

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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People gather in Spartanburg, S.C. to raise awareness about the murder of Florida teen Trayvon Martin.

PHOTO/ALEX C. HICKS JR., AP PHOTO/SPARTANBURG HERALD JOURNAL

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TRAYVON MARTIN AND THE RISE OF FASCISM IN AMERICA

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Mental Health Movement and their allies barricaded themselves inside Chicago's Woodlawn Clinic and set up a tent city outside to protest the closure of half of the city's mental health clinics. Follow on Twitter: #SaveOurClinics PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYONE

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

EDITORIAL

Anna Brown died a tragic death in St. Louis, after being ordered to leave the emergency room (ER) in September of 2011. Police arrested her after an ER doctor told them she was healthy enough to go to jail. She died later that night from blood clots that went from her ankle to her lungs. In the months prior to her death, Anna Brown's home was destroyed in a tornado, and she lost her job and became homeless. Her two small girls were taken away from her by the child protective agency when they found them living in a building with no water or electricity.

You could say that Anna Brown was down on her luck. You could also say that blood clots killed her. But in reality, it was the government that killed Anna Brown and the other 45,000 Americans who die every year because they cannot get treatment for conditions which

can easily be cured. That means that during the past ten years, 450,000 people died needlessly in our country. And this dreadful number is doubling every seven years! Over a million people will die by 2022, unless this trend is reversed. Do we care about each other anymore? Is this the kind of America we want to be?

Our government's leaders don't care about this deadly health care crisis. So it's no wonder that many advocates for changes in our health care system no longer place any hope in winning victories in Congress, or in the Democratic Party. There is a growing movement of people taking shape who say that a thorough overhaul of the system is needed. This would include eliminating private health insurance in this country, and replacing it with a government-run single-payer health insurance that provides healthcare to everyone as a human right.

Do we have the collective will

to assert ourselves against the bigoted interests of the few? The introduction of new technology is rapidly eliminating jobs—leaving millions permanently unemployed—and uninsured. Today, with the factories shut down, Wall Street and the 1% will no longer provide medical insurance for workers they don't need. And with Congress, and the White House controlled by the corporations, only a well-organized movement of the working class will be able to force the government to guarantee that all the people will get medical care. The health industry—insurance, pharmaceutical, and hospital corporations—will not change willingly. We must act to make the government take them over and run them in the interests of society.

All the other developed countries such as Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan have some kind of national health plan. Why has this never happened in America? It is because we have

been tricked into a debate about economics instead of morality. Instead of the language of right and wrong, today's political leaders use the language of budgetary accounting. They talk endlessly about "fiscal responsibility," and cutting "the growth in entitlement spending." In every country where the people have won universal health care, first they won the moral debate, and then ways and means were found to make it happen. The money is there. The 1% have it.

The bottom line is we need to end up with a system that provides quality health care to everyone who needs it, regardless of their ability to pay. Single-payer gets us started on the road to such a system, and puts us in the fight for a government that is controlled by the people, not the corporations. In the name of Anna Brown and all those who have died in this inhumane health care marketplace, let's force the fight onto the high ground of morality. That's where we can win.

Why the Movement Needs a Press

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

Visit us on the web at www.PeoplesTribune.org

From the Editors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE TRAYVON MARTIN MURDER AND THE RISE OF FASCISM

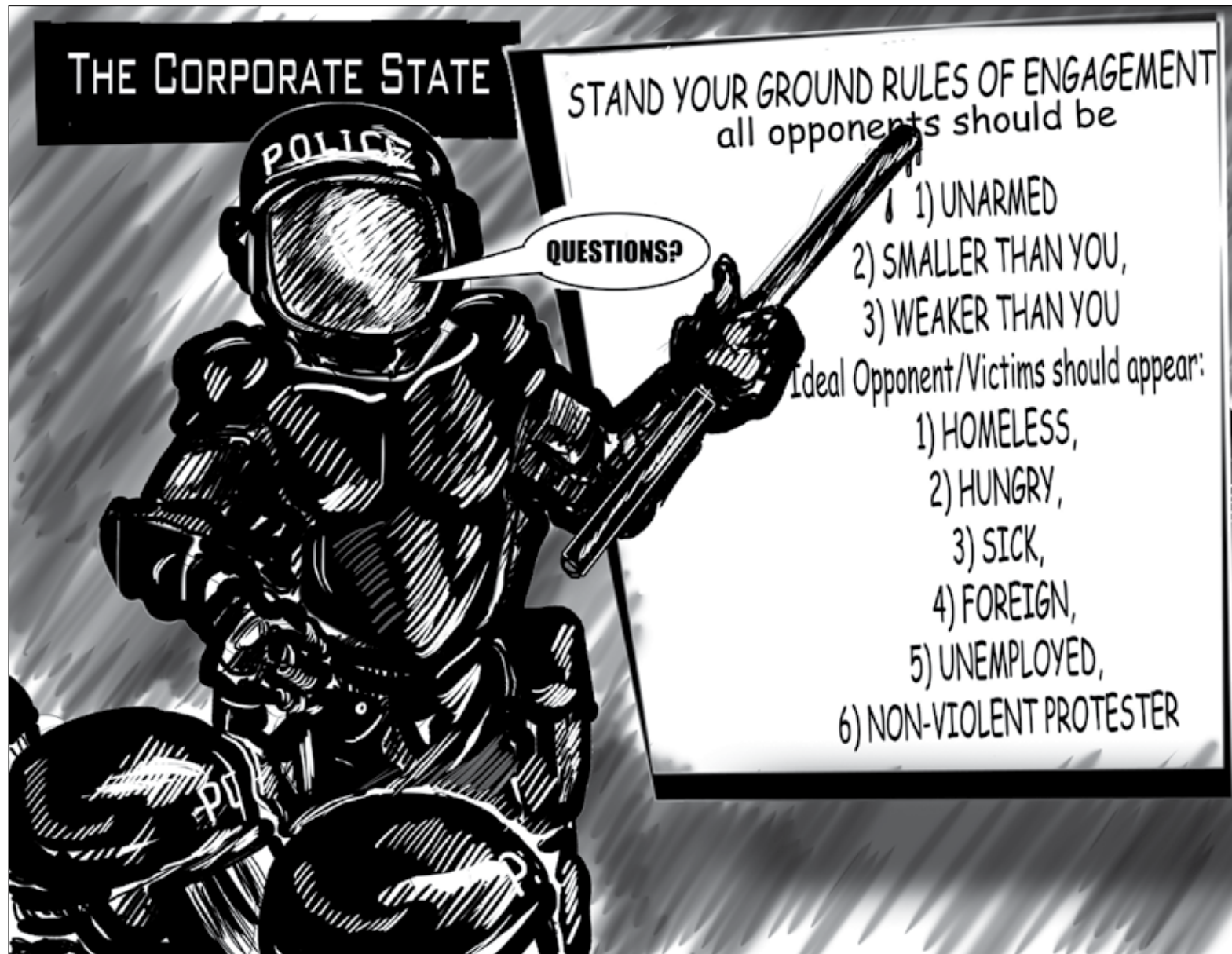
COVER STORY

What does the Trayvon Martin case tell us about the crushing of democracy and the rise of fascism in America? Any fascist movement in America has to proceed from the most violent elements of our national history. The murder of Trayvon Martin is not simply racism. It represents a racist form of fascist social development in the United States.

There is a difference between the lynchings of Blacks in 1932 and the murder of Black youth in 2012. In 1932 cotton was king. Cotton had to be picked with slave-like labor. The goal of the lynchings was to maintain slave-like conditions—to keep the Blacks subservient.

Today, we are faced with a different situation. With technology replacing labor and the growth of mass, permanent unemployment, the corporations need fascism to contain the coming upsurges of the people, who are going to demand a government and an economic system that will meet their needs. Today, the American ruling class is pushing the white poor down to the level of the Black poor. This presents the possibility of unity among the poor, and this is a potential threat to the rulers. The goal of the violence today is to keep the poor from uniting against their common oppressor—corporate America and the capitalist system it represents.

The economic and political aspects of fascism—the merger of the corporations and the government, the elimination of our legal rights, the expanded powers for the police and military, etc.—are already in place. What is needed to finally impose fascism is the development of a fascist culture, the social expression of fascism. The killing of Trayvon Martin was a manifestation of such a fascist culture. A whole culture of fascist violence and hatred and disregard for human life is taking hold. It takes the form of terror against Blacks, against immigrants, against Mus-



Corporate sponsored “Stand-Your-Ground” laws, in effect in Florida and 29 other states, justify the killing of unarmed victims by shooters who can claim immunity because they “felt threatened.”

CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

lims, against the people being forced out of the economy and into destitution. It is seen in the imprisonment of millions and the fascist conditions in the prisons, and in the denying of basic needs to the poor. It is seen in the militarization of society, and in fascist entertainment that glorifies violence, and in the effort to rally communities to vigilantism.

The fascist culture in America arises from the history of the slaughter of the Indians, slavery, and the whole concept of a white man’s country. The fascists inherit

this history and use it for their purposes. In this regard, they have a tremendous advantage over those of us who are fighting for a democratic America that serves the mass of the people.

This points to the role of revolutionaries. Revolutionaries point out the immorality of the present situation and paint a vision of the free and prosperous society that is possible if the people were in power. They fight for all those who are being pushed out of the economy and crushed by the capitalist system to unite in the struggle for a

new society. Unity of the poor isn’t automatic. It has to be fought for by conscious people.

What kind of society will we have? Will it be a society organized around a corporate ideology that says the individual has no rights and that government has no economic or moral responsibility for the well being of the people? Or will it be a cooperative society controlled by the people, where everyone’s needs are met and where everyone can live a happy, peaceful, cultured life? The future is up to us.

Sister/Brother, can you spare \$20?

The People’s Tribune brings clarity to the growing movement. It unites the movement 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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IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS:

More than 200 supporters of immigrant rights march on Palm Sunday to the site of a proposed for-profit immigrant detention center in the small village of Crete, south of Chicago. PHOTO/SAMUEL BARNETT

Activists rally to block a 'Guantanamo in the cornfields'

By Samuel Barnett

CRETE, IL — More than 200 supporters of immigrants rights marched on Palm Sunday to the site of a proposed for-profit immigrant detention center in this small village south of Chicago. Local activists and area residents were joined by a coalition of Chicago-based organizations who set out on foot Friday, March 30, from Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission on 26th Street in Little Village. These activists, which included the Moratorium on Deportations campaign and the No Name Collective, walked to highlight the connec-

tion between capitalism and the criminalization of immigrants, the expansion and 'cosmeticization' of the prison industry, and the impact increased deportations is having on families.

If approved by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Crete facility would have 788 beds, making it the largest immigrant detention facility in the Chicago area and one of five new centers nationwide. A report issued by village officials and the controversial Corrections Corporation of America describes an "ideal facility" as LEED certified with "soft" interior settings and

"non-institutional" design to "provide the least restrictive environment appropriate to the detention population." At this "normative residential environment with non-institutional furniture and finishes" deportees would be subjected to "enhanced but controlled freedom of movement" and clothed in uniforms simultaneously described as "non-institutional" and "less institutional."

Despite the language of a more 'humane' approach to deportation, the Obama administration is contracting for-profit prison corporations with dismal track records of abuse and neglect like Corrections

Corporation of America and the GEO Group to build and operate these facilities. The GEO Group was cited numerous times by auditors in Texas for "atrocious and horrific conditions" at its prisons across the state. A Corrections Corporation of America facility in Arizona covered up the deaths of nine detainees. In the past decade more than 100 people have died in immigrant holding centers. This misery has reaped large profits for both industry and the state as the cost of detaining and deporting immigrants has doubled in the past five years.

Broad opposition already ex-

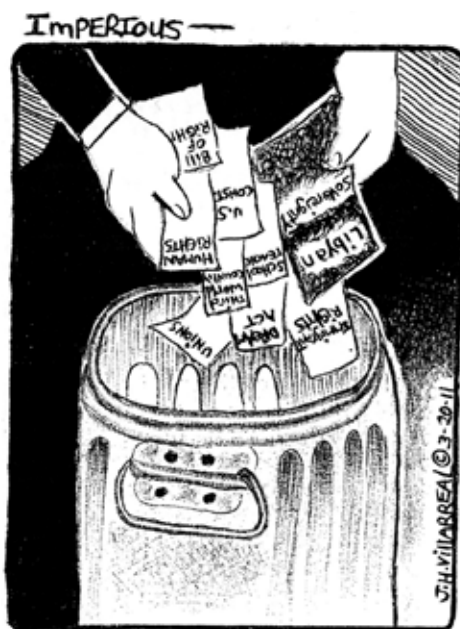
ists within Crete to negotiations between the village board, Corrections Corporation of America, and ICE. Testimonials from the marchers about abuses at Corrections Corporation of America prisons and the failures of immigration reform under the Obama administration helped expand the context of opposition. As we march on Mayday let us all bear witness that attacks on immigrants are part of the larger attack on the working class, and that the rights of immigrants are fundamental to the rights of all human beings.

New voices echo from America's prisons

By Jose H. Villarreal

CRESCENT CITY, CA — I was very happy seeing your coverage of the hunger strike that occurred here in Pelican Bay starting on July 1. As one of the participants, believe me, when I say prisoners are very grateful for the solidarity that so many people gave us.

As your article correctly points out, conditions here in the security housing unit (SHU) amount to tortuous conditions. Prisoners here have been sentenced to what amounts to "enhanced interrogation," meaning you stay in solitary confinement with no sunlight, no contact visits, no phone calls, no access to taking photos, no salt in your food, and no access to any social programs, i.e. classes for rehabilitation to name a few of the deprivations thrust upon the prisoners in SHU. The SHU is not built for rehabilitation. It was built to terrorize the general population in California prisons into submission and to break those prisoners. Most prisoners sent to SHU have not committed any physical acts while in prison to land them in SHU, rather most are here after having been fingered and informed on and targeted by officials for being rebellious or viewed as leaders. Revolutionary prisoners seem to find themselves targeted for SHU the most. The state's propaganda will say SHU is filled with the "worst of the worst" or gang members, but a look to prisoners' records will show different. Many have been in these tortuous conditions for decades!



ILLUSTRATION/JOSE H. VILLARREAL
PELICAN BAY PRISONER

And yet the corporate media has not let out a whimper about people here in America tortured, of people held in isolation not for physical acts but for their ideas! For their political beliefs, these decades long abuses have finally erupted like an old slave revolt in which the people would choose putting our health on the line and, in some cases people's lives were jeopardized rather than

to go along with being treated less than beasts. The support we received was overwhelming. Our shout was heard across the globe with prisoners joining across the U.S., as well as from places like Canada to Australia! It gave us a huge morale boost.

The real jewel that was carved out of the rough in this occurrence was the previously unflexed muscle of a prisoner united front. The state has not seen such solidarity coming out of California prisons in a very long time. California has the largest prison population in America, along with the most prisons (33). Thus the ability of prisoners in California to come together for such an act of civil disobedience is a real threat to the state. I think the state would much rather see any other state prison come together than California. The problem of SHUs is merely a symptom of the problem. The real problem that maintains SHUs lies in the capitalist system itself, where profit is put above the people's needs in a society. Rather than rehabilitating prisoners in a real way, the system creates more prisons and more SHU's where it buries more poor people, mostly Latinos and Blacks. It is in these dungeons that a new voice is being found that echoes out of these Koncentration Kamps and rings in sync with shouts from around the world.

Jose H. Villarreal is a prisoner, writer, artist and poet. Jose can be contacted at: Jose H. Villarreal #H84098, PBSP-SHU-C11-106, PO Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532.

DOG FOOD

in a country of Yosemite and Yellowstone, of stock certificates and golden parachutes, of Apple Inc. and iphones, of Facebook and fine dining, of billionaires and millionaires, of a cocktail lounge on nearly every corner. of Chevron and luxury yachts, of missile defense systems and a nuclear stockpile unlike any other, many senior citizens eat canned dog food in order to survive

— Neeli Cherkovski

ASSAULT ON DEMOCRACY REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

Rachel Maddow Show uncovers scandal in Michigan

By Claire McClinton

Breaking News: Claiming that the font size was improper, the Michigan Board of Canvassers ruled 2-2 to not certify the 220,000 plus signatures gathered to overturn the PA 4 "Dictatorship" Law. A stunned and angry crowd from around the state, rose to their feet, pumped their fist at the Board, and shouted "SHAME! SHAME! SHAME!" for several minutes. The struggle continues.

MICHIGAN—Public Act 4, the Emergency Manager Law (aka Dictator Bill) enacted last year along with hundreds of other laws may have been passed illegally. This Act allows Governor Snyder to dispatch 'Emergency Managers' to cities and/or school districts around the state deemed "financially distressed." The Emergency Manager replaces the local government and may without the will of the people, set aside union contracts, sell off public assets, and even dissolve the township or a city itself.

The fascist state takeover of such cities as Benton Harbor, Ecorse, Pontiac, Flint and recently Detroit, is an affront to everything democratic that this country says it is. On Wednesday, February 29 of this year, citizens from around the state delivered nearly 250,000 signatures to Lansing to repeal the law. Meanwhile a flurry of lawsuit challenges out of Highland Park, Flint, and Detroit brought on by

AFSCME union members temporarily stalled implementation of PA-4, such as what occurred in Flint where the Emergency Manager was briefly removed from office. Violation of the state's Open Meetings Act drove the suits but the Court of Appeals (clearly in the pocket of the corporate governor) overturned them all. The most recent court challenge may be the one that makes the whole state and perhaps the nation stand at attention. This suit was brought by Democrats against Republican legislatures.

MI House Speaker Bangs Gavel: Rams Thru Legislation

The Michigan Constitution states that laws passed are to be put into effect 90 days after the legislative session ends. This means the Emergency Manager Law, which was passed in March of 2011, would routinely not go into effect until at least January of this year. However, there's a provision in the Michigan Constitution that allows a law to be 'fast tracked'. This process is called "immediate effect" and requires a 2/3 vote. The "immediate effect" provision exists to enable the implementation of emergency legislation without delay in a crisis.

When the House Republicans recently passed a law eliminating union dues deduction from teachers pay checks, they needed 72 votes (in a separate motion),



Occupy Detroit march and rally in downtown Detroit. The rally was supported by the UAW and AFL/CIO last fall. Almost 1,000 people were in attendance. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

to allow for "immediate effect." The House Republicans knew full well they did not have the required 72 votes. The Speaker banged the gavel, hollered out, "So Ordered!" House Democrats asking for a roll call vote were ignored. As a result they headed to court. The Judge ordered a stay on the laws in question, but the Court of Appeals overturned the ruling. Since 2010,

546 laws have passed "immediate effect" without a 2/3 vote.

All of this was uncovered during an airing of the Rachel Maddow Show. Citizens are shocked and appalled. They ask 'Why did we have to learn these things from a TV show?'

As the struggle continues to organize against martial law, the destruction of the social safety net

and the wrecking of public employee unions, all eyes are on elected officials, both local and state wide, Republicans as well as Democrats. History will not judge them on how many pot holes they filled or how many bottles of champagne they smashed at this or that dedication, but more on what they did to fight against the dismantling of democracy in Michigan.

STRUGGLE TO KEEP CHICAGO'S MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS OPEN

Editor's Note: The People's Tribune interviewed Kelly Hayes, a member of Occupy Chicago and Occupy Rogers Park. On April 12, people barricaded themselves inside the Mental Health Clinic on the south side of Chicago. They were protesting the threatened closure of half of the total 12 city mental health clinics.

People's Tribune: Kelly, what happened and who were the protesters?

Kelly Hayes: Most of the people who barricaded themselves inside were patients who depend on the services that these clinics provide. Others included members of Southsiders Together Organizing for Power (STOP), the Mental Health Movement (MHM), and a street medic...

When the police made their way to the clinic's glass doors, which were chained shut from the inside, the crowd locked arms and tried to stand its ground. The police got very physical at that point. People were shoved around pretty hard. We were fortunate that there were no serious injuries...

We decided to block the po-

lice vans as one last act of solidarity and protest... I wanted the people who had been arrested to hear us chanting, to know that we were continuing to fight for them. Watching through the window as they were arrested was heartbreaking. Some of these people are elderly, and disabled. Even with local clinics, they struggle to maintain their routines. They are brave people, just for struggling to live productive, functional lives in the face of great difficulty. Their bravery last night was inspiring.

Watching their arrests was heartbreaking and we wanted to do something more.

PT: Why did you get involved with stopping the mental health clinic closings?

KH: I got involved with the fight

"I Knew I had to Occupy"



Protesters and police clash outside the Woodlawn Clinic. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

to save our city's mental health clinics after attending a sit in with the MHM at City Hall. Occupy Chicago was supporting those sitting in and I was so moved by what I heard, and by the gravity of what these people were facing, that by

I cannot express. In that moment, I could see the largeness of what was happening. Here you had these ill, struggling, goodhearted people, who were so afraid of losing the care they depend on that they barricaded themselves inside the clinic.

10 pm, I was still there. At some point, supporting those sitting in seemed insufficient. I needed to take a seat myself... these people had made every possible effort to reach out to officials who were in a position to help them...

I know the people who were arrested in that clinic. They're good people, and their cause is just. Seeing the police saw through that barricade and take them away pained me in a way that

Friends and allies rallied around them. A beautiful moment of solidarity, and the demand for a better world, sprung out of their willingness to put themselves in that situation.

PT: Where will these patients go if these clinics close?

KH: We already know. This isn't theoretical. When local access to care is diminished, less care is received. It's a no brainer. Less care, for the mentally ill, means more incarcerations, more hospitalizations, more homelessness, addiction, despair, and suicide. This isn't debatable. This is reality.

The police arrested 23 people early Friday morning April 13. Occupiers erected tents in a vacant lot across the street from the clinic. The tent city has been evicted three times since that night, with ten more arrests the night of April 24. At press time, patients and members of Occupy remain at the site. On April 25, occupiers and Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle of MHM met with and appealed directly to Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams. More in the next issue.

ELIMINATING POVERTY AND SECURING DEMOCRACY: ONLY WITH WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



Occupy Oakland General Strike, November 2, 2011.

PHOTO/NEREOCYSTIS

By Ethel Long-Scott

The World Courts of Women on Poverty in the U.S. comes at a critical time in world history. A revolution in technology has overthrown the 20th Century's labor-based economy, globally pitting workers against robots and against each other and shredding the old labor-based social contract. Instead of creating opportunity, an economy organized for private profit now shuts out the 99%. A new economic vision is imperative. Abolishing poverty and

defending democracy are central for securing a future for our country, humanity, and the planet.

Any discussion of poverty, jobs, and education must be grounded in understanding the 21st Century shift from a labor-based economy to a technology-based economy. Everywhere in the world, corporations are determined to increase their profits by becoming increasingly exploitive—cutting jobs, cutting wages, cutting benefits, substituting machines for people wherever possible.

The rapidly increasing corpo-

rate investment in labor-replacing computerized and high-tech production greatly reduces the number of good jobs available for the working class, and is a key cause of the rise in poverty in the U.S. Even in countries where once-impoorished rural farmers are finding better paying work in factories, it is often under slave labor working conditions, as Apple Computer's Chinese electronics scandal has shown. Around the world, women remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, disproportionately impacted by exploitation for profit.

As the crumbling capitalist order reorganizes itself in a desperate attempt to maximize profits and defend private property relations at all costs, women suffer. Women are half of our collective society, and the violence and oppression they experience in today's economy is a forerunner of the destruction spreading across our entire society. One in five women in America has been raped in her life time and US women are poorer than men regardless of ethnicity or color and through all ages except childhood, highlighting centuries old injustices of oppression and exploitation.

As society disintegrates, a backlash is developing that clamors for further restrictions of women's rights, trivializing the growing violence against them, and turning a blind eye to their downward spiral into destitution.

Determined to seek profit by any means necessary, corporations are using every means to get rid of gov-

ernment controls on their behavior. In the US they buy elected officials with campaign contributions, putting tremendous pressure on government to cut public services, to deregulate industries, to have government promote corporate interests rather than the interests of ordinary people. In the economic crash of 2008, both major U.S. political parties joined in bailing out the international financiers on Wall St., but not the workers on Main St. Government services benefitting the entire society are privatized, from public education to public water systems.

These attempts to put the power of governments on the side of maximizing corporate profits, instead of what working people need, have resulted in savage attacks on democracy, seen most recently in Public Act 4 in Michigan, under which the state can neutralize local elected officials, turning entire cities over to an appointed "emergency manager" (a person or a corporation), who can set aside union contracts and privatize city services and public assets without gaining approval of the city council or the citizens.

This course is economically and politically unsustainable. The growing polarization of wealth and poverty is throwing millions into poverty regardless of gender, color or nationality. The U.S. poverty rate increased to 15.1% in 2010, up from 14.3% in 2009. For single mothers and children poverty continued to explode: 32.5% in 2009 to 34.2% in 2010. Even so, poverty and how to address it have not been

prominent on the national agenda since the concerted "welfare reform" attacks of the 1980s and early 1990s. Instead, those who face great hardship as primary caregivers, struggling to support families, have been targets of "blaming the victim" to benefit and serve the interest of capitalism.

The 20th Century social contract of a decent wage for a decent day's work has been shattered. Society desperately needs a new vision of a social contract that will meet the needs of the 99%. To focus on the experiences of women is not to exclude others, but to shine a light on the most glaring manifestations of poverty. The first step of healing is to bring out these stories, not isolated from one another, but connected in common cause. When we all work together to craft change, women's healing starts to reverberate throughout society as collective healing, allowing for rebuilding community, human healing and repairing and healing the planet

We are dedicated to educating ourselves and society not only to reject actions that objectify and marginalize women, but to teach that women play a central role in forming up a new class that shares common economic justice interests, not only with each other, but, increasingly, with men in similar economic position. The systematic dismantling of the safety net points to the importance of unity along class lines as the only means of organizing our forces for the struggles ahead.

Goldman Sachs: An Oakland study in the struggle for public resources

By Shamako Noble
President, Hip Hop Congress

OAKLAND, CA—We have entered a period in human history where the people must take control of their government and corporations, or watch and suffer as the corporations take over their government, piece by piece and city by city.

The struggle in Oakland around Goldman Sachs, typified by the coalition of SEIU, ACCE (Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment), Occupy the Hood, The Interfaith Tent and others is reflective of the current national and international struggle around corporations appropriating public resources. This coalition's demands are to give the public all its money back and reinvest it into jobs, community resources and programs. This speaks to a series of trends that are sweeping America.

The first trend is of the corporate and financial takeover of America. The "swap deal," a fixed interest rate loan that Oakland entered years ago, is crippling the

city. While city officials struggle with choosing between defaulting and paying the loan back in full, Goldman Sachs holds to its unethical contract, feeding off the life blood of their big bailout. Oakland is not unique.

Goldman Sachs is just one of many corporate and financial institutions bailed out by the people that continue to chip away at the quality of life. Recently, the city of Reno filed a lawsuit against Goldman Sachs, accusing them of misleading the city into issuing \$210 million in bonds to finance development in an unstable market. San Francisco International Airport signed a rate swap agreement in 2007 for \$143 million. Today that deal has a negative value of \$22 million. Again, Goldman Sachs wins, and the public loses.

Another trend is the tendency of government—local, state and federal—to be mindful of the needs of big money and neglect the demands of the citizens that put them in office. What will it take for the people to get their resources returned into



Occupy Wall Street sit in at Goldman Sachs in New York

PHOTO/CLARENCE ELIE RIVERA

a space of public ownership?

When corporate and financial institutions will not allow them-

selves to be regulated, they must be eliminated or controlled altogether. The people must seize con-

trol of their government and the corporations.

WHAT CAUSES FORECLOSURES?

By Community Homeless Alliance Ministry

SAN JOSE, CA — By the end of 2012, there will have been 2 million foreclosures in California since 2008. What caused this crisis, and why is it being allowed to continue?

SUBPRIME MORTGAGE CRISIS

Myth: Government programs forced banks to loan to “uncreditworthy” people like minorities and women.
Fact: Predatory banks could “do bad all by themselves.” The housing bubble was created by unregulated Wall Street profiteers who created irresistible incentives to bundle subprime mortgages into worthless bonds and credit default swaps. Rating companies were paid off to give them false triple-A ratings, and subprime lenders were encouraged to openly lie about consumer loan qualifications. The Federal Reserve Bank stimulated the entire process by artificially lowering interest rates. Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and banks regulated by the federal Community Reinvestment Act all got involved



Occupy Providence, Rhode Island

PHOTO/KEVIN JAMES, WWW.FB.COM/KEVINJAMESPHOTO

later and had default rates significantly lower than the unregulated private lenders.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Myth: Foreclosures happened because of “deadbeat” borrowers.
Fact: After the subprime collapse of 2007-2008, the majority of foreclosures were against people with

conventional loans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own due to the crash of 2008. An economic system is broken when it cannot provide employment for its people at a time when so many urgent human needs are going unmet. When companies “recover” by replacing workers with technology, the situation only gets worse. Now

unemployment rates cannot go down because the foreclosure crisis continues to depress consumer demand. The foreclosure rate cannot go down because unemployment rates cannot go down.

CORPORATE CRIME

Myth: The government is prosecuting rogue bankers.

Fact: The government is allowing the greatest fraud in human history to go uninvestigated and unpunished. Not only was fraud the method of choice for the lenders who created the subprime housing bubble in the first place. It has become the norm for almost all major banks carrying out foreclosures since then, including “robo-signing”, perjury, forgery, and tax evasion. Assessor Phil Ting recently reported that 84% of foreclosure sales in San Francisco were in clear violation of the law. In the 1980s, the FBI assigned 1000 agents to investigate S&L fraud, while today in a crisis forty times worse, the FBI has only assigned 10 agents.

GOVERNMENT FAILURE

Myth: The government is adequate-

ly addressing the foreclosure crisis.

Fact: Government programs since 2009 have only assisted a small percentage of foreclosed on families. The recent \$25 billion government settlement with the banks represents only 3 percent of the \$750 billion in negative equity lost by homeowners from predatory loans. Some analysts estimate we face 10 million MORE foreclosures in the next decade, for a total of a QUARTER of all the mortgages in the country. A government that represented people instead of corporations would immediately nationalize the banks, stop foreclosures, and return foreclosed homes to their rightful owners and to the homeless and others in need of housing.

In California, 400,000 men, women, and children are homeless every night. The government has trillions of dollars to bail out banks and finance wars, but claims it cannot afford to stop foreclosures and house the homeless. This is not a question of resources, but of whose interests the government serves—the corporations or the people?

TRAPPED IN THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

By Rebeca Walker-Marquez

I used to believe in the American Dream. Then I lost my job, and with it went my income, my health insurance and eventually my savings. I lost my car and my son and I had to move in with friends. The stress made me physically ill, and the downward spiral made me very depressed. I became part of a new and rapidly growing group living in the American Nightmare.

The American Dream taught us that in this land of plenty, freedom, and democracy, everything is possible if we put heart and hard work into it. It says we have so much opportunity that only the lazy will fail.

That Dream never worked for everyone, and as employers relentlessly slash benefits and cut back wages it is not working any more for millions of people. It is not their fault that despite their heart and hard work, they are not able to earn enough to house, feed, transport, educate and keep themselves and their families healthy. We have record levels of unemployment, poverty, homelessness and hunger. The safety net programs that guarantee people their human rights in compassionate societies have been shredded and powerful forces push to eliminate them completely.



Occupy Detroit PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

What of the mothers who can't afford to work because of the high costs of childcare?

What of the laid off workers who end up homeless because the job market is very limited?

What of the people who go bankrupt due to medical bills?

What of the people who can't afford rent even when working full time?

What of the youth who start their working lives deeply indebted by college loans and find themselves with very limited job opportunities?

What of the people who lost their homes to foreclosure? What of the victims of violence who have lost their ability to perform at work?

What of the disabled who can't

work?

What of the people who 'self medicate' with drugs or alcohol to cope with harsh life circumstances because lack of support from the health care system?

Why is this happening? What is at the root of all this misery?

When I ask myself this question, I see that the basic notion that every human has the right to health, food and a roof has been replaced by the notion that corporate profit is more important than human dignity. The American Dream has become a Corporate Dream—we can purchase as much human dignity as we can afford, as long as we don't threaten corporate profits.

As long as the main focus of healthcare, education, housing and food is profit, millions will be excluded. How are people supposed to thrive when their wages and benefits are slashed and they are pushed out of an increasingly automated economy? The supply of workers now outnumbers jobs and more and more full time employed workers are unable to sustain themselves.

Millions of Americans share this nightmare and the numbers are growing. Unless we act together to assure dignity, health and opportunity for all, our Dream is nothing but a false illusion, and all but the very rich will be permanently trapped in the American Nightmare.

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BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

The G8 meets to keep the global economy firmly in the hands of the capitalist elite

By Laura Garcia

The watchdogs of the biggest world economies will hold a summit at Camp David May 18-19, meeting as the Group of Eight (G8). The heads of state are faced with the task of restructuring corporate private property in the era of globalization.

The heads of state find themselves between a rock and a hard place. As technology replaces more and more workers and wipes out more and more jobs, demand is shrinking. Yet, the ceaseless drive for profit forces the owners of the corporations to drive down the cost of production by replacing workers with computerized machines.

As they eliminate jobs, cut government budgets, and drive down wages, the capitalists deny their workers sufficient money to buy the goods they produce—and this undermines the whole capitalist system.

So globalization is worsening the divide between rich and poor. The richest 50 individuals in the world collectively pay themselves more annual income than they pay the poorest 416 million people. For the most part, these 50 capitalists live in the G8 countries, 20 in the United States alone.

They are the owners of corporations such as Walmart, Microsoft, Oracle, Google, Amazon, Nike, Cemex, America Movil, and Grupo Mexico.

There is a direct correlation between the G8, poverty, and migration.

G8 policies foster the buying

and selling of cheap labor between developed and underdeveloped countries—between global South and global North. The demand for cheap labor in the dominant, “developed” countries is supplied by the abundant cheap labor in subordinate, “underdeveloped” countries.

Global capitalists suck migrants into the world market to minimize the cost of production (and maximize their profits)—whenever and wherever the labor is needed.

Migration has become a central issue in the 21st century. More people are on the move now than at any other point in human history and their numbers are rising. Today some 214 million people worldwide live outside their country of birth, compared to 191 million as recently as 2005.

Global capitalism has turned one out of every 33 people into a migrant worker.

Global migrant workers are the most vulnerable sector of the working class. They suffer the most blatant violations of human rights, and they work under the worst sweatshop conditions.

Attacked from all sides, global migrants have become the scapegoat for capitalism’s own failures. The capitalists’ divide-and-conquer strategy has painted a bull’s-eye on the back of migrant workers, turning them into hunted animals. Vigilante groups, ICE, and police agents hunt them down—at the border, on the job, in church, and at home.

Migration has become the catch-all scapegoat for domestic



Thousands commemorate the historic 1965 civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery that culminated with the passage of the Voting Rights Acts. Banners called for the defense of voter and immigrant rights. PHOTO/DAVID SANDOVAL

problems—the lack of jobs, the deteriorating public education, the inadequate health services. The anti-immigrant campaign prepared the ground for Arizona and other states to pass draconian immigration laws.

The U.S. is not alone in this; other countries have taken such measures.

The attacks on migrant workers cannot be allowed to continue. In May, thousands will demonstrate, protesting not only unjustified wars and global warming, but also immigration policies that make of the undocumented an animal of prey.

Workers can no longer allow national boundaries to contain our struggle.

Laura Garcia is the editor of the *Tribuna del Pueblo*, the sister newspaper of the *People's Tribune*.



May Day 2011 in Chicago. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

MAY DAY 2012 Working class unity is possible!

From the Editors

This May Day finds the world’s working class under attack. We are besieged by unemployment and poverty, austerity programs, the rise of fascism and the threat of world war. Across the earth the workers are struggling to find the way forward. There are dangers, but also opportunities. Today it is finally possible for the workers to unite.

Globalization knocked down the barriers between countries. At the same time, labor-replacing technology is permanently eliminating jobs, creating a new section of workers who have no place in capitalist society. They are forced to fight for a new society.

This fight for a new world has many faces – the migrants who cross borders in search of work, those fighting to live on public aid or low-wage jobs, the homeless, the unemployed, and those who are losing their homes to foreclosure, to name a few.

Our fight is for a new society, where the people own the technology of production and cooperatively produce what we need. The key to moving forward is working class unity around the demands of the impoverished. Humanity’s immediate demand is that resources be diverted from warmaking and be used to meet human needs.

The new technology gives humanity the opportunity to unite and create a bright future. But we have to fight for it.

The editors respond: Race, class, & cover photos

A reader asked the *People's Tribune* why recent cover photos have seemed to feature more whites than people of color. America is a diverse country, and we are committed to showing the diversity of the struggle for a new society. However, we did want to point out the thinking behind our approach on the cover photos. One aspect is that we do battle with the ruling class by attacking their strategy. Their strategy has been to paint poverty Black, when in fact two-thirds of the poor in America are white. The result of the ruling class’ approach to poverty has been to divide the working class and weaken the struggle. So we want to convey through our photos that the poor are a diverse group

with common class interests and a common enemy—the capitalist system.

Another aspect is that the center of gravity of the struggle in America has shifted in recent years. The process of electronics replacing labor is creating a new class in America. Part of that new class has become dispossessed, meaning their labor is no longer needed and they have been stripped of everything they had—their jobs, their homes, their health care, etc. Because of historical factors, the most recent group to join that dispossessed section is largely white. These newly dispossessed are being drawn from the formerly stably employed workers who have been the primary political

support among the workers for American capitalism. Therefore, they are strategic; if they can be won away from supporting the system that is making them (and the rest of us) poor, and united as a class around a vision of a new society, then we can bring this system down and build a society where no one is poor. Today, we have the opportunity to reach them because they are becoming dispossessed, so we want to show them in struggle and try to raise their consciousness as part of the process of raising the consciousness of the whole working class. Getting people to understand who and what is their enemy is the key to victory.

The Editors

FOOD OR FASCISM FOR THE HOMELESS?

By Eric Sheptock

The winds of change are blowing and people all over the world are becoming socially aware—knowing that something is gravely wrong with society and wanting to do something about it.

Well the problem is fascism and its effects are most directly and intensely felt by the homeless—a community which many people love to hate or ignore, which often doesn't fight for itself and which the government finds to be easy prey.

There is the story of Anna Brown, a homeless woman who was arrested in September 2011 because she refused to leave the emergency room of a Hospital in St. Louis after receiving inadequate treatment. She visited two other hospitals about leg pain. So, at the third hospital, after being “seen” by a doctor, she sat in a wheelchair in the emergency room for seven hours until the police carried her out.

She was accused of being high and addicted to pain killers and was placed on the floor of a jail cell where she died moments later from blood clots in her legs after they traveled to her lungs. (There is YouTube video of her arrest and of her lying on the floor of the jail cell moaning in extreme pain.) The hospital, in typical capitalist fashion, allowed an indigent person to die. Now they are defending their actions by saying that some blood clots are undetectable when, in fact, they didn't make a good-faith effort to find out what was wrong.

As if police arresting homeless people for sleeping or satisfying other human needs in public was not enough, various cities have made it illegal for people to feed the homeless in parks or other outdoor venues (which is in direct contrast to Galatians 5:22-23: “... goodness... Against such there is no law.” Cities veil their draconian

laws under the guise of caring by stating concerns about food-borne illnesses which the homeless are no more susceptible to than the general public is.

Due to the government's austerity measures in the face of increasing poverty and unmet needs, many homeless people have moved into Occupy encampments around the world—some as active participants; some for the free amenities. Encampments have asked that all those present participate in direct actions. However, as we are fighting for a system that guarantees that all people have their basic human necessities, we should gather donations and distribute them to people in need whether or not they involve themselves in direct actions.

This would cast the movement in a more positive light. Furthermore, people whose bellies are full are more likely to join in discussions about social theory, the problems with the existing system and the new society which we are fighting for. (This is similar to the Christian principle of witnessing to the lost through your behavior until they want to know what drives you.) So, let's strike a balance between making demands on the system and helping our fellow citizen.

Ms. Brown, becoming one of many victims of capitalist euthanasia and people being jailed for helping the needy, should cause people to ask, “Are we becoming a fascist nation?” But for our revolution to be successful, the movement should begin to develop the new system, which we are fighting to create within the existing system which we are fighting to dispose of, lest we create chaos and give rise to all-out, overt dictatorship as a means of regaining order. So, let us “be the change we want to see in the world” by providing for the needy, in effect, swelling our ranks and replacing the dying system of capitalism. “From each according to ability; to each according to need.”



Occupy Houston protest of the big oil companies in front of Houston City Hall.

PHOTO/ MARIA ELENA CASTELLANOS

ANTI-FOOD SHARING LAW PASSES IN HOUSTON

By Maria Elena Castellanos

HOUSTON, TX — The Houston City Council passed an anti-food sharing law, set to go into effect on July 1, that will shut down the voluntary distribution network of surplus food to the hungry in Houston. This law will also suffocate any future OccupyWallstreet type of lengthy protests in Houston. The occupation of a public space can only be carried out with the food and moral support of humanitarian, food-sharing groups. An outcry is developing against the law.

Healthcare professionals report that at least 25% of Houston's children already “go to bed hungry every night.” Many say that the new law will cause serious illnesses, including brain mood dis-

orders, learning disabilities, congenital birth defects—abnormal brain development due to lack of access to nutritious whole foods. The corporate media mischaracterizes the law as a “feeding the homeless law.” In fact, low-income children, pregnant women and unemployed youth depend upon informal distribution networks of free food.

The City Council passed this Chapter 20 food-sharing ordinance, with fines up to \$500, per infraction for feeding five or more people without a city permit (if on public property) or for feeding people on private property without written permission from the private property-owner.

The U.S. corporate-government has long used food as a political weapon in extending its corporate interests into foreign countries. The International Monetary Fund has imposed austerity conditions upon other countries for many decades as a condition to renegotiate their loans. Hungry people worldwide are getting desperate. On April 4, 2012, a pensioner in Athens, Greece killed himself because he reportedly refused to scrounge for food in the dumpster.

Now the chickens have come home to roost in that this law criminalizes the charitable food distribution of surplus food to the hungry in a major U.S. city. This will force people to buy food rather than get it for free. It will result in more profits for the big food corporations at the cost of imposing increased hunger and sickness.

The faces of the estimated 13,000 homeless children, men and women who will feel the immediate negative impact of this anti-charity law, haunt me. I am also concerned about the fate of thousands of low-income families who depend upon many unofficial charitable groups and individuals for access to nutritionally rich whole foods.

Houston is seeing a surge in calls for the replacement of the eleven Houston City Council members who voted to adopt this mean-spirited and uncharitable food-sharing-restrictions law. Please launch your own drive for recall elections.

Petitions are already circulating to repeal the anti-food sharing law. The new law was a hot-button topic at the 99% Spring Training community meetings held in Houston. Groups and individuals vowed to bring banners and petitions demanding repeal of the law and for the recall of Houston's ‘City Council. This will be part of the immigrants' rights, May Day activities on May 1. Opponents are talking passionately about this cruel law at community meetings, community radio stations, Spanish-language media, on youtube and on the Internet.

Food-sharing-restrictive laws or outright bans on feeding the homeless are already “on the books” in about 24 cities and towns, including: New York City, NY, Philadelphia, PA, Orlando, FL, Houston, TX, Dallas, TX, San Diego, CA and Wilmington N.C.

Guns kill. Education helps you live

By Simuel Ramey

From elementary school to college, classes are overcrowded. Budgets have been slashed. Teachers have been laid off. Schools have become violent.

- A North Little Rock elementary school student was suspended after shooting a fellow student with a BB gun.
- At Jacksonville High School in Arkansas, a teacher brought a gun to school. A student saw it in her purse and stole it.
- At Columbine High School, 13 people were killed and 21 injured.
- At the Metropolitan Career-Technical Center, a student was

arrested after putting a handgun in a locker.

At Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University, 32 people were killed and 25 wounded.

What accounts for this violence?

We're living in a violent society. It starts at the top, among the 1% who rule this country. They initiate the violence, whether through wars for profit, torture, police killings, or the social and economic devastation for millions of Americans. Public schools are in a deplorable state because the labor replacing technological revolution is eliminating the need for an educated workforce. The capi-

talist system won't educate those who it cannot exploit. The violence we are seeing in our communities is a reflection of the violence the corporate government is meting out. We have to root out the cause of the problem: the capitalist system.

Without knowledge, we do not possess the tools required to secure our future. Students have to learn. Without education, we cannot critically evaluate what we are told. We cannot determine truth from fiction, which allows for the crimes of capitalism to continue. We must replace guns with knowledge. We must learn how to create a new society that cherishes human life.

Constitutional or not, it's a win-win for the health insurance industry



Occupy Oakland General Strike, November 2, 2011.

PHOTO/NEREOCYSTIS

By Katie Robbins

The recent Supreme Court hearing on the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), or "ObamaCare," has reopened the false debate surrounding the President's signature legislation.

Whether to uphold or strike down the ACA isn't about how to provide truly universal healthcare in a sustainable way. Common sense solutions such as improving and expanding Medicare to everyone were kept completely off the table as the law was being written.

The ACA is designed to bail out the for-profit healthcare industry before their profits flat line and the court's decision will reflect how best to do that.

The health insurance industry spent \$1 million a day to influence the national healthcare reform debate in their favor. Written by Liz Fowler of the nation's largest insurer, WellPoint, the law delivers 30 million new customers and \$447 billion in taxpayer subsidies directly to the private health insurance companies.

If fully implemented, the ACA will leave at least 23 million people uninsured, egregious insurance company practices such as charging older people more for policies, denials and delays in approving care, and high rates of medical

bankruptcies due to inadequate insurance plans, will continue.

The Supreme Court's ruling, expected by the end of June, could have a number of different outcomes.

1) The punt: The Court could punt the decision on the constitutionality of the law until after the insurance mandate goes into effect in 2014 and someone has actually been fined for not purchasing health insurance. The court would then take up the case again in 2015 when people have to provide proof of health insurance when they file their taxes.

2) Throwing out the mandate: The Court could toss out the mandate declaring it unconstitutional, affirming the arguments that mandating people to purchase private health insurance is beyond Congress' role of regulating interstate commerce. The rest of the law could remain intact allowing some of the beneficial provisions to be implemented such as the Medicaid expansion and the regulation of health insurance company practices.

3) Throwing out the whole thing: If the mandate is deemed unconstitutional, the court rules that entire law must be struck down. Without the mandate, the ban on preexisting conditions restrictions and community rating provisions would drive up costs and reduce coverage. The mandate is therefore

inseparable from the entire law and the entire law will be struck down.

4) Upholding the law: This Supreme Court has a track record of ruling in favor of the corporate interests (see Citizens United), and the ACA is based on legislation crafted by the health insurance industry. This should not be a surprising outcome.

If the law is thrown out and the status quo in healthcare continues, the insurance companies are left with a playing field stacked in their favor without regulations that may eventually threaten profits. Costs will continue to skyrocket; more people will be without insurance.

If the ACA is upheld, many of the law's provisions won't be enacted for another two years, plenty of time for the industry to whittle down regulations that get in the way of profits and still have the 30 million customer stimulus.

The Supreme Court will rule according to what is best for the corporate interests. Upheld or struck down, the for-profit healthcare model continues to take public money for a public good and make obscene profit. The opposition to the legislation mostly came from people saying the law doesn't go far enough in making healthcare a right. Recognizing the enemy in this debate is a first step toward building unity in fighting back.

CABRINI EVICTIONS: HOW THEY MAKE US HOMELESS

By Joseph Peery

CHICAGO, IL — With the taking over of public housing by private corporations comes countless ways to evict residents and make them homeless. Let's look at some of them.

During the Clinton Administration the "One Strike" policy was enacted. It applies only to public housing residents and can have you evicted for merely an arrest of anyone, even a guest associated with your address in any way. How this applies to you is in the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) Lease, Part I Terms And Conditions, and other documents residents are supposed to receive. Most residents don't receive these, and proof of that is in their files at the management office. The Lease, Part 2, states that a thorough explanation of the Lease is to be given,

but no one gets an "explanation" either.

Such a large number of people are being evicted because of this policy that there aren't enough lawyers to defend them. Once in court, many are tricked into signing agreements waiving their right to "trial by jury" or "discovery," preventing them from obtaining evidence that may get the eviction overturned. If the agreement is broken in the slightest way, they are back in court facing immediate eviction with no rights. "Notice to Appear" in court is supposed to be mailed or hand delivered. However, in some cases this isn't done, and proof of that is in the court file downtown in the Daley Center. Court proceeds without the resident present to defend themselves and an eviction is ordered. Their first awareness of this is when the Sheriff appears at their door and

tells them they have 30 minutes to get out.

Even if they are lucky enough to immediately get a lawyer to challenge the Agreement, which has legal flaws, as well as the obvious violations of due process above, they can still be denied access to their CHA file where evidence exists that can exonerate them. According to the CHA Ombudsman, private companies managing mixed income units may be able to do this because of Tenant Selection Plans which, again, tenants are supposed to receive but do not.

In the end, that corporation's private property rights are ruled more important than your rights as a human being and the eviction stands. As bad as this all sounds, it is exactly what happened, including all the above, to a 33-year old single, unemployed mother of 2, today at eviction court.

My Father's Offhand Reply

I wonder how many miles you walked
as a mailman
before your knees finally surrendered?

I wonder how many dogs you had to mace
in self-defense and
how many letters you faithfully delivered?

The distances you traveled
in Texas over the years
must truly be beyond all calculation.

I remember you coming home
soaked in sweat like salty tears
just wanting to unravel

but I would leap on your back
as if you were a horse
without a saddle

and greet you with my little boy's salutation of:
"Dada play toys! Dada play toys!"

Recently reflecting on such childish joys,
I said to you:

"Man, that must have been a pain,
to come home after a long day of work
and have this little jerk
jumping all over you
demanding for you to play."

But your reply, dear father, stopped me short,
because I didn't expect you to suddenly say:
"Are you kidding me?
That was the best part of my whole damn day."

Daniel Klawitter.

Bio: www.coloradopoetscenter.org/poets/klawitter_daniel

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— The Editors

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE BY COURT WATCHING

By Robin Yeamans

Across the U.S., people are fighting the court system, often as it tries to take their children or drag them or their loved ones into the prison industrial complex. They learn: don't go through this alone! Banding together, especially to do court watch, is a major tactic used to try to avoid the catastrophe that court can inflict on victims.

In Silicon Valley, California, a community group called DeBug's Albert Cobarrubias Justice Project pulls together activists, victims, legal workers, and family and friends to deal with cases, mostly criminal. But they also support and encourage people with other types of cases, such as a civil suit when a family member is killed by a law enforcement taser.

DeBug meets weekly and helps each person make a plan for the next week regarding the court case. As the court action threatens to engulf one like a huge wave sweeping them out of their life as they knew it, DeBug helps them remain on their feet and take steps one week at a time to keep on fighting. Read more about this Justice Project at acjusticeproject.com. Raj Jayadev, an organizer for the project, reports, "By bringing a community organizing ethic to the courtroom, we learned we can dramatically change the outcome of cases, keep families together, and change the landscape of power for our loved ones entangled in the criminal justice system."

In Michigan Rev. Pinkney does court watch every single week. He began court watching in 1999 and says, "I didn't know about the court system back then and couldn't believe what I was hearing. Now I know that every person they can

put in jail this system will."

Although a U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brady v. Maryland*, requires all prosecutors to turn over to the defense all exculpatory evidence—which might tend to prove one's innocence—withholding evidence is not uncommon, and the prosecution gets to choose when before trial they'll reveal the evidence. In states like California, at the first court appearance the prosecution gives the accused a "discovery packet" with a copy of the police report and perhaps other items. But in Michigan this doesn't happen; one must demand the information to get it. Rev. Pinkney says, "Don't plead guilty until you see your police report!" With his guidance more than 175 young people have been saved from becoming fodder for the prison industrial complex.

Also, when Rev. Pinkney court watches, he pays \$15 to buy the recording of the entire day—all the criminal cases heard that day. This can be of extreme importance in assuring that the recording will not be tampered with later. Unfortunately, in California they don't use recordings but use human court reporters, and it would cost thousands of dollars to buy even one day's transcripts. This leaves the record open to being altered, and with computerized stenographical machines, there is not even a paper trail, just readily altered electronics.

Rev. Pinkney works in the community to educate people about what's happening even before they're arrested. People are cautioned to assert their 5th Amendment right to remain silent, not to talk to the police. People who follow this standard advice tend to do better in their court struggles.



Chicago artist Chris Drew was arrested for selling his art. He was then charged with a felony for audio-recording his own arrest. PHOTO/DONATED

THE FIRST AMENDMENT AND THE RIGHT TO SURVIVE ARTIST HONORED FOR FIRST AMENDMENT FIGHT

Occupy Rogers Park (Chicago) presented artist Chris Drew an award for his fight for free speech, and for his work for many years organizing community artists and giving them the skills and opportunity to express themselves. As reported earlier in The People's Tribune, Chris was arrested for selling his art patches without a peddler's license, a charge that was dropped when the police discovered he was audio recording his own arrest. Instead he was charged with felony eavesdropping, with a potential sentence of 15 years. This interview is excerpted from his remarks.

What do you mean by "change-art"?

Chris Drew: Art for [social] change vs. art for art's sake: Art is always both, because the act of art is self-expression, which is the act of expressing the self in flux—in change. The economic system that developed around art—art for collectors, for curators and art as an investment—separated itself from art for change when desirable. "Change art" being feared by the moneyed classes had to be discouraged during its dangerous lifetime... Community art keeps rearing its beautiful head, generation after generation, by different names, movements and artists.

Explain the connection between first amendment rights and

the Right to Survive by Art.

CD: We are talking about the real First Amendment right to survive by selling our art in public spaces that is required for change art to exist and build a public audience. This is the right above all that should be defended by our very lives. It's the most important right. In Chicago and too many other locations it has been abandoned as useless, a move that has marginalized artists and dwarfed our art scenes in public. [See Chris Drew's blog www.c-drew.com/blog]

You have said you are looking for a core of workers to re-awaken the Art Patch Project. Can you elaborate on this?

CD: Please use the Art Patch Project to make Chicago Change. Bluntly put, I am dying* and the Art Patch Project needs new energy...

We must teach citizens of Chicago to stand up for their rights and demonstrate the central role art has in this process... Using art we have changed the eavesdropping law. Let's extend this to artists' rights and set an example of using art to fight for First Amendment Rights. The Art Patch Project is a win-win concept. Artists submit designs and are encouraged to promote their art on line on the art patch. The Art Patch Project promotes artists' rights on line on the patch. Volunteers print and give away the many flavored art patches over time edu-

ating the public to the variety of artists missing in public.

The movement regenerates an art movement to sustain its needs in public. Activities take place in low-tech one or two day a week activities sustainable by a core of dedicated artists at costs affordable to a volunteer movement that takes place in public... These patches are sewn on clothes, pinned up in a creative variety of ways. They have a life that goes on promoting your voice. This is a solution.

Artists have been using the Art Patch Project to protect our stolen rights with growing awareness, establishing a foundation to build on. The fact is we have less right to survive by our art in Chicago in public than most places of the world. And we have a first amendment guarantee in this right. And we are not fighting for it. We have given it up. We have given up our most basic right. It is your duty to change this.

How does your work relate to the Occupy Movement slogan "It's not one thing. It's everything"?

CD: What most people see is small and unconnectedness. But it is connected. It's about the whole thing, and art is the key... to our freedom. We use the art patch to illustrate how to fight for freedom, demonstrate that [artists] have tools to fight for that freedom.

**Chris was diagnosed with lung cancer a year ago.*

NATO AND THE THREAT OF WORLD WAR

From the Editors

Every day we see economic crisis, cutthroat competition for markets, the rise of fascism, and the drive toward war. What is going on? And how do we divert resources from war-making to human needs?

The world's markets are shrinking as technology replaces labor, wipes out jobs and the ability of consumers to buy. The competition among the giant corporations for shrinking markets is increasingly vicious, and will lead to more poverty and war.

Resistance by the world's people is gathering, and the capitalists seek to crush it by instituting fascism. Poverty, fascism and war go hand in hand under capitalism. The threat of world war—that could destroy humanity—looms on the horizon.

When the NATO ministers gather, they will talk about how to use their military alliance to crush any resistance to the aims of global capital.

The world's people have nothing to gain by fighting one another in the interests of capital. Humanity is ultimately fighting for a world where the people own the technology of production to cooperatively produce everything we need for a civilized life. The immediate demand is "Money for Human Needs, Not War."

TENSIONS ARE BREWING IN BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

By Rev. Edward Pinkney



BENTON HARBOR, MI — Tensions are brewing in Benton Harbor, Michigan, over the impact on the residents of the Senior PGA Championship. The residents will occupy the PGA from May 23-27, 2012.

The residents are disappointed that Whirlpool and Kitchen Aid will be sponsors of the Senior PGA. The Senior PGA Championship will make its first appearance in Michigan in 2012 at the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course which is part of the 530-acre Harbor Shores development in Benton Harbor. The Harbor Shores, Whirlpool Corporation and Kitchen Aid are the leading forces in the gentrification of the city of Benton Harbor.

In addition, Harbor Shores is pumping millions of gallons of water from the Paw Paw River free of charge and refuses to pay the city of Benton Harbor any money for water. The residents' water rate has tripled and it is expected to go even higher.

This is the reason Occupy PGA is so important. We are committed to escalat-

ing the Occupy movement to support human rights in housing, in addition to the push back against bailouts of fraudulent banks that are stealing our homes and our lives. Democracy is non-existent here in Benton Harbor. We have our very own dictator. We must stop all dictators.

The Occupy movement is an international protest movement directed against social and economic inequality. Its primary goal is to make the economic structure and power relations in society fairer. Different local groups have different focuses, but prime concerns are big corporations like Whirlpool, Kitchen Aid and the PGA, as well as other global financial systems that control the world, disproportionately benefit a minority and undermine democracy.

The phrase "99" is a political slogan used by protestors of the Occupy movement. It was originally launched as a Tumblr blog page in late August, 2011. It refers to the concentration of wealth among the top 1% of income earners compared to the 99%. The top 1% nearly tripled their after tax income over the last thirty years according to a Congressional Budget Office report.

Occupy the PGA! IT IS NOT ABOUT ONE THING. IT IS ABOUT EVERYTHING! LET'S TAKE OVER THE TAKEOVER!



Cooling towers for nuclear power plants in Shell Bluff, Georgia.

PHOTO/ADRIANE HARDEN

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN SHELL BLUFF, GEORGIA

By Adriane Harden

SHELL BLUFF, GA — Environmental racism occurs when hazardous industries and facilities are placed in and near poor, minority communities. Environmental racism can also be connected to the exclusion of minority groups from the decision-making process in their communities.

Construction is underway for new twin nuclear reactors in Burke County, Ga., at the Vogtle plant. According to Southern Company (which is building the reactors), the creation of the nation's first new nuclear reactors in 30 years will result in new jobs and more economical resources for the poor and mostly Black communities around Shell Bluff and other Burke County cities.

But some residents are asking if nuclear reactors are really the solution. Why is Burke County still one of the poorest corners of the state a quarter century after Southern Company brought its first pair of local reactors online in 1987? They also want to know: If the old and new reactors will be safe, why won't Southern Company or the federal government pay to monitor radiation levels in Burke County? And most of all, why are cancer rates more than 50 percent higher in communities near existing reactors, according to the Centers for Disease Control?

Trading clean energy and jobs for the health of poor Black citizens without investigating the long-term effects fits the definition of environmental racism precisely.

"Some people did get jobs," former Shell Bluff resident Annie Laura Stephens

states. "But a lot of us got something else. We got cancer. I lost sisters, brothers and cousins to cancer, and every family I know has lost somebody to cancer."

Since the early 1980s, Burke County residents have experienced a veritable cancer epidemic. Located along what is already the fourth most toxic waterway in the nation, Shell Bluff is across the Savannah River from a former nuclear weapons manufacturing plant. Nearby Waynesboro residents rely on wells for bathing and drinking water, which makes them highly vulnerable to the radioactive contamination of local ground water.

On February 11, 2012, Bobbie Paul of Wand, Rev. Samuel Mosteller, President of the GA State Unit of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), The Peace and Justice Coalition, Dianne Matheowitz, AIC, Burke County Residents and supporters joined for a day of remembrance of the nuclear disaster at Fukushima in Japan on February 11, 2011, and to warn about the dangers of nuclear radiation and the effects that two new reactors would bring to Burke County.

Bribing poor communities with jobs in exchange for sickness and death. Is this what environmental racism looks like?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Southern Company have stated that the plants in Burke County are safe. It is the NRC's policy to allow plants to monitor themselves?

For more info, contact Adriane Harden amharden@gmail.com 678-653-2012



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.

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