

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

APRIL 2011, VOLUME 39, NO. 4

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Rally in Lansing, Michigan against the governor's budget and the passage of the Emergency Financial Manager's bill that gives sweeping new powers to break union contracts, dismiss elected officials, and disincorporate entire municipalities.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

## INSIDE:

Assault on Media	2
Cabrini Green Evictions	4
America's Rust Belt Erupts	5-8
New Fascist Law in Michigan	6
Bail Out Students, Not Banks	10
Homeless in Washington DC	11
Protest PGA in Benton Harbor	12

# SOCK IT TO 'EM TAX THE RICH

Pages 3 and 5-8



# Attempt to Muzzle the Media Part of Drive Toward Fascism

## EDITORIAL

A thousand mile journey starts with (and develops with) a thirty-inch step. This often quoted adage certainly applies to the development of the political features of fascism in the United States. We took another step with the firing of Vivian Schiller, CEO and President of National Public Radio, because an NPR fundraiser make remarks attacking the conservatives. Conservatives in Congress then launched a new campaign to stop federal funding of NPR. The media community was frighteningly quiet with each media organization thinking they may be next. As the man said, fail to learn from history and you will repeat it. We are way down that road.

Have we forgotten why America fought a war that left 60 million dead and continents in ruins? Does anyone remember the Four Freedoms which was our battle cry against the fascist powers? During those terrible days the Office of War Information wrote to the American people, "The freedoms we are fighting for, we who are free: the freedom for which the men and women in the concentration camps and prisons and in the dark streets of the subjugated countries wait are four in number. The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want — which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants — everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world."

To advocate such policy today places one in danger of losing their job for being "too liberal," and places their organization in the cross hairs of Congressional investigation.

The economic foundation of fascism — the merger of corporate and national political power — is just about complete. The political face of fascism is in place.

Under the so called "REX" program the President could declare a state of emergency, empowering the head of

bilities, combined with the exploding computerized information technologies, have enabled a massive data base of personal information to be developed on millions of unsuspecting American citizens. It is all in place awaiting only a presidential declaration to be enforced by both military and civilian police.

The hideous social face of fascism is in place. The racist gangs allied with the outright neo-Nazi groups already represent a formidable threat. The political and social aspects of fascism have not



FEMA to take control of the internal infrastructure of the United States and suspend the constitution. The President could invoke Executive Orders 11000 thru 11004 which would: 1 — Draft all citizens into work forces under government supervision. 2 — Empower the postmaster to register all men, women and children. 3 — Seize all airports and aircraft. 4 — Seize all housing and establish forced relocation (i. e. concentration camps) of citizens.

Since the Senate hearings on surveillance in 1975, the steady development of highly specialized surveillance capa-

been unleashed because there has been no serious organized resistance. The rapidly deteriorating economic situation will change all that.

The reality is this country is in trouble and that trouble cannot be fixed without fundamental changes in the economic relations. Nothing less than replacing this military-financial oligarchy with a cooperative society can save it. This is our country, the only home we have. We fought the German and Japanese fascists to save it.

Do we dare turn our backs on it now?

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

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

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

**PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY:**  
Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

**Deadlines for articles and art:** The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 600 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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**Publisher:** People's Tribune  
ISSN# 1081-4787

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## 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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# SOCK IT TO 'EM: TAX THE RICH

## COVER STORY

In recent months we have seen massive protests in many cities across the United States, fighting new laws to take away workers' rights. These demonstrations show that people have power beyond filling out a ballot every year or two. They show that masses of people can become engaged in their communities, broad sections of people uniting to take a stand and take action. The occupation of the Capitol Building in Madison, Wis., has been a tremendous display of solidarity, capturing the attention of the world, projecting the demands of Wisconsin's working class.

The attacks on workers' rights are pulling hundreds of thousands of people into action across the country. From the streets of Madison to Michigan to Ohio to Indiana the enthusiasm is palpable, the solidarity infectious, and the momentum is growing. Recall campaigns and legal challenges to egregious new laws have gained tremendous momentum. These campaigns mobilize people and can have visible results, yet we must take these demands even further. As historic labor champion Lucy Parsons once said, "Never be deceived that the rich will permit you to vote away their wealth."

Every corner of this country is under attack: from Michigan to Oregon,

from Arizona to Florida to Connecticut. Dozens of states are considering bills that will limit the collective bargaining of public sector unions and other major attacks on the rights of workers. Lawmakers have used the deficits that forty-four states face as the impetus to slash workers' rights, pay, and benefits. These new laws aim to shift the burden of the economic crisis from extremely wealthy individuals and corporations onto the working class.

Taxpayers have already paid enough, bailing out banks and financial institutions with trillions of dollars, and are now taking to the streets to say, "We will not pay anymore to solve this crisis!" Voices rising from the struggle are demanding, "Tax the rich!" The budget deficits, which most states face, are not due to a lack of money. There is no shortage of money. The rich and the corporations have your money.

Corporate profits are the highest they've ever been in the 60 years that the Department of commerce has been keeping records. These profits have been generated through the use of new technologies in automation and robotics, which have contributed to a "jobless recovery." Millions of jobs are being permanently eliminated and millions more are on the chopping block. Indeed all sectors of work, from store clerks to car builders, even lawyers, are made vulnerable by cost-efficient automated technologies. This is why we see the corporate assault on the workers — the corporations will no longer provide wages, benefits and services for workers they don't need.

With labor costs down and productivity up, profits are soaring. Even though corporations are making more money than ever, legal loopholes and tax evasion techniques allow many of America's corporations and wealthiest individuals to pay little to nothing in taxes. Countless times since the recession began in 2008 we have seen the government align itself closer and closer with the corporations. In effect, the corporations and the government have merged, creating the basis for an all out attack on democracy.

The demonstrations in Wisconsin and elsewhere present the working class with an opportunity to take a decisive



Tens of thousands of workers, farmers and students protested in Madison, Wisconsin in March against the budget cuts and a law to abolish collective bargaining rights for state employees.

PHOTO/ANTHONY D. PRINCE

stand for its own self-interest. As the economic crisis plays out, more people are seeing the need to rebuild the economy in a way that meets the needs of the many; this is a process that must unfold, with each step along the way marked with the deliberate actions of con-

cerned people, organizers, and activists.

Frederic Douglas famously said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand — it never has and it never will." Working people across the nation unite to demand, "Tax the rich!"

### 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.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org).

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# CABRINI GREEN EVICTIONS: SMALL VICTORY!

By Joseph Peery

CHICAGO, IL — Billionaire Warren Buffett, once said, “There is a class war, and my side is winning.” On February 16, 2011, Roberta Rendles, a former Cabrini Green resident, won a year-long Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) eviction case. The mother of two was accused of violating the “Good Conduct” part of her lease when two people were arrested in her home for marijuana possession and trespassing while she was babysitting her nephew at her sister’s apartment in another part of the building. Judge Murray’s ruling centered on the fact that the CHA failed to give Ms. Rendles a copy of the “Good Conduct” part of her lease and documented that fact when they left the box blank verifying that she got it.

Indeed, countless CHA residents have shown me their leases and all but two had blank verification boxes. None of them have received any part of the twenty-nine page document entitled CHANGE, CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY, FY2009, RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT, Board of Commissioners Approved, August 18, 2009, which includes the “Good Conduct” portion. Attorneys, Kingsley Clarke and Ed Voci, representing Ms. Roberta Rendles, say that this ruling may affect thousands of CHA residents who

have been kicked out of their homes.

Here is Roberta’s side: While the Chicago Sun Times reports in a February 23, 2011 article entitled “Blank Box Allows CHA Tenant To Keep Her Home,” that a “Cabrini Green resident

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**Public housing is being dismantled and what is being built to replace it is becoming the private property of the Warren Buffets of the world . . .**

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accused of harboring drug dealers cannot be evicted from her Chicago Housing Authority home because an official forgot to check a box on her lease agreement,” and CHA spokespersons in the same article call it, “an isolated incident brought on by an unfortunate clerical error,” Roberta offers another account. “My auntie was in my apartment cooking, with my door open. The guy came in first and shortly after the girl came in and the police came in behind her. They told my auntie that they observed the girl buy drugs downstairs

on the first floor and followed her up. By the time I got there, both were arrested for trespass and the girl was charged with possession. They searched my apartment and found nothing.

My question is, if these people weren’t supposed to be in the building, how did they get past security on the first floor? And if the police saw a drug sale, why didn’t they make an arrest right then and there?” As pertains to the lease, Roberta maintains that nobody gets a copy of the rules and everyone’s lease has blank boxes. Since this has happened, Roberta has become active in the community. About eight or nine people from the old building (1230 N. Burling) are going through eviction. “I help as many people as I can,” says Roberta, “I go to court with them and I show them how to do Jury Demands.”

TAKE A SIDE: Public housing is being dismantled and what is being built to replace it is becoming the private property of the Warren Buffets of the world. They determine who will live there and who will not. We have no way of knowing how many human beings have been thrown out on the street wrongfully in this process by the CHA, how many of them remained homeless, or even how many of them may have died on the street as a result. However, it can be said with certainty that this is the fate that awaits many of us if we don’t save ourselves.



Private contractors tearing down public housing units at Cabrini Green Projects in Chicago.

PHOTO/JOSEPH PEERY

Roberta Rendles took the first step when she defended herself. She took the next step when she began to defend others. The next logical step is for the rest of us, the exploited and oppressed of this land, homeless and housed, working and unemployed, to begin thinking about how we can take political power and run the country in our interest.

## FIGHTING FORECLOSURES IN FLORIDA

By Rev. Bruce Wright

We live in exciting and perilous times! All over the world, this country, and our community, people are rising up and calling for social and economic justice, peace, housing, and worker’s rights! We are beginning to realize that this is a class struggle between the people and wealthy corporate elites pulling the strings of repressive governments, both domestic and international. People are continuing to lose the rights to organize and unionize, lose their homes to greedy banks and foreclosures, lose their jobs, become homeless, and face a police state.

In Madison, an illegal vote took place to destroy worker rights in Wisconsin. In Michigan, the Governor seized the right to usurp duly elected officials and take control of city councils and mayor’s offices throughout the state. Now it is happening not only throughout the mid-west, but here in Florida as well.

We have heard calls for walk outs, general strikes, and direct action. We at the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign and the Refuge join these calls for action. The answer for homelessness is housing first, NOT jail annexes disguised as shelters, not gov-



Protest in St. Petersburg Florida calling for housing to be a human right.

PHOTO/NICK HINCKLEY, NEWROOTSNEWS.ORG

ernment-run tent cities. Let the worker, the unemployed, the homeless, the poor, the ex-con and the oppressed lead and create the answers to these problems.

The wealthy bankers and corporate whores that have robbed us can no longer be tolerated. The revolutionary movement is a God-given call. As John the Apostle teaches us, “How can the love of God dwell in someone who sees

their brother or sister in need and does nothing!” Fake so-called Christians who support the wealthy corporate fascist oligarchy must REPENT! Will we side with the people or with greed?

In mid-February three homeless people and three supporters moved into a blighted, foreclosed property in a previously middle class neighborhood and made improvements to the roof, win-

## SPIRIT OF THE REVOLUTION

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](mailto:spirit@peopletribune.org).

dows, and landscaping. They got water and electricity running. In the process, they enhanced the values of the surrounding properties, on a block where three other homes are sitting vacant in foreclosure.

A confusing web of financial institutions now “own” this property in an area of St. Petersburg that until the recent housing collapse was a “Beaver Cleaver” neighborhood. Middle class folks worked hard here to try to achieve the American Dream of home ownership.

We had legally established residency, but the St. Petersburg Police, at the direction of a supposed representative of the bank, who never proved who he was, illegally evicted us from our home. They illegally entered our house, questioned my minor son without my permission, refused to let us move, stated that they didn’t care what the law said, and illegally dismissed our attorney, whom we had a right to have present.

We lost this battle, but we will continue to look at taking over houses, creating intentional community, and resisting foreclosure. “Woe to you who make unjust laws that deprive the poor of their rights.” Isaiah 10:1.

Rev. Bruce Wright is the director of the Refuge in St. Petersburg, Florida.



# AMERICA'S RUST BELT ERUPTS

On pages 5 through 8 of this issue, readers will find coverage of the ongoing battle between workers and the corporations which is being fought over the issues of state budget cuts and union busting in the Rust Belt states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The Rust Belt is a harbinger of the future of the rest of the country if we don't act. — *The Editors*

## Michigan Rallies Protest Bills That Attack Labor

By Waistline

Twenty years after Governor Engler abolished general assistance, began slashing government programs for the poor and destitute, declaring cities bankrupt and stripping them of their assets, the political class loyal to big capital seeks the means to give more tax breaks to the billionaires and make workers foot the bill. The idea that tax breaks to corporations, low wages and placing the burden of the economic crisis on the backs of the workers can grow the economy is insanity.

**These laws are nothing less than legalizing a fascist takeover of government by corporations.**

Michigan state government passed legislation to strip unions of their collective bargaining rights, setting workers from police officers, firefighters, government workers, teachers and seniors into political protest. First came the February 23 protest of hundreds of police officers in the Capitol, then the March 15, protest of more than 1,000 seniors. AARP Michigan, the senior citizens organization, helped to bring half of the protesters. They held signs

reading "Don't tax the poor and elderly to bribe the rich" and "Corporate greed is the problem, not Grandma!"

An even larger rally took place March 16, with unions protesting dozens of bills that cut away at collective bargaining rights, prevailing wage laws and other measures important to unions. The Emergency Management Laws were singled out. These laws grant ap-



Rally in Lansing, MI against the governor's budget and the passage of the Emergency Financial Manager's Bill that gives sweeping new powers to break union contracts, dismiss elected officials and disincorporate entire municipalities.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

pointed emergency financial managers sweeping new powers to break union contracts, dismiss elected officials, and even disincorporate entire municipalities. These laws are nothing less than legalizing a fascist takeover of government by corporations and political henchman of the capitalists. Who voted for these guys?

### What is happening in America?

No longer is it just the poor and destitute being thrown under the bus of capitalism's crisis. Economic revolution, brought on by advanced electronic technologies is eliminating millions of jobs, lowering wages as people compete with

computers and robots and low wage producers in the world market. Anyone and everyone can be replaced by a new technology or a lower paid worker seeking to escape destitution.

It is not simply the growth of poverty that is significant today. It is that this destruction has penetrated the vast "middle" in American society. This section of society once embraced the illusion of inclusion, only to find out that no section of the working class is immune to the economic crisis.

Consequently, many of the demands and slogans of March 16 were centered on preserving the "middle class" or "middle America" and "hard working Americans." In reality, there is no "middle class." The "middle class" is just the more highly paid section of the working class. Their loyalty to capitalism was bought with high wages and benefits. Today, what was once the more economically well-off "middle" of American society is being crushed down into the lower section of the working class.

The "middle class" is in the process of finding out that the capitalists are not their friends, and that to defend the interests of the working class, they have to defend the bottom of the social ladder also. It is only a matter of time before a new layer of the working class is cast into poverty. Our slogan has to be "one for all and all for one."

"Where do we draw the line" and "whose side are you on?"

Here are questions all union members must ask themselves and then demand their union stand up for the entire working class.

"One for all and all for One."

## Ohio Union Leader Speaks About the Attack on Labor

By Sandy Reid

The People's Tribune interviewed Harold Mitchell, First Vice President, AFSCME, Ohio Council 8 about the attack on public employee unions in Ohio.

**People's Tribune:** Harold, are the large protests against the anti-union bill still going on at the Ohio statehouse?

**Harold Mitchell:** Currently the large demonstrations that were held for a few weeks when the bill was being discussed in the Senate are now moving more to regional and local demonstrations in smaller cities around Ohio, continuously building support in opposition to the bill.

**PT:** Tell us about the bill.

**HM:** We have had a public employee collective bargaining law in effect for 27 years. They are trying to gut the law

in an effort to make unions basically irrelevant in the workplace and in the political arena. One of the differences between the Wisconsin strategy and Ohio's is that Wisconsin decided that they could get more public support if they exempted police, highway patrol and firemen. Ohio is including everyone. Safety forces currently don't have a right to strike. The bill would eliminate the right to strike for every public employee. We would have a right to bargain over wages with the legislative body making the final decision if an impasse is reached.

**PT:** What is labor's strategy?

**HM:** The strategy is to build public support against the bill and to prepare for a petition drive leading to a ballot referendum. A referendum is where you would have to get a certain amount of signatures of registered voters based

upon the number of people who voted in the last election. If you reach the threshold for the number of registered voters, the issue would go on the ballot and voters would decide. In this case, we need 231,000 signatures. Our goal is to get 500,000 signatures.

**PT:** What is the consciousness of the people? Is anger growing against the rich who pay little or no taxes?

**HM:** I'm not sure that the people have reached the consciousness yet that the rich are not paying their fair share. Some of them don't see it until issues like Senate Bill 5 affect them personally. Forty percent of the unionized state employees voted for this governor — now he is privatizing or outright eliminating their jobs. In Ohio, the cities are already devastated — Cleveland, Youngstown, Dayton, Toledo — they are now facing a 33% cut in local

government funding from the state with no way to make it up except to make cuts on the local level.

One thing that has been clear to a lot of people is that the force behind a lot of the attacks is the Tea Party. The chairperson of the Senate Committee chairing this legislation actually made an appeal to the Tea Party to have their activists show up to support the bill. The Tea Party has told Republican legislators that they had better stay on track or they will go after them in the next election.

Senate Bill 5 has brought the different elements in the labor movement together. The AFL-CIO affiliates, Change to Win affiliates and non-affiliated unions like the Fraternal Order of Police and the Ohio Education Association are solidly unified to save collective bargaining and the middle class.



# THE PEOPLE VERSUS THE CORPORATIONS IN THE RUST BELT

From the Editors

The people of America's industrial heartland, in the Rust Belt states, are beginning to stand up in larger and larger numbers. They are responding to a corporate assault on their rights, their jobs and their standard of living that has been going on for 40 years, an assault that has escalated over the last two years with the financial crisis and the Great Recession. Public sector workers and their unions are the most recent targets of the attack, and their fighting response has galvanized many others into action. The people are saying "No!" to wage and benefit cuts, to cuts in social services, to privatization, and to restrictions on their democratic rights to organize and voice their views.

The corporate assault in the Rust Belt is just the leading edge of a nationwide attack on the people. Why is this happening? For decades the corporations have been lowering the cost of production by replacing labor with technology and shipping jobs to low-wage areas. The result is a growing mass of per-

manently unemployed and underemployed people — workers who are simply no longer needed for production. And the corporations will not provide wages, benefits or services for workers they don't need. In recent years we have seen this process spread to the more stably employed, higher-wage section of the working class — the so-called "middle class" — and they are losing everything. And now, for the first time it's effects are penetrating the public sector of the economy.

This process of replacing labor with technology led to the financial crisis and the recession. The latest chapter in the story is that government revenues are falling because of the economic crisis. The problem could be easily solved by taxing the corporations and the rich, but the corporations — which for all practical purposes have become the government — are telling the workers "you must pay for the crisis." The corporations are moving to break the public sector unions and demand wage, benefit and service cuts, as a means test to attack all of organized labor and eliminate the concept of collective bargaining

altogether.

The workers don't have to pay for the budget crises. There is plenty of money to resolve the deficits at both the state and federal level and provide the social safety net our people need. The rich and the corporations have the money. We must demand that both the state and federal governments tax the corporations and the rich, and that the federal government provide emergency aid to the states for expanded social service programs.

We must also understand that a new society is going to be built around the new, labor-replacing technology. The only question is, will that society serve the people or the corporations? Right now, our society, including the government, is being restructured by the corporations to guarantee their power and their profits. We, the people, have a simple choice: we can become slaves of the corporations or we can educate and organize ourselves to get the political power we need to restructure society around the workers' interests. The future is up to us!

Coming Soon to a Town Near You!

## State Law Empowers "Manager" to Set Aside Collective Bargaining Agreements, Seize Public Assets

Special to the People's Tribune from Claire McClinton

In 1990, the State of Michigan passed a law enabling the governor to appoint and dispatch "emergency financial managers" to cities, towns, and school districts deemed facing "dire financial troubles". The managers have full authority to make financial decisions without approval of the elected city or school board officials. Voters are disenfranchised as the decisions of the "manager" are binding.

Both Republican and Democratic Governors have used the undemocratic law.

Enter new Governor Rick Snyder signing a new and more draconian bill while thousands of protesters flooded the Lansing capitol protesting it along with budget cuts. The new bill, the "Local Government and School District Financial Responsibility Act," enhances powers of managers/dictators, which includes allowing them to sell public assets and SET ASIDE OR CHANGE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS. The state of Michigan has parleyed what was already a voter disenfranchise law into what one state senator calls "financial martial law" into a fast track to privatization and union busting — removing all obstacles to naked corporate power.

The following are excerpts from articles and an editorial from an online newspaper: Voice of Detroit vod.net which is just a sample of citizen outrage.

### CLASS WAR IN MICHIGAN

By Diane Bukowski

LANSING and DETROIT, Feb. 16 — "When are people going to wake up and re-

alize we are in a class war?" asked Cecily McClellan, Vice-President of the city of Detroit's Association of Professional and Technical Employees (APTE). "Our government now is nothing but a corporatocracy and it is in a full frontal attack against us." She and a dozen others gathered at the Spirit of Detroit statue outside the Coleman A. Young Center to plan a fightback against multiple attacks on Detroit, including its water department.

Mike Mulholland, secretary-treasurer of AFSCME Local 207, representing Detroit Water Department workers, said, "We need to do what they are doing [did] in Wisconsin. The teachers and students in Wisconsin have shut down the schools in response to the governor's attacks. We do have the power and we can win." Richard Hairston, a WHPR-TV commentator said, "This is Detroit's Egyptian moment."

### COMMENTARY BY DIANE BUKOWSKI

We are at war! As in Egypt, Wisconsin and elsewhere. Snyder is no different from Walker; he's just doing his fascist dirt more undercover, in alliance with the legislature. Rise, ye mighty labor movement (what's left of us after years of concessions), or the next step will be concentration camps for union leaders as happened in Hitler's Germany. Collective bargaining was actually a contract between labor and the capitalist class, negotiated in the 1930's to end the massive wave of sit-down strikes. It provided a way for the system to forge ahead with labor peace and still rake in huge profits, conduct unending wars, and devastate our cities! If it is now to be removed, there must no longer be labor peace!

READ: "No More Tradition's Chains," by clicking on [voiceofdetroit.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/No-More-Traditions-Chains.pdf](http://voiceofdetroit.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/No-More-Traditions-Chains.pdf). It is a summary of labor history in America, and the crisis now faced by the labor movement, as well as unorganized and unemployed workers.

### NO LIMITS ON POWER OF EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGERS (EFM)

The newly passed Michigan law includes the following:

- Power of all local officials suspended. Local officials may be removed if they do not comply with EFM's orders.
- Receive and disburse all state and federal funds.
- ENTER INTO CONTRACTS OR TERMINATE EXISTING CONTRACTS, INCLUDING UNION CONTRACTS AT WILL.
- SELL, LEASE, OR CONVEY ASSETS OF LOCAL ENTITY (E.G. DETROIT WATER DEPARTMENT)
- DISINCORPORATE OR DISSOLVE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND DISTRIBUTE ASSETS AS ALLOWED BY LAW.
- Establish academic plans and reduce class schedules.
- Establish staffing levels, even below minimum requirements.

EFM has no term limits and no cap on salary.  
EFM can be a firm.



From top to bottom, left to right: Michigan, PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM; Madison, PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK; Ohio; [JPTPKPE WEODMER. AFSCME, Indiana, PHOTO Greg Hansen, Michigan, PHOTO Daymonjhartley.com

## WISCONSIN FARMERS JOIN LABOR PROTESTS

What follows are excerpts from a speech given at the March 12 rally in Madison by Tony Schultz, a third generation family farmer from Athens, Wisconsin, and member of Family Farmer Defenders.

"Solidarity between farmers and workers is an old and sacred alliance of producers that dates back beyond the populist movement . . . Anacous Donnelly, the Minnesota populist, said, "The interests of the world and the urban labor are the same; their enemies are identifiable." For more than 100 years we have been fighting together, we have been picketing together, we have been sitting in, we've been blocking traffic and we are going to take this state back. . . This budget could not be a clearer manifestation of corporate power and we say no. It's a farmer's issue because public workers are our friends and our neighbors and our family members and we stand in solidarity with them. It's a farmer's issue because we know that we are all in this together. It's a farmer's issue because we understand, that an injury to one is an injury to all. Solidarity!"

## The Latest In Automation and Robotics

By Tony Zaragoza

This column will periodically report on the latest developments in automation and robotics around the world from nano-robotics to large-scale industrial automation focusing on the impacts these technologies have on the economy and society such as labor replacement, war, and how society operates.

When we think of labor replacing technologies, we often think of manufacturing facilities such as auto plants and steel mills. But when it comes to automation, one thing we must be clear about is that this is happening in all sectors of the economy including and especially in the service sector.

The service sector includes such jobs as healthcare, garbage collection, teaching, retail sales, hospitality, finance, banking and insurance, among a wide variety of others. Many of these and other service sector jobs are seeing automation and robotics growing rapidly. We don't have to look too far to see the self checks in groceries, libraries and air-

## MICHIGAN LEADER OF THE POOR SENDS SOLIDARITY GREETINGS TO MADISON PROTESTS

By Maureen D. Taylor

Some of us are waking up! We have heard what Governor Walker has said about destroying the collective bargaining process, except where it involves the Police Department or firefighters. Clearly, the move to de-certify public worker unions is not about concessions, as all Wisconsin public workers have agreed to economic give-backs, so this Governor has positioned himself for some other victory.

Here is what we see. The tax base that for so long has funded all local fiscal programs is irreparably destroyed because too many of us have been laid off. There are no more large plants with 10's of 1,000's of workers producing goods for sale, so without good paying jobs, the entire country is caught in the jaws of a new world order.

Technology that used to enhance labor has now replaced labor so items are manufactured without people — what does that mean for our collective futures? It means that the budget deficits being talked about from coast to coast are being balanced with our blood, sweat and now tears.

It takes us a long time to see that things have changed. If tax revenues are the basis of how things get paid for, and that reality is now gone, we have to think ahead. What kind of a world can we imagine that treasures humanity, believes that mothers and children are both important, and that all labor is valuable? What kind of existence can we envision that promotes the importance of clean water, the importance of clean air, and the

Maureen D. Taylor is State Chairperson, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.

importance of "treating others the way we want to be treated?"

In the hands and under the control of these corporate pirates, our entire society is in danger. These political tricksters are serving these corporate masters, positioning themselves to help steer even more resources into the pockets of big business on the "trickle down" theory. Visionaries that can imagine a different kind of world need to step up and start that organizing process. Our time is now...our moment has arrived. We get what we organize to take so let us continue to organize on the basis of the new, rising class of disenfranchised people. We don't have to be hungry. We don't have to be homeless. We don't have to be sick and without health care. The technology exists for humanity to share the gifts of the planet and we have the skills to share if we just take that leap of faith.

To the thousands of workers who are gathering in Wisconsin, we applaud your strength and courage. Your willingness to sacrifice your safety as you stand up for a better quality of life for working people everywhere is a beacon of hope for us all. What we must do now is to address the problem of shrinking revenues caused by the new economic paradigm. Across the world, workers are asking the same question — what do we do? Workers can find a solution to this crisis. Workers of the world must find an answer that helps organize a society that addresses these needs once and for all. Can we do this? Yes, we can. America, let's roll...

ports. But there are quite a few other surprising developments.

We have seen new recycling center robots, robo "valets," robot waiters and chefs, office cleaners and other tasks, and invoice processing. The high tech recycling center in Charlestown, MA (and various other cities around the U.S.) began operations in 2009

According to CNET, the only significant number of workers that remain do the job of "presorting" by removing non-recyclables, and the machines do the rest including optically scanning and sorting specific types of plastic. Beginning in May in Abu Dhabi, you can have your car parked by a robotic machine that retrieves the car in under a minute. Gizmodo reports that a sushi chain in Japan has turned to sushi robots to replace their sushi chefs in an effort to cut costs and increase profits (they had already replaced waiters with touch screen ordering and bussers with table-side collectors). Roomba, the home robo-vacuum, is now being used to clean offices at night while during the day other ro-

bots are being used as mobile mail delivery robots and secretarial robots. As part of the new business processing automation trend, Teasdale Foods has automated their invoice handling so successfully that they are hoping they can automate much of their human resources processing.

As jobs in factories were off-shored and workers replaced by machines over the last 30 or 40 years, we were told that the US economy was becoming dominated by the service economy, and workers (especially those being laid off) were told that we should retrain to become part of the service sector. So, if our futures don't look so good in the service sector, what are we going to do now? How about the information sector? We'll cover that next month in this column. For now why don't we consider a new kind of economy in which we could all benefit from these new technologies.



# Beyond Collective Bargaining: Wisconsin Battle Galvanizes Struggle Against Corporate Rule

*"It's time to reclaim our country. And we will." — Rose Ann DeMoro, Executive Director, National Nurses United*

By Anthony D. Prince

MADISON, WISCONSIN — Six days after a massive March 12 protest involving some 200,000 workers, farmers and students, a Dane County judge issued an injunction blocking implementation of a law to abolish collective bargaining rights for state employees. The ruling was celebrated the next day by thousands who returned to the State Capitol. Led by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) on the 8th anniversary of the U.S. invasion, marchers in desert fatigues crystallized the significance of the five-week battle to preserve workers' ability to negotiate the terms of the sale of their labor power. "Veterans are workers and workers' rights are human rights!" declared IVAW founder Kelly Daughery.

Although the future of the legislation remains undecided, the significance of the Wisconsin "uprising" is clear. Governor Scott Walker became a symbol of outright corporate rule, the theft of the public treasury and the resultant suffering imposed on the infirm, the hungry, disabled, the aged and unemployed. Throughout, the Madison public school employees unselfishly took the lead, exploding the pernicious myth that America does not love its teachers. Having staged a four-day sickout early in the battle, no group had more to lose. "It's not a protest anymore, it's a movement" said retired transportation worker



Tens of thousands of workers, farmers and students protested in Madison, Wisconsin in March against the budget cuts and a law to abolish collective bargaining rights for state employees.

PHOTO/ANTHONY D. PRINCE

Steven Reid who made nine 250-mile round trips from Eden, Wisconsin to the Capitol.

Indeed, tens of thousands of others similarly persevered, day after day, in freezing weather, sleeping on floors, in some cases risking their jobs, fully aware or at least instinctively sensing that this fight was not just about a piece of reactionary legislation, but about challenging the status quo and moving towards the fundamental reconstruction of America. "The attack on collective bargaining was always part of a larger game," says Rose Ann DeMoro, Executive Director of National Nurses United which has launched a campaign

to "change, once and for all, our priorities" advancing a program that calls for guaranteed living wage jobs, universal health care, shelter and freedom from hunger. Across America, there are hundreds of similar challenges — some highly organized, others with few or no resources; some grounded in the trade union movement in our biggest cities, others scattered in the desperate fight to keep a rural clinic from closing its doors or stop yet another home foreclosure. Ultimately, the coordination, collective strength and shared vision of all these components across the whole front will be necessary if we are going to transform a defensive fight to "hold on to

what we have" into a planned, deliberate class offensive to birth a new and just order.

One thing is for sure: our enemies are just as determined as we are and far more organized in pursuing their economic and political interests. We saw this clearly in Wisconsin. The measure to abolish collective bargaining was finally passed in the dead of night, behind locked and police-barricaded doors, in complete disregard of state constitutional procedures. The next day, the capitol was locked down, the people forced to pass through three separate layers of security, patted down, wanded, warned, "no bullhorns, no posters, no speeches." Where hundreds of thousands had earlier chanted, "this is what democracy looks like", a visitor now lamented, "this is what fascism looks like." Truly, a system that cannot employ, feed and shelter the people ultimately turns to force.

Thus, what happened in Wisconsin revealed both the dangers and opportunities facing the American working class today. The energy, the determination and purpose shown here demonstrates the potential to make the kind of fundamental, systemic change that is not only possible, but necessary if we are to have a real future.

*Anthony Prince is a trade unionist and labor lawyer who traveled to Wisconsin as part of a Teamsters delegation from Chicago. Contact him at [anthonyd.prince@yahoo.com](mailto:anthonyd.prince@yahoo.com).*

## INDIANA WORKERS FIGHT ANTI-LABOR LEGISLATION

From the Editors

INDIANA — Last month, 20,000 workers occupied the Indianapolis statehouse and capitol grounds protesting the proposed budget cuts of Governor Mitch Daniels and a host of anti-worker legislation. It was the largest demonstration in Indianapolis in decades.

Indiana lawmakers are proposing their own versions of budget cuts and anti-work legislation that's also being proposed in states across the country. However, the epicenter of this legislative assault is found in the Rust Belt states of Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio and Michigan.

Indiana's most severe budget cuts proposals focus on higher education and Medicaid. The legislation includes a list of anti-worker bills such as legislation for a state Right to Work law, making it virtually impossible for workers to organize majority membership in unions. Additionally, they are proposing to enshrine into law a 2005 administrative decree that placed a ban on public employee collective bargaining and allows

for wholesale privatization of government operations.

Additional anti-worker legislation includes a bill that includes merit pay for teachers and places further restrictions on teachers collective bargaining, a school voucher bill that allows families the use of state tax dollars to send their children to private school, a bill providing for the expansion of charter schools and a proposal that allows the state to take over schools and turn them over to for-profit "special management teams".

Other proposed legislation includes a bill that would make it illegal for state, county and local governments to require bidders on public works projects to hire union workers, or discriminate against bidders who refuse to work with union contractors and another bill that eliminates the existing prevailing wage law for public works contracts that requires the payment of a standard wage rate.

*The People's Tribune will have interviews with leaders in this struggle in its May edition.*

## Why is the Cost of Gas Skyrocketing?

From the Editors

Four dollars a gallon and a threat of going higher! What is driving up the cost of gasoline? The short answer is CAPITALISM. We are struggling to survive within a system that deals the cards according to wealth. No money — no clout. Got money? All the doors are open to make even more.

The first stage of taking the people's money is to take their minds. To take the people's minds you have to take the people they trust. People trust the Universities to tell them the truth. Few people know that Big Oil has given the Universities \$800 million over the past decade to grind out reports so Big Oil can scare the gas cap off you with smoke and mirror talk about coming shortages and the need to raise prices now.

Oil is a critical weapon in the underground struggle between the U.S. and China for control of the world market.

The more expensive the oil, the higher the cost of production in China. Big Oil doesn't have to worry since the US taxpayers shell out \$4,000,000,000 a year that will make up any short fall due to high prices.

When the individual goes through the shock and awe of filling up the gas tank the first impulse is "Somebody oughta do something!" The Some bodies aren't going to do anything, because they can't. Arrayed against them is a government in the hip pocket of the oil industry, a media that lies for them, academics who cover for them, speculators who rob you blind and a police force that will put you in jail if you start causing trouble.

We are at the end of the road. There is a solution to the energy crisis and that is to nationalize energy! The choice now is either we belong to it or it belongs to us! Next time you fill up — think about it.



## After Arizona Assassination Attempt of Congresswoman

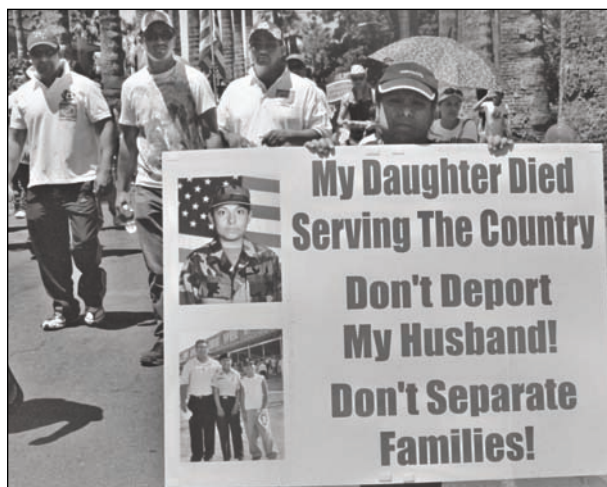
# “Empower our communities and stand strong together”

*Editor's note: The Tribuno del Pueblo, our sister publication, received the following letter — excerpted here — shortly after the attempted assassination of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in early January.*

Saturday's tragedy [January 8, 2011] in Arizona was a shock for many. As a nation we need to have a much-needed conversation about acting responsibly and realizing that rhetoric has consequences.

The Latino and immigrant community has been plagued with the worst of words and in some cases, real acts of violence driven by hate.

Even Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik in Tucson, Arizona — who is not the greatest friend to the immigrant-rights movement — got it right when he said: “The anger, the hatred, the bigotry that goes on in this country is getting to be outrageous, and unfortunately Arizona, I think, has become sort of... the mecca for prejudice and bigotry.”



**Protest for Immigration Rights in Arizona.**

PHOTO /RUDY CORRAL

This commonsense take has caused him to be attacked by conservative pundits and marginalized in the media because there has been an effort to manufacture fear and anger out of real problems — and there is no doubt it has

led to a polarized political climate.

We know what it's like to be attacked and made afraid of each other. We've seen a 35 percent increase in hate crimes against Latinos. And in the lead-up to the passage of SB 1070 in Arizona, we saw the racist signs that anti-immigrant activists used. We were disgusted by the rhetoric that demonized and dehumanized immigrants and Latinos.

Meanwhile, we have record deportations and the continuous expansion of the 287g program, which empowers local and state law enforcement agencies to enforce federal immigration law and tear apart families.

As a nation, we should instead be focusing on solving the immigration crisis, not expanding the problem with

solutions that create fear in our communities.

Laws like SB 1070 in Arizona, the copycat bills being filed in state legislatures all over the country, as well as the debate about states overturning the 14th Amendment, which provides U.S. citizenship to anyone born in this nation, are an immoral sideshow. They serve only to polarize one community against another and line the pockets of groups that are perpetuating this charade.

People are looking for answers, for ways to sort through this tragedy. In addition to saying a prayer — in whatever way you choose — for the victims and for those still fighting for their lives, please take a moment to pass this message on.

The only way we will get through this and build a better country is if we empower our communities and stand strong together as one. Thank you and ¡adelante! —Joaquin, Laurie, Favianna, and the rest of the Presente.org team.

## Non-Profit For the Money

By Sheridan Talbott

All across Southern Illinois over recent years, private investors have been buying up publicly owned hospitals and turning them into “non-profit” facilities. I guess the same has happened all across the country. Why would private investors do that? It sounds almost altruistic. Well, the reason is it's more profitable. These investors really are strategic thinkers and know how to turn a buck.

It's all pretty simple really. If you have a non-profit status, as opposed to a for-profit one, you save a bundle on state and local property taxes, as well as corporate income taxes. Never mind that this undermines the community's and the state's revenue base, the bottom line on the ledger is what counts.

Now, they're open for business and making money, but what to do with it. That's easy, expand and develop. It's a neat trick. They buy up properties adjacent to or near the hospital and build more buildings or parking lots, with the same tax exempt status. They invest in expensive technology to expand their medical services, making even more money. All of this meaningfully increases the value of their initial investment.

It's commonly thought doctors schedule unnecessary tests to protect them from malpractice cases. While there's some truth to this, it also true that every time a test is run at a hospital, the hospital makes money.

Then there's the hospital's non-profit foundation. If you choose, you can get at the money without threatening the hospital's non-profit status through a

foundation. Salaries, fees for services rendered, etc., who knows how many ways they have of getting at their profit. None of this serves the community very well, but it serves the investors' bank accounts well indeed.

There's nothing philanthropic about it. In most cases, maintaining a tax exempt status requires the treatment of a relatively small number of charity patients. But this treatment can mean, and often does, simple information and various forms of support, that really cost the hospital nothing. Certainly strains the meaning of treatment.

Think there's not serious money to be made through a non-profit status? Ever wonder why the National Football League is a non-profit operation? But something's seriously wrong when the healthcare of a community and a nation is organized almost solely to make someone money rather than take care of the health needs of its people. Publicly owned hospitals use to truly serve people, at least to some extent. Today it's all about the money.

Over and over again we've all heard how “the health care system is broken.” It hasn't been broken. The health care system in the US, by design, has been a very efficient money machine for corporations and private investors. Health care reform changed nothing. Pockets have been and continue to be richly lined by super profits made off of illness and suffering. Privately owned hospitals are key cogs in that wheel. Something's very wrong and immoral about making money, big money, off of people's illnesses and suffering.

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— Rev. Edward Pinkney

“We have to start organizing teams locally to be ready for protests. We will need more papers.”

— Claire McClinton

“People are running down the street at the row houses asking for papers. I'm asking others to distribute.”

— Joe Peery

“I finally got permission to put the papers in the D.C. Public library. I think I can get out an additional 100.”

— Eric Sheptock

We rely on our readers for all of our financial support. Order bundles at 30cents each. Won't you send a donation today?

**Mail your donation today to the People's Tribune at PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.**



# Bail Out Students, Not Banks!

By Steven Miller

In an "Open Letter to UC Berkeley Students", Ricardo Gomez wrote, "As students we are asked to take out more loans that force us into jobs we don't like, to pay off debt we can't afford for the privilege of getting a lower quality education."

Student debt today is \$830 billion, exceeding the total US debt on credit cards and it is growing at \$90 billion a year.

The Student Debt Bubble is a huge speculation market, which is about as justifiable as the junk mortgages that their parents were sold. Both are "securitized" where they are turned into "financial instruments" that can be ei-

being done by Blum's own company, URS Corporation. This is funded by sub-prime student loans, many of which are provided by Career Education Corporation, the world's second largest private diploma mill, a large part of which is owned by Blum Capital Partners! How is something like this even legal?

In fact, the massive student increases had already been spent to guarantee loans. The common perception is that universities use research funds to finance education. The reality is exactly the opposite. Undergraduate programs, especially in the humanities, are relatively inexpensive, but produce huge revenue. This money actually subsidizes the university's profit-making ventures, not the other way around.

Bob Samuels, President of the UC Faculty Association noted: "Moody's even slipped into its bond rating for the UC system the need for the [UC] to restrain labor costs, increase student fees, diversify revenue streams, feed the money-making sectors, and resist the further unionization of its employees," Samuels concludes that, 'like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank, the bond raters tie access to credit to the dismantling of the public sector and the adoption of neo-liberal ideology.'

What's going on in higher education is the classic case of government policy using debt to engineer the transformation of public institutions. The education market today is all about investment, speculation and profitability now, not the quality of education. Educating people is no longer the priority. This is the inevitable outcome when a right becomes a commodity, when the public loses its power to determine how it



Education protests in Northern San Diego, San Diego, CA.

PHOTO/DHRUMIL S. DESAI/WWW.DHRUMILDESAI.ME

## The education market today is all about investment, speculation and profitability now, not the quality of education.

ther be bought or sold to turn a profit. The average student debt has more than doubled from 1994 to 2008. Only about 40% is being repaid.

Even as the stock market collapsed, University of California, Berkeley, for example, continued to build the Richard C. Blum Center for Developing Economies, named after the alpha-regent, who happens to be the husband of Senator Diane Feinstein. The construction was

wants to be educated.

State debt sets up the student debt market. It becomes a vicious circle. California's regular yearly budget crisis causes increase in public school expenses. Students can't pay, are forced out and turn to for-profit private institutions like the University of Phoenix, the largest private university in the country as well as the newer on-line "colleges".

The majority of Obama's stimulus funds last year went to for-private institutions, not community colleges. Since public universities are being cut back today, this is a direct subsidy to profit-making corporations at the expense of the public.

Public colleges and universities are

legally responsible to provide a quality education. Private colleges are legally bound to maximize their profit. Thus they spend 20% to 25% of their budgets on marketing and only 10% to 20% on faculty.

If this country is to truly guarantee public education as a free, legal and human right, then student debts should be treated the same as bank debts. They should all be forgiven and eliminated. It's time to bail out students, not banks.

*Adapted by Steven Miller from "Out of the Ashes", an electronic pamphlet on the state of public education. For copies of the pamphlet, contact nanodog2@hotmail.com.*

## "THE GOVERNMENT WON'T HELP... BUT WITH GOD'S HELP WE CAN ALL MAKE A DIFFERENCE."

By Lenette Evans



We all live day by day and yet so many people are not seeing how we are living in the end times right here and now! When you go to Wal-Mart you can see entire shelves completely gone of dried beans, rice and there is hardly any bread left on the shelves. People walk around the stores wondering if they can afford what they are buying . . . and prices keep going up!!!! People are cutting back and are faced with hard decisions of crucial priorities right now when they go shopping.

In St. Joseph, Michigan when I was at the Marathon gas station an attendant was putting white plastic bags over the gas nozzles because they had completely run out of gas. A gas station in Watervliet, Michigan had run out of gas

the same day. There are grocery stores, health food stores, and as well as family businesses that have closed down across America because of our economy. About 90 percent of the K-Mart stores have closed and are sitting on empty abandoned lots. There are thousands without a job and a lot of young people coming out of college with bachelors and masters degrees cannot find a job and are forced on welfare and food stamps and others with a degree work at Burger King or Wendy's.

Unfortunately our economy has also forced major chain stores to close its doors. Elderly people and others who have disabilities and who are on medications cannot get them if these stores continue to close. They are forced to either find someone to take them to the store or to do without. Many of the homeless I know in Benton Harbor are diabetic and many have gone without their medications because they do not have transpor-

tation and the nearest pharmacy is about five miles away.

I can remember not that long ago looking in the Sunday "Chicago Tribune" newspaper and the unemployment section was filled with so many jobs. But now... that same Sunday paper has only a few short pages of job possibilities. Many of our newspapers have gone out of business and they say the St. Joseph Post Office is going to shut down. Many of the workers have been there over 17 years and are concerned whether they will have a job or not.

With this in mind, I pray this penetrates the minds of every person who reads this. But our disgusting rotten stinking government is doing absolutely nothing to help our families out there who need help. Families and children are on the streets and living in abandoned buildings, vehicles, or a dumpster. The government does not care because the politicians live in nice homes while they

fill their pockets with our tax money.

DO NOT Hold Your Breath Waiting For The Government To Do Something. NO.... In these tough times people need to come together and start helping one another while also trying to force the government to do something. Neighbors, churches, and communities need to help each other and look for opportunities to find people in desperate need they can help in making a difference and WE CAN ALL STAND UP AND DO SOMETHING. GET MOVING! This is also a time to start embracing the word of God in your home and in your children's lives. PRAYER is what we ALL need. But where is your faithfulness to God? EMBRACE JESUS CHRIST IN EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.

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



# Mother Of A Baby Born Into Homelessness Testifies Before DC Councilman

By Eric Sheptock

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Friday, March 11th, 2011 DC Councilman Jim Graham held what would turn out to be one of the most heart-wrenching Human Services budget oversight hearings that I've ever attended. Stories were told of homeless mothers and their very young children being turned away from shelter with nowhere to go. One woman sat in the hearing with her month-old baby who has never slept in a crib or had a place to call home. This is happening in the capitol of the wealthiest country on earth, as our government spends billions bailing out Wall Street and fighting unjust wars!

Those testifying included homeless and formerly homeless people as well as service providers. People gave testimonies of how certain programs have helped them and implored the councilman to ensure continued funding for these programs. Others exposed problems with the system. A lawyer from the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH) suggested that, since DC

Government's Dept. of Human Services devises a winter plan each year and the purpose of that plan is to prevent weather-related deaths, they should also keep records of weather-related deaths as a way of gauging their level of success or failure.

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**One woman sat in the hearing with her month-old baby who has never slept in a crib or had a place to call home. This is happening in the capitol of the wealthiest country on earth. . .**

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As is the case with government all too often, what was once presented as a solution has now become the problem. In response to complaints about the DC Village Family Shelter, the administration of former DC mayor Adrian Fenty closed the shelter and instituted the Sys-

tem Transformation Initiative (STI), a program which housed about 170 families. Now the government claims that it doesn't have enough money to keep funding STI and is "transforming" the System Transformation Initiative into STEAP (Short-Term Exit Assistance Program).

Whereas STI previously had no time limit, STEAP will pay all of a homeless family's rent for the first month and then incrementally over the course of a year, decrease the percentage of rent that they pay. The program will cease to pay the family's rent after a year. Families are screened for the program and may only receive its services if it's highly probable they will become fully self-sufficient within a year. However, it is not very likely that a family's monthly income will increase by more than \$1,000 over the course of a year, which means that most participants are being set up to fail.

Four young mothers with children ranging from one month to five years old came under the direction of lawyers from the Washington Legal Clinic for

the Homeless. They gave heart-felt accounts of how they and their children were turned away by the shelter system with nowhere to go. One mother cried as she explained how she, with her 3 children -- ages 5, 3 and less than a year-old -- in tow, was told by an employee of the Virginia Williams Family Intake Center that there were no shelter spaces for them and that she was given bus tokens so she could ride the city bus all night with her children in order to stay warm. Other mothers testified that they also were given bus tokens so they could use the bus as a de facto shelter. (DC Law states that, if there is no shelter space available for a homeless family with small children, then they must be put into a motel room)

All of this just goes to show that the State is not genuinely concerned about its poor and dispossessed. They are giving tax breaks to the wealthy while cutting the budgets for much-needed social services. The silver lining in this dark cloud is that more of the dispossessed are becoming socially conscious and angry at the system which is failing them.

## The Future Is Up To Us

Workers of the World  
And Soon-To-Be-Out-Of-Workers of the  
World,  
Unite and fight!  
You have only everything to lose.

You are worth something to society.  
You work to make commodities  
In factories all over the globe.  
You work to provide services  
In restaurants, shops, and stadiums.  
You work  
For pennies of the real value  
That you produce.  
The real value  
That fills the wallets  
Lines the pockets  
Trusts the funds  
Of those you work for.  
You consume  
Commodities  
And services  
With your pennies  
That collect into jars  
That fill the wallets  
Line the pockets  
And trust the funds  
Of those you buy from.  
Your funds will decrease  
With each and every increase  
In productivity.  
Each new machine made  
To do a job better  
Or send it to someone

Who will do it cheaper  
Than you  
Puts you closer to unemployment.  
Debt, starvation, and death.  
As a worker,  
You are becoming obsolete.  
As a consumer,  
You currently watch as your funds deplete.  
What good is someone  
Who isn't a worker  
And can't afford to be a consumer  
To a capitalist society?  
  
You are worth nothing to a capitalist society.  
A capitalist world  
Filled with men and women  
World leaders  
And bankers  
Who fill their wallets  
Line their pockets  
And trust their funds  
And have absolutely no reason to care  
About anyone they can't have work for them  
Or buy from them  
In other words,  
People who can't make them more money.  
There will be no good-natured sacrifice  
For the tired and huddling masses  
To halt progress and productivity.  
In the eyes of the capitalist  
You are not worth more than a machine.  
You never could be.

You are a human being.  
Who needs  
Food  
Clothing  
Shelter.  
Who will proclaim  
That you are worth something to society?  
You will.  
You will have to.  
  
The minority of you may find your place  
Working at a machine  
Or building a new machine.  
Building a damn of mud,  
Arrogance  
And naivete  
To stop the flood  
Of progress and productivity.  
  
The majority of you will end up displaced.  
Persons without  
Food  
Clothing  
Shelter.  
  
Your future is up to you.  
  
Workers of the World  
And Soon-To-Be-Out-Of-Workers of the  
World,  
The Future is Up to Us.

— David A. Romero



# VOICES FROM BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

## Protest of PGA in Benton Harbor



Rev. E. Pinkney.  
PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

A demonstration was held to protest the ribbon cutting for the 2012 Senior PGA Championship's opening of a new office (at the expense of the residents) at 101 Main Street next to Abonmarche in downtown Benton Harbor. Protesters say the sponsors, Whirlpool, Harbor Shores, the PGA, only promote tourism and do not give Benton Harbor's people the promised jobs.

The demonstration was a tremendous success. The battle in Benton Harbor, and in other cities across the country, is awakening a sleeping giant. Millions of people must stand together to save cities such as Benton Harbor from the blood sucking greedy corporations. Whirlpool, Harbor Shores and the PGA are working together to suck the life out of Benton Harbor. They are nothing but carpet-baggers.

We must keep up the momentum. A huge fight is brewing in Benton Harbor over the hostile takeover of the city by these corporate forces. Their action is breathtaking. The people must realize what is going on before it is too late. Whirlpool, Harbor Shores and the PGA are driving our already battered city straight into the ground. They plan to drive out all the Black residents with the help of the so-called men of GOD.

What the people need right now is an inspiring leader to help reinvent Benton Harbor and to find creative ways to create new jobs, new careers and lift us out of economic depression. We the people must take a stand. We must stop Whirlpool, Harbor Shores and the PGA. This group pays no taxes.

We are calling for a mass demonstration on May 22-27, 2012. We will set up camping grounds for everybody. Plan to be in Benton Harbor for the mass demonstration. Remember you only get what you are organized to take. It is time for the residents to not be cowards and stand up and fight for justice for all.

## Warning to Gov. Snyder

By Marcus Muhammad  
Mayor Pro Temp

As Governor Rick Snyder is poised to sign this draconian Bill into law, I reflect on the words of Thomas Jefferson "I tremble for my country when I reflect that GOD is a just GOD. And his justice will not sleep forever."

This legislation will cripple the administration of Governor Snyder because it goes against the oath that he recited to assume the office. It will be a pyrrhic victory for the Republican Party. To nullify local charters and violate the State/Federal Constitution in the name of fiscal responsibility is a miscarriage of justice. This bill will divide the state of Michigan and ruin the already failing economy. Due to the "Hot Bed" that this legislation will provoke, businesses and economic development will suffer. The political blindness of the Republican Party will sink the state into a financial abyss as a result of their self-righteousness and partisan politics.

I write this communication as a final warning. Whatever you abuse you will lose. Governor Snyder and the Republican Party are undermining their own authority as legislators. I am afraid that events will take a turn that they least expect. As a final thought, I quote from the Declaration of Independence. "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their power from consent of the governed." When the cardinal principle established by the founding fathers are mocked, political, social and economic disaster will follow.

# TAKE BACK THE LAND

By Ryan Acuff,  
Take Back the Land, Rochester



As we go to press, Cathy Lennon, (left) a grandmother, and 7 children, were evicted from their home. 25 police cars and a SWAT team showed up. Arrests included an elderly neighbor who said, "This is not America."

PHOTO/TAKE BACK THE LAND, ROCHESTER

March 18 was Day 5 of the eviction defense of the Lennon-Griffin family from 9 Ravenwood Ave. in Rochester, NY. First on Monday, then on Tuesday the City Marshal was scheduled to execute the eviction of the family for Fannie Mae (Federal National Mortgage Association), but the combination of protesters, an eviction blockade, strong community support, and a news media presence was enough for the Marshal and the bank-hired movers to cancel their visits. Organized protest and resistance clearly made the difference.

Close to 75 neighbors and community members mobilized to defend the Lennon-Griffin family from eviction on Monday, including a blockade of the main entrance in case of an eviction. On the same day, protesters from Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign marched on the northeast corporate headquarters of Fannie Mae in Philadelphia, PA, demanding that Fannie Mae immediately withdraw the eviction. Fannie Mae claimed that they didn't own 9 Ravenwood, but all records clearly show and calls today confirm that Fannie Mae owns the house and petitioned for the family's eviction just last month. For over 8 months the mortgage company has failed to answer the family's pleas to negotiate.

For the last seven years, Catherine Lennon and her family of 11 have lived at 9 Ravenwood Ave. After Catherine's husband died of cancer, their now defunct mortgage lender and government bailout recipient, Countrywide, refused

to renegotiate the mortgage, sending the family's house into foreclosure. In 2010, Countrywide turned the house over to Fannie Mae and now Fannie is seeking to evict a family of 11 (including 7 children ages 2 to 11) on Monday.

The Lennon-Griffin family and Take Back the Land Rochester are calling on Fannie Mae to immediately suspend the eviction and renegotiate a reasonable settlement where the longtime residents can stay in their home and prevent the disintegration of an entire family to homelessness. After reclaiming the home the family has aspirations to put the house into a community land trust. Housing is a human right and a family's right to quality housing is more basic than a corporation's right to make a profit.

From Wednesday through Friday the family, neighbors, and Take Back the Land Rochester organized an Eviction Watch Encampment from 9 to 5 — the hours an eviction can be carried out in the State of New York. The watch, which includes a video camera, looks out for any marshal or police activity and is ready to notify the community for an emergency mobilization if necessary. And now it's been 5 days and the family is still in their home! The Eviction Watch Encampment will continue.

If anybody has any contacts with Fannie Mae or any suggestions about establishing meaningful contact with them please send them our way.

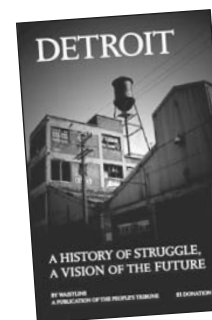
Contact us to follow the ongoing events: Take Back the Land Rochester at TakeBackRoc@RiseUp.net or (585) 653-8362. Subscribe to our Eviction Watch Listserv: lists.rocus.org/listinfo/evictionwatch Website: takebackroc.org Facebook: facebook.com/takebackroc

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