

**Ann Arbor City Council Session: August 15, 2011  
 Email Redactions List Pursuant to Council Resolution R-09-386**

<u>Received Time</u>	<u>Sent Time</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>CC</u>	<u>Redactions</u>	<u>Reason for Redaction</u>
8:03 PM	8:03 PM	Taylor, Christopher	Zetter, Doug lowerburnsparkneighborhood association@googlegroups.c om on behalf of Jardtje		Email addresses; property address	Privacy
8:22 PM	8:22 PM	lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation	lowerburnsparkneighborhood association@googlegroups.c om on behalf of Deborah Fisch		Email addresses; property address	Privacy
8:37 PM	8:36 PM	lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation	Fisch		Email address; property address	Privacy

**From:** Pete Hoekstra [pete@hoekstraforsenate.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 7:49 PM  
**To:** Derezhinski, Tony  
**Subject:** Mitt Romney



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 15, 2011

**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT**

**MITT ROMNEY: Hoekstra would  
make a terrific senator**

**“Pete is an intelligent, capable, business-savvy leader.”**  
*– presidential hopeful Gov. Mitt Romney*

Senate Showdown  
Holland Sentinel  
August 12, 2011

**“Pete is an intelligent, capable, business-savvy leader, who would make a terrific senator,”** said presidential hopeful Mitt Romney, a Michigan native. **‘I surely have the highest regard for Pete Hoekstra and his capability.’**

“Hoekstra would be the most experienced opponent Stabenow has faced after 18 years in the U.S. House.” [Read more.](#)

*For more information, please visit [www.hoekstraforsenate.com](http://www.hoekstraforsenate.com).*

###

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Paid for by Hoekstra for Senate

This message was sent from **Pete Hoekstra** to [tderezinski@a2gov.org](mailto:tderezinski@a2gov.org).  
It was sent from: Pete Hoekstra for Senate, 151 Central Avenue, Suite 220 Holland, MI 49423.



[Unsubscribe](#)

**Greenshields, Rachel**

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**From:** Doug Zeffer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:03 PM  
**To:** Taylor, Christopher (Council)  
**Subject:** Re: FW: [REDACTED] Nocturnal use of Abandoned House  
**Attachments:** [REDACTED].JPG

Address confirmed. I wish there were no [REDACTED]. Here's some photos.

Regards,  
Doug

On Mon, Aug 15, 2011 at 12:44 PM, Taylor, Christopher (Council) <[CTaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:CTaylor@a2gov.org)> wrote:  
Doug,

Can you please confirm the address?

Thanks!

Christopher  
Christopher Taylor  
Member, Ann Arbor City Council (Third Ward)  
[734-506-8770](tel:734-506-8770) (m)  
[734-213-3605](tel:734-213-3605) (w)  
[734-213-6223](tel:734-213-6223) (h)

---

**From:** Larcom, Kristen  
**Sent:** Mon 8/15/2011 12:13 PM  
**To:** Taylor, Christopher (Council)  
**Cc:** Seto, John  
**Subject:** RE: [REDACTED] -- Nocturnal use of Abandoned House

Chris: From my review of City Assessor records, I think there is no [REDACTED]. If DC Seto agrees, would you be able to clarify the address?  
Kristen

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Taylor, Christopher (Council)  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 10:10 AM  
**To:** Seto, John  
**Cc:** Larcom, Kristen; Postema, Stephen; Crawford, Tom; Higgins, Sara; Hieftje, John; Jones, Barnett  
**Subject:** [REDACTED] - Nocturnal use of Abandoned House

Deputy Chief Seto / Ms. Larcom,

Good morning.

Please see below regarding persons using an abandoned house on [REDACTED] for improper nighttime activities. I have asked the neighbors to be vigilant and indicated to them the importance of communication to AAPD when they see anything out of the ordinary, but I would be grateful for any and all swift, proactive work with Patrol and/or other measures that we can deploy to address this situation.

Thanks very much, as ever, for your help in these matters.

Best,

Christopher

Christopher Taylor  
Member, Ann Arbor City Council (Third Ward)  
734-506-8770 (m)  
734-213-3605 (w)  
734-213-6223 (h)

-----Original Message-----

From: Doug Zeffer [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: Mon 8/15/2011 9:57 AM  
To: Taylor, Christopher (Council)  
Cc: [REDACTED] neighborhood@yahoogroups.com  
Subject: Re: [REDACTED] neighborhood] Re: Abandoned Houses

Thanks, Chris:

The address is [REDACTED] Looks like they're getting access through the windows. According to a neighbor they are going in and out at night only.

Regards,  
Doug

On Sun, Aug 14, 2011 at 9:55 AM, councilmember\_christopher\_taylor <[votetaylor2@gmail.com](mailto:votetaylor2@gmail.com)> wrote:

> \*\*  
>  
>  
> Thanks for the shout out, Rob!  
>  
> Doug, if you would please email me at ctaylor [at] a2gov [dot] org with the  
> address and details, I will work on the problem from my end.  
>  
> In the meantime, if you or any one on this list ever see anyone on the  
> premises that doesn't belong, please call the police immediately, either 911  
> or the non-emergency number: 794-6911. These calls, whenever there is a  
> problem, create critical data for AAPD and/or the City Attorney's Office to  
> use in combatting public nuisances such as this.  
>  
> Thanks very much and please do not hesitate to contact me with any  
> questions you may have.  
>  
> Best,  
>  
> Christopher  
>  
> --- In [REDACTED] neighborhood@yahoogroups.com, Rob Stone [REDACTED]  
> wrote:  
>>  
>> Hi, Doug -  
>>  
>> I think it would be worth contacting councilperson  
>> Christopher Taylor about seeking a more permanent solution to the

> squatter problem? I have found him to be quite responsive.

>>

>>

>> Rob Stone

>>

>> On Aug 13, 2011, at 5:34 AM, Doug Zeffer [REDACTED] wrote:

>>

>>> Speaking of abandoned houses. brown There [REDACTED] The one

> that's [REDACTED] has been a problem. That's the one that

> had all the parties. Eviction was complete in July, according to the city.

> Since then There's been people breaking in and sleeping inside. Arrests were

> made about a month ago but they're back. Can't wait till this house gets

> resold.

>>>

>>> FYI

>>>

>>> Doug

>>>

>>>

>>

>

> \_\_\_\_\_



3237



## Greenshields, Rachel

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**From:** lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com on behalf of jadite [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:22 PM  
**To:** lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation  
**Subject:** Re: LoBuPa Subject header for our group

On Aug 11, 10:36 am, Kathleen Kryza <[REDACTED]> wrote:

> YEAH!!!! This is awesome!!!! Thanks Dan and Nancy for making it happen.

>

> Nancy, thanks in advance for typing up the notes from the meeting.

>

> Peace, Kathleen

>

> Kathleen Kryza

>

> Educational Consultant/Coach

> Co-Creator and Chief Inspirational Officer Infinite Horizons -

> [www.kathleenkryza.com](http://www.kathleenkryza.com) Inspiring Learners -

> [www.inspiringlearner.com](http://www.inspiringlearner.com)

>

> --Inspiring teachers to honor and grow their students culturally, emotionally and academically.

> Be the change you wish to see in the world! -Gandhi

>

> On Aug 11, 2011, at 10:26 AM, Nancy & Todd Leff [REDACTED] wrote:

>

>> Hi All,

>

>> Thanks to Dan for helping me to figure this out. I think that our

>> subject line should now say: LoBuPa followed by the subject line.

>

>> I hope this helps out. And thanks to Miriam for motivating me to do

>> this!

>

>> I will be sending a synopsis of the Stadium Bridges Meeting from

>> last night in a day or so. It was a good meeting and many good

>> ideas came out of the discussions.

>

>> Nancy Leff

>> [REDACTED]

>

>> --

>> You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups

"lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation" group.

>> To post to this group, send email to [lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com](mailto:lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com).

>> To unsubscribe from this group, send email to

[lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com).

>> For more options, visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation?....>

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation" group.

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For more options, visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation?hl=en>.

## Greenshields, Rachel

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**From:** [REDACTED] lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com on behalf of Deborah Fisch  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:36 PM  
**To:** lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com  
**Subject:** Re: [LoBuPa] Neighborhood Yard Sale

Hi, Neighbors. We were thrilled to hear about the yard sale date, but it turns out we'll be gone that day. We'll gladly give our items to someone else to sell (you keep the proceeds, of course) - or even just to have. A list is below; if you're interested in taking these off our hands for whatever reason, please reply to me OFF-LIST, so as not to clog up other people's mailboxes. Thanks!

upholstered chair, purple, with fringe around the bottom  
various toddler outdoor toys, including a little slide  
bike helmets in assorted sizes  
a small bike, fit for a two-year-old, chain needs fixing  
...and whatever other interesting things we find in our garage

deb

-----  
Deborah Fisch  
[REDACTED]

On Sun, 3 Jul 2011, [REDACTED] wrote:

> Hello neighbors, it seems as though most respondents chose August 27th  
> for our LoBuPa yard sale. So, put it on your calendars and begin  
> collecting sale items. We'll begin at 9 am and all are welcome.  
> Thanks to all who participated in the poll. Best, Rachel

--

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation" group.

To post to this group, send email to [lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com](mailto:lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation@googlegroups.com).

To unsubscribe from this group, send email to

[lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com](mailto:lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com).

For more options, visit this group at <http://groups.google.com/group/lowerburnsparkneighborhoodassociation?hl=en>.

## Greenshields, Rachel

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**From:** Chris Dixon [pflagaasecretary@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:58 PM  
**To:** Chris Dixon  
**Subject:** PFLAG Ann Arbor August Newsletter  
**Attachments:** August2011.pdf



29 years and going strong  
**Ann Arbor**

August 2011

Support

Education

Advocacy

Volume 29 Issue 8

## Discover ways to have healthy conversations with elementary school students about LGBTQ issues.

Some may think elementary school students are too young to worry about addressing issues surrounding gay and lesbian students. Not so, experts say. It's never too early to begin teaching children about respecting differences. When an elementary school student has questions related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) issues, it is critical that you are prepared to answer these questions in a way that fosters healthy dialog, critical thinking and inclusiveness. With that in mind, your conversations must include all students and perspectives to create a safe and supportive school climate. Several strategies will help you and your school community have positive conversations with elementary school students around LGBTQ issues.

### Plant the Seeds

It is vital to prepare yourself for the important conversations around LGBTQ issues within your elementary school community. Before you have your first conversation, do the following to establish a foundation for future conversations.

*Do your homework:* You play the leading role in fostering safe and affirming conversations about LGBTQ perspectives with elementary school students. It is crucial that your dialogue with students be based on facts, not stereotypes, misconceptions or a limited knowledge of relevant issues. By expanding your own knowledge on LGBTQ perspectives, you will empower yourself to creatively engage in meaningful conversations with your students.

*Find support:* After you've done your homework, find local support. With over 200,000 members and affiliates, [PFLAG National](#) provides grassroots-based assistance and outreach to communities all

information geared toward students, families, teachers and school counselors.

*Know your community:* Don't assume that your school community doesn't have LGBTQ families or students. Making this false assumption will limit positive dialog and behaviors and could isolate members of your school community. Remember that creating a supportive space for everyone to be valued in your school community is vital to healthy growth and development for young students. Your main goal is to support and nurture your students, and the first step toward that goal is to know and understand everyone in your community.

*Consider your students:* Before starting a conversation about LGBTQ matters with your students, you must be in touch with their cognitive development to help frame the dialog. Since many young students are grappling with their understanding of the world around them as it relates to their personal growth and experiences, they may start asking more questions and challenging your reasoning. Students will start to see connections between how they use language and how language affects behavior. For example, elementary students will become aware of the school's negative view of the word "gay" if they are reprimanded for using the word when asking questions. As a result, students often internalize what they see and hear and will make connections with how it makes them feel and behave.

### Watch Them Take Root

Planting the seed is just the first step in developing a comprehensive

## UP COMING EVENTS

### September Meeting

Ann Arbor PFLAG Presents

Ken Wilson from Ruth Ellis Center

### October Meeting

Transgender 101

**Join us for our monthly support  
and program meeting!**

**Sunday, August 21st**

**Entry from parking lot behind church.**

**Look for "PFLAG" sign.**

**SEE MAP ON BACK PAGE**

**Our meetings are the 3rd Sunday  
of every month from 2:00 - 4:30 PM  
at St. Andrews Episcopal Church  
306 N. Division @ Catherine Street  
Ann Arbor**

approach to fostering a welcoming school environment. The next step toward having meaningful conversations around LGBTQ perspectives with elementary school students is to become active within your school community, providing support and elevating your role and presence as a resource. The following strategies will help:

*Don't assume your students are too young:* Elementary school is an appropriate time to begin discussing LGBTQ issues. In fact, elementary school is the best time to lay the foundation of respect for all people and acknowledge the school's acceptance of all families and students. Remember, it is important for you to be mindful of the ages and maturity levels of your students, but the message of respect for all should be consistent and maintained.

*Be an accessible ally:* You want to encourage your students to come to you by making your space welcoming. Consider having LGBTQ-positive posters, Safe Zone stickers, books and other welcoming materials that symbolize your ally status. Your school community needs to know that you are an LGBTQ ally, especially when trying to develop a spirit of inclusion for all school community members.

*Listen carefully:* It's important to understand thoroughly what your students are asking to help you formulate a solid response to their questions. It may be helpful to ask them why they are asking the question, what do they already know about being LGBTQ, where have they heard the language, how do they feel about the word "gay," etc. You want to create an atmosphere where discussing LGBTQ issues is encouraged and part of the culture of your school. Also remember that if one student has questions, there are other students that may have questions or will have questions in their future. Taking careful notes may help you formulate a lesson, activity or school event to educate everyone. Never judge or promote fear; your students are looking to you for guidance and support.

*Connect to real life:* Always use concrete examples instead of abstract concepts, and always do your best to relate the example to something that could happen in the students' immediate future. It is crucial for students to see how their voices, experiences, questions and behaviors fit into their current lives. For example, if a student used respectful words to manage a difficult situation, praise and ask the student to think of another situation in which those words could help. If students are using the word "gay" to hurt or tease another student, ask them to think of a time when someone used a word that hurt their feelings. Also, remind them that although being gay is nothing to be ashamed of, any word used in a combative or derogatory way can result in hurt feelings.

*Do something:* Intervene immediately when you experience students engaging in bullying behavior. Allowing negative behaviors or language to go unnoticed or unaddressed opens the door to an unsafe learning environment. Intervening is the first step toward changing the school climate.

*Use established character education programs:* Many elementary schools are required to have character education programs aimed at building students' social development. Adapt your current program to support discussions around LGBTQ issues. Using language, tools and resources that are already familiar to your students will make the dialogue easier and more accessible to students and teachers.

*Share positive perspectives:* Provide your school community with opportunities to see positive LGBTQ perspectives by providing educational resources such as books, videos and other publications that address LGBTQ issues.

#### **Watch Them Grow**

To work with students and their families effectively, you must work with the administration and teachers in your school to create a safe

and inclusive environment for even the youngest children. Educate yourself about the issues, learn the appropriate terms to use in conversation around those issues, and put into place comprehensive strategies to begin and sustain a meaningful dialogue with your students and the broader school community.

One way to sustain a welcoming school climate is to participate in national school events promoting inclusive climates, such as Mix It Up Day, which encourages schools to intentionally work toward dismantling stereotypes and creating inclusive environments for all students. Also, always make sure your resources are current and are available to the school community. PFLAG National offers many publications, some in Spanish, which can be used to support parents, families and caregivers. Family support is vital in having positive LGBTQ-related discussions at home.

It is important to remember that a respect-for-all approach is the best way to talk about LGBTQ issues with elementary school-age children. When students' physical and emotional needs are properly addressed, when they are given guidance to build positive interactions and when they are able to bring their true selves and identities to school, they are likely to demonstrate supportive behavior toward their peers, all of which leads to academic and social success.

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## **UNDERSTANDING TRANSGENDER**

### **How many transgender people are there?**

We don't know for sure the answer to this question. There are a number of reasons for that. First, there really isn't anyone collecting this data. It's not something that the US Census or other agencies keep track of. Second, many transgender people are not public about their identities, so they might not tell anyone about it.

NCTE estimates that between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 1% of the population is transsexual.

### **Why are people transgender? What causes it?**

There are a number of theories about why transgender people exist although there is not yet scientific consensus.

When you look across cultures, you will find that people have had a wide range of beliefs about gender. Some cultures look at people and see six genders, while others see two. Some cultures have created specific ways for people to live in roles that are different from that assigned to them at birth. In addition, different cultures also vary in their definitions of masculine and feminine. Whether we view someone as transgender depends on the cultural lenses we are looking through as well as how people identify themselves.

Biologists tell us that sex is a complicated matter, much more complex than what we may have been taught in school. A person has XX chromosomes is generally considered female, while a person with XY chromosomes is generally considered male. However, there are also people who have XXY, XYY, and other variations of chromosomes; these genetic differences may or may not be visibly apparent or known to the person. Some people are born with XY chromosomes, but are unable to respond to testosterone and therefore develop bodies with a vagina and breasts, rather

than a penis and testes. A variation in gender may just be part of the natural order and there are more varieties than we generally realize. People with biological differences in gender may be considered intersex; they may or may not identify as transgender.

There are medical theories about why people are transgender. Some speculate that fluctuations or imbalances in hormones or the use of certain medications during pregnancy may cause intersex or transgender conditions. Other research indicates that there are links between transgender identity and brain structure.

Some people believe that psychological factors are the reason for the existence of transgender people. It is clear that there are people who are aware that they are transgender from their earliest memories. Many trans people feel that their gender identity is an innate part of them, an integral part of who they were born to be.

Then there are people who feel that everyone has a right to choose whatever gender presentation feels best to that individual. People should have the freedom to express themselves in whatever way is right for them.

Sex and gender are complex issues. A huge variety of factors are at work in making each individual the person that they are and there is no one reason that causes people to be transgender. Trans people are part of the variety that makes up the human community.

### Is being transgender a mental illness?

No, but this remains a stereotype about transgender people. Gender Identity Disorder is listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-4th Edition (DSM-IV), a guide used by mental health professionals to diagnose psychological conditions.

Transgender identity is not a mental illness that can be cured with treatment. Rather, transgender people experience a persistent and authentic difference between our assigned sex and our understanding of our own gender. For some people, this leads to emotional distress. This pain often can be relieved by freely expressing our genders, wearing clothing we are comfortable in, and, for some, making a physical transition from one gender to another.

For people who identify as transsexual, counseling alone, without medical treatment, is often not effective.

Our society is, however, very harsh on gender-variant people. Some transgender people have lost their families, their jobs, their homes and their support. Transgender children may be subject to abuse at home, at school or in their communities. A lifetime of this can be very challenging and can sometimes cause anxiety disorders, depression and other psychological illnesses. These are not the root of their transgender identity; rather, they are the side effects of society's intolerance of transgender people.

RECEIVING UNANIMOUS RAVES !!!

## "MY TWO WIVES AND THREE HUSBANDS"

A true love story by S. Stanley Gordon

At Amazon. COM and all bookstores

### Relationship concerns?

If you're in one or not...  
been together 5 months or 23 years...  
doing OK or desperately need help...

you can learn a better way to relate!



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202 E WASHINGTON ST, STE 708, ANN ARBOR, MI 48104-2017  
217 S KNOWLES ST, STE 240, ROYAL OAK, MI 48067-2767

734-327-9322

by appointment only

### TELL US YOUR STORY

We hear stories from other PFLAG members now it time to put our stories in writing

Tell us your story to help people that might miss our monthly meeting

Just e mail your story to Brooke or Chris

And watch for your story in up coming newsletters

Send your Email to [info@pflagaa.org](mailto:info@pflagaa.org)

**PFLAG/Ann Arbor HOTLINE**  
**(734) 741-0659**

E-mail: [president@pflagaa.org](mailto:president@pflagaa.org)  
 WEBSITE: [www.pflagaa.org](http://www.pflagaa.org)

**Straight Spouse Support** (Stephanie)  
 Email Contact: [smsphd@hotmail.com](mailto:smsphd@hotmail.com) Call for phone support or meeting information. **(248) 582-9822**

**National PFLAG** (202) 467-8180  
 Website: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)  
**Affirmations Help-line** (800) 398-GAYS  
**Nationwide Suicide Hotline** (800) 850-8078  
 (Counselor on duty 24 hours a day 7 days a week)

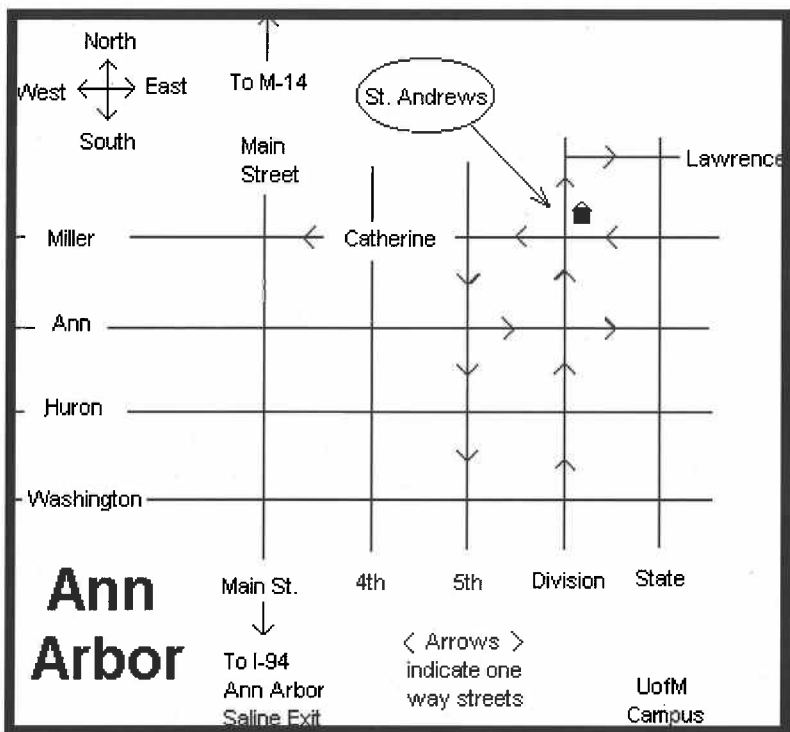
**Equality Michigan** 313 537-7000  
 Website [equalitymi.org](http://equalitymi.org) Report Discrimination

**Community Weekly News: Between The Lines**  
 Website: [www.pridesource.com](http://www.pridesource.com)

**NEIGHBORING PFLAG CHAPTERS**  
**PFLAG/Jackson- Hotline** (517) 750-3045  
 Website: <http://community.pflag.org/jacksonmichigan>

**PFLAG/Detroit - Hotline** (248) 656-2875  
 Website: [pflagdetroit.org](http://pflagdetroit.org)

**PFLAG/Downriver- Hotline** (734) 783-2950  
 Website: [pflagdownriver.org](http://pflagdownriver.org)



**PFLAG/Ann Arbor Mission Statement**  
 PFLAG/Ann Arbor promotes the well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through:

- Support** - to cope with an adverse society.
- Education** - to enlighten an ill informed public.
- Advocacy** - to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

*PFLAG/Ann Arbor provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.*

*PFLAG, is a 501.c3 non-profit organization and is not affiliated with any religious or political group. All donations are tax exempt.*

**Membership Application**

( Please Print )

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Put me on your our E-mail Notification System \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Change of Address \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 of this donation will be sent to PFLAG National

**Mail To:**

**PFLAG Ann Arbor**  
**PO Box 7471**  
**Ann Arbor MI 48107**

**Make checks payable to PFLAG Ann Arbor**

\$ 35.00 Individual \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 45.00 Household \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 55.00 Supporting \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 105.00 Contributing \_\_\_\_\_

\$ 1000.00 Lifetime \_\_\_\_\_

Donation of Support \_\_\_\_\_



## Greenshields, Rachel

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**From:** Portside Moderator [moderator@PORTSIDE.ORG]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:55 PM  
**To:** PORTSIDE@LISTS.PORTSIDE.ORG  
**Subject:** Chile's Student Protests: Two articles

Chile's Student Protests: Two articles

1. Chile's Student Rebels
2. Chilean Student Movement Leads Uprising . . .

===

1.  
Chile's Student Rebels: Views From the Trenches

by Eloy Fisher, Council on Hemispheric Affairs | News Analysis

Sunday 14 August 2011

<http://www.coha.org/chiles-student-rebels-views-from-the-trenches/>

Protesters outside the University of Chile's main building, August 8. (Photo: Fernando Mandujano)

Radio Toma, loosely translated as "Occupation Radio," broadcasts non-stop information about the protests being staged in front of the University of Chile's main building - literally a stone's throw away from the Presidential Palace of La Moneda. Since June 10, students have occupied the beautiful neoclassical 19th Century campus as the protests have continued to intensify around their one demand - to dismantle the market-based approach of the Chilean educational system, something they have scornfully come to label "Pinochet's education."

"We just distrust the political class," one of the students in front of Radio Toma told me. But even when the political establishment tried to discredit their protests, students' responses turned out to be well-organized. They are fully cognizant of their role in trying to overhaul not only the educational system, but the tense democratic framework put in place by the Pinochet regime as well.

The media so far has been complacent in its coverage.

Except for the same international agencies which tend to cover the protests from the political trenches, Chilean media seemed very cozy inside the tall steel gates of the Club Hipico, where flustered cameramen and news commentators took pictures, argued about attendance and whether the march would take a turn for the worse. Unlike the conventional narrative, these protests are not limited to the wayward acts of "subversive vagrants" (as the gaffe-prone Senator Carlos Larrain publicly derided), or even worse, a lighthearted, middle-class uprising - a view implicit in the New York Times and in a recent interview with neoliberal pundit Moises Naim.

All of these fractures are also being seen in Chile's Winter of Discontent. Eerily reminiscent of previous shifts, today they pit the demands of a growing (as well as younger) cohort of citizens against a traditional elite who are desperately trying to buy themselves legitimacy and time, all the while being cognizant of the fact that this year's campus activist is likely the next decade's presidential candidate.

When I asked about the endgame at Radio Toma, the two students there nodded - "look, honestly we don't know where this is going to end. We do not own society's demands. This movement is dynamic in nature... but in the end it all boils

down to a conflict in legality." As he said this, we heard the sound of hundreds of sneakers treading across the sidewalk. He looked at me, excused himself very politely and ran into the building, all as the police quickly moved in and sprayed everyone with fast speed, heavy volume water cannons.

A few hours before, as the march departed from the Universidad de Santiago station, the mood was jovial - under the loud and constant tapping of police helicopters, people drummed, danced, chanted and waved banners against what they deemed as Pinera's tone-deaf attempt to save, at all costs and against their wishes, the educational compact dating back from the Pinochet era.

Two veterans of these protests, Manuel and Carlos, watched the march from one of the more festive corners of the protest. At the Avenida Espana and Claudio Gay intersection, people in the balconies were throwing sacks of water and confetti on top of the students and singing along with their tunes taken from other songs, in an attempt to freshen-up the protesters as a surprisingly beautiful spring day was made more pungent by the multitude. "I have not seen so much people since the No Protests," Manuel said, while Carlos nodded along. Both had been tortured during those violent episodes that rocked Chile for months during the heady days of the Pinochet regime after the economy plummeted in 1982. But as the thousands of teenagers and twenty-somethings streamed into the street, they could not help smiling - "we have to give it to them. These kids have extraordinary courage. I can only hope they can change what we failed to do, because we were afraid..."

Yet, students are surprisingly modest in their demands.

Cristobal Lagos, Secretary General of the Universidad de Chile's Student Federation, one of the biggest student unions spearheading the effort, recognized the matter plainly as we walked down the street into Almagro Park, where the march would ultimately congregate - "we don't like Pinera, but we don't want to break the institutional framework. However, if after this movement others [movements] are born, that's better. Because of what we are doing, people will come out and demand real change in Chile."

But despite the appeals for calm, I spoke with one of the up-to-no-gooders in full combat paraphernalia as he taunted the police in one of the side streets near the area - he said that they were allowed to go past La Alameda, but he was lying - the area was clearly off-limits. As more and more people flooded the park's bounds, tensions started to flare despite desperate efforts to keep calm on both sides. As the march turned around down the streets of Manuel Matta and Nathaniel Cox, I witnessed the frantic efforts of one parent (as he called himself while he herded the students into the designated route) who stood between the students and the police, as some anonymous rocks fell dud, short from the heavily armored police.

As the hundred thousand-strong march flowed through the decently sized park, it didn't take long for the protest to trickle beyond the strictly defined "designated" area by the government, and towards the menacing police barricades. While the author ran across the side streets around the park, it was clear that both protesters and police were uncomfortable near each other's inherently dangerous presence. One can be excused for being slightly subjective on such subjects of several germane subjects since when one comes from Panama, where until very recently and despite some particularly morose circumstances, police and students were prone to negotiate, interact and even, jokingly, defuse tensions during policy oriented protests. These antics could have just as well been carried out on the sidelines of a World Cup soccer match same as could be carried out in one of Pinochet's or his Panamanian counterpart's torture chambers. Panama has changed, much like Chile has taken on an unattractive cast, even while bearing a democratic garb. In a new world of austerity and economic crises, a fractured society where Chilean carabineros are once again being restored to power while Chilean students are once again losing their innocence, the police think nothing of fiercely answering the taunts of the kids with their kaffiye covered faces, to be followed without much provocation, later, experienced, and now camped-in at Radio Toma, and where students are emboldened enough to retaliate the scorn with rocks that they harvested from potholes in the street.

It is very difficult to see where this will end politically - divisions seem to be growing as we speak.

Once again, there are some scattered references to UNAM protests in Mexico, where students unsuccessfully, if bitterly, occupied the university for almost a year to protest against tuition increases. These students now have recognized, they cannot alienate society without creating channels to carry away the angst that pervades Chilean society. "Those protesting today, we are the same pinguinos (colloquial for students in Chile) who protested in 2006, and who were cajoled by the Concertacion's roundtables and big plans that amounted to nothing..." the students at Radio Toma said, as they explained their distrust towards the government's appeals for negotiation. Feeling no love for the Concertacion, who they see as the same elites with different stripes, they view themselves as a movement that is hurriedly coagulating different political aspirations, producing water instead of blood.

"We've held out for three months... if we get something now, it has to be big."

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## 2. Chilean Student Movement Leads Uprising For Transformation of the Country

New America Media

By Roger Burbach

August 13, 2011

<http://globalalternatives.org/node/115>

Chile is becoming a part of the global movement of youth that is transforming the world bit by bit--the Arab Spring, the sit-ins and demonstrations in the Spanish plazas, and the rebellion of youth in London.

Weeks of demonstrations and strikes by Chilean students came to a head August 9, as an estimated 100,000 people poured into the streets of Santiago. Joined by professors and educators, they were demanding a free education for all, from the primary school level to the university.

In the riotous confrontations that took place between bands of youth and the police, tear gas canisters were fired into the crowds, and 273 people were arrested.

Later on, in the cool winter evening, the deafening noise of people banging on their pots and pans in support of the students could be heard throughout Santiago, the country's capital city of six million.

Under the 17-year dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, much of Chile's educational system was privatized, and even after he left power in 1990, private education continued to prevail. Today, 70 percent of university students attend private institutions. Private education is sustained by the constitution drawn up during the Pinochet regime, and educational entrepreneurs capitalized on it.

Camila Vallejo, the elected president of the Student Federation of the University of Chile and one of the main leaders of the national protests, proclaims: "We need quality education for everyone. It is a right. Chilean society cannot move forward without it."

Twenty students from the secondary schools are currently on a hunger strike and are willing to forego the academic year, even die for the cause.

Alina Gonzales, a 16-year-old participant in the secondary school strike, told NAM: "We will do what it takes to change this system and our lives."

The students are part of a broader movement that is calling for the transformation of Chile. In recent months, copper mine workers have gone on strike, massive mobilizations have taken place to stop the construction of a huge complex of dam and energy projects in the Bio Bio region of southern Chile, gay rights and feminist activists have marched in the streets, and the Mapuche indigenous peoples have continued to demand the restoration of their ancestral lands.

Faced with the intransigence of the conservative government of billionaire President Sebastian Pinera, the movement is calling for a national plebiscite.

Camila Vallejo, who is also a member of the Communist youth organization, asserts, "If the government is not capable of responding to us, we will have to demand another non-institutional solution: the convocation of a plebiscite so that the citizens can decide on the educational future of the country."

Forty-two social organizations grouped together under the banner "Democracy for Chile" have rallied to back the student movement. Their manifesto proclaims: "The economic, social and political system is in a profound crisis that has compelled the communities to mobilize ...

An unprecedented and historic movement of citizens is questioning the bases of the economic and political order that were imposed in 1980" by the Pinochet constitution.

Picking up on the students' call for a referendum, the manifesto argues that it should be "multi-thematic" and allow voters to decide whether to convene a constituent assembly that would have the power to draft a new constitution.

In recent years, there has been a growing call for an end to the neo-liberal order and the attendant political system that concentrates power in the hands of a political elite. As in Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela, there is a movement to reshape the nation with a constitution that allows for popular participation at all levels of government. Fundamental rights would be recognized, including the right to a free education, health care, culture, and the right to choose one's sexual orientation.

President Pinera refuses to endorse the call for a plebiscite. His approval rating now stands at 26 percent. The day after the massive demonstrations, he signed a token law calling for "quality education." He denounced supporters of universal free education, arguing that it would represent a transfer of wealth to the privileged since "the poor would pay taxes that benefit the more fortunate" who attend the universities.

Chile is at a crossroads. In the two decades since the fall of the dictatorship, many Chileans have succumbed to consumerism, as shopping malls and credit cards have proliferated with the "Chilean Economic Miracle" that has seen annual growth rates of 6 percent. But many Chileans want a more meaningful society. They recall the Chilean tradition of democratic socialism that was snuffed out with the overthrow of President Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973.

New mobilizations are planned in the coming week, including a one-day national strike. The call has also gone out for similar demonstrations in other Latin American countries.

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Study of the Americas 2288 Fulton St., Suite 103, Berkeley, CA

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## Greenshields, Rachel

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**From:** Portside Moderator [moderator@PORTSIDE.ORG]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:53 PM  
**To:** PORTSIDE@LISTS.PORTSIDE.ORG  
**Subject:** The World Should Be Watching Tahrir Square

The World Should Be Watching Tahrir Square

by Joel Federman

Published on Monday,  
<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2011/08/15-0>

Global media coverage of news from Egypt over the last week was focused on the trial of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. It ignored--or gave only footnote status to--a more important development: the forcible expulsion on Monday, August 1, of democracy activists from Tahrir Square in Cairo, and the occupation of the square by the Egyptian military and police. Armed forces now surround the central square area, literally taking up the space occupied by the democracy movement only a few days ago.

[ Joel Federman] Tahrir Square, Cairo, August 3, 2011.  
(photo: Joel Federman)

The trial of Hosni Mubarak, who oversaw his government's killing of more than 1,000 Egyptians, whose only crime was peacefully protesting for basic human rights and dignity, is an important step toward establishing the rule of law in Egypt. But, it is only one step toward democratic reform. That the ruling Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) saw fit to shut down Tahrir Square shows, at best, that they don't understand the importance of that place for the democratic development of Egypt.

Tahrir Square was, and is, the epicenter of social change in Egypt. The revolution began there on January 25, and it became a community of liberation, a place where Egyptians could voice to their deepest aspirations for freedom, social justice and dignity. It has been a gathering point for people coming from all over Egypt to debate the future of their country, and also to find and share their courage to express their needs and values, so long crushed by the Mubarak regime.

It has also been a genuine community, with Egyptians sharing food, music, living space, culture, and ideas. Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy, Director of Cairo University's Center for Civilization Studies and Dialogue of Cultures, describes the experience of Tahrir Square during the early revolutionary days as "magnificent....It was something really spiritual. There were gates in Tahrir, and when you entered the gates, you feel the spirit: people sitting together, caring for each other, loving each other. The most secure place in Egypt was Tahrir Square. The people were securing each other. When you ask anyone who had been there, they have the same answers, the same experience."

[ Wikipedia.] Tahrir Square, February 8, 2011 Photo  
source: Wikipedia.

SCAF tactics since the initial closing of the square have only escalated in violence. After the square was cleared on Monday, August 1, the following Friday evening, August 5, a few hundred peaceful protesters gathered to break their Ramadan fast and briefly demonstrate. The protesters made it clear they weren't attempting to re-occupy the Square. But, unprovoked, the military violently attacked the protesters. I was a witness to this attack.

The protesters were on an island of the square that was open earlier in the day, not the center area that has been cordoned off by the police since Monday. They shared food with each other. Then, they demonstrated, with speeches, chants, and songs.

The army gathered across the street, but it seemed from their formations that they were just there to stop protesters from blocking traffic or reoccupying the central island of the square. Then, without any provocation, the army charged the island. This was not a standard police-style block formation to clear protesters out of a public space. This was a brutal attack by the military on completely unarmed, 100% peaceful protesters, whose protest was largely completed.

The soliders beat dozens of protesters indiscriminately, most of whom were simply trying to escape. I repeatedly saw groups of five to ten soldiers chase down boys who couldn't be any older than ten years old and beat them with yard-long sticks. The soldiers chased protesters many blocks from Tahrir Square, all the way to the Kasr-al-Nile Bridge half a mile away, for the purpose of beating them.

Many dozens of bullets were fired as the soldiers chased the protesters through the streets, presumably into the air. Though there haven't been reports of anyone being shot, though many protesters were hospitalized from their beating injuries.

Clearly, the purpose of the attack was not just to clear that little island of the square. The level of brutality suggests that its true purpose was to strike fear in the hearts of anyone who wants to make public political expression in the main town square of Egypt.

In terms of world media attention, the Egyptian regime is getting away with tremendous brutality, possibly because the brutality in Syria at the moment is even worse, and the trial of Mubarak draws attention away from the suppression of the people power demonstrations that brought about his overthrow. [ Joel Federman)] Soldier reaching back to beat protester with stick, Tahrir Square, Cairo, August 5, 2011. (photo: Joel Federman)

Tahrir Square represents both the symbol and substance of democracy in Egypt. Democracy and freedom of assembly are part of the same principle. If you shut down the right of people to assemble peacefully to express their hopes, fears and dreams, you can't claim to be a democracy, even an emerging one. SCAF cannot legitimately assert that it is facilitating the transition to democracy in Egypt while suppressing the fundamental democratic human right of "freedom of peaceful assembly and association," as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 20).

When asked about the importance of Tahrir Square, Sabah Hamamou, an editor at Al-Ahram, a prominent Egyptian newspaper, said in an interview, "Democracy is people finding space to express the things they want. But things start with a space." In Egypt, that space begins in, and emanates from, Tahrir Square.

Despite the brutality, the democratic movement in Egypt shows extraordinarily admirable resilience and courage. In the wake of the events of last Friday, a broad coalition of organizations organized a new protest in Tahrir Square, which took place Friday. Egypt's Sufis, in coalition with Copt Christians and secular groups such as the April 6 Youth Movement, organized the demonstration for an Egyptian civil state, as opposed to a religion-based government, as was advocated in the Square by conservative Muslims a few weeks ago. The military police chased protesters with sticks and fired shots in the air when they attempted to retake the central island of the Square, but the main protest was allowed to continue as planned. The status of the Square is clearly in flux. What happens in Tahrir Square in the coming weeks will be an important measure of the state of democratic change in Egypt.

Joel Federman teaches at Saybrook University in San Francisco. He recently returned from a week-long visit to Egypt, where he met with democracy activists and others

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**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 8:55 PM  
**To:** PORTSIDE@LISTS.PORTSIDE.ORG  
**Subject:** The Deficit Committee is a Stacked Deck

The Deficit Committee is a Stacked Deck

By Carl Bloice

Submitted to portside by the author

Last week, the Financial Times ran a commentary by Benn Steil, a senior fellow and director of International Economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, headlined "U.S. Solvency Rests with 12 Angry Men."

Well, not exactly. There is one woman on the new Joint Select Committee on Debt Reduction.

And it wasn't the headline writer's mistake; Steil wrote the story that way.

Right after the recent debt deal was agreed to in Congress and the new 12-member "supercommittee" was set in motion, the Women's Media Center called upon Congressional leaders to appoint an equal number of men and women to it, noting that its members "will decide the future of many social programs relied upon by millions of Americans" and "making critical judgments that will likely affect social programs that women disproportionately depend on - like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid."

As it turns out Sen. Patty Murray, Democrat of Washington, will be the only female present when the guys begin their deliberations - or, some would say, horse trading.

But you are not alone sisters. There is only one African American in the group and only one Latino, both Democrats in the House of Representatives.

And, as Melissa Harris Perry said on the MSNBC Al Sharpton show the other day, the three designated by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi - Reps. James E. Clyburn of South Carolina and Xavier Becerra of California Chris Van Hollen of Maryland - are the only members of the full committee that are not very rich.

Obviously, there is nothing demographically representative of the Gang of 12. It's hardly democratic; but then, there is nothing particularly democratic about the whole setup.

A lot of attention is being given to the political composition of the panel when, in fact, its very existence should be called into question. It's a scam designed to bypass the regular legislative process (if it makes recommendations they will be voted up or down by the Congress with restricted debate and no amendments allowed.) Its purpose it is permit the Republicans and Democrats to make "tough" decisions about the Federal budget. It's a given that any decisions they make regarding cuts in social programs will mean fewer resources for the elderly, students and disadvantaged communities. Since each and every one of the Republicans on the panel has previously pledged to oppose any tax increases, even on the most wealthy, the odds are against the group coming up with anything.

However, one Democrat could join them, throwing any thought of revenue enhancement out the window.

Then there is that other assault on democratic governing, the "trigger" mechanism whereby if the panel cannot agree, or the Congress is deadlocked over what it proposes, there will be an automatic \$1.2 trillion in budget cuts that would, among other things, seriously jeopardize the future of Medicare.

"Put this whole mess up on the big board at the MGM Grand in Vegas, and the line would probably be 50-1 that working people, sick people and the elderly are, once again, about to take it on the chin," wrote William Rivers Pitt, author of "House of Ill Repute:

Reflections on War, Lies, and America's Ravaged Reputation," on Truthout.org the other day. "Perhaps more galling than the seemingly evident outcome of this farce is the fact that the whole process flies in the face of Constitutional law. Nowhere in that document does it give Congress the power to supersede the established process of legislating through full committees and sub-committees, and after all is said and done, the whole thing could wind up being thrown out by the courts if a legal challenge is brought against the 'super-committee's' final conclusions.

"Nothing good will come of this, I fear. A great deal of bad, however, almost certainly will."

Meanwhile, all the attention that will be directed at the supercommittee, its makeup and possible dealings, will serve to distract from the two big elephants in the room: the state of the economy (clearly made worse by all this maneuvering) and the 14 million people unemployed. Then there is the specter looming out of London these days.

"The American right today is obsessed with cutting government spending. In many ways, Mr. Cameron's austerity program is the Tea Party's dream come true,"

wrote two New York sociology professors, Richard Sennett and Saskia Sassen. "But Britain is now grappling with the consequences of those cuts, which have led to the neglect and exclusion of many vulnerable, disaffected young people who are acting out violently and irresponsibly -- driven by rage rather than an explicit political agenda."

"America is in many ways different from Britain, but the two countries today are alike in their extremes of inequality, and in the desire of many politicians to solve economic and social ills by reducing the power of the state," Sennett and Sassen continued. "Britain's current crisis should cause us to reflect on the fact that a smaller government can actually increase communal fear and diminish our quality of life. Is that a fate America wishes upon itself?"

House Democratic Caucus Chair John Larson of Connecticut has proposed the debt ceiling legislation be amended to form a panel tasked with creating a plan to eliminate unemployment by 2021.

"I plan to introduce legislation that would establish a Joint Select Committee on Job Creation that would be tasked, under the exact same terms as the Deficit Committee, with developing a plan to return the nation to full employment by 2021," says Larson. "This would allow the Congress to simultaneously consider both our near-term (high unemployment) and our long-term (growing debt) challenges later this year. Just like the Deficit Committee, all options would be on the table. We owe the American people nothing less."

Fat chance of anything like that happening, not without a tremendous upsurge in public outrage. The Republicans will never agree to it and the Democratic Party leadership, from the White House on down, have shown scant willingness or courage in putting anything really "tough" on the table and go to bat for it.

On Wednesday, the New York Times called the Federal Reserve's decision to hold down interest rate for the next couple of years "a sign that it has all but written off the chances of an expansion strong enough to drive up wages and prices," adding "It is now conventional wisdom among forecasters that the economy will plod along through the end of President Obama's first term in office. Millions of Americans will not find work. Wages will not rise substantially." The same day economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, "Our leaders tried papering over the economy's weaknesses - perhaps out of fear that if we were honest about them, already fragile confidence would erode. But that was a gamble we have now lost. Now the scale of the problem is apparent, a new confidence has emerged: confidence that matters will get worse, whatever action we take. A long malaise now seems like the optimistic scenario."

I would like to think Stiglitz is being overly pessimistic but there appears to be nary a bright spot in this situation.

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**Subject:** The Left's Crisis

The Left's Crisis

by Leo Panitch

Socialist Project - The Bulletin

E-Bulletin No. 536 August 15, 2011

<http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/536.php#continue>

A common response of the left to the financial crisis that broke out in the USA in 2007-08 was often a kind of Michael Moore-type populist one: Why are you bailing the banks out? Let them go under. This kind of the response was, of course, utterly irresponsible, with no thought given to what would happen to the savings of workers, let alone to the paychecks deposited into their bank accounts, or even to the fact that what was at stake was the roofs over their heads. On the other hand, the even more common response was all about asserting state responsibility: This crisis is the result of the government not having done its duty:

governments are supposed to regulate capital, and they didn't do so. But this response was in fact fundamentally misleading. The United States has the most regulated financial system in the world by far if you measure it in terms of the number of statutes on the books, the number of pages of administrative regulation, the amount of time and effort and staff that is engaged in the supervision of the financial system. But that system is organized in such a way as to facilitate the financialization of capitalism, not only in the U.S. itself, but in fact around the world.

Without this, the globalization of capitalism in recent decades would not have been possible.

It was indicative of the left's sorry lack of ambition in the crisis that its calls for salary limits on Wall Street executives and transaction taxes on the financial sector were far more common than demands for turning the banks into public utilities. It was, of all people, the mainstream LSE economist Willem Buiter (the former member of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee, appointed in November 2009 by Citibank as its chief economist) who in his Financial Times blog on September 17, 2008 a few days after Lehman Brothers'

collapse endorsed the "long-standing argument that there is no real case for private ownership of deposit-taking banking institutions, because these cannot exist safely without a deposit guarantee and/or lender of last resort facilities, that are ultimately underwritten by the taxpayer." And he went further:

"The argument that financial intermediation cannot be entrusted to the private sector can now be extended to include the new, transactions-oriented, capital-markets-based forms of financial capitalism...

From financialisation of the economy to the socialisation of finance. A small step for the lawyers, a huge step for mankind." Credit in the Hands of the State?

Well, this sounds a little bit, if you've ever read The Communist Manifesto, like the call that Marx made - among his list of ten reforms - for the centralization of credit in the hands of the state - which just goes to show that in a crisis you don't have to be a Marxist to have radical ideas if you have any sort of ambition or self-confidence. Most Marxists don't have that ambition and self-confidence today. But you do have to be a Marxist to understand that this is not going to happen by bringing some lawyers into a room and signing a few documents. What Buiter was putting forward was the technocratic notion of how reform happens. But fundamental change can only really happen through a massive class struggle, which would involve a massive transformation of the state itself.

Even in terms of calls for better regulation, with a working-class that is not mobilized to put pressure on, you can't expect this state to simply follow policy guidelines that come from technocrats, progressive liberals or social democrats. So we at least ought to be using our opportunity to do more than offer left technocratic advice to a policy machine; we ought to be trying to educate people on how capitalist finance really works, why it doesn't for them and why what we need instead is a publicly owned banking system that is part of a system of democratic economic planning, in which what's invested and where it's invested and how it's invested is democratically decided.

The sort of bank nationalizations undertaken in the wake of the fallout from the Lehman's collapse - with the lead of Gordon Brown's New Labour government in the UK being quickly followed by Bush's Republican administration in the U.S. - essentially involved socializing the banks losses while guaranteeing that the nationalized banks would operate on a commercial basis at arm's length from any government direction or control. All they asked was that these nationalized banks seek to maximize the taxpayers returns on their 'investment.' As sagely put in the 2010 Socialist Register essay on "Opportunity lost: mystification, elite politics and financial reform in the UK," this really represented "not the nationalisation of the banks, but the privatisation of the Treasury as a new kind of fund manager."

The most important reason for taking the banks into the public sector and turning them into a public utility is that you would remove thereby the institutional foundation of the most powerful section of the capitalist classes in this phase of capitalism. That's the main reason for nationalizing the banks in terms of changing the balance of class forces in a fundamental way. Build Socially Useful Commodities

A second socialist reason for nationalizing the banks would be to transform the uses to which finance is put. Let's take an example. Where I come from in Canada, the backbone of the southern Ontario economy, apart from banking, is the automobile industry. With the layoffs that occurred and the plants that have been closed (this has been going on for three decades, but it was heightened during this crisis very severely) you are not just losing physical capital you're losing the skills of tool and die makers. A banking system that was turned into a public utility would be centrally involved in transforming the uses to which credit is put, so those skills could be put to building wind turbines, so they could be used to develop the kind of equipment we need to harness solar energy cheaply rather than expensively.

We cannot even begin to think seriously about solving the ecological crisis that coincides with this economic crisis without the left returning to an ambitious notion of economic planning. It's inconceivable. It can't be done. We've run away from this for half a century because of command planning of the Stalinist type, with all of its horrific effects - its inefficiencies, but even more its authoritarianism. But we can't avoid any longer coming back to the need for planning. The allocation of credit is at the core of economic planning for the conversion of industry. When we on the left call for capital controls, we can't just think about that in the sense of capital controls that would limit how quickly capital moves in and out of the country. We need capital controls because without them we can't have the democratic control of investment.

It's not just capital controls at the border that matter; what matters all the more for socialists is control over capital to the end of directing, in a democratic fashion, what gets invested, where it gets invested, how it gets invested.

Now, people often say that socialists in the last 20 or 30 years have not laid out a programmatic vision. I don't think that's true. As the Socialist Register 2000 volume on Necessary and Unnecessary Utopias showed, there were more writings on what a future socialism would look like in the last two decades of the 20th century than probably ever before. But the detailed pictures of a socialist order they painted - whether involving some combination of plan and market or participatory economic planning - have been exceedingly sketchy on two crucial things. One is immediate demands and reforms. And the other is how the hell would we get there. What are the vehicles? What are the agencies? How are the vehicles connected to building the agencies?

It is certainly very true that, whatever the vehicle or the agency, you are never going to mobilize people simply on the basis of the need to nationalize the banks for economic planning, when they know that can't come for decades, given

the lack of political forces to introduce it. People need to be mobilized by immediate demands, as they were by the demands for trade union rights, a reduced workweek, a public educational system a welfare state, etc.

Some 15 years ago, when the FMLN in El Salvador after the settlement of the civil war turned itself from a guerrilla army into a political party, I was one of the people invited to help them set up a party school. And I had a conversation there with Fecundo Guardado who had been subcommandante on the San Salvador Volcano, and who later ran for president under the FMLN banner.

He said to me, everybody thinks that the long term is the next election, (which since this was in 1995 would have been in 1999 there). He said: they're completely wrong - in fact, that's the short term. What we have to hope is that by 1999 we will be strong enough, have a strong enough base, to be able to make a decent showing in the next election. The medium term is 2010, when we have to hope that we will have a broad enough representation and a deep enough development of our members' capacities that we actually could have an influence on the direction of the country. The long-term is 2020, when we will be able to get elected as a government that can actually do something, that can transform the state. Angela Zamora who as the head of party's educational program was hosting me, sat there and listened to this and suddenly said, in that case I'm leaving the party. I can't go back to the people who I've been leading in struggle for 15 years and tell them they have to wait for 2020 for immediate reforms. It's impossible. I can't do it.

#### Immediate Demands and Longer-Term Vision

So one needs to figure out how to combine a clear, ambitious sense of immediate demands with this longer-term vision. But in the current crisis the Left's immediate demand could and should have centered around bringing the banks into public ownership. The case for this could have been made in terms of the need for a massive program for public housing. After the Great Society program in the 1960s left-wing Democrats, rather than calling for more public housing to rebuild America's cities instead called for the banks to lend money to poor black communities - in other words, for the problem to be solved by letting black people, who had been largely excluded from the banking system, into it. It was similar to liberal feminism's demand that women should be able to get credit cards, which they were largely not allowed to do by the banks until the 1970s.

Well, you should be careful what you hope for. One of the effects of winning those demands was a channeling of those communities more deeply into the structures of finance, the most dynamic sector of neoliberal capitalism. Clinton carried those reforms much further in the 1990s, appealing to the Democratic Party constituency (Clinton was known as 'the black President' for this) on the basis of we're going to let you succeed at the capitalist housing game. And then Bush, of course, let every crook that he could find into the mortgage business. Of course, there's no reason why black people or women shouldn't want the same rights as everybody else - why shouldn't they look forward to their homes appreciating in market value?

But you need to understand the dynamics and contradictions that are involved in trying to win reforms for people through integrating them more deeply into capitalist credit relations. And the results are now clear.

We should be also demanding universal public pensions, as the private pension plans won by trade unions now are coming unraveled for both public sector and private sector workers. And that would contribute to strengthening the working-class, because it would eliminate the kind of competition amongst workers that employers have played on with their private pensions.

Indeed, increasingly we see that even the unions in largest corporations today as well as unions of public employees cannot sustain their member's pension plans.

We should also be calling for free public transit - to be available like public libraries, public education and public health care. All of this involves trying to take a crucial portion of what we need for our livelihood, our basic needs, and decommodify them as far as possible within capitalism.

People respond positively to such demands even in North America. The trouble with them, however, is that there's not that much room for manoeuvre left for reform in today's capitalism, because in order to have a major program of public housing, in order to have free public transit, you very quickly run up against where are the funds going to come from?

It's possible to argue, given how cheap public bonds are today, that you can go to the bond market, but that also means that you become subject to the kinds of pressures from bondholders that is requiring the Greek and the Portuguese and the Spanish states to do what they're doing to their public sector in order to guarantee that they won't eventually default on those bonds. So you come back fairly quickly to the need to at least begin a process of socialization through taking the banks into the public sector.

We need to try to see this moment of crisis from the perspective of what openings it could create. The limitations of a purely defensive response to the crisis lie in not taking advantage of the opportunity that the crisis creates. Despite the 'Another World Is Possible' rhetoric, the left has been more oriented to attempting to hold on to things than to taking things in a new direction. Whether the struggle has been to prevent water privatization, or whether it's been to protest at G-7 and G-20 meetings, however militant the action, it's often primarily defensive in the demands that are articulated.

This is, oddly enough, one of the limits of a perspective that says you can change the world without taking power, without engaging on the terrain of the state, without transforming the structures of the state. What is on the agenda is mainly to prevent the state doing certain things and what is off the agenda is to change the state in such a way that ensures that when new progressive reforms are won they lead on to further structural reforms. We need to appreciate the reasons for the anti-statism that is so on the Left today; the suspicion of talking in terms of building new parties or transforming the state is understandable. But we need to go beyond protest, or we will be trapped forever in organizing the next demo.

And as this current crisis is transferred down to the regional and local levels, which every central state will try to do, we will run up against the limits of what can be secured in struggles at those levels. We have to learn how defensive and localized struggles can be linked up, and how they can be transformed so they are directed into a struggle for state power.

Otherwise, all the protests will run up even more quickly against the kind of limits of the immediate reforms that don't lead on to more fundamental ones.

This is enormously important because we probably are facing the destruction of public sector trade unionism unless there's a shift in the balance of forces in the context of this crisis. Capitalism can only go on so long with the private sector being as limited in its unionization, its density being so low, in terms of collective bargaining rights and recognition, and the public sector being almost universally unionized. It can't continue. Part of the onslaught on state expenditure that is taking place now is to destroy public sector trade unionism. The ability of public sector unions to resist in this crisis is being very severely tested. That's how serious this is.

Speaking more generally, it is increasingly clear that trade unions, as they evolved through the 20th century, not only in the advanced capitalist countries, also in most of the countries of the South, are no longer capable of being more than defensive. They are not able to win new gains, and they are not able to organize in ways that develop the capacities of their members. The challenge now is to build a trade unionism that is actually a class organization, one that goes beyond organizing people by the workplace alone and organizes people in relation to the many facets of their lives touched by this crisis. \*

Leo Panitch is a political economist and theorist based at York University, Toronto, and is co-editor of Socialist Register. His most recent book is *In and Out of Crisis: The Global Financial Meltdown and Left Alternatives* (with Greg Albo and Sam Gindin). This article is a revised version of a presentation at the Delhi University symposium on "Globalization, Justice and Democracy," November 11, 2010.

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Verizon Strike Highlights Union Effect on Middle Class Jobs

By Kari Lydersen August 15, 2011

This article was originally published on Working In These Times, at [InTheseTimes.com/working](http://InTheseTimes.com/working). It is permanently archived at:

<http://www.inthesetimes.com/working/entry/11832/>

Verizon employees rally in Boston's Post Office Square on the steps of the Verizon building on July 31, 2003.  
(Photo by Douglas McFadd/Getty Images)

State officials nationwide -- most prominently governors Scott Walker in Wisconsin and Chris Christie in New Jersey-- have attacked unionized nurses and teachers as overpaid, as part of a larger campaign against public sector unions.

Now Verizon company executives are using a similar tactic to try to undermine support for 45,000 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and Communications Workers of America (CWA) members on strike across the East Coast including in Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C. and New York, since their contract expired Aug. 6 and negotiations for a new contract are stalled.

On Sunday, Steven Greenhouse reported for The New York Times:

Verizon says its unionized workers average \$70,000 a year before overtime and \$91,000 with overtime. But union officials say only a small percentage of workers earn that much with overtime, an amount they say would require hundreds of hours of it. Company officials note that the average U.S. worker earns \$23 an hour, translating to \$48,000 a year for a full-time worker. "The striking workers earn considerably more than many unionized nurses and teachers," Thonis said. "We're at the very top of our industry in terms of compensation."

The unions have emphasized the "middle class" nature of the union jobs, mostly in the company's land-line division - which is under pressure because of the shift to cell phones. The unions argue that land-line workers helped build the company's highly profitable wireless side, which is not unionized.

In a statement CWA spokesperson Candice Johnson said the company is demanding a total of \$1 billion in concessions from the 45,000 workers:

These demands would cost every family \$20,000 a

year. This is unacceptable from a company that is among the 10 wealthiest in America, that compensates the top five executives at a level of more than a quarter of a billion dollars over four years, that doesn't pay any federal income tax and still gets a \$1.3 billion tax rebate.

Given the attacks on public sector unions and the overall decline in unionization rates, the unions' emphasis on Verizon's threat to middle class jobs might be seen as part of a larger strategy to remind the public of the critical role of unions in the very creation of an American middle class in decades past, especially during the heyday of the auto industry.

The IBEW Local 2222 website says:

It's outrageous. Even as Verizon continues to rake in record profits, it's trying to outsource more jobs, demand workers pay more for benefits and undermine workers' retirement security...Verizon is trying to strip away 50 years of collective bargaining gains for middle-class workers and our families. But the company won't succeed. Workers won't let Verizon destroy the middle-class jobs and benefits generations of Verizon workers gained through collective bargaining.

Company officials and union members are sparring in the media over what exactly constitutes "middle class" and how exactly workers would be impacted by the changes Verizon wants to make.

Union members say that the changes to their health plans and required contributions, specifically, would be devastating. Company officials say they are just trying to bring their workers in line with most Americans' health coverage burdens. Union members also point out that depending where they live - like the New York City area - pay that might sound above middle-class to an average American is actually not.

Greenhouse quotes Poughkeepsie, New York worker Doug Anderson:

What we make is just a living wage in the New York area...On what I earn, my family can't even afford to live where I work -- Westchester County. And on what we earn, it's hard to send a child through college.

The strike has been highly contentious, with both sides alleging physical threats and attacks, and judges handing down injunctions and limiting the number of picketers allowed at any one location. Fox News reported on company legal filings, which the unions say are exaggerated and typical management tactics.

Over the past few days, strikers have fired a BB gun at a non-striking worker in the Bronx, pushed another into a scaffolding and injured his arm in Albany, crowded around a Manhattan manhole where workers were sent to splice a cable and refused to leave when police were called, according to the company's legal filing in New York. It says pickets

also blocked postal trucks from getting into a Verizon billing center in the Long Island community of Massapequa and gathered by the dozens to harangue people going into and leaving various Verizon locations.

Kari Lydersen, an In These Times contributing editor, is a Chicago-based journalist whose works has appeared in The New York Times, the Washington Post, the Chicago Reader and The Progressive, among other publications. Her most recent book is *Revolt on Goose Island*. In 2011, she was awarded a Studs Terkel Community Media Award for her work. She can be reached at [kari.lydersen@gmail.com](mailto:kari.lydersen@gmail.com).

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