

# PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2012, VOLUME 39, NO. 11

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A teacher works at a Staten Island, NY school, which was designated as a polling place before Hurricane Sandy, and has now also been set up as a clothing donation site. The super-storm, which affected 60 million Americans, was a result of man-made global warming which was not addressed by either Obama nor Romney during the 2012 elections.

PHOTO CREDIT JULIE DERMANSKY ©2012

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## LESSON OF ELECTION 2012: **UNITY IS KEY TO ENDING CORPORATE RULE**

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Detroit neighbors rally to stop the home foreclosure and eviction of Jennifer Britt and her family. Britt has been struggling to meet mortgage payments since her husband died. The bank has nearly doubled her mortgage payments and now wants to evict her.

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

## Why politicians appeal to the 'Middle Class'

### EDITORIAL

When Presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Barack Obama, of the two capitalist parties, talked about standing up for the 'middle class', what were they saying, and what were they not saying? Why did they pretend to speak for a section of the working class that is being destroyed in ever greater numbers by their own policies and the corporations whose interests they represent?

Who is the so-called 'middle class'? They are really a section of the working class that has had stable, good-paying jobs. As the way of life of millions of these formerly stable working people is destroyed—those who had jobs, an education, relatively secure lives, and were active politically and in their communi-

ties—this recently dispossessed section of the working class is being pushed into insecurity and poverty. Because both political parties represent the interests of the corporations, the candidates would not and could not talk about the destruction of human lives and the impoverishment of the very section of working people who were once the basis for the system's stability.

Because of this, formerly secure people who are being thrown out of work, working part-time and contingent jobs, losing their homes to foreclosure fraud and their savings and retirement to financial fraud, are waking up to the fact that their interests haven't been protected, addressed or heard. Today 50 million Americans—one in six—are in poverty. People who a few years back had skilled and middle management jobs, homes, and some savings

and benefits, are finding themselves in foodlines and living in their vehicles. This is the reality of the dispossession of millions of Americans, each with their own story, but all part of an irreversible historical process.

Nothing that either party of the capitalist class proposes will turn this around. This appeal to the 'middle class' is an attempt to confuse people and obscure common class interests. It is also a coded way of dividing them from each other, based on what is most historically backward in American society – the false divisions of race, nationality and ideology. They are being told that their problems are their own fault, or the fault of some other section or color of workers. This is the formula for fascism.

These newly dispossessed workers, if they become conscious that they and the rest of

the workers have common interests, have the skills and experience to pull the whole struggle forward, fighting for the interests of the entire working class. This is exactly why the ruling class is trying to mislead them. The capitalists want to prevent these newly dispossessed from turning against the system.

The dispossessed are at the core of a new class being created out of the antagonisms arising in capitalism between an economic system based on the exploitation of wage labor and labor-replacing technology. Their demands for what they need to survive and thrive are in reality the demand for a transformed world where the sharing of the abundance we create is the economic and political norm. The future is in the hands of our people, we who no longer have a stake in the old exploitive order.

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.

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**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 500 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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**Publisher:** People's Tribune  
ISSN# 1081-4787

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### WHY THE MOVEMENT NEEDS A PRESS

From the Editors

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.

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# LESSON OF ELECTION 2012: UNITY KEY TO ENDING CORPORATE RULE

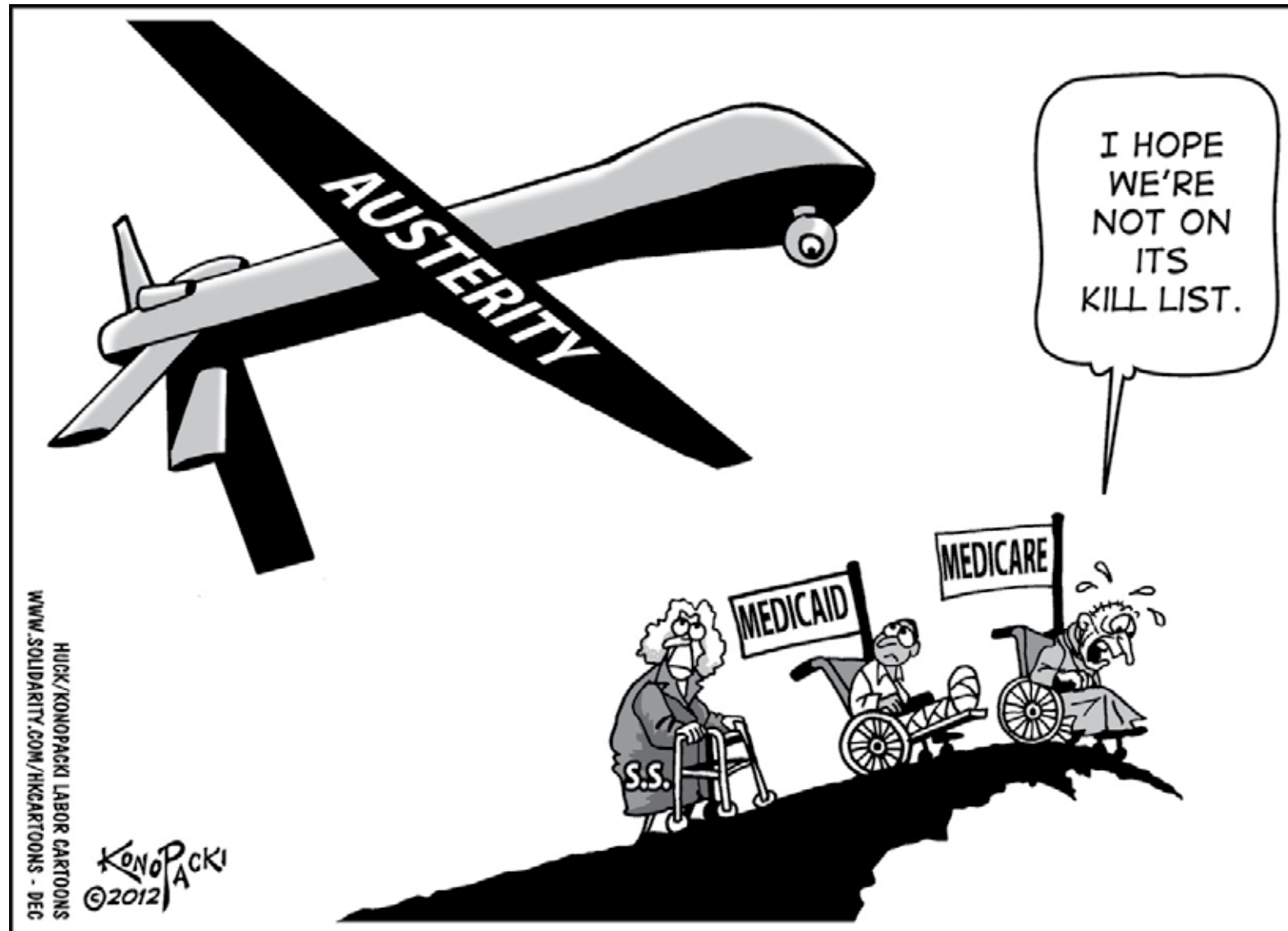
## COVER STORY

What can we learn from the 2012 presidential election that will help the people wage their struggles for jobs, housing, health care, the environment, respect for the human rights of immigrants and everything else we are fighting for?

The situation we face gets worse every day. Hurricane Sandy reminded us that, because of the power and dominance of the energy corporations, the capitalists will not deal with the global warming that threatens to make the earth unlivable. They refuse even to give proper assistance to the storm victims. Meanwhile, the economic hurricane that is hurling millions into permanent unemployment, underemployment and poverty continues, and the capitalists again refuse to help those suffering.

The key lesson of the elections is that we have allowed our real enemy to divide us, and we cannot win if we are divided. The ruling class politicians of the “major” parties have appealed to us as Black, white, Latino, women, “middle class,” etc. In essence we have been told not to consider ourselves workers, but instead to think about the needs of our particular group. The appeal to the “middle class” in particular is a way of saying, “Don’t worry about anyone else, just think about yourself and your family.”

This tactic historically has been used by the wealthy and powerful to divide and rule the working class. The ruling class gave some workers privileges over others, then pitted them against each other. The common class interests that unite us as workers are hidden by this tactic. We are kept busy fighting each other for a piece of the pie, and fighting for equality under the very capitalist system that is itself the source of the inequality.



At the root of the problem is the economic crisis. Technology is in the process of wiping out the need for human labor. As the jobs disappear, the capitalist system goes deeper into crisis. Capitalists won’t pay to support labor they don’t need; instead, they demand the people submit to an austerity program. They are moving to eliminate democracy so we can’t fight for a new society. The threat of an open dictatorship grows daily.

At the same time, the crisis is laying the foundation for working class unity. Workers of all social strata are being plunged into a common poverty and pushed out of the system, regardless of color, gender or nationality.

To win, we have to unite around the demands of those who

are being destroyed by the economic system. Their demand is for a society that guarantees the necessities of life to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. The great mass of us, regardless of color, gender or nationality, have one main identity—as part of the working class. And as workers we have a common enemy—the capitalists and their system—that is plunging us into a common poverty and oppression.

People are beginning to

move toward political independence. The vote for the Green Party more than doubled from 2008. It’s time the people declared their political independence from the ruling class and build their own party, a party that will take as its program the demands of those who are pushed out of the economic system and who are forced to fight for a new, democratic, cooperative society free of poverty and inequality.

### SEND US YOUR STORY!

All editorials and cover stories are written by the People’s Tribune Editorial Board. The rest of the paper is composed of voices from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. Send us your story.

### 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](http://www.peopletribune.org).

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# END TO CIVILIZATION OR VICTORY IN A NEW WORLD?

By Diane Nilan

What's one consistent thread through my 150,000 miles of mostly backroads travel? My astonishment at how devastated our country has become. I've traveled some of the same paths, and can't help but notice the increased deterioration of communities as I rumble through: for sale signs, boarded-up businesses, unkempt municipal properties, more people begging on street corners... not good signs.

My HEAR US trip from Illinois to Houston at the end of September was no different. As I wined my way through Illinois highways, I remembered back to the '80s when we saw massive grassroots efforts, led by the likes of Willie Nelson with his Farm Aid, to attempt to stave off the disastrous bank takeover of family farms back in the good ol' days.

Not so much anymore, as the tsunami-like economy has managed to ravage those who would help out as well as those standing too close to the edge. With this destruction comes a lot of survival mode, every man for themselves, forget women and children into lifeboats first. We're a nation deep into denial.

And what a mess we've made of things. State governments, free to drift the way of political

winds, are seeing themselves holding the shredded bag of former government—as in the feds—support. The very states where poverty is the worst are making plans to refuse to extend medical care to people who can-

not afford insurance, slashing welfare for those “freeloaders” who haven't managed the bootstrap trick, kicking homeless families in the gut, tax burdens that they seemingly are. All in the name of political brutality.

I find myself wondering if the pace of the destruction of civilization as we know it will match the pace of technological advances. A trade-off if you will. Then my thoughts snap back to remember this world has lasted

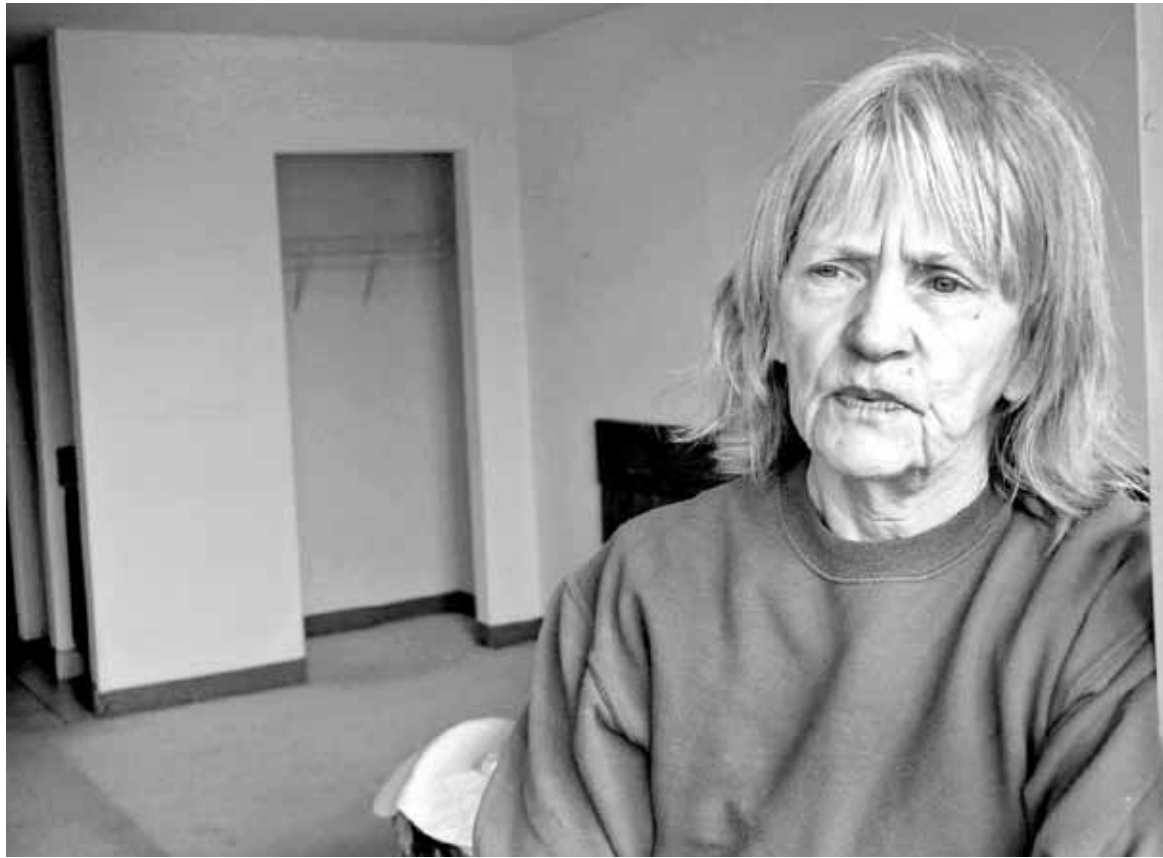
millions of years, having undergone major events that were nothing less than catastrophic. Becoming immobilized by today's crises would do no good.

And I call to mind the good people I've met along these 150,000 miles, those who have offered support—moral, financial, spatial, and material. In whatever way possible, we need to preserve and strengthen the thread of goodness, kindness, and justice. Weave it like a rescue line, and cast it to those who would otherwise be lost.

It's the same story told generation to generation: rich and powerful bullies against the impoverished and seemingly insignificant masses. What keeps me going, among other things, is knowing the sweet taste of victory of the little ones over the big bad ones. The turtle beats the hare. Good over evil. Yeah. I still believe, after all these years and miles. So stick around. It will get interesting.

If you are able, I'm asking that you consider being a monthly HEAR US donor. It can be a small amount, \$5 a month is fine. You may do this on at <https://npo.networkforgood.org>. Your info is secure and your support is treasured.

*Diane Nilan is the President/founder of HEAR US, Inc.*



**Brenda finished packing her belongings in preparation to leave the Oglethorpe, Georgia motel she called home for months. The bank foreclosed on the rural motel, owned in partnership by a Georgia state senator and US Congressman. The town's carpet industry was ravaged by the shattered housing market. It has no shelter and few resources to help Brenda and the 80 plus former tenants of the motel.**

PHOTO DIANE NILAN

## WORKING CLASS UNDER FULL ATTACK!

### *Families of children who miss 10 school days to lose welfare benefits*

By Maureen D. Taylor  
State Chairperson, Michigan  
Welfare Rights Organization

DETROIT, MI — You can't make this nonsense up! Technology has an ever-tightening death-grip on workers around the world, eliminating families from employment, replaced forever by machines. Instead of using electronic production to advance humanity, corporations displace workers, leaving them destitute in numbers not seen before. We have reached the end of an era. Capitalism that relied on a specific cycle is collapsing. Workers work—get paid a salary—spend those dollars on things produced by other workers—return to work—get paid again, etc.

The introduction of electronic production has altered that dynamic all over the world; the new order is to teach us how to live on less. Austerity measures have

angered millions who are taking to the streets.

The plot is to convince workers that the economic collapse is our fault. Somehow, our desire to live from day to day, to eat, to have a place to live, and to dream of a better life for our children is why the society is in free-fall. Balderdash. It is NOT our fault that the 1% will stop at nothing to enrich themselves at the expense of humanity.

The newest barbaric attack is in Michigan. Effective October 1, 2012, the government has found yet another way to make lives miserable. The stereotypical message is that welfare families don't value education, don't care about our kids like others do, and that we are lazy and unmotivated because we won't send our children to school. Truancy is purported to be a problem, and of course, welfare children are the ones who are the culprits in yet

another “lets attack poor workers” scam.”

Now, if a child misses ten school days, the food stamps and cash assistance will be terminated for the ENTIRE family for 21 consecutive school days! That'll teach 'em! A closer examination reveals that Michigan reported just over 92,000 truanancies in the entire state last year. Just over 4,200 of those were truanancies in Detroit schools—approximately 4%! This trial balloon is floated to determine the level of hatred that can be stirred up about the “lazy, baby-making welfare recipient.”

Workers are led into the trap of agreeing that some children should be starved in order to punish them into attending school. What a terrible position for members of our own class to take. Children should attend school all day. If there are those who for a variety of reasons are absent, shouldn't we determine as a society what the challenges are? In Michigan, low income children and their parents have been singled out for further pun-



**Children work on an experiment at Hanley International School in Hamtramck, MI. Many of Michigan's children and their families will be affected by a new government attack that cuts families off welfare benefits if children miss too much school.**

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTEY.COM

ishment and marginalization.

Fellow workers, don't be tricked into becoming the crematory guards while plans to herd us into the chambers of economic Hell unfold before our eyes. We are living with pain and suffering. We are bloodied and bent,

but will not leave this fight until every one of us is dead. The only good welfare recipient is a “dead recipient” is the message sent. We will not go silently into the night...”you get what you organize to take.” Organize and fight poverty... not the poor!

# DC'S POOR MOBILIZE: Back to 'bad' isn't good enough



Protester on World Homeless Action Day in San Francisco. PHOTO/STEVE RHODES

By Eric Sheptock

WASHINGTON, DC — In 2011, hundreds of homeless advocates and concerned citizens came out to demand that the DC Council find the money to fill the \$20.5 million budget shortfall in the Fiscal Year 2012 homeless services budget. The Council was threatening to close homeless shelters for all but the five coldest months of the year. Then they found \$17 million. This year the shortfall was only \$7 million for FY 2013, but the Council again threatened to close shelters and also reduce funding for feeding programs and transitional housing.

Then in the last week of September, the DC Government's tax revenue came in \$140 million above the projection, and the Council found another \$36 million available to put into savings or reverse the budget cuts. However, with the lingering threat of federal budget sequestration (which would decrease the amount of money Congress gives to DC Government), the DC

Council is being cautious so, as of the writing of this article, it has not decided to reverse the budget shortfall to homeless services.

SHARC (Shelter, Housing And Respectful Change) is a group of homeless advocates that formed in April 2011 to fight the budget cuts. We demand that MORE than \$7 million of this money be invested in homeless services. When services were "fully-funded", they were woefully inadequate. The shortfall has threatened to downgrade them from "bad" to "worse". Merely reversing the shortfall would bring services "back to 'bad'"; but, we demand "better". DC Inspector-General Charles Willoughby recently ran two articles in the Examiner concerning inadequate homeless services. He criticized the District's inexcusable failure to END homelessness as the advocates have argued for years. The District has not responded.

But SHARC placed immense pressure on the DC Council and mayor to invest in solutions to homelessness -- not just mainte-

nance of the problem. Until Hurricane Sandy hit, it had planned to mobilize 1,000 or more of DC's 7,000+ homeless people (up from 5,757 in 2007 - of which at least 1,600 are children) on October 29. "Occupy the DC Council: A Homeless and Poor People's Town Hall Meeting at DC City Hall" intended to provide food, music, speakers, a coat/clothing drive, and throughout the day direct people to enter the Wilson Building (City Hall) across the road and make their pitch for what we need to get out of homelessness. Various faith-based groups, service providers, nonprofits, and concerned citizens all contributed because we all want to go beyond getting homeless services "back to bad."

For more information, you can attend a weekly SHARC meeting at 425 2nd Street NW, Washington, DC on Mondays from 1 to 3 PM. You can also e-mail [sheptock@streets.tv](mailto:sheptock@streets.tv), or leave a message on SHARC's voicemail (202) 643-1550 or text Eric Sheptock at (240) 305-5255.

## WHAT'S BEHIND THE FINANCIAL 'BUBBLES?'



Occupy Wall Street protest in San Francisco. The final destination was a Wells Fargo building where 50 plus police in riot gear guarded the bank building.

PHOTO/ FLICKR.COM/FORABITMORECONTEXT

By Jim Fite

BALTIMORE, MD — Those of us who have to work for a living find it difficult to understand the big finance of Wall Street. We do understand when they have "bear markets", downturns or depressions because we get laid off or lose our homes. Most of the mystery is just because they use different words than we do. For instance, a person we would call a criminal they call a "tycoon" or "successful capitalist."

We all remember the crisis of 2008 when we were told the "housing bubble" burst. Recently we have been told there are other bubbles about to burst, the Social Security bubble and the student loan bubble are both predicted to burst soon. What does this mean? How do these bubbles get blown up and how do they burst?

The tycoons and successful capitalists are having a hard time making money. Traditionally they would exploit some work-

ers for their riches, but with layoffs, robots and computers there are fewer workers to exploit. Tycoons and successful capitalists have found a temporary way to make money. They gamble billions of dollars in hopes of increasing their wealth.

This form of gambling is called speculation. During the housing boom they would take mortgages of a 1000 people and combine them in one batch. The batch of mortgages would then be turned into bonds. The "ty-

coons" would sell these bonds and promise to make annual payments to those who bought the bonds. In order to get more bonds, the Tycoons gave loans to anyone who wanted one. The more loans, the more bonds and the more chances to gamble with the bonds and insurance for the bonds.

The "bubble" is when suckers are drawn in with the promise of "easy money". When the Tycoons have looted the money paid for the bonds they let the bubble burst and all the bond holders and all the mortgage holders were left with nothing. A bubble can be made of anything that people can buy or have to buy.

Students need loans to go to school. The easier it is to get loans, the easier it is for universities to raise the cost of going to school. After those on top have stuffed themselves they let the bubble burst. The newest bubble invented by Wall Street is the "rent bond..." These are bonds based upon rent payments. For instance, a Wall Street banker will buy the future rents from a building owner, package these rents as a bond and sell the bonds. But what happens when the renter loses their job and has to move? The bonds and their bubble collapse.

This is a foolish way to conduct business. If this is all the tycoons can do, they should not be allowed to get near our economy. Not one banker went to jail for the bursting of the housing bubble. Today one in four houses in the U.S. owes more than it is worth. The tycoons and bankers have shown their programs do not help us. They must lose their right to interfere with the economy with their dangerous gambling.

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

The *People's Tribune* welcomes your comments, especially on our covers and editorials. Your feedback helps us stay on course as a paper that points the way forward to a new cooperative society.

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# GREEN PARTY IS AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE!

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, the day after the election, Sandy Reid interviewed Jill Stein, Presidential candidate for the Green Party, for the People's Tribune.

*People's Tribune: Did the Green Party achieve its goals in the presidential election?*

**Jill Stein:** The Green Party received something in the order of ½ million votes, maybe more. Every vote is an enormous victory on a very steeply tilted playing field. The election results confirm that we are winning though not in all of its rigged dimensions.

The measure of a win to me is have we recovered our political voice, our political courage? Have we established a fight going forward? Do we have a vehicle to advance that fight? I think we have. The momentum is riding high.

New people are coming into the Party, especially the young. This is the real win. Youth are the future. A whole generation of young people are living in poverty. The Green Party is providing a platform for the social movement that is alive and well.

*PT: Do you see growing numbers of people getting involved in a third party?*

**JS:** Yes. A lot of powerful voices from the social movement have identified the Green Party as the

way forward. Obama has not a single solution to offer.

Obama said his priority now is to cut a deal with the Republicans, a grand bargain that will start to dismantle Medicare and Medicaid. There are 20 million seniors being kept out of poverty by social security. We have the numbers to lift the cap on social security and have the wealthy pay their fair share. There's plenty of money to keep social security repaying those that have already invested in it. In this election, we took the single stand to support Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, to stop the next free trade agreement, which will be another heavy wake up call.

When the Transpacific Partnership that the president is negotiating is unleashed, it will continue sending jobs overseas.

The Keystone Pipeline will be another big wake up call as the president gives the thumbs up to the northern half. He will no doubt try to cover his tracks with some marginal green jobs proposal that won't be a drop in the ocean of what he's doing in unleashing the fossil fuel change onto the planet. When people see the thumbs up for keystone, it will be a big mobilizer.

It's great to have built the vehicle onto which people can climb. It's all about us acquiring



**In an attempt to silence them, Green Party Presidential candidate Jill Stein and Vice Presidential candidate Cheri Honkala (left) were arrested as they attempted to enter the presidential debate site. They were taken to a warehouse and handcuffed to chairs for eight hours.** PHOTO/NEMO ALLEN

the politics of courage to enable us to stand up and use the political power that we already have.

*PT: What's the next step for the Green Party?*

**JS:** One idea is to focus a lot on local races where Greens are already a strong force. All over the country we're seeing incredible candidates in places we never expected, like Tennessee and Texas and in some of the Republican southern states.

There is a big fight on DC statehood; the Greens are standing up for that.

There is a constitutional amendment to clarify that everyone has the right to vote.

The Greens are standing up. The Greens are saying let's stop these bailouts to Wall Street, which are ongoing to the tune of \$40 billion. We need to be a force to stop the keystone pipeline, to start the Green New Deal, to bail out the students, to put a mora-

torium on the foreclosures, to bring the troops home, downsize the military, and enact Medicare for all. These are all within our reach.

We can't afford to wait until the next elections. Together we will continue to be that unstoppable force.

Visit the Green Party website, [jillstein.org](http://jillstein.org) to become part of the team, to sign up to volunteer, and to stay in touch.

## 2012 GREEN PARTY CAMPAIGN: FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE

By Sandy Perry

SAN JOSE, CA — Although it did not win the election, the 2012 Green Party presidential campaign was still a signal victory

for the American people. The Jill Stein—Cheri Honkala campaign put out and popularized the Green New Deal, a 1930s-style jobs program to restore our schools, cities, transit, health care

system, and environment. The Green New Deal opened up precious political space for people battling the austerity programs and repression of the two-party dictatorship.

When Jill Stein stood with the striking teachers in Chicago, she gave hope to the families fighting for public education and resisting school closures. When she and Cheri Honkala held a sit-in at Fannie Mae, they gave voice to the millions facing foreclosures. And when they were arrested and handcuffed to chairs in a secret prison, merely for asserting their right as candidates to participate in a presidential debate, they took a stand for democracy for all of us.

At the same time, the campaign experienced firsthand the enormous practical difficulties of third party politics in the United States. Rev. Bruce Wright of Refugee Ministry in St. Petersburg, Florida pointed out that the poor were so preoccupied with survival that they had limited capacity to respond to the Green Party

campaign. In conservative areas like his, he said many people asked, "Why should we support a third party when we can't even get a Democrat elected?"

Some are advancing their agendas without directly aligning themselves with a third party. The Southern Movement Assembly, held in September, plans to plant the seeds for a new political movement by organizing a People's First 100 Days after the election.

Shamako Noble, the Racial and Economic Justice Organizer for the Stein—Honkala campaign, urged Green Party supporters to take a long term view. "This campaign is not just about how we voted on November 6," he said. "The change we are fighting for is not something we can win in one campaign, and it is not just about Jill Stein and Obama. Obama will not even be running again in 2016. It is about building for the future. If we don't start building an alternative party now, then we will just find ourselves locked out all over again in 2016."

The challenges facing the Green Party, and any party that aims to give voice to the urgent demands of the American people, is to build political power on the ground. America's two-party political system is gradually disintegrating before our eyes. People will gravitate toward the political forces that address their needs. While we build neighborhood by neighborhood, we need to continue to link our local efforts with the programmatic national solutions offered by the Green New Deal.

The most important lesson of the campaign is that in the dire straits we are in today, everything we do matters profoundly. Third parties like the Green Party are no longer just about intellectual dissent or ideological protest. They are evolving into life and death expressions of the fight against a dying and lethal economic system. The Jill Stein—Cheri Honkala campaign opened the door for us, and we would not be where we are today without it. But the rest is up to us.



**Green Party Presidential candidate Jill Stein, speaking in Houston, reveals how big corporations profit from the privatization of public education and how public health care is strangled by private health insurance companies. She pressed for the Green New Deal and the creation of a vast public works program that would put millions to work building a clean renewable energy infrastructure.** PHOTO/MARIAELENA CASTELLANOS

# DEFEND FORT HERNANDEZ: L.A. HOMEOWNERS FIGHT BANK OF AMERICA

By Marlon Stern

VAN NUYS, CA — On August 24, 2012, Occupy San Fernando held a “foreclosure BBQ” at the home of Ulises Hernandez, 21, at 14620 Leadwell Street. That night marked the last moments before the final five-day notice to vacate their home of six years had passed. It also marked a night when the community decided to fight Bank of America by building a barricade and staying in the home. The barricade was built from household objects and furniture easily found on neighborhood streets. There are 173 other foreclosed homes in the 91405 zip code and the neighborhood is littered with left behind furniture. The fortified home known as #FortHernandez, is guarded 24 hours a day, seven days a week by at least one person who sits on couches in front of the barricade.

Fifty days into the fortification, the Sheriff’s Department did not appear at Fort Hernandez. The LAPD, however, has con-

tinually harassed activists as well as neighbors. On the morning of October 4 police took couches as well as family pictures. They cited homeowner Javier Hernandez, 35, for the barricade and brother Ulises for couches “blocking the right of way.” A day after appearing in court for couches, Ulises was arrested on his street by undercover “narcotics” officers driving an unmarked car. They used a snatch and grab tactic. He was released the same day after posting \$560 bail on a charge of fair evasion. Cars have been impounded. William Gagan was arrested and held two days for blocking the sidewalk after he heard gunshots unrelated to Fort Hernandez and walked over to see what was happening. The Los Angeles County Department of Family and Children threatened to take Hernandez’s youngest brother, Adrian, 5, because the house has, “No running water or electricity”—another fabrication.

Countrywide wrote the loan



Defenders of the fortified home known as #FortHernandez, in Van Nuys, California. It is guarded 24 hours a day, seven days a week by at least one person who sits on couches in front of the barricade. PHOTO/#FORTHERNANDEZ

in 2006. That year Countrywide wrote 20 percent of all U.S. home loans. The mortgage jumped from \$3,900 a month to \$4,600 overnight in 2008. That year, Bank of America bought Countrywide for \$4.1 billion. That year Bank of America promised to modify 400,000 loans. That year the bank told the Hernandez family to stop paying their mortgage to prepare for loan modification. Three attempts to modify the loan were made and the family was denied each time. In 2011, Bank of America cut an \$8.5 bil-

lion deal with BNYMellon to clean up toxic loans. That year, the Hernandez home was placed up for auction by BNYMellon. That year, Bank of America paid a \$335 million settlement regarding allegations that poor Latinos and Blacks were steered towards high interest rate loans by Countrywide.

The Hernandez family has seen no settlement and had never heard of BNYMellon before 2011. After widespread media coverage of #FortHernandez, Bank of America contacted

the family to modify the loan a fourth time. They were denied again. The family is resilient as it is unclear which bank has the mortgage, and it is clear that the loan is problematic. The community stepped forward at events to help and to ask for help. As of this writing, there are two other homes in Southern California that have used the #FortHernandez tactics. They are #FortLucero in East Los Angeles and #CasaPerez in Anaheim, California, which was approved for a loan modification as of October 17, 2012.

# Chicago Housing Authority is trying to evict the elderly

## CABRINI EVICTIONS:

By Joseph Peery

“When the Constitution was written, a strange formula to determine taxes and representation declared that the Negro was sixty percent of a person. Today another curious formula seems to declare that he is fifty percent of a person. Of the good things in life, the Negro has approximately one half those of whites, of the bad things of life, he has twice those of whites.”

—Martin Luther King Jr.

CHICAGO, IL — During the last week of September, two apartments with elderly heads of households received ‘Ten Day’ eviction notices. Both live in the same building at Parkside of Old Town which was built to replace Cabrini Green. The families want to remain anonymous, but feel a need that their stories be told.

The man is a 79-year-old retired mechanic who is illiterate and can’t read or write his own

name. He was forced to move into Parkside when his Cabrini building was scheduled for demolition. If evicted now, he has nowhere to go. The woman, 78-years-old, is an amputee confined to a wheelchair with a host of medical problems requiring her to go to dialysis treatment as well as surgeries. The last thing she needs is the stress of an eviction.

The ten-day notices charge the seniors with “consistent” violation of some of the “One Strike” provisions in the CHA (Chicago Housing Authority) lease which holds that your lease may be terminated if tenants, occupants, guests, invites, any one in their unit and persons ‘under their control’ engages in criminal activity that threatens the life, health, safety, or property and/or disturbs other residents peaceful enjoyment of their accommodations. These rules apply to CHA residents and no one else. The notices further accuse an alleged guest of one household and an

occupant of the other of stealing UPS packages, with video footage to back it up. There have been no arrests and neither family has been shown a police report.

On October 11, around 9:30

P.M., according to the elderly man, he awoke to knocking at his front door. When he opened the door, a man and a woman forced their way in saying they were there to see the apartment. They

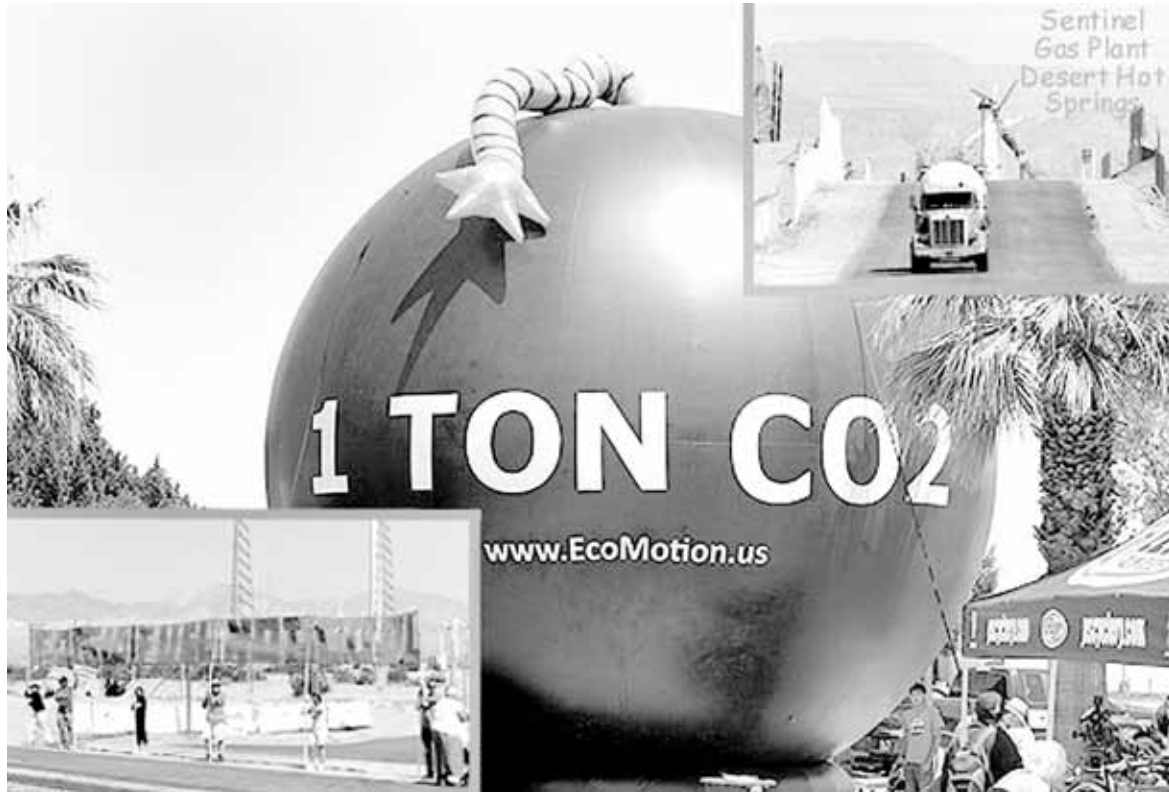
walked and looked all through his dwelling and then left, ignoring all his requests to identify themselves or their reason for being there. His family believes they were from the building’s condo association, which manages the building, but not the CHA apartments in the building. When the family put up a notice in the lobby requesting help in identifying the assailants, it was taken down. The next day, when the family attended an informal grievance hearing which they requested, they were admonished for putting the notice up, by Holsten Management Corp., which manages the CHA apartments in the building.

There is a general feeling among CHA residents living in these mixed income communities that we are not wanted here and any and all opportunities will be taken to get us out, even to the extent of throwing a little old man and little old lady who have done nothing into the streets as another cold Chicago winter approaches.



Corporate takeover of public housing. CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

# Fossil fuel burning power plant threatens desert environment



Demonstration by Occupy Coachella Valley outside the Sentinel power plant as construction got underway in March 2012. PHOTO COLLAGE/DAREL PROBST

By C.E. Krause, Bob Terry and Chuck Parker

DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CA— Until February 2012, it seemed that no one in the Coachella Valley had heard of the CPV Sentinel natural gas-/fossil fuel-burning, 800-megawatt Power Plant under construction four miles from Palm Springs, CA. No one,

that is, but a handful of bought-off politicians and “regulators” who had managed to slip approval of this gross polluter past the public. The owners of the plant plan to make a bloody fortune, selling out our air and water, for their profit. But when members of Occupy Coachella Valley heard about it, a small group of them calling themselves People

Over Pollution determined to fight to stop CPV Sentinel from going into operation.

The Coachella Valley is the sun-drenched, wind-swept southern California desert where cities are named for geo-thermal phenomena: Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and so on. That’s where the “fossil-fool” owners, Mitsubishi and

GE, decided to put their gross polluter. They put it right next to the San Andreas Fault, and it sits at the mouth of the bottleneck between the San Jacinto and San Geronio Mountains, from which the poisonous air of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties [rated ‘F’ by the American Lung Association] gushes over solar panels and through wind turbines, which produce clean electricity at minimal cost.

The plant’s smokestacks would spew one million tons of carbon dioxide per year, and 277% of the allowable PM2.5, those tiny particles which can enter your body through the pores of your skin and your lungs, and which are proven to worsen conditions like asthma and emphysema and, worse, to cause cancer. If this gross polluter went into operation, the wind would spread these lethal particulates to the cities nestled along the foothills bordering the Coachella Valley, churning with the toxic pollutants from the Salton Sea, then blowing the poisonous concoction as far south as the Mexican border.

CPV Sentinel plans to pump nearly 2000 gallons of pristine water per minute from the Mission Springs aquifer to cool the

eight 90-foot tall smokestacks. Over the 30 year life of the plant that would come to over 10 billion gallons of our drinking water, renowned country-wide for its purity. They plan to replenish the water table with water piped in from the contaminated Colorado river.

Operating the plant would also require highly toxic ammonia gas, to be stored in large tanks nearby which, in an earthquake, could release deadly clouds of gas.

But People Over Pollution and its community allies - Occupy Coachella Valley, Comite Latino, and other local affiliates - are bringing truth to the People by way of demonstrations, city council meetings, petition drives, and town hall forums throughout the Coachella Valley. Our air, water and soil are at stake; our economy, our livelihoods, our lives are at stake; Mother Earth’s survival is at stake.

In the long run, we must take the profit out of energy industries by making them public property. True political power resides with the People, and once we are armed with the truth and organized, CPV Sentinel can and will be stopped. Please join us in this urgent struggle for survival.

## HOUSING TAKEOVERS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS IN FLORIDA: THE SEEDS OF REVOLUTION

By Rev. Bruce Wright

TAMPA, FL — Most economists and futurists indicate that the economy is only going to get worse. In spite of the pontifications of apologists for both the Obama and Romney campaigns, things continue to worsen, not only here, but around the world. The answer from the corporate controlled plutocracy continues to be domestic cutbacks, tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations, and more funds for continuous war around the world.

While real unemployment continues to rise, and eight million families have lost their homes to foreclosure, neither major party seems to really care or have any answers. The “p” word, poverty is not even in the discourse. But there is a movement rising! As the ranks of the poor and homeless continue to grow at a breathtaking pace, people are beginning to look at alternatives to this housing crisis and alternatives to this economy.

People are taking things into their own hands, creating their own economies, and taking over abandoned and bank-owned houses. It is my belief, and the belief of many in this beleaguered class, that bailed-out banks no longer have any right to hold the houses and other properties they foreclosed on, in many cases illegally. Why should banks retain property they have in effect stolen from us, we the working people?

So, all around the country people are moving into properties that banks and the government stole from them. Like the song says, “I took back what he stole from me.” In the Tampa Bay area, where I am from, people are beginning to act on housing takeovers, planting community gardens, and other creative means of taking back the economy. When the Republican Convention happened in Tampa, we the people took over houses, created the Romneyville encampment, planted gardens, and reclaimed food.



Rev. Bruce Wright at the Romneyville Tent City in August in Tampa Florida.

PHOTO/ROMNEYVILLE FACEBOOK

In spite of the local and national corporate interests, people did what was necessary to survive, and created and grew this strug-

gle of the oppressed class. Study groups are emerging all over the Tampa Bay area, and all over the country, as a result of this grow-

ing movement coming out of the various “Occupy” actions. The seeds of revolution are growing and it is long overdue!



# THE WORLD'S PROPHETIC VOICES

## '100 Thousand Poets for Change' speak out together in 115 countries around the globe

By Dave Ransom

When two poets in a small California town can spark a weekend of 800 coordinated events in 115 different countries, you know there's a movement under way.

This is year two of that phenomenon, 100 Thousand Poets for Change, and the movement is rapidly breaking its bounds, up from 650 events in 95 countries in 2011, and morphing into a global gathering of artists of every stripe—musicians, painters, actors, photographers, street performers...

For instance, in Cairo this year, it became "100 Thousand Mimes for Change," as a mime troupe gave a festival of performances in subway stations.

In Lafayette, LA—deep in Cajun country—people heard from the spoken-word troupe Revolution Theory and the St. Martinsville High School Dead Poets Society.

In Macedonia, the country's leading graphic artists competed to produce posters for the

event—and everybody in the country heard about it.

Organizers in Kingston, Jamaica, named their monthlong festival "Tell the Children the Truth" after a Bob Marley song.

In Trinidad and Tobago, they were on the nightly news. The "mainstream" corporate media in the U.S. ignored it entirely.

Putting these events in one country after another took a good deal of work. Getting the ball rolling took very little.

In 2011, upset by the state of the world, California poet Michael Rothenberg put up on Facebook an idea that there should be worldwide events by "100 Thousand Poets for Change."

The idea went viral.

What set Rothenberg off was "wars, economic collapse, the Gulf Oil spill," he says—"and people running around as if nothing was happening."

Rothenberg and fellow poet Terri Carrión live in tiny Guerneville, nestled under the redwoods on the Northern California coast. Together, this year and last, they have been the nexus



From the series *Susurros Poéticos (Poetic Whispers) En El Tianguis Del Chopo 2012-100 mil poetas por el cambio*. Left to right: Carmen Saavedra, José Díaz Martínez, Maya Lima, Lucero Balcazar in Tianguis del Chopo, Mexico City, DF. PHOTO FLORENTINO VALDÉS MARTÍNEZ

of the movement, with Carrion hosting a web site that listed all of the events and provided city-by-city links.

They emphasize that the only thing asked of participants was that they be for change—peace and sustainability—and that they act collectively. Everything else was up to people locally.

"What people see is common ground, a vehicle for change," they say. "They find activism as an artist. It empowers them, knowing it's going on all over

the world."

In Italy, hundreds of poets took part—in Genoa, Bologna, Rome. Mexican poets spoke out against the endemic violence, reading not only in the capital city but in hard-hit Juarez and Tijuana as well.

In the U.S., ex-Poet Laureate Robert Hass and Beat legend Michael McClure read in Oakland. Across the country, there were events in 45 states, from Alabama to Wyoming. Internationally, there were events

from Afghanistan, Albania, and Armenia to Wales, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Though 100 Thousand Poets for Change events were originally set simply for September 29, they are continuing. Indeed, in many localities, they are morphing into an ongoing, day-to-day cultural movement.

For more information, see [www.100tpc.org](http://www.100tpc.org)

## Houston police officer fatally shoots amputee in the head



Brian Claunch, a double amputee with mental health issues was shot in the head by police for holding up a shiny object that turned out to be a ballpoint pen in September.

PHOTO/YOURJEWISHNEWS.COM

By Tim Weary

HOUSTON, TX — Brian Claunch was a troubled double amputee with mental health issues, (HPD has a policy that calls for inclusion of a trained officer with knowledge in dealing with mentally challenged individuals). Yet on September 22, of this year Brian was shot in the head in defense of 'cornered' policemen for holding up a shiny object that turned out to be a ballpoint pen. None of the officers present were trained in handling a mental health issue, so instead of Brian getting the medication while he sat helplessly ranting in his wheelchair, he was gunned down as if in a statement to us all that if you are a part of this poor, working, immigrant, or medically impaired section of society,

you have no worth.

This incident comes on the heels of the Chad Holly protests that took place in Houston after Chad, an African American youth was captured on film getting caught and beaten by Houston police. The first of six officers was found innocent of any wrongdoing. All officers involved were fired, yet two are back on patrol already. Worse still, young Chad Holly was again arrested on a burglary charge and all demonstrations for justice came to a screeching halt!

There have been demonstrations and a new call for a civilian review board with subpoena power by community leaders. These calls have been made before in the face of an abusive police force and in an attempt

to deal with the powerlessness civilians have when it comes to issues like police brutality. In Houston, the blatant dehumanization of poor, minority and immigrant go unchecked despite the public protests. These murders and civil rights violations are all part of convincing us that it's alright for the state to murder the defenseless.

The only true resolution to police brutality is to have a government of the people, where a civilian review board is not necessary, because the civilians will already review and have the power to dismiss or imprison any officer guilty of misconduct. We will not have to put forward the slogan for the district attorney to resign, because the people will remove any official not doing their job.

Lines are being drawn in the sand. These lines have the representatives of corporate America and their henchmen on one side, fighting to hold on to a dead economic system by any means necessary. On the other side stands a growing mass of impoverished workers and a growing number of revolutionaries who see a future of peace, jobs, food and housing in a cooperative, healthy society. It is only in this society can these brutal acts of terror stop. But this new society will not come about because we dream about it or because we want it, or even because we need it. It will come about because we choose that side, organize and fight for it. Which side are you on?

# A tale of two events on the day before presidential debate #2

By Andi Sosin & Joel Sosinsky  
The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition

NEW YORK, NY — Attending two very different events on the same day provides striking similarities and contrasts: Hofstra University students and faculty re-enacted scenes from historic labor struggles one day before hosting the second presidential debate between Obama and Romney, and the Green Party presidential candidates rallied in New York City. While very different in tone and content both events addressed the problems of America's working class—how capitalism and corporations beat down workers then and now, and what solutions are offered to us today.

Hofstra's preparation to host the presidential debate was an educative production called "Expressions of Democracy," in which dramatic and musical performances and a social realism art exhibit tackled abolition, industrial capitalism, immigration, the Great Depression, up through the struggles for Civil Rights in the 1960s. In a tableau, the Bread & Roses strike of 1912 was brought to life by speeches from International Workers of the World (IWW) leaders "Rebel Girl" Helen Gurley Flynn and "Big Bill" Haywood. A costumed Rose Schneiderman eloquently condemned the moneyed class-

es following the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire of 1911. The audiences, mostly of college students and faculty, supplemented by middle school social studies classes, participated loudly and vigorously, shouting "strike!" as Clara Lemlich had when she incited female shirtwaist makers in

the 1909 Uprising of the 20,000.

The Green Party rally concentrated on how present day American politics has become a contest of which of the two "corporate" political parties can marshal the most money, rather than which candidate has the best ideas to help the country and

the world. Excluded as a third party candidate, Jill Stein, who is running for the presidency on the Green Party ticket, gave a convincing stump speech that outlined their platform for economic revival based on a New "New Deal" and environmental conservation. The Green Party

had to spend most of its time this year in qualifying to get on the ballot in each state because of the US two-party system. Stein spoke optimistically about how, if the Green Party can achieve 5% of the national popular vote in this election, it will qualify for matching funds and could become a contender in the next presidential election.

Comparisons of history to present day conditions expose the timeless nature of unfair economic and political systems. Educators, like the ones at Hofstra who produced the historical vignettes, help youth understand how the labor and civil rights movements stood in solidarity for righteous beliefs in equality and fairness. Current day politicians like the Green Party's Jill Stein show courage and conviction for the same beliefs. As the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition advances the cause of a memorial to the fire's victims and the social activism of its aftermath, we are encouraged to see educators who teach about historical labor struggles and politicians who focus on our most pressing social and environmental problems, meet on common grounds. See the [rememberthetrianglefire.org](http://rememberthetrianglefire.org) website for details about the planned memorial.



Occupy Wall Street, Stamp Money Out Of Politics protest, New York.

PHOTO/SCOTT LYNCH, FLICKR.COM/SCOTTLYNCHNYC

## RICARDO CAMPOS ORTA, *In memory of a compañero in struggle*

By Pedro Angel Rivera

On the 6th of August of this year, we lost our compañero in struggle, Ricardo Campos Orta. The loss of Ricardo is also a moment to recall the benefit that his life meant for many. It is an extremely fertile occasion to harvest the lesson that his living legacy leaves in the heart of all comrades that shared with him the happiness and problems of a struggle, that like a ray of light does not cease. This is the principal lesson that the compañero Ricardo bequeathed to us—the struggle from all the trenches and at all times, as an antidote to the unfeeling nature of the capitalistic system of life that imprisons us daily.

Ricardo was a tireless striver from the trenches of the political party of the "people at the bottom," fighting against the colonialism of his motherland Puerto Rico in the archipelago island as well as from the imperial bowels

of North America. In that same spirit of struggle, Ricardo fought shoulder to shoulder with women and men of all social strata and nationalities, in the noblest spirit of communist and proletarian internationalism, staunch to his own roots from a proletarian father and mother.

From his motherland he became known as a militant of the Puerto Rican Independence Party and as an outstanding member of groups of advanced communists such as the Revolutionary Socialist Party. From such organizations, he worked as much in the area of street protest demonstrations as in the field of ideological struggle as a writer, historian, university teacher and debater, always in defense of the proletarian struggle against capitalist exploitation and domination.

He was obligated to migrate to the U.S. due to political persecution and by his own need to search in other areas of struggle,

to meet revolutionary fighters of other nationalities in the space opened by the then newborn Communist Labor Party (CLP). Within that political space he succeeded in becoming connected as an intellectual proletarian to the class struggles in which the CLP was active. In Rally, Comrades! and the Tribuno del Pueblo, the writing and revolutionary analysis of Ricardo are linked to the proletarian intellectual collectivity of the CLP to popularize the ideas, tactics and strategies developed in the heat of the struggles of the homeless, the migrant agricultural workers and the industrial proletariat in decline—all exploited and dispossessed by capitalism in its new phase of destructive re-creation.

Today, it moves many compañeros and disciples in struggle to celebrate his legacy in the one and only way which Ricardo would want us to: continuing in the struggle that as the ray of



In memory of a compañero in struggle, Ricardo Campos Orta who passed away August 6, 2012.

PHOTO/DONATED

light does not cease, against a capitalist system which is dying but each day becomes more dangerous and more obsessed with pushing us toward the struggle

of all against all, instead of toward humanity without slavery to which we all aspire.

# Our Native American veterans – Yesterday and today

By Mary Anne Morrow Barbour®

*“We may have been a conquered people, but we were not a defeated people.”*  
— 100% Disabled Iraq Specialist Chris Lively

JACKSON, TN — Some of our least heralded, unrecognized and most valiant combat veterans are Native American. Native American Heritage Month is in November and continues to receive less coverage than other national U.S. Heritage Celebrations. There is a Native saying that Native Americans have been fighting terrorism since 1492.

Native Americans have served in every war the U.S. has been engaged in; ironically, even in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. During the Tribal Removals they received horrendous, inhumane treatment and many of them were shipped off like cattle to the barren lands of the southwest. Despite that they were robbed of their lands, their culture and victims of genocide, they proudly served and continue to serve our country.

Many of these brave warriors did not even receive citizenship until The Snyder Act of 1924, and others may not have had full citizenship and suffrage rights until 1948 when citizenship was granted to approximately 125,000 of 300,000 indigenous people in the United States. Some Native Americans not included in citizenship numbers had already become citizens by other means; e.g. entering the armed forces, giving up tribal affiliations, and assimilating into mainstream American life.

During WWI, 6,509 Indians or 37.6% of their population served in the Armed Forces, despite the fact that they were not subject to the draft because they were not U.S. citizens. Approximately 45,000 or 10% of the estimated population of 350,000 Native Americans served during WWII.

In spite of the genocide and betrayal by the U.S., Native Americans’ enlisted in astonishing numbers. Also, more than 10,000 joined the Red Cross and purchased more than \$25 million in Liberty Bonds. This includes Native American wom-

en who served in the WACS, WAVES and Army Corps. The tradition of honoring Native American Veterans is a long, honored and notable ritual among Native Tribes.

On October 2, 2012, First Congressional District candidate Jimmy Farris condemned the potential cuts to veteran’s benefits supported by Congressman Raul Labrador. “I don’t understand how Congressman Labrador can justify cutting veteran’s benefits,” said Farris. “These brave men and women sacrificed so much for us and our country. The least we can do is to provide the necessary help and support for them when they come home.”

Paul Ryan’s budget plan, which Labrador supports, cuts Veteran’s benefits. These are hidden under “Function 920,” a section of the budget that includes nearly \$897 billion in unspecified cuts. Because these cuts are not specifically outlined in the budget, they are left out of these calculations. This deception is proposed in a misleading manner that allows its proponents to deny the cuts to these specific programs.

Because of the distance and lack of technology that Native American Veterans experience these cuts would be catastrophic to many of them. Americans should do our utmost to preserve, not only our Native American Veterans’ benefits, but all Veterans’ benefits. It is our duty to protect those who have given so much to protect us, especially our Native American Veterans.



Adam Shapiro, a radio programmer and host, and activist in community, religious and political organizations died in September. Adam loved strumming and singing “labor” songs.

PHOTO/HEATHER GRAY

## HONORING ADAM SHAPIRO’S LIFE

ATLANTA, GA — Adam Shapiro, friend and comrade, died in his sleep of natural causes in September. Adam was a programmer on WRFG 89.3 FM and was host of the show “Current Events.” Despite his blindness, he was active in many community organizations, religious and political. He was co-chair of the Georgia Green Party. Adam loved strumming and singing “labor” songs. Adam wrote this song spontaneously at Mercy Community Church after serving a meal for the community, many of whom are homeless. He had been joking with one of the women present about how everything she did was “cool like that.”

One of the members of the Church sang this song at Adam’s Memorial Service.

### *Cool Like That*

Words and music by Adam Shapiro, 2012

Lunchtime’s over  
It’s clean-up time  
Wash them pots and pans  
And make ‘em shine

### *Refrain:*

‘Cause we’re cool like  
that (cool like that)  
We’re cool like that  
(cool like that)  
We’re cool like that –  
We got mercy all the time!

Out on Catch-Out Corner  
With the poor  
We got the kind of love  
You can’t buy in a store

### *Refrain...*

If Jesus were a-preachin’  
Out on Ponce de Leon  
He’d say:  
“Keep singing them  
freedom songs!”

### *Refrain...*

Black, White, Latino,  
Christian, Jew  
We all get a taste  
Of that mercy stew

### *Refrain...*

You want a revolution  
Here’s what you gotta do  
Respect your brother  
And your sister too

### *Refrain...*

## Prisoner Donates \$10 to People’s Tribune

This inspiring note shows how important the People’s Tribune is to the struggle for a New America. Please donate at our website: go to [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org), click on donations. Any size donation is appreciated and needed. — **The People’s Tribune**

*Dear People’s Tribune,*

*Please find a remittance in the amount of \$10. I understand it is not very much. I wish I could send more. As a prisoner entombed in a supermax, I don’t have a job so I am limited. Take care. La Luta Continue.*

*— A prisoner*



The community protests the opening of the Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course on public parkland in Benton Harbor, MI. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

# HOMELESSNESS GROWS IN BENTON HARBOR, MICHIGAN

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — COGIC Village, a low-income apartment complex in Benton Harbor, Michigan is driving more and more residents out of the community into homelessness—or out of the town altogether. In addition, Black employees were fired, and apartment residents have been subject to racist slurs by the management company.

Carolyn, a now homeless, former resident of COGIC Village says: “If you have never been homeless, it is tough to describe that first night sleeping on the street. The fear and disillusionment are paralyzing. I was previously employed. Whirlpool Corporation started outsourcing all the manufacturing jobs. I lost my job, home and car. I lost everything. Whirlpool makes life miserable for Benton Harbor’s poor. Now that Whirlpool has built its office complex down-

town, we can’t stay under the bridge where I sleep with other homeless people. We are harassed constantly by Benton Harbor police who are promoting Whirlpool’s agenda. I even was cited for sleeping on the sidewalk. It is a hard life. I moved into COGIC Village Apartments. It was a living Hell, worse than living on the street. Kim Hunt, the apartment building manager, fired all of the Black employees and hired her family and friends. Kim, a white female, was brought in by President Rod Littlepage of Eagle Point Management to chase all the Blacks out of the COGIC Village Apartments. Kim calls Black ladies “niggers” and “Black bitches.” If someone stands up to her, she has them evicted. She has had many residents evicted. They are now homeless. I would rather live in an abandoned building in the winter without heat, than live in COGIC Village Apartments. I am again homeless.”

Whirlpool, the giant global corporation that rules the town of Benton Harbor is behind this inhuman situation. Benton Harbor, once a thriving industrial town, has an unemployment rate of over 65 percent. The jobs left years ago. About 90% of the population now lives below the poverty line. As the industrial base was decimated, Whirlpool and other big money interests launched a “redevelopment” plan. That plan is to turn this lakefront town into a vacation land for the rich. What is happening at COGIC Village is part of this plan to force the poor out and to bring the rich in.

The community is taking matters into their own hands. In October, people protested the mistreatment of residents of COGIC Village. The demand was for management to remove Kim Hunt from her job and for Manager Rod Littlepage to sit down with the group. This is an important step in defense of the poor and against corporate power.

## People’s Tribune subscription drive!

Dear Readers,

November is subscription month for the People’s Tribune! As an independent press, we rely exclusively on donations. The People’s Tribune offers its pages to those in the movement who want to get coverage of their struggles out. At the same time it offers analysis, direction and solutions to the problems our society faces. We tell the truth! Please order a subscription to the People’s Tribune. Subscriptions are \$20. Order a subscription for your friend or relative too as a holiday gift. Donate for your subscription via pay pal at [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org) or send a check to PO Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524.

— People’s Tribune Editorial Board

## Victory in fight for democracy in Michigan

# ‘DICTATOR’ LAW IS VOTED OUT!

By Marian Kramer

In a victory for democracy and against corporate power, Michigan’s Public Act 4, the “dictator” law, was voted out on November 6 by a 52 to 48 percent margin. The coalition, Stand up for Democracy, organized the recall effort. Public Act 4 allowed “dictators” appointed by the governor to come into fiscally troubled cities, throw out democratically elected officials, take over

whole school districts and turn them over to private corporations, renegotiate union contracts, and more. Had the recall failed, it is likely that states across the nation would have enacted such corporate led, fascist legislation. This is a tremendous victory. But it is important that we not let our guard down. The corporations are out for blood. We must be ready for their next move. Congratulations to the Michigan workers!

## Lady Macbeth and US

Do these “We the People”  
Of these United States in the Americas  
Understand  
That electing war mongers  
Sends us all into the dark halls  
Underneath the draped robes  
Where wanders power seeking more power?  
Not humanity seeking more humanity?

Can you feel the blood tears on your cheeks  
Dripping on your hands?  
Is it red-orange and fresh?  
Is it burgundy, dried and caked?  
Is it pooled and spreading?

Can you see upon the oily pools  
The spectors swirling  
Of limbs lost, eyes blinded, hearts burst?  
Can you see the babies and mothers buried  
under shelters once called homes  
with beds and blankets,  
hearths and windows, blooming gardens?

Can you see the grandfathers orphaned?  
Can you see the boys and girls camouflaged  
Into killers?  
Can you see them suckling now  
Nationalism laced  
With depleted uranium  
At the breast of Lady Macbeth?

Go ahead,  
Try to wash your hands.

— Karen S. Harper 11-4-04

Karen Harper is an activist who is an active member of Occupy Long Beach and the Long Beach Historical Society