



Workers of the World, Unite!

The MICHIGAN

**socialist**

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Voice of the Socialist Party of Michigan

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The *Michigan Socialist* is the voice of the Socialist Party of Michigan (SPMI), affiliate of the Socialist Party USA. Party address: 909 Walwood Ct., No. 2, Kalamazoo, MI 49007; e-mail: michigansocialist@ameritech.net; WWW: www.michigansocialist.net/news.

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## Socialist Party USA: Outline of Principles

*THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control: where working people own and control the means of production and distribution, through democratically-controlled committees and assemblies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible.*

*The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support union and electoral actions — independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system — to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions — radical and fundamental changes in the structure and nature of economic, political and social relations — to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control the economy and the government.*

*The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.*

## **editorial** **End foreign rule! Free Palestine!**

THE HISTORY OF Palestine and the Palestinians has been marred by centuries of foreign occupation and repression, with their right to self-determination, equality, freedom, and peace denied. In the 20th Century alone, the Ottoman Empire, British Empire, Jordan and Egypt have each taken their turns at ruling the Palestinians.

In 1948, Israel was formed and became the fifth ruler, placing over 50 percent of Palestine under Zionist rule, though the Palestinians were the overwhelming majority. After the Israeli invasion of Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967, Israel conquered the remaining areas of Palestine: the Gaza Strip, West Bank and East Jerusalem. Both incidents created large waves of Palestinian refugees, accounting for one of the largest refugee populations in the world, who were, for the most part, terrorized and expelled by the Israeli Defense Forces.

Unlike the former rulers of Palestine, Israel is the only ruler to build permanent settlements, expropriate Palestinian land, request taxes while denying suffrage to the Palestinians, deny Palestinians access to roads, services and resources, create a massive refugee population and continue to occupy and rule the Palestinians who are denied legal status and live in limbo.

The Socialist Party of Michigan recognizes this historical plight of the Palestinians and supports their national right to be free from foreign control and to live in dignity. To this end, we demand:

1. The immediate, unconditional and unilateral withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces from all lands occupied in the 1967 invasion;
2. An end to the \$3 billion a year aid given to Israel by the United States. The governments and corporations of the World, in particular those of the U.S., must also halt all sales of military and civilian equipment that could be used by Israel against the Palestinian people;
3. An immediate halt to settlement building, the expropriation of Palestinian land, the Jewish populating of

Palestinian-majority cities for the purpose of creating Jewish-majorities and the Zionist ambitions to expel all Palestinians, with the ultimate aim of dismantling and evacuating the present settlements and pave the way for a viable Palestinian state, encompassing all of the territory occupied by Israel in 1967;

4. An immediate end to violence against all innocent, non-combatant civilians, in both Israel and the Occupied Territories, committed by either the Israeli Defense Forces or Palestinian guerrillas; the rights of civilian non-combatants must be protected at all times;
5. The immediate release of all conscientious objectors and political prisoners, both Israeli and Palestinian. Israel must respect the right to refrain from military or civil service, and the right to free speech, expression and protest;
6. The abolition of all discriminatory policies within Israel and the Occupied Territories against non-Israelis and non-Ashkenazi (European-origin) Israelis in regard to employment, housing, services, resources, permits and movement; no taxation without equal representation;
7. A solution to the Palestinian refugee problem: either compensation and reparations equivalent to the current value of all property lost at the time each person sought refuge, or immediate return with full restoration of property and citizenship rights, with all costs paid by the State of Israel;
8. The abolition of Zionism as the official ideology of the State of Israel, and the elimination of its theocratic-nationalist character. Zionism is a colonial, racist and xenophobic ideology that contradicts the essence of democracy, equality, freedom and secularism. The so-called "Jewish character" of Israel inhibits it from providing equality to all its citizens;
9. A democratic and secular Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and cooperation, and hopefully

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# **-national/michigan**

## **U.S. Supreme Court on affirmative action:**

# **Not a victory**

**By MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

ON JUNE 23, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on the two cases against the University of Michigan, related to the school's policy and application of affirmative action.

In a 5-4 decision, the Court upheld the "race conscious" process of the U-M Law School, but, in a 6-3 decision, struck down the undergraduate point system, and sent the case back to the Court of Appeals for further disposition.

Civil rights groups, including radical student groups like BAMN (By Any Means Necessary), hailed the split decision as a "100 percent victory." They saw the reversal of the point system as a "minor point."

We respectfully disagree.

The split decision of the Supreme Court sent a singular message: in theory, race can be a factor in admissions; but don't attempt

to put it into practice in any meaningful way. Or, to put it in simpler terms: *talk a lot; do nothing.*

Affirmative action was enacted as an attempt to correct, in concrete terms, the inequality of capitalist society.

The latest decision of the Supreme Court has successfully rolled this back, saying that the most educational institutions can do to implement affirmative action is talk a good game.

For Socialists, affirmative action is part of the struggle for democracy and social equality. That is, for affirmative action to work, its administration by capitalism must end, and working people must put it into practice themselves.

The Supreme Court decision went in the opposite direction; affirmative action is not something to put into practice, they said, but best kept as an abstract "goal."

Rolling back affirmative action to a mere abstraction robs the struggle of its social



**Students of color celebrate the Supreme Court's split decision on affirmative action. But, is there really any reason to celebrate?**

content, and can only be seen as a defeat in the struggle for freedom and liberation.

Those groups hailing such a rollback as a "victory" are either blinded by the capitalists' platitudes about "equality" or are consciously deceiving their supporters. ★

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**Be careful what you wish for...**

## **Feds now control Detroit cops**

**By MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

IN A MOVE that many radicals and liberals are hailing as a victory, the city and the federal government have agreed on two consent decrees that give the U.S. Department of Justice oversight of the Detroit Police Department.

City officials signed the decrees on June 12, settling a civil rights complaint filed in federal court the same day.

The federal oversight and control of the Detroit Police is the culmination of a 30-month investigation by the Justice Dept., following a 30-month investigation requested by then-Mayor Dennis Archer into a series of murders committed by the cops, as well as cases of arbitrary and indefinite detention of "material witnesses."

The police will have 90 days to implement changes to department policy in many areas, including the detaining and care of witnesses and suspects, the use of force, and ensuring due process. The feds will oversee how this plan is put into place, and how it progresses, until June 2008.

To be honest, many of the changes the Detroit Police will be forced to make are, in the abstract, supportable: rewriting the rules on the use of force to place more emphasis on non-lethal weapons; verbal warnings before using chemical weapons (e.g., pepper spray); safe, clean detention cells; guaranteeing due process and judicial oversight; etc.

However, as much as these reforms will make one's experiences with the Detroit Police less hazardous to a certain degree, a greater danger lies beneath the consent de-

crees and the federal control.

Some months ago, the Detroit City Council passed a resolution barring the police department from assisting Attorney General John Ashcroft in investigations related to provisions of the USA-PATRIOT Act. The resolution was hailed as an act of defiance, and resulted in The City joining a growing movement of local and state governments against the Washington regime.

But now, with Detroit police under the control of Washington, that resolution is not worth the paper on which it is printed. It is only a matter of time before Detroit police begin accompanying federal agents on "terrorism-related" raids.

To take it a step further, there is a possibility that these raids will, at some point, be turned against the unions in the area.

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# world Class warfare in Venezuela

By WALT WEBER

Special to the *Michigan Socialist*

THE POLITICAL SITUATION in Venezuela has recently developed into a hot bed of action, where multiple groups are currently engaged in an intense fight for power.

The opposition to the government, masquerading as a labor struggle, is an organization calling itself the Democratic Coordinator.

The Democratic Coordinator called a “general strike” in protest of the Chavez government, with the hope that their unified action would bring down his presidency.

A closer look at this so-called strike however, demonstrates the true class politics involved in the Venezuelan people’s struggle for democracy and social reform.

The Democratic Coordinator movement is a group of people who are asking Hugo Chavez, the democratically elected president of Venezuela in 1998 and 2000, to step down from the presidency.

They claim that through his serious of reforms, called the Bolivarian Revolution, he is trying to seize power in Venezuela, and they consider him to be an authoritarian Marxist and a dictator.

In the elections of 1998 and 2000, Chavez was elected into office on a social democratic platform that included tax restructuring on foreign oil companies, land reform, an attempt to reduce poverty, and a strong stand against government corruption.

This platform was the basis of the reorganized constitution of Venezuela, which was adopted in 1999 by popular referendum.

Chavez’s platform also advocated the reorganization of the state oil monopoly, PDVSA, to ensure that more of the revenue generated from the oil went to the government for social programs, and less went into the pockets of management.

As it is, 50 percent of the state’s revenue and 70 percent of the country’s export revenue are derived from PDVSA’s oil exports.

This platform of progressive reforms has provoked a response from the elite in Ven-



Opposition protestors march in Caracas, Venezuela. Just so you know, “Gente del Petroleo” means “Oil Men” in Spanish. Sometimes, a picture really is worth 1,000 words.

ezuela, including large landowners, business owners, and the white-collar management of PDVSA. These groups united to create the Democratic Coordinator, the primary mechanism of opposition to Chavez’s popular reforms.

This group includes the CTV trade union, as well as the Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Fedecamaras), media owners, and other middle-class and wealthy citizens against Chavez’s reform agenda.

It is these groups who have called the “strike” against Chavez, which has been reported very favorably among media sources in the U.S. However, the term strike in itself is a misnomer. The situation in Venezuela would be more accurately labeled a managerial lockout.

Strikes are a withholding of labor by the workers of a shop or industry in an attempt by the workers to make a gain. This withholding of labor stops production, and forces the demands of workers to be taken seriously by management.

Currently in Venezuela however, the organization of people calling for the work stoppage is not composed of the workers themselves, but of business owners and managers of the state oil company. By walking out of their jobs, the managers make it nearly impossible for the workers, who want

to work, to do so.

A strike is a voluntary withholding of labor; an involuntary withholding of labor is a lockout. This current “strike” in Venezuela is no more a strike than the ILWU’s lockout was in late 2002. In both cases, the workers wanted to resume work, but were denied the opportunity to do so by a large coalition of management.

The difference is that in the U.S., the ILWU faced a large coalition of management in the PMA, but only a lockout in one industry.

In Venezuela, workers are facing a cross platform lockout that spreads over a few different industries. This is a prime example of organized capital waging a war against a democratically elected government, as well as against the working class of Venezuela.

In fact, the only workers actively participating in the so-called strike in Venezuela are the white-collar managers of PDVSA. This group will lose the most if Chavez’s restructuring plan takes effect.

In fact, the April 2002 “strike” of the same nature was based largely on a similar gripe; the raises in salary of white-collar workers would be cut. The current restructuring plan would adjust the salaries of white-collar workers even more, with less money going to management and more money going to the Venezuelan govern-



**'It's all so unnecessary...'**

# Rebellion in Benton Harbor

**By BEN BURGIS**

*The Michigan Socialist*

IMAGINE THE FOLLOWING scenario.

It is February, and the streets of Saddam Hussein's Baghdad are restless. His despicable regime maintains itself on a "security force" of torturers and murderers who rain terror on ethnic minorities and political dissidents.

When the decision is made to "make an example" of someone, they are arrested in humiliating circumstances, often savagely beaten.

The court system is so corrupt and loyal to the Hussein regime that the "case" can be rushed through at lightning speed, with no physical evidence or believable testimony, and the hapless victim can spend the rest of his or her life in prison.

The residents of Baghdad's Shiite ghettos are especially aware of the constant danger that they are in.

Against this background, one day a young Shiite is driving through the streets and sees some notorious members of the

Ba'athist "security forces" tailing him. He is understandably terrified.

He speeds up in a vain attempt to evade them and save his life. They chase after him like little children enjoying themselves far too much in a real life game of "cowboys and Indians."

When they catch up, one of the Ba'athist thugs starts slamming the Shiite motorcyclist from behind, causing an even further acceleration as he tries to save himself. The other member of this latter-day SS swerves out in front of the Shiite motorcyclist to drive him into a nearby brick wall.

The deed is done. One of the thugs kicks the young Shiite where he lies on the ground, and he and his partner give each other high fives.

This, finally, is too much for this miserably oppressed community. In a rare show of courage, a huge crowd of Baghdad Shiites goes to protest at the City Hall located in a Sunni neighborhood.

One of the distraught petitioners starts screaming and swearing about the state repression they all face, and one of the eth-

ment for social programs.

Despite the strike's crippling effects on PDVSA and other particular industries, many businesses have remained open and disregarded the bogus call to strike. Small businesses cannot afford to close as long as large companies can. The result is that a large amount of economic activity has continued despite the lockout.

Chavez has turned the tide, and despite the business classes attempt to sabotage it, his agenda of social reform and aid to the poor will continue.

And although the Democratic Coordinator has pushed an intense propaganda

machine to build support for their agenda, the majority of the country is still in large support of Chavez. This includes the working class, the rural and urban poor, and the military.

In a country where over 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, it is easy to see why Chavez's platform of increased social programs, increased democracy, and land reform has stood the test of four general strikes, as well as an armed coup that removed him from power for about two days.

In a country that was previously ravaged by austerity programs and neo-liberal re-



**Police prowl through the streets of Benton Harbor on the first night of the rebellion.**

nic-Sunni Ba'athists running the show uses it as a pretext to kick them all out.

That sets off a firestorm. Thousands of Baghdad's most degraded citizens, mostly Shiites, rampage through town, turning over and smashing the vehicles of Saddam Hussein's security forces, throwing firebombs into government buildings and chanting repeatedly: "NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE! NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!"

The regime knows that they are in grave danger. Hundreds of security thugs are

forms, Chavez has found a wide umbrella of support to address and fix these problems.

Despite the attempts to incapacitate his government by the local and global economic elite, he has continued as the leader of a social democratic revolution in Venezuela. ★

*This article is reprinted from Workers Democracy, newspaper of the Workers Democracy Network.*



**On the Internet:**  
[www.workersdemocracy.org](http://www.workersdemocracy.org)

## lead article

brought together from all around the area, and they surround the most important government buildings.

A nervous Saddam Hussein signs an order allowing the Iraqi Army to be deployed in assisting the police and civil security services in crushing the uprising.

Sure, the violence has been nothing compared to day-to-day street crime, but the core issue is one of power, and the regime is taking no chances. The entire Shiite ghetto is put on a strict curfew, every community member treated with suspicion.

After a few days of this, the uprising is quelled and Saddam Hussein's regime is once again secure.

Now, how would this story be covered in the western media? This goes without saying.

The Ba'athist security forces would be the villains, the violence a long-delayed popular uprising against repression. William Safire and Norman Podhoretz would write op-ed pieces proclaiming in tearful terms their admiration of the heroism of a largely unarmed population rising up against incredible odds.

The whole nation watching, President Bush would give his most inspiring speech, praising the citizens of Baghdad and telling them they would very soon no longer have to fight alone.

To Saddam Hussein and his lackeys, he would deliver a very strict warning indeed. Acts of cruelty in suppressing the uprising

would not go unpunished when our boys rode to Baghdad's rescue. Sit this one out, and you will be rewarded.

Now, back to reality. Everything in the first four paragraphs happened, with one vital difference. It didn't happen in Iraq, it happened in Michigan, near the Indiana border.

IF YOU SUBSTITUTE "Black" for "Shiite," and the "Benton Charter Township Police Department" for "Saddam Hussein's security forces," and the picture starts to fall into place. What would have been called a popular uprising against state repression anywhere else in the world was simply called a "riot." Even the most liberal commentators took for granted that the "rioters" were the villains.

Incidents of opportunistic crime that took place during the chaos were played up to the exclusion of the political content of the major drama. When the police chief bemoaned the uprising against police brutality, saying "its all so unnecessary," his comments were widely reported without irony.

The crowd that always pretends to feel for the victims of oppression in situations where the oil and gas companies have something to gain from "regime change" held the silence of the tomb on the miniature police state in Benton Harbor.

That the incident took place exactly as described is certain beyond reasonable

## *Benton Harbor and St. Joseph used to be called "twin cities," until the bitter irony became too much.*

doubt. Forty eyewitnesses attested to the facts, and only the accused murderers themselves — who, by the way, have been "punished" with paid vacation — dispute them.

This in an impoverished and racially segregated city whose residents are often sent off to life in prison by corrupt white judges without so much as a single credible eyewitness testifying to the prosecution's story.

Still, what is the word of 40 poor Black people compared to that of two white cops accused of murder? Not surprisingly, the state police "investigating" the matter have interviewed none of these witnesses so far.

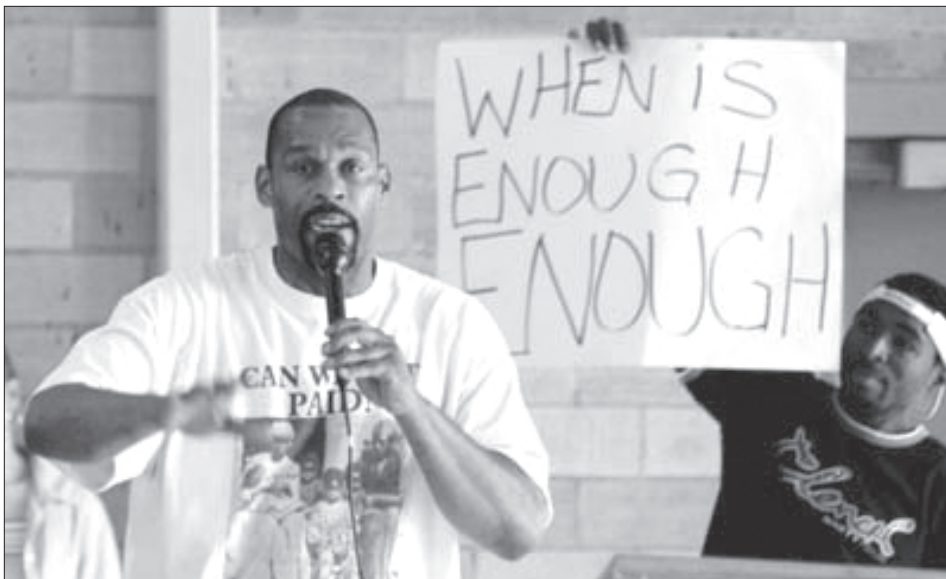
None of this is new in Berrien County, which, as a scale model of race-based superoppression in the U.S., is almost a caricature.

It is the sort of place that sociologists love to write books about, and that capitalist politicians love to pretend does not exist. Benton Harbor and St. Joseph used to be called "twin cities" until the bitter irony became a bit too much. Benton Harbor is over 95 percent Black. St. Joseph is over 95 percent white.

The County is ruled from St. Joseph. A recent County Commissioners' meeting in St. Joe, attended by a few activists from Lansing, including a member of the Socialist Party of Michigan and reporter from the *Michigan Socialist*, was almost surreal.

None of the commissioners could have been cast to play the role in a similar scene in a movie, because it would be too absurdly pedantic. "Yes, yes, we get it, they're the corrupt local power structure. You don't have to beat us over the heads with it!"

They wear nice suits. They are almost all white. Many of them happen to be very overweight. And as they sat through a long



Residents of Benton Harbor express their outrage at the racist cop violence that resulted in the rebellion. They ask a good question, but we don't think they'll like the answer.

“public comment” session with Benton Harbor residents raging against the urban decay and police violence that plague them, most of them couldn’t help looking very, very bored.

MANY ACTIVISTS WERE there with “Free Maurice Carter” shirts, and his case is illustrative of the something rotten that is stinking up Berrien County. He is still in prison on charges of killing a white police officer in 1973, despite some very odd facts.

For one thing, he was identified in a line up only after severe prodding by police including showing witnesses his picture. Eye-witness testimony that the shooter was much darker than Carter was suppressed the prosecution. It gets worse.

A key witness later admitted that he had been threatened with a life sentence for his own crimes if he did not play along. It goes on and on. No weapon was found, no motive was determined, no fingerprints implicated him. It does not take much for a poor Black man in Benton Harbor to be put away for life. Certainly, he does not need 40 eye-witnesses to murder.

A woman who once served on Benton Harbor’s City Council lashed out in scalding terms at the police conduct and the county’s toleration of it. She wondered whether Berrien County now considered speeding to be a “death penalty offense.”

She mocked the argument, common in the western part of our state especially, that the kind of crippling economic conditions that provided so much of the subtext of that situation could be solved through the churches. She referred to this “solution” as being somewhat comparable to trying to cure cancer with band-aids.

After the public comment section was over, the Commissioners went on to unrelated county business as if nothing had happened. Outraged, all of the community members present, every single one, walked out of the room. This is exactly the right response to what that detail reveals about the attitudes of those in power towards the uprising and its aftermath.

The Governor has appointed a “special” commission. Investigations will abound. The cause of the events will be determined to be “complex” and solutions will evade the investigators. That a murder occurred,



**Berrien County sheriffs occupy Black neighborhoods in Benton Harbor. Gee, and people wonder why comparisons to Saddam Hussein are made?!**

that there have been 20 severe beatings meted out by local police since January, that local judges are openly corrupt, that almost unbelievably oppressive conditions of poverty and racial segregation are apparent everywhere will evade their notice — or be ignored.

The poverty wages paid to Benton Harbor residents lucky enough to have jobs are good for profits. The police reign of terror keeps the rabble in line. It ain’t broke, so why fix it?

TO BE CERTAIN, no one should hold their breath waiting for the Governor, the state police and the rest to announce that they will be pursuing lifetime prison terms for the police murderers, or that they will work to appeal legislation allowing police chases to be pursued along county lines.

As well, no one is expecting that they will support a dramatic increase in the minimum wage and an end to police involvement in strikebreaking, to help lift people out of poverty, or that they will institute a public works program to end unemployment.

And no one is deluded enough to think that they will institute a school busing program to integrate the public schools of Benton Harbor and St. Joseph, and equalize their funding.

Vague appeals to “peace” and “harmony” will be the general rule, when that is understood to mean that the people of Benton

Harbor do not rise up, that “normal” conditions of poverty, racial segregation and state repression can continue.

In these circumstances, it is worth noting a very perceptive comment by the historian Howard Zinn: “There’s hardly anything more important that people can learn than the fact that the really critical thing isn’t who is sitting in the White House, but who is sitting in — in the streets, in the cafeterias, in the halls of government, in the factories.”

“Who is protesting, who is occupying offices and demonstrating — those are the things that determine what happens.”

With that in mind, every one who reads this should come to Benton Harbor on July 12. The community will gather at the City Hall at 11 a.m. to march against police violence. Anything that people in the rest of the state can do to let these people know that we stand in solidarity with their struggle is vital.

Meanwhile, any one who wants to understand what happened in Benton Harbor and why should ignore the media, the governor and the police chief, and listen to the community residents when they speak for themselves.

One local woman was interviewed by the *New York Times* as the June 15-17 uprising raged about why it happened, and gave a succinct and heart-felt response.

“I guess people here just got tired of being killed.” ★



# Monumental decay

A story about unions in America

By **JOE DeNEEN**

*The Michigan Socialist*

NOT TOO LONG ago, a friend told me of a monument dedicated to the Flint Sit-Down Strike of 1936-37. The monument stands a few yards east of Harrison Street at the north bank of the Flint River in Riverbank Park.

Nearby are worn and waving American and UAW flags above a block reading "UAW: A Walk in History," with long busted lighting fixtures around it.

Numerous trees block the view of the monument, leaving one to wonder what structure stands behind the branches.

The monument consists of three cement replicas of the automobile seats the strikers spent 44 days seated on.

These seats mark the perimeter and surround two walls that rise in the center.

The four sides of the walls are covered in four separate murals made up of hand-painted tiles depicting the strike, the shop floor, workers and numerous quotes from strike participants and notables of the American labor movement including Eugene V. Debs and Samuel Gompers.

Along the base of the walls lie scattered chunks of the murals that have long since decayed and fallen apart due to aging, weathering and vandalism, leaving the remaining murals cracked and faded.

In 1987, the 50th anniversary of the strike, the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Flint City Council, among others, constructed and dedicated the monument in celebration of the women and men who took part in the historic strike.

The Flint Sit-Down Strike took place during the Great Depression. The average autoworker took home \$900 a year, while the minimum income a family of four needed to survive was \$1,600.

With life in such dire poverty, the workers looked to the UAW for assistance in halting abuses by General Motors (GM), the largest corporation in the world, including unionbusting by hired Pinkerton guards, routine firings, wage



**A section of the decaying remains of the monument to the 1936 Flint Sit-Down Strike. This section, before it was destroyed, displayed famous quotes from labor activists and leaders like Eugene V. Debs and Samuel Gompers.**

cuts and work stoppages and speedups.

On December 30, 1936, GM began hauling its machinery onto rail cars, prompting the UAW to call the strike, and 3,000 workers barricaded the doors and closed Fisher Body Plant 1. Soon after, 100 workers sat down at Plant 2.

The women workers were made to leave the plants to avoid slanders of "immorality," resulting in the formation of the Women's Emergency Brigade. The Brigade supported the strike by supplying the strikers with food, clothing and other necessities.

When the police, Pinkerton guards and National Guard came knocking at the gates, it was the Women's Brigade who stopped them, smashing the windows to protect from tear gas and even carried their own clubs for defense.

(I highly recommend the documentary, "With Babies and Banners," which is available at the Flint Public Library.)

The strikers demands included: a

national conference between the UAW and GM; abolition of all piecework systems of pay; a six-hour day and 30-hour week, with time and one-half for work above these; a minimum wage; reinstatement of all employees "unjustly discharged;" straight seniority; speed of production to be mutually determined by each plant management and shop committee; and, recognition of the UAW as the sole bargaining agent for GM employees.

Victory finally came soon after Chevrolet 4 went on strike after the strikers used Chevrolet 9 as a decoy pulling the plant guards away. With the closure of Chevrolet 4, the strikers shut down GM's most important plant that produced 1 million engines a year.

On February 11, 1937, the strike was won when GM agreed to acknowledge the UAW and enter negotiations bringing out thousands of strikers and their supports in deafening screams of "Solidar-



ity Forever!"

Unfortunately, that great event for American workers has fallen in the waste bin of history, decayed and forgotten like its monument.

Ironically, GM ultimately "won" by pulling almost completely out of Flint by 1999 with the closure of Buick City, leaving behind a city with high unemployment, an infrastructure in ruin and weakened unions.

But GM cannot be fully blamed. Capitalism has created the conditions for Flint to decay and unions have weakened due to a poor leadership that has long lost its radical spark of the 1930s, and betrayed industrial unionism and the rank-and-file.

The deindustrialization of American society, representative of Flint, has also resulted in the rapid decline of union membership nationwide and the struggle by unions to survive in the 21st century. With it has come the rise in non-union service-sector jobs with low wages and little to no benefits.

Like the monument, the American labor movement can re-emerge bigger and better.

On June 3, the UAW broke ground behind UAW Region 1-C headquarters to begin construction of a new monument,

which is expected to be completed on September 1, Labor Day.

The monument will consist of a granite base, a surrounding walkway of bricks and six bronze figures representing different workers and a Woman's Emergency Brigade member surrounding an eternal flame.

All across the country new union locals are popping up in every sector of industry. "Janitors for Justice" has been a successful campaign in California unionizing janitors.

Even the radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) has witnessed gains in California in recent months with unionizing of Stone Mountain and Daughter Fabrics in Berkeley, and East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse in Oakland.

Recently in Ann Arbor, workers at Borders bookstore unionized making it the first store in Michigan to do so.

At the University of Michigan non-tenure-track faculty won their struggle for unionization under Lecturers Employee Organization (LEO).

Established unions are also fighting for their survival as companies refuse to sign new contracts. In New York City, thousands of public union workers rallied against lay offs and wage cuts.

Union workers at Azteca Foods in

Chicago have been fighting for a new contract and called for a nationwide boycott of Azteca products that has gone on for months.

In Michigan, thousands of teachers and school faculty have been working without contracts for months and even years.

Let us not forget the old slogan, "an injury to one is an injury to all." Unions need to revitalize their role in American society with waves of aggressive campaigns across the country unionizing every worker regardless of industry, trade, ethnicity, sex or nationality.

To expropriate a line from Karl Marx, "The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all countries, unite!" ★



In a scene forever captured in history, Flint sit-down strikers celebrate their victory over General Motors, after the announcement of the company's recognition of the union, Feb. 11, 1937.

Read...

## THE SOCIALIST

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*Ford Motor Company*  
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## *on a century of...*

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## *automotive tradition!*



Henry Ford Sr. is awarded the Grand Cross, the highest award given to foreigners by NAZI GERMANY! We NEVER FORGET!

***This message brought to you  
by the Michigan Socialist***

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# Police

*continued from page 3*

Many Arab and Muslim workers in the area belong to some of the largest and most powerful unions in this country — the United Auto Workers, AFSCME, the Teamsters, etc.

It is easy to see a scenario where the federal government decides to go after one or more of these unions because one of their "suspects" is also a union member.

For years, the progressive movement in Detroit called for federal intervention into the police. Now they have it — but it is not being carried out under the conditions that originally sparked the call.

Then, there was a nominally democratic government running the Justice Dept. Now, there is an unelected, fascistic and corporatist regime backing a KKK-loving head of the department.

The likelihood is that little, if anything, will really change for the better at the Detroit Police Department. The changes will be whitewashed, and the facts kept from the public. In the meantime, the police will become an extension of the Bush regime, and protect those interests over and above those of the people.

At the very least, this latest turn of events is a tragic confirmation of the old saying: "Be careful what you wish for, you may just get it." ★

# Editorial

*continued from page 2*

working toward a unified federal republic. Israel should give to the newly formed State of Palestine all taxes collected from the Palestinians, since 1967, to be used to rebuild Palestine's infrastructure and fund universal education and health care, and other social services.

The Socialist Party of Michigan supports the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation. We support armed resistance as a legitimate means of self-defense, aimed at ending the occupation. We also support and encourage worldwide demonstrations, strikes, rallies, boycotts and divestment actions, and the use of civil disobedience and other non-violent means and cooperation between all ethnic, national and religious groups to end the occupation and achieve peace and security for everyone in the region. ★



## **Socialist Party of Michigan State Convention**

Saturday, July 19, 2003 • 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Room 2195, School of Management  
University of Michigan-Dearborn

**The public is invited to attend. For more information, call  
(313) 535-4234 or e-mail [michigansocialist@ameritech.net](mailto:michigansocialist@ameritech.net)**

# Water

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Thompson Lake alone has dropped 5 inches since Perrier began its operations in Michigan, paralleling severe drops in Crystal Spring near Orlando, Fla., where Perrier has pumped for the past seven years.

Perrier estimates that the groundwater inflow to its spring site will decrease by 26 percent, along with a 50 percent decrease in the discharge rate to the culvert downstream.

Water is my no means exempt from privatization's inevitable cancerous spread, particularly in this age of corporate globalization.

Under the Chapter 11 rules of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) corporations cannot be treated differentially, and have the ability to sue governments directly for hindering their right to profit if some corporations are given access to a publicly owned resource and others are not.

This sets an especially dangerous precedent for the world's largest supply of fresh water, which, under such rules, could potentially come widely under the control of a few conglomerates.

Despite Perrier's new legal entitlement to amass Michigan's most vital publicly-owned resource for free, many of Michigan's low-income residents have found that their unassailable right to water for themselves and their families is now null and void.

Since last year, the City of Detroit Water Department, directed by former Thames Water and United Water Companies executive, Victor Mercado, has shut off water to over 40,000 of its residents, most of whom received no prior notice.

All shut-offs were because of failure to pay.

Many of these residents are victims of former president Clinton's 1996 Welfare Reform Act, which put a five year limit on welfare assistance.

Unemployed residents of Detroit and others working only minimum wage jobs, exempting them from Family Independence

Agency assistance, are now being slapped with unaffordable water and energy bills and large unpaid back balances.

These long-running balances have been especially catastrophic for tenants in the city whose landlords have not paid their water bills for years.

For families with steam-heated homes, the water shut-offs have also meant a loss of heat due to radiators needing water to operate.

Although little progress has been made in terms of negotiations or reform, water rights activists from the Sweetwater Alliance have made their voices heard with continuous demonstrations at the Detroit Water Department headquarters and the Ice Mountain bottling plant.

Their message is as clear as the life-sustaining resource for which they fight: water is neither a commodity nor a luxury for the fortunate, but a fundamental human right for all. ★



**On the Internet:**  
[www.waterissweet.org](http://www.waterissweet.org)

# DMC

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lem starts at the top — with the board and the financial accounting.

Looking at the problems in the DMC today, you almost get a sense that the governing board was taking tips from Enron and MCI WorldCom. The main problem now, though, is that the proposals by state and local officials are allowing the top brass at the DMC to build higher walls of protection from prying eyes.

The proposal put forward by DMC CEO,

Dr. Arthur Porter, to create a two-tier board, with only select members being able to review the budget, is a step toward making independent auditing of the system difficult, and could even be seen as a move that favors privatization of the system.

We propose a different approach.

The DMC should belong to the people, and should not be run on a for-profit basis. We support making the DMC publicly owned and democratically controlled, with unit and hospital committees coordinating and making the decisions of how the hospital should be run.

Further, we are in favor of "cutting the

fat" where it really exists — at the top. We support removing the unaccountable governing board with a coordinating committee elected from unit and hospital committees, accountable to them and the City Council, with compensation no higher than that of the average working person at the DMC.

Finally, anyone who is a resident of Detroit, regardless of income, should be guaranteed free and quality medical care through the creation of a municipal health service, run by an elected council and responsible for coordinating with city agencies to acquire funds and improve services. ★

## Congratulations! It's a comrade!



The staff of the *Michigan Socialist*, and the membership of the Socialist Party of Michigan would like to welcome

## Collin Edward Walker Treacy

who came into the world at 3:26 p.m., June 24, 2003.  
We all offer our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to him and his parents, Mike and Christy.





Michigan's water sold for profit as thousands are denied access...

# The price for H<sub>2</sub>O

By **MATT ERARD**

*The Michigan Socialist*

PERRIER GROUP OF America, a subsidiary of Nestlé, the world's largest food producer, began production last May of their regional brand of bottled water, Ice Mountain, at their bottling plant in Mecosta County, Michigan.

Perrier, which controls 30 percent of the world's bottled water market, cut one of the most lucrative deals with the state government last year, a deal that most corporations could have only dreamed about in the past, at a time when water is a scarcer resource to Michigan's residents than ever before.

Under permits from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Perrier is permitted to have one bottling plant in Mecosta County, including two production wells, a facility, and a pipeline. From



The Sweetwater Alliance protests outside of Gov. Granholm's inauguration in Lansing.

this plant, Perrier is permitted to withdraw 200 gallons per minute, equaling 200 million gallons per year.

Along with denying citizens in Mecosta and Morton townships their right to put the project to a referendum, the state of Michigan has entitled Perrier to withdraw 500,000 gallons of the state's water per day,

while paying nothing to the state's citizens and privately keeping all of the profits.

Unlike water taken by farmers and individuals, which returns to its original basin, Ice Mountain water taken, bottled, and shipped throughout the Midwest is not restored to the ecosystem.

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For-profit medicine bears fruit...

# Detroit Medical Center goes bust

By **L. MEYERS**

*The Michigan Socialist*

THE DETROIT MEDICAL CENTER (DMC) is the primary care provider for the people of Detroit. Every year, it handles tens of thousands of patients, many of whom have no insurance and cannot pay out of their own pockets for services.

This is because health care in the United States continues to be a for-profit industry, operating on the same basis as other capitalist businesses. The difference, though, is that health care is not something that is a "personal choice," like buying a car or furniture — it is, quite literally, a matter of life or death.

And now, we are seeing the fruits of for-profit health care.

On June 16, Governor Jennifer Granholm, Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick agreed to offer support to the failing DMC and to come up with short-term "solutions" to keep the medical conglomerate from closing its doors.

The DMC is running an unsecured debt of over \$360 million, most of which is claimed to be the result of poor and uninsured patients being unable to cover the over-inflated costs of medical care. But is it?

A review of the numbers published in the major capitalist newspapers in Detroit, the *News* and *Free Press*, fail to account for more than half of the listed debt at the DMC. In addition, the amount that the DMC has budgeted for covering costs from the unin-

sured and Medicaid patients is less than one-third of what is owed.

So why are poor people and the uninsured being targeted? Could it be a diversion?

There may be an answer to that question in the conditions Granholm, Ficano and Kilpatrick have placed on the plan to save DMC: work with a publicly-appointed "oversight committee;" undergo a new, independent audit; restructure their governing board; and earmark any emergency public funds for Receiving and Hutzel hospitals.

If we were to base our assumptions about the source of the problems at the DMC based on these four recommendations, then we're left with no question that the prob-

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