

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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DONATION \$1



Rally calling on the mayor of Providence, Rhode Island to rescind the termination notices he sent to all of the city's nearly 2,000 teachers.

PHOTO/GRETCHEN ERTL PHOTOGRAPHY

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The Fight for Public Education

TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

Back-to-school Special

Coverage on pages 3, 6, and 7

“Laborless” Day, 2011

Global Economic Crisis Creates Social Upheaval



EDITORIAL

Chicago protest against corporate officer meeting.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

How something happens or expresses itself is not what causes it to happen. The global economy is undergoing new shocks, the result of attempts to stabilize the economy by credit adjustments. However, these attempts address the effects of the crisis, not the cause of the crisis. The underlying cause of the global economic crisis is the increasing electronic (i.e. laborless) production of goods and services in an integrated global capitalist economic system.

One example of how fast global production is being automated can be found at Foxconn, China's biggest employer that produces Apple's iPad and other electronic gadgets. The corporation currently employs one million workers. The Financial Times reported last month that during a Foxconn gathering this past July, Terry Gou, its chairman and chief executive, announced the company would have up to 300,000 robots next year. They would increase the number to one million robots by 2013. The company currently has just 10,000 robots on its production lines.

According to the same report, Alvin Kwok, head of hardware technology research at J.P. Morgan said, "It signals that the cost of labor is no longer lower than

the cost of capital." The significance of this statement is that production without labor (electronic automation) has become cheaper than production with labor, even in China. However, with increasingly more commodities being produced with no labor and increasingly less people working and earning an income, there are less buyers of what is being produced. As a result, the worldwide capitalist economy and the social system that's built upon it, is beginning to collapse and self-destruct.

Up to now, credit has artificially propped up the global economy. This created an artificial market of buyers and sellers. As more debt was created, more and more lending followed to keep the buying and selling of production going. At a certain point the mounting debt can't be paid, lenders tighten credit and austerity becomes the new mantra of the enriched lenders.

Across the globe, new austerity measures are being implemented. In virtually every country in Western Europe to Britain and the United States, the working class is being required to pay the bills of a super-rich, global capitalist class. State budgets in the US are being slashed, vital social programs are being cut and workers are being laid off

in record numbers. The recent federal budget agreement is poised to cut at least \$2.4 trillion more from programs and jobs desperately needed by the American people.

Social unrest is sprouting up across the globe. People are taking to the streets in protest against government imposed austerity measures. These spontaneous uprisings are fighting against the disastrous effects of the economic crisis, with no understanding of its actual cause.

The polarization of wealth and poverty in the U.S. is extreme. The top economic 1% of the US population now has a record 40% of all wealth in the country. They have more wealth than 90% of the U.S. population combined. At the same time, the new electronic production is for the first time in human history producing such abundance that no human being needs to go without any of their necessities. This creates the potential to create a new society, if only the vast majority had the power to achieve it.

We need to think in terms of changing the entire system—of making private property, currently in the hands of the corporations and the billionaires, public property. Our first step in creating a just American society is simple. TAX THE RICH!

Why Revolutionaries Need A Press

From the Editors

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

Visit us on the web at www.peoplestribune.org

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe and house its people must be and will be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of those struggling to create such a new economic system. It is a vehicle to bring the movement together, to create a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it.

Labor-replacing electronic technology is permanently eliminating jobs and destroying the foundation of the capitalist system. The people's needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where the socially necessary means of production are owned by society, not by the corporations.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

The People's Tribune, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

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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The Fight for Public Education: TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

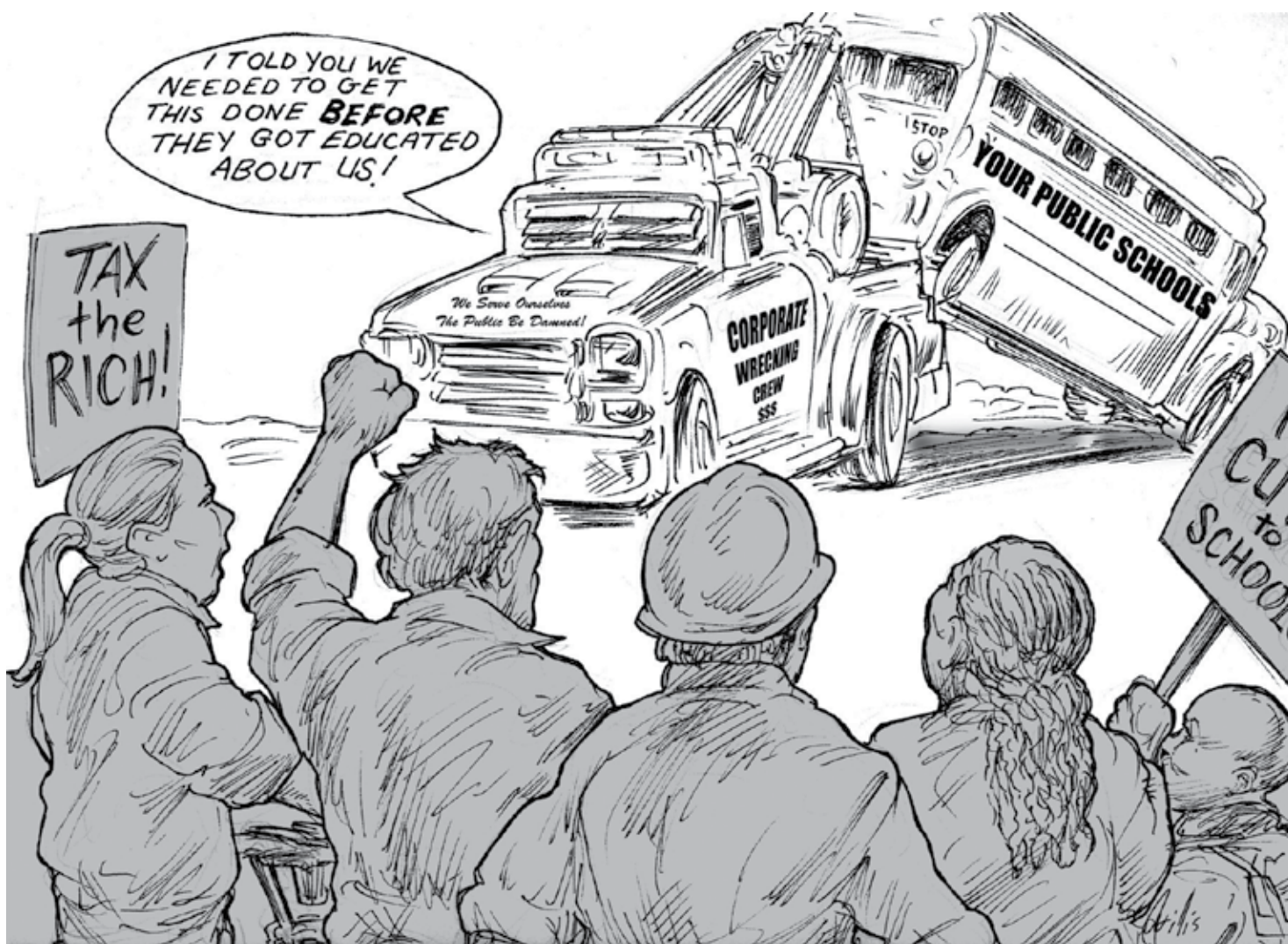
COVER STORY

From its beginnings, U.S. public education has been designed to meet the labor needs of the capitalist class. During the industrial era, public education guaranteed a supply of educated workers—engineers and other professionals, as well as skilled and semi-skilled workers—to design and operate the sprawling factories of the 20th century. Under the electronic (laborless) production methods of today, most workers are becoming increasingly unnecessary to the globally integrated production process and therefore are increasingly useless to the capitalist class.

The capitalist system has no need to educate those it can't employ. Education today is being designed and reserved for the sons and daughters of the privileged few and the narrow stratum of professionals needed to design and operate the robots and computers that increasingly carry on 21st century production. Public education is being privatized by the corporations, in part as a source of profit, and in part to guarantee that the education system serves the needs of the corporations. The right to an education is becoming a thing of the past. The capitalists know that the people have always fought to expand and improve public education, so the capitalists are taking the education system away from the people.

Today, laborless production is creating a growing mass of dispossessed—people who are permanently jobless or reduced to working part-time or as contingent labor. Their needs can only be met by a society where the socially necessary means of production are publicly owned and what we produce is distributed according to need; therefore, the dispossessed are a threat to private property. The key item on the corporate agenda now is to protect private property. Any thought of a public domain and real democracy runs counter to the agenda of the corporate government. Government at every level is taking virtually everything that used to be public and putting it under private (corporate) control, including education.

"Tough Choices or Tough Times", a report of the New Commission on Skills of the American Workforce, from the National Center on Education and the Economy, clearly describes this outlook and the process under way, as the new model for education in the U.S. The report, financed largely by Bill Gates, calls for replacing public schools with "contract schools," in which private corporations would make all the choices about education.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

A free, universal system of public education is key to the future of all of us, and the cornerstone of a democratic society. And for the first time in human history, we have the capacity to provide everyone with a high-quality public education. But we cannot provide it if education is privatized to serve the corporate agenda.

There is a rising movement across America to demand that public education be established as a public right for all. This is a political struggle and must be recognized as one. It cannot be won by incremental compromise in the face of an all-out political assault on public education. We, the people, are in a struggle for the political power to ensure that our needs are met in the realm of education and every other realm.

A first step toward ensuring the education system we need is to fight for nationalizing education under the leadership and control of those who pay for it and receive it—the working class. Billionaires, corporations and politicians have no business trying to de-form the schools to their needs. Work-

ing class families understand that public education at all levels should be both free and guarantee the greatest maximization of each individual's abilities. This way public education guarantees each person a future, rather than limited skills that serve only corporations.

This fight for public ownership and control—nationalization—will open up a discussion about who controls the government and whose interests the government serves—the people or the corporations? If we are going to have a government—and an education system—of, by and for the people, we are going to have to wage a political fight for it.

See more education articles on pages 6 and 7.

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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THE WORLD POETRY MOVEMENT

By Jack Hirschman

A momentous event took place in July, 2011 in Medellin, Colombia. Fernando Rendón, the Colombian poet who for the past 21 years has organized the spectacular Medellin International Poetry Festival, this year initiated the formation of the World Poetry Movement (WPM) in order to collectivize poetry festivals on a planetary scale.

The Mission Statement of the WPM is presented below, with particular reference to its first major event, which will take place worldwide on September 24, 2011 in coordination with the call by poets Michael Rothenberg and Terri Carrion for "100 Thousand Poets for Change". The call has already set the stage for more than 450 grassroots poetry events on that day, with that number increasing daily. For example, I've just come from a Festival of Chinese and American poets in Chengdu, China, where Agneta Falk and I read and met with Chinese poets there and in Beijing who have begun organizing for readings on September 24.

For more on September 24, go to www.100tpc.org.

Statement by the World Poetry Movement

The World Poetry Movement was founded in the context of the World Gathering of Directors from 37 International Poetry Festivals, held in Medellin, Colombia, between April and July 8th, 2011.

There they discussed the connection between poetry and peace, the reconstruction of the human spirit, the reconciliation and recovery of nature, the unity and cultural diversity of peoples, material poverty and poetic justice, and possible actions to take in favor of the globalization of poetry.

A month later, the World Poetry Movement has been joined by 77 international poetry festivals and 317 poets from 83 countries from all continents.

One of the goals is to include most of the strongest international poetry festivals, poets, schools of poetry and printed and



Jack Hirschman in Medellin, Colombia, with World Poetry Movement members from Turkey, Colombia, Chile, Canada and Japan.

PHOTO/NATALIA RENDÓN

virtual publications, to increase our mutual cooperation and thus energize the individual and collective voice of poetry in our time.

Recently the World Poetry Movement has been joined by the "100,000 Poets for Change" project, a bold initiative by poets Michael Rothenberg and Terri Carrión, in California, who have proposed the implementation of a worldwide poetic action, next September 24th, 2011 in 350 cities worldwide.

Due to the nature of poetry, the World Poetry Movement supports and will always support the thoughts, actions and measures that can contribute to world peace, the defense of all life on earth, the sustainable de-

velopment of a new world, the restoration of beauty, dignity and truth, in the process of a persistent strengthening of poetry's presence in contemporary society worldwide.

Poetry is knowledge, reflection and enlightenment, liberation, contemplation and action, lightning, creative imagination and brotherhood, spiritual unity of individuals and peoples, past, present and future of humanity.

World Poetic Movement calls on all its members, poets and international poetry festivals, to plan, develop and spread poetic actions and simultaneous poetry readings, across the planet, next September 24th, 2011, to consolidate our organizational pro-

cess, making a formidable display of poetic power possible in the world, in hundreds of cities and villages on Earth.

We ask you to please inform us shortly on the decisions taken regarding this proposal to the following email: <mailto:worldpoetrymovement@gmail.com>.

— By the World Poetry Movement Coordinating Committee: Peter Rorvik (South Africa), Bas Kwakman (Netherlands), Jack Hirschman (United States of America), Rati Saxena (India), Alex Pausides (Cuba), Amir Or (Israel), Iryna Vikyrchak (Ukraine), Fernando Rendón (Colombia)

SWEET BEAUTIFUL MONSTER (The Sexy Side of War: Satire/Exposé)

And now look at you, my sweet beautiful monster
I wanted you to stay home with your Mom
and me and help raise your son
You could have gone to Jr. College and learned
a good trade or business skill
That General said you would make a good soldier
They were looking for a few good men and women
The cultures of war love the sweet smelling
sounds of sex, booze and drugs
The General said it was a "just" war for
Democracy with a little collateral damage
He would personally recommend you to be
the poster child for Uncle Sam
You have sex appeal; that Jenesaisquoi; you
could not resist serving your country
It is the sweet scientific thing to do. Your
Mom and I did not want you to go
For a long time we have been protesting
bad wars for good reasons
We lost friends and relatives and you
know how much we were hurt
We believe in blaming the country and not
the soldiers for going to war
But we taught you the "Art of War" facts; you read
the articles, books and you saw the videos
To poke fun at us, you protested our protest

with your big sign reading:
"WAR IS BEAUTIFUL; IT CREATES JOBS;
IT CONTROLS THE POPULATION"
You said there's a certain erotic beastly
beautiful thing about war, rape,
Fires, torture, hangings, domestic
violence and sadomasochism
It's better than belonging to a gang and doing
drugs and crime; don't ask, we won't tell
My kid said ugly is the new beauty and
violence is the new rich
Your Mom and I both agreed that you needed
to get some counseling ASAP
The next day you saw the General and joined the
Army because you were bored and broke
It was all the wild drug sex life you expected
and more than you bargained for
A sweet beautiful horrible experience and
you loved every minute of it
Especially the friendly fire until they sent
you home to the psyche ward
Laughing out of your head about what a great time
you had being a sex toy for Imperialism
After all like the straight talking General, you were just
following orders for the slapstick theatre of war
And my sweet beautiful monster, when your

baby looks at you confused and crying
Because he does not even recognize his own
mother (not like the before picture)
Martin was against the Viet Nam War and Malcolm said
we were: "lied to, hoodwinked and bamboozled"
The General argued against the war privately but
supported it publicly; he follows orders
He also said he would take the fifth after drinking
it first and he was famous for saying:
"Never air the dirty linen of your war Fascist fantasies
wet dreams sadomasochistic menageatros between
You, Uncle Sam and the Taliban that went insanely crazy
bad tossing you to the streets with the bottles
And cans you picked up to earn a buck to buy some
booze to share a drink in your free public housing
Home under the bridge where you are not even counted
among the unemployed; it does not matter
Because war is so freaky, sexist and sexy. Don't ask, my
savvy sugar horny honey bun, and we won't tell!"

—Wardell Montgomery Jr., *Urban Folk Poet*, 313-821-8660, wardellmontgomery@sbcglobal.net, ©2010
Wardell Montgomery Jr. (11-21-10). This poem was inspired by John Dower's book: "Cultures of War." Interviewed by Sanho Tree on CSPAN November 21, 2010

Interview: The Next Step for Labor

Sandy Reid of the People's Tribune interviews Richard Monje, Vice President of Workers United about the next step for labor. Part one of this interview was published in the August, 2011 edition of the People's Tribune.

People's Tribune: Richard, what is the next step for labor?

Richard Monje: The next step for labor is to clearly determine the role labor will play. There are many indications that labor does not know where to go so they are constantly repeating the same old thing. They are hoping that some individual will come in and save the institutions that they had. So the faith was held in the Democratic Party institutions—that Carter, then Clinton and now Obama has the solutions—that there can be a new agreement made between the corporations (and the wealthy) and working people (and the poor) to form a new political coalition of forces. There is no indication that such a coalition can be built.

Brezinski recently stated that if the U.S. continued down the course it is heading, there would be deep social unrest. I agree. There are also a whole bunch of other people trying to figure out what kind of program could link together the social unrest, not just over job loss, but also over trade, and all of the issues that are affecting people's everyday life. There seems absolutely no interest on the part of the Democratic Party or the Republicans—nor among the groupings of capital that sought compromise with the anger and frustration in the 1930s and 1940s—to form that kind of coalition. On the contrary, they are putting institutions and laws in place to further control the anger and frustration.

The unions are going to participate in the construction of something extremely conservative and narrow on self-interests—

or they can transform into a different kind of organization. Instead of simply negotiating contracts for the self-interests of the workers they represent, they could seek to represent the basic members as only a part of a broader section of people. They could utilize their resources to assist in identifying what kind of new economic models can be created. Take a look at a Wisconsin. There's social organization in all of the towns and rural areas that expressed a programmatic point of view of what should happen in this country on the budget crisis. They should have an opinion and they should fight for that opinion. I don't think the unions or the labor movement can do this by themselves. But we need to play a role in the reconstruction of the economic model that expresses a new way to distribute goods and services in this country and who pays for it.

PT: Is there motion toward a third party?

RM: There is a constant bubbling of interest towards building all kinds of parties. None of the "legitimate" institutions or organizations is a part of that process. Right now they are dedicated to the re-election of Barack Obama.

So what is left is anger and frustration and a large mass of people who have no organizational expression, no leadership speaking on their behalf, and at any point can explode.

The best example of this was the re-



Rally in Lansing, Michigan to protest budget cuts.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

sponse in Wisconsin to the Republicans' actions. It wasn't led by a national leader, by the Democratic Party or Obama. It was an expression of people who lived in small rural areas, of students and some union activists, but it didn't require leaders to say, "Let's do X, Y, Z." It was led by local leaders who were tied to teachers, who were tied to fire-fighters, who were tied to the other trade unions, who were tied to people who used to belong to unions in the Fox River Valley, where all of the paper mills used to be and have since closed. Literally tens of thousands of families are connected to that history, that union history, to an economic model of who is responsible and what do I

contribute to society so that society can take care of me, my family and my community.

I think this is a model of what can happen when we don't have a third party, an independent political expression outside of the Democrats and Republicans debating how much do we cut, rather than solving the problem of a lack of jobs, health care and poverty.

Right now there are organizations that are attempting to form parties. That is an important step, but right now it hasn't congealed. So it remains small isolated groups and the general broad base of mass social discontent is disconnected from the attempts to form that party.

Why Teach About the Triangle Fire?

By Andi Sosin and Joel Sosinsky
Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition

Teachers shoulder responsibility to prepare their students with the skills and knowledge necessary to be productive citizens, yet they are continually criticized for their inability to overcome the effects of poverty and the myriad reasons for failure. As the desperate nature of the economic situation becomes more obvious, the neoliberal effort to control education and suppress dissent has become even more vociferous. Schools are the medium for the transmission of values, which is contested territory: sugar-coating capitalism by calling it free enterprise, excluding labor from history books, and reducing what is taught to the bare minimum of skills and topics that are tested. In the much reduced social studies curriculum, labor is dealt with as ancient history, unrelated to our modern world. Teachers are constantly pressured to meet externally imposed standards and teachers unions are under the gun, losing control over their working environments from increasing encroachment of conservative political ideologies and private charter school operators. And the decimation of union membership in the US has greatly diminished the chances for parents to pass on union values to their children. All of these forces have successfully created ignorance about the popular movements that shaped this nation, espe-



9th graders at IS 190, Bronx brought their memorial posters to the Triangle Fire centennial commemoration.

PHOTO/ROBERT DOMINGO, FDNY

cially of the labor movement. What can be done to counter this trend?

Those who care about social and economic justice have much to learn from the Triangle fire and the political revolution it is credited with inspiring. The Triangle fire took place in New York City one hundred years ago on March 25, 1911, killing 146 workers, mostly immigrant women, amidst labor upheaval in an ascendant industrial economy. The fire and its attendant exposure of exploitative factory working conditions across New York state galvanized the

citizenry to come out in support of workers, which forced politicians to bend to the public's will to support the workers and extend to them the safety and social protections that we now take for granted. In the style of popular education, lessons of the Triangle fire present a teachable opportunity that has the potential to engage people in exercising collective power for their own welfare.

The Triangle fire potently demonstrated capitalism's disregard for human beings, and the necessity of government to care for all of the people, not only the wealthy and

powerful. From Triangle came the social justice legislation that authorized unions, regulated workplace safety, and established the social safety net that is now in jeopardy. Despite that it happened one hundred years ago, Triangle's lessons are about what can take place when people become aware of their own exploitation. This generation's economic prospects are far different, but what has not changed since the Triangle era is that the ordinary citizen can only exert power through collective action.

The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition (RTFC) organized the centennial commemoration of the Triangle fire. Its website <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org>, contains information about the fire and links to participating organizations, books, films and online resources, lesson plans, and advice to organizers. Courageous teachers marked the Triangle centennial by sharing these with students, and the RTFC is now leading an effort to create a permanent Triangle memorial, which will serve to honor social justice activism and potentially educate those who have not learned about labor's struggles in school. In this way, the Triangle fire can create awareness of the value of collective action and highlight ways to achieve social and economic justice now hidden by corporate culture. For more information about the RTFC's efforts in education, contact the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition at info@rememberthetrianglefire.org.

“Let’s Take Over the Takeover!”

When the LA School District abruptly turns their middle school into a charter-school, people protest

By Maria Elena Martinez

“Let’s take over the takeover,” vowed a South Los Angeles resident about the Los Angeles Board of Education’s recent move to close Henry Clay Middle School and then reopen it with Green Dot, a charter-school corporation, as operator.

Public School Choice is a program of the LA Unified School District (LAUSD) that puts public schools up for bid to outside groups such as charter-school corporations and nonprofits. It has made the LAUSD the most charter-friendly school district in the country.

The LAUSD uses scores from standardized tests to label schools “failing” or “low-performing”—even though the tests have been proven unreliable.

By using the scores to give schools away to charter operators, the district blames the whole school community—parents, teachers, students, and staff—for problems that have actually been caused by decades of budget cuts and underfunded public education.

And the LAUSD is also using the program to give away newly constructed schools that don’t have any track record at all!

Still, the giveaway of the Clay Middle School came as a surprise. Instead of holding community hearings to consult with parents, the district simply announced Green Dot’s takeover.

“The school board placed Clay on a

silver platter and handed it to Green Dot,” exclaims Marguerite La Motte, the lone school-board member who opposes Public School Choice. “Green Dot’s scores are no better than Clay’s,” La Motte points out. “Of the 13 schools they operate within LAUSD, eight have scores of less than 650.” A low Academic Performance Index (API) is cause to put a school up for bid, unless you are already a Charter like Green Dot.

Awarding Clay to an organization whose scores are essentially no better than Clay’s raises suspicions about why LAUSD is so aggressively giving away public schools.

Studies on charter schools show that their initial success depended on massive outside funding from billionaire “venture philanthropists” like financier Eli Broad and Microsoft’s Bill Gates.

This initial investment allows them to siphon millions more from struggling school districts.

Charters have also been criticized for filtering out students who require more help—for instance, special-needs students and English-language learners.

And there are other drawbacks. Unlike public schools, when community needs are too high, the charter schools simply close down. Green Dot abruptly closed its Animo Justice Charter High School in the middle of the 2009/2010 school year, leaving its largely Latino students abandoned and angry.

Now longtime residents of South LA—

many of whom experienced de facto segregated schools, as they grew up—are vowing, “We Will Not Be Moved!” and “This Is Our school, Our Land!”

Joining in the struggle are newer Los Angeles residents who recently came to this country in search of a better future for their children. They are spreading the word on the backroom deal to give away Clay Middle School, and about the move to take the “public” out of public education.

“They didn’t do it right the first time, so they are fixing the procedures to take away our schools,” explains Emily Saenz, the recently displaced parent representative from Henry Clay.

She believes the Clay giveaway without parent input is a test for how Public School Choice will be implemented in the future. “This struggle is bigger than one school—the future of all schools depend on whether we save Clay.”

“There are millions of dollars in public education, and these charter organizations want our schools and our money,” she says. “Clay’s annual budget is \$4 million.”

The Clay takeover also represents a shift in strategy by charter operators. Many believe the takeover is the first step in taking over the feeder elementary schools as well.

Clay’s future is uncertain. But the struggle to keep public education “public” has reached a community with deep roots in civil-rights battles for quality public edu-



Teacher rally in Lansing, Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

cation – and they are not likely to let the struggle die.

KEEP THE PUBLIC IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Steve Miller

The privatizers of public education play on the fact that public schools in America are more segregated by race today than they were when the Supreme Court ruled, in 1954, that separate education is inherently not equal. This apartheid school system delivers absolutely horrid public education to central city schools. Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford Education professor, has estimated that central-city education has been under-funded by a trillion dollars since the 1960s. Today we are told that charter schools are the answer. A few early charter schools used creative approaches to education. Today, however, charter schools, in California by law, must be run by corporations. Can corporations really create better schools than the public can?

Charter schools today are even more segregated than public schools. Unlike public schools, charter schools do not have to accept children with special needs, broken families or discipline issues. In fact, they routinely drive them out back into public schools while keeping the money paid by the state for the student’s education.

Charter schools are bankrolled by billionaires who use “philanthropic donations,” that are guaranteed by tax breaks, to control public education policy.

Oprah Winfrey certainly supports charters. She donated \$1 million each to six charter school corporations a year ago. It’s only fair to inquire if Oprah feels that the

Supreme Court was wrong to require government to guarantee equal public education. Since Martin Luther King fought for this all his life, was he wrong too?

Corporations are designed to make a profit. They must do this, under law, or be penalized. “Non-profit” corporations can also make a profit, but the size is limited. By definition, profit-making takes money from the children.

Many charter corporations receive more money than most public schools, from private endowments by billionaires, plus specially earmarked state funds as well as federal money. Yet study after study shows that charter students do not achieve as well as public school students. This is true even though charters routinely “cherry-pick” the strongest students, refuse to take students with special needs, such as language issues or learning deficits, and routinely drive out the students that do not get the best grades.

Decades of studies that show that in-school factors (of which the teacher is only one) effect about 1/3 of student success. The other factors—counting for 2/3 of achievement—are issues of poverty and class. Stu-



Protest against school cuts in Culver City, California.

PHOTO/L. KURNARSKY

dents from impoverished families simply do not do as well when they face on a daily basis unemployment, hunger issues, constantly moving from house to house, gang problems, health care interruptions, lack of adequate family resources, etc. What a surprise! The corporate agenda strives to hide these issues because these factors are created by the cor-

porations themselves.

How can profit-making organizations be allowed to provide what should be a right to all? Commercial organizations cannot protect this right. How can anyone argue that the market, which is based in commercial rights, is the best guarantee of civil rights?

When did we agree as a nation to stop holding government accountable for public education? Why should we let them off the hook? If we don’t hold the government responsible, then who should be responsible? When did we agree that billionaires, like Oprah, Bill Gates, and Eli Broad, could control public policy, rather than demanding the government be responsible?

Corporations are using the smoke-screen of “budget crisis” to begin to seize everything that belongs to the public. Public schools are the

sector of government that the public controls most directly. No wonder they are under attack in every city! Instead of allowing politicians to ignore their responsibility to the public that elected them, we should hold them accountable to extend the power of the public over the schools.

Chicago—

THE FIGHT FOR FREE, PUBLIC EDUCATION

By Lew Rosenbaum

In Chicago, as teachers start back to school, they are entering the last year of their contract. A few months ago, the school board handed out pink slips to more than 1,000 teachers. They have placed many of those laid off on a do-not-hire list -- the education version of the blacklist. And now teachers need to prepare for contract battles and a possible strike next year.

On June 13 the Illinois legislature passed a law, SB7, undermining tenure rights as well as making it difficult to strike. The majority of these lawmakers were Democrats and the law was signed by Democratic Governor Pat Quinn. Newly elected Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel began by appointing a new school board stacked with corporate leaders such as Penny Pritzker, champion of charter schools, whose family controls the Hyatt Hotel empire. Emmanuel, also a Democrat, directly threatened the unions when he stated he wants to take away the teacher's right to strike.

All over the Rust Belt, public workers are being blamed for the "deficits" of cities and states. To emphasize their plight, the Chicago school board has been beating the deficit drum. Even though they agreed to hold "public hearings" to discuss their \$6 billion budget, only five copies of the 1000 page budget document have been made available for the public to examine -- and they are all at the district office! One reason the schools are in a deficit is because hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax

revenues have been shifted from school to corporate development whenever the city declares a neighborhood a TIF (Tax Increment Financing District.)

There is some hope for resisting these attacks. Last year the Caucus of Rank and File Educators won the leadership of the Chicago Teacher's Union. Their core program, forged through two years of confronting the school board and administration, leaned heavily on working alliances with parents, students, and community organizations protesting both declining education and the closing of neighborhood schools. At recent budget hearings, audiences at Lane Tech, Westinghouse, and Simeon schools didn't buy the deficit charade. At Westinghouse, when school board representatives balked at using TIF money to close the deficit, Jackson Potter, a union representative asked the audience, "If they can't hear us, we need to make them listen! Is this a democracy or is this a dictatorship!?" (Susan Zupan in Substance News, August 12, 2011).

On June 14, the day after Governor Quinn signed the anti-teacher law SB7, the Stand Up Chicago march protested corporate greed, and charged that money to balance the city's deficits was being siphoned into the pockets of corporations. Thousands of teachers and other public workers descended on the Hyatt Hotel where corporate leaders dubbed the "Billionaires Club" were meeting. The workers demanded that corporations pay their share to fix the housing foreclosure crisis, provide increased funding for quality public education and create



Chicago Teachers Union marches against the corporatization of Chicago Public Schools. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.ORG

livable wage jobs.

The concerted effort in Chicago against teachers is not because of their militancy, or the deficits. And with Democrats doing the dirty work, Chicagoans certainly can't blame the Republicans. Breaking the unions and decreasing education expenditures underlines this: education as the way to a better job and a stable work force is no longer viable.

The Penny Pritzkers, who have their eyes on the bottom line, know it is not necessary to teach as many people for good

jobs. They are Hell-bent on privatizing as much education as can be made profitable, while guaranteeing high quality education only for an elite group. This is what we are up against. The CTU's battle to forge a common front of struggle, both for education and school employee compensation, is part of a process: developing a class response while envisioning what kind of society provides a world class neighborhood school for all its children.

Atlanta—

Expand and Improve Public Education, Don't Destroy It!

By Gloria Slaughter

The destruction of public education is in motion like a perfect storm, and the Atlanta Public Schools are a case in point. The first wave was the education cuts; the second wave, privatization in the forms of vouchers and choice; the third wave was the No Child Left Behind Act, which was designed to eliminate the public schools with a mandate that every school in the US must reach 100% proficiency in reading and math; the fourth wave is the Race to the Top, which brings more competition for funding; and the last wave, the alleged Atlanta cheating scandal, where test scores increased dramatically in some schools in one year and educators allegedly changed answers while being caught in the pressure of "raise scores or be fired." This is "disaster capitalism" at its worst and may very well bring the state take-over.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in January, 2010 that Hurricane Katrina was "the best thing that happened to the education system in New Orleans" because it gave the city a chance to rebuild and improve its failing public schools. The Atlanta Public Schools are in the same "boat" as the New Orleans schools after Katrina hit. Public schools were replaced by charter schools and the "leftover kids" who didn't make it were left behind in underfunded failing public schools.

There is a history in Atlanta of an alliance between elected officials and business leaders and Atlanta is a specific expression of the process of the merger of government and corporations that is taking place across the country. We just have to look at the former Atlanta school superintendent's Blue Ribbon Committee which investigated the "cheating scandal" in Atlanta. Sam Williams, President of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, named those who would be on the blue ribbon panel. Community activist Joe Beasley stated that Williams called the shots to the detriment of the children. The committee chair was the Vice chairman of General Electric who had awarded the school system \$22 million. The committee supported then Superintendent Beverly Hall. Elected school board members such as Board chairman Khaatim S. El were forced out.

The state takeover of public schools in New Orleans, New York and Michigan trampled democracy, equality and equity. Georgia faces the same situation. Governor Nathan Deal and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed

are united in their plans to take over the schools and operate them in the interests of the corporations. The Atlanta schools student body is predominantly African American. The drop-out rate in Georgia is 40% and growing. Too long we have had a school to prison pipeline and this has been the status quo in the Atlanta public schools.

The unequal divide being created is really grounded, however, in the polarization of wealth and poverty. Statistics from the study of the Southern Education Foundation show that the poor are the majority in the schools in the South. The students are being "cheated" because they are not receiving a good education. Jonathan Kozol who wrote *Savage Inequalities* in 1992 says that the No Child Left Behind creates two classes of citizens. Students in the low income schools who are taught within the boundaries of high-stakes testing and those in affluent schools who receive the best education money can buy.

Public education began in order to educate and discipline the workforce for the industrial era. At this period of time, there is no longer a need for an educated workforce since technology is displacing the worker, thus, the deterioration of public schools.

The vision for public education is free, equal, quality education for all. We need to expand public education, improve it, not destroy it!



Teachers protest in Detroit, Michigan PHOTO/KARINA HARTLEY

CONVERGE 2 CONVERT

A Proposal for Movement Building, Culminating with May 1, 2012 Rally

By Frank Hammer

Global warming due to human reliance on fossil fuels is the defining issue of our time. The escalating danger posed by the consequent climate change and extreme weather patterns around the world by way of droughts, floods, hurricanes, etc., requires an “all-hands-on-deck” response—globally—if we are to slow it down and ultimately reverse it. The U.S. contributes a full quarter of the world’s carbon emissions, of which the petroleum-based auto industry is responsible for an estimated 20%. If we in the Midwest and Detroit in particular are to reduce our “carbon footprint,” we must take the lead in creating a new, renewable energy and transportation paradigm—not tomorrow, or in the distant future—but now, ASAP. We can start by demanding that closed auto plants be immediately reopened and retooled, and our laid-off industrial workforce be re-employed, to produce components for renewable energy such as wind turbines and solar panels, as well as more efficient transportation including more electric and hybrid cars and buses, and light and high speed rail. This way we can reduce “greenhouse gases” while simultaneously combating the hyper-unemployment laying waste to our regional economy and livelihoods.

There are many “green jobs” advocates who do not grasp the great urgency of this project. We are talking rapid conversion in a manner similar to what took place at the onset of WW 2 right here in Detroit, when the auto companies were ordered by the Federal Government to cease automobile production and begin immediately producing weapons for the forces in Europe combating the expansionism of the axis powers. The conversion was accomplished in eight months, earning the city the accolade, “Arsenal of Democracy.”

Developing the political force to bring this about requires uniting all who can be

united, beginning with environmental justice and union activists from the auto, steel and other industrial sectors, along with the massive ranks of the unemployed, to create a new “Arsenal of Survival.” Our immediate focus should be to demand that the rail cars for the planned Woodward Light Rail, and the proposed high-speed rail line linking Detroit to Chicago, be built right here to establish Detroit as the transportation center for the 21st century.

We are not operating in a vacuum. The Military-Industrial Complex has its own designs in this region—to further militarize our productive capacity and thereby make us increasingly dependent on never-ending military conflicts for our livelihoods. The peace and progressive faith-based communities rejects this and are eager to join with the environmental and union movements as advocates of “retooling for peace.” “Transportation as a democratic right” is also looming as a critical issue, as we approach the global depletion of accessible oil. Twenty-five percent of Detroiters already don’t have cars, a figure that will surely rise. The social movements advocating more democratic forms of transportation—including urban, student and transit-activists, will also want to join this effort.

Work is already underway to reach out to these forces with a mobilization for a May Day Rally in 2012 at the Michigan Train Depot in Southwest Detroit—icon of a once-successful public transportation system. May 1 is International Workers Day, a fitting time to declare that U.S. workers and allies have joined the developing global struggle against climate change. Southwest Detroit is also the site of recent immigrant rights rallies, which will become even more critical as climate change triggers many more migrations globally. The close proximity of the immigrant rights rally at Clark Park and the proposed May 1 event allows for a natural



Power Shift 2011's Polluter Protest in Washington, DC to protest corporations that pay no federal taxes.

PHOTO/TIM LUNDIN, TDLPHOTO.COM

link. Autoworker Caravan, Peace Action of Michigan, the Detroit Area Network for Peace and Justice, and Southeast Michigan Jobs With Justice have already committed to organizing towards this goal, with events beginning this fall. To join, and for

more information, please contact Frank Hammer at fkhammer@ameritech.net or 313-863-3219.

Southern Illinois—

“Unite Our Struggles and Demand No Cuts!”

By Cathy Talbot

Southern Illinois has more than its share of problems. Many of our counties have double digit unemployment as well as high poverty percentages. Opportunities for our youth to find employment following high school or college are meager at best. To illustrate this point, in April during the nation-wide hiring spree by McDonalds, only 80 jobs were available throughout Southern Illinois. Over 1500 applied.

The governing bodies of local towns and counties are facing mounting problems and dwindling revenues. Johnston City, a small town in the heart of coal country is one such community. The State of Illinois owes the town over \$300,000. Yet due to a mix up it must now pay back the state over \$50,000 for apparent misappropriation of the state’s motor fuel tax. The city is now about \$1,000,000 in debt, frantically robbing Peter to pay Paul, with officials pointing fingers

at each other. Council member Boyd, head of the finance committee, said the city is in a “financial emergency” and they are going to run out of money. Many cities here have increased local sales and property tax rates to buffer the shortfalls but this is a regressive tax that cannot make up for state revenue sharing and is like building that bridge to nowhere!

Meanwhile, during an August 24 hearing on poverty in Carbondale held by members of the governor’s commission to cut poverty in half by 2015, Al Ridley, executive director of Illinois Coalition for Community Services said that there are more than 670,000 persons existing in extreme poverty in Illinois. The commission’s mission, to propose legislation and action to eliminate poverty in the state, will certainly fail in the face of Governor Quinn’s budget reductions. These cuts will only put more of our neighbors, friends, and family in extreme poverty. Those in attendance spoke of

empty shelves in food pantries, cuts in unemployment assistance, loss of jobs, more people losing their homes and shelters closing, among other things.

On the education front, communities such as Cairo are cutting out their music and arts programs as well as staff. Marion’s school district is over \$3 million in the red and is looking for areas to cut. This is all due to state budget cuts. At Southern Illinois University, 3400 members of four Illinois Education Association unions have been without a contract over 430 days. These unions have legitimate concerns about job security, health care, and the future of employee voice and collective bargaining at SIUC. Community colleges have gone to four days a week and students are finding it difficult if not impossible to get funds. Many who have children are facing the elimination of childcare subsidies, which are vital to parents being able to attend college.

We are told is we all have to make shared sacrifices. But we see corporations such as Continental Tire in Mt. Vernon getting state subsidies to expand without paying increased taxes, coal companies getting permits to mine under Pyramid State Park, which is a first, university administrators making 300,000 dollar salaries while employees do not have protection from arbitrary layoffs and pay cuts, and the list goes on and on.

While the poorest among us will receive the brunt of the cuts in the budget, all of us, working and unemployed, will suffer unless we find a way to unite our struggles and demand no cuts. We have the right to housing, health care, food, education, all the necessities to sustain life, including meaningful productive work. It is our right as human beings.

Book Review:

13 Bankers by Simon Johnson and James Kwak

By Chuck Parker

"My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks." Barack Obama, March 27, 2009. So begins the book, *13 Bankers*. This was the President's message to the most powerful bankers in America as they met to discuss a solution to the financial crisis. He had two options: the blank check or the takeover. Obama handed the bankers a blank check and they were delighted.

In this option, managers keep their jobs, shareholders keep some value, and creditors are kept whole so taxpayers take the most losses. In the words of Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman it was, "an attempt to socialize the losses while privatizing the gains." And the cost of the bailout more than doubled the deficit.

How could this happen? What does it mean for the future? Is there anything we can do about it? *13 Bankers* answers all these questions. It is so packed with information it may take more than one read, but it's worth it. The way it's organized makes that easy to do, and the footnotes provide many references for further study.

The book tells the history of how Wall Street became so powerful by winning deregulation of the banking industry during the last 30 years. Led by familiar faces like

Reagan and Greenspan, they eventually won over the Democratic Party leadership under Clinton and Obama. Wall Street's ideas have come to dominate both sides of Congress, powerful bankers have passed through the "revolving door" to high positions in Democratic and Republican administrations. They doled out hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign contributions and kept an army of lobbyists in the field.

And, they could not have come to dominate politics without becoming the most profitable sector of the U.S. economy, either. Between 1980 and today, financial sector profits grew by 800%. Non-financial sector profits are up a mere 250%. For Wall Street to win so big, millions of people had to lose big. Five Wisconsin school districts lost \$35 million investing in synthetic CDO's. As one expert explained, "Selling these products to municipalities was pretty widespread. They tend to be less sophisticated. So the bankers sell them . . . junk." With the "Too Big To Fail" banks even bigger and busy engaging in even riskier behavior backed by government guarantees—an even worse crisis is inevitable.

But the book's outlook is hopeful. "History shows that finance can be made safe again. But it will be quite a fight." The book tells the history of struggles between banks and democratically elected governments

from the first battle between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison over whether to create a National Bank, to the FDR's legislation to break up and regulate banks during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Furthermore it discusses the alternative to the blank check—the takeover option—a fundamental reform of banking, the central pillar of which is the breakup of the megabanks. In this option, managers lose their jobs (and maybe go to jail), shareholders are wiped out, and the remaining losses are shared between creditors and taxpayers. But since the government owns the banks, taxpayers can claim the upside. In the words of another Nobel Laureate, Joseph Steiglitz, "Nationalization is the only answer. These banks are effectively bankrupt."

Wall Street has stolen America's wealth. They are foreclosing on the American working class. We need to foreclose on them and take back what is ours. "Real change will take years, and it will only happen when the conventional wisdom in Washington changes." However, Washington will only change its ideas when an enlightened working class forces it upon them.

Read *13 Bankers*. Arm yourself with knowledge for the struggle ahead.

TAKE BACK WALL STREET'S LICENSE TO STEAL!



Elderly Are Abused at Nursing Homes



By Lenette Evans

The residents at nursing homes in Berrien County, MI and across the US go through neglect, isolation, physical and emotional abuse, fatigue, depression, loneliness and hopelessness. Many have mental illnesses and disabilities and its difficult for them to get around without assistance. Disability limits their access to friends, church, activities and enjoyment in the community.

My Dad has been in a local nursing home here in St. Joseph, MI for nine weeks. I go twice a day to check on him. Many times I mention that he cannot have certain things to eat or drink but they give it too him anyway. They do the same to other residents who have dietary restrictions due to diabetes or heart conditions.

It is heartbreaking to see my Dad and many others lying in bed or sitting in a wheelchair being neglected all day and having very little activity or interaction with others. I have seen people fall from their wheelchairs. The companies do not do a thing to help and the staff denies these things are going on. I have had one doctor tell me these things as well.

Many of the employees, nurses, doctors, and staff do not have love and compassion for the elderly residents. Residents go around for days in their wet urine and with food spilled on their shirts for days. The nursing homes have not trained their employees and most employees are sorely underpaid. There is still no excuse to leave people in unhealthy situations.

My Dad threw up all over his new shirt, pants and the wheelchair. An aide refused to clean him. He sat for 45 minutes until some-

one decided to clean him. There were 4-5 nurses sitting behind the nurse's station who would do nothing to assist him.

An elderly lady asked for a glass of water and the nurse's aide told her, "Woman shut up." This woman cried for days needing someone who would listen, pray and make a difference. I prayed with this lady many times!!!

My Dad may need knee surgery. In the meantime his insurance with Blue Cross is cutting him off and the nursing home is shoving him out the door unless we pay out of the pocket which is \$270 a day. These are OUTRAGEOUS FEES!

On September 1 my Dad will be discharged and our home is not set up to care for him. These nursing homes put you out the door and do not care. So in the meantime we are hoping to get him into a V.A. facility down South in Arkansas where he can get better treatment and more rehabilitation to walk again. I am living on a prayer one day at a time!

My Dad is a veteran and cannot get help in his own hometown. You serve your country and then you get cut off and get the big boot. People we need to help our veterans and our elderly seniors and make a difference in their lives. We need to demand that the government take over these for-profit nursing homes and run them in the interests of the public. Please visit these nursing homes everyday so you know what is going on. I have only begun my journey on this matter. God help our nursing homes and the elderly who need love and compassion and deserve the best healthcare possible.

Lenette Evans, Street Evangelist,
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Envisioning Eldercare in a New America

Imagine a world where our elderly are happy and cared for, where the "golden" years are truly golden. Under capitalism, however, the elderly—many of whom are former workers whose labor is no longer needed—are warehoused in the profit-hungry, under-staffed nursing home industry, awaiting death. Under such criminal conditions, even the most caring health care workers cannot provide adequate care.

The solution? The whole structure

of society—which is based on the interests of the giant corporations rather than people and quality of life—needs to be uprooted. Private property in the hands of the corporations needs to be replaced with public property. Under such a society, the most advanced science and technology can be utilized to provide a fulfilling life for all.

- The Editors

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Who's Taking the Jobs Away? Is it Immigrants?

By Leslie and Andy Willis

We have lost ten million jobs due to the Great Recession (starting in 2007). Wall Street bankers and financiers, unregulated and out of control, artificially inflated the economy.

Widespread fraud and corruption at the highest levels of the financial industry with the cooperation of the government built a widespread Ponzi scheme that was bound to crash. (William K. Black former Director of the Institute for Fraud Prevention, Professor of Economics and Law at the University of Missouri, Kansas City School of Law) Another reason for a steady loss of jobs is robotics and computers. "Fourteen percent of all the factory workers in the whole world have disappeared in the last seven years. At this current projected rate, even if you don't increase the intelligent technology and things just keep going as they are, then you end mass factory labor within 30

years." (Jeremy Rifkin, author and head of the Foundation on Economic Trends, Washington, D.C.)

Are immigrants a drain on the U. S. economy? Immigrants have actually increased our economy by a net gain of \$10 billion a year. In areas of high immigration rates, employment opportunities actually increase for native-born workers. This is because the need for goods and services expands to provide for their needs. The new immigrants develop small businesses, creating job opportunities. They rebuild blighted communities and also contribute through their savings. "Over the past two decades, most estimates of the fiscal impact of immigration in the United States have concluded that, tax revenues of all types generated by immigrants—both legal and unauthorized—exceed the cost of the services they use." (From a Congressional Budget Office report)

Do immigrants pay taxes? All immigrants pay taxes, state, federal and sales

taxes. It is estimated that they pay between \$90 to \$140 billion a year. Between 1990 and 1998 the undocumented paid \$20 billion in Social Security that they can never collect! (Source: National Academy of Sciences, Cato Institute, Urban Institute, Social Security Administration)

Do immigrants increase the crime rate? Immigrant communities do not increase the crime rate. Actually newly arriving immigrants commit fewer crimes than native born Americans. Even though the undocumented population has doubled since 1994, the violent crime rate in the U.S. has declined 34.2% and property crime has fallen 26.4%.

Are undocumented immigrants a burden on the healthcare system? According to the National Immigration Law Center, the typical immigrant uses less than half of the dollar amount of the medical services that a typical U. S. citizen uses. For example, in Los Angeles County, the total medical spending on undocumented immigrants

in 2000 was 6% of the total, although the immigrants comprised 12% of the region's population. "Legal immigrants are severely restricted from accessing public benefits, and undocumented immigrants are even further precluded from anything other than emergency services." (National Immigration Forum, June 2003)

How can we solve unemployment, increase our incomes, and be fair to the immigrants in our midst? There is plenty of work to be done. We need improvement in our roads, parks, bridges, and a greener environment. We need people to help with all kinds of services, in health care, public transportation, and education. If the wealthiest people and corporations paid a fair share of taxes, we could have job programs. As people who must work for a living, we need to form an alliance with immigrants, defend them and stand up for immigration reform that will allow them to be citizens with a right to vote and participate equally.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

Immigration Struggles—A Critical Front In The Movement For Equality And Justice

By Jerome Scott & Walda Katz-Fishman

The immigration struggle moved into high gear last year with the passage of Arizona law SB 1070 and the threat of copycat laws across the nation, especially in the South, along with the failure of the US government to pass immigration reform and the Dream Act. SB 1070 swelled the wave of criminalization of immigrant communities—both documented and undocumented—leading to racial profiling by the police, collaboration with I.C.E. (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and massive incarceration and deportation of the undocumented.

The movement organized to repeal the Arizona law, to stop copycat laws that have nonetheless passed in Georgia (HB 87) and Alabama (HB 56). Campaigns were launched across the country to opt out of "Secure Communities" (S-Comm)—the federal mandate for partnership of local and state police with ICE in racial profiling, de-

portation, and deportation. Our demands are for legalization, a path to citizenship, and the human rights of all immigrants regardless of status.

Of the many questions confronting the growing immigration struggles two are critical: "Can we eliminate white supremacy and all forms of racism within capitalism?" and "Can we stop the attacks and violence against immigrants within capitalism?"

Anti-immigrant laws and ideology criminalizing the undocumented and unleashing racial profiling are a clear expression of white supremacy as practice, ideology, and law. White supremacy has been dominant and prevalent in US society from its origins in Indigenous genocide and the slave labor system to today's increasingly economically polarized and racialized oppressive society.

Early US law on citizenship and immigration says it all. The Naturalization Act of 1790 restricted citizenship to free white persons (women were included, but with

restrictions). No Indigenous, no Africans, no indentured servants, no other immigrants or colonized peoples had citizenship rights. With the abolitionist movement heating up, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 denied citizenship and the very humanity of fugitive slaves as "free" blacks in the North, and criminalized those who gave aid and assistance to them. These laws are the model for today's anti-immigrant laws.

The Page Act of 1875 excluded immigrants defined as "undesirables"—targeting Asian men coming as contract workers and Asian women. In 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act halted all Chinese immigration to the US, and was not repealed until 1943. These acts became law in a time of economic crisis, high unemployment, and reduced need for labor following the Gold Rush and completion of the transcontinental railroad. Like today, the content of these laws is to restrict immigration and to deport immigrants and their families already in the country because of the earlier need for their labor.

The struggle to roll back these laws at the state and federal levels are critical and must be ongoing. Each state and local struggle has to determine its own next steps. For those in Georgia, strategic discussions are happening. These include discussions about the commonalities in our different histories and the lessons of earlier movements, such as Civil Rights, and what are the long term goals of our struggle.

The dynamism of immigration struggles reflects the fact that the politics of immigrant workers and those who work with them are deeply rooted in the objective conditions of their daily confrontation with the laws and enforcement apparatus of the developing fascist state—at federal, state, and local levels. This has led to an immediacy and urgency of action and commitment to intense and ongoing struggle to "turn the tide" of the repressive legislation and enforcement. It is bringing forth resistance and unity among the exploited, oppressed, and dispossessed.

MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE TO CUT 13,000 TO 15,000 RECIPIENTS OFF WELFARE OCTOBER 1

By Marian Kramer & General Baker

The Michigan Legislature voted on August 24, 2011 to implement a (lifetime) "TIME LIMITATION" of four years for welfare recipients to be on welfare. They have stated that 13,000 to 15,000 people will be cut off of welfare on October 1, 2011. This will effect some 25,000 to 45,000 children. Each welfare recipient received a letter early this month stating the "Time Limitation" will go into effect on October 1, 2011. This was before it was passed by the Legislature. The letter also stated, the recipients will receive another letter later this month if they are one of the people who reached their time limitation. The State of Michigan will be going back retroactively to count the four years.

The "Time Limitation" is part of the Clinton Administration's Welfare Reform Bill, called The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. It says: "Federal cash assistance is only limited to 60 months in any recipient's lifetime." States have the option of shortening the time. So Governor Snyder had a needed weapon from the Federal government; all he needed was to cut the 60 months to 48 months. He is attacking the poorest section of the working class to balance the state budget for the benefit of the corporations.

Welfare recipients are already living below the poverty level and jobs in Michigan are very few. Why would the legislature and the governor attack the poorest section of the working class? How many more attacks are we going to take from this governor and legislature, who represent the inter-

est of the rich? Who will be next? Public workers, teachers, seniors and the disabled are under attack. Are you next?

Michigan Welfare Rights is holding "Resurrection Marches" for one hour every Thursday from 12 Noon to 1:00 P.M. to educate and organize people to join the fight. All of us must take a stand for our sisters and brothers on welfare in order to stop this continuation of divide and conquer.

Why doesn't the Governor increase the tax on the corporations and the rich to balance the budget? They figure that this section of the working class is not needed any more to produce for the corporations. So therefore, you don't need to eat, don't need to have a home, don't need health care, education, etc. So, you are pushed off at four years.

We produce enough food to feed the world. We produce enough homes for the world. We can educate our people for free from birth to death, provide universal health care for all and all of the other necessities of life. But the problem is that this country works not in the interests and well being of the



Marian Kramer (left) and Maureen Taylor (right) of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization join protest in Detroit against proposed cuts to State employee union contracts. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

masses of people, but in the interests of the rich.

Call MWRO at (313) 964-0618 or join them at 3044 W. Grand Blvd., at the Michigan State Bldg./formerly the GM Bldg., between Cass and Second.

The Movement Is Moving to Washington, DC

By Eric Sheptock

When will a national movement get formed to implement "stronger tactics" that effectively usher in the "revolutionary change" that we are working toward? Well, Gerald Celente of Trends Research Institute (a think tank on worldwide socio-economic trends) has predicted that the U.S. will see food riots, tax rebellions and revolution by 2012. And his long track record for accuracy has some people worried.

But you don't need to be a well-paid academic to see that conditions are ripe for revolution. The news is chock full of reports of increasing unemployment, a worsening housing market and struggling families. The U.S. economy is so bad that Obama himself recently told people in a small town in Iowa that he doesn't believe that Washington knows best (and it doesn't).

People have begun to polarize around Tea Party/Congressional demands on the one hand and the demand for the government to fund human needs on the other. There are countless stories of people in this country struggling for positive change and there is clear evidence that we are reaching the tipping point.

There are at least three large actions which are scheduled to take place here over the next nine months. And they all

share the same basic message: "Stop funding war and Wall Street; and, start funding human need."

Citizens for Legitimate Government will begin its action dubbed "Seize DC" on September 10 on Capitol Hill (without obtaining the required permits for a protest). "Stop the Machine—Create a New World" will occupy DC's Freedom Plaza beginning on October 6, set up tents that night (which their permit doesn't allow) and stay beyond the four days for which they have a permit.

Both groups are calling for days-long Egypt-style demonstrations that continue until our demands are met. And they might end up converging. I'm elated to see that others have realized that it is counter-intuitive to protest according to the rules of the oppressive government. It's high time we used "stronger tactics" than merely having hundreds of thousands of people march, chant and carry signs for a few hours—their words falling on deaf ears.

Then there is the Poverty March planned by the Assembly to End Poverty to take place on June 30th, 2012. Its organizers have approached DC-based activists in an effort to establish an office here. As it turns out, we actually need an office that can not only organize for June 30, but also host the national movement as it comes to town and

seeks to connect with the locals.

There is one very important caveat in all of this. As this new wave of more brazen protesters sweeps into the capital, each successive action promises to further heighten tensions between the police and the protesters. Let's hope that police don't use the civil disobedience of the two earlier actions to justify aggression against peaceful marchers next June—and let's know that they might very well do just that.

We have a failed economic system, with suffering people who are unhappy with government's performance and a growing movement in Washington, DC that promises to become more confrontational toward the establishment. It won't be long before that proverbial spark lights the fire of positive change here in the U.S. and has a worldwide ripple effect.

Let's hope that Gerald Celente was right and let's prepare to be the kind of change we want to see in the world. Come join the motion.

Eric Jonathan Sheptock is chairman of SHARC (Shelter, Housing And Respectful Change). You can reach him at: (240) 305-5255

A TEACHABLE MOMENT

By Sandy Perry

Do stronger tactics usher in revolutionary change? Not always. The example of Egypt's recent upheaval is instructive. This massive and courageous uprising was an inspiration to people around the world, including here in the United States. But how did it end? It ended with the transfer of power from the Mubarak dictatorship to a military dictatorship, with no mandate whatsoever for the economic changes necessary to address the grievances that set off the movement in the first place.

We have also witnessed numerous examples over the decades where stronger tactics led to fascist repression, not revolution.

So what is the difference between success and failure, between victory and defeat? The key question is whether or not revolutionaries can bring class consciousness to the participants as the spontaneous movement intensifies. Everything depends on the introduction of revolutionary ideas and the building of revolutionary organizations.

Today in particular, we need to introduce the idea that incremental change in our economy no longer works. Today, change we can really believe in requires the elimination of private control over our means of production, and its replacement with a publicly owned cooperative economy, where wealth is distributed based on human need, not private gain.

Revolutionaries welcome stronger tactics. They create a teachable moment without which we cannot move forward. We will fight harder just like everyone else. But we will also redouble our efforts to study, teach, and disseminate the vision of the better world we are all striving for.

DICTATORSHIP BY THE CORPORATIONS

By Salvador Sandoval

I had the privilege of interviewing the Rev. Edward Pinkney. Rev. Pinkney gained national recognition for leading the impoverished, overwhelmingly Black community of Benton Harbor, Michigan in its fight against the corporate takeover by Whirlpool Corporation.

The struggle highlights the growing fascist danger in this country that arises when government and corporations work together in the corporate interest, trampling democratic rights, and overturning democratically held elections.

Once a thriving part of the Midwest, Benton Harbor sits on prime lake-front property near Lake Michigan. Whirlpool is the largest employer in the area. It has long held plans to take over this valuable land.

In the early 1990's jobs began to disappear. Production was shifted to lower wage areas in Mexico, or taken away by labor replacing technology, which caused massive unemployment in Benton Harbor.

In 2003-2004 the former CEO of Whirlpool advocated for a \$500 million marina/golf course complex that would take 530 acres of Benton Harbor, thus privatizing the city's only beach.

Rev. Pinkney and the community mounted a campaign to oppose the takeover, despite the stranglehold control Whirlpool had with six city commissioners favoring its plan. The campaign led to the successful recall of a key commissioner in Whirlpool's pocket.

Thereafter, in a staggering series of events, the recall was over-turned, Rev. Pinkney was charged with voter fraud, and he was acquitted. Then he was placed on parole after a second court of all white jurors found him guilty of hand carrying an absen-

tee ballot.

He was subsequently charged and convicted of parole violation. He was given 3 to 10 years for quoting the Bible in criticizing the judge and penal system for mistreatment of prisoners! This sentence was overturned by the Michigan Appellate Court.

Since that fateful day in 2005 when the control of Benton harbor was challenged, the political landscape of Benton Harbor has changed. In 2008 four commissioners favorable to the Benton Harbor Community have been elected, effectively breaking Whirlpool's stranglehold control.

Unable to take the lakefront property by its accustomed means, Whirlpool took the land it wanted anyway. This travesty was accomplished through actions of the Michigan State appointed Emergency Financial Manager Joseph Harris. By the authority of the new state law an EFM can be a person, corporation, or person beholden to a corporation.

Thus Benton Harbor, Michigan became the first victim of Michigan's new Emergency Financial Manager law (EFM), but it likely won't be the last. Already 5000 teachers in Detroit have been laid off, in violation of their union contracts.

The case of Rev. Pinkney and his continuing battle with the corporate control of Benton Harbor has tremendous implications for the rest of the country, given the state budget shortfalls. At issue too is the fact that many corporations do not pay taxes.

It is important that all of us heed this warning. As Reverend Pinkney stated, "this could be coming to your town next."

This article is excerpted from a longer version published in the Community Alliance in Fresno, California.



"We are still fighting for justice against Whirlpool and the Emergency Financial Manager (EFM) in Benton Harbor. We might be driving the EFM out of town. We'll know soon. We need to keep up the fight." - Rev Edward Pinkney

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

Cynthia McKinney will speak at 2nd Annual Freedom Fund Dinner in Benton Harbor on October 8, 2011.

Plan for mass demonstrations at PGA Championship on May 22, 2012 in Benton Harbor.

Flint is First City to Test Michigan's EFM Law

By Brandon Jessup

Here's something I really didn't want to see happen—at least not under Michigan's new version of the Emergency Manager Law. Flint Mayor Dayne Walling announced that

the city's finances would be placed under preliminary review. This leads me to believe that, yes, a fifth community will be placed under emergency management.

This comes at a time when a majority of labor unions are negotiating new collec-

tive bargaining agreements. Public safety employees across the state are bargaining with their local governments to save cost and discuss concessions that will keep cities afloat.

Flint's elected officials are doing exactly what Benton Harbor, Pontiac and Ecorse city councilmen, mayors and commissioners did respectively: they have pledged to **co-operate**. Rightfully so—if you haven't done well managing the finances of the municipality you've been elected to govern, the state should step in and review what's going on. That's not my main bone to pick about Michigan's Emergency Manager law. This law creates bureaucrats on steroids with powers of both branches of government.

Here's why this process is so dangerous. Under Michigan's Emergency Manager Law, once the process starts, you're pretty much sledding down an ice mountain at a 60-degree angle in a sled with greased skids. Before Flint's city council knows what hit them, the doors to Flint's City Hall will be locked. Would you want a "mayor" that could:

- Eliminate public contracts with employees and contractors.
- Sell public assets without the vote of city council or public input.

• Dismiss your local city council or other elected officials without reason.

• Refuse to engage in collective bargaining with public employees.

• Set budgets and contracts two years after their last day in office.

That's not a mayor—that's a dictator. Any elected official that sees Public Act 4 as a means to gain financial stability is trampling the constitution and rights they swear to protect. This situation in Flint is growing as odious as Michigan's Emergency Manager law. There's a deal being made between Lansing and Flint. The 83,000 voters in the city will be paying the bill. I pray that the next 30 days of preliminary review aren't just window dressing for the inevitable in Flint. However, I think the die has been cast. The only option for the people of the city of Flint is the best option: Lean on Democracy and pick up a petition to repeal Michigan's Emergency Manager law.

Brandon Jessup is Chairman and CEO of Michigan Forward of Detroit which launched the state wide petition drive. This is an edited version of a more comprehensive article. For further information go to michiganforward.org.

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