

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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A teacher is arrested at the state Capitol in Sacramento, California in May. More than two dozen California teachers have been arrested at the state Capitol protesting education funding in the state budget. PHOTO/JULIET WILLIAMS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

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JAIL BANKERS NOT OUR TEACHERS

SPECIAL: The Struggle for Education
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The Importance of Teaching As We Fight

EDITORIAL

As the world economy deteriorates, large numbers of people are pulled into a new level of social consciousness. This presents both dangers and opportunities for revolutionaries. The danger is that revolutionaries, eager for struggle, will over estimate the level of mass consciousness, plan on social responses that cannot as yet happen and end up not only demoralizing themselves but the movement as well.

The opportunity is that any social motion is a school where revolutionaries can raise consciousness and develop organization.

To bring clarity to the mass, it is necessary that revolutionaries are clear on the stages of development that the people must go through. The first stage is social consciousness, when people realize that society is divided into two hostile economic classes and they identify with the working class. The next stage is class consciousness, when they understand and work for the political supremacy of the working class. There are many phases of development within each stage and none of them can be avoided.

The unavoidable conclusion of history is that revolutionary development is the development of consciousness — not simply bigger and better demonstrations. From this point of view, the American revolutionaries have an enormous task before them. The first step is to convince themselves that although demonstrations, strikes and uprisings are a necessary part of the struggle, these things cannot change a system. Only the transfer of political power from one class to another creates the necessary conditions for change. This transfer cannot take place unless the vast mass understand it, want it and will fight for it.

The American people are awakening. At this phase they are willing to

fight for the rights of the trade unions even while they turn a blind eye toward the desperate struggle of the unorganized section of the working class. They are willing to fight the giant corporations — yet are more afraid of the word “communism.” Communism is simply the public ownership of socially necessary means of production and exchange. Communism has become a political

this awful political and ideological confusion. Nothing can be done without such clarity.

History shows us that in times of struggle there are plenty of soldiers, but few officers. A serious officer struggles to grasp an overview of the entire war rather than becoming bogged down with any particular battle. That requires knowing not only where we are, but also



rather than economic term while capitalism has become political and identified with democracy. Over the years the corporate press has censored out “working-class” — an economic term, in favor of “middle-class” — a social term. We see photos of picket lines defending the “middle class” as if the poorer sections of the working class did not exist.

While we participate in the spontaneous struggles, our task is to clarify

where we are trying to go. Where there is oppression and exploitation there will be resistance. It is simple (and necessary) for the revolutionary to grab onto this resistance and fight a battle. The task is to conceptually see an individual struggle as part of a process and to use that struggle to develop the entire process. The process is the struggle to develop a whole new world of co-operation and peace.

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.”

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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EDUCATION STRUGGLE IN DETROIT SETS STAGE FOR THE FUTURE

COVER STORY

What American city was once called the "Paris of the Midwest" and the "City of Champions" after all its major professional sports teams won championships in a seven month period? What city had the greatest industrial output, the first paved highway, the first freeway and the first shopping center? What city had the best public school system in the nation? You guessed it: Detroit, Michigan. What happened to that great American metropolis now known as the "murder capital?" Automation and computer assisted production have caused jobs to be moved elsewhere. Most importantly, this new technology has actually replaced human labor, eliminating workers' jobs, forever.

And what happened to Detroit's great school system? Let's be clear. Our education system's basic function is to produce the type of employee business needs. As science was applied to industrial production and society became more complex, the owners of industry needed educated workers and developed a publicly financed educational system designed to create them. When machines began to replace human labor in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the workforce began to shrink and public



Michigan teachers at a political rally on the lawn of Lansing's Capitol building. It brought in labor and teacher unions from across the state.

PHOTO CREDIT/DAN BJORKLUND

education became less necessary.

In addition, the diminished size of the workforce created by computer based production limited the employer's capacity to profit from the labor of workers. The workers had less capacity to sell their ability to work and buy the things they produced. As a result, the whole system of production for profit is fast becoming obsolete. There are fewer and fewer things where the corporations can make profitable investments. As a result, they are privatizing public services. The public education system in this country is a \$750 billion enterprise, ripe fruit in private hands.

In Detroit, half the public schools have been ordered closed by the state legislature, with 41 or more to become non-public charters. A two or three-tier system is being created, with some students going to elite schools and some being educated for low paying jobs or no-paying jobs in the prison industrial complex. Our youth won't be educated. They won't be able to see through the smoke and mirrors and outright lies of the system or to think and

to ask tough questions while making demands that the system can't meet.

Teachers, parents and supporters have been marching and protesting in Detroit and in Lansing, the state capital. On May 21, over 10,000 people rallied at the capital to oppose Republican Governor Snyder's new tax plan giving corporations huge tax breaks, cutting per pupil funding and taxing senior citizens' pensions. On May 24, thousands of teachers in 40 communities throughout the state protested drastic changes in the Michigan Public Schools Employees Retirement System.

To promote the corporate agenda, the state is using Emergency Managers to take over schools systems, cities and counties. They are eliminating the powers of elected officials and stripping us of our democratic rights. Their agenda is privatization. The Detroit Public Schools have already privatized their security guards, bus drivers and janitors. What is happening in Detroit is just the beginning of a political fight happening nationwide.

Our schools are being used to fit the corporate agenda and its insatiable thirst for profit. Isn't it our duty to recreate the educational system in our image and not in theirs? If computer assisted automation permanently eliminates the need for workers and has the capacity to create abundance for everyone, our young people won't have to do the jobs that we once did. They can truly reach for the stars and let their imaginations be their guide. To achieve this goal, we need to create a national public school system to insure that our schools remain public and properly funded. Education is crucial to our entire nation and is recognized throughout the world as a human right. It should not be used to satisfy the needs of a few people. We must have a national system of educating our children for the 21st century. They have the right to realize their full potential as human beings. Let them fulfill their destiny in the age of electronics to recreate the world so that mankind can finally realize its age old vision of a beloved community on a peaceable planet.

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.

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PHILADELPHIA SHERIFF CANDIDATE WANTS TO STOP FORECLOSURES

By John Grant

Cheri Honkala is a well-known poor people's activist in Philadelphia who was raised dirt poor and has worked lots of unpleasant jobs to survive. She is running for Sheriff of Philadelphia on the Green Party ticket.

Honkala is Robin Hood. But instead of running around in green tights and using bows and arrows to engage the wicked Sheriff of Nottingham, she's using the ballot box to take the Sheriff of Nottingham's job.

The central plank of Honkala's campaign is a determination to stop the evictions of poor and middle-class homeowners whose mortgages have been foreclosed on by banks and lenders. She wants to revamp the Sheriff's Office and give it a new mission to counter the pirate-style economics of the moment.

One of her potential opponents, John Kromer, is running in the Democratic primary to eliminate the office and transfer Sheriff's Office tasks to the mayor's office. The other candidates in the Democratic and Republican primaries are campaigning to keep the office doing exactly what it has been doing. The previous Sheriff, John Green, left office under a dark cloud that involved the mysterious disappearance of \$53 million. The audits are still going on.

Behind the Honkala campaign is the sordid story of Wall Street financial-class speculators engaged in an unregulated orgy of slicing-and-dicing mortgages into confusing financial instruments for personal greed.

The problem is, while the government bailed out the financial institutions "too

big to fail," it completely reneged on provisions voted in the bail-out legislation to help poor and middle-class homeowners. The US used tax funds to bail out the big fish and, despite voting funds for the task, chose to let the little fish fend for themselves. Because of this, Honkala says, if



Cheri Honkala on the campaign trail.

PHOTO/JOHN GRANT

elected, she will not enforce eviction orders of poor and middle-class homeowners foreclosed on in Philadelphia.

Honkala's campaign revolves around one of the most un-reported realities of American governance, something as American as apple pie, something seen throughout American history and something that always will be with us: The willful selective enforcement of our laws.

It ranges from George W. Bush's notorious "signing statements" concerning laws passed by Congress to the 55 mile

per hour speed limit. In general, it's the ugly, prejudicial backside of police and judicial discretion. Usually it benefits the rich and the powerful. The New York Times recently reported on at least nine specific instances of the selective avoidance of prosecution or accountability at the very top of the nation's financial and banking industry.

All these "too big to fail" pirates made out just fine thanks to the bailout and the selective absence of law enforcement. They are still rolling in ill-gained money and buying second and third vacation homes. Meanwhile, the poor and working people in places like Philadelphia are paying the price with unemployment and foreclosures. It's a lousy deal, and it did not have to be this way—and selective enforcement and the absence of accountability caused it.

One picks one's battles in life, and Honkala is picking the race for Sheriff as her battle for 2011. In the end, it's up to the voters of Philadelphia. In the meantime a lot depends on fundraising and media coverage, the two necessities of electoral politics in America.

The fact is, unlike a lot of races, this year's Philadelphia Sheriff's race is rich with ideas and real choices. Expected charges of "class warfare" hinge on a willful refusal to see what an incredible free-ride plutocracy is currently getting in America.

In that sense, Cheri Honkala's Robin-Hood-For-Sheriff campaign is a local defensive action.

For those who want to learn more about Honkala's campaign, or to contribute to it, go to CheriHonkala.com

Human Rights Violations in America

By Simuel Ramey



I have witnessed so many "social injustices" during my visits to my home state of Arkansas.

It's just overwhelmingly sad. I have witnessed a homeowner being convicted of shooting an intruder in his own home after being attacked. I myself have become a victim of social injustice by a certain attorney, hired by me, to handle an auto accident claim, in which my due process rights were denied.

I have witnessed and conferred with several victims of the Arkansas Black Farmers Association class action lawsuits. They have been "sold out" and "ripped off" by so called handlers (lawyers) of the class-action litigation. Registered Black Farmers of Arkansas have been displaced because those who were supposed to be representing them, misrepresented them in this litigation.

America, we've got to open our eyes and take a stand. The state of Arkansas has even had a publicly televised execution of a mentally retarded friend of mine who was wrongly accused of a crime.

I say to you: come on people. Let's reorganize this society and protect our rights. Let's utilize our rights as they were meant to be: "of the people, by the people, for the people!"

City Government Steals From Residents of St. Joseph, MI

By Lenette Evans



An elderly lady I know in her late 80s who lives in downtown St. Joseph, Michigan had her electric bill skyrocket from \$25 a month to \$90 a few years ago when they put in new electric meters. Then her gas bill in the coldest part of this past winter rose to \$300 a month. She had to lower the temperature in her home and was forced to go out a few times a week to eat to save on her electric bill. Like most elderly seniors, she lives on a fixed income with little to make ends meet.

Then the city of St. Joseph added \$30 a month more to her water bill for a fire hydrant on her block that never worked. The city has big sweeper machines to clean the sidewalks of residents in downtown St. Joseph. When

they cleaned her sidewalk, one of the city employees running the sweeper machine broke off two corners of two concrete sidewalk slabs which made it difficult for anyone to walk. The ground was no longer level.

So again the city of St. Joseph digs a little deeper into their filthy, deceitful, corrupt pockets as Berrien County does so often. They told this lady she had to pay for two replacement sidewalk slabs at \$100 each for a total of \$200. It is outrageous and ridiculous how the city of St. Joseph steals from our seniors for their stupid and ignorant mistakes. The city of St. Joe needs to reimburse this lady who lives on a fixed income. **IT'S NOT HER FAULT OF THE CITY OF ST. JOSEPH!!!!**

A few weeks ago the lady was walking across the street by the intersection near Broad St. when a police officer sped by and turned the corner with his flash-

ers on, nearly hitting this elderly lady, trying to get to Thornton's Restaurant, a block away. She confronted the officer and he lied, denying that he almost hit her. When does Berrien County start putting their own officers in jail and fining them for abusing police property and being disorderly, reckless, and nearly hitting a pedestrian in the crosswalk?

COME ON BERRIEN COUNTY. GET IT TOGETHER!!!! For all you residents out there in St. Joseph — start keeping a camera in your pocket and take pictures and notes of what goes on in your area. People, we have to get involved in our community and politics or it will one day get a hold of you. It's time that residents stand up for their rights and justice and **SHUT BERRIEN COUNTY UP AND SHUT THEM DOWN** and this includes "WHIRLPOOL" which is the biggest and worst corrupt corporation in Berrien County.

Local residents, wake up and stop sitting on your butts while they steal from you and corrupt your community behind your back!

Berrien County, Whirlpool, as well as Harbor Shores, are all about raising our taxes to feed the rich and drive out the poor, charging local residents for bogus claims just to fill their own pockets with **YOUR MONEY!**

IT'S TIME TO EXPOSE THESE FILTHY DISGUSTING BLOOD SUCKING RATS OF BERRIEN COUNTY. People, we as locals and residents are the ones that need to do it. So stand up and get involved! Do not rely on your government to help you with these situations because they are just as corrupt as Berrien County is.

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CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION: WHAT HAPPENED IN SACRAMENTO?

By Jack Gerson

On the evening of Monday, May 9, sixty-eight Bay Area college students, public school teachers, and their supporters chanting, “Tax the Rich! That will fix the deficit!” were arrested for occupying and refusing to leave the state capitol building in Sacramento, California. Although this happened on the first day of a “Week of Action” called by the California Teachers Association (CTA) to protest cuts to state funding for K-12 education, CTA leadership walked away from the occupiers and literally pulled CTA members out of the Rotunda, saying that the protesters were “not on message.”

Yet three days later, CTA president David Sanchez and several other CTA leaders were arrested for sitting in at the offices of Republican state legislature leaders Robert Dutton and Connie Conway. In the words of CTA’s press release, “CTA members refuse to leave capitol and demand passage of tax extensions to keep deeper cuts away from schools, colleges and essential public services.”

What is going on here? CTA leadership’s strategy all along has been to throw their full support behind Democratic Governor Jerry Brown. Last year, California labor unions contributed \$20 million to Brown’s gubernatorial campaign. CTA was one of the biggest contributors. As soon as Brown was elected, he started talking up the need for austerity. His proposed austerity budget includes about \$12 billion in cuts to es-

sential public programs — hundreds of millions from programs for the disabled, Medicare, higher education, etc.

Brown then proposes to get an equal amount by extending a regressive tax on the poor and those who labor for

with taxes. We must fight for it because the alternative is so much worse.” That is their focus: They tried to break up the Monday sit-in because its message was “tax the rich,” not “pass the tax extensions” (i.e. “tax the poor”).



Students from all over California march through the rain to the capitol building.

PHOTO/JESSICA NORTH

another five years. Increasing the sales tax means the poor pay a higher percent of their income than the rich. Well, CTA leadership is openly and ardently demanding immediate approval of this tax package. Brown warns, “There is no other alternative. We all must sacrifice.” And CTA agrees: “We must fight for this budget. It’s balanced. It mixes cuts

Not everyone is sacrificing. Not the banks—huge bailout and rip-off of taxpayer money, record profits, big bonuses, minimal taxes. Not the oil companies (especially in California, the only oil-producing state without an oil extraction tax). Not the corporations (more than half of all profitable California corporations pay no state income tax). Not the

rich (state income tax is lower now than it was under Republican governors Ronald Reagan and Pete Wilson). Making the banks, corporations and the rich pay would provide the money needed to restore and expand all essential programs and rescind all layoffs.

CTA leadership’s short-term and long-term leadership’s strategies are identical. They are to co-opt dissent and channel it into the Democrats; provide massive funding for Brown and Democratic politicians; phone-bank for Democratic candidates; usher incipient mass movements off the streets and into lobbying, phone banking, fundraising, etc.

The Democrats’ strategy—short-term, long-term, and in-between-term—can be summarized in one word: austerity. And this is more than just a California strategy. In state legislature after state legislature, Democrats and Republicans agree that public worker unions and pensions, along with essential public programs must be rolled back. The labor bureaucrats support this call for “shared sacrifice”.

Fighting austerity requires a mass movement that rejects the whole notion of “shared sacrifice” and it insists on rolling back all the cuts and all the layoffs and getting the money that’s needed from the banks, from the corporations, and from the wealthy. The old slogan still applies: People before profit!

CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY PAYS DEVELOPER’S BILLS WHILE EVICTING TENANTS

By Joseph Peery

Last year, Crain’s Chicago Business news reported, “The Daley Administration is bailing out the developer of the high profile Cabrini-Green redevelopment on the Near North Side, side stepping a default on a \$32-million construction loan that would be a punch in the gut to the ambitious plan to remake the city’s public housing projects.”

The article, entitled, “City saves Cabrini remake,” went on to say, “The [Daley] Administration has agreed to pay a \$3.4 million public subsidy early, lowering the sales target needed to get the money and trimming the number of homes in the 263-unit mixed income condominium development, which has been hurt by slow sales. The deal funnels badly needed cash to a venture led by developer Peter Holsten that on Dec. 15 was unable to pay off a J. P. Morgan Chase & Co. construction loan. As part of the deal, the bank tentatively agreed to extend the loan, and new investors are injecting cash into the project.”

About three weeks ago rumors went through the neighborhood that again Peter Holsten was unable to pay his bill

and that the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) has now begun paying it. At this time, evictions in the Cabrini Green area have reached an all time high. The CHA and a host of private management corporations, including the one mentioned above, have used the police, courts, multiple leases and all kinds of legislation both old and new, as well as tactics legal and extra legal, to remove residents who are poor. Nichelle Dunn is one such resident. The 42-year old mother of two moved into Parkside of Old Town managed by Holsten in April of 2009, under the same TIF (Tax Increment Financing) affordable housing program. But instead of getting bailed out, she got evicted on April 30, 2011.

Holsten Management didn’t take her to court to remove her, they simply just didn’t renew her lease, and then scared her with Part 18 of the lease which reads:

“If lessee fails to vacate upon termination then: (A) If lessor files a statutory forcible entry and retainer action for possession based upon lessee’s failure to vacate the premises, then lessee shall pay lessor a sum equal to double the amount of rent here in set forth as liquidated damages for the time that

possession is withheld; or (B) Lessor may, by written notice thereof, extend the term of this Lease upon all the terms and conditions herein for one year, but with a rental of 20% greater than the rental contained herein.”

“I received a letter of non-lease renewal,” said Nichelle, “and the reason was that I didn’t sign the required paper work.” Embarrassed about it, she kept quiet until other residents told her about their situation. “About a week after I got my letter, I noticed several people moving out of the building, and as it came closer to my lease ending, I noticed a lot more people moving out, and all of us didn’t have any answers other than we didn’t sign the paper work, and some people didn’t get any reason why their leases weren’t renewed. The only thing we want are answers, why didn’t they renew our lease?” And further, “I usually receive a lease renewal paper in January, but I didn’t receive one this year. I felt that they were hiding something. When they had something they needed you to sign they’d hunt you down, but if it was something you needed, you never found out what was going on.”

BRWN BFLO raps with Stic Man calling for Unity

BRWN BFLO is one of the Bay’s top conscious rap groups. The video for their song “Corazon,” with Stic Man from DeadPrez, is a profound statement that calls for the unity of everyone who is cast out by this system of capitalism that can only thrive by hurting people.

Check it out:

**BRWN BFLO feat. Stic Man
“Corazon”**

[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=PQxCGDtcmsU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQxCGDtcmsU)



The People Vs. The Corporations in The Rust Belt

An interview with well-known labor leader General Baker

On May 26th, the People's Tribune interviewed General Baker, retired autoworker and internationally recognized labor leader.

People's Tribune: What is the situation in the Rust Belt?

General Baker: Michigan is the worst of the other three states: Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio. In Wisconsin, they passed the bad legislation, but it is held up in court so it is not being implemented. Here in Michigan, the Emergency Financial Manager (EFM), is in place in Pontiac, Benton Harbor and in the Detroit School Board. Also, the Governor has been able to pass his budget for all kinds of cuts. Another bill just passed that cuts almost \$170 per student out of the school budget. So, we are in worse shape because all these bills have passed and are being implemented.

PT: How are people responding?

GB: There is a petition drive to recall the Governor, which started May 21. It was initiated in Lansing, during the mobilization of around 10,000 teachers. A dramatic amount of petitions—with 807,000 signatures—have to be in by August 5. If you calculate that 20% of the signatures will be bad, it means that 1.1 million signatures—or 10,000 signatures a day—must be turned in. Seems impossible but people are enthusiastically signing the petitions. Michigan Forward is putting forth another

initiative. Their strategy is to repeal the EMF bill—Public Act 4. For that, you only need a 167,000 threshold of signatures. If you calculate for the 20% of signatures that are bad, 250,000 signatures would put you in place and you have 90 days. We're looking forward to having that off the ground on June 3rd. In Michigan, the Democratic Party is

only take 8-10,000 signatures, so they are also realistic.

The problem is that there is no unity around these efforts. In Ohio they have a united labor table in charge of the petition effort. We don't have that kind of solidarity in Michigan. Without Democratic Party backing, things are scat-

ter. Party is still having town hall meetings discussing the reapportionment—like it makes a difference how many representatives you have when the EFM is on the table wiping out all of your rights. There will probably be some seeds developing toward a third party coming out of all this petitioning. We have an opportunity to enthrone people to start considering other alternatives.

PT: What is the next step?

GB: First, we have to increase our understanding that even though we are trying to repeal bills, and in some cases recall individuals, the real culprit in this battle are the corporations. They are prepared to take over with the help of the government. We have to increase our education around the issue of corporate takeover. Even though the EFM is threatening the schools, and the amount of money for education of children is being cut back, the whole initiative of the charter schools is to place these schools under corporate control. We have to make that clear. The corporations are able to hide behind these initiatives. We haven't had a direct assault on collective bargaining like Wisconsin, but the EFM allows them to do the same thing—end collective bargaining—without calling it by name. Second, we have figure out how to unite. We can come together around the issue of taxing the rich.



Thousands of teachers protest in Lansing, MI, against education cuts and the Emergency Manager running the Detroit School system.

PHOTO/WE ARE THE PEOPLE-MICHIGAN

not supporting either initiative. The other activities are individual recall petitions against four Republican senators. One has started already. There are three other petitions against three representatives and one senator. Those activities

ter. However, we're probably in a better position in that here the Democratic Party is in such shambles, it's an opportunity for other forces to come forward. But, it's hard to find anyone calling for that. So there's no unity. The Democratic

This is something new—we must respond with new ideas

By Al Gladys

We are so productive we are not needed. Science is advancing technology so fast and making us so productive that jobs are disappearing at the speed of electricity.

The other day I was watching CNBC and they were running an announcement on the ticker at the bottom of the screen. McDonald's was hiring 50,000 people that day. That's right, 50,000 fast food, part-time, minimum wage, "mini-meds" healthcare jobs. That's what is available for our children, grand-children and great grand-children. If we just fight for jobs then this is the future. That is the something new.

Gone are the days when generations of the same family worked in auto. Gone are the days when the UAW had 1.5 million members. Gone are the days when this economic system provided a so-called "middle class" lifestyle. We are so productive they don't need us anymore. McDonald's is waiting for the next generations of your family.

And we are not going to bargain our way out of this. The corporations are using the state and federal governments to determine what our lifestyle will be. And they are starting with the non-productive

"working class". In my state, Michigan, the house has passed HB 4152.

This bill appears to interfere in "collective bargaining" for the school employees in the state. After the expiration of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and before a new CBA is negotiated, school employees' (state and local employees) wages are frozen and the employees must pay for any increases in medical insurance rates during negotiations. Both the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) are opposed to the bill. But the history of the union movement is that the corporations have always controlled "collective bargaining" through the government.

In Michigan, the Public Employment Relations (PA 336) became law in 1947. It controlled bargaining for state and local government employees. The first thing it did was make employee strikes and employer lockouts illegal. Of course the employer lockout became legal if em-

ployees engaged in an "illegal" strike. An "illegal" strike is the failure of one or more employees to report to work. On December 30, 1974, the Crestwood School District Board of Education in Dearborn Heights, MI fired 184 teachers



Demonstration for Medicare for All in front of Detroit's City/County Building, part of Day of Protest called by AFL-CIO.

PHOTO/RETIRES FOR SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE

because they stayed out on strike hoping for a better contract. The firings were upheld by the courts and few, if any, of the teachers found another job in a Michigan school district.

So what is new about HB 4152? It

clearly is a response to our productivity. Corporations want to cut their expenses, including "government services" for non-productive people (state employees, retirees, under-unemployed and never to be employed workers). So, what appears to be an attack on "collective bargaining" is actually a political attack on "government services". And who are the beneficiaries of those services? All of us who must work for someone else in order to live. This is not an attack on the "middle class". The middle class is the small business owner. This is an attack on the "working class" regardless of how big or small your paycheck is or if you have a paycheck at all.

Corporations want to cut "government services". Our response must be to expand "government services". Medicare For All (HR 676) does that with health care.

Visit *Retirees For Single Payer Healthcare* at: www.retireesforsphc.org

MICHIGAN TO THROW 12,600 FAMILIES OFF WELFARE: WHO WILL BE NEXT?

By Marian Kramer

The Michigan House and Senate passed legislation approving a four-year lifetime limit on welfare benefits. If you have been on welfare for four years, you are automatically cut off. Come October 1, 12,600 families will be cut off the rolls. The family unit will also lose their insurance and their food stamps. Then every month, more people will be eliminated. If you have been on welfare for say three years, you only have one year left. Ohio is also going through this process — they are trying to legislate a three-year time limit. These are examples of the wholesale cuts that are taking place in the Rust Belt against that section of the working class that has the least. If allowed, it could eventually affect the whole working class.

The four-year time limitation is part of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), the welfare “reform” bill that was passed in 1996 under the administration of Bill Clinton.

However, it was left up to the states as to when they would implement this part of the bill. Some states rushed to implement it and others tended to leave the time limitation alone. Now, the present administration in Lansing—via Gov.



10,000 demonstrators rally against budget cuts in Lansing, MI. Marian Kramer of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization is second from the right.

PHOTO/DONATED

Snyder—is not only implementing the time limitation with the blessing of the legislative branch of the government, he is going back retroactively.

The Governor says people are to get a job. How can you get a job in an economy that is not producing jobs for the vast majority of people—people are thrown off the job rolls by technology. We have people coming into the Michigan Welfare Rights Office who are trying to match up two or three jobs. They still can’t survive. They are not grossing the amount of money they would have realized if they had their old jobs. They need assistance.

The Michigan government claims that by moving to do the four-year time limitation, an estimated \$77.4 million will be saved. There is no consideration given to what will happen to people without money to buy food or shelter. They will be out on the street.

If the masses of people do not rally against these particular cuts, it will set the foundation for the cuts to go deeper. They will continue the taxation on the pension, eat away at other benefits of the workers, and eliminate certain programs not rel-

evant for the corporate interests. If we allow this to go forward, what is it going to do for social security on a federal level—and will there be a time limit for social security? We have to think about this. Enforcement of this bill would set the foundation for all of our benefits to be eliminated.

When Snyder went after the pensions for Michigan seniors, the people mounted a massive campaign. Suddenly some \$400 million in funds showed up. The government is not broke. They don’t need to eliminate people on public assistance in order to “fuel the economy.” They are trying to use general funds for the corporate interests. We should remember, too, that it took both Democrats and Republicans to pass the original bill. We need to fight in the interests of the whole working class. Tax the rich!

Many groups, including the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, are mounting a campaign. We see this as central to the overall battles taking place for workers’ rights. Please contact us. Call (313) 964-0618 or visit our website: www.mwro.org/

Ohioans Battle Anti-Labor Bill and Budget Cuts

By Robert A. Davis, Political and Legislative Director, AFSCME Ohio Council 8

In Ohio the election of 2010 saw a dramatic shift in the state’s legislative agenda. In that election Republicans were able to retake the Ohio House of Representatives and now hold a commanding 19-seat majority. This coupled with retaking the governor’s office and holding on to their majority in the Ohio Senate positions Republicans to bring forth an unprecedented assault on workers, beginning with public employees.

Senate Bill 5, the collective bargaining “reform” bill basically strips public employees of Ohio’s cities, counties, school districts, police and firefighters of their right to collectively bargain over healthcare, work hours, and conditions of employment. Despite the fact that polls showed the public supporting the

rights for a referendum vote to be placed on the ballot in regard to any legislation that is passed by the state legislature. For the vote to take place, petitioners must gather at least six percent of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election from 44 of Ohio’s 88 counties. Labor has now come together in this fight and is in the process of obtaining more than 500,000 signatures of registered voters to place a referendum on the ballot this November to take the provisions of Senate Bill 5 out of law. With a deadline of June 30th to obtain the needed signatures, AFSCME as well as other unions representing teachers, police, firefighters and other public employees are on target to exceed this goal.

In addition to the fight against Senate Bill 5, Ohio also finds itself in the midst of a budget battle that has the same Republican-led legislature balancing a projected \$8 billion budget shortfall by simply shifting the burden to local governments and it’s most vulnerable citizens. Newly elected Republican Governor John Kasich refuses to discuss the need for revenue, deciding to address the shortfall through a “cuts only” approach. Cuts to local governments thru a reduction in the Local Government Fund and the total elimination of the Estate Tax



Ohioans rally against the anti-labor legislation SB5 and budget cuts.

PHOTO/JOE WEIDNER

both of which assists local governments with revenue streams will leave local communities struggling to provide the most basic of services. School districts will see their budgets slashed by more than \$3 billion while at the same time having to watch more public tax dollars siphoned off to fund an expansion of charter schools and voucher programs.

Governor Kasich is having a “Fire Sale” in Ohio proposing to sell or privatize state prisons and the state’s only revenue generating roadway, the Ohio Turnpike. These major assets will be sold for a fraction of their value simply for an influx of one-time money. Ohio can simply not afford to address

the budget in this manner. A balanced approach whereby revenue enhancement is coupled with a decrease in state spending is the best way to address the budget shortfall so that our state government can continue to provide the vital services the citizens of Ohio rely upon each and every day.

In November the voters of this state must send a message to the governor and legislative leaders to let them know that we demand a responsible government. One that just addresses the concerns of all of its citizens and not just those of a privileged few.



PHOTO/JOE WEIDNER

to collectively bargain and holding rallies which brought tens of thousands to the Ohio Statehouse, the bill quickly moved thru the legislative process passing by a vote of 53 to 44 in the Ohio House and 17 to 16 in the Ohio Senate. In just two short months Republicans were able to eliminate legislation that had been in place since 1983.

Ohio’s Constitution al-

Interview with Adisa Banjoko of the Hip Hop Chess Federation

Oakland rapper DLabrie interviews friend and mentor Adisa Banjoko.

DLabrie: What's your background in hip hop, education and politics?

Adisa Banjoko: I'm a pioneer hip-hop journalist/author. I was a member of the rap group Freedom T.R.O.O.P. 187 (FT187). Back in the day we did a lot of work with Kiilu Nyasha & OG Black Panthers in the Bay Area. I was one of the first west coast writers for The Source, VIBE and other mags. I authored two books called "The Lyrical Swords" about the connection between hip-hop and politics. Currently, I run a non-political organization called Hip Hop Chess Federation (HHCF).

DL: Tell us about your early days in hip-hop.

AB: My crew (FT187) did a lot of work with DJ Qbert, Mix Master Mike and DJ Apollo (Rock Steady Crew DJ's). Back in the day we opened for Gangstarr, Organized Konfusion, Paris, Onyx, Brand Nubian. The first rap group I was in, One Nation, was the first rap group featured in The Source's "Unsigned Hype." Back then I was known as MC Most Ill.

DL: How did you get into writing and speaking?

AB: I wrote first, so, it wasn't that hard. Our group got respect on the street. That's how I began speaking. I've lectured at Harvard, Brown, UCLA, Stan-

ford and also in juvenile halls & prisons like DVI, San Quentin, and Vacaville penitentiaries.

DL: Why did you get into martial arts?

AB: I used to take Eskrima Serrada from a guy who used to bodyguard for the Saudi royal family. Now I am a purple belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu at Heroes Martial Arts (Bay Area). I also recently de-



Adisa with students from John O'Connell High School in San Francisco.

PHOTO/NINA PARKS

veloped a system called The Iron Hook Submission Series; I'm working on an iPhone app for it. Martial arts has given me a higher level of self-awareness, physical fitness and spiritual clarity.

DL: As a Muslim, why do you think hip-hop and Islam both have such a negative image in the media?

AB: Both are deeply misunderstood. When I was young, I was really angry. Islam replaced my anger with love for myself, family and the world. That's how I came to embrace non-violence. Even if someone like 50 Cent or Lil-Wayne raps about killing, it's still a non-violent act. Rather than write, the person could have killed. But they chose to pick up a pen instead of a gun.

DL: What made you start the HHCF?

AB: I've known for years that many rappers like T.I., JayZ, Will Smith, WuTang Clan played chess. I organized it and added philosophies I learned off the board. We fuse music, chess and martial arts to promote unity, strategy and non-violence. Rappers like yourself (DLabrie), RZA, Immortal Technique, Zion I, Hieroglyphics, Dialated Peoples, DJ Qbert, Traxamillion, plus chess champions and well known MMA fighters work with us. Our events change lives and break stereotypes!

DL: What do you see as the role of artists in education and activism?

AB: Every artist is not meant to be Im-

mortal Technique or Chuck D. At the same time, it's equally unfair for an artist to say they are super political OR super gangster if they are not. Hip-hop is supposed to be FUN. If you beat kids over the head with political ideologies all day, it's just as bad as feeding them party music all day. Both harm the children. Moderation is the key.

DL: You're a role model and family man. What is next for Adisa Banjoko, the person?

AB: Chill, read, workout. This summer I'm going to be training my kids in Jiu-Jitsu. I'm trying to get back into college and finish school. MalcolmX said that the future of Black people would rest on the shoulders of those that went to college. Without him, I'd have never been Muslim.

DL: Tell us your up and coming projects.

AB: For all updates visit <http://www.hiphopchess.blogspot.com>. We have HHCF events and all kinds of stuff happening. Follow us on twitter @HipHopChess. I was recently featured in a book called "The Boombox Project" with MCA from Beastie Boys, Fab 5 Freddy and some old school rap folks. I'm also featured on your (DLabrie's) debut album "MR NETW3RK." I have a blog about fatherhood at <http://www.alldadsallday.blogspot.com>

Juneteenth 2011: The Color Question Today

On June 19, 1862, Congress abolished slavery in the U.S. territories. This historic event is celebrated as "Juneteenth." Juneteenth also provides the opportunity to make a sober appraisal of where African Americans are in the journey up from slavery and to determine what lies ahead for all workers.

From the Editors

As we celebrate Juneteenth 2011, it's a fitting moment to look at the role of the color question in American politics, and how this question has changed in the era of electronics and globalization.

Historically, the color line subjected all African Americans, regardless of education or wealth, to the same oppression, segregation and discrimination. This segregation gave African Americans a distinct culture and thus produced an "African American people."

Since the end of World War II, four elements changed this situation. First, the determined and militant struggle of the African Americans themselves against their oppression, a struggle which had been going on for centuries, was able to win certain victories under the particular conditions of the 1950s and 60s.

The second element was the mechanization of southern agriculture, which was the material basis for the modern

freedom struggle.

Third, during the Cold War the Soviets shone a spotlight on African American oppression, embarrassing the US government into taking steps to dismantle legal segregation.

The fourth element was the introduction of electronics into production and communications, and the resulting creation of a new class of workers whose labor is no longer needed—a class that includes millions of every color.

Today, the African Americans have essentially ceased to be a "people." The Black political, cultural and economic elite have become integrated into the ruling class and the political bureaucracy. While the isolation of the Black masses remains, the vast mass of African Americans—though segregated and discriminated against—were always part of the working class, and today are at the core of the new class created by electronics. Despite their continued isolation, today every demand of the Black

masses is in the interests of the poor of all colors, and against the interests of the wealthy no matter their color.

This does not mean that racism is declining; it does mean that racism is changing its form. We must never forget that the brutality of racism has not always been rooted in color differences. The racist nationalism of the fascist Japanese government against the peoples of Asia during World War II, or the slaughter and enslavement of the Slavic peoples by fascist Germany during the same war are only recent examples. In history we see racism in a religious garb as well.

The thing that is clear is that racism, no matter its veneer, facilitates class exploitation and is an integral part of capitalism. Therefore, as the needs of capitalism change, the forms of racism will change to accommodate it.

As the economy degenerates, a political awakening on the part of the dispossessed will become a threat to the capitalist system itself. Therefore the ruling class must isolate and attack the new class.

German and Italian fascism had to proceed from the most violent and brutal elements of their national history—and so will the rise of fascism in America. This demands that the isolation and

oppression of the African American must again be called into being, but in a new form.

There is plenty of old-fashioned racism around and it will continue. The thing revolutionaries must grasp is that a new form of racism is developing. This new racism is directed against the "ghetto Blacks" the "illegal immigrant" and the white, so-called "trailer trash." In other words, class and cultural differences with the ruling class, not color, are emerging as the ideological basis for the savage economic and political assault against the new class.

Those being forced out of the economy by labor-replacing technology are of every color and nationality, yet history is uniting them. They are all forced to fight for a new kind of society or starve. This creates the possibility of real class unity in America—that is, people united as a working class around a common program in a struggle for political power.

Now the task of revolutionaries is to wage the propaganda war necessary to make the possibility of unity a reality.

The above concepts are largely from The Future is Up to Us, a book by Nelson Peery. Order books from: www.speakersforanewamerica.com

May Day 2011: Which Way Forward?

From the *Tribuno del Pueblo*

Again this May 1, workers marched and rallied for immigration reform. We marched and rallied against the attacks on the immigrants in America. We marched against enacting anti-union and anti-democratic laws in states like Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio.

After the rallies and marches, state legislatures continued to take away workers' rights and to balance state budgets on workers' backs. And immigrants and their families are still suffering gross violations of their rights by employers, ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) agents, and the police.

What is happening to the American Dream?

The answer lies in the epochal changes underway in the economy. Computers and robots are permanently replacing workers. The life of the worker no longer has any value to the corporations. The system will not care for those it does not need. The capitalists and their corporations no longer need a well paid, healthy workforce. The end result is that people without work, or with too little work, have no money to buy cars, houses, refrigerators, food—

the necessities of life.

This process is creating discontent among workers. In such times of crisis capitalists have used the immigration issue to divide and conquer, just as they use the racial issue, pitting Black against

white. They make immigrant workers the scapegoat for the ills of society.

Historically, those workers most susceptible to anti-immigrant propaganda have been those who see their way of life threatened by capitalism's new

ways. They are duped into believing that the immigrant is to blame.

Today the corporate media is working overtime to make Americans believe immigrants are taking their jobs and using government benefits that they don't pay for.

Republicans and Democrats alike are using the attack on immigrants as a way to sway American-born workers to supporting their agenda—to obliterate the laws and programs that have benefited workers.

But the real fight isn't immigrant against native-born or Black against white. The overriding factor is class. Either we unite as workers, regardless of color, creed, or national origin, or the corporations will extinguish us under the wheels of change.

There is an alternative. The labor-replacing new technology has created the possibility of achieving a world of great abundance for all. It makes possible a cooperative society in which everyone can benefit from the wealth produced.

That new world is possible. But it can only be built if we take production from the hands of the corporations and organize society to provide for the welfare of all.



Youth spearheaded pro-immigrant and workers' rights marches for May Day in Madison, Wisconsin. PHOTO/LAURA GARCIA

Student Activists Train at "Bring It!" Youth from South Carolina to Maryland gather at Virginia's Wayside Center

By Luis Rangel

"I came to see students talk about what it takes to organize in our own schools and to then go back and actually do it," says Luis Oyola, one of the facilitators of the first student-organizer retreat at the Wayside Center for Popular Education.

"The greatest part was the people who are entirely new to radical organizing mixing with people who've been at it for years," says Oyola.

Early this spring, some 30 high-school and college students ranging from South Carolina to Maryland met at Wayside Center in rural Faber, Virginia, to work on leadership and youth organizing at the first annual "Bring It!" Southeast Students Intensive Strategy Retreat.

The weekend was a call from students to their peers to "bring it on!" and organize on and off campus. Student organizers came to meet other student activists from the region, learn new skills, get inspired, and try their hand at training each other.

These students are leading the organizing on such things as on-campus racism, global sweatshops, mountain-top removal by the coal companies, and the resegregation of schools in North Carolina.

Activists at this first Bring It! came from Cary High School (Cary, N.C.), Durham Technical Community College, George Mason University (Fairfax, Va.), the Howard Gardner School (Alexandria, Pa.), Howard University (Wash-

ington, D.C.), Southern School of Engineering (Durham, N.C.), University of Maryland, University of Virginia, and Wofford College (Spartanburg, S.C.)

Members of both Wake Up the Nation! and NC H.E.A.T. (North Carolina Heroes Emerge Among Teens) participated in the conference. Both come from Wake County, N.C., where the cities of Cary, Durham, and Raleigh are located. They are fighting the county school board's attempt to re-segregate the schools based on economic status.

Re-segregating the schools this way means worse education for low-income students, and the issue is of great concern to African-American and Hispanic families particularly.

One of the H.E.A.T. members at the conference was Maria Padilla. "Bring It! was a great experience," she says. "At Wayside, I learned about strategizing and facilitating with a wonderful group of people from all over. The chef was absolutely amazing, and the people were very genuine and kind."

Along with amazing food provided by "chef" Michele Baskin, many friendships were formed throughout the weekend.

"I often think that in the presence of really good people, we learn more than we could ever hope to," comments Ce Garrison from George Mason University.

"We talked about our dreams and the things we aspired to do, and from those experiences we found a common ground," she says. And they did it "with people we had known for a five-minute

lifetime there to hold us up."

Some people had less organizing experience than others, making for an environment in which the less experienced found weekend mentors.

Leading several of the workshops was Lisa Fithian, well known as an organizer since the 80s, who did major union work in the 90s in DC, Los Angeles, and Denver.

Around the evening campfire, Lisa shared stories about how much work

there is before we can be content with our world and our society and how important it is that students take part.

The Wayside Center will host Bring It! again next year. Inspired by the Highlander Center in Tennessee, Wayside is a vibrant 25-acre conference center where activists, organizers, and other justice-loving folks come together for education, training, socializing, rest, renewal, and healing. At multilingual events, it provides simultaneous translation.

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POLITICAL ATTACK ON FLORIDA MINISTER

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 email at spirit@peopletribune.org.

By Sandy Perry

“The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.” - Proverbs 29:7.

Cities all across Florida are stepping up repression in anticipation of the 2012 Republican National Convention. St.

Petersburg is proposing anti-feeding laws as well as other draconian anti-homeless ordinances designed to literally sweep the poor off its streets. It has also launched a media and political campaign against one of its most effective homeless organizers, Rev. Bruce Wright.

I have worked with Rev. Wright in numerous national conferences and actions in support of Christian

non-violence and the rights of the poor. He has ministered to St. Petersburg’s homeless and organized them to fight for housing for twenty years.

Rev. Wright was targeted by Secret Service visits earlier this year and now a coordinated media campaign. Channel 10 recently attacked him for receiving

an \$1100 a month salary from Refuge Ministries for his tireless service and advocacy. While claiming his salary was outrageously high, it also attacked him because it was too small to keep current on his child support payments. Its coverage included a gratuitous political attack on him by Mayor Bill Foster.



Rev. Bruce Wright
PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Channel 10 apparently went so far as to tip off police that he was driving without a license in order to stage an arrest at a time when they could film it for the news.

Rev. Wright is an ordained minister with a doctorate who could earn a salary of \$70,000 a year serving a conventional congregation. Instead he has dedicated his life to serving as a spokesperson for the rights of the poor. The

Secret Service and media have not seen fit to investigate other local non-profit directors earning \$200,000 a year or more.

Rev. Wright has not been deterred, and intends to continue his ministry. Together with Food Not Bombs he is participating in statewide vigils by the homeless every first of the month.

FBI witch-hunt of activists expands —so does resistance to it

By Chris Mahin

CHICAGO – For eight months, the FBI has waged a systematic campaign of harassment against anti-war and international solidarity activists. That campaign intensified in late May 2011 — but so did public outrage and opposition to the witch hunt.

In September 2010, the FBI raided several homes and one office used by peace and justice 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 more people were informed by the FBI that they were being subpoenaed.

The FBI’s campaign took an ugly new turn on May 17, 2011, when agents of the FBI and the SWAT team of the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department raided the home of Carlos Montes, a well-known political activist in Southern California.

At 5 o’clock in the morning, the raiders smashed the front door and rushed in with automatic weapons as Montes slept. The team of sheriff’s deputies and FBI agents then ransacked his house, seizing his computer, cell phones, and hundreds of documents, photos, diskettes, and mementos of his current activities in the immigration rights movement and civil rights movement. They also took hundreds of documents related

to Montes’ involvement in political activity going back 44 years.

Montes was arrested on one charge dealing with a firearm-code violation. He was released on bail the next morning.

The May 17 raid represented an intensification of the FBI’s harassment campaign. Until the Southern California raid, the FBI’s campaign against the 23 peace and justice activists had been centered in the Midwest. The name “Carlos Montes” was listed on the subpoena left in the office of the Twin Cities’ Anti-War Committee last September when it was raided. Montes is an active member of the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, the group set up in 2010 to oppose the FBI’s harassment of the activists. When Montes was placed in the car of a Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputy on May 17, an FBI agent approached him and tried to ask him questions about the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, one of the organizations whose materials the FBI was looking for in the September raids. Montes invoked his right to remain silent.

The raid on Montes’ home has resulted in expressions of outrage across the country. On May 25, an emergency press conference was held at the Federal Building in Chicago where leaders of the immigration rights movement spoke out against the raid.

While the raid against Montes is ominous, it comes at a time of increasing public unease about all the raids and subpoenas issued against anti-war and international solidarity activists. In the last several months, at least eight members of the U.S. Congress have written to President Obama or Attorney General Eric Holder to express their concern about the danger to civil liberties that the FBI’s activity in this case could present. These members of Congress were clearly responding to requests from their constituents that they speak out—urgent calls from anti-war activists, students, union members, and other concerned people. It is very important that these efforts continue!

We urge our readers to speak out against the FBI’s harassment of peace and justice activists, and to demand that the charges against Carlos Montes be dropped and his property returned immediately. Please call and write U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder at 202-353-1555 and demand an end to the raids and subpoenas. Further information can be found at:
<http://www.stopfbi.net/>

New Orleans: Workers Join Hands on May Day

By Ted Quant

*“Workers of the world unite!”
“An injury to one is
an injury to all!”*

These historic slogans of the class-conscious international working class of yesteryear are still the philosophy and consciousness needed to unite the working class for its political tasks today in 2011.

The banners of the May Day demonstration in New Orleans expressed this understanding and concretely expressed the demands of immigrant workers, “the right to remain,” and the demands of African American workers, “the right to return” and the fight for jobs for the public housing residents in the reconstruction of their communities, were all represented.

Another organizational expression of the urgency to unite is the recent formation of a Jobs with Justice coalition in New Orleans. Joining in this effort were the New Orleans Teachers Union, Teamsters, Metal Trades Avondale workers, Congress of Day Laborers, Stand with Dignity, and the Alliance of

Guest Workers.

While the economic crisis exerts pressures for division, pitting worker

against worker along racial and ethnic lines, these efforts are starting to fight back.



May Day March in New Orleans shows the unity of all workers. People protested illegal detentions; deportations where people have “disappeared;” they demanded the “Right to Stay” for those workers who came to clean up the destruction after Katrina; they supported the “right to return” of African American residents scattered around the country, and jobs for residents of public housing.

PHOTO CREDIT/TED QUANT

LAWYER PERSECUTED FOR ADVISING PEOPLE TO BREAK INTO THEIR OWN FORECLOSED HOMES

By Robin Yeamans

Finally, a lawyer does the right thing and fights foreclosures, and what does the bar association do: Try to disbar him. The California State Bar eJournal of 4/1/11 announced: "Bar moves to lift license of controversial lawyer." The State Bar is attempting to lift the law license of Michael T. Pines, a California attorney who made national headlines by encouraging his clients to break into their own foreclosed homes and take up residence again. Not content with this, the Bar immediately issued an order preventing attorney Pines from practicing law because of the "harm" that might occur to the "public."

What does anti-foreclosure attorney Pines say? "If you hired an attorney who sees your car which has been stolen, the lawyer has an *obligation* to tell you to go get your spare key, take your car back, and call the police. If the foreclosure was criminally done, it's the same thing."

He has vigorously and effectively defended foreclosure victims, and therefore the banks ganged up on him, and the State Bar is trying to throw him out. He says virtually every foreclosure

is unlawful, and the evicted homeowners should go break in and remain. This forces the bank in "nonjudicial" foreclosure states to do an eviction ("unlawful detainer") action after the foreclosure, to obtain possession of the premises. It seems the foreclosure courts don't award possession and evict people; this is done in a separate, later eviction action if people stand their ground and stay in their home. (In judicial foreclosure states they do both of these lawsuits in one case.) To foreclose the banks use lawyers who run eviction mills, doing shoddy work, and if a lawyer goes in and demands adequate proof, it turns out to be lacking.

While there has been a lot in the media about

robo-signers, such as in Florida, the situation in many ways is worse in non-judicial foreclosure states, where banks foreclose on homes with zero court action necessary. Some states that are all or primarily non-judicial: California, DC, North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia. In California, for example, a lender gets a "deed of trust," not

a "mortgage." When the borrower doesn't pay, the lender just records a notice of default and sets the date for sale of the home on the courthouse steps—all without any court action at all.

Bar Associations should be looking into the practices of the eviction mill lawyers, not persecuting someone acting on

behalf of foreclosed homeowners.

Of course, most people cannot pay a lawyer to defend them in foreclosure or eviction cases. Law is the will of the ruling class written down, and enforcing this is what the courts and bar associations do. As the economy crashes, a lawyer merely doing what he sees as his legal duty can get him disbarred. The corporations are forced to turn towards fascism to protect their wealth in the new economy. In preparation for this, they are cleaning out both the judiciary and lawyers of conscience. They can't have insiders using their own rules against them. People who haven't been in the court system tend to think of it as a "justice system." People who've been funneled through the prison-industrial-court complex have a better appreciation that court is just another way of making money and keeping people down.

Attorney Pines needs people to email the State Bar to let them know that we don't want him disbarred, and we want the lawyers who run eviction mills investigated.

Write: jim.towery@calbar.ca.gov.



For sale and foreclosure signs are common in working class neighborhoods. A lawyer who advises families to break into their own foreclosed homes and stay is persecuted by California State Bar.

PHOTO/TRUBINODELPUEBLO.ORG

DECLARATION OF ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS

Jonathan
A latch key kid
Out of Detroit Michigan
Lives with his Auntie
And his Moms
Been a month
Since he's seen her
Two months since
She's been home
Used to live with grandma
Till that night he could
See his breath
Found her dead
In that Detroit cold
All over a gas bill
Opens a letter
Addressed to his mother
School asking for donations
Of basic necessities
Functional toiletries
Turns on the news
Thinks
They got money for war
But not for toilet paper
This city
Detroit
Once had the nation's
Highest income per capita
But now
Take a drive around town
It's hard to believe
You're still in America
Fresno California
Consuela
In a motel with four children
Men pass in out of these rooms
In and out her life

She has learned to depend on no one
Over the past three years
She has assumed
Several identities
As she has been twice prosecuted
Nearly deported
For stealing a handful of fruit
There are nights
Neither she
Nor her children eat
There days she goes without work
Dodges immigration
And hotel clerks
They spend some
nights in shelters
Not much safer
Than that cold dark concrete
There is wealth in the soil
There are tents growing in the street
That she swears she
will do anything
Anything
To separate
Her little girls from
But what promise can she keep
When she cant
Even afford the trip back
To Oaxaca
Welcome to America
Taylor
Harlan County Kentucky
Lives in a house of fifteen
That every month
Stretches
Two paychecks

Some food stamps
Oxycontin
And a couple of liters
Of Mountain Dew
Across the table
Of uncles aunts
Nieces, nephews
Cousins
Their fiancées
His wife a his children
It's been a month and a half
Since he made the nine mile walk
To the unemployment office
He has given
Four fingers seven teeth
And what feels like
Every morning
When he wakes
Half a lung
To these mountains
Sometimes under the
Kentucky sky
Out in Appalachia
It's hard to believe
This is really America
Los Angeles California
Melanie
The only child of Cambodian immigrants
Who came here with nothing
Who raised her to believe
In this country you could
achieve anything
If you worked hard enough
That the poor here were just
Stupid and lazy
Didn't take advantage of

the opportunity given
First year out of University
She was making forty thousand
Next year forty five
The next fifty
Remembered the lessons
From business school
Try to make herself
Recession proof
Everyday in every way
Trying to prove
She was adding value
But added value
Is what they don't pay you
Until you can be outsourced
For eight months
Melanie slept on her savings
Then on the couches of friends
Then in her car
Till finally returning home
There are days
When the shame
Bring thoughts of suicide
Having felt having failed
At America
We need a new value system
A new set of truths
Already proven to be self evident
A declaration of economic human rights
The right to food
The right to shelter
The right to clothing
The right to clean water

The right to not live
in the shadows
In the crevices of the night
Or in daily squalor
The right to dignity
The right to have the
truth brought to light
A declaration of economic human rights
To be taken to a court
Higher than the ninth circuit
Higher to the supreme
court of justice
To the court of what
you already know
In your heart to be true
That poverty should not
be a death sentence
That a system that has
money for bailouts
But not for the mouths
of hungry children
Is not one worthy of allegiance
That everyone
Yes everyone
Despite where they live
Or come from
Has a right
To what they need
Yes even here
In America

— Matt Sedillo

Book Matt Sedillo through Speakers for a New America
info@speakersforanewamerica.com

Benton Harbor: The Stolen City

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

Whirlpool and Governor Rick Synder are working together to destroy the people and drive the poor out of Benton Harbor. This is the systematic killing of a whole city by Whirlpool, a global appliance mega-manufacturing corporation that was started in Benton Harbor by the Upton family.

Whirlpool has driven almost all the manufacturing jobs out of the area. Whirlpool has made the city of Benton Harbor one of the poorest cities in the United States.

The city is 94% Black, 90% of the people live below the poverty level, and over 60% are unemployed. The average annual income is around \$9,000.

St. Joseph, which is across the river, is 92% white with an average income over \$35,000. Unemployment is less than 3%.

The country watched Governor Rick Synder, also known as the “Ricktator,” pass a controversial bill, which stripped elected officials of power. People around the country call this a direct attack on the citizens of Michigan and the country.

Benton Harbor now has a dictator in



Rev. Pinkney leads march against Benton Harbor EFM takeover.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

Emergency Financial Manager (EFM) Joseph Harris. Governor Rick Synder, the “Ricktator” is restructuring the government to protect the interests of the corporations, and especially, Whirlpool.

The residents of Benton Harbor have no rights as citizens, including no voting rights.

Soon this kind of legislation will sweep the country—with corporations and government working together

against the people. I call it fascism: a system of government characterized by dictatorship.

Whirlpool received over \$500 million in tax breaks. After the new tax incentives started, Whirlpool, announced it would move its Evansville, Indiana and Fort Smith, Arkansas plants to Mexico, laying off workers and, leaving more than 2000 out of a job.

Whirlpool, the job exporting, outsourcing, mega-manufacturing corporation, will once again receive several government handouts, including over \$300 million in energy tax credits, a \$19.3 million grant from the Department of Energy, and \$19 million in tax incentives from the Michigan Economic Growth Authority. Whirlpool received more than \$500 million in tax credits from the Brazilian government. Whirlpool has not and will not pay any taxes.

We must call for a federal investigation into impropriety by Congressman Fred Upton in relationship to illegal land sales in his district that allow his company, Whirlpool, to obtain protected lakefront land property against the will of the owner and citizens of Benton Harbor. This sale is for the sole purpose of his company—Whirlpool and its af-

filiates. They have gone so far as to dissolve the elected government of Benton Harbor to complete the hostile takeover of the remaining lakefront property.

These activities have not been disclosed to the House, Senate or to the Presidential office as required by law. This is a conflict of interest in the duties of a congressional officer.

There are many U.S. Representatives like Fred Upton. There are many Gov. Rick Synders. There are many Al Pscholkas in the government of the United States of America. Government is supposed to be run by and for the people. We the people must change the system. It is broken. The time is now.

In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught. Our pathway must be through the soil up, through the swamps, through the forests, up through the streams and rocks, up through commerce, education and religion. We cannot begin at the top to build a house. If we try to do this we shall in the end reap the fruit of our folly. Everything starts with the grassroots movement. It is time. It is time to change the system.

Voices from April 27 Protest Against Emergency Financial Manager Dictatorship

“As Mayor, I’ve been getting calls from every state in the union...this is a test case for the whole country.”
— Wilce Cooke, Mayor of Benton Harbor

“Public Act 4 (Emergency Financial Manager Act) is like a termite to democracy because it’s eating away at the core democratic values that make this nation and this state great.”
— Marcus Muhammed, Mayor Pro Tem Benton Harbor, MI

“It makes me ...angry (and teachers and support staff) to know that one day an Emergency Financial Manager can come

into our school district and we may be next. We’re at risk. They want to tell every school district, you have to privatize. We want our children to be good workers and union members. I’m going to keep telling my students to VOTE and be part of the movement too!!”

— Emily Heck, Benton Harbor teacher and member of Michigan Education Association (MEA)

“I saw a sign in the back that said ‘FREE BENTON HARBOR!’ I’ll be darned (as a preacher I have to be careful about the language) if I would fight in Southeast Asia for

democracy and freedom for another country and come back to Benton Harbor, MI and lose my democracy. We want our democracy now!!”
— Vietnam Veteran

“Do we want rule of the people or do we want rule of money? We may win it in the courts, but that’s not the battle. We have not been demanding a movement in America. As soon as social justice dies, political pressure by the right and by the Corporations, and by the wealthy. . . This is taking away peoples democratic right to Vote, elect, and hold accountable their local officials. So if you can do it to the mayor, why can’t you do it to the governor? This is a step toward fascism. This is unbelievable.”
— Bob King, President UAW



Hundreds protest the EFM takeover outside Benton Harbor City Hall.

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HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

“T- Shirt Shurn” Memorial Rally & March for Justice
June 18th at Noon

Meet at the Benton Harbor Public Library 213 E. Wall St.

June 18th marks the eight year anniversary of the June 2003 Benton Harbor uprising. It was a response to the high-speed police chase and death of 28 year-old Terrance T-Shirt Shurn. His death is only one incident in MANY of Benton Harbor police brutality and violence. Sponsored by the Benton Harbor NAACP. Call Rev. Pinkney at 269-925-0001