronics needs political

power to build a new society that will serve humanity instead of the corporations. This class is the section capable of leading the whole people in the fight for fundamental change. Electronic production means that society is going to be reorganized—the only question is, in whose interest? Which class—the capitalists and their corporations or the new class created by electronics—will wield the political power to shape society?

The corporations are trying to build a new society that will allow them to keep private property and private profits, and this drive to maintain private property is absolutely antagonistic to the needs of humanity. Society is polarizing. This

polarity is between the whole political establishment and the discontented mass of people who are beginning to understand they are threatened by an economic system that has turned a g a i n s t them. Under these conditions, the corporations can't allow democracy.

The corporations are merging with the state to impose a fascism that will allow them to maintain private property.

The question is: are we going to protect and serve property rights, or are we going to do what is right to protect and advance humanity?

History has demonstrated that a movement is a cause and a press. The revolutionary movement in this country needs a national press through which to share information, experience and tactics, and a press from which to gain political clarity and a strategy for victory. We need a press to help make the movement conscious of its real purpose so it can win. A press that gives us a vision of the new society we can build. The People's Tribune and the Tribuno del Pueblo are striving to become that press. We have opened our pages to the movement. These papers are a means for the leaders of this growing movement to have



Raise it Up Youth perform skit on poverty.

PHOTO/DAMONJHARTLEY.COM

a dialogue with each other. We have no paid staff, we get no grants, we are completely dependent on donations and subscriptions, and we depend on our readers and contributors to distribute the paper.

We are approaching a fork in the road. Revolutionaries must boldly step forward and explain to the people where each of the forks leads. 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 environment and to unending war. The other fork, the road to socialism, leads to co-operation instead of competition, to abundance for all, to peace and to an orderly world.

This is the moment of decision. Will the corporations finish taking 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.

Another United States Is Necessary

By Sandy Perry

Over 20,000 community organizers from all across the country converged at the United States Social Forum (USSF) in Detroit from June 22-26. The political tone of the gathering was set on June 20, when the March to Fulfill the Dream, which began in April in New Orleans, entered Detroit. It was organized by the USSF Poverty Working Group and Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign.

The June 20 march resonated because it reflected the very reason Detroit was chosen for the USSF. With its 23% unemployment and 27% vacancy rate, Detroit more than any other city represents the crisis of the global private property system. This march, as well as many of the other marches,

workshops, cultural events, poverty summits, and peoples movement assemblies, galvanized the USSF around the battle for water, housing, health care, and other economic human rights. They represented a growing trend toward class organization of the dispossessed to secure the necessities of life.

One expression of this was the resolution on World Courts of Women adopted by the Poverty Working Group (<http://pma2010.org/node/206>.) The World Courts of Women are public hearings all over the world called to share voices of survival and resistance from the margins. They seek to break the silence on poverty as a violation of both women's rights and human rights. They reject the myth that dire poverty only exists outside of the boundaries of the U.S., and they demand an end to the tremendous violence of poverty that im-

pacts our children, our families, and our communities. They are also committed to uniting the poor as the leadership base for a broad movement to abolish poverty everywhere and forever.

Another was the resolution of the Poverty Summit (<http://pma2010.org/node/217>) that summed up the experience of this critical sector of the movement and pointed toward the future.

"We are clear that poverty is not the result of personal failures. It is the product of an economic system that increases and deepens poverty as it concentrates the abundance of this country and the world in the hands of the few. Those who control that system, with governments acting as their agents, have shredded even the 'safety net' that historically met some basic human needs. They have abandoned those they no longer need. They have created

a growing class of dispossessed. We are conscious members of that class.

"Through our groups and organizations, we have fought for decades for reforms. It is clear to us now that our efforts have been, and continue to be, necessary — but not sufficient. We are clear that we must unite as never before to demand that the abundance of this country be used to meet the basic human needs of its people — no exceptions.

"We commit to that unity. As a first step, we hereby create an Assembly to End Poverty through which we can share our knowledge and skills, support each other, educate and engage our neighbors and friends, and act democratically and collectively to press our demands and secure our claims to economic justice."

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY OF DETROIT

The following two articles are excerpts from speeches made at a panel on Detroit's League of Revolutionary Black Workers at the U.S. Social Forum

By General Baker

General Baker, a founder of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and the Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in the 1960s, opened a U.S. Social Forum workshop with some comments on labor history.

"The Black workers had absolute loyalty to the Ford Motor Company back in the 1930s. They had no reason to be loyal to a union that still had by-laws with Jim Crow clauses in it. At Ford Motor Company, the Blacks were not just confined to the foundry and those heavy places. Ford had them all over, in the assembly plant and the engine plant — had to have big meetings to figure out how to win over these Black workers to the cause.

"John L. Lewis and the coal miners came up to Detroit. They had big rallies at the old Olympia Stadium. They brought in Paul Robeson to sing and

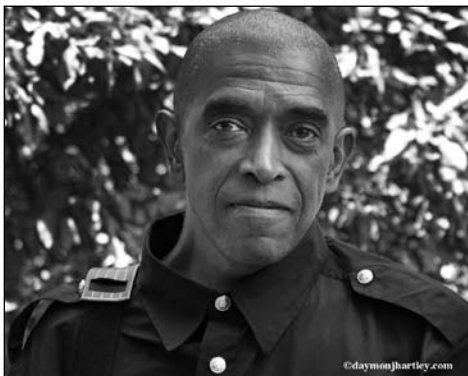


General Baker.

PHOTO/DAMONJHARTLEY.COM

address the crowd and to convince the workers that they were going to have a multinational union. John Lewis opened up the meeting saying 'if there is anybody in this room that thinks that our Negro brothers are not an equal part of the union, then you get out of here now.' They had that kind of forcefulness in the discussion for solidarity at the Rouge plant.

an hour or less. That's pathetic. Something has happened. Sooner or later we have to figure out what that was. The social forum is where we come together and begin a new process. I want to read something out of this book called "Detroit — A History of Struggle. A Vision of the Future." Yes, I wrote it... I wrote it for you.



Brother Waistline.

PHOTO/DAMONJHARTLEY.COM

"Here is how it begins. It's a point of view: It says:

"In the beginning human beings create instruments, tools and machines in the drama to sustain and improve human life. Since people organize society

"They put out at least six editions of a newspaper called the Ford Facts. They sent sound trucks around the Black community. They had Reverend Hill and other progressive ministers join their side, as they went to work to try to win over these Black workers for the union cause. Special papers came out just for the black community that were printed by the international union. When you tell people that they did something like that today, people don't believe it. But there it is on the record. And only after they did all that were they able to get the victorious union in April of 1941.

"I think it is important to note that the solidarity that developed out of the Rouge plant was different than any other plant. Even today when you look at the UAW leadership and the Blacks in leadership, most of them come out of Rouge Local 600, because of the real solidarity that was won on the battlefield — not just ideologically. I think it is important because when we get to the DRUM movement in the 1960s,

there was already a legacy of struggle around discrimination. So this thing didn't jump out of nowhere. There was a history and continuity to it, all the way to the end of the war and up to today. Even during World War II we still had strikes. When Black workers went into the final assembly lines at the Packard plant, all the whites walked out. Same thing happened at the General Motor's Turnstead plant. So, you see these other plants didn't have the kind of solidarity that we developed at the Rouge.

"I think at some point it is also important to talk about the other sections of the labor movement — the community organizations. If it hadn't been for them, we could never have done the organizing. Most people think the labor movement is just a trade union. If that was the case, the union would never win anything. You get caught up in the bureaucracy and follow trade union rules and you aren't going to ever win. You need to set the conditions on how you're going to fight."

around the instruments of production, types of social organization and types of family life ultimately depend upon the type of tools and energy sources which exist and define one's life activity.

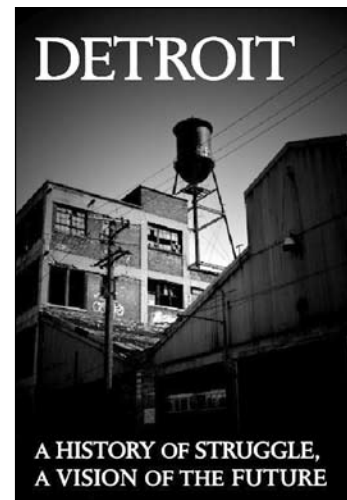
"The industrial revolution grew out of the long history of development of tools and machines, and is a certain kind of society. People created industrial tools, machines and means setting into play stages of growth of the industrial revolution.

"Then, on the Sixth Day the industrial revolution recreated man in its image.

"In this beginning there was the word. The word became flesh with mind, heart and soul. The voice spoke:

"Which way is Detroit and how do I get there?"

"Our story is the story of the development and the rise, and the fall of the industrial working class. It is the story of all the phases we went through to try to get organized. Bound up with our story is the history of the development of industrial capitalism. We have to know what it was that we were fighting and why we have to have another vision and do things in such a way so that we can continue to struggle for a new society.



DETROIT

Brother Waistline is available to speak on the new pamphlet, "Detroit." Contact Speakers for a New America for more information. To order the pamphlet, send \$3 to People's Tribune, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524, or pay via paypal at <http://www.peoplestribune.org>

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Mountain Top Removal: An Attempt To Rewrite Work's History

By Christopher Worth

In the heart of West Virginia, there is a piece of land that has been dedicated as a park. This park exists on the top of Kayford Mountain. The park is an island in the sky because all around the mountain there exists only craters where once had stood a chain of mountains in the Appalachian range. Kayford is the last standing link in what used to be a glorious chain of peaks and valleys.

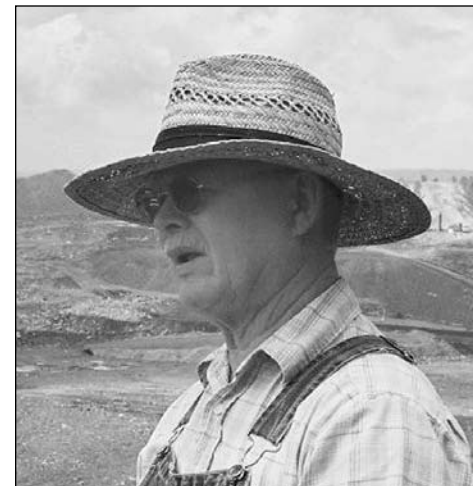
The chain was slowly cut away by a mining practice called mountaintop removal. This type of mining is characterized by the removal of the tops of mountains to more easily access the rich coal seams running through mountain's center. As a part of the removal process, the debris from the top of the mountain is simply pushed over the edge down into the valleys below (called valley fill). This process ignores the impact on the streams and the water table. They are further impacted because of the use of chemicals used to clean the coal as it is harvested, leaching into the water

and poisoning it. West Virginia is called the birthplace of rivers for a reason. It is within our mountain range that major river tributaries find their beginnings, and so as mountain top removal continues, so too does the poisoning of the water that feeds much of the US.

We can barely touch on the immense environmental impact mountaintop removal has in this article. What I want to do is talk about the people standing up against such practices, particularly Larry Gibson, who is the keeper of Kayford Mountain. He has fought long and hard to maintain his island in the sky. Just as important as protecting the environment, Larry and people like him protect a history, culture, and way of life, for it is within the coal country of Appalachia that the worker took a stand against the industrial barons. This historical moment is known as The Battle of Blair Mountain. The workers rose up to demand their rights and an end to economic, social, and political tyranny that showed its face as mass repression. As the workers attempted to break their

chains, the system responded by dropping bombs. It is clear to me that the battle of Blair Mountain (which opened up so many possibilities for organizing worker's rights) has, for the most part been squashed by history.

Today the coal industry is planning to take the top off of Blair Mountain, thumbing their noses at the worker's history. This is a last ditch effort by the coal company to rewrite history. They have convinced the mass population of West Virginia that they are the number one job providers in the state -- a complete lie. The predominant coal extraction process only employs 16 miners per site, while a deep mine would have employed close to 200 workers. The coal industry that has made so much money on the backs of Appalachians, has taken more than physical resources from this place. They have repressed culture and even human potential. Many native West Virginians do not believe that they could do anything outside of the mono economy.



Larry Gibson and the numerous unnamed people standing up against the coal mining industry are examples of the possibilities for bringing about change in Appalachia.

PHOTO /DONATED

The Voice of A Young Revolutionary

The Meaning of May Day

By Sean Crawford

Editor's note: The second part of this article will be published in the September issue of the People's Tribune. It was a speech given on May Day, 2010 in Flint, Michigan.

I feel it's impossible to understand the meaning of May Day without first understanding the struggles endured by the working class for a better quality of life. Specifically the struggle for the eight-hour work day and the 40-hour working week.

Of course an eight-hour work day wasn't always something we could take for granted. In fact, it has only been common practice in most western countries for approximately 75 years. Prior to that workers often had to suffer through a mandatory 12 or more hours per day; with no overtime pay and little if any health or safety protections. Making the working conditions for many; dirty, miserable and dangerous.

Imagine the coal miner, blackened with soot laboring in dungeon-like conditions, beneath the earth, with tons of rock barely hanging on above him. Risking his life and sacrificing his health for subsistence. Or the auto worker, treated like a machine, disposable. Trapped in brain numbingly repet-



Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa joined newly elected United Auto Workers (UAW) President Bob King, representatives from the AFL-CIO, NAACP, Interfaith Worker Justice, Jobs with Justice and the more than 1,400 delegates from the 2010 UAW Convention to march down to Detroit's banking district to tell big banks and corporations that the assault on the middle class must end now.

PHOTO /DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

itive work, with the line ever quickening at the bosses whim. Always one misstep or mechanical defect away from losing a limb or losing his life. Then imagine enduring all this for 12 or 14 hours per day. Imagine the fatigue. Imagine how easy it would be to make a deadly mistake in such volatile conditions.

To injure yourself during a time

when health benefits, workers compensation or any kind of social safety net were non-existent, could easily spell homelessness and starvation for you and your family. This is the state that people labored in prior to Unions. A state that often amounted to struggle, danger and the possibility of death at work; and hunger, homelessness and the possibility of death without it.

Although safety on the job wasn't the only concern. Having an eight-hour day allows more time for being something other than a worker. To define yourself as something other than a producer of capital, as something other than simply your job. It gives you time for your family and friends, to pursue things you love, for the most valuable things in life. In short, it allows you to spend more of your life, being human. This can be summed up in the old Union slogan "Eight hours for work. Eight hours for

rest. And eight hours for what we will."

So for dignity in the work place and a chance to live a better life, a half million workers demonstrated across the United States on May first 1886. At the center of this was Chicago, where 30,000 workers went on strike and 100,000 flooded the streets. The event was peaceful. But two days later, in Chicago, at the McCormick Lumber mill, things would change for the worse. A conflict between Union workers and scabs resulted in the Chicago police firing into the crowd, killing four people and wounding many others. Keep in mind that this was a common way for the police to end strikes at the time.

The response of Unions was to call for a demonstration at a popular gathering spot called Haymarket Square the following day, to denounce the murder of these workers. Some 3,000 showed up to hear the speakers, with the police not far behind. Apparently, not enjoying the presentations, the police closed in to shut them down. As they closed in, an unknown person threw a bomb at the police line, killing one officer and injuring many others. The police responded by opening fire on the protesters. The number of people shot could not be determined as most neglected medical attention to avoid arrest. TO BE CONTINUED.

Mom's Struggle For Healthcare For Disabled Child Underscores Why Fight For Healthcare For All Must Continue

By Melonya Cook

My daughter Madisyn was diagnosed with a very rare vascular abnormality called Sturge Weber Syndrome after she experienced a stroke-like episode while she was on the playground with her first grade classmates. Until that life changing September day in 2004, we didn't know Madi had a disability of any kind, only that her skin was many different colors with many different patterns. Since only one in every 50,000 babies is born with Sturge Weber Syndrome our pediatrician just didn't know enough to recognize the disability until the day her brain stopped working. Since 2004, Madisyn has experienced four of these stroke-like episodes. During these episodes, she loses brain function and more brain tissue dies. In addition to the debilitating strokes Madisyn's disability presents, she has challenges with epileptic seizures, glaucoma, insulin resistance, developmental and physical



Melonya Cook, pictured with her daughter, Madisyn, at the USSF in Detroit. Melonya shared her story during the Healthcare Now! People's Movement Assembly (PMA). Melonya and her daughter live in Dayton, OH.

PHOTO /SHEILAH GARLAND-OLANIRAN

delays, and migraine headaches.

I am a single mother working at a nonprofit organization. I, like many parents of the 12 million children living with special health care needs, make too much money to qualify for the current Medicaid program and too little to qualify to purchase it from the government. In the ten years I have worked for my employer, health insurance costs have increased for both the organization and the employees.

This year the increase is staggering. My family no longer has access to a traditional health care plan. We must choose to opt-in and pay the first \$6,000 of any prescription or medical services needed from out of pocket or opt-out and not have insurance. Prescriptions alone will cost over \$2,000 per month. This new coverage began July 1. We were informed of the new plan only 20 days prior to implementation. Like many employers, mine did not understand the devastation this would cause my family.

This was perhaps a good financial decision for the organization – but not for the employees, not for my daughter.

So today, I come to you as a mother of a child with a disability, as a civically responsible adult and as a human being and ask: WHY am I being forced to choose between providing my family with basic human needs — safe housing and adequate nutrition — or buying the prescriptions my daughter needs to stay alive?

Madisyn should have a right to have safe housing, nutrition, and access to needed life sustaining medications. As her mother, I should have the right to be economically self-sufficient so I can provide for my family's basic needs. My family should not be forced to live in poverty because I am a single mother, with a master's degree, earning the same wage as 50% of our nation's households (\$50,000), and have a child who is challenged with special health care needs.

An Independent Movement Needed to Win Healthcare For All

By Sheilah Garland-Olaniran

Margaret Flowers, M.D., is a doctor on a mission for single payer healthcare — an expansion of Medicare for all. She spoke at the recent U.S. Social Forum (USSF), in Detroit on the need for independence from the Republican or Democratic parties in the fight for real healthcare reform. Dr. Flowers, who practiced pediatric medicine for 15 years, discovered early in her practice that the insurance industry made it nearly impossible to treat her patients without their profit-driven system interfering in her delivery of care. So, she joined PNHP (Physicians for a National Health Program). Joining PNHP and the growing movement for healthcare reform in order to educate and join with others fighting for the same healthcare

reform was an important decision for Dr. Flowers.

Like others, Dr. Flowers understands that the political system is broken: "I never had any illusions that we would get single payer, but I understood we needed to push it as far as we could and use the opportunity to educate and join with as many people as possible to fight for it. My priority is to help create a social justice movement with true healthcare reform as its priority."

At the USSF Healthcare NOW! People's Movement Assembly (PMA), Dr. Flowers told the gathering that "In our fight for single payer we need only remember ICU. The movement must have Independence — that it is not tied to a political party — we have to drive our own agenda. The movement needs Clarity — the ruling class created so much

deliberate confusion and distraction from the single payer fight by the public option debate. They did an effective job of confusing a profit model for healthcare with a public model, which eliminates the insurance industry from the delivery of healthcare. And the movement has to be Uncompromising. The movement has to set its own Agenda. Along with healthcare we must demand what we require — education, a job with liveable wages, clean water, dignity and respect. Our power lies in forming solid blocs of educated voters. Our power lies in an independent movement that cannot be taken off its course."

Sheilah Garland-Olaniran, Chicago, IL, is a Single-Payer Fighter and Contributor to the People's Tribune



Dr. Margaret Flowers protesting for single payer healthcare.

PHOTO /BLOG.PDAMERICA.ORG

Subsidiary of GM Tries To Take Healthcare Benefits to a New Low

SAGINAW, MI — UAW members at Nexteer Automotive (formerly GM Steering Gear, then Delphi) are clear. The Healthcare legislation passed this winter at best did NOTHING to stop employers from dropping healthcare coverage for employees and could actually accelerate the end of decent employee based health insurance plans for employees and retirees.

The auto industry has already robbed new hires of pensions and retiree Healthcare. Management at Nexteer wanted future new workers' healthcare insurance to exclude coverage of their spouses and children with a benefit that would only cover the worker!!! Workers at the facility rejected these and other contract proposals three times (as usual management played the JOB card and even laid workers off temporarily to sell this and other cuts). In the end, workers ratified a local agreement, just before the company was sold to a Chinese auto parts maker. The new agreement does allow coverage to family members of new hires. This is an important victory but does not solve the problem of corporations considering their profits before the healthcare of their workers.

Workers who are used to seeing "Cadillac" plans for autoworkers can not rely solely on contract negotiations to maintain even minimal benefits or prevent benefits from being cut altogether. The struggle for an expansion of Medicare for all which would provide access to healthcare for all is the only way we can protect present and future workers.

Poem for the Practical Dreamers

when our very act of breathing
or sitting or resting
on our own streets
in this city of St Francis
or grabbing a scrap of sleep

in the mean cold of night
becomes a revolutionary question
an act of resistance

when our being
on this earth
this spherical globe
that doesn't understand
owners or borders

is an act of faith

towards a just future
as we stand upon
its living ground
under the radiance
that loves us all

when survival itself
becomes our manifesto

gathering here with
our bothers and sisters
undivided: each of us unique
yet wholly interdependent

here on this ground
where our rights were written down

for all humanity
where the farmer's market
on Wednesdays and Sundays
shows us the abundance that's all around
where a human hand can glean
the jewel of a cherry

another hand picked from a tree
in paradise: our earthly paradise
no one can own: we repossess it
in the name
of life

we have been making the world anew
and dreaming it up
in our lonely rooms
and in our roomless
star-roofed places
our windy streets
and squats
alleys and ravines
that's where transformation
is born: when we kick off
those mental chains
locked around us
by the theorists
of death and greed
the lies about scarcity
and dog eat dog
spread by the merchants
of death and hunger
the profiteers of misery
the ocean-killers

we come together in cooperation
those of us with least
who are everything
with our powerful dreams
with practical skills
with unkillable hearts
hands that build and heal
practical visionaries
poets and organizers
lovers of justice
artists of joy

— Sarah Menefee
Revolutionary Poets Brigade

SHELTER

Master locks on steel chains
Boards on windows & doors
An old building's interior is bare
Down to the stairs & floors

Neighborhood eyesore
So much, it brings tears
This domicile sat unused
For untold years

Emptier than a tomb
While a sickened man sleeps outside
The cold, hard sidewalk against his back----
His last abide

Lone cadaver on concrete,
This classist system's target
Because a single-minded landlord
Kept this building off the market

That could provide shelter
For indigent, landless masses
Instead, it provides shelter
For a wealthy skinflint's taxes

In hard economic times,
There's landless folks for sure
That building's chained & boarded up----
Nothing that boltcutters & crowbars can't cure.

— Dee Allen
W: 4.17.10
[For Colin Ward—1924-2010.]

Our Name

in the desert of exile where the tongue is orphaned
in fields where hands cannot reap the fruits of toil
under skies impregnated with mysterious chemical agents
in nights of fire that leave nothing for dawn to resuscitate
face to face with the barking dog
the hypocrite judge and bureaucrat executioner
the slackened face of the fat career pig
surveilled by soulless retina
the hygienic smile of the full of shit
through months of uncertainty. unemployment. waiting
slouched on corners of hopeless expectation
in streets of open and unbridled bigotry
when lungs are winded with exhaustion
when the door trembles with the dreaded knock
in air saturated with sweat
at machines. that. sow. poverty
when the heartless repetition of boots grows louder
when mindless helmets shot blindly into the voices of many
when the sniper picks apart the crowd like he's cleaning his teeth
when limply they meet the screeching earth
behind walls of apartheid
behind fences of ethnic cleansing
in prisons of deportation
on white knuckle days
nights when whispers rise and fall like stars
we go by many names,
Courage. Solidarity. Defiance.
you shall call us Triumph

— Pete Rugh

a dedication:

to those whose name or place
of origin is known by no one
to those whose bullet-ridden blood
polluted deserts and kitchens

to those who never heard bells
or trumpets celebrating their arrival
to those women who suffocated
inhaling tears and toilet stench

to those who like me were
born to clean to work to wash
to sell their sweat at two dollars

a gallon to mi gente the most
untouchable of people here is
a kiss an embrace in my poems

—Lauro Vazquez
[from Dishboy]

Wall Street and Mega-Banks, The New American Gangster

By **Adriane Harden**

We were all told to apply for the wonderful HAMP program that would help us save our homes. Well the Banks are using this very program to force homeowners into foreclosure so they can capitalize on the Shared Loss Agreement in place with the FDIC. This agreement allows the FDIC to share in the loss with the bank and cover the banks loss when you foreclose.

One of those banks, One West Bank FSB, under the ownership of IndyMac Mortgage Services, uses HAMP as a reason to not modify mortgages. According to them, this is based on a servicing agreement between them and the actual owner of the loan. When OneWest took over Indymac, the FDIC and OneWest executed a "Shared-Loss Agreement" covering the sale. This Agreement would reimburse OneWest for any losses they suffered in foreclosing on a property. In the event of foreclosure, the FDIC would cover from 80-95% of losses, using the original loan amount, and not the current balance. HAMP requires the servicer to comply with the terms of their servicing contract with the owner of the loan, the Investor.

This contract is called "The Pooling and Servicing Agreement" (PSA). This agreement dictates the terms regarding how mortgages are pooled, securitized, sold, and serviced. One of the terms many of these agreements contain makes it almost impossible for certain homeowners to be offered a modification. Some pooling and servicing agreements state that no more than 5 or 10% of the mortgages in the pool can be offered loan modifications in the case of default. This means that a homeowner applying for a loan modification after the 5-10% modification threshold has been met will be turned down for a modification. PSA's set a limit to how many mortgage modifications can be offered by servicers, and they may face liability from the trusts or investors that own the loans if they offer too many workout plans to borrowers. Servicers may find themselves in breach of the servicing terms they agreed to, even if it would allow more homeowners to avoid foreclosure, and they are not willing to take this risk.

I would say at least let homeowners know from the beginning that they are not getting a loan modification. It would be much easier than making all

the repeated phone calls and re-faxing of documents to get told you are denied and facing foreclosure.

Banks were bailed out by taxpayers, now they've found a way to use a program that was set up to help borrowers save their homes to use against them. Then to top it all off, the FDIC has provided a safety net with taxpayer money to once again bail them out through a Shared Loss Agreement.

What people don't understand is that the banks will do almost anything to deny you that modification. Banks are in business to make money, by any means necessary! So if that means putting you out on the street so they can sell your home to someone else and make a profit, so be it. I refuse to bank with these crooks. I've moved my money to a smaller bank and/or credit union. I refuse to allow them to use my money to continue their corrupt business in organized crime. I think we all need to make a stand and stop sup-



Adriane Harden, protesting foreclosures in Atlanta, Georgia.

PHOTO /BLOG.PDAMERICA.ORG

porting those that DON'T support us. If the Government won't regulate the banks, then I will make a stand on my own. How about you?

Quotes From Simuel Ramey — One of the People's Tribune "Star" Distributors. Part 2

By **Simuel Ramey**

I discovered in Little Rock, Arkansas some organizations that are tackling the problem we face in society about the lack of funding for special interest groups. I attended a few charity basketball games spear-headed by a local Radio station-KIPR POWER 92.3 JAMS under the "tutelage" of Operations Manager "Broadway Joe" and his Nubian Queen "Ms. Freddie", who is the executive producer of the "Broadway Joe Video Show" that airs highlights from each game and other events each Sunday morning at one (1:00) a.m., on CW Arkansas. The games are all set up by the Operations Manager of the station. Revenue from each game is received by different organizations in different cities in Arkansas from community centers to church groups, scholarship funds to civic groups throughout the state. A local independent promoter, Sell-it-\$yl with C & J Entertainment, provides halftime Entertainment by way of dance groups, hip-hop artists/groups, gospel artists/groups etc...due to our government cutting funding from special-interest groups everywhere. "Somebody has got



Simuel Ramey.

to grab the bull by the horn. We have got to ensure a future for our kids," says Independent Promoter, Sell-it-\$yl.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, for example, the state is taking poor people's land via the "eminent domain" clause and not allowing them to grow food on it. For three generations people have lived and eaten from their land. Now the state says it is a health problem. Before I left, I discovered a huge event that takes place in the community that I was raised in. It is a celebration of a former slave community called "McALMONT

DAY" !!! June 18-19th, 2010. The organizers take two days each year to celebrate the accomplishments of the community. There's a parade, health fairs, job fairs, live entertainment, kids games, guest speakers, fundraisers...all designed to give our kids a sense of integrity and pride. The organizers (H.E.A.T. Foundation, Inc.) of this celebration have canvassed neighborhood residents over the past three years with requests for donations, grassroots fund raising events, i.e., raffle ticket giveaways, car washes, rallies, etc., to fund this celebration. It has been a struggle, but, they always manage to pull it off. The H.E.A.T. Foundation, Inc., recently accepted membership into the Little Rock Regional Area "Chamber of Commerce". Also, the community of "McAlmont" was just voted into the "Independent Youth Football League" (I.Y.F.L.) Ages: 5 thru 12. I salute the "community", and I say to you in "unity", "straight ahead"! At the same token C & J Entertainment is preparing to put on an event August

7th, 2010 with the theme of "GOSPEL on the RIVER".

GRANT WRITERS NEEDED!!!

To support any of these causes you can contact the H.E.A.T. Foundation, Inc., an Acronym that means "Helping Each Achieve together". DIRECTOR: Karoma Smith/501.960.3415, e-mail: arkansasheat5473@yahoo.com

Also visit our website at: <http://www.mcalmontday.org>.

To support C&J Entertainment you can contact C.E.O.: Pastor Joseph Hollis: 501.672.0366 fax: 501.778.8405 myspace: www.myspace.com/cjrecord-sentertainment e-mail: cj_recordsandentertainment@yahoo.com

OPEN LETTER TO ST. PETERSBURG MAYOR BILL FOSTER

By **G.W. Rolle**

Dear Mayor Foster,

My name is Gregory Rolle. Most people call me "G.W.", and you may as well.

I am heartened that you have reached out to the Homeless Leadership Network. I am by no means the leader or spokesperson for that group, but being a member of the HLN in good standing, I am compelled to answer your mailing if for no more reason than to rise to the defense of the Public Defender.

The marginalization and the criminalization of the homeless and near-homeless is a disgrace and a blight on our city. Housing, Mayor Foster, is a basic human right. Affordable housing is intrinsic in that formula. Laws that make people criminals by their very definition, are laws that criminalize and marginalize them.

You see, sir, the number one reason that people are homeless, is that they lack housing. Most ne'er-do-wells, thieves, drug addicts, alcoholics, petty criminals, and prostitutes, live inside. The small amount of people who live outside do so because they either cannot afford or cannot negotiate living inside. No one, sir, wants to be homeless.

When homeless people do get jobs, and lift themselves off the street through meager means, such as the selling of the St Petersburg Times, please tell me how it serves society or St Petersburg to nix their earning potential and render them street homeless again, by passing laws and ordinances which criminalize them.

With all due respect, sir, your letter would be of better service by engaging in topics of affordable housing and a cessation of criminalizing ordinances that cost the taxpayers of this city untold thousands, and have been shown to be quite ineffective in reducing street

homelessness.

Mayor Foster, every 21st of December for the past three years, the City of St Petersburg has signed a proclamation stating that housing is a basic human right. Wouldn't a proclamation stating that housing is a human right year round, and a pledge to seek creative involvement, rather than the current criminalization of homelessness, produce a greater yield?

I'd like to close with an example: There is a man who is homeless and a veteran, who has spent 320 days in jail since 2008. Most of these are one or two day affairs, for open container, public urination or trespassing — homeless crimes. Even by a modest estimate of \$126 a day for incarceration, this sum is over \$30,000.

With the policy the city police have to drive people out into the rain who are seeking shelter, and arrest those who are too slow to comply (statements fur-

nished upon request), we see a fortune in \$126 pile up before our eyes, whereas we see little change in our homeless population or problem. The Public Defender is all that homeless people have, unless you believe he should be replaced by another lawsuit by outside forces.

Your Honor, our street outreach team does fabulous work in terms of constructive engagement. We need five more teams. That would save us money and we would begin to see our homeless numbers decrease.

Yet I am afraid, that without a frank and honest discussion about affordable housing we are just dancing around homelessness instead of dancing with it.

G.W. Rolle is the Social Justice Minister at Missio Dei Church in St. Petersburg, Florida.

"THE BRIDGE MINISTRY" Helps The Homeless Under A Bridge

By **Lenette Evans**

Here in Nashville, Tenn., the homeless situation is extremely bad and far worse than in Benton Harbor, Mich., where I am from. Nashville is a much bigger city but, outside Nashville, all the towns are little rural farm towns. This also happens to be a right-to-work state and many people are out of work and can't find a job. Many of the homeless are local and many come from all over. The better climate attracts people to Nashville.

I have been helping feed a homeless man and his dog here in Springfield, Tenn., and I recently met two other homeless men in downtown Nashville who have been banned from the library for trying to get a few minutes rest.

Everyday the homeless are faced with being beat up, robbed, stabbed, and degraded because they are homeless. They live on the streets, wherever they can, under bridges, dumpsters, and abandoned buildings. Many suffer from depression, mental illnesses, as well as addictions.

OUR GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO BE MORE ACCOUNTABLE IN HELPING OUR HOMELESS PEOPLE . . . especially since our economy has been shot down and flat-lined to the max.

Thank God for wonderful, passionate, caring people like Candy Christmas.



Candy Christmas is the Founder and President of The Bridge Ministry in Nashville, Tennessee.

PHOTO /DONATED

She is an awesome woman of God and a well-known Christian Gospel singer who started the Bridge Ministry, back in 2004 to help the homeless.

I was at the Bridge Ministry, which takes place every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. under the Jefferson Street bridge. Worship singers and the homeless filled every chair under the bridge and many were standing or sitting off in the lawn next to the bridge.

There is anywhere from 200-250 people. There has been up to 500 people at times.

Hot meals are served, and cold soda/bottled water. Two half sized semi trucks

give away bags of food and new clothing to those in need.

A pastor spoke the word and prayer partners prayed for those in need of prayer. Candy Christmas gave some of the homeless a chance to show their talent by singing "Amazing Grace," along with her and Angie Brown.

Two other organizations

that help the homeless are the "Nashville Homeless Power Project" and the "Nashville Rescue Mission".

PEOPLE LETS STOP SITTING AND THINKING THAT THE HOMELESS AND THE LOST WILL COME TO YOU — NO! . . . IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE GETTING OUT AND GOING WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE AND HELPING THEM.

I am a street Evangelist in Benton Harbor, Mich., but imagine if every person got out of their home, out of the church pew and truly took up your cross to follow Jesus Christ to make a differ-

ence in someone's life. Imagine how you can help? Homeless people have struggles like anyone else but they also need to be loved and know someone cares for them.

We can all give up something to reach out to the homeless or someone in need — it might be a cup of coffee, or going out to dinner or buying clothes for yourself. I might be on vacation here in Nashville but God's work is never done. Wherever I go, day to day, I am reaching out to someone and trying to feed the homeless and the poor. Praise God for what he does in the Bridge Ministry because its all about giving and sharing and when our government doesn't reach out to help we have to get out there and get creative and see what we can do to help.

For more info on the Bridge Ministry go to: <http://www.bridgeministry.org>

Saving Souls Ministry,
St. Joseph, MI.269-876-1848
Savingsouls1@yahoo.com

VOICES FROM BENTON HARBOR, MI

Corporate and Government Interests Merging, says Dorothy Pinkney

People's Tribune: Dorothy, what do you think about the state giving the Whirlpool Corporation tax incentives for a new \$87 million office building and consolidation project?



Rev. Edward Pinkney and Dorothy Pinkney.

PHOTO CREDIT/ DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Dorothy Pinkney: The Benton Harbor City Commissioners voted 7-2 on July 19, 2010, to approve a resolution supporting negotiation of financial incentives for Whirlpool, a multi-billion dollar corporation to develop the downtown lake front property. The deal is worth \$50 million. This is free money to Whirlpool. Also, Whirlpool pays no taxes and pays no water bills. This is a very sad day for Benton Harbor's residents. The greedy blood-sucking corporation known as Whirlpool has done it again. Whirlpool always finds ways to take money from Benton Harbor, a city that is \$5 million in the red. What we have here is the merging of corporate and government interests to maximize profits for the few.

PT: How will the people of Benton Harbor benefit from these tax giveaways?

DP: The community will not benefit from this tremendous tax give away. There will be no jobs for the residents. Whirlpool just keeps on taking and taking. This is the last step for the residents of Benton Harbor before being evicted.

PT: Is poverty growing in Benton

Harbor?

DP: The unofficial jobless rate has increased to 75%. The poverty level is over 90%. Homelessness is growing. The people are packed in with relatives and friends. The living conditions are bad. This is a tremendous change from when I was a child living here. There were plenty of jobs. That is before industry automated or moved away.

PT: What are the people of Benton Harbor saying about Whirlpool, the developers and the local government?

DP: The residents are sick of Whirlpool stealing from them.

PT: What can be done to stop the corporations and for people to have decent lives?

DP: Whirlpool is the enemy! If anybody can say differently, they are mentally, morally and socially corrupt and may be getting paid under the table by Whirlpool. Whirlpool's 100-year lease with the city — for the leasing of three holes for the golf course in Jean Klock Park — is ridiculous. Whirlpool is stealing the future of our children by taking this prime land. The High School will be next as the school sits right on the lake.

PT: Tell us about the upcoming protest.

DP: August 10 is the official opening of the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course. Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Johnny Miller, and Tom Watson will all be there. We are planning a mass demonstration to stop Whirlpool and Harbor Shores, the evil twins, from stealing our lake-front land. The Jack Nicklaus signature golf course is for the rich only. So bring your golf clubs. (This is a metaphor for the clubbing the city of Benton Harbor is receiving from Whirlpool and Harbor Shores.) The demonstration is at 11 A.M. in front of Benton Harbor City Hall. Please invite everybody. All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.

TRUE FIGHTER FOR THE POOR PASSES

Mary E. Carter (age 75) of Benton Harbor, MI died Sunday, July 11, 2010 in Grand Rapids, MI.

Mary was a true hero and warrior. She was always on the front lines, fighting to save the people of Benton Harbor from the corporations.

Mary received the People's Champion Citation of Honor Resolution from the city of Benton Harbor for her selfless service and dedication to the city and the people. Mary served on city committees, including the Mayor's Advisory Board and the city's Legislative Committee and she gave her time to many city residents. Mary was also the chairman of the Right on Time Block Club. She helped set up many community food gardens and did landscaping on city-owned properties.

Mary Carter lived a life of ultimate sacrifice for GOD with much humanity and unselfish love for her family and community.



Mary Carter was in the forefront of the fight for Jean Klock Park to belong to the Benton Harbor community, not Whirlpool and the developers.

PHOTO /DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

FOR UNITY OF THE POOR

From the Editors

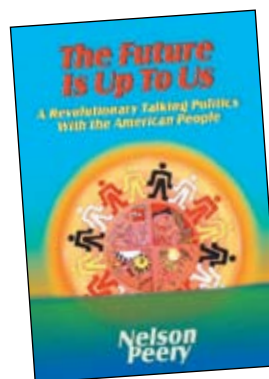
The People's Tribune has been asked to write about why some, (but by no means all) of America's poor turn against their brothers and sisters and line up with corporate America.

People side with the corporations because they are confused about what the real situation is and where their real interests lie. In Benton Harbor, for example, some of the poor are siding with Whirlpool, a corporation that steals from the people. In other cities, some blame the homeless for their poverty or the immigrant for the spiraling joblessness. They don't understand the truth. That is, that jobs are lost because of capitalism's drive for maximum profit. To produce cheaper and faster, corporations automate their plants, eliminating workers permanently, or move to cheaper wage areas. Neither the corporations

nor the government care about what happens to the workers who are left to fend for themselves.

We, the people, must join together — regardless of color, sex or creed — and take control of this country. To do so, the people must stand on the side of those who have nothing — not with the billionaire corporations! We must force the government to take over the giant corporations and run them in our interests. This is the path to the ultimate solution of creating a whole new society where the things that people need to survive and thrive are distributed to all based on need, not money. In such a society, corporations will be in the junk yard of history. Humanity will flourish.

ORDER COPIES OF THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE TO DISTRIBUTE CALL 800-691-6888 OR EMAIL INFO@PEOPLESTRIBUNE.ORG



To order books, send \$10 for *Future is Up to Us* and \$3 for *Battle of Benton Harbor* to Speakers For a New America, PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654

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MASS DEMONSTRATION:

Place: Benton Harbor, MI. Date/Time: Tuesday, Aug. 10 at 11:00 A.M. at City Hall with a march to Jean Klock Park to protest official opening of Jack Nicklaus Golf Course and Harbor Shores and Whirlpool's hostile take over. For information, contact Rev. Pinkney at 269-925-0001 or email banco9342@sbcglobal.net.