

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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DONATION \$1



Man standing on a corner in Lansing, Michigan. The profit of corporations like Staples soar, while Michigan slashes programs for the poor.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

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THE END OF JOBS DEMANDS A NEW SOCIETY

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RECLAIM THE EARTH

EDITORIAL

Scientists say, as a result of the earth's warming, we are approaching a threshold where some cities and some parts of the world will become uninhabitable. There are predictions of deadly heat waves and floods, of agricultural regions becoming deserts, and of a huge section of humanity dying over the next 50 or 100 years.

Already, new weather-related catastrophes are occurring almost weekly. In the U.S., three dozen fires, resulting from extreme heat and drought, are raging in six bone-dry states. Wildfires scorched nearly four million acres this year. Pounding rain and major flooding are sweeping parts of the country, causing thousands of evacuations. More than 1,000 reports of tornadoes, hundreds of tornado-related deaths and unimaginable destruction occurred in April alone. Hurricane Irene left flooding, downed trees and power outages affecting a million people.

Clearly, human civilization is in danger. Innumerable species have disappeared from the face of the earth as conditions changed. There is no guarantee that we as a species will survive if intolerable conditions develop. This is not an ideological question. It is a question of survival.

At the root of the environmental crisis is the capitalist system. Let us examine how the crisis arose in order to chart a path forward.

The environmental crisis did not just happen. It is interconnected with the growth of industry and society in the post-WWII period. Armed with billions of dollars from war profiteering, the ruling class tightened their control over government and set out to make America into a country totally dependent on the corporations. The first step was the expansion of the roads into a super highway system. This made possible the building of suburbia, which along with the destruction of the public transportation systems, put the auto and oil industries at the heart of the country's economy. As



Activists concerned about the environment protest plans to build the potentially pollution-causing \$16 billion Keystone pipeline that will run from Canada to the U.S. Gulf coast. Over 1,000 were arrested for refusing to move from the sidewalk in front of the White House.

PHOTO/RICK REINHARD

the transnational corporations and globalization consolidated, environmental destruction became an integral part of the capitalist mode of production.

Individuals, environmental organizations, scientists, educators, religious activists, and others throughout the world have struggled for years to curtail the global polluting corporations and to force the development of clean energy sources. The movement continues to grow in numbers and militancy. However, at times it seems as if little progress is made.

Just recently, over 1,000 environmental activists were arrested for protesting plans to build the huge \$16 billion Keystone pipeline that will transport hot tar soaked sand from Canada to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico via the Midwest. Some say the pipe-

line is already a done deal. In addition, every international and national agreement to implement the broad environmental changes that scientists say are needed are continually watered down or axed completely. Why?

The corporations say we can't afford to put the environment ahead of profits. That is true—they can't. If they do, the whole capitalist house of cards will come apart. The rules of the market economy are that if you take measures to protect the environment at the expense of profit, you will be taken over by corporations who have no such concerns. So the corporate profits shot up until today they are the highest ever. This explosion of profit was paced by the destruction of the ecology, by an increase in tornadoes, wildfires and floods.

We are at a political cross-

road. More and more scientists concur that the world must rapidly move away from a fossil-fuel powered society to save civilization from ultimate destruction. The global energy corporations won't allow it.

The masses of people must take over the giant corporations and run them in the interests of humanity. We cannot allow the earth to remain a plaything for profit in the hands of private individuals.

The environment has become a strategic front of struggle against corporate power and private ownership of things indispensable to society. This time it is the earth itself. We have to reclaim the earth from the corporations and build a humane economic system worthy of the people who inhabit it.

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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Why Revolutionaries Need A Press

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.peopletribune.org

From the Editors

The End of Jobs Demands a New Society

COVER STORY

The majority of Americans polled say that the top three issues facing the country are jobs, jobs and jobs. How do we create and maintain good-paying jobs with good benefits?

The short answer is, we can't. Permanent unemployment and underemployment has been growing for years because robots and computers are taking the jobs. Yes, some jobs are being sent overseas, but even those jobs eventually will be automated. We need a new way of supporting the people.

As former Labor Secretary Robert Reich has written, "America has lost at least as many jobs to automated technology as it has to trade. Any routine job that requires the same steps to be performed over and over can potentially be done anywhere in the world by someone working for far less than an American wage, or it can be done by automated technology. By the late 1970s, all such jobs were on the endangered species list. By 2010, they were nearly extinct."

Look at manufacturing. Overall manufacturing employment in the U.S. rose from 1946 to about 1978, peaking at slightly over 19 million jobs. By 2003 there were only about 14 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. According to a 2006 report published by the Economic Policy Institute, "Between 2000 and 2003, annual manufacturing employment in the United States declined by almost 3 million jobs, and has been largely flat since then." The report says that 84 percent of this manufacturing job loss from 2000 to 2003 was due to increases in productivity, meaning automation allowed more to be produced with fewer workers. Sooner or later, every sector of the economy will be automated. There is no limit to how sophisticated the computers and robots can become.

And the competition for scarce jobs has driven down wages for those still working. The median wage in America has been flat or in decline since 1980. Between 2009



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

and 2010, an additional 2.6 million people slipped below the poverty line, and the poverty rate increased from 14.3 percent to 15.1 percent. Today there are 46.2 million people living in official poverty in the United States.

The jobs and high wages aren't coming back. We are going to have to organize the economy in a new way or we aren't going to be able to feed ourselves. Under the current capitalist system, a handful of wealthy people and corporations control the money and the means of production. The rest of us have to sell them our labor power in order to live. But in an era when robots and computers are taking the jobs, this system no longer makes sense. No capitalist is going to buy your labor power when a robot will do the job cheaper and

with no complaints. With capitalism, having no job means poverty and starvation. And the corporate government has made clear there will be no more safety net.

There is plenty of food, plenty of housing, plenty of everything. We need an economic system that will allow the people to take control of the productive power of electronics and distribute the necessities of life—food, clothing, housing, health care, etc.—to those who need them, regardless of ability to pay. In such a cooperative society, everyone capable of working would be able to make a contribution to society and get what they need in return, and those too old or sick to work would be taken care of.

Capitalism is dying—sentenced to death by the computer—

and everything the capitalists try to do to save it makes things worse. In trying to cling to their wealth, their property and their power, they are destroying society, and they will destroy the world itself if we don't stop them. The private property of the corporations must become public property. The resources and technology the corporations control are too important to society to be in private hands.

In the short term we must tax the rich to get the money to provide a proper safety net for the unemployed, and to begin lining up the people to fight in their own interests. But in the end we are fighting for a new kind of society, where the economy is owned and controlled by the people.

Sister/Brother, can you spare \$20?

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

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

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WORKERS' RIGHTS AT STAKE IN OHIO

By Robert A. Davis

With a month to go until Election Day, Ohio voters are poised to determine in great part the future of workers' rights. *NO! On Issue 2* is the campaign for the ballot initiative which would repeal Senate Bill 5, Ohio's anti-collective bargaining legislation. Rushed through both chambers of the Ohio legislature and signed by the governor with less than eight weeks of hearings, Senate Bill 5 eliminates

virtually every subject of bargaining for Ohio's more than 300,000 public employees.

In June, the We Are Ohio campaign delivered more than 1.2 million petitions signatures to the Ohio Secretary of State to put this issue before Ohio voters. Since that time labor has been joined by religious and community organizations in making thousands of phone calls and door knocks to keep Ohio voters informed, educated and engaged on this issue.

These same organizations are working on another issue as well. House Bill 194 is voter suppression legislation that was passed and signed by the governor before the summer legislative recess. Some of the provisions of this legislation disproportionately affect the elderly, minorities and the economically disadvantaged. Examples are:

Reduces the timeframe for early in-person voting from 35 days to 16 days.

Prevents counties from mailing unrequested absentee ballot applications to residents.

Eliminates the requirement for poll workers to help voters find their right precinct.

Fair Elections Ohio is the campaign that has begun circulating petitions to repeal this legislation. Once again AFSCME as well as other labor, community and religious organizations have joined in this effort. The deadline for submitting the 231,147 valid signatures is Thursday, September 29, 2011. If successful, there would be a hold placed on the legislation and it would then appear on the ballot for the general election of 2012; giving the voters of Ohio the opportunity to repeal it.

Both of these bills mirror what has been happening across the country since the election of November 2010. The agenda of the extreme right-wing, both in state legislatures and in Congress has been a blueprint drawn by the American Legislative Exchange Council. This organization advocates for the repeal of The Affordable Care Act and the balancing of state budgets without requiring that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share. Tax cuts for these entities have starved local, state and the federal government of the revenue they require to provide essential services and programs that citizens rely upon.

Legislation such as Senate Bill 5 and House Bill 194 are just the beginning of what we can expect

to see from not just Ohio's, but from state legislatures around the country where those with extreme right-wing political views are now in control. Voters however can change this dynamic. Vote on Election Day yes, but also become engaged. Know and understand the issues. Participate in actions in the community to about bring awareness. Most importantly, hold elected officials accountable for their actions.

It is the hope of thousands of workers that on Tuesday, November 8 the voters of Ohio will.

Robert A. Davis is Political and Legislative Director, AFSCME Ohio Council 8, AFL-CIO



Rallies protesting Ohio's anti-labor Senate Bill 5. PHOTOS(ABOVE & RIGHT)/AFSCME OHIO COUNCIL 8

Automation: Looming Changes in the Longshore Industry

Sandy Reid interviewed Al Green who has worked as a longshoreman, driving heavy equipment and operating cranes at the Long Beach, California docks for 28 years.

People's Tribune: Automation is coming to the U.S. docks. Can you speak about that?

Al Green: One of the facilities here is going to be at least partially automated by 2017. They let us know last night.

PT: What will the automation consist of?

AG: New cranes will have the ability to pick up containers without anyone's hands touching them. Automated cranes can work without Longshoremen. Most cranes here require a driver and people down below lashing and unlashings. They require a worker to interact with a machine. Here, drivers go up in the cab of the crane to move the containers. We actually

drive the equipment. In Singapore and Rotterdam, however, one guy runs four cranes from the tower sitting in an office looking at a monitor. He's not even down on the terminal. They use video cam-

That will eliminate 5 people.

PT: What did people say?

AG: Some of the older ones felt it was coming. Everybody can see what's happening in the auto

They have technology now that can manipulate the crane to do the work. That is, they imitate the actions of man. Now they can say, "We don't need you."

eras. Most of the workers are looking at this as something new. But those of us who have traveled to Singapore, already saw it. Singapore is so advanced. They are going to bring that technology here. So this is a whole different animal. One person will direct five cranes.

industry. The younger people are traumatized. They are saying, "Wow. What am I going to do?" They are trying to get the membership to take a mechanical class at college. That brought on more grumbling. You could hear people breathing hard.

PT: Have they started the process yet?

AG: They have already broken ground for a fully automated section of the terminal that will feed the ship. They have 100 acres of land. They took 20 acres and got it prepared. Containers will be picked up and go directly to the crane, cutting out a number of steps.

PT: Hasn't there always been some level of automation?

AG: Automation always enhanced work. It never really eliminated work. Work just shifted. We've been able to keep the workers. Cranes are just a way of moving huge amounts of weight and cargo without human muscle. They used to hire 16 people that worked inside the hold of a ship. We used to go down there with crowbars and move crates and stack them. That was labor intensive. Now they put the cargo in containers. They have technology now that can manipulate the crane

to do the work. That is, they imitate the actions of man. Now they can say, "We don't need you."

PT: What will be the response of the union?

AG: It will create a lot of struggle—a struggle to survive. We're trying to keep the newer members abreast, telling them, you have a rich labor history, and hopefully they will take that to heart. We want to keep this going. Hopefully this next generation will step up to the task. We are very fortunate to be still working. People in the communities are just trying to stay afloat with the foreclosures and poverty. Sometimes we get lost. We think, "I'm making money. I'm in the union. I'm not with them." But we are. We have to support the struggle of the community. We are all in it together. It's sink or float. We need to get together and talk. We need to think about strategy.

#OccupyWallSt Protest

By Andi Sosin & Joel Sosinsky

Editor's Note: As we go to press, reports indicate that around 80 protesters have been arrested. The powers that be are trying to strangle the protest.

#OccupyWallSt, the internet arranged protest demonstration in New York City's financial district, location of the New York Stock Exchange and most of the major U.S. banks, began on Saturday, September 17, and is still going on as the People's Tribune goes to press. On Tuesday, September 20, there was violence, as the NYPD arrested several demonstrators for wearing bandannas to conceal their faces, using a law dating from 1845, and for marking the sidewalks with chalk. Videos on the internet (occupywallst.org) show young people being handcuffed and dragged.

Demonstrators point to the income disparity between the 1% super-rich and the 99% working people, blame corrupt bankers and politicians, and some vow to continue their occupation indefinitely.

Tuesday's demonstrators seemed to be mostly in their 20's and early 30's, although all ages seemed to be well represented at the initial march on Saturday. The protesters interviewed on Tuesday were livid about the arrest of demonstrators, considering the NYPD to have used unjustified force.

The #Occupy Wall Street demonstration got its start in Canada, originated by an internet magazine called Adbusters, that posted a call for a mass protest in a large, symbolic public space, emulating the Tahrir Square experience of Egypt.

Adbusters' call spread across the Internet, through Twitter, Tumblr and other social network sites. According to sources close to the organizers, on Saturday September 17, over one thousand protesters met at the southern end of the financial district, and marched up toward Wall Street. However, the New York Police department (NYPD) cordoned off the area around the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street, and redirected the marchers to Zuccotti Park, a privately owned



Demonstrators at the #OccupyWallSt protest. Police used a net to trap Chelsea Elliot, left, and other protesters before pepper spraying them, as seen in this video: <http://youtu.be/TZ05rWx1pig>. This is the first demonstration Chelsea has ever attended. Read a full interview with Chelsea on The Village Voice blog. PHOTOS/JOEL SOSINSKY

public space three blocks north of Wall Street on Broadway at Liberty Street.

Before the terrorist attacks on

the World Trade Center of 9-11-2001, the park was known as Liberty Plaza, which demonstrators have re-embraced as symbolic of

the likeness of their uprising to that of the Tahrir Square demonstrators in Egypt, as Tahrir in Arabic means "liberty."

More Anti-Immigrant Legislation Introduced In Congress It's Purpose: To Divide And Conquer—E-Verify Attacks All Workers



Ariana Salgado, along with five other youth put themselves at risk during a Chicago protest outside a Department of Homeland Security hearing on the Secure Communities Program. They are undocumented and were later arrested. They are fighting the case.

PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA

By Margarito Diaz

In June, Rep. Lamar Smith, Republican from Texas, and 53 cosigners introduced the toughest anti-immigrant legislation in more than two centuries in Congress. Known as the "Legal Workforce Act" or H.R. 2164, this legislation, if it becomes law, will force every worker to have their legal status verified where they work through the E-Verify system, forcing employers to fire everyone that Social Security says is using a false ID.

The United States is going through one of its most perverse waves of anti-immigrant and anti-worker sentiment—a wave that can only be compared to those in the early 19th and 20th centuries, when capitalist propaganda also injected anti-immigrant fear into people's minds.

The ultimate goal of American capitalists—then and now—has been to divide and control workers in America, to make sure working people do not unite to demand the end of the exploitation of immigrant workers, the end of declining pay and lengthening workdays, the end of the capitalist system itself.

It is in this context that we must understand the bar fight going on between the Democratic and Republican parties over who can hammer on immigrants the most.

In the late 1700's, as the migration of politically active work-

ers from France and Germany increased, capitalists in this country saw an urgent need to demonize, dehumanize, control these new workers—and to reduce their influence on American workers.

Out of this, American nativism was born to pit one worker against another. The propagandists of capital injected the idea that different ethnic groups should be considered hostile or alien to the native culture and therefore should not be considered equals.

Based on American nativism, the capitalist-controlled federal government passed the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798. The new laws gave the president of that time arbitrary powers to exclude or deport foreigners deemed dangerous and to prosecute anyone who criticized the government.

Throughout the 1800's, Irish immigrants among others, suffered racism, humiliations, job discrimination, and even beatings. Job postings in newspapers and help-wanted signs, both reading "Help Wanted No Irish Need Apply," publicly humiliated the Irish and encouraged "native-born" workers to think themselves superior. Today, the corporate and financial capitalists control both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Their control of the mainstream media is also absolute. And once again they have revived American nativism to divide workers at a time

when our unity is our survival.

The rich in this country want to exploit immigrants even more than they are doing already. They are driving immigrants into the "underground economy," where they are workers without rights, easily exploited, and with the ultimate goal of driving wages down for all workers in this country.

Knowing this, we can understand why the Democratic Obama administration is forcing so many immigrants out of their jobs through the increasing number of "silent raids"—the I-9 audits. And we can understand why Republican politicians are trying to pass federal legislation to do pretty much the same thing through E-Verify and the Social Security no-match letters that compare workers' papers to federal records.

But we must also understand that this divide-and-conquer attack is directed at native-born American workers as well as immigrants.

Immigrants have a right to work, and they need to be protected and remain protected by U.S. labor laws. Only by protecting those rights will the rights of all workers be maintained.

And only by avoiding another dark period of racism, job discrimination, and the exploitation of immigrants will the entire American workforce take control of its future.

One for all, and all for one!

Editorial: HEALTHCARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT

From the Editors

Kyle Willis, an unemployed 24 year-old man, died after an infection in his tooth spread to his brain. He went to a dentist who said the tooth needed to be pulled, but he could not afford to pay for the procedure. He developed severe headaches and his face swelled up. He didn't qualify for Medicaid, and couldn't afford the antibiotics the doctors in the Emergency Room prescribed. He died a senseless death.

Melissa Matthews, a 20 year-old prison inmate, was diagnosed with cancer. She recently refused to be released on parole. "If I'm in here, then I can get treated. If I'm out, I'm going to die from this cancer." Kyle Willis was studying to be a paralegal. Maybe he would still be alive if he had been an inmate of the legal system instead. Stories like these are as common as a cold.

Every year between 22,000 and 100,000 Americans die due to lack of medical care. And the crisis is getting worse with millions losing their health insurance because they have lost their jobs, or because of cuts in public assistance that have been proposed by federal and state lawmakers. How

long can we ignore such a pressing moral question? Should everyone have equal access to health care? Is health care a human right?

Every industrialized country in the world except the United States has agreed that everyone has the right to see a doctor and be treated whether they can pay for it or not. The leaders of our country view the healthcare crisis as an economic problem, always using words like "budget" and "cost." But the crucial debate over the fundamental moral question of whether health care is a human right has never taken place in the United States. Why is this? It is because the highly profitable healthcare corporations: big insurance, big pharmaceuticals and big hospital chains are blocking it. The medical industry lobby donates more money to members of Congress in both parties than any other industry except big banking.

A closer look at the last two political efforts at "healthcare reform" reveals that their goal was really to make the health industry more profitable and not to provide universal government-funded healthcare. In 1994 President Clinton stated his goal this way, "Reforming healthcare is essen-

tial to reducing the deficit and expanding investment." This was perfectly in tune with his overall economic policy of reducing the deficit to insure the profitability of the bond market for Wall Street. President Obama followed in Clinton's footsteps. First he bailed out Wall Street, and then he passed "healthcare reform" which mainly benefitted the insurance industry by requiring everyone to buy private insurance.

Kyle Willis died because he could not afford the medical treatment that would have saved his life. Each of us has to answer the question: What is right and wrong when it comes to health care? Once we have decided that it is wrong to let tens of thousands of Americans die every year in a country well-equipped with state-of-the-art hospitals and highly trained health professionals, we will find the ways and means to make universal health care a reality.

Let's do the right thing, and force the political leaders and candidates for office to deal with this life and death question rather than always protecting the profits of the health industry corporations. We must take over these corporations. Nationalize them in the

interest of the public and provide healthcare for all.

In a world where the economic value of human life is being reduced to zero by the elimination

of labor from production by robots and computers, we need to insist that every human life is precious whether or not some corporation can squeeze profits out of it.



Michigan healthcare rally.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

CLASS WARFARE AND HEALTH CARE

By Al Gladycyk

"There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning." Warren Buffett was quoted in an article published by The New York Times on 11/26/2006. The article was written by Ben Stein,

actor, lawyer, writer, economist.

Mr. Buffett is this grandfatherly multi-billionaire majority owner of an investment company, Berkshire Hathaway (recently trading at \$103,000 a share). In fact, Berkshire-Hathaway just announced plans to invest \$5 billion in Bank of America.

So when Mr. Buffett says he is part of a class war on us, he knows what he is talking about. When he says his class is winning, he knows what he is talking about.

As part of this class warfare, a Democratic President and a "lame duck" Congress extended the tax cuts to the rich for two years in

exchange for a one-year extension of unemployment benefits to 99 weeks in December 2010. But the real heart of this "bipartisan deal" was the 2% cut in "payroll" taxes for Social Security at a time when Social Security and Medicare recipients are expected to grow to 80 million people over the next 20 years. The purpose of this 2% cut was to "stimulate" the economy by increasing demand for commodities (goods and services). It didn't.

And this class warfare is reflected in the state governments. In Michigan, the Republican Governor and Republican controlled legislature have instituted attacks on local government and school district employees. First came the "new and improved" Emergency Financial Manager" law. A law that allows the Governor to take over "troubled" local governments and school districts to cut government services and education to the bone. Then followed the cuts to state aid to the people living below the poverty level. 14,500 families (including 29,700 children) are slated to be removed from cash assistance starting on October 1st of this year. Now the state legislature has passed a law capping the cost of medical insurance at \$5500 for an individual and \$15,000 for a family. Local governments and school districts can only exceed these amounts

if the employees pay the premiums in excess of these caps.

As a response to these attacks, "Recall the Governor" and "Repeal the Emergency Finance Manager Law" petitions are circulating in the state. The Michigan Democratic Party, in what amounts to "bipartisan" support for the governor, does not support either petition drive.

We are in an abusive relationship with the rich. And just like any abusive relationship to get out of it, we need to realize that the abuser is not going to change and our needs can only be met outside of this relationship. Since the rich are waging a class war against us, then what are our class needs?

How about food, clothing, housing, and healthcare? How about culture, community and education? For the rich, these are things to be given to us when they feel like it and taken away when they don't. That, at its core, is an abusive relationship. Our class needs, at their core, are simply human needs.

Those of us that are advocates of Medicare For All (HR 676) must hold on to the fact that this is just one battle in this class war being waged on us by the rich. We must give what support we can to the people fighting the other battles freely and we must understand and accept the support of the people in those battles.



Michigan healthcare protest. Al Gladycyk (center) says, "Those of us that are advocates of Medicare For All (HR 676) must hold on to the fact that this is just one battle in this class war being waged on us by the rich."

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL!

Nurses Turn Up the (Main) Street Heat!

By Joyce Mills

Holding signs saying “Heal America” and “Take it Back,” nurses from National Nurses United began a campaign calling for a law to Tax Wall Street. Calling it the “Main Street” Campaign, union nurses, who have historically led the fight for Medicare for All in this country are waging this campaign, recognizing that “the economic situation makes the healthcare situation worse,” in the words of the California Nurses Association’s Rosanne DeMoro.

The campaign began in San Francisco September 1 as nurses held a “soup kitchen” and stated their intentions as part of similar actions taking place across the country. “We will not leave our patients or our country to fend for themselves,” announced Board member Malinda Markowitz. Nurse after nurse stood before the crowd telling stories of nurses who cannot afford to retire after years of service and shame of all shame, nurses who can no longer afford health insurance for their families.

Last week, a thousand nurses from around the world came together in San Francisco again to up the ante. “Nurses have started talking about suicide, reported

DeMoro. They are embarrassed that they can’t send their kids to college, that they are losing their homes... they believe the hype that ‘It’s your fault.’”

Michael Moore, who was awarded by the nurses for his movies from the plight of workers in Flint Michigan to his promotion of “Single-Payer” healthcare in “Sicko,” addressed the cheering nurses pledging his support. “We Americans are slow learners,” he told them, “but we have good hearts, we have a strong conscience, and we know right from wrong... The American people will do the right thing if you all get in and fight.”

Central to the campaign is a “Financial Transaction Tax” of 0.5% (1/2 of one percent) on Wall Street trading which they claim could generate \$350 billion a year to boost the economy, stimulate jobs, pay for “essential services,” and discourage computer-driven speculation by Wall Street. The idea of a stock transfer tax has been proposed by such economists as Joseph Stiglitz and Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Now the nurses are taking it to the streets.

The nurses’ campaign represents a new day in the politics over



PHOTO/CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION, NATIONAL NURSES UNITED

the economy in this country. The campaign recognizes that working people in this country can no longer rely on fighting in old ways. It is an attack on ideas being put forward by both main parties that our economic problems are based in deficit spending rather than the truth, which is that it is speculation and the growing merger of government with corporate interests that is making life impossible in this country.

This is becoming reality even for full time, working union members, never mind for the growing majority of those Americans who are unemployed or who are existing on part time, contingent work.

The growing fight over taxing the rich has important implications for American politics, especially in the context of accusations that the President is instigating “class warfare” by proposing a more limited

set of tax proposals. The nurses’ proposal for taxes on Wall Street is also recognition of another reality as well. The fight for health care for all, fought out in the past period largely as a policy issue separated from other demands for basic needs, has become inextricably intertwined with a fight for survival, for the economic health of the country, and indeed, for the fight to “Heal America.”

Dialysis—Do or Die The Georgia Healthcare Crisis

By Rita Valenti

“After one week of implausible anguish of denied life-saving treatments, disappointment, fear and less than comforting handling from hospital staff (and dialysis) staff, ARxC dialysis patients will



PHOTO/
CALIFORNIA NURSES ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL NURSES UNITED

be able to once again embrace hope,” announced a leader of Advocates for Responsible Care. On September 6, 2011 a three-year deal was struck to continue dialysis treatments for 21 undocumented patients.

To briefly recap, one of the first actions that the former public safety net hospital, Grady Memorial, took after being privatized was to close the Grady dialysis clinic. Those most affected were the undocumented from many countries. Citizens who require long-term dialysis become eligible for Medicare and can receive the life saving treatments at a variety of privately owned dialysis centers. The undocumented are not eligible for Medicare. For 2 years, Grady had been paying private for profit dialysis clinics to continue the care for the 23 undocumented patients affected by Grady’s dialysis unit closure. That contract ended 8/31/11.

Facing certain death without dialysis, the patients first gathered at Fresenius, a huge for-profit dialysis chain that had been under contract with Grady to provide

care. They were told to “go to Grady” and if they didn’t leave, the clinic manager would call the police. Fresenius like most dialysis centers, makes huge profits from public funds like Medicare. In 2010 alone, they had revenues over \$12 billion with a net profit of \$979 million!

The sick patients then gathered at Grady and together marched into the Emergency Room. Again, they were told to leave. They weren’t yet ‘sick enough’ to receive dialysis! Predictably, a few days later, several of those patients had to resort to Grady’s emergency room where they now were seriously ill enough to receive dialysis. Through the courage, persistence and absolutely necessary actions of the undocumented dialysis patients, Grady and Fresenius Dialysis Centers signed an agreement to continue care for these 21 until 2014.

The question must be raised, what about other undocumented people in Georgia who develop kidney failure and need dialysis? There is no deal for them. There is no permanent deal for the 21

ARxC patients either. What about the almost \$1 billion in profit Fresenius and other dialysis chains make annually off Medicare funds. Who do they answer to? What happens when all historic public county safety net hospitals are privatized? Where do the uninsured and underinsured go for health care? Today, it’s the undocumented fighting for their lives, tomorrow it’s millions who own little but their humanity.

Over 20% of Georgians have no health insurance, no safety hospital, no nothing. This is what we face – the fight for the right to health care, indeed the right to live or die. The crucial take-home point is that we cannot abandon the most vulnerable among us, be they undocumented or uninsured or on shrinking Medicaid, or employed, but grossly underinsured and expect that this crisis in the access to health care will be solved by itself. We must unite as a class that’s being excluded from the necessities of life or we’ll die alone. It is time to plan how to take what is ours.

Nationalize Healthcare!

As we go to press, it has been reported that the pharmaceutical industry is withholding life saving drugs from the market for the sole purpose of maximizing their profits. This one example shows that either society must take over these corporations or the corporations will take over society. We must nationalize the healthcare industry: run it in the interest of the public and provide healthcare for every single person in the country.

— From the Editors

Stop The Machine— Create A New World

By Eric Sheptock

Are people ready to take a stand yet? The organizers of “Stop the Machine – Create a New World” have called on “people of conscience and courage—all who seek peace, economic justice, human rights and a healthy environment—to join together in Washington, D.C., beginning on Oct. 6, 2011, in nonviolent resistance similar to the Arab Spring and the Midwest awakening.” The planning for this action is in full swing with dozens of organizations and thousands of individuals having signed on to a pledge to participate. Other groups are planning actions as far out as June 2012, which might lead one to believe that people are indeed ready.

Revolutionaries and action organizers in DC are raising some very pertinent concerns as we prepare for the city to be inundated with hordes of disenfranchised, disgruntled Americans who are demanding change—a scene reminiscent of the Bush-era war protests. What, if any, social theory do people bring with them? How will we insert popular education/theory into the process? How will we get other working class people who are directly affected and negatively impacted by government policies to see that we are one class and join the cause? Can we create a local organization that will coordinate all social justice actions that come to DC? Will any of the planned peaceful actions get out of control? How can we bring about system change without violence?

We won't be able to answer all these questions before the action begins. However, conscious revolutionaries are making the



most of this teachable moment. As national groups contact local DC revolutionaries so as to involve us in outreach and logistical work, we aren't just telling people to join the mass movement or the local motion. We are putting forth our analysis of societal conditions—letting them know that many jobs are being lost to technology and aren't coming back. Then, the unemployed people pay less in taxes and spend less in our economy. They become more dependent on government assistance. The government, in turn, slices social programs and leaves people high and dry. The system is broken. Then the people react.

We are working hard to ensure that people understand the aforementioned analysis, come together as one class with one cause,

and develop into a strong political force that remains intact long after the planned direct actions. Moreover, we want to teach people that only complete systemic change—ending corporatism, militarism and, most of all, capitalism—can meet our basic human needs.

Efforts are being made to reach out to poor, dispossessed communities across DC, to agitate and to educate them. But this is a new moment. We as a city and the nation as a whole have never been here before. With our best efforts, chances are that we'll have to figure some things out after the motion has begun. That said, this is a teachable moment for both the organizers and those whom we bring together.

India and Capitalism: “Same Song”

By William H. Watkins Ph.D.

For the first two weeks of August, 2011, I was fortunate to visit several cities in India including Delhi, Mumbai, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Agra, Khajuraho, and Varanasi among several others. As a tourist, I had no special access to power or information. I did, however, have my eyes and ears working.

India has become prominent in American life. Tens of thousands of Indians now populate U.S. cities. Americans are told to be alarmed that the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) threaten America's economic world dominance. American students are cautioned that they must compete with the technological excellence of Indian schoolchildren. Many urban doctors are Indian. Indian hotel and franchise business owners are visible throughout the na-

tion. Most notably, the computer technician business is increasingly peopled by Indians. The giant computer companies now outsource their business to India. We have all experienced those hour-long computer help calls answered by technicians in India.

India and America have more in common than we realize. Both began as trading outposts, settlements and then colonies of the British Empire in the early 1600s. The now famous East India Company established early trade relations which benefitted the British Empire. Capitalist chattel slavery alongside modern American and Indian capitalism began with the East India Company.

Centuries of colonial oppression and the extraction of wealth made the British Empire wealthy beyond imagination. America broke away from British domi-

nation in 1776. India was not so lucky as it was exploited for the next two centuries. In the 20th century, the victorious fight against fascism and totalitarianism energized the colonized and oppressed peoples of the “third” world. Change was on the way to India in the mid 1940s.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, referred to as Mahatma, a lawyer who spent many years in South Africa, led a non-violent movement for independence and civil rights that rocked the world. India successfully gained its independence in 1947, employing a strategy that would profoundly influence Dr. Martin Luther King and the American Civil Rights Movement.

Today, India is held up by the capitalists as a model of development. What is the real story? One is immediately struck by the antiquity of the land. Beautiful and

Letter to the Editor:

Should corporate taxes be raised to solve the debt crisis?

Realistically speaking, the problem isn't whether or not to raise corporate taxes, but why the corporate giants and their CEO's pay little or no taxes at all. In 2010, all the major oil companies and ditto for the global corporations and bankers paid either no taxes, or less than zero taxes.

Exxon Mobil, for example, the most profitable oil company had a negative tax on its 2010 \$19 billion profit. Not only did they pay zip tax, but as a special bonus got a whopping \$156 million rebate from our already depleted tax coffers.

In the first three months of this year alone, Exxon raked in a record \$10.7 billion profit. Imagine how much they'll siphon from the public treasury in 2011! Multiply this by the untold number of financial giants that are also feasting at the public trough and it's easy to understand why the U.S. has a debt crisis.

The strain the corporate tax loopholes put on the economy is only one aspect of the U.S. debt crisis. Over the decades, since the 1950s, the income gap between CEO's and the hard pressed working class has wid-

ened to the extent that corporate CEO's have seen their income increase 400 times, while the income of the working class has plummeted nine fold.

Meanwhile the Democrats, in control of the Senate and the Republicans in control of the House of Representatives are strutting and prancing on the Washington stage trying to fool us into believing that they have major differences. Now because of the supposed deadlock they aren't able to hold a joint session to negotiate a final budget and have put it in the hands of a special committee to decide.

President Obama jumps in offering a compromise. He's willing to put the entitlement programs on the chopping block if the Republicans will agree to modest tax increase behind closed doors. Even though our fearless leader is offering us loyal taxpayers as sacrificial lambs, the Republican Tea Party members still say, “No way, we won't raise taxes on the rich!” The 90% of us who do pay taxes are told we must give up everything and continue to fill the treasury pot, while the profiteering predators continue to raid the national purse.

—Amy Frazee



Protest against Michigan's welfare cuts that will throw 40,000 children off welfare and into the streets.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

green beyond belief, the country is experiencing limited modernization, new edifices, the evolution of a middle class, and some industrialization, however, another story is obvious.

The politics of crisis and capitalist neoliberalism are easily visible. Lots of factories and manufacturing structures lay idle. As 70% of the population lives in rural environs, travel along rural roads find agricultural workers using primitive hand tools although the harvest of fruits and vegetables seem abundant.

Most important is the grinding poverty that even Ray Charles can see. Everywhere are the visible signs of a people living only a step above the animal kingdom. Rail thin people with tattered clothes beg in every public venue. Conversations revealed that wages among working people were at

subsistence or below.

One inescapable conclusion emerged from my visit. Capitalism anywhere is the same as capitalism everywhere. Just as in the United States, palaces and mansions exist among thatched tin shacks. In India as well the United States, there is plenty of food and housing for everyone, yet millions starve and exist homeless. In both places, the rich are getting richer while the rest get poorer. In both places people have tired of want in the midst of plenty. Protest movements are stirring everywhere.

Rappers Shock G and Digital Underground articulated capitalism eloquently – “All Around the World, Same Song.” May the Indian and American people throw off the evil system that concentrates wealth in the hands of the few while the majority face poverty, hunger and want.

C.H.A. Tricks Residents Out Of Housing, Part II

By Joseph Peery

In Part I, Veronica Buckley, talked about her experiences in the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) "Self Sufficiency Program" that almost made her homeless. What follows are excerpts from the rest of her interview with the People's Tribune.

People's Tribune: So you reach a point where you lose your job and you decide to start a business. How did they help you?

Veronica Buckley: They didn't help me; I actually did it on my own. I had no contact from CHA or HUD with my goals. Somebody was supposed to follow up and nobody followed up. If you're gonna put a person into a program, then the first step should have been making sure there was someone there to help guide them.

PT: So, when did you finally realize you had been tricked?

VB: When I got this letter this year from Section 8 and a case manager from Hull House explained it to me. I was shocked. They were excited about me graduating, but I was being put off Section 8 at

the exact moment when I'm losing money. I lost 3 clients. So how am I over income? I'm just getting by. In Section 8's eyes any little money you make, you don't need them no more.

PT: You ended up getting a lawyer, right?

VB: No, I ended up going down there with the paper work I needed in regards to my income and asked for a hearing. You see they get mad when you ask for a hearing, because it's not in their hands no more. It goes before a judge and a jury. I felt like I was being mistreated. How were they calculating that I was supposed to pay \$1800 a month for rent on my income?

PT: You won your case?

VB: I won my case. They didn't give me a hearing, they just went back and recalculated my income, which they could have done in the beginning. Someone could graduate from the program and then lose their job or business and then try to re apply to Section 8 and as everyone knows they ain't opening that list no more. They could end up homeless.

PT: Do you feel you were in danger of becoming homeless?

VB: Yes, I felt like I was in danger of becoming homeless. I wasn't prepared for that. Their main in-

attention is to get you out of public housing. They have a hidden agenda to get you out.

PT: What advice would you give other people who they're ap-

proaching with these programs?

VB: Don't do it. Understand what you're signing up for, because if you go in there blindsided like me, you're gonna be lost. If you want to help someone become 'self sufficient', help them get a degree or career, not just a job.

PT: Are there enough of these kind of jobs for everyone who is unemployed?

VB: Nope, if there was, then we wouldn't be in a depression. This is the wrong time to put someone into a program to get them out of a program. Public housing was born in the Great Depression of the 1930s and yet it is now that we are again in a depression that it is being destroyed. The final causes of this 'Transformation' or 'CHAnge' as the CHA likes to refer to it as, are not to be found simply in the CHA's bad managers and corrupt CEOs. They are waiting to be discovered by a realistic look at the economic system under which we live and the how's and why's of that system's production and distribution of housing and other necessities of life.



Veronica Buckley (bottom right), a former Cabrini Green resident and a wife and mother of five, was talked into joining a program to get her own business. As she began earning some money, CHA tried to kick her off of Section 8, which would have made it difficult to survive.

PHOTO/DONATED

Little Rock, Arkansas

KNOWLEDGE IS THE KEY TO PROSPERITY

By Simuel Ramey

Human rights, as well as constitutional rights violations have come full circle since the integration of Central High School in 1957.

Fredrick Douglas in 1852: What to the American Slave Is Your "Fourth of July?"

"The key to Freedom is education."

Harriett Tubman: "If more knew they were slaves, I could have freed more."

W.E.B. Dubois: "America is arming itself for suicide, and taxing itself into poverty."

It seems that what W.E.B. Dubois said has come to pass.

Health, Education, and Welfare is under attack throughout this country.

Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas was the first school in the South to integrate in 1957. Some years ago a class action lawsuit was filed by the Pulaski County Special School District. It was settled just a few years ago. It benefited the three school districts in Central Little Rock. Since the settlement, there has been much controversy surrounding the distribution of the monies.

Nowdays, the State Department of Education is targeting school boards in Arkansas, specifically predominantly Black School Districts. A recent dissolution of the Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) School Board also led to the firing of the newly hired Superintendent of the PCSSD in Little Rock, Arkansas. (When is it ever going to stop?)

The system does not want us to be educated, because then they cannot make slaves out of us.

The system does not want us to be educated, because then they cannot make slaves out of us. The system claims that they want every human being to have affordable healthcare, but they can't agree on a specific plan that everyone will be happy with. The greatest and/or wealthiest country on the planet has the greatest poverty and homelessness problem. I ask again, when does the propaganda and B.S. end? These are examples

of human and constitutional rights being blatantly violated by the dominant society.

I myself have been subjected to these injustices. A situation that I am involved in exemplifies this very thing. The perpetrator didn't realize that I was highly educated in constitutional and human rights laws. Being a victim of "Due-Process" rights being violated has brought grave financial difficulties to my life. These injustices appear to be more racial in nature, as well as caused by greed.

We must open our eyes to the efforts to send us into a fascist society. I pray to you to educate yourselves to the Constitution of the United States, and join the struggle to take back our rights and our money.

John 8: 32-35

32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

33: They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You shall be made free'?"

34: Jesus answered them. "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."

35: "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever."

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“You Have To Stand Up And Do Something” Says Welfare Rights Leader

Maureen Taylor, State Chair, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, spoke in September, 2011, at a Michigan event about the welfare cuts that could throw 40,000 children on welfare into the streets. Excerpts from her talk are below:

I’ve been involved for 25 years and I’ve never been so distraught and sad as I am today. I lived through the Engler recall activities, and I remember what the discussions were then about men and women being “lazy.” But this is the first time in the United States of America that I can remember in this city and in this state where the government is targeting children. I’ve never seen anything like this before. All of the messages and all of the people are talking on our behalf about what is about to happen. But it seems like all of the voices are not loud enough because all of these divisions are being dealt with. They talk about “middle class.” What “middle class”—the middle of what? We got working people and we got folks that are abusing us. You have to stand up and do something!

quick pronouncements. Unlike all of you, I’m going to live forever! Everybody else out here is going to pass away. Some will leave quicker than others. I know it’s a surprise to many of you, and what you had better do is this. Just in case your prayers are answered and somebody is going to ask you to account for your life—you are going to have to stand up for this moment. The press is talking about 40,000 children being targeted; there’s a whole lot more that will end up being thrown off the rolls—over 200,000 welfare families.

These families are being kicked out in the worse housing market, the worse jobs market, the most hostile market. Well, this is what we are going to deal with. They are going to put women and children out in the street; that’s what they’re talking about. Their cash assistance is about \$420 for a mother and child. You have to pay your rent and utilities. Well, you can’t do that anymore—and we are working, we are working we are working.

There’s a whole bunch of people upset and sitting in the front questioning churches. Well, you don’t have to wait. Every Thurs-

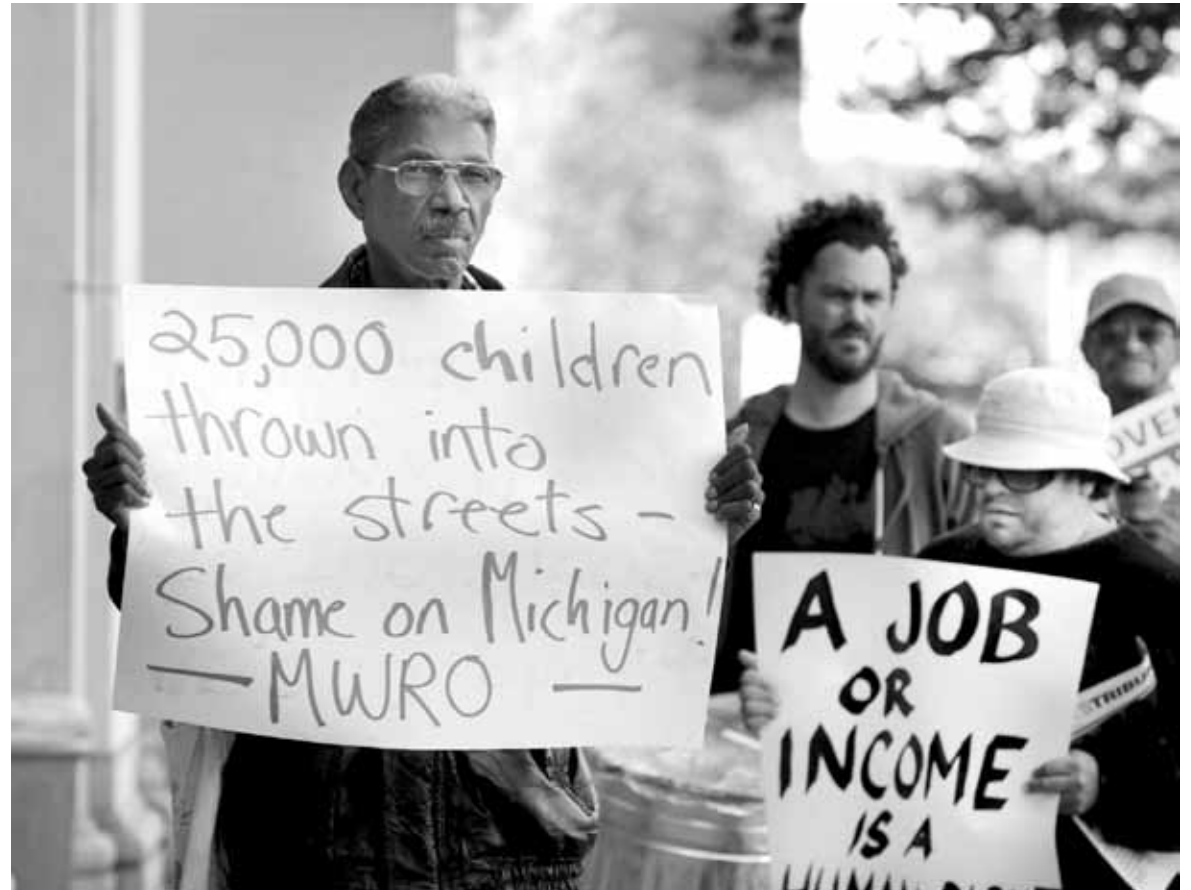
day there is a Resurrection March in front of the State Building, on W. Grand Blvd. between 2nd and Cass in Detroit. We meet at high noon

When I die—if I decide to do that—what I am going to say is this: “Speaker of the community...

It was reported by the Dept. of the Census that welfare recipients voted in large groups.” We were there. We knew what was wrong. When I die I want God to say, Maureen, “You sit next to me.” I want to be able to point out people and to say, “I know what he did.

And that woman over there, let me tell you what SHE did.” I’m going to be the snitch for God. See you on Thursday on the frontlines.

You can reach the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization at: (313) 964-0618.



Resurrection March is held every Thursday in Detroit to protest the inhumane welfare cuts that will throw thousands of families and children into the streets. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Fired Up, Organizers Poised To Oust State Representative

By Claire McClinton

In Michigan, cuts in the education budget, taxing of retiree pensions, along with takeovers by the state, have produced a flurry of recall efforts (at one point as many as 20) including the campaign to recall Governor Rick Snyder. One such effort is the recall of State Representative Paul Scott, a Republican from Grand Blanc, a suburban community just south of Flint.

In July, organizers gathered over 11,000 signatures in two weeks. This was well over the 9,000 needed to put the recall on the ballot. The Michigan Education Association supported the effort even though they had previously endorsed and helped elect Representative Scott to the state legislature. That was before he joined in lockstep with the Governor to slash the education budget and introduced legislation that would fine teachers a

day’s pay if they go on strike.

After several unsuccessful court challenges, the Michigan Supreme Court refused to hear the case, allowing the recall to go forward.

Both Republicans and Democrats are unnerved by these ‘citizen revolts’ manifested by recall and ballot referendum campaigns. In the state House and state Senate, elected officials have called a truce on recalls, i.e. neither side will join in these recall efforts. With the major parties standing on the sidelines, the basis is forming for a new independent political movement. Whether this happens or not depends on whether the leaders have the vision to go forward. In the meantime, come November, the citizens of Grand Blanc, Michigan will have an opportunity to do something they’ve been wanting to do for months—tell Representative Paul Scott, “You’re Fired!!!”

Love And Compassion Needed In Nursing Homes, Especially In The Administration

By Lenette Evans



There isn’t a day that goes by where I am not at Royalton Manor Nursing Home twice a day to help care for my Dad and others. If I am not there the sorely understaffed nurses and aides are not able to do their job and cannot tend to the people like they should. Many elderly residents are here permanently and some are here to get rehabilitated.

Everytime I am in the dining room for lunch and dinner I have mention to the aide that they need to put down silverware first, put clothing protectors on the residents before the coffee and food is served. There is only one aide in the dining room trying to serve

coffee and if a resident comes in late then they do not get coffee unless I myself get up and get it for them. Most of the time I am waiting on the residents and getting them coffee, extra napkins and silverware.

Royalton Manor needs to have at least 3-4 people in the dining room serving and waiting on people. Several residents have a hard time opening their milk cartons or pulling the wrapper off their butter or placing butter on their bread.

Many of the residents think I work here because I care about the people and love them all. They are special and need to be treated with love and compassion. But Lonnie King, who was once a nurses aide and a nurse before becoming an administrator for the Royalton Manor corporation, shows no love or compassion for the residents.

He will never speak to any of them in the hallways or in the dining room. God help our people and help place loving, caring compassionate people and better nutrition in our nursing homes with people who truly care! This will necessitate that nursing homes are run in the interests of the people, not for the sole purpose of making corporate profits.

Lenette Evans
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Madison, Wisconsin: Democracy Convention

The People's Tribune interviewed Ben Manski, Executive Director of the Liberty Tree Foundation, and an organizer of the recent Democracy Convention, held in Madison Wisconsin.

People's Tribune: What was the purpose of the Democracy Convention?

Ben Manski: The Democracy Convention was a gathering for organizers—people who are making the revolution happen on their campus, in their communities, in their unions, at their workplaces. This was a gathering for doers. The result was that the energy level was incredibly high and people took inspiration from one another. Liberty Tree just got these people together in the same place and provided some structure.

The goal was to have a coming-of-age party for the U.S. democracy movement. This movement was born in the late 90s, in the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle. In its early years, the democracy movement confronted two stolen presidential elections and the illegal, unending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In these struggles, millions of Americans resisted corporate power and demanded real democracy, but the democracy movement as a movement was not recognized. Now this movement has matured to where it is becoming visible. It became visible at the Democracy Convention.

PT: Why did you hold the Democracy Convention in Madison?

BM: With hundreds of thousands

of people in the streets of Wisconsin, we saw the demand for real democracy expressed. Some of the top leadership claimed the movement was just about a narrow set of issues. If you looked at the signs that people carried, and their demands, they were and are about power. People are not willing to accept a return to the way things used to be. They want a complete overhaul of our political and economic systems.

PT: Is there motion toward a third party and was it represented at the Convention?

BM: There's a lot of anger at the Democratic Party by people who had considered themselves Democrats. I get a lot of email that is harshly critical of Obama and the Democratic Party. They make the mistake of thinking because I talk about democracy, that I'm a Democrat. I was a leader of the Green Party of the United States. I'm not a Democrat.

Given all the anger, there is an opportunity to build a party independent of corporate capital. The Democracy Convention took up the question of building of independent politics and parties, but it wasn't designed to get people invested in any particular party. The Convention was about strengthening the existing movements on the ground and bringing those different movements together in one place.

PT: How does the struggle for a society without poverty fit into the democracy struggle?

BM: Without the security of a decent home, health care, access to

education, healthy food, and a livable income, no human being can be free. The fact that one third of Americans live without these basic requirements of life, and that most of the rest of us live in fear of losing them, means that the vast majority of people in the U.S. are not free to govern ourselves. So the struggle for democracy must be understood to be one and the same as the struggle against poverty.

PT: Did you accomplish your goals?

BM: Yes, it was clearly successful. One, there were 1000 people at the Convention, and hundreds of thousands around the country who knew about it. We made the U.S. democracy movement visible. And we accomplished the goal of having the participants go back to their communities and work, not only more energized and inspired, but also equipped with the broader perspective that is needed.

PT: What is the next step?

BM: There are many. There will be another Convention in two or three years. Next month, hundreds of people who went to the Convention are heading to the occupation of Freedom Plaza in D.C. There were nine conferences within the Convention, each representing ongoing movements. They will all have their own organizing campaigns. For example, the Education for Democracy Conference, the people fighting for democracy in schools and colleges, are constantly in contact with one another and there are plans for student mobilizations in concert with students



Ben Manski (right); Cheri Honkala (left). Ben Manski is an organizer of the Democracy Convention held in Madison, WI in August. Cheri Honkala, a leader of the poor, and a candidate for "people's" sheriff in Philadelphia, gave a rousing keynote address at the Convention.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

all over the world. Another step for people working for Local Democracy is participatory budgeting: getting cities to give the people the power to decide how to spend our public money. And a major next step is the call for amending the

Constitution to make democracy possible in the U.S. This movement to amend the Constitution, led by the Move to Amend coalition, gained a lot of energy from the Convention.

APPEASE AND DELAY

Veteran Speaks Out about the Veteran Care System and V.A.

**By Leslie A. Burris
(a.k.a. Justavet2000)**

The standard message from the Veterans Care Providers and Veterans Affairs seems to be to appease and delay.

In 1994, this veteran entered the veteran care system. From 1994 until 2006 many medications were given to this veteran for P.T.S.D. This veteran has been rated 100% for P.T.S.D. He is rated another 120% for his right hand, wrist, arm, and ears.

In 2006 a behavioral medicine doctor at Evansville, Indiana Veterans Out-Patient Clinic did not refill this veteran's medication. Within a few days, this veteran exploded with pain, sickness, vomiting, bleeding, shaking, and asking God to take this veteran's life.

For three months this veteran did not know if he would live or die from the sickness and detoxing from the lack of medication and

neglect. Nine months passed. This veteran survived. Still, veteran care providers had not followed up on this veterans call about medication. After 9 1/2 to 10 months, the Evansville Veterans Out-Patient Behavioral Medicine Clinic called. They stated that there was a floating psychiatrist at the Evansville clinic.

ent. There was no note or progress notes made, nor was there any concern. Instead this veteran was told to go somewhere else if this veteran did not trust them.

I don't trust them and will not take their medicines. Therefore, suddenly this veteran is told by the Veterans Affairs Administra-

This veteran does not trust the veteran care providers any more. They tried to kill this veteran. They left this veteran suffering, fighting for life due to their neglect and lack of follow up.

This veteran told the psychiatrist that the behavioral doctor had attempted to kill this veteran by taking away years of medications. This psychiatrist wrote nothing of this in his progress notes of what this veteran has told veteran care providers from 2006 until the pres-

ent. There is a new evaluation stating that this veteran is better. The Veterans Affairs Administration has not produced this new evaluation. It seems that this new evaluation is because of the behavioral medicine doctor who left this veteran to die, and veterans care

providers who chose to ignore this veteran's concerns.

On August 1, 2011, this veteran met with the head of behavioral medicine in Marion, Illinois. This psychiatrist asked what they could do to make this veteran happy and trust them again. When this veteran attempted to tell the psychiatrist of the attempted murder and neglect, this veteran was told to go somewhere else. All they said was, "This is not in my computer."

Presently this veteran is engaged in a battle for survival and an opportunity for a quality life. Several health issues are faced: hernia operations, a spot on lung, a spot on kidney, arthritis, nuclear medicine for bone density and other issues.

This veteran does not trust the veteran care providers any more. They tried to kill this veteran. They left this veteran suffering, fighting for life due to their neglect and lack of follow up. These care providers have decided this veteran is better

because this veteran does not take their drugs. Some veteran doctors send veterans medications to take before they see the veteran. When a care provider is questioned about medication without evaluation, this veteran is told that this is doctor's policy. The sad reality of this drug policy is that their drugs may be more life threatening than good.

This veteran called the Behavioral Medicine head at Marion, Illinois, answering their question as to how they could make this veteran happy. This veteran asked for free-base veteran's surgery (which means it goes to the private sector). This veteran was denied. As for how veteran care providers can regain this veteran's trust, I do not see that happening with all the denial and cover up. This veteran has more questions than answers. Is this veteran the only one?

The author of this article served in the Navy in an amphibious unit.



BENTON HARBOR'S EMERGENCY FINANCIAL MANAGER GOES WILD

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



The Benton Harbor Emergency Financial Manager, Joseph Harris—the dictator—has cancelled Constitution Week in the city of Benton Harbor.

This was to be a week meant to honor the signing of the Constitution. Joseph Harris and Whirlpool now have complete control over the city of Benton Harbor. They have decided: there will be no Constitution Week for the city.

It is our constitutional duty as American citizens to hold our elected officials accountable for their wrongdoing, whether it is through words, action or inaction. We the people must draw the line and decide what to do if that line is crossed, and we must use our Constitution. Joseph Harris has crossed that line in the sand too many times. Joseph Harris has now cancelled Constitution Week. What is next?

In April of 2011, Joseph Harris authorized an “order prohibiting all action by all city boards, commissions and authorities, except as authorized by the emergency manager.” Harris’s order, Order 11-05, can

be read in its entirety in the box below.

Harris has stolen your vote.

The Dictator and CEO Cheryl Miller of New Products Corporation are sparring over the building of non-motorized zones on her company’s property. According to the Herald Paladium, “A bike path under construction on Klock Road has become a source of contention between the Benton Harbor Emergency Financial Manager and one of the oldest businesses. Cheryl Miller asserts that the path encroaches on her corporation’s property by about five feet for a length of 100 feet.” Joseph Harris said “Cheryl Miller has no grounds to be complaining about the permits the city issued for the bike path.” He added, “For her to be complaining is the wrong thing to do because she’s going to get an answer from me that she is not going to like.”

This, and the canceling of Constitution Week, is a clear case of an Emergency Financial Manager going wild. This is a clear case of government and Whirlpool working together against the people, (and even against their friends: other corporations!) It is clear that the sole role of the Emergency Financial Manager is to force Whirlpools agenda to redevelop Benton Harbor for the rich and to force the poor out of the city in the process.

for Homes Not Jails housing takeover, July 4, 2011

once back in the old
Homes Not Jails days
I dreamed some young squatters
were in a hardware store
buying golden nails
to fix up the spaces
they were repossessing from
the empty voids
the profiteers had left
in human lives

building decency in an order
where people die in the streets
outside of empty buildings
where cars get shelter
and people sleep on cold cement

because we are dying of it
and the heartbreak of it
and something has to be done

here we are again
building the future
in the present
with the golden nails of love
and revolution

— Sarah Menefee

Benton Harbor Order 11-05

I, Joseph L. Harris, the duly appointed Emergency Manager for the City of Benton Harbor, Michigan (the “City”), pursuant to the power and authority granted by Act 4 of the Public Acts of Michigan of 2011, being MCL 141.1501 et seq (the “Act”), do hereby resolve and order as follows:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Absent prior express written authorization and approval by the Emergency Manager, no City Board, Commission or Authority shall take any action for or on behalf of the City whatsoever other than:

- i) Call a meeting to order.
- ii) Approve of meeting minutes.
- iii) Adjourn a meeting.

2. That all prior resolutions, or acts of any kind of the City in conflict herewith are and the same shall be, to the extent of such conflict, rescinded.

3. This order shall be effective immediately.

WHEREAS, Section 19(ee) provides that the Emergency Manager may exercise any power or authority of any office, employee, department, board, commission or similar entity of the City, whether elected or appointed;

WHEREAS, the power of the Emergency Manager as set forth in Section 19(ee) of the Act is superior to and supersedes any such officer or entity; and

WHEREAS, now, no City Board, Commission or Authority has authority or power to act on behalf of the City as provided in the Act.

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