

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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A protester talks to police at Occupy Oakland. On January 28, thousands of people clashed with police. Protesters planned to move into a vacant building and turn it into a social center. PHOTO CREDIT/GLENN HALOG

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## *Election 2012:* **EXPOSING CORPORATE CONTROL**

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# WHAT IS “POPULISM?”



Occupy Oakland protesters take to the streets in January, 2012.

PHOTO/GLENN HALOG

## EDITORIAL

The word “populism” is bandied around in the news lately to depict politicians, parties and social movements. What is populism?

Populism is a complex of ideas entrenched in and arising from American history. A common populist theme compares “the people” against “the elite”, “rich against poor” or “us against them,” but avoids class identification. It urges social and political system changes.

Populism is arising now because of fundamental changes in the economy. More and more people are becoming aware that the top 1% of Americans own 42% of the wealth while another, growing section—those who create the wealth—are becoming deeply poor. A movement is developing to right the wrongs.

However, there are a myriad of social forces, most notably the capi-

talist class, who seek to gain hold of the new, embryonic movement. It is crucial that we understand the history of populism and how it has been used by the rulers to subvert social movements. The key question is: will the struggle be diverted to support capitalist private property and a fascist reorganization of society? Or will it move forward to a new cooperative society where everyone has equal access to food, education, healthcare and housing?

### HISTORY OF POPULISM

Populist upsurges and anger against the landlords and bankers have existed in America since the revolutionary war. Populist movements arise every time the method of production changes and a section of the population is left out of the new economy. The movement most commonly associated with populism is the struggle of the small farmers, craftsmen and workers from the 1890s through the 1930s. Their fight was directed at the rail-

roads, large banks, and large agricultural corporations. However, the rulers guaranteed that the movement did not gain the understanding that capitalism, rather than some section of capital, is the enemy. They turned the movement against itself. The conditions of that era—an expanding economy, social bribery, and a history based on slavery—were the context for this treachery.

### POPULISM TODAY

Populism under conditions of capitalist expansion is different than populism under present conditions. In the past, widespread social bribery was the foundation for securing the peoples’ loyalty to capitalism. Today, globalization prevents this by its constant search for lower labor costs. Nor can the capitalists solve the irreversible polarization of wealth and poverty brought on by labor-replacing technology. It has led to the formation of a new section of workers who will never find work again. These factors are creating a

new and different form of populism. Today, populism has no base in the ownership of small enterprises.

The populist stage of social struggle is a historic and therefore necessary stage. As a powerful voice of opposition to fascism, it opens the door for debate, and that debate has already begun. Revolutionaries can educate that capitalism is the source of society’s ills and that there are two basic classes in society with hostile interests. Up to now, the populist movement has always wanted to go back to what was. This is the first time in American history that a movement is developing that is objectively struggling forward to a new world. The role of revolutionaries is to introduce new ideas. Workers must identify with their own class, and fight for their class and the vision of the cooperative world that is finally possible. The private property of the giant corporations must be made into public property. These conglomerates are too critical to society to remain in private hands.

## 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.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.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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# Election 2012: Exposing Corporate Control

## COVER STORY

Corporate America's election propaganda will be dominating the news, advertising time and space, filling our waking hours with election chatter until Election Day on November 6, 2012. The twin parties of the capitalist class will riddle our senses with non-truths, half-truths and outright lies, as they once again urge U.S. citizens to give them a chance to make things better. Neither political party offers a solution to the economic crisis and its continuing unemployment, lack of health care and education, housing foreclosures, homelessness, war, attacks on civil liberties and desperately needed social programs. The list goes on.

The corporations and the government have merged to protect the wealth, property, power and privilege of a shrinking, but more enriched capitalist class. Despite their populist appeals, militant promises and rhetorical differences, both parties plan to further attack the living standards and social programs needed by the vast majority of the American people. These politicians plan to further enrich themselves and their capitalist class cohorts, all under the banner of "shared" sacrifice during these tough times. Meanwhile, as the old saying goes, "They laugh all the way to the bank!" The American people will once again be asked to vote against their own self-interests.

However, this corporate two-party charade will become more evident during this election year. The 2010 Supreme Court decision—*Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*—allows corporations to make *UNLIMITED CONTRIBUTIONS* to influence and sway the electorate about candidates and issues, as long as these political organizations are not "directly" affiliated with a political party. Thus, for the first time Super PAC's (Political Action Committees) are allowed to act with unlimited contributions and funding, either against or on behalf of a candidate, without imme-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

diately and fully disclosing who is funding their operations. This prevents voters from knowing who is behind the Super PAC's activities and communications before they cast their vote.

### Growing Social Awareness

Last November, unions and community organizations in Ohio defeated Issue 2, a referendum on the anti-collective bargaining bill, SB-5 that passed the Republican state legislature last spring. And in Wisconsin last month, unions and community organizations gathered one million signatures to hold a recall "special" election of Republican Governor Scott Walker and a handful of other Republicans this spring. Walker, along with a Republican state legislature, passed a law last year

that eliminated collective bargaining for most public workers in the state. While these efforts in Ohio and Wisconsin are aligned with statewide Democratic Party organizations, they nonetheless represent an awakening and an organizational advancement on the part of the workers in these states.

The Occupy Wall Street movement is also setting the stage for a broad social awareness of class interests throughout the country. It represents something new that is happening from below in America. Those who are demonstrating and speaking from within these growing, anti-corporate centers are speaking for millions that have been unorganized and speechless. They vow to not be co-opted by the Democratic Party and the two-party election year charade.

New forces are emerging across the land and a path is being cleared for new independent politics to arise. Obstacles remain, but the process is underway. The emperor has no clothes and more are beginning to see the reality of the situation. We are at the early stages, but people are searching for a new political direction. There is a new stirring that is struggling to take shape. The in-our-face, bought and paid for, 2012 election season helps create the environment for revolutionaries to further tear away the corporate two-party shroud and expose its political manipulation of the American 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](http://www.peopletribune.org).

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# Welcome to Chicago... Now Sit Down and Shut Up!

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — Outside City Council Chambers on January 18, hundreds of locked out protesters—Occupy Rogers Park, Occupy the South Side, Occupy el Barrio, and Occupy Chicago, along with trade unions and community organizations—shouted “We vote no!” Inside the aldermen of the City of Chicago voted to approve an extremely repressive municipal ordinance proposed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Four aldermen—Hairston (5th ward), Burns (4th), Sposato (36th) and Fioretti (2nd)—resisted the mayoral juggernaut and voted “no.”

The ordinance was first floated as necessary to combat “outside agitators” coming to Chicago for the NATO/G8 summits May 19-21. Then Emanuel admitted it was intended to be permanent. Occupy Rogers Park (ORP) and Occupy the South Side (OtSS) issued a press release January 9 that renamed Emanuel’s proposal “Sit Down and Shut Up.”

When Occupiers deluged all 50 aldermen with letters objecting to the proposed law, some aldermen questioned Emanuel. The Mayor responded with a substitute ordinance. Aldermen saw the substitute for the first time when asked to approve it in committee, so that the whole council could vote on it the next day. ORP-OtSS originated an on-line petition and submitted more than 15,000 signatures against the ordinance to the Mayor and aldermen.

In the full council, the vast majority of the aldermen swung into lockstep with the mayor, with Ald. “Joe” Moreno (1st) saying: “. . . I don’t believe that the particulars of this ordinance significantly curtail 1st Amendment rights enough to justify a no vote.” The Democratic Party organization—the Mayor and all the aldermen are Democrats—has shown it is the willing partner of the corporations who rule the city. Public pressure forced the few “no” votes.

The new law lays out a maze of permanent regulations for protests. It gives broad discretionary power to government bureaucrats and police. The minimum fine for infractions is now \$200 and could also result in 10 days in jail. Knowing how permits are allowed and the laws are enforced tells us: NATO/G8 forms a convenient excuse to intensify a crackdown, and not because Emanuel and the aldermen are sick or weird. They represent a class, centered in the likes of the Commercial Club of Chicago. They must safeguard the power and property of that class. With consummate gall, these leaders characterize the relationship between their power and the powerless—“Sit Down & Shut Up”—as protection of first amendment rights!

In contrast, Marissa Brown, speaking for OtSS and ORP at a Jan. 17 press conference, condemned the proposed ordinance, “At a time when unemployment is in the double digits; boarded up, foreclosed properties pepper our communities; neighborhood



“Take Back Chicago” rally in Chicago against a repressive new municipal ordinance that the City says is necessary to combat “outside agitators” coming to Chicago for the NATO/G8 summits in May. The Mayor admitted it was intended to be permanent. PHOTO CREDIT/CHARLES MILLER

schools are closing; and basic human needs like mental and physical health care are denied, we must have our voices heard.”

The council did vote for the ordinance. But strong opposition from the movement forced the Mayor to backpedal from some provisions, like requiring all protest signs to be approved before approving a permit.

Also the Occupy movement’s

emphasis on the schism in society, with Emanuel increasingly identified as “Mayor 1%,” has made it clear that making demands on the government for free speech is connected to the survival needs of society. ORP and OtSS, at opposite ends of a segregated city, worked together to raise common demands. They have begun to break down barriers specifically established in Chicago to prevent class unity.

In the aftermath of the activity, Jim Ginderske from ORP concluded:

“The original proposal would have permanently dismantled the right to protest anything, anywhere in Chicago. That was not accidental. The Mayor and his Aldermen will try again. We will be there when they do. Our message is clear:

“Expect Us.”

## Corporations Declare War on Public Education

### BOOK REVIEW

By Todd Alan Price and Lew Rosenbaum

William Watkins put together a toolkit for teachers and other activists in the trenches fighting for world class schools. He is editor of the book, *The Assault on Public Education*, a title which accurately describes the state of war declared a decade ago on Chicago’s public schools and carried to a higher level by the administration of the new mayor, Rahm Emanuel. It is a state of war now being conducted nationally, as this book makes clear. Watkins’ unique contribution to this volume analyzes the political-economic environment for “school reform.” He identifies a historic change, which he calls techno-globalism. The basis for this world-wide change, he says, is:

The computer chip, introduced in the 1970’s, forever altered human labor and human relations. The “chip,” which could activate

machinery, meant that for the first time in production, the basis of all economies, could occur without human labor.

A new social order is being formed to correspond to production without workers. The present educational system was built to train workers for industry. Now, “the plutocrats want a new educational system that creates a tech-

nocratic elite.” The remainder of society is expendable.

The other contributors to this volume, all distinguished educators, together document how corporations, in bed with the government, and with the assistance of some accommodating trade union leaders, have proceeded to dismantle public education. Pauline Lipman shows how Chicago’s Commer-

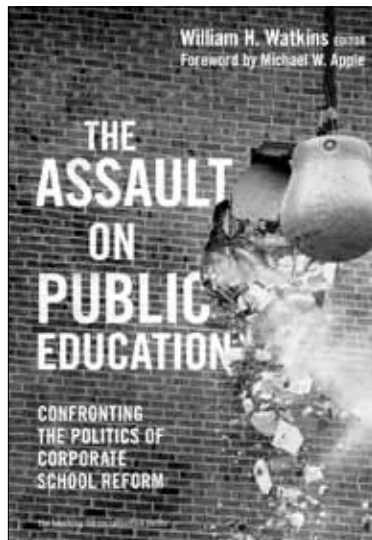
cial Club established an agenda for school closings, turnarounds and the proliferation of charter schools, concentrated in Black and Latino communities, often related to gentrification patterns anticipated in those communities. Ken Saltman focuses on private “philanthropy” to show how the multi-billion dollar Broad Foundation is in reality looking at schools as a form of business investment. Jack Gerson reveals the national union leaders’ often weak response to attacks on teachers such as “pay for performance.” Ann Winfield traces some of the roots of corporate reform to the eugenics movement 100 years ago. Kristen Buras confirms that the replacement of the New Orleans public schools with Charters results from the racialization of school reform in the deep South.

These various reforms have been introduced along a line of march while corporations are merging thoroughly with the state. A word often used to describe this is “neoliberalism.” But Watkins makes clear that what underlies “neoliberalism” is not simply a

hiccup in the business cycle, not a quantitative step, one right after another, along a straight line. “There is no going back to normalcy because there is no more normal . . . Public education, as we know it,” he says, “likely will not survive.”

In Chicago the teachers’ union is the largest local in the Midwest and is conducting a battle in conjunction with parents and students. These elements show the beginning of a fight along class lines. They are up against a machine that includes the wealthiest citizens of Chicago, some of whom sit on a School Board appointed by the mayor. Their demand, a world class school in every neighborhood, is a reform that the state and the corporate interests refuse to accept.

Watkins makes clear that, in a time of restructuring, the outcome has not yet been determined. What will happen? The future lies in the hands and, more importantly, the minds of those fighting the corporate reforms. *The Assault on Public Education* is a critical weapon in the battle.



**The Assault on Public Education: Confronting the Politics of Corporate School Reform**

William H. Watkins, Editor

Foreword by Michael W. Apple

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# The 99% Speak: “I didn’t crash the system, but I’m paying for it.”

By Mark Tucker



MICHIGAN — It started when we bought a modest home instead of spending money on a honeymoon.

We were so naive; no money, no tools and no experience. But we were young. We were going to do it damn it! Our first home. We poured our hearts into that little crack house in Hamtramck. I learned carpentry, plumbing and basic electrical skills the hard way. But living in a constant construction zone was the ultimate relationship stress test. After the divorce I was still determined to finish what I had started. Sell. Make some money. Finish my degree. Jumpstart my career. That was my goal. I believed hard work would be financially rewarded.

I became an independent contractor, making a living using skills learned at home. I built up a small client base with the help of my ex who had become a real estate agent. She referred me work. I was stressed, always on the edge of the financial cliff, but ok. Then the market tanked. TARP was the hot radio topic. The markets were in free fall. My phone stopped ringing. Suddenly I was underwater on my mortgage, and so were most of my clients. People stopped repairing their homes. I had no savings. I couldn’t live on the credit cards anymore. I considered pawning sentimental possessions. That’s when I snapped out of it. Don’t let a house destroy you! The alternative killed me.

I’m close with my grandparents. I respect their advice. They owned and managed a machine shop with a dozen employees for thirty years. Their business failed because America squandered its manufacturing base. But that’s another story. Over dinner I told

them I was 95% sure I was going to foreclose. My plan was to squat in the home until eviction and save as much money as possible. It was the only way I could get my money out. I didn’t want to do that to my neighbors, but I was in a corner. My grandpa leaned in to say “let me be the other 5%.” I choked up thinking about it. Hours of online research at my local library taught me the foreclosure process. In six and a half years, I had only been late on one mortgage payment. I was proud of that. I went from diligently paying to squatting in my home for the next seventeen months. I survived winter with only a space heater in my bathroom and bedroom. My breath was visible in the cold air when doing the dishes. It was hell. Opening the mail made me anxious, afraid maybe the bank would forget to send a notice and I’d come home to find my possessions on the curb. I was proactive, calling the bank’s lawyers for updates on my file. I got out relatively drama free and with some cash, but I’m pissed.

Wall street got a bailout, I got sold out. I didn’t crash the system, but I’m paying for it. Every taxpayer is. Manipulative Wallstreet bankers convinced politicians to make the taxpayer pay for their mistakes with TARP. Where are all the smart people? Why can’t they fix this mess? Well, too many of them are sociopathic captains of industry who caused the collapse. For years I’ve been yelling at the radio, yelling at the TV, yelling at the damn computer screen, wondering, out loud, why there is not open revolt in the streets. The system has been broken for a long time. Anybody not seduced with distractions can see it. I’ve been waiting for the Occupy movement. Now I’m plugged in. That’s my story. I am the 99%!

Contact Mark Tucker at 248-991-5702 [demauer@gmail.com](mailto:demauer@gmail.com)

# FIGHT FOR A GOOD FUTURE FOR OUR YOUTH!



Michigan school children.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Gloria Slaughter

ATLANTA, GA — Will we have a vision of the future where all children will be educated in order to fulfill their potential or will we step back into the 1800’s before the Child Labor Laws were passed and dictate that children work in the schools?

In 2011, the Governor of Maine, Paul LePage advocated support for rolling back child labor laws. There was a bill introduced in the Maine legislature whereby students could work in the schools four hours on a school day when school was not in session. Anyone under the age of 20 could earn \$5.25 an hour for the first 180 days. There is a federal law which entitles those under 20 to work the first 90 days for \$4.25. Maine worked hard for a Child Labor Law to be enacted in 1847 when teachers complained that children were falling asleep in class after working late hours on school nights. We now find out that more states have introduced bills which would repeal child labor laws.

Now Presidential candidate Newt Gingrich has come up with a statement that he thinks the children from the poorer ranks of the students should work in order to get experience to know what work really is. He called child labor laws “stupid,” in November, 2011, in an appearance at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. “It is tragic what we do in the poorest neighborhoods, entrapping children in, first of all, child labor laws, which are truly stupid,” said the former House speaker, according to CNN. “Most of these schools ought to get rid of the unionized janitors, have one master janitor and pay local stu-

## POVERTY RAMPANT AMONG GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Nearly 60 percent of Georgia’s public school students receive either free or reduced lunch each day. In the last five years there has been an increase of 47,000 students to enroll in the federally subsidized program offering school meals.

The nonprofits that used to help the needy with distribution of food now have no inventory of

food to distribute due to the decrease of donations from the community and restaurants. These same nonprofits are now helping families apply for food stamps.

“Scrooge” hasn’t left Georgia. Some of the state legislators are suggesting decreasing income taxes and increasing sales taxes, even putting the existing 4 percent sales tax on groceries.

dents to take care of the school. The kids would actually do work, they would have cash, they would have pride in the schools, they’d begin the process of rising.” He states that we should not reform schools for poor kids, and we should forget the graduation rates and let them spend more time scrubbing bathrooms. He later rescinded these statements. But in 1994, he also advocated that children of poor people should be sent to orphanages in order to reduce the welfare rolls.

Poverty is increasing in this country and particularly in the state of Georgia. 1.83 million Georgians live in poverty, 61,000 more than a year ago. Georgia is the third-highest rate among states. There are 46.2 million Americans who live below the poverty level. Presently, the unemployed in Georgia can’t find jobs and have maxed out on their unemployment compensation and no longer receive unemployment benefits. Not only children are living in poverty in the Atlanta area, but the metro area as a whole. An example of widespread hunger

coming to the suburbs of Atlanta is the rate that free and reduced lunch rolls in Rockdale county has swelled. Sixty-three percent of students now receive free or reduced lunches in the schools there, rising from 45% in 2006.

The ranks of those living in poverty are growing, so the question of what a public education should look like is pertinent. Due to the electronics revolution, robots are taking the place of workers. Is Newt Gingrich and others like him going to ask all students to work whose parents aren’t working? In 2010, Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education stated in April this year that 80,000 of the 100,000 public schools in America are failing. So, taking what Gingrich says, there will be many schools not reformed.

Education should fulfill the whole person and not just be a vehicle for a job. We should call for nationalization of our public schools and let there be equitable funding for all schools.

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## “Ricktatorship is Dictatorship:” Michigan’s Emergency Manager System

By General Gordon Baker

DETROIT, MI — “Ricktatorship is Dictatorship” was one of the slogans of the 1500 folks protesting Public Act 4 January 16, 2012. This protest descended on the Ann Arbor, Michigan neighborhood of Gov. Rick Snyder to rally against the state’s emergency manager law. Protesters from southeast Michigan and other parts of the state began to march at 4 P.M. from Washtenaw Community College to Parker Mill Park, less than half a mile from the governor’s Ann Arbor home. They were joined by civil rights and clergy leaders who led marchers in chant and song on the annual holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rick Snyder’s strategy is to reorganize Michigan based on the new corporate state. The Emergency Manager system is one of the most serious threats to political liberty faced by our working class since slavery. In this corporate-state vision of a New America, the citizens no longer have political rights and are reduced to the status of a customer. Public Act 4 destroys the heart of democracy allowing an Emergency Manager to shut down all elected officials in a city, nullifying their power as political representatives, which means effectively destroying political democracy.

Public Act 4 also allows an appointed Emergency Manager to take over public assets and sell them to the highest bidder; sell off our public water, our public beach fronts, our Great Lakes, our pub-

lic libraries, our public hospitals, shut down schools, break union contracts and fire public employees. The 141 Emergency Managers (EM) Governor Synder trained reveal his strategy to occupy government as a dictator—the new corporate Hitler, working for the corporate class.

That the EM—an individual—can abolish a political jurisdiction, effectively fire political representatives and sell of all public assets, is a form of government called fascism. Although American democracy has always been deeply flawed and in constant need of enlargement, it is a political form of society worth fighting for. It is not simply the right to vote, but more importantly, the political category called “the citizen.” The citizen and citizen form of government—democracy—liberated individuals from being serfs and subjects of a lord and master, and destroyed the system based on the divine rights of Kings. The EM system destroys the political category called citizen; reduces everyone to customers of the corporate state, with zero political rights.

Thus, citizens of goodwill from across the state of Michigan have launched a campaign to recall Public Act 4.

The Emergency Manager system cannot solve the crisis of financing for cities. The tax base on major cities has been destroyed as corporations down size and relocate to other areas of the country and world. Collection of property tax based on home ownership is



shrinking as default rises and the value of homes falls. The EM purpose is to privatize every aspect of our life and public services so that corporations can make a buck.

This transfer of public money

to corporations comes at a time of change in the economy. New technology is destroying the old industrial workforce. The new workforce using modern technology is so productive there is no way to employ

all of us, or our children, in the new economy. The corporate class is in total control. Either we fight to control the corporations and government or the corporations will control us.

## Fire Sale in the City of Pontiac, Literally

By Kermit Williams

PONTIAC, MI—Recently, Pontiac, Michigan’s third Emergency Manager, Louis Schimmel, dissolved the 170-year-old, Pontiac Fire Department. Mr. Schimmel, a member of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, lives in Waterford Township, a suburb of the city of Pontiac. Guess where Pontiac’s fire department went? That’s right: Waterford! The township needed to absorb Pontiac’s fire department to fill a two-million dollar hole in their budget to avoid layoffs and the possibility of needing an Emergency Manager.

So now Pontiac will pay \$6.2 million for fire services, but will only receive \$4.4 million in fire services from Waterford Township. Yes, Waterford Township

will pocket \$1.8 million from the cash-strapped city of Pontiac. The takeover of the Pontiac Fire Department is the greatest heist since Pontiac’s first Emergency Financial Manager sold the 127-acre Silverdome Stadium (former home of NFL’s Detroit Lions) for \$583,000 back in 2009.

To date, no ex-Pontiac fireman has been offered a position with Waterford Township Fire Department. After they received pink slips on Christmas Eve, many of the fireman felt that they had to vote to dissolve their union contract to apply for a job with Waterford.

And, what about the citizens? Already, Pontiac residents are complaining about their inability to get fire insurance due to the loss of the Pontiac Fire Department. Response times will in-

crease because of the closure of two fire stations in the takeover deal. The other station will be leased by Waterford Township for \$1 million. Sorry, I meant ONE dollar or 100 pennies.

The 10-year deal with Waterford will have the township coffers looking pretty for quite some time.

Emergency Managers can do more than cut. Isn’t it ironic that Emergency Managers can generate revenue for the cities in which they live, but not for the cities they govern.

*Kermit Williams is a member of Pontiac City Council, District 7. He is one of the people who are in the center of the fight against the takeover of the city of Pontiac. Email him at Kermit@Kermitwilliams.com*

**Protest against Michigan’s new law that gives dictatorial control of a city or school district to an emergency manager, replacing elected officials. In this corporate vision of a New America, the people have no political rights. We either fight to control the corporations and government or the corporations will control us.**

PHOTOS/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM (ABOVE), MARK TUCKER (BELOW)



# WELFARE CUTS - No Exceptions, No Mercy



Michigan school children.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

By Fred Vitale

DETROIT, MI — Michigan's Department of Human Services cut over 11,000 families from cash assistance. This is the first wave of a plan to cut all single mothers and children off cash assistance, whether they live or not. The consequences on the lives of the poor are incalculable. These cuts will save \$68 million for the state. Meanwhile the state is giving huge tax breaks—some \$500 million—to the corporations. This shows whose lives are valued and whose are not.

Anyone without a job raising small children should receive enough support so she (or he) and their children are not homeless, heatless and food-less. Cash assistance — which only mothers (or fathers) with children receive—must pay for all needs—housing, utilities, transportation, utilities and school tools for children. Only health insurance is paid by the federal and or state today, and that is also under attack.

Under welfare reform, passed by the Democratic president William Clinton and a Democratic Congress, there is a five-year lifetime maximum for receiving federal assistance.

The policy is inhumane. It affects over 50 million people who live at or below the poverty line and another 100 million at twice the poverty level (\$44,000 for a family of four). This is a policy you cannot find in many other countries

on this planet.

Federal and state dollars spent on welfare have been collected from working people's taxes for decades. This is our money and should be used to protect those who need it the most — women and young children.

## WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW

Women and children began losing cash in November and December, 2011. Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (MWRO), a union for low-income people, laid out what to do. First, everyone appeal. Clog the system. Second, try to win cases where state and federal policy was not followed.

Hundreds of women filed. The state scheduled over 900 cases to be heard statewide on two days. UAW Local 6000 activists who are required to participate in this work as state employees initiated a picket line to protest this unfair treatment of welfare recipients and state workers.

MWRO pulled many of the affected women into a meeting. We found that many are taking care of disabled children or parents, are disabled themselves or victims of spousal abuse. These were three exemptions to the 5-year limit.

The unexpected happened. We lost every case. The rules have changed. There are no exceptions. The exemptions applied only in the year the law was passed—1996.

## YOU LIVE IN AN IMMORAL SOCIETY

MWRO picketed the State Office building in Detroit every Thursday from August 11–December 15 in protest. Hundreds of Detroiters and supporters marched, including union members and leaders, pastors and ministers, and members of Occupy Detroit.

But, like the unreformed Ebenezer Scrooge of Dickens' Christmas Carol, the cold-hearted Snyder and the legislature were unmoved. They offer Michigan's people only the poor house and the prisons.

MWRO is most concerned with the loss of shelter for women and children. We have launched a campaign to put people back into their homes. Our campaign is part of a wave rolling across the country. For more information, contact 313-964-0618. Ask for Gwen.

Working class people in Detroit make a special contribution to the effort for deep, radical change in America. They bring an understanding of powerful struggles which live at the very core of the country—the oppression of African-Americans and women, the exploitation of workers, and the oppressive nature of U.S. wars. Together with new layers of young workers in motion around Detroit and beyond, we can win justice for women and children in Michigan.

*Fred Vitale is a retired Ford worker and a volunteer at MWRO.*

# Ruth Williams ...Gone!

By Maureen D. Taylor

It is with great sorrow that I share the news that our own Ruth Williams, was carried away by the angels. Ruth has been the consummate organizer and housing champion for decades, learning HUD policies and making certain that these policies were applied to help low income families. She never tired of this task. I remember calling her for client advice even while she was in the hospital waiting for this or that procedure, me insisting that she address the issue at hand. She always would, telling the medical team—you have to wait because I have this NUT on the phone. There will not be another like her, and we are all so blessed to have had her in our lives for some 40 plus years. Ruth was the membership chair of Michigan Welfare Rights, and the National Welfare Rights Union. She was a member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA) and will be sorely missed. Ruth traveled on international, national, regional and statewide fighting for the poorest section of the working class. She was always ready to go to jail for what she believed. Ruth's knowledge and



Ruth Williams

PHOTO/SANDY REID

practice of housing problems in this country kept her on the front of the struggles for a better society for our children and seniors. Ruth will be missed by her children and numbers of children throughout the metropolitan area of Detroit. She is gone, but the work that she was responsible for must go on.

Sleep well, sweet Ruth—you did good!

*Maureen D. Taylor is the State Chairperson of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization.*

# A Salute to Chuck Wooten

By General Gordon Baker

A salute to Charles Wooten, popularly known as "Chuck." Chuck passed on Oct. 27, 2011 after a bout with cancer. He was an icon among Black workers here in the Detroit area and was known in many workers circles around the country. Chuck was a man of action, not long on words.

In an article entitled "Why I Joined DRUM," Chuck stated, "My thing for getting in DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement) was that, from the first day I got hired in the plant, I noticed immediately that about 60 of us hired at the same time were all taken to the body shop. And out of that number, about 40 were Black. Out of this group, about seven to ten of the white workers went into the Inspection Department. The other [whites] were systematically given light jobs on the sixth and seventh floors. The area of the line I went into was putting fenders and doors on the cars and,

well, the door job was the worst job in that area. And from the time I started in there until I left that area, until I went on days, every time a new Black worker came in, he was given that door job. All the time I stayed in that area, I never saw a white worker work at that job."

This was Chuck's proclamation. He was one of the nine founding members of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. He rose quickly into a leading position in the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. As the League grew, Chuck helped reach out to teachers around the country who could teach us the science of Marxism. It was his outreach through the Muni Bus Drivers in San Francisco that connected us to "Robare" who led us to the California Communist League in the early 1970s. This put us on course to unite with hundreds of revolutionaries today. Chuck has earned his place in history.

# Cabrini Green Evictions: Relocation Rights

By Joseph Peery

CHICAGO, IL — In August of last year, the remaining 31 families in the Southeast corner of the Cabrini Row Houses received 180-day notices from the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to vacate their apartments. In the following months, many of the families were pressured to take Section 8 vouchers or move to other developments.

In November, some of the remaining families received 90-day notices informing them that they had to move to the temporary addresses shown on the notices or wait to get their Section 8 vouchers approved. These families also received a packet with a document in it called the **CHA LEASEHOLDER HOUSING CHOICE AND RELOCATION RIGHTS CONTRACT**. It is a 26-page document, written in legal language, and oddly enough, with Page 4 missing. Page 4 lists additional ways that the CHA can evict you without relocating you.

Seventeen years ago, as Cabrini residents, we were promised that if we wanted to remain in this community, we would be moved out temporarily. As new housing was built, we would return. This document reads on Page 1, that “CHA’s ability to offer right of return is subject to the federal funding commitments...” With the current threatened budget cuts, what does this mean for us? On Page 2,

if you moved in after 10/1/99, you have no right to return and are to take a Section 8. And further, on Page 6, “However, the CHA cannot guarantee that all families displaced by redevelopment activity will be able to return to their site of origin or receive their permanent housing choice.”

If found to be “non-lease compliant,” or if a resident delays or refuses to follow the process laid out in the contract, it’s grounds for loss of right to return and eviction. There are dozens of ways this could happen, many of them mentioned as “additional relocation terms”, but not listed in the document. A family could move out under one set of rules and move in somewhere else under another set of rules—without knowing what the rules are. Most of these rules didn’t exist when the original promises of housing were made.

While the penalties are so severe for public housing residents, if the CHA or one of its agents, i.e., developers, private management, contractors, etc., doesn’t live up to their side of the bargain, nothing happens to them. In June of 2010, the CHA backed moving trucks up to 1230 N. Larabee and forcibly removed residents from their homes in violation of the RELOCATION AGREEMENT and a federal judge’s court order. Their only punishment was a warning from the judge.

Why again is there a big hurry



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

to move everyone out? Why does the CHA propose demolition of all the row houses, including the west end that was recently renovated? The answer is private corporations are waiting for the big CHA contracts to demolish and rebuild. The same company that renovated could be the same one to tear down what they just renovated. They

don’t care if families need a place to stay. Their only concern is to get that money.

RELOCATION RIGHTS, TRANSFORMATION and REDEVELOPMENT, are all code words for the taking away of your rights in the interest of corporate private property rights. We are at a crossroad. We face a possible fu-

ture where not just public housing but everything public, including the government itself will be taken over by private corporations. But the future is not yet written. We can also have a future of WE THE PEOPLE, where all Americans can have a place they call home. What future will we get? The future is up to us.

## WHY ALL THE WORLD IS IN THE STREETS

*The revolution in technology is pushing the world’s workers out of production*

By Dave Ransom

In the immense corn and wheat fields of the Midwest, unmanned tractors seed and harvest crops. In California’s Silicon Valley, high-tech new industries produce world-changing products with only handfuls of workers. Even in China and India, the world’s great cheap-labor reservoirs, industrialists are replacing their workers with robots.

It’s no surprise the unemployed, the underemployed—and those who see the handwriting on the wall—are in the streets protesting in country after country. We live in revolutionary times. And underlying all the great changes is the revolution in technology.

In the “Rust Belt,” General Motors produces almost 10 percent more cars with 25 percent fewer workers. In the low-wage South, GE proudly shows off “advanced manufacturing” plants that produce its complex jet engines

and gas turbines with only 350 workers.

Corporate honchos are well aware they are creating unemployment. But GE and other companies have no choice other than replacing workers with robots if they are to stay competitive. And that’s why there are 5.7 million fewer manufacturing jobs than just ten years ago.

**“...companies have no choice other than replacing workers with robots if they are to stay competitive.”**

Manufacturing output rose by almost 50 percent between 1997 and 2007. But robotic production almost doubled the output per worker, so millions of jobs were lost.

In the U.S., workers have been much concerned about the “outsourcing” of jobs to cheap-labor

countries. But now robotic production is replacing workers even in China and India.

Chinese tycoon Terry Gou employs more than a million workers in his sprawling industrial empire. They manufacture half the world’s outsourced high-tech products—computers, video games, iPods.

But at a party he threw for employees at his biggest factory,

he gleefully announced he was buying a million robots to replace many of them. “His audience,” reports a Beijing correspondent, “was shocked.”

India is manufacturing the robots that are replacing workers worldwide. Headquartered in India’s car-making capitol, Chen-

nai, Precision Automation and Electronics makes robots for Caterpillar, Ford, and Chrysler, for instance.

CEO Ranjit Date says he had a hard time convincing Indian companies to use robots, because labor is so cheap there. But automation is even cheaper, he says, and “we have grown in waves with the Indian economy.”

When Ford wanted to double its production in Chennai, it brought in 92 robots, though its plant was designed for assembly by workers.

For decades, workers in the U.S. have been told that automation would create new industries and millions of new jobs—in services as well as manufacturing. That’s no longer true.

Small businesses have generated two thirds of the new jobs over recent decades. Today there are as many or more new small businesses as before the recession, but they are producing a third few-

er jobs. Online computer programs make it unnecessary for start-ups to hire staff for basic things like accounting, inventory, and customer service.

In telecommunications, jobs are also vanishing. Call-center operators and sales people are rapidly being replaced by on-line buying, and the industry has terminated an eighth of its workers. Sprint alone laid off 20,000 employees.

“Of all the lies that the American people have been told the past four decades, the biggest one may be this,” writes Harold Meyerson in the Washington Post—that “we’ll all come out ahead in the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society.”

Yet that can, and should, be true—but only if we revolutionize society as well as technology, so that all of us, not just the One Percent, will benefit. There will be no survival for much of the 99 Percent unless we do.



# African American History Month, 2012

## AN END TO RACISM IS POSSIBLE!

### From the Editors

The French philosopher, Karr, famously wrote, “The more things change, the more they remain the same.” This seems especially true in the long struggle of the African Americans for freedom and equality.

African American History Month, 2012, presents the propagandists for capitalism with a serious dilemma. How can they explain to America and to the world the contradictory conditions of African Americans? America elected a president who is Black. There are Black officers at all levels of the military. Black scholars and scientists abound in Academia. A handful have become CEO’s in Fortune 500 companies. Obviously, great social change has taken place. A foreigner looking at American television would surely declare that at long last America has fulfilled its promise. That is, until he or she takes a look at the working class African Americans in their ghetto-like communities.

Here is another Black America—segregated, impoverished, occupied by a militarized, brutal, trigger prone police force. Here is 16 to 20% unemployment. Of those who have jobs, 56% have low wages. In many cities, half the

young Blacks are under the control of the criminal justice system. In the nations capital it is 42%—in Baltimore it is 56%. Obviously there has been no change. Clearly, the concept of integration has failed for the majority of African Americans.

Why has it failed? Black soldiers could be integrated with white soldiers. Black scholars could be integrated with white scholars. There is no compact section of white American workers that the majority of Black workers can be integrated into. The hangover of history prevents it.

Things are changing. Applying electronics to industry has hit both white and Black. The newly impoverished white workers find themselves pushed toward the same situation the Black workers are in. Here we see the probability of whites integrating with Blacks rather than the other way around. They have already formed a new economic section of the working class and are in the process of creating a new social and political entity.

African slavery was the foundation of American capitalism and an integral part of it. Despite all the cosmetic changes, it is not possible to do away with the hangovers of slavery without doing away with the system itself. It

is being done away with because more productive, electronically controlled equipment is replacing manual labor. This new equipment

is incompatible with capitalism.

We have entered a vast economic and social revolution that will end with the reconstruction of

society on the basis of cooperation rather than exploitation. This will forever put an end to racism in all its forms.



Protest against Michigan’s dictatorial Emergency Financial Law that eliminates democratically elected officials. The law is currently pointed primarily at African American cities and school districts. But it is a launching pad for the corporate government to take over cities around the state.

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

## VOICES IN THE STREET: *Finding our collective voice*

By Mary Gray Kaye

CHICAGO, IL — In the beginning I felt so small. My voice was so weak. I grew hoarse ranting at and about Chase Bank. “Won’t you help me? Can’t anyone do something? I can’t meet this mortgage.”

“Did you fill out all the papers? (Yes I did.) They haven’t arrived. It takes maybe six weeks for us to look at them. (I don’t have six weeks—I can’t pay that mortgage.) Well, fill them out again and send them to this address.

Another forty-three sheets to

copy. Another six dollars postage. I sent the documents again. And heard nothing.

“There are organizations to help you get those papers filed,” was advice I received. So I went to one of those organizations. “Have you filled out the papers? (Yes I have.) You should fill them out again and send the copies to me.” Another forty-three sheets to copy. Another six dollars postage.

“Can I speak to Michael? I was told to call him to follow up on some paperwork I sent him for my mortgage modification. (Michael?

Michael who?) I don’t know his last name; this is the number he gave me to call. (“There is no Michael here.”) Not there, not anywhere that the organization could find. “Could you fill out the forms and send them on to us again and we will look into it. (Yes I can - did I have any choice? No.)

Another mortgage payment—another scraping all the loose change I had to meet it. Another month of hoping for reprieve.

In vain. “You are missing some of the documentation. This is what we need.” More research into my financial files—my assessments, my 1040, my heating, telephone, electricity bills, contributions, grocery expenditures, gas. Another pile of paper sent off. Another strip of stamps.

Another month of waiting. Telephone calls to any telephone number I had noted. The responses? “Not this department,” or “Leave your number and we’ll get back to you.” Oh no they won’t.

Another month. “We’re tracking it now and it seems like the request has been sent on to the legal department.” A department that needed more documentation explaining why I was unable to meet my mortgage. Had Chase not heard

of the fatal Wall Street manipulations? Did it not make any sense that my inability to pay my mortgage was tied up with the money I had entrusted to Wall Street?

More money borrowed from relatives willing to put a cushion under my bank account.

After sixteen months of weekly, sometimes daily, tracking, following up, begging, more documentation, more unanswered phone calls, the verdict came down. “No.” I wasn’t in dire enough straits to warrant any reduction of my mortgage rate from an improbable 6.5 percent when loans were being offered at four. No. I couldn’t remort-

gage because my home was “under water”—worth less now than what it was mortgaged for. Screwed. And my by now hoarse voice was now voiceless.

Then I joined with hundreds of others—all with their separate grievances. Together we made noise in Chicago, Boston, New York, Madison—in dozens of other cities spreading across the United States. And the noise continues and will continue until the cry of the middle class is heard. When there is no more cry, there is no more middle class. There is no more America.



Thousands have taken to the streets as part of Occupy Chicago.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

### Is there a “Middle Class?”

By the Editors

Our politicians are running on platforms appealing to the “middle class.” In reality, there is no “middle class.” The “middle class” is just the more highly paid section of the working class. Their loyalty to capitalism was bought with high wages and benefits at a time when capitalism was expanding all over the world. Today, because of globalization and the “race to the bottom,” what was once the more economically well-off “middle” of American society is in the process of being crushed down into the poorest section of the working class. To defend the interests of the entire working class, we have to defend the bottom of the social ladder. Our slogan must be “one for all and all for one.”

# IT'S TIME TO STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT

By Mary Anne Morrow Barbour®



JACKSON, TN — *First Amendment law encompasses far more than principles, tests and concepts. It arises from real people in real circumstances, from the turbulence of history and culture of particular times and places.* — David Hudson, Jr., *First Amendment Scholar*

Do you know the words to our First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? Unfortunately, many Americans don't. It states: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*"

Tragically, our First Amendment Rights have been and continue to be under attack. What makes this travesty of justice even more alarming is that we are under attack by our own government.

"The FBI improperly investigated some left-leaning U.S. advocacy groups after the September 2001, attacks, the Justice Department said Monday, citing cases in which agents put activists on terrorist watch lists even though they were planning nonviolent civil disobedience." (Reported in "*The Washington Post*" by Jerry Mar-

kon on September 20, 2010.)

A 2010 report by Inspector General Glenn A. Fine absolved the FBI of spying on domestic groups that were targeted purely for their political activities. These activities of monitoring certain advocacy groups took place between 2001 and 2006 (according to an article written by Jerry Markon). General Fine also cited that aggressive and vigorous action was necessary in protesting the Iraq War and other political activities.

His report was in violation of our First Amendment Rights.

Since September 11, 2001, civil liberties groups have long accused the FBI of their radical responses in their zeal to improperly monitor antiwar protests, freedom of speech, peaceful assembly and environmental groups. A few of the groups that the FBI had been spying on were Greenpeace, a Catholic organization that advocates for peace and PETA—a group that speaks out against cruelty to

animals and exploitative corporate and government practices.

The following was taken directly from [firstamendmentcenter.org](http://firstamendmentcenter.org).

"Arresting-journalists-with-demonstrators-hurts-us-all." (This atrocity occurred in my home state in Nashville, Tennessee. However it is happening all over America.) "A police policy of "arrest 'em now, sort 'em out later" in dealing with demonstrators—and journalists who report on behalf of the rest of us—falls woefully short

of these principles. Among those who were arrested was journalist Jonathan Meador—who repeatedly told the 65 officers that moved in to arrest 20 people, that he was with the media and that he had a right to be there—woefully to no reply by the arresting officer."

Current FBI scrutiny also includes many civil warriors that have assembled during the Occupy Wall Street, Occupy Portland, Occupy Nashville, etc., and other similar protests. All across America law enforcement agencies have continued to monitor and harass groups and individuals for peacefully exercising their First Amendment Rights.

Our government has the ability to monitor any of us who aren't afraid to defend our First Amendment Rights and Civil Liberties and to arrest us for exercising these rights. Collectively as Americans, we must stand up, raise our voices, and fight to preserve our rights without fear of retribution. How and why is our government attempting to take away our First Amendment Rights?

I will close this article with a quote by Roger Baldwin, the ACLU Founder: "So long as we have enough people in this country willing to fight for their rights, we'll be called a democracy."



Oakland Police move in on Occupy Oakland protesters with "less-lethal" ammunition. This is what fascism looks like. PHOTO/GLENN HALOG

## Arkansas: BLACK FARMERS' FIGHT CONTINUES

By Simuel Ramey, Jr.

February: The month designated for acknowledging the accomplishments of Blacks in History...there was discrimination in

history...there is discrimination in the present!

A big sigh of relief swept over the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists, Inc. (Pigford II) membership in December, 2010, when Presi-

dent Obama ordered Congress to approve the \$1.25 Billion settlement. The class action suit charged that the government had discriminated against Black farmers and failed to investigate or properly respond to complaints from 1983–1997. Now, fourteen months later, none of these litigants has received a dime of that settlement. Instead, all they've gotten is a directive to submit more money to the Legal Fund set up by who knows who.

On December 17, 2011, exactly one year to the date when President Obama ordered Congress to approve the settlement, the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists, Inc., held a forum at the Pine Bluff Convention Center to educate/update the membership on the disbursement of the funds...at least for the estimated 1,500 members in attendance, that is what they *thought*. In actuality, another load of [sic] was dropped on them.

The mediator's (attorney) for this forum slapped them in the face by asking for more money for the legal fund. About 900 of those

in attendance were so appalled they left the meeting. Also, a lot of members discovered that they had to provide proof of ownership of property, and subsequently, that they had applied for a loan and was denied by the Department of Agriculture.

Local area farmer Pete Hood, who resides in the farming town of Dick Jeter, just on the outskirts of Jacksonville, expresses disgust with the whole process. He asserts that the problem is that the settlement of this "litigation" has not eliminated the discrimination that is evident, more than it was when our people were making contributions in history. The subsidized disbursement that Congress was ordered to pay has yet to come to fruition. As stated by Pete Hood, "I've been waiting for a stipend since 1999. This is the second-time around of getting the run-around, for new equipment, and repairs of existing equipment. This is disparate treatment...this is unjust...this is unfair. "OOPS! It's the continuing practice of

**DISCRIMINATION!!!"**

The Pigford II settlement has as its objective to pay late claims and late-late claims filers, which is in part good. However, it does not include the original lawsuit benefits which included a \$150,000 Line-of-Credit; \$75,000 for equipment and operations purposes and \$75,000 for land purchases to the farmers of the "Black persuasion."

Additionally, Pigford II has simply omitted the original Black farmers who were not paid after completing the necessary paperwork required for disbursement before the late claim filers window was opened. These are the generational Black farmers.

**To my readers: The "PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE" is our voice in this state about how the stigma of social injustices in this country is keeping us in the state of oppression. Please subscribe. Contact information is on the inside cover of this publication.**



Black farmers are still fighting to receive their 2010 \$1.25 Billion discrimination settlement. To date, no litigant has received a dime. Left: Pete Hood, of the Dick Jeter community, and Charles Johnson (grandson of Harvey Austin), of the McAlmont community. PHOTO/SIMUEL RAMEY

# WHY WE OCCUPY From Houston's grassroots!

By MariaElena Castellanos

HOUSTON, TX — What are thousands of Houstonians saying about the economic system? Capitalism is “dying,” unconscionable, “not functioning,” “broken,” a millstone around the neck of humanity, “a system based on massive concentration of wealth on one end... and growing misery and deprivation on the other end (99%).”

Here is the essence of what is being said, written, sung and chanted by “occupyhouston.” “Jail the Bankers;” “Capitalism does NOT equal democracy!” “People over Profit!” “Elected Officials Bought and Paid For,” “Foreclose on Wall St;” “I cannot afford a lobbyist!” “Hey, hey, ho, ho... the 1% has got to go.” “Universal healthcare with a single payer.” “They [1%] get bail-outs... we get budget cuts.” “Where’s my education?” Stop the Keystone XL pipeline!” Big Oil gets tax breaks, our teachers get laid off.” “Capitalism is NOT working... it’s not working for the benefit of the people.... the 99%.”

And the chants and signs are the same, albeit in different languages, on Wall Street, in London, in Germany, and around the U.S and world. Check out the news about Italy and THE EURO on the brink of financial collapse. Oh, wait a minute.... what is the 1% (big bank and big corporate owners) saying: “The European Banks are too big to fail.” Sound familiar?

The economic crisis has been exacerbated by globalized finance capitalists imposing austerity measures upon entire countries—after those same stock-price ma-

nipulators and privileged CEO’s have destabilized those same economies with fraudulent credit-default-swaps, and phoney AAA ratings on bundled securities, and fraudulent mergers, and illegal manipulation of the commodity supply—to wit, Enron’s fraudulent constriction of California’s energy distribution grid in order to artificially force the price of Enron’s stocks sky-high while causing inexplicable brown-outs; and phoney mortgage banks’ subprime lending schemes. This is why people took to the streets of Greece, Portugal, Ireland, and Spain recently. Of course the IMF and G-8 had been imposing “austerity” measures on Mexico, on Argentina, on Latin America for many decades.

OccupyHouston participants and supporters agree... capitalism is “killing the people and the flora and the fauna and the “Good Earth’s” natural resources....”

The 99% are waking up and standing up! They are asking why do we have to settle for more cut-backs, and more foreclosures, and more college debt, and NO real jobs, and NO healthcare, and now, NOT EVEN respect for the few fragments of rights left to the 99%—the right to peacefully assemble on public property and complain to the corporate-state and seek a redress of grievance from government? Seems that the 99% are catching a glimpse of how to deal with entrenched politicians and big corporate thieves. More and more of the 99% are finding each other and are beginning to realize that WE, THE 99%, ARE TOO BIG TO FAIL.

**Hundreds of parents travelled from Houston to Austin to tell Gov. Rick Perry NOT to take \$30 million away from the Texas, public education fund to give to BIG OIL in the form of more tax breaks.**

PHOTO/CARLOS VILLALOBOS



**Occupy Congress protest is focusing attention not only on those who receive inordinate amounts of our tax dollars, but also on those who are doling it out.**

PHOTO/ERIC SHEPTOCK

## Washington, D.C.

# OCCUPY CONGRESS

By Eric Sheptock

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It was a cold and rainy morning on January 17 as occupiers congregated on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol. After the first fifty people arrived, everyone began to do mic checks during which they stated where they came from and why they had come. At about 9:30 a.m., hundreds of marchers from the two tent cities—Freedom Plaza and McPherson Square Park—arrived. The crowd grew to just shy of 1,000 people. The crowd immediately began to move toward the Capitol, only to be given parameters by the U.S. Capitol Police who prevented them from getting within 200 feet of the building.

In the afternoon, the weather cleared and the crowd moved across Capitol Hill to the Rayburn House Office Building. Some people went inside to speak with their representative while the major-

ity continued to demonstrate on the steps outside. People gave out symbolic pink slips at the offices of representatives who they said do not represent the 99%. The protesters eventually marched toward the White House (which is two blocks from the McPherson Square Park occupation) and disbanded.

The movement is now more than four months old. Some occupations have been raided (not merely due to the decisions of mayors, but also with the direct involvement of the Department of Homeland Security). But the movement hasn't died. It has shown its resilience and holding power. The upside of the efforts of the government and police to prevent the motion from growing, is that we've shifted from occupying Wall Street (where the virtual leaders of the system gather) to also occupying Congress (where the nominal leaders of the system gather). This is helping to focus on not

only those who receive inordinate amounts of our tax dollars, but also on those who are doling it out.

It has also served to shift our focus away from the encampment that started the movement to its many offspring—in effect decentralizing the movement. The state has essentially decapitated the hydra, only to have more heads appear. They've also succeeded at focusing a greater portion of the movement's energy on the pinnacle of state power.

Groups are planning for the Spring and hope to resurrect the local movement in all of its glory. They've even dubbed it the “DC Spring” in the hopes that it can, on some level, compare to the Arab Spring. Many people believe and hope that 2012 will be the tipping point that sets the stage for a leap in the movement. Many are working hard to make it happen. We fight on.

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# Man found dead in St. Joseph River

## Where's the Investigation?

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



BENTON HARBOR, MI — While visiting family members in Money, Mississippi in 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till, an African American from Chicago, was brutally

murdered for flirting with a white woman. He was not prepared for the level of racism he encountered in Mississippi.

Emmett Till's assailants, the woman's husband and brother, drove Emmett around, beat him and then made him carry a 75-pound cotton-gin fan to the bank of the Tallahatchie River. They ordered him to take off his clothes. The two men beat him nearly to death, gouged out his eyes, shot him in the head, and threw his body tied to the cotton fan with barbed wire into the river.

With this kind of history in America, how can people in the state of Michigan stay in the dark? In the city Benton Harbor and the state of Michigan, they are still hanging nooses and burning crosses. If reporting by the media in Berrien County were truthful, residents would have information that might provoke meaningful action in response to such actions by elected and other officials, law enforcement and the Whirlpool Corporation.

An immense travesty has occurred in St Joseph, Michigan, just across the river from Benton Harbor. An African-American, Timothy "Bulldog" Allen, missing since November 9, 2011. turned up dead in the St Joseph River in St Joseph, Township. There is no doubt for many that he was murdered, possibly by two cops, the last people known to see him alive.

Berrien County has a sordid history of African-American disappearances, of nobody caring, and of limited investigations by law enforcement. A man turned up dead in the river and police are the last to see him alive, about two hundred feet where he was last talking to them. This has a chilling effect on the community. We buried Timothy "Bulldog" Allen today.

Beware! Armed bands are roaming the highways and marching through your



Timothy "Bulldog" Allen

neighborhood. They may even try to enter your home! Watch for these gang identifiers: vehicles they may drive are sport cars, four door sedans, vans, often painted black and white, blue and white or just plain white with sirens and flashing red and blue lights. Their clothing is well kept dress uniforms, usually black, blue and sometimes brown gang colors. They are adorned with patches and a badge. Headwear varies. Other accessories include gun belts, handcuffs, hand held radio and large flashlights. These gangs are highly organized, well armed and potentially violent. Warn your friends and neighbors. We must protect our future. Occupy everything.

**Protest the corporations and bankers at the Senior PGA Championship tournament at the Benton Harbor golf tournament May 23-27, 2012. We are the 99% and the 1% will be there. Saturday, May 26 is the big day. Join us! Call Rev. Pinkney, President, BANCO at 269-925-0001 for information.**

### OCCUPY WALL STREET

"a progressive mindset found language list poem"

OWS  
 FEED THE HUNGRY  
 CLOTHE THE NAKED  
 HOUSE THE HOMELESS  
 HEAL THE SICK  
 REHABILITATE THE PRISONERS  
 EDUCATE THE STUDENTS  
 COUNSEL THE DISTURBED  
 EMPLOY THE UNEMPLOYED  
 SAVE THE CHILDREN, THE SENIORS AND THEIR PETS  
 SAVE AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT  
 RESPECT THE SCIENTIST AND THE ARTISTS  
 SAVE THE UNIONS AND THE WORKERS  
 END PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC PROPERTY  
 CASINO CAPITALISM; MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES  
 IMPERIALISM; BAIL OUT THE PEOPLE NOT THE BANKS  
 GLOBALIZATION, GREED, CORRUPTION, LOBBYISTS, THE FED  
 OLIGARCHS, PLUTOCRATS, BIG OIL, PACS, AND STUDENT LOAN DEBT  
 CORPORATIONS VS THE PEOPLE: "CITIZENS UNITED"  
 EQUITABLE TRANSPARENT DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH  
 SAVE PENSIONS, SOCIAL PROGRAMS, AND OTHER BENEFITS  
 SAFE PLACES FOR YOUNG FOLK TO WORK, PLAY AND STUDY  
 FREEDOM TO SPEAK, WORSHIP, AND PEACEFULLY ASSEMBLE  
 END ALL UNJUST WARS, CONFLICTS, ASSASSINATIONS AND DRUG WARS  
 FAIR COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION AND THE DREAM ACT  
 RECALL MEAN-SPIRITED GOVERNORS AND CORPORATE MISMANAGERS  
 IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS ENJOY ALL CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
 THIRD PARTY OR CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT WITHOUT PARTIES  
 GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DEMOCRACY, OR REPUBLIC  
 POLICE: PLEASE PROTECT PEACEFUL PROTESTERS  
 TOP 1% MUST PAY FAIR TAXES AND PLAY BY THE GOLDEN RULE  
 "IT'S NOT ONE THING...IT'S EVERYTHING" PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

"Give me your tired, your poor,  
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
 Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me,  
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door."  
 Emma Lazarus

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### Emergency Manager isn't balancing the books!

Joseph Harris, the Emergency Manager with dictatorial powers to "straighten out" the Benton Harbor books, had predicted a \$400,000 surplus in 2011, according to the Herald Palladium. But the books are apparently still in the red! In addition, an audit showed accounting mistakes and stagnant accounts that weren't being used. Meanwhile the City's elected officials are stripped of almost all of their authority to run the city. A public investigation into the work of the Emergency Manager is in order!

— Rev. Edward Pinkney

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