

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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DONATION \$1



84-year-old Julia Boteo is led away during a protest by people who had lost their homes to foreclosure, or have been battling banks over loan modification, and their supporters outside a Chase bank branch in downtown Los Angeles. Police arrested 22 protesters who blocked the doors to the bank.

PHOTO/AP PHOTO/REED SAXON

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# AMERICA'S CORPORATE GOVERNMENT

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# States Deny Life Saving Surgeries: The Solution is a New Cooperative Society

## EDITORIAL

Mark Price, a 36 year-old father of six, battled leukemia. He died awaiting an organ transplant that could have saved his life. The state of Arizona decided that it could no longer afford to pay for his promised transplant, or for the transplants of 97 more Medicaid patients whose surgery had already been promised. In December a second person died as a result of being denied transplants.

Soon, many more men, women and children will join the tens of thousands who—in the richest country of the world—are dying every day because they cannot afford to buy healthcare. The American Public Health Association says a lack of health insurance appears to be a factor in the deaths of 45,000 people in 2005 alone.

Now, with the cutting of Medicaid patients out of life saving surgeries, this appalling practice has become officially sanctioned, and it can

only spread to other states. The giant corporations and the rich could be taxed to pay for the state's budget crises. Instead, things are set up so that those who have money can live and thrive. Those who have no money—die. This is not simply immoral. It is cold-blooded murder.

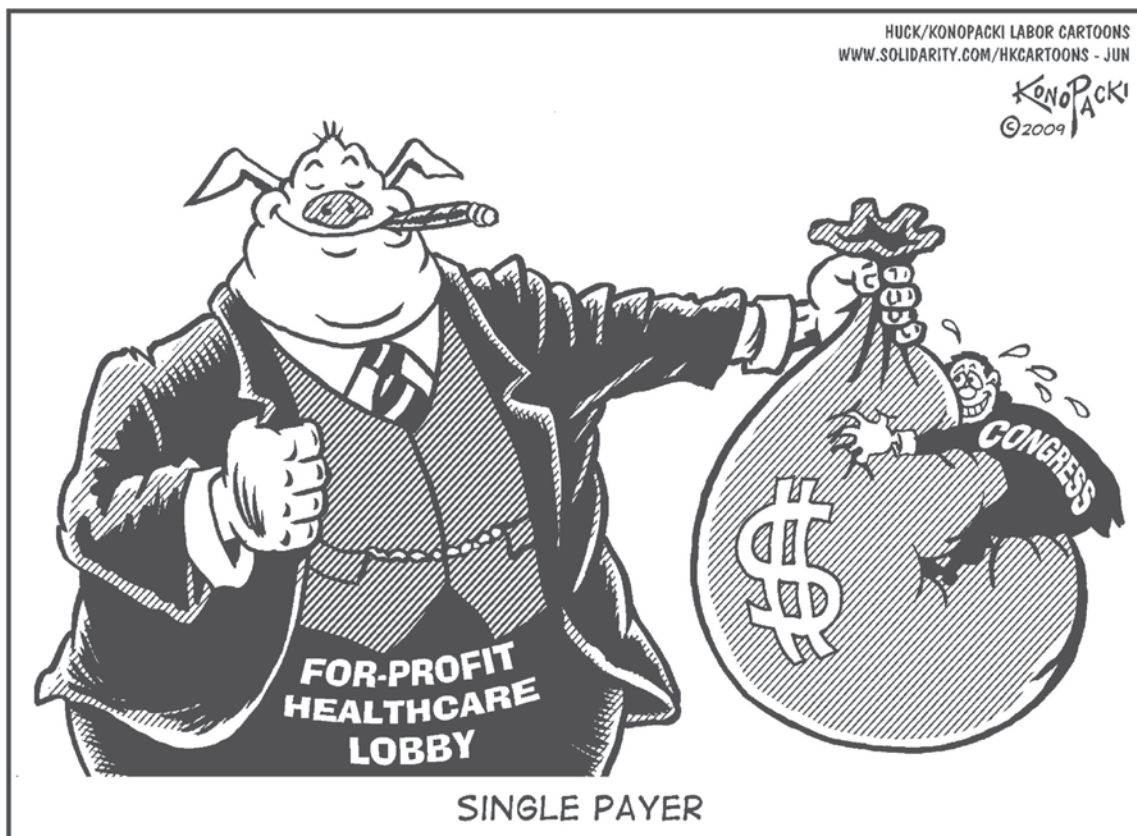
It would be one thing if quality healthcare was in short supply. To the contrary, scientific breakthroughs are made in healthcare every day and there is plenty of quality healthcare to go around. There is no rational reason for a single person to be denied it.

In the past, government kept the workers relatively healthy because industry needed healthy workers. The electronic age means replacing labor with computers and robots. The net effect of all this is that the value of the workers is falling to zero. The devaluing of human life—and the refusal of the corporations and government to spend money on the worker—is happening because of the epochal changes taking place in the economy and in society. Corporations won't pay for healthcare, unemployment compensation, Social Security, public aid or other necessities for workers they don't need. Therefore all of these programs are on the chopping block.

However, the workers without paychecks can't buy the goods and services the corporations are trying to sell. The system of buying and selling on which capitalism rests is being steadily destroyed. This means there is no way to reform the system. We have

to go forward to a whole new society.

There is an old saying: without vision a people will perish. Now is the time to achieve a vision of a truly new, cooperative society where the wonders of science and technology will serve all of the people. Today we have a society ruled by the billionaires—people like Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen who, among other possessions, owns a 414-foot yacht that houses two helicopters, a submarine and a swimming pool. But we can have a society based on the interests and demands of the growing mass of impoverished, jobless and homeless Americans. Such a society would not be organized around the private property and interests of the richest one percent. It would be organized on the principle that the necessities of life must be distributed to all according to need, not money. The new advances in science and technology make such a world possible. Let's fight for it!



SINGLE PAYER

## 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.

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# AMERICA'S CORPORATE GOV'T

## COVER STORY

The merging of U.S.-based global corporations and the federal government is advancing with deliberate speed as the executive branch continues its reorganization. The rapid consolidation of wealth occurring in the economy and the simultaneous global economic crisis requires the capitalist class to consolidate its political control of the government to insure the total protection of its power, privilege and its system of private property.

Through appointments by the executive branch, these corporations now oversee and control all cabinet positions, the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, the CIA and the FBI, along with the armed forces (and of course the private mercenaries and security forces they directly own), the police and all government organs of force.

To further illustrate this merger we need only look at the most recent appointments made by the President last month. They include the new White House Chief of Staff, along with his new appointment to lead the National Economic Council and finally his newly appointed chair of his economic advisory panel — the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. These three add to the corporate concentration



The Detroit police were attempting to prevent any protestors from entering the General Motors Renaissance Center last year. The protest was organized by the Peoples Summit Tent City.

PHOTO/DAYMON J. HARTLEY.COM

in the executive branch and a rounding out of near complete corporate control of virtually all levels of power.

These appointments, combined with the lingering recommendations of the co-chairs of the President's appointed bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform and testimony last month before the Senate Budget Committee by U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, represent just a few examples of the corporate government emerging with full force to continue placing the consequences of the economic crisis squarely on the backs of the American people.

William Daley, former head of the J.P. Morgan Chase Midwest operations and the chair of the firm's "corporate responsibility" section, is the newly appointed White House Chief of Staff. Gene Sperling is the new chair of the White House National Economic Council; he held the same position in the Clinton administration. And the new chairman of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness (formerly called the President's Economic Recovery Advisory Board) is none other than Jeffrey Immelt, CEO of General Electric Corporation.

In December, just one month prior to these new appointments, the co-chairmen of the President's fiscal commission released their final recommendations

for Social Security as part of a comprehensive proposal to reduce the deficit. Those recommendations include cuts in Social Security that raise the retirement age, reduce cost of living adjustments and propose new eligibility criteria.

Testifying early last month before the Senate Budget Committee, Ben Bernanke addressed concerns regarding the U.S. budget deficit saying, "Plans recently put forward by the President's National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform and other prominent groups provide useful starting points for a much-needed national conversation about our medium and long-term fiscal situation."

During his testimony Bernanke also rejected any loans to state or local governments facing massive budget deficits, saying, "We have no expectation or intention to get involved in state and local finances." He later added that the states, "should not expect loans from the Federal Reserve."

This is despite the fact that the economic crisis and resulting high unemployment and underemployment has rapidly increased needs for social services, which is placing even greater burdens on the states and local governments. The Committee on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that 40 states have projected gaps totaling \$113 billion for fiscal year 2012 (beginning July 2011).

Once all states have prepared estimates these are likely to grow to \$140 billion.

A key implication of this merger of the corporations and government is the corporate takeover of the police, the courts, the military, the prisons—the things that will be used to enforce the will of the corporations over society.

The vast majority of the American people need to counter this planned corporate assault on their lives with a broad independent political movement hell-bent on taxing the rich and nationalizing the economy in the public interest. Otherwise, the complete corporate government will impoverish our vast majority, as it reforms its system to protect private property and the interests of the capitalist class.

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

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

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

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Editorial Board

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This column depends on comments from readers. Feel free to contribute. Contact us: c/o Boxholder, P.O. Box 720821, San Jose, California 95172 or by e-mail at spirit@peopletribune.org.

## “AN EMPHATIC NO”

By G.W. ROLLE

In St. Petersburg, Florida the city devised a plan to put the homeless in a converted jail annex. It was laid out before the Homeless Leadership Network, a group of service providers and politicians that is supposed to come up with homeless policy for the area. I am the “homeless” representative to this group and my comments are usually ignored, because Lord knows, a formerly homeless person doesn’t know anything about homelessness. At the end of the meeting about this proposal, everyone in the Network voted to enact this plan. Except for me.

If I am correct, the Mayor of St. Petersburg and the Pinellas County Sheriff’s office devised the plan to deal with their own specific problems. The city’s problem is the “visible homeless.” The sheriff’s problem is the flooding of the jail with people arrested for homeless ordinances.

A consultant from Texas was employed with an eight month contract at \$5300 a month. This expert told St. Petersburg officials that hot food enables the homeless. He said as long as there is hot food, and showers and restroom facilities, the homeless will never leave downtown. The city and this expert asked some of our feeding partners to not feed the homeless.

The mayor of St. Petersburg assured us that the jail annex “will be no place of comfort.” The plan calls for the homeless to live outside on a concrete slab in a courtyard at first, and through incentives move indoors to mats on a

concrete floor. The food will be cold, but through incentives the homeless will gradually get hot food. Armed security will be onsite twenty-four hours a day. The Texas expert believes in incentives. “It’s important that you reward good behavior and punish bad behavior.”

Five reasons that I am voting NO.

1) The plan will escalate the criminalization of the homeless.

2) The plan has absolutely nothing to do with our ten-year plan to end homelessness.

3) The City refuses to see the connection between the loss of affordable housing and the rise in street homeless numbers. They enact laws that criminalize people by their very definition and force them along a trail of tears to a place that even the mayor describes as not a place of comfort.

4) This plan will be a funding redundancy. The Sheriff’s office has \$600,000, the City has \$150,000. The light bill alone is \$330,000 a year. How will this run after the first year?

5) We will be asked to dismantle this plan if we are to have any consideration for federal funding. At a recent homeless conference at a luxury resort in Clearwater (where the homeless are not welcome), Barbara Poppe of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, gave a speech in which she said “Housing, Housing, Housing!” She made known her preferences for Housing First. Our Texas Expert said

that Housing First was one of the craziest things he had ever heard. The annex plan does not address ending homelessness; it seems to be about shifting the homeless from one place to another.

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



Human Rights March in St. Petersburg, Florida. Demonstrators say housing is a human right.

PHOTO/NICK HINCKLEY, NEWROOTSNEWS.ORG

## Imagine Not Having To Worry About Finding A Job

By Bob Lee

Millions of people losing their jobs, millions of lives devastated. People losing everything, and ending up homeless. As someone put it, it’s a shock knowing that your talents and skills are dispensable. We don’t truly realize how much work gives meaning to our lives in this kind of society until we don’t have it.

The situation makes clear that we absolutely can, and must, have a society where we don’t have to worry about selling ourselves in the labor market every day in order to eat. That new society is possible right now. We have the technology to produce everything we need. But private property is standing in the way.

Think about the kind of society we have now. A relative few of us work for the government or for non-profit groups,

but most of us work for private employers, meaning for the handful of wealthy people who own the factories, the mines, the mills and the offices where things are produced. We have to sell our labor power — our ability to work — to these employers, these private owners of productive property. If they don’t want to buy it, for whatever reason, we don’t work, and if we don’t work we don’t eat. The owners of productive property only employ us when it’s profitable for them to do so. If a computer or robot can do the job, we get replaced. If the market for whatever a factory is making dries up, the factory shuts down. Under this system, employment is for someone’s private profit; we don’t put people to work just to satisfy our collective needs. If employing you doesn’t make a profit for someone, you get laid off. Today, given that robots and computers are re-

placing work permanently, there are not going to be jobs — in the old sense.

But this technological revolution in the economy also makes possible — and not just possible, but necessary — a revolution in how our society is organized. We, the people, could own society’s productive property ourselves. We could produce whatever we needed, whenever we needed it. We could guarantee that everyone in our society had everything they needed to have a full, cultured life — food, clothing, housing, education, health care. Technology would no longer be a threat to our ability to make a living; it would be a tool to give us more leisure time, more time to spend with our kids, more time to devote to taking care of each other and to doing the things that really personally satisfy us. We wouldn’t have to go to jobs that we hate, just so we could eat.

We wouldn’t have to struggle to make ends meet on wages that aren’t enough. We wouldn’t have to worry about being without health care. We wouldn’t have to fear becoming homeless, or live in poverty in devastated neighborhoods. We wouldn’t have to have work define our lives; we could focus on being happy. And isn’t that what life is supposed to be about?

The only thing in our way is a ridiculous system where our society’s productive property is in private hands. It may seem like a big job to change that, but history has shown that a system that can’t meet the basic needs of the people can and will be changed. Together we can do it.

*Bob Lee is the editor of the People’s Tribune.*

## VISION OF A NEW SOCIETY

This column is a place to discuss why a cooperative society is a practical solution to the problems people are fighting out. Send your articles to info@peopletribune.org or write: PT, P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654.



# WHAT AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH MEANS FOR US ALL

## From the Editors

African American History Month is a holiday that has critical meaning for every American. As we celebrate the achievements of individual African Americans, today's conditions necessitate that we discuss how we can achieve our vision of change for the American people. A key component of this is the solutions we can put forth to solve the deteriorating situation of the Black masses.

Today, almost nine in ten Black youth ages 16 to 19 are unemployed. There is a steady increase in Black teens murdered. Black families on average hold one-tenth the wealth of white families. HIV, a disease of poverty, disproportionately affects Blacks. There is a disproportionate number of Blacks in prisons.

This dangerous situation facing the African American poor is not happening in a vacuum. It is part of a process that is pulling millions of all colors and nationalities into poverty, and it is a harbinger of the future for everyone if we do not unite in a fight for our common needs.



Michigan school kids.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Today, the economy is losing millions of jobs. Nearly 50.7 million Americans, or one in six, are without healthcare. An estimated 50 million people struggled to put food on the table last year. The demand at food banks is up. One in four children are hungry. Growing numbers of Americans are going without other necessities such as water and heat in their homes.

Clearly, it is not possible for the African American masses to make dramatic advances while the working class (which most African Americans belong to) is sliding backward.

No problem can be solved without examining what lies at its root. Today, millions of jobs have been permanently lost with the advent of computers and robots. Without a job, people cannot buy

and the system begins to break down. The Black workers, who have historically been the last hired, and first fired, are the first to feel the effects. Today, the economic crisis is affecting ever wider sections of the population. Today, the corporate-run government operates to maximize profit. The system must put an end to the good standard of living that was once possible for a small section of workers.

The real question is how revolutionaries can work to unite the struggle of the millions of dispossessed Americans, regardless of background or color? Fundamental change cannot occur without the unity of those who are forced out of the system and into poverty. The key to bringing about that unity is to show people that they must build a powerful movement that forces the government to provide the food, clothing, health care, education, utilities and the other necessities that everyone needs. Such a focus will set the basis for the people to carry on the fight for the strategic goal: a whole new society.

## Speakers for a New America

Women's History Month, 2011 — Women are in the forefront of the fight for a better world. Our speakers bring a message of hope and the possibility of creating a new, equal society whose wealth benefits all.



**Cheri Honkala**  
National Coordinator for  
The Poor People's Economic  
Human Rights Campaign



**Ethel Long-Scott**  
Executive Director of  
The Women's Economic  
Agenda Project (WEAP)



**Maureen Taylor**  
State Chair,  
Michigan Welfare  
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## "Guardian Angel — Takes Care Of Elderly In Mobile Home Park"

By Lenette Evans



We have all been experiencing very unusual and cold weather conditions across the United States. Here in Michigan, the temperatures have gotten down to a frigid eight degrees at times.

But here in Watervliet, MI at a mobile home park there are a lot of elderly seniors who are having problems with their water pipes freezing underneath their mobile homes. In order to have a plumber come out to thaw out the pipes for just one mobile home it would cost \$900. Elderly seniors cannot afford that. They live on a fixed income and for many it's all they can do to afford a few

groceries for themselves and some cannot afford that.

Many of them are disabled and need help getting their driveways plowed out and to get to the store for medications, doctor appointments, and other things but have nobody to help them when they need it.

Many are very scared with the economy and prices going up on everything everyday. So many people have lost hope and our pathetic government isn't helping to take care of our people and especially our elderly in America.

"And my God will meet ALL your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." ---Philippians 4:9

Stores that once used to be open till 10 p.m are now closing earlier to conserve energy.

But when our government doesn't help this is where people need to stand

up and reach out to help people in need and to share the love of Jesus Christ by GIVING of ourselves unconditionally.

"If there is a poor man among you, of one of your brothers, in any of the towns of the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand to your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and generously lend him sufficient for his need in whatever he lacks." ---Deuteronomy 15:7

My friend Jim has a really huge heart for people and volunteers his time day-to-day for people in his mobile home park by sharing food with his neighbor, taking his elderly neighbors to the grocery store or picking up groceries at the store for them. He takes people to the hospital when they have emergencies, and he plows out his neighbors' driveways and much more without expect-

ing anything. He is a very generous and kindhearted person and he just loves to help people who truly need help.

Because of what Jim has been doing in helping others he is seeing neighbors that have never gotten out of their homes to talk to others who are now getting out and talking with other neighbors socializing and sharing food and things. This is exactly what God is shaking us all up in this world to do which is "TO BE GIVERS TO ONE ANOTHER ABUNDANTLY," and to go out of our way helping those in need!

The next step we all need to do is write to our government since they have all the resources and express our needs so they can start helping the people in this country!

Lenette Evans, *Saving Souls Ministry St. Joseph, MI, 269-876-1848, [Savingsouls1@yahoo.com](mailto:Savingsouls1@yahoo.com).*

# JOIN A TENANT CAMPAIGN TO OPPOSE HOUSING BUDGET CUTS!

By Sandy Perry

The National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) reports that “the new House leadership has proposed to cut \$100 billion from the still unfinished FY 2011 budget—21% — from discretionary federal programs as soon as March 4, 2011. If applied across the board to HUD, this could mean 750,000 Section 8 tenants cut off from federal assistance, starting this spring, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP).”

The danger is not just from Republicans. The Bipartisan Deficit Commission report in December also called for steep discretionary spending cuts of 7.1% in 2012 escalating every year up to 22.5% in 2020.

The time to act is now! NAHT is organizing local HUD tenant coalitions and organizing projects, CBPP, and the Resident Engagement Group (including Public, Voucher and Multifamily tenants coordinated by the National Housing Law Project) to initiate a national tenant-led campaign to demand full funding for Section 8, public housing



**These residents of Fresno, California show the need for full funding for HUD housing programs, not cuts. Even with HUD's current budget, they are forced to spend the winter living in tents on the F Street sidewalk. They recently stood up for their rights and won when police ordered them to move by 5 P.M. or get citations and have their tents removed by force. By refusing to back down and calling for community support, they protected their right to live on this small patch of public property.**

PHOTO /MIKE RHODES

and other housing programs.

To start the campaign, NAHT is organizing coordinated local actions on Valentine's Day (Monday February 14) targeting Senators and new Congresspeople with a message to “Have a Heart—Save Our Homes!” They are

coming together with public, voucher, multifamily tenants and/or homeless people and advocates in up to fifteen cities around the country, and inviting other national networks to do the same.

For more information, contact NAHT at <http://www.saveourhomes.org>

## Where

are you old man  
I saw earlier  
sitting on your folded blanket  
by the wall  
when I walked over here?  
old man, pitted  
big nose face  
returning my hello just  
with a flicker  
sharing our humanness  
where are you  
now that the rain  
is growing fierce  
with solstice light?

Cathleen Williams

## “We declare our right to organize”

# Rallies support activists' fight against FBI witch-hunt

By Chris Mahin

CHICAGO — “We WILL NOT take part in this fishing expedition.” Those defiant words brought a roar of approval from some 350 people rallying outside the Dirksen Federal Building here on January 25.

The Chicago demonstration was called to support international solidarity and anti-war activists who have been the targets of FBI raids and subpoenas.

In September, the FBI raided the homes and one office used by anti-war and international solidarity activists in Minnesota, Chicago, and Michigan. The FBI claimed that this was part of an investigation related to “material support for terrorism.” In December, nine additional activists were informed by the FBI that they were being subpoenaed. All nine were told to testify before a grand jury on January 25; all refused.

“Together with the 14 activists raided in September, we declare our right to organize to change U.S. policy,” the nine declared in their statement. The statement was read to the Chicago rally by Maureen Murphy, a Palestine solidarity activist and one of those subpoenaed.

Opposition to the witch-hunt against those who have been subpoenaed has grown steadily since the FBI raids in September. The Chicago rally was one of more than 40 such demonstrations across the United States on January 25.



**J Burger of Teamsters Local 743 on the Chicago picket line opposing FBI harassment of activists.**

PHOTO/RICH CAPALBO

(There were also demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin, Ireland and in Kiev, Ukraine.) Resolutions in support

of those targeted have been passed by important trade unions and community groups.

The spirited Chicago picket line and rally included trade unionists, veterans, and high school and college students. Christine Boardman, president of Local 73 of the Service Employees International Union, spoke at a press conference held outside the Dirksen Federal Building immediately before the picketing began. She made a strong statement in support of a member of her local, Joe Iosbaker, one of the targets of the raids. The SEIU local union president said that this same kind of repression was used against other, earlier movements. Jesse Sharkey, the vice-president of the Chicago Teachers Union spoke at the rally itself, as did Basil Ali of American Muslims for Palestine, and former political prisoner Ricardo Jimenez of the National Boricua Human Rights Network, and Sarah Smith, one of those subpoenaed.

Since the January 25 protests, the campaign to oppose the FBI witch-hunt has organized a national day of telephone calls to the offices of public officials to demand an end to the targeting of activists. Plans are underway to have a series of regional conferences in February to discuss strategy going forward.

*Editor's note: We urge our readers to continue to speak out against the raids and subpoenas and to help support the upcoming regional conferences. For more information, go to [www.stopfbi.net](http://www.stopfbi.net).*



# The Local AND Federal Governments Are Abandoning Us

By Eric Sheptock

WASHINGTON D.C. — Last month I wrote about how the D.C. Government was planning to limit TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients to 60 months in the program, despite the fact that we are in an economic downturn. No sooner had the ink dried on that article when I learned of plans by Congress to cut the H.U.D. (Housing and Urban Development) budget by 21%. All things considered, this translates into Washington, D.C. losing 5,000 of its 11,000 H.U.D. vouchers.

Congress failed to adopt a budget for Fiscal Year 2011. As a stop-gap measure they adopted a “continuing resolution” which is good until March 4 and allows all departments to be funded at the same levels as last year until that date. However, they’ve determined that they must cut \$101 billion from this year’s budget. Congress has ordered the Congressional

Budget Office (CBO) to cut a total of \$60 billion from all non-military discretionary budgets for 2011. They won’t cut anything from the entitlement budgets or from the discretionary portions of the military budget, but will instead cut from discretionary budgets like that of H.U.D. This says a lot about our government’s priorities.

H.U.D. mandates that all municipal governments that receive H.U.D. funding count their homeless in the last week of January in every odd-numbered year. (D.C. Government chooses to count its homeless EVERY year.) While the results of this year’s count are still forthcoming, the findings are sure to be grim. Washington, D.C.’s homeless population went from 5,757 in 2007 to 6,539 in 2010 — a 13.6% increase in 3 years. (This is in spite of the Permanent Supportive Housing program (PSH) having been initiated in September 2008 and having housed over 1,200 homeless peo-

ple at this point.) And there is no logical reason to believe that this year’s count will show a reversal of this trend. If the new Congress has its way, D.C.’s homeless population is bound to grow exponentially.

People in at least 22 cities across the nation are planning to do direct actions on Valentine’s Day with a message to our federal officials to “Have a heart.” In D.C. that effort is being spearheaded by Empower D.C. and will be preceded by a public awareness campaign which is intended to alert poor people to the policy initiatives that are in the pipeline and will adversely affect them. It is aptly named the “Reality Campaign”. As it turns out, in December members of COHHO (Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations) spoke of the need to inform TANF recipients that they will lose their benefits if the pending legislation passes. Since I have been the only person who attended both

meetings, I have encouraged the two groups to come together for a broader campaign which will hopefully include people from Maryland and Virginia.

With Washington, D.C. housing the federal government and having had “Home Rule” (a local government) since 1973, the local citizenry gets the best of both worlds. Sadly, this can result in the combination of federal and local policies hitting D.C.’s poor harder than most. (We also receive less federal money due to the fact that we are not located within a state.) But it also means that many national movements have converged on the city so as to speak truth to power. That said, a poor people’s march on D.C. is long overdue. But, for now, the focus is on increasing public awareness, as people can’t be expected to address a problem that they know nothing of. Knowledge is power.

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

## DETROIT: UNDER ATTACK!

By Maureen D. Taylor  
State Chairperson  
Michigan Welfare  
Rights Organization

Not a day goes by without continuous assaults leveled against Detroit, Wayne County, and workers living in the State of Michigan. We are inundated by a barrage aimed at lowering our quality of life so that the rest of the country will not resist when these corporations move against them.

Recently, we learned that in Detroit, there were 19 city-operated ambulances in full service, and that 29 trucks were out-of-service and in need of repair. The entire City must depend on these emergency vehicles to arrive in time when called to address critical medical needs, and we are unprotected. So little faith is held in this one single operation, that when a gunman burst into the 6th Police Precinct just days ago armed with a shotgun, indiscriminately firing at will, officers who were injured in this melee were transported to nearby hospitals in the backs of squad cars because there are no guarantees that the 911 ambulances will arrive.

We are fast approaching the critical situation experienced by sisters and brothers in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina aimed a flashlight on life there. No one is coming to help us here either. We are organizing communities of safety without local governmental support. We are



**Detroit protest against utility shut offs by DTE Energy. 80,000 homes are without utilities in Wayne County with 60,000 in Detroit.**

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

organizing transportation units without local governmental support. We are organizing committees to restore families who were evicted by corporate banks, and placing them back inside their homes. The frigid weather snap has forced us all to come together and demand that DTE Energy stop disconnecting lights and gas at the homes where the disabled, the elderly, and low-income families live especially in single degree temperatures.

The next battlefront is shaping up to be the one that fights against the corporate take-over of our municipally owned water, the “Jewel in the Crown.” Ownership of the Detroit Water Department has always been a local possession, paid for and operated

by the residents of this City. Recent revelations about the graft, the mis-management, and the ills associated with water operations are designed to create the atmosphere that approves of “privatization” as the only alternative.

We will hold on to the water operations, we will not allow our residents to be evicted without end, we will stand against utility shut-offs, we will organize communities of safety, and we will be that beacon of patriotism the country wants us to be! We get what we organize to take, and Detroiters “ain’t” taking this! To those corporate criminals making plans to take over our lives, our futures and our dreams, to you again we say, “NUTS!!!”

## Zombies, Fascists and Butterflies

I dream about zombies.  
They come out at night  
after their TV shows.  
They drink a lot of beer, too - which  
makes it easier for them to be controlled  
by the fascists.  
I’m not supposed to know this.  
The zombies think I’m uppity  
and rude if I mention it  
and I’m wanted by the fascists  
for these thought crimes.  
The fascists came for me and  
some children I was caring for  
in a zombie dream.  
It was kinda scary and we  
didn’t want them to take us  
away - which  
was a thought crime in itself.

But, then, a  
million  
white  
butterflies  
appeared  
in  
the  
sky.

The youngest child pointed them out.  
The fascists looked at them in awe, and left.

—Sarah Page

# Fight Anti-Worker Immigration Policies: Immigrants' Rights Are Workers' Rights

By Margarito Diaz

Throughout our nation hundreds of thousands of families are being destroyed. The tragedy is due to the rhetoric used in the immigration debate, which has led to SSA "No-Match" Letters, raids, E-Verify and now to something called ICE I-9 audits.

On August 15, 2007, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) issued new rules giving companies the green light to terminate employees from whom Social Security Administration (SSA) "No-Match" Letters were received. Fortunately, before this new rule was to take effect, a suit was filed, and in October 2007, a federal district court issued an injunction prohibiting ICE and SSA from implementing the new rule. Labor Unions and community organizations fought ICE in court, and on November 2009 ICE overturned all of its 2007 proposed rules regarding SSA "No-Match" Letters.

In May 2008, as Bush was to leave office, "The Biggest Raid" in U.S. history against workers took place at a meatpacking plant "Agriprocessors, Inc." in the city of Postville, Iowa. The raid created outrage in the neighboring communities and with the general public, due to the inhumane treatment of workers by ICE and the imprisonment of half



United Methodist Church members join protest for immigration rights.

PHOTO /UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

of Postville's population. The raid made headlines all over the world, and people all over the states drove to Postville to demand an end to all raids.

After taking office, the current administration encountered ICE-2007 SSA "No-Match" Letter Regulations blocked in court, and raids not very tasteful especially after Postville. So, the Obama administration has decided to go after workers with the E-Verify Program and ICE I-9 audits. E-Verify and audits have far more devastating effects than raids.

Hundreds of thousands of Union and

non-Union workers in factories, warehouses, industrial laundries, restaurants, meatpacking plants and janitorial services in the U.S. have lost their jobs. And soon, another great number of people will join the ranks of the unemployed, as the Obama administration pushes for lower unemployment numbers as the 2012 elections get near.

E-Verify is an electronic option available for all companies, to verify the eligibility of current and potential employees to work. All federal contractors are required to use the system, and a total of 14 states have imposed E-Verify on state agencies and companies who receive state contracts. According to the Orlando Business Journal, "In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2010, the system processed 583,052 queries compared to 241,328 a year earlier," and the prediction is that the number of queries will double in 2011.

The other variant is the I-9 audit. An I-9 Form has to be completed for every employee hired after 1986, and an I-9 audit is the inspection by ICE of the I-9

Form. According to ICE, three days prior to an I-9 audit the employer is given a notice of inspection, and if ICE has an underlying investigation, no notice may be given to the employer. In 2010, ICE conducted more than 2,400 I-9 audits, and that number is expected to triple this upcoming year.

Workers and communities across the country are currently going through the pain of I-9 audits. Among others, hundreds of workers in Minnesota, Massachusetts and Washington state have lost their jobs.

As of January 20, 2011, ICE announced the creation of a special task force to go after companies with E-verify and I-9 audits.

Right now, Labor Rights and Labor Unions are engaged in the fight for survival, and if organized labor gets destroyed, Labor Rights and the dreams of all working people are in danger.

As working people, as a community of workers we must fight back against all these anti-worker policies. We must work hard to convince our friends and neighbors to become advocates of Immigrants' Rights. If we are able to persuade everyone in our society that Immigrants' Rights are Workers' Rights, then we will be better prepared to fight the current and imminent attack against all workers by greed.

## An Open Letter To The Environmental Movement: It Is Time For An Alternative Strategy

By Dr. Issac Wolf

On December 20th, the Clean Energy Works (CEW), a coalition of 80 environmental, religious and labor groups, announced that it will end its lobbying efforts in Washington, DC, and begin a process aimed to "redirect their strategies" (Washington Post, 12/21/10). This move was prompted by the failure of the coalition's efforts to influence Congress to pass a nationwide cap on carbon emissions. The CEW's efforts were blocked by bipartisan opposition in the US Congress, and, as Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, observed, the defeat was fueled by corporate money, and the environmental movement was "never going to compete with Exxon in money." (WP, 12/21/10). There was also hostility from the Obama Administration. This is reflected by the January 18 directive from President Obama ordering the U.S. Regulatory Agencies to avoid "unreasonable burdens on business," a move characterized by Frank O'Donnell, President of Clean Air Watch, as "an early Valentine to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce." (WP, 1/19/11).

What happened to the Environmental

Movement? According to Fred Krupp, President of the Environmental Defense Fund, the environmentalists did not do a good job listening to and connecting with the American people (WP, 12/21/10). Thus, Krupp's solution is to do more "grass roots" work. But is this enough? Perhaps it is time to not only reassess where to work, but also what to work for.

The failure to force Congress to enact legislation placing a cap on carbon emissions is not only due to the corporate control of the US government. It is also due to the lack of a program that clearly benefits the "grass roots." The environmental movement has successfully educated the American people that the future of humankind depends upon reducing carbon dioxide emissions, but has failed to present a viable alternative program. The only strategy they offered was to replace coal-powered electricity with alternative energy production using wind, solar and geothermal techniques. However, this would result in higher energy prices as the current cost of electricity (per megawatt hour) from coal is \$59.51 compared to \$176.37 (offshore wind) and \$240.55 (solar). Thus, the

cost to the consumer would have to be at least 3 times higher to maintain current profitability. It would not automatically produce more jobs and actually pose potential ecological risks; for example, Save Western Maryland and the Maryland Conservation Council are suing Constellation Energy contending that its wind turbines will injure or kill the endangered Indiana bats, geothermal drilling has been shown to produce earthquakes and solar battery components are toxic.

It is unlikely that these issues will be part of the CEW strategy, especially since the development of wind power has gained support from power companies and their government allies. However, it is important that environmentalists avoid confusing corporate support for alternative power with a conversion to the "green" movement. It is clear that corporate "green" is money, and corporations see alternative power as a supplement not a replacement. In addition, with government, therefore public, subsidies, wind power is a profitable investment.

Profits are really the key environmental issue and the key to a new strat-

egy for the environmental movement. The new CEW strategy should be to ask the question "why does public power produce private wealth?" The answer is that while clean, cheap, renewable and safe power lies in a combination of technologies, the only way to achieve this objective is to nationalize energy production. Public control of public power is the winning strategy that will unleash the power of the human mind to save our planet.



Nationalizing energy production is the key to clean, cheap power.

PHOTO /DONATED



# CABRINI GREEN EVICTIONS: The Last Woman Standing, Part 2

By Joseph Peery

The following are excerpts from interviews with Annie Ricks, THE LAST WOMAN STANDING. Part 1 ran in the January, 2010 edition of the People's Tribune. All of the Cabrini Green high-rises are now in the process of being torn down.

**People's Tribune:** You were saying that if you didn't get out the building when you did, they (CHA) were going



All of the Cabrini Green high-rises are now in the process of being torn down by private contractors.

PHOTO /JOSEPH PEERY

to throw you onto the street?

**Annie Ricks:** The judge said I had to be out by then. I kept telling Eric Garrett (Asset Manager), Jadine Chou (Asset Management Director) and Bryce White (Community Outreach Director) that they couldn't assign me no address 'cause I wasn't in legal like other people.

**PT:** These are all the high level people in CHA trying to get you out...

**AR:** Right. And they had lied. Jadine told me that to get in Parkside I would have to be screened. She asked me, "Miss Ricks, could they eat off your floors?" They all lied, even Eric Garrett. When he came up to my house, he had the nerve to tell my son to leave. I told him, "How you gonna tell me who got to leave out my apartment; my son is visiting from Frazier, Michigan

for the holiday? You can't tell nobody to get up out my house." So I closed my door. We had talked to a reporter and they had asked how I felt about the building closing. I said, "I thought it was supposed to be closed January 4, because we got 60 day notices in November."

**PT:** Right. How can they make you move out prior to January 4?

**AR:** The judge said it wasn't safe in there.

**PT:** If they had thrown you out on the street, wouldn't you have been more unsafe than in that building?

**AR:** Yes I would. They had the nerve to ask me how I felt about coming in the building.

I said, I feel safe, you got police and security downstairs.

**PT:** Did the media tell the story the way it needed to be told?

**AR:** No they didn't.

**PT:** What was missing?

**AR:** They wanted to get us out of the Gold Coast area, and now they got it.

**PT:** What do you mean by 'they'?

**AR:** The rich people, they want the poor out. And it's inconvenient here, I could walk to the store, parks and public library in Cabrini.

**PT:** What about here in Wentworth Gardens, can't you get around here?

**AR:** No I can't. By me not having a car, I have to catch the bus and they don't have a lot of stores around here.

**PT:** People say they want the land back in Cabrini, talk about that.

**AR:** To my understanding, they do want it back, because Schiller School is now called Skinner and Truth School is now called Ogden.

**PT:** Are they all white schools now?

**AR:** Yes they are.

**PT:** What do you want people to know about your story?

**AR:** Only the strong survive. I want people to know me for what I did. I was active in the neighborhood and was well loved by kids and parents. There was a lot of love in Cabrini. I am gonna miss it. I want people to stand up for they self like I did.

**PT:** If they come here to Wentworth Gardens to tear this down to make condos, what should people do?

**AR:** All of us need to come together and not sell out. Everybody has got to stand, 'cause this they home. Don't let CHA or nobody else put you out of your community.

## The Hypocrisy of 'America's' Democracy

By Larry Pinkney

*"Sometimes people hold a core belief that is very strong. When they are presented with evidence that works against that belief, the new evidence cannot be accepted. It would create a feeling that is extremely uncomfortable, called cognitive dissonance. And because it is so important to protect the core belief, they will rationalize, ignore and even deny anything that doesn't fit in with the core belief."* — Frantz Fanon

*"Killing One Person Is MURDER — Killing 100,000 Is FOREIGN POLICY."* — Anonymous

The United States of America is, in reality, a one-party corporatist state whose very existence is, more than ever, perpetuated by a conscious deliberate denial of reality, even in the face of the obvious.

This nation's internal and external political, economic, and military policies have nothing whatever to do with "democracy," "justice," or "human rights;" and everything to do with exploitation, hegemony, deceit, and control of the many— by the few. No amount of rationalization can change or ameliorate this fact.

Everyday Black, White, Brown, Red, and Yellow people in this actual one-party U.S. corporatist state are the de facto cannon fodder of the corporate / military Democratic and Republican Party foxes and wolves respectively. Moreover, it is utterly absurd and delusory to expect "hope" to bring about

much-needed systemic "change." The time is here for the people of this nation to dispense with myths, face reality, and change it.

Corporations are in constant covert (and often unabashed overt) control of the White House, the Congress, and the judiciary, even as this nation's infrastructure deteriorates and living standards plummet — along with decent living wages and opportunities for everyday people. The two Rs — Rhetoric and Repression — are what the masses of everyday people are the daily recipients. Meanwhile, the corporate elite of corporations including Honeywell, General Electric, Lockheed, Boeing, and so very many more — rake in billions upon billions of dollars in blood money as they develop and perfect ever more sinister and devastatingly hideous devices and killing machines — to the scourge of humankind and the entire planet. There is no war (declared or undeclared) that the corporate / military elite do not support — for whether any war itself is won or lost — this avaricious corporate / military elite wins. They smugly and arrogantly wrap themselves in apparent political expediency under the cover of grotesquely distorted patriotism — sanctimoniously financially enriching themselves — while bathing in the precious irreplaceable blood of everyday people of this nation and that of people around the globe. This is the corporate trough from which the politicians of this nation drink and to which they are beholden.



Opening march to U.S. Social Forum.

PHOTO /DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

There can be no viable appeal to reason when the obvious is so studiously ignored. Thus, the need to intensify in our efforts to educate, agitate, and organize with and among everyday Black, White, Brown, Red, and Yellow people.

Justice for the people of Haiti! Justice for the people of Tunisia! Justice for the people of South Africa! Justice for the people of France, Germany, Greece, Iceland and Spain! Justice for the everyday people of the United States of America! Justice for students and workers! Justice for the peoples of the

world! Visualize a world free of corporate / military domination! Visualize it and struggle to make it real.

We must end this hypocrisy in 'America,' and in the words of Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again!" Let it be the 'America' of and for everyday people in harmony with everyday people of the world — of our Mother Earth, for she calls to us and we must answer!

Onward my sisters and brothers! Onward!

# The History of McAlmont, Arkansas

By Simuel Ramey  
and Karoma Smith

The history of McAlmont, Arkansas —The Slave Community — has a rich heritage that our youth should embrace and cherish. The first school in this area before the Civil War (during slavery) was known as “The Morning Glory School.” That was in 1836. Pulaski County High School, a one-teacher school taught by W. Foster, with two directors: R.E. Holt and W.M. Vaughns, opened its doors to Blacks in 1886.

In 1911, the school was moved to Bookers’ Terrace crossing, and the name was changed to Holt Training School. It was a frame building with four rooms. In 1912, after the building was destroyed by fire, a two-story structure was erected. P.J. Vanpelt was principal from 1911-1925. W.J.C. Hunter became principal prior to it being destroyed by fire. A newly built school was renamed Pulaski County Training School. The first school mascot was the “eagle.” Through the influence of Mr. Wallace VanPelt, the mascot was later changed to the “Panther.” Following the Spring graduation in 1963, the school was renamed Harris High after Mrs. Viola. H. Harris who was an administrator in the District and at McAlmont Elementary School. In 1970, from “segregation to integration” the school was stripped of its High School and became “Harris Elementary School.” Today it is the largest elementary school in the state of Arkansas.

And now, the powers that be are proposing to close the school down. “MY GOD!!!” There is a movement in place to prevent this closing. We are asking for everyone’s support to stop this closing. This is the ‘Pillar’ of our community.

The community was named after a prominent doctor/druggist named McAlmont who migrated to Little Rock after setting up practices in Pennsylvania,



**Feeding of the Homeless at New Dora Baptist Church in McAlmont, Arkansas. From left: Gladys Smith, Public Relations Director, H.E.A.T Foundation, Inc. (Helping Each Achieve Together); Doc Holliday, Polaski County Sheriff, Karoma Smith, Director, H.E.A.T Foundation, Inc.**

PHOTO/DONATED

Ohio, Benton, and Little Rock. He had a home northeast of town on Old Military Road, a railroad stop. There was a station on the St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern Pacific Railroads, called the McAlmont Station. The community was officially named McAlmont in 1876. In 1866 McAlmont was the Mayor of Little Rock. He was one of the eight founders of the Arkansas Industrial Department of Science, now known as University of Medical Sciences.

The great community of McAlmont was divided into the East and West side of the tracks. The settlers of McAlmont were dedicated to being good citizens while striving to maintain their families, properties, churches, and schools. The older settlers were property owners who helped each other by sharing what little they had. Though their homes weren’t fancy, they were proud and enthused about owning them. Many of our earlier settlers continued to work in the fields

as day hands, and most of them raised cows, hogs, chickens, and their own vegetable gardens to support their large families. Most of the families from the West side of the tracks purchased their homes from Camp Robinson. They shared discipline in the community, which gave credence to former First Lady Hillary Clintons’ book, “It Takes a Village to Raise a Child.”

We are so fortunate to have families who were willing to share memories of our earlier settlers. We are encouraged to be strong and work hard. This encouragement comes from our neighbors, parents, churches and schools. So, let us pass this encouragement on. I say again to our youth, our future; EMBRACE and CHERISH this HERITAGE!

*Karoma Smith/President H.E.A.T. Foundation, Inc. “Helping each achieve together.” Call 501.960.3415 or 501.945.1517. Email Arkansasheat5473@hotmail.com. Need Grant Writers!!! www.mcalmontday.org*

## Carmelo Parrilla: A Long Time Fighter for the Poor Passes

By Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) and the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KRWU)

We are writing about a good man who just passed away on December 30, 2010, to the extreme sadness of an entire family and community. His name is Carmelo Parrilla.

Carmelo Parrillo was a loving husband, father, uncle and friend to many. He loved and cared for his own and many other children throughout his lifetime. He not only took in families whenever the need arose, but having prevailed through his own struggle with homelessness over many years, Carmelo continued to house families

facing similar dire life situations. Carpentry was only one area of the broad maintenance skills which allowed Carmello to be creative in keeping people housed, heated and healthy no matter what the season or what any family’s circumstances. This was true as well for people whose livelihoods depended on having working vehicles; whenever Carmello was needed to address broken down cars he was there.

Having said all of this, Carmello did not believe in charity. When he passed out food from the back of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KRWU) truck, he was passing out food to soldiers in the army to end poverty.

There are many reasons why people in the struggle to end poverty, hunger

and homelessness in the neighborhoods most steeped in all of these in Philadelphia, refer to and will remember Carmello as one whom they call “the real deal.” It was Carmello who, though he himself had great difficulty reading English, insisted on attending every ‘educational’ given by the KRWU, Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) and the University of the Poor.

Carmello was one of the founders of PPEHRC. (All of his life, Carmello fought for equal top-notch education for the poor to educate the poor. This came directly from his personal struggle with English learning disabilities that were not identified or addressed until well into his adulthood.)

## The Real Purpose of Greed

By Simuel Ramey

There’s more to this madness and chaos than there appears to be. Underneath the guise of technology/advancement, lies the real purpose of GREED.

It is a greed so self-seeking it disregards all the moral, ethical and environmental standards of humanity. Encompassing enslavement, aggression, manipulation, treachery, deceit, betrayal, and disenfranchisement, the “dawn” of technology is bringing about the destruction of mankind and the environment.

When one has hunger, in a world where all natural things reproduce themselves; homelessness, with land available for everyone, but “owned” by a few, new diseases, depletion of natural resources, consequences are happening. Are the signs of global warming, species disappearing, birds falling from the sky, fish dying, natural habitats destroyed and natural disasters to be ignored or considered insignificant for the sake of progress (BIGGER, BETTER, FASTER) to promote GREED?



**Simuel Ramey, a star distributor of the People’s Tribune.**

PHOTO/PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE

It’s time for the people to come together and demand that their basic needs be met – food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, water, heat and more. It’s time for the people to demand that the earth be cared for, regardless of the monetary cost.



# Middle East Turmoil Shows Resistance to Global Capitalism

From the Editors

The events the world is currently witnessing in the streets of Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, the Yemen and Egypt indicate a qualitative shift in the revolutionary process sweeping the Arab world.

The Tunisian revolution succeeded in ousting a pro-U.S. dictator. Days later the Egyptian revolution erupted, threatening the imperial interests of the U.S. and its ally, Israel, in the region. The revolutionary events in Tunisia and Egypt have been led by the youth who have suffered the consequences of capitalist globalization: no freedom of expression, no liberties, no employment, no health care, no social security, and NO FUTURE. Repression supported by the U.S. has been an essential ingredient to keep the lid on protests against policies that have exacerbated the huge gap

between the rich and the poor.

The genius of the youth is reflected in their use of the Internet to organize protests that surprised the U.S. and its allies that had propped up those dictators to serve the interests of the global capitalist.

Coupled with what has been occurring in the Middle East region, namely the Iraq, Afghanistan, and Somali wars, the breaking up of the Sudan, the crisis in Lebanon and the deteriorating Iranian-U.S. situation, it is not difficult to see that capitalist exploitation is being resisted by the peoples of that region as it is by peoples across the globe.

As we struggle against capitalism here at home we stretch our hand to and stand with the Tunisian and Egyptian people. After all, the capitalists are our common enemy.

## The Industrial Complex ... That is Texas Prisons



By Isma'il Abdul Rahman

From state to state, coast to coast, states are considering the release of prisoners as a viable option to meeting their budgets, except TEXAS! The state with the second largest prison system (120 prisons, 180,000 prisoners) in America is actually looking to expand its prison system because the prison system in Texas is a cash-laden Industrial Complex!

Under the guise of being “self-sufficient”, Texas prison officials created an industry called, Texas Corrections Industries or (TCI) in 1963, where free prisoner labor is utilized to make all types of products from hand soap to bed sheets, to raising livestock and making iron toilets and portable buildings. Free prisoner labor also maintains the water recycling and purification systems for all Texas prison units. TCI is a “Publicly Traded Stock” on the New York Stock Exchange, making the Texas Prison System one of the only Prison Systems you can buy stock in. TCI operates numerous furniture factories, garment and textile factories, slaughter house and meat

packing plants making products to be sold on the open market.

Immediately after the creation of TCI, Texas prison populations exploded. I often wonder how many Judges, District Attorneys or Government officials own stock in TCI. One would think there exists a conflict of interest or even “insider trading”, when the people who hold stock in a prison industry company are the very ones who control prison sentences and populations. Wouldn't you think it's a criminal act to convert a place that was designed for punishment and corrections into a multi-million dollar industry?

The Texas prison system and state of Texas and their industrial complex is a bread and butter commodity producing machine that will never work to decrease the prison population. We can only hope that TCI one day will start paying its workers, so they can at least buy hygiene items, since they are not provided to indigent prisoners.

*This is excerpted from a longer article.*

## Upon Reading “Man With The Hoe”

Strangling in the muck of history  
He leans against the tavern wall  
And silently gazes across the Avenue  
Where watchdogs of property  
With vulture eyes and shotguns  
Impose Pax Americana.

With the brooding hatred of the helpless  
With the weight of tradition's chains  
Upon sagging shoulders,  
He indicts  
The lords of heaven and hell

You, who stole the rapture of his youth,  
You who heaped grief upon sorrow,  
You who hoped to silence hope  
With the authority of fear —  
Listen to the silence —  
Do not believe  
It is submission,  
Or that the lowered eyes no longer see  
The mountain.

For he is the son of the slave  
Who built and brought down  
Empires of the ages.

His are the hands that created  
The vaulted heaps of gold and silver,  
Inspired the art, the soothing music —  
That dragged humanity from the swamp.

You! Lords of the universe!  
Do you believe those who concretized dreams  
Do not dream?  
Or those who materialized vision  
Have no future?

He is the gathering storm,  
The whirlwind that thunders  
Condemnation!

More than destroy the old —  
The guns of pride, of property and privilege,  
He will build the world of peace and love.  
And dance with six winged Angels.

Nelson Peery

# VOICES FROM BENTON HARBOR, MI

## WE MUST FIGHT FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, am the first political prisoner in the city of Benton Harbor. I have been living in the depths of the de facto apartheid type conditions in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Benton Harbor, the state of Michigan and the whole country.

Berrien County has a long history of doing whatever it wants to do to the people. Whatever Whirlpool wants, that is what Berrien County wants. The Berrien County court system is set up to keep the corruption and power structure in place and the people down.

I am not and will not be the only political prisoner. Mumia Abu Jamal will lose his life to a vindictive city

and Russell Maroon Shoatz, a new African political prisoner of war, who at this moment is serving a prison sentence at Waynesbury, Pennsylvania State Institution. He was originally locked up in January of 1972 and has spent over 33 years in 15 different states, counties, and Federal prisons, jails, and a Maximum security prison/mental institution and over 17 years were spent in the hole of these various facilities locked down for more than 23 hours daily.

I, Rev Edward Pinkney, remain committed to fight for freedom for all and will not rest until the people are free from oppression. We are in another era, one that was not born from the euphoria and idealism of the sixties and government is once again arresting, subpoenaing and tormenting movements. The government is hoping people will become informants. We must resist. We must not compromise. We must defend every single political prisoner. This includes all of those imprisoned because of poverty.

We must keep our mind on freedom and our freedom on our mind.

### QUOTES FROM THE COMMUNITY:

We must study politics and war that our sons may have liberty to study math in our school system that is controlled and destroyed by Whirlpool. — Rev. Smith

I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty but driving them out of poverty. We must work together to help the poor. — Dorothy Pinkney

### DONATE TO KEEP REVEREND PINKNEY OUT OF PRISON

Rev. Pinkney must pay \$5,000 in court costs and fines, the consequence of a year long illegal prison term or he will be returned to prison, something Whirlpool and the courts would like nothing more. Rev. Pinkney stood up for all of us. Any size donation would be appreciated. BANCO is a 501C-3 and tax deductible. Send to BANCO, 1940 Union St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022.

— Pastor Mary Gault

## The River

*For the 'Where's Our Change? Housing is a Human Right' march*

shoulder to shoulder  
face by beautiful face  
marching thru the rain

oh my people  
oh my sisters and brothers  
come from everywhere  
and from every struggle  
each with a singular heart  
to add to the work of justice

my revolutionary sister  
speaks of the newborn who died  
in the homeless cold  
and the millions of hungry children  
in this land of abundance:  
how can we not be marching  
for the overturning  
of any system that murders  
its new life this way?  
this illegitimate order  
that builds prisons for us  
instead of housing

do you see us coming?  
with our little brass band  
with our visionaries  
with our radiant faces  
thru the cold rain  
thru the storm demanding  
'house keys not handcuffs'  
humanity not death  
cooperation not despair  
a revolution: a turning-around  
into an order of love and justice

it starts here: it continues here  
every small stream  
coming together from everywhere  
a mighty living river of us  
into the human future

— Sarah Menefee



Protest against Whirlpool's land grab in Benton Harbor, MI.

PHOTO CREDIT/BRETT JELINEK

I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, am the first pastor in history to be sent to prison for quoting the Bible. Do not quote Deuteronomy 28 in Berrien County Courthouse. It will scare the judges.

When I was in prison I started organizing the prisoners. I stated that we are not eating that buck-naked fish.

The bottom line was when the Appellate Court overturned the Berrien County Court decision to imprison me. It was a major victory for the people in

government, unless the community can mobilize to protest his incarceration. Mumia, a journalist, was labeled a voice for the voiceless by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for exposing what the U.S. department of Justice called the practice of police brutality against minorities by the local Police Department.

There are many political prisoners such as William Phillips Africa, Sundiata Acoli, Herman Bell, Oscar Lopez Rivera, Jonathan Paul, Marshall Eddie Conway

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