

Buffalo Forum



Local Publication of the
U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization

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September 18, 2015

Vol. 19 #9

Our Children Are Not Products

Education officials at the state level often now refer to our children as "products." We as parents and teachers respond they are not products, they are human beings with rights, including the equal right to education for all. So why are officials using this language of "products."

According to state officials, the role of schools is to increase productivity, so these "products" can better compete on the global market. Teachers are called "human capital," again not human beings. As "capital" their job is to serve capitalists. Specifically, to be product managers, producing more "products" that meet the needs of the monopolies in *their* global competition for profits.

It is from this perspective that Governor Cuomo talks about imposing the "death penalty" on Buffalo public schools, which, evidently, are not producing the products needed. Similarly, it is said that the 25 Buffalo

Our Children Are Not Products • 4

REFUSE STATE TAKEOVER

Take Action Now to Defend Rights of Students and Teachers

The state, including Governor Cuomo and Education Commissioner Elia have put forward that state takeover of schools is a way to improve them. They have presented no evidence, no research, no data to show this is the case. They have simply imposed this undemocratic action

that removes these schools from public accountability.

As part of the state takeover, broad powers to attack the rights of students and teachers have been given to the Commissioner and local receivers for 144 schools

Take Action Now • 3

Schools Cannot Use Best Qualities to Demonstrate Improvement

One of the most irrational features of the state takeover of the public schools is the refusal by the state to use qualitative measures concerning learning and teaching in the schools. And the refusal to identify and utilize the best qualities at a given school as part of improving the quality of education provided. Indeed, quality is

Schools Cannot Use Best Qualities • 4

State Education Commissioner Dictating School Plans

New York State Education Commissioner Elia has recently informed the 25 Buffalo schools taken over by the state what "metrics" they are required to pursue to show "improvement." The large majority of these "metrics" are based on student scores on a single state Common Core test. When the Commissioner first released the list of "metrics," it was said the schools could choose which they wanted to

Commissioner Dictating Plans • 5

New Orleans Katrina Pain Index at 10: Who Was Left Behind

*Bill Quigley, Law Professor and Rights Activist,
Loyola University, New Orleans*

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, the nation saw tens of thousands of people left behind in New Orleans. Ten years later, it looks like the same people in New Orleans

have been left behind again. The population of New Orleans is noticeably smaller and noticeably whiter. While tens of billions poured into Louisiana, the impact on poor

Katrina Pain Index • 10

VULTURE FINANCIERS DEMANDING CUTS

Cancel Puerto Rico's Debt and Fully Fund Healthcare and Pensions

The vultures of Wall Street continue to demand that the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico pay them, while deeply cutting funding for the University of Puerto Rico, imposing school closures and other attacks on

education including cuts to teacher pensions and funding for cities and towns. Pension funds are already underfunded by about \$45 billion. Hospitals are also to be privatized. So-called public-private

Cancel Puerto Rico's Debt • 11

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I • TAKE ACTION NOW

statewide. In Buffalo the receiver for 25 public schools is the new superintendent hand-picked by the Commissioner, Dr. Cash.

At meetings on receivership at the schools involved, the state has gone out of its way to minimize or provide disinformation about the powers. These include the power to “abolish the positions of all members of the teaching and administrative and supervisory staff,” without cause, at a receivership school. It has been reported by school administrators that teachers and staff for at least one school have been told to expect such mass firing without cause in January. Such mass firing would be very harmful and disruptive to students, teachers and parents alike. Yet we are being told no action to defend rights is needed now.

As well, the receiver is only required to re-hire 50 percent of those fired. However, he also has the power to decide the qualifications and working conditions for positions at the school involved. This means he could decide that some who re-apply are not qualified.

Anyone who is not re-hired is not allowed to bump those with less seniority in the district, as is normally the case under the existing contract. These trained and experienced people are instead put on a list for possible open positions, most likely at other receivership schools, in the future.

The uncertainty about this ability to fire people without cause is generating anxiety and concern among students and teachers district-wide. At the very least, in the interests of our students, teachers and parents, the Commissioner and Dr. Cash should publicly promise not to use this power for the next year.

Separate Agreements Undermine Collective Strength

A second main power ignored is the ability to compel teachers and staff of a receivership school to accept a separate “receivership agreement.” No justification is needed for this demand. It also means conditions at each school can vary greatly, as the separate agreements can cover “the length of school day; the length of school year; professional development for teachers



and administrators; class size; and changes to programs, assignments, and teaching conditions in the school in receivership.” Such variations could make it very difficult for parents to provide care for their children after school, as each may be dismissed at different times. Scheduling for after school programs is already causing such problems and this would only make the situation worse.

Teachers and staff at the given school are *compelled* to complete an agreement with the receiver within 30 days. Then teachers and staff have ten days to vote for or against the agreement. If an agreement is not reached in thirty days or voted down because teachers and staff determine that it harms conditions for teaching and learning, then the Commissioner decides. She can impose a separate agreement even if it has been voted down. This can hardly be called negotiations.

Further, it was reported that in her recent visit to Buffalo in September, the Commissioner specifically targeted South Park and Burgard High Schools, two of the five schools given only one year to show improvement. In meetings at the schools the Commissioner claimed there was a “disconnect” between student test scores and teacher assessments. Like Cuomo, she claimed if state test scores were not good, it must mean teachers were not good. She provided no evidence as to how or why the quality of teaching can be determined



by student scores on a single state test. She also did not address the rigged and arbitrary scoring of the tests by the state. And the fact that when it comes to assessing teachers or students, a single quantitative measure cannot provide an assessment of their quality. Instead she simply used the unfair test scores to justify the takeover of these schools and threaten the full use of her powers and those of the receiver against the schools, their students, teachers, staff and parents.

It can be said that the state takeover, which has already occurred, represents a volcano, spewing lava. We cannot wait for Buffalo to be buried by this burning, unforgiving lava. The time for refusal is now. Let all play their role. Get informed and inform others, using resources like *Buffalo Forum*. Let the unions pass resolutions against receivership and its powers to fire without cause and divide the district, and take them statewide. Let parents and students join in refusing by demanding the Commissioner and Cash promise publicly not to use their powers to fire and impose separate agreements. Let those on the Community Engagement Teams engage in developing real plans for the schools and real engagement involving parents and community. Let students organize to show their refusal by wearing armbands and similar actions. Let all stand together at rallies and “Refuse Days” at the schools, standing united for equality and the rights of all.

I • OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT PRODUCTS

public schools taken over by the state and put in receivership have “the poorest human capital.” Further, that parents with children in these schools are being left with the “dregs” — garbage, scum, the worst teachers.

Parents in Buffalo have long experience with being told that their children are the “worst,” no better than garbage to be thrown out of school, or put in jail, simply because they are among the poorest students or are African Americans or Puerto Ricans. And as such, it is said that do not have the right to the highest quality education. Parents have rightly rejected such claims, demanding that all children have the equal right to the best education society can provide. As seen at rallies and school board meetings, it is also parents, teachers and students together that have emphasized that all involved with the schools have a social responsibility to help ensure the rights of *all* are met.

Just as we reject labeling our children as garbage and failures, we reject labeling our teachers as the worst. Our teachers, including many in the receivership schools, are among the best. As a *collective* they contend with the serious problems of poverty, like lead poisoning and hunger,

and the inequality that students face. They work to educate young people and treat them as people, not products. As a whole, they work to improve the schools, including by fighting for better teaching conditions, which are better learning conditions. Teachers too are human beings with rights. And, like the students, the more their rights are respected, the better all are able to improve the quality of education.

Failure of Government

The problem is not the existence of some teachers that need more training and assistance to become better teachers. The problem is not failing teachers or students, but a government failing to meet the rights of all. And a government, failing to provide solutions, imposing an undemocratic takeover.

The purpose of the language of “products” and “dregs” is to divert from this failure of government to in any way improve the *quality* of education. That is not their aim. Instead, they are attempting to prepare the ground for the mass firing of teachers and the further undermining of the quality of education. The power given to the receiver includes the ability to fire all teachers and staff without cause. If

these teachers are seen as the “worst” and garbage, such an unjust action as throwing them out is made acceptable.

Further, if students are seen as “products,” and parents and teachers are to focus on “productivity,” then the all-round *quality* of education, and curriculum and teaching conditions necessary for it, can also be eliminated. This is already occurring, as music and art are being cut and eliminated and history and social studies greatly limited. Librarians, essential for assisting students in learning to investigate and find things out for themselves are also being cut. These are not needed to increase the productivity of “products” competing in service to the rich. They are needed to educate the next generation of youth to tackle and find solutions for the social problems facing society.

Refusing receivership is directly connected to refusing this concept that our children are products to be used by the rich. Human beings have rights, products do not. Human beings need education to change the world. The rich and their government, who cannot provide these rights, need drones who submit and obey, not human beings who think and resist and fight for rights and equality.

I • SCHOOLS CANNOT USE BEST QUALITIES

not being examined at all. Instead, student scores on a single state Common Core test are being used. That is, quantitative data from one test, and whether this quantitative data “improves,” is the main means being used.

What is the aim of excluding other measures showing the quality of a given school? South Park, for example, one of the schools singled out by the Commissioner, along with Burgard, has one of the better quality programs for students with special needs. These students are about 30 percent of the student body. But the quality of the education provided these students, the improvements they and their teachers accomplish, are not to be utilized in assessing the school. Similarly, their music program is such that their students wrote and performed their own musical, a

significant accomplishment of collective student learning and an indicator of the quality of teaching. But it too has no place in how the state is assessing the school.

An approach that leaves out quality, particularly the strengths of a given school, makes no sense. If one were assessing the quality of a football team, for example, one would take into account its strengths as well as weaknesses. A single quantitative measure like the number of fumbles would readily be seen as insufficient in assessing the team. And in deciding how best to improve, one would certainly use the strongest qualities as part of overcoming weaknesses.

Teaching and learning are also collective team efforts. Indeed, the quality of a given school can only be measured by the qualities of the collectives involved.

Student learning cannot be measured by test scores, a single quantity, and one that is not valid to begin with. Similarly, student test scores cannot measure the quality of teaching, nor the overall quality of the school. And they say nothing about what is needed to improve the *quality* of education. That is a problem requiring the collective efforts of students, parents, teachers, staff and the public as a whole to develop.

There is no doubt the public schools need improvement. But there is equally no doubt that state takeover does not have this aim. Indeed, state takeover is directly blocking the ability of students, parents, teachers and staff to together examine the quality of learning and teaching, the quality of education as a whole and together *decide* what is needed to improve it, in each school and district-wide.

I • COMMISSIONER DICTATING SCHOOL PLANS

address. In fact, for what are called “Level 1 metrics” the Commissioner has now told the schools which ones they were required to address. She also informed the schools that reducing class size could not be included as part of their plans to improve the schools. This is true even though most parents and teachers consider reducing class size one of their top priorities. Given the abundant research and experience showing that smaller classes are a main way to improve quality, it makes no sense that the Commissioner is excluding it.

The state formula for “improvement” is a complicated one. It does not permit the receivership schools to include aspects of their school where they excel, such as in music, or art, or increases in scholarships won, or awards in science. Instead nearly all the “metrics” are tied to student scores on the single state Common Core test.

To understand the Commissioner’s “metrics” it is first necessary to know that the state uses the Common Core state test to label students, as one would a product, as a level 1, 2, 3 or 4, with 4 the highest. The 1s and 2s are considered below “quality,” or defective.

The majority of “Level 1 metrics” are tied to the test scores. For elementary schools, the majority of the receivership schools, they include requirements for improving the number of students at or above level 2 in the test scores for English and math. For example, one elementary school has been told by the Commissioner to show improvement for test scores for all grade 3-8 students ranked level 2 and above in math and English, and grades 4 and 8 science for all students level 2 and above. Evidently, the level 1s are being discarded.

Similarly, for a high school, the Commissioner dictated improvement in 10th graders passing the Common Core Math Regents, a new exam for this year, written by a private company, not educators. The school also must show improvement for 11th graders passing the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core Regents exam, the total cohort with 4 years Advanced Regents Diplomas and 5-year graduation rate.

Ranking Hides Quality of Students as Human Beings

The state ranking of young children, based on scores on a single state test, as 1, 2, 3 or 4s is a way to claim it is our children that are failing — when it is the government that is failing. It is also a way to deny that all children, whether poor, or African American, or Puerto Rican, or refugees, have equal rights as human beings that the state is obligated to meet. Far from doing this, the state is using the unfair test scores to humiliate students, with these false labels often publicly displayed in the schools, or placed above students’ lockers. Teachers and whole schools are also branded as “failures” in this manner. Those schools that have been ranked as “failing” by the state are the ones subject to state takeover.

Scores Rigged to Show “Failure”

It is well-known and even admitted by the state that the Common Core test scoring is arbitrary, with “failing” rates (levels 1 and 2) set to ensure the majority “fail.” The tests themselves have also been shown to be unfair, developmentally inappropriate and not a reliable measure of anything, least of all the quality of teaching and learning in a given school or district. Yet, these scores are the main thing being used to justify state take over of the public schools.

As just one aspect of the unfairness

of the testing, students who are English Language Learners and with Special Needs are forced to take the same test and scored in the same manner as other students. The large majority of the schools in receivership have sizeable numbers of both groups of students. This means their test scores are necessarily going to be lower, even if their students are learning and contributing and their language and learning levels are improving. This real improvement will not be seen by the test scores, just as the reality of the quality of teaching cannot be demonstrated using a single test score.

Given that a large majority of the so-called metrics are tied to the single state test, and the scoring for it is rigged to show “failure,” it can be said that the demands for “improvement” are also rigged to show failure. This is further demonstrated by the manipulation of data for graduation rates. A high school, for example, is accountable for all the students entering their ninth grade, called a “cohort.” They are responsible for the graduation rates of this “cohort,” even if students do not even enter the building, or leave the state without notifying the school, or are forced to leave school for economic or family reasons, or are pushed out. These are social problems the schools do not control that impact graduation, but are hidden by the way in which the data is calculated — just as the test scores hide the actual learning and teaching conditions in the schools.

As teachers, parents and principals in receivership schools have brought out, the demands by the Commissioner to restrict school plans to these “metrics,” based solely on test scores, while also excluding things like smaller classes and areas where the schools excel, makes no sense if one wants to actually assess the quality of teaching and learning. All involved in education know that a single test, even it is a relatively good one, cannot measure the quality of the student body, the quality of the teaching or the quality of the school as a whole. Nor can it identify what is needed to improve the overall quality of education to meet the needs of students and society as a whole. That is not the aim of the state, but it is a main aim of students, teachers, parents and staff.

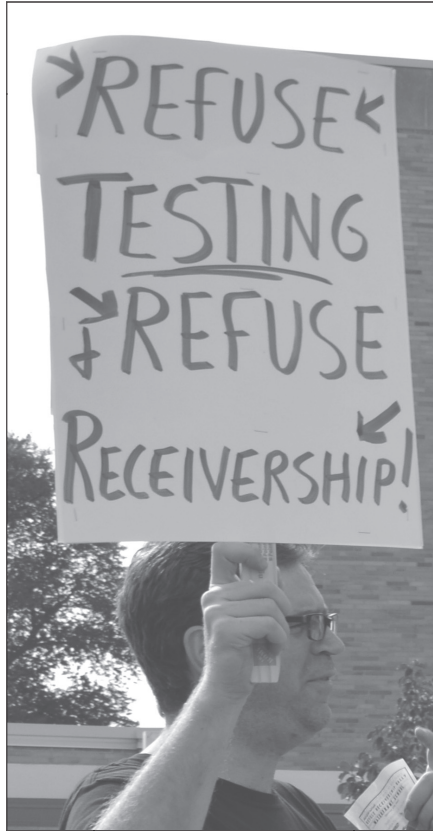
COMMISSIONER DECIDING

Restrictions Placed on CETs and School Improvement Plans

When the state introduced the state take-over of 144 public schools statewide, 25 in Buffalo, it promoted the possibility of parents and teachers and community members participating in developing school improvement plans. The mechanism provided for this was the Community Engagement Team (CET). It was said that the CETs would have an opportunity to develop plans based on what their schools actually needed, such as more teachers, or translators, or guidance counselors, or music, or physical education, or full-time librarians, more books and so forth. The regulations called for parents to be able to get together to choose parents for the CET. Students and community members were to participate as well.

The reality has been quite different. In general, principals at the schools were told by the receiver to select members of the CET. Those selected were commonly the already existing members of the School Based Management Teams (SBMT), most of which have minimal parent participation. At the meetings at each receivership school, which were supposed to inform parents and the community, the information provided varied considerably and was often inaccurate or limited.

As one example, while people present were told the CET existed and could advise on school plans, people were often not told how to join or what kind of time commitment was expected. Or they



were told the CET already existed and left with the impression that they could not join. Similarly, various community organizations and activists were often not directly informed or invited to participate. To the degree they are involved is largely based on whether the principal invited them, or they took initiative to attend the receivership meetings.

For the information of all concerned, it is still possible to join the CETs at the receivership schools and one can do so by talking with the principal of the school. Some CETs have already started meeting and others are only now holding their first official meetings. However all CETs are to continue meeting through out the year so joining remains a possibility, decided by the principal and receiver.

Limits on School Plans

The school plans have also been

greatly limited by the Commissioner. They are limited by the requirement to focus on the Commissioner's "metrics," which are almost entirely related to showing improvement in student test scores. As well, generally, the schools have been forced to use their existing school improvement plans submitted before CETs were even formed. For schools with School Improvement Grants (SIGs), these plans are additionally limited by the requirements of the grant. And certain important areas for achieving improvement, such as having smaller class sizes, cannot be part of the plan.

Most schools only got the Commissioner's specific demands for their school's "metrics," very recently, after school already started. Some schools held their first official CET meetings September 15-17. Yet they have a deadline for submitting their plans to superintendent receiver Dr. Cash by September 21 or 23, for his proposals. Thus the time to actually discuss and devise the plans, especially for new participants, was very limited.

The revised plans will then be sent to the Commissioner by September 30 and can be changed and/or approved by her. Some schools have been given until October 28 to submit their plans to the Commissioner.

Further, while the state has not been required to provide any research or data showing that state take over of public schools brings about improvement, the school plans do require such things. The schools must include in their plans the research rationale, data to show need, and budget requirements for any recommendations they have. All this within a few days while school is in session and thus all concerned have many other responsibilities.

The reality of the situation concerning both CETs and school plans is not what was promoted. The Commissioner, both in terms of timing and requirements, has made certain that the plans are greatly restricted and the role of the CETs has also been limited.



A Proposal for Real Planning and Real Engagement Teams

One of the problems facing those concerned about improving the quality of education is the lack of decision making power concerning plans for the content and organization of schools, individually and as a district. The state takeover has made this problem worse, as the state Education Commissioner has limited the school plans and is forcing schools to mainly focus on quantitative measures related to state test scores.

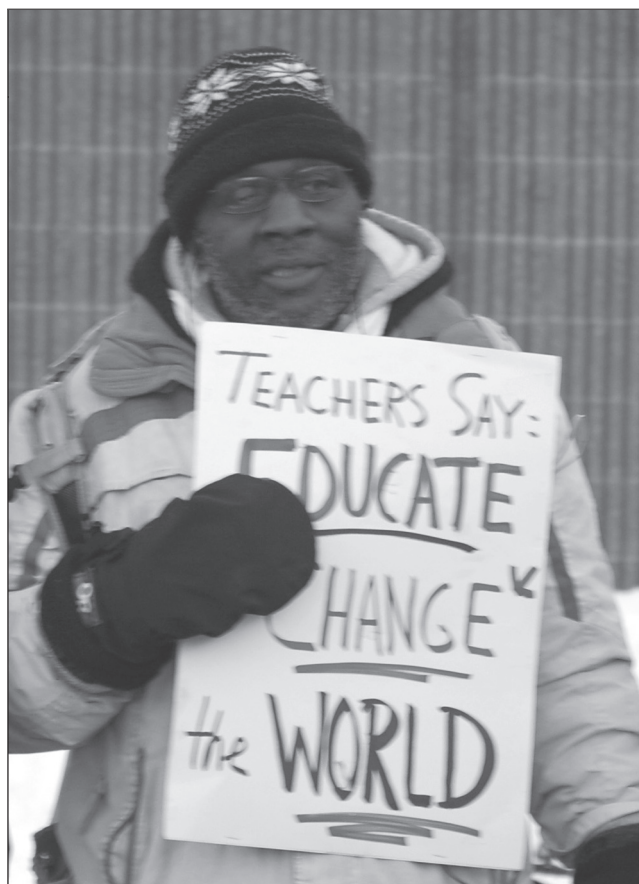
For those coming forward in various ways to demand qualitative improvements, including teachers, parents and students on the Community Engagement Teams (CETs), one way of contending with this is to refuse to accept these limitations. Instead, efforts can be made to broaden the CETs and involve them in developing real plans based on what students, parents and teachers decide is needed. This could include things like smaller classes, more music and art, more translators

for English Language Learners, both students and parents.

Instead of accepting the focus on testing, focus instead on alternatives of our design. These could include proposals for waivers from state testing for students learning English. It can also include proposals for alternatives to state testing for all students, such as use of student portfolios and joint projects.

It can also include re-thinking how best to organize education, including curriculum, to meet the requirements of modern life. Schools are currently organized based on an old approach, divided by subject, by grade, and often detached from addressing social problems. Certainly one measure of how well something has been learned is the ability to apply it to actual problems in the world, large and small. Yet this is often left out, contributing to the sense among students that what is being presented is not relevant. Similarly subject content is often limited, excluding the history and contributions of all to social progress.

Speaking overall, debate and thinking about the aim of education today, who and what it should serve, is an integral part of working out plans for organization and content. What is the place of engaging the community as a whole, of participating in organizing efforts, of joint projects, of learning together and social responsibility?



The issue of making qualitative changes to education and plans for this is on the agenda. The state takeover is not solving this problem and in fact is taking things backward. One way of contending with this is for CETs to refuse the limitations of the state and take up real engagement and planning and use their ability to hold public meetings to broaden this content and discussion. And if the state attempts to block such efforts, to refuse that as well and carry forward independently. It is parents, students, teachers and staff together who together can solve problems in education. They can do so by refusing the limits of the state and taking initiative to develop plans that serve students and society by providing education to change the world.



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Thousands “Walk-In” to Milwaukee Public Schools to Oppose State Takeover

Kim Shroeder, President Milwaukee Teachers Education Association

Thousands of parents, educators, students and community leaders held “walk-ins” at more than 100 public schools across the city of Milwaukee to celebrate public schools and to share information about how a proposed public school takeover will hurt students and the Milwaukee economy.

The Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association and the Schools and Communities United coalition organized the walk-ins in response to a public school takeover plan that was passed in July as part of the Wisconsin state budget.

The school takeover plan charges the Milwaukee county executive with choosing a takeover commissioner this fall. The commissioner would then choose 1-3 schools to convert into privately run

charter or voucher schools for the 2016-17 school year. In each subsequent year, up to five schools could be handed over to private operators.

Parents and community members have raised several concerns about the takeover plan. Among them:

- The takeover plan offers no new ideas or resources. Changing who runs a school will not provide the resources or support that students need to succeed.

- Many students will be left without critical services. The takeover schools are not required to meet the needs of special education students or English language learners.

- School takeovers eliminate good jobs in our city. Takeovers have hurt the local economy in New Orleans, Memphis and

Detroit.

- The takeover plan eliminates democratic local control and disenfranchises black and brown communities.

- Takeovers will affect all public schools, not just a few individual schools. The very existence of our public school system is in jeopardy.

The citywide walk-ins were a step forward in building a network of school defense committees to protect and strengthen every public school in the city of Milwaukee. Parents, educators, community members and students will work together in the coming months to solidify their school defense committees and prepare for an all-city summit of school defense committees on December 5, 2015.

Massachusetts, Roland Fryer, and a “Two-tiered System of Standardized Testing”

Mercedes Schneider, Deutsch 29 EduBlog, September 17, 2015

On November 17, 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) will vote on either the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) assessments or the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) as the statewide assessment system for Massachusetts. [New York is also a part of PARCC and will be using the PARCC Common Core test, BF Ed. Note.]

In 2015, districts in Massachusetts were able to decide on either PARCC or MCAS, with over half using PARCC.

Massachusetts Commissioner Mitchell Chester chairs the governing board of the struggling PARCC consortium, and in November 2015, he is to make a formal recommendation to BESE on which assessment system to choose.

Meanwhile, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker has made two new appointments to BESE. One is Michael Moriarty, a Holyoke education and community development expert.

The other is Harvard University economist Roland Fryer, who was (hmm...) promoted from assistant professor to full professor after a single year on the Harvard University faculty (and skipping right over associate professor, to boot).

Fryer is also the faculty director of Harvard University-based EdLabs, which describes itself as just a helpful group of individuals with no agenda:

“We are an eclectic collection of scientists, educators, and implementers with diverse backgrounds and vast experience, generating ideas and implementing experiments that have the potential to transform education.

“Edlabs has no political affiliation or agenda to promote. We squeeze truths from data. People may not always like what we discover, but we will disseminate our results no matter what we find.”

On the same web page EdLabs lists five “stakeholders.” Among them is Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of state who now leads former Florida governor

and Republican presidential hopeful Jeb Bush’s corporate-reform-promoting nonprofit, Foundation for Excellence in Education (FEE).

A second EdLabs stakeholder is former New York City (NYC) chancellor, Joel Klein, who with Rice co-authored a weak “A Nation at Risk” substitute in March 2012. After his stint in trying to privatize NYC public education, Klein left to lead Rupert Murdoch’s ed division, Amplify – a losing venture that Murdoch dumped after it lost \$371 million this year alone.

According to Fryer’s curriculum vitae, Fryer served under Klein as the “chief equality officer” for the NYC Department of Education for a year (2007-08), which happens to be the same year that Fryer made that remarkable jump from assistant professor to full professor.

A third notable EdLabs stakeholder is billionaire Eli Broad, whose most recent privatizing effort involves pushing to convert half of Los Angeles’ schools to

Two-Tiered Massachusetts System • 9

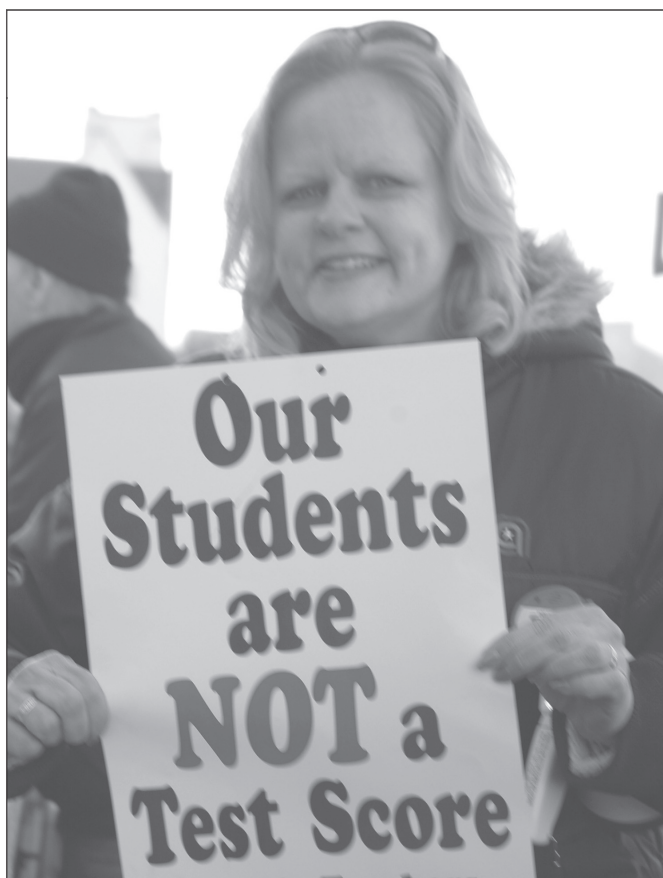
8 • TWO-TIERED MASSACHUSETTS SYSTEM

charters.

Then there are EdLabs “Partners in Innovation,” a Who’s Who in test-score-driven, market-serving, ed “reform,” including Teach for America (TFA), the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, Pritzker Foundation, and Robin Hood Foundation.

Fryer’s curriculum vitae includes the following section entitled, “Selected Gifts and Grants.” Note that Fryer has collected over \$10 million from the Broad Foundation and more than \$7 million from the NYC Mayor’s Fund under Bloomberg:

- \$2,500,000 Broad Foundation Grant, 2011
- \$284,000, Community Foundation of Oklahoma, 2011
- \$500,000, Hecksher Foundation Grant, 2011
- \$1,000,000, Ford Foundation Grant, 2010
- \$1,500,000, Liemandt Foundation Grant, 2010
- \$250,000, Hecksher Foundation Grant, 2010
- \$1,000,000, Gates Foundation Grant, 2009
- \$500,000, Arnold Foundation Grant, 2009
- \$500,000, Fisher Foundation Grant, 2009
- \$10,000,000, Griffin Foundation Grant, 2009
- \$400,000, CAREER Grant, 2008
- \$150,000, Steans Foundation, 2008
- \$150,000, Joyce Foundation, 2008
- \$7,600,000, Broad Foundation Grant, 2007-2009
- \$4,800,000, NYC Mayor’s Fund Grant, 2007-2009
- \$1,900,000, District of Columbia Public Schools, 2007-2009



- \$360,000, Smith Richardson Foundation Grant, 2007-2009
- \$200,000, National Science Foundation Grant, 2005-2007
- \$35,000, Milton Fund Grant, Harvard University, 2004-2005
- \$15,000, NICHD Minority Research Grant, 2001-2002

So, I am finding it difficult to believe that Fryer would vote against PARCC in favor of a state-based assessment system. But there is more to note about Fryer’s view of standardized testing: his favoring testing as a “two-tiered system.” I read the following on September 17, 2015, on Worcester (Massachusetts) School Committee member Tracy Novick’s blog:

“In 2012, Fryer gave a lecture regarding his work at EdLabs. He had this to say about standardized tests:

‘I haven’t figured out why no one has tried a two-tiered system for standardized testing. So, I live in Concord, Massachusetts which is a wonderful suburb of Boston — my wife and I just moved there

— and I actually don’t want a lot of standardized testing in Concord because it will crowd out my kids learning Shakespeare and those types of things I never really read. However, in the schools that are failing, we really do need standardized tests because at least we know where they are and that’s really, really important. Just because we don’t test them doesn’t mean they’re not failing. And so I would actually say if schools are high-performing suburban schools or high-performing schools ought to be able to say, ‘You know what? 90 percent passed the test in 2008, let’s not take the test for 2 or 3 years so that we can focus on different and more holistic types of instruction’. *For schools that are in the bottom, I think they ought to test those kids every day.*” [Emphasis added.]

Given that there is an established connection between standardized test scores and student family income, what

Fryer is advocating is that standardized testing become “education” for poorer American children.

Note also that according to Fryer’s curriculum vitae, he is currently involved in an “experiment” from 2015-18, entitled, “Decrease Poverty or Increase School Quality?”

“School Quality” Fryer-style must be a euphemism for a lower-income-student daily dose of standardized testing.

Then comes the issue of what “passed the test” means. What test? PARCC, with its higher failure rate? Even Massachusetts will take a hit with PARCC — with disadvantaged groups taking the hardest hit.

“Passed the test” is not objective. “Passed the test” depends upon the selected test and the selected cut scores — both of which are little more than hyper-marketed political tools for an obscenely-financed status quo that clearly includes Fryer.

I • KATRINA PAIN INDEX

and working people in New Orleans has been minimal. Many of the elderly and the poor, especially poor families with children, never made it back to New Orleans. The poverty rate for children who did make it back remains at disturbingly high pre-Katrina levels, especially for Black children. Rents are high and taking a higher percentage of people's income. The pre-Katrina school system fired all its teachers and professionals and turned itself into the charter experiment capital of the US even while the number of children in public schools has dropped dramatically. Since Katrina, white incomes, which were over twice that of Blacks, have risen three times as much as Blacks. While not all the numbers below are bad, they do illustrate who has been left behind in the ten years since Katrina hit.

33: Rent in New Orleans is up 33 percent for one bedroom apartments and 41 percent for two bedroom apartments since Katrina hit. This is very tough because in New Orleans, 55 percent of residents rent. The national average is 35 percent. In 2005, one bedroom was \$578 and two was \$676. In 2015, it is \$767 for one and \$950 for two.

Before Katrina the average renter spent 19 percent of income on rent. The Data Center, a terrific resource for information on the region, reports 37 percent of renters in New Orleans now spend more than 50 percent of their income to rent. Rental apartments are mostly substandard as well with 78 percent, nearly 50,000 apartments, in the city needing major repairs. And CNN/Money has named New Orleans as one of the worst cities in the U.S. for renters.

38: In 2005, 38 percent of the children in New Orleans lived in poverty, 17 percentage points higher than the U.S. as a whole. The most recent numbers show 39 percent of the children in New Orleans live in poverty, still 17 percentage points higher than the national average. About 82 percent of these families have someone working in the family so the primary cause is low wages.

44: New Orleans now has 44 school boards. Prior to Katrina, nearly all the



public schools in New Orleans were overseen by the one Orleans Parish School Board. About 91 percent of the public schools in New Orleans are now private charter schools, the highest rate in the country. [...]

50: Fully half the Black children in New Orleans live in poor households, a higher percentage than when Katrina hit.

59: New Orleans is now 59 percent African American, down from 66.7 percent in 2000; 31 percent white, up from 26 percent in 2000; and 5.5 percent Hispanic, up from 3 percent in 2000. [...]

3221: There are now 3221 fewer low income public housing apartments in New Orleans than when Katrina hit. In 2005 there were 5,146 low income public housing apartments in New Orleans, plus thousands of other public housing apartments scheduled for renewal or maintenance, nearly 100% African American. The housing authority now reports having 1925 public housing apartments available for low income people on the sites of the demolished complexes, less than half of the number promised. Less than half of those completed have rents set at rates which are affordable to those who lived in public housing before Katrina, meaning the majority of their public housing units now require higher incomes from renters than the people who were living in public housing prior to Katrina. That is why only about half of the families who lived in the four public housing developments which

were demolished after Katrina made it back to New Orleans at all by 2011. And only 7 percent of those original families were living in the new housing that replaced their homes.

6,000: There are 6,000 fewer people on Social Security in Orleans Parish than before the storm. Orleans parish had 26,654 people on Social Security, either old age or disability, in 2004. Orleans parish had 20,325 people on Social Security in the latest report.

7,500: Over 7,500 public school teachers and paraprofessionals, mostly African American, were fired after Katrina when Louisiana took over the New Orleans public school system. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal in May 2015. [...]

17,392: There are 17,392 fewer children enrolled in public schools in New Orleans now than before Katrina. There were over 63,000 enrolled pre-Katrina and now there are 45,608.

35,451: The median income for white families in New Orleans is \$60,553; that is \$35,451 more than for Black families whose median income was \$25,102. In the last ten years the median income for Black families grew by 7 percent. At the same time, the median income for white families grew three times as fast, by 22 percent. In 2005, the median income for Black households was \$23,394, while the median for white households was \$49,262. By 2013, the median income for Black households had grown only slightly, to \$25,102. But the median for white households had jumped to \$60,553. [...]

71,000: Seventy one thousand fewer people live in New Orleans now than before the storm. In 2005, New Orleans had a population of 455,000 and in 2014 its population was 384,000.

99,650: There are 99,650 fewer African Americans living in New Orleans now than in 2000, compared to 11,000 fewer whites.

71,000,000,000: Seventy one billion dollars was received by the State of Louisiana for Katrina repairs, rehabilitation and rebuilding. One look at this index and you see who did NOT get the money.

REALITY OF “RECOVERY”

New Orleans Running ‘Modern Debtors Prison,’ Lawsuit Charges

Nadia Prupis, Common Dreams, September 18, 2015

A federal class action lawsuit filed Thursday in Louisiana says Orleans Parish has resurrected unconstitutional “debtors’ prisons” by routinely jailing the region’s poorest residents over their inability to pay court fees and other fines.

The lawsuit, filed against the Orleans Parish District Criminal Court, says New Orleans officials use “jail and threats of jail to collect court debts from thousands of the city’s poorest people,” leading to “an illegal, unconstitutional and unjust modern debtors’ prison,” the likes of which were ruled to violate the 14th Amendment in 1983.

Moreover, those taken into custody found themselves left without “notice of how or when they would be released or when a hearing would be held.”

The suit takes aim at the city’s sheriff’s office and court officials for participating in what it calls an “illegal scheme” to jail debtors until they collect enough money

to pay off fines or a pre-set \$20,000 bond — funds which then go directly to the court’s Judicial Expense Fund, which the suit says constitutes a conflict of interest for judges. More than 80 percent of defendants in Orleans Parish criminal court qualify as indigent.

Such unconstitutional systems have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. A similar lawsuit earlier this year in Missouri forced one notorious judge in Ferguson to resign just a month after the claim was filed.

In Thursday’s suit, plaintiff Alana Cain detailed her experience being arrested and jailed for missing scheduled payments without being given a chance to plead poverty.

The New Orleans Advocate writes:

[Cain] was ordered to pay more than \$1,000 in fees, court records show, including \$600 to the Judicial Expense Fund.

According to the lawsuit, the court’s

Collections Department set up a payment plan, for which she was late once, citing poverty. Cain was pulled over last March on a traffic stop and jailed on a warrant for failure to pay the fees. [...] After a week in jail, Cain appeared in court, and the judge “told her that if she ever missed a payment again, she would have to spend 90 days in jail,” the lawsuit states.

“The environment of threats of jail and actual jailing creates a culture of fear among indigent people and their families, who borrow money at high interest rates, divert money from food for their children, and cash their family members’ disability checks in a desperate attempt to...avoid indefinite confinement,” the suit continues.

And judges’ pursuit of debtors’ money “has corrupted the basic delivery of justice and resulted in pervasive conflicts of interest and rampant constitutional violations in the procedures for collecting those debts after cases are closed.”

I • CANCEL PUERTO RICO'S DEBT

private interests to rob the public treasury, are being demanded for the island’s public highway, transit, port and building authorities. Numerous actions have opposed these demands and instead put forward the call to *Cancel the Debt!*

It is the Wall Street vultures that lowered Puerto Rico’s bonds to “junk bond” status, allowing them to rake in even more from the higher interest rates imposed. One result is Puerto Rico for years on end is being forced to pay and pay again tens of billions to these financiers. The island is paying close to \$3.7 billion a year just to service the debt. About \$18 billion in principal and interest are due in the next five years, including general obligation debt — something seen as untouchable by the financiers. The Puerto Rican government is demanding restructuring of at least this much.

Wall Street instead is now demanding

a control board that will reportedly be made up of representatives of the hedge funds and the U.S. government. This is a means to further block the ability of Puerto Ricans to hold these vultures accountable, while making it easier for the financiers to impose more cuts. This same pattern of protecting billionaire owners while attacking the people and their rights was seen in Detroit, with its financial manager, and in Buffalo, with its Control Board.

The Puerto Rican people are demanding cancellation of the debt, as a start toward the reparations owed to them for U.S. colonization since 1898. It is U.S. colonialism that has distorted and wrecked the Puerto Rican economy, where only about 40 percent of the working-age population is in the workforce. As well, hundreds of thousands have been forced to leave the island and come to the U.S. in search of work.

While some are calling for Puerto Rico to be able to declare bankruptcy, experience with this in Detroit and elsewhere show it is yet another means for the financiers to make a big score while the people pay the price.

It is also the case that the U.S. government is worsening conditions by refusing to fully fund Medicare and Medicaid in Puerto Rico. The fact that Puerto Ricans have no control over such matters, with funding decided not by her legislature but by the U.S. Congress, is yet another crime of colonialism.

Canceling the debt and refusing to pay a penny more is what will assist the Puerto Rican economy and her people. Upholding the right of Puerto Ricans to self-determination, to decide their own affairs by themselves without U.S. interference and military occupations, is the order of the day.

Coalition Demands U.S. Government Fund Puerto Rico's Healthcare System

Puerto Rico Healthcare Crisis Coalition

The newly formed Puerto Rico Healthcare Crisis Coalition, a broad group of patient advocates, doctors, hospitals, insurers and business leaders, joined forces to call on the U.S. government to take immediate action to prevent the imminent collapse of Puerto Rico's healthcare system. A collapse will not only jeopardize care for millions, but could result in a dramatic blow to Puerto Rico's weak economy.

Sixty percent of the Island's population — over 2 million patients — receives their care through Medicare, Medicare Advantage (MA) or Medicaid. Puerto Ricans pay the same Social Security and Medicare taxes as the other fifty states, yet Puerto Rico's MA program is paid 60 percent of the average rate in the states — while also having the highest MA enrollment percentage, about 540,000 people. This funding gap will only increase after implementation

of the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) recent 11 percent cut to Puerto Rico's MA premiums, effective 2016. While CMS approved these drastic cuts to Puerto Rico's MA, at the same time it increased rates to the 50 U.S. states by three percent.

This injustice means an immediate loss of half a billion dollars to Puerto Rico's healthcare system. In addition to fixing this injustice by raising reimbursement rates, the U.S. government must advance funds or give a line of credit/guarantee a line of credit for local health insurance funds so they may meet their Medicaid/Medicare match obligations. Without these federal actions, the MA program is likely to begin to shut down.

Similarly, Puerto Rico's Medicaid program receives 70 percent lower reimbursement rate of any U.S. states. This

disasterously low rate is being temporarily supplemented by a federal grant that will soon expire. This program is already experiencing cash flow problems and, without intervention, the government of Puerto Rico will have to come up with \$1.8 billion in 2018 or dramatically reduce the program. It is time to restore parity to these grossly inadequate reimbursement rates.

"Healthcare represents 20 percent of Puerto Rico's economy, which means its collapse will have catastrophic effects for the Island's already fragile economy," said Dennis Rivera, Chairman of the Coalition. "The federal government's shortchanging of healthcare funding is blatant discrimination against Puerto Ricans. We are not asking for special treatment — we pay the same Social Security and Medicare taxes but get less than people who live in the U.S."

Demand U.S. Fund Healthcare • 13

Hedge Funds Holding Puerto Rican Debt

Joel Cintrón Arbasetti and Carla Minet, Center for Investigative Journalism

Although the government protects the identity of U.S. hedge and vulture fund financiers that hold part of the Puerto Rico's debt, the Center for Investigative Journalism developed and verified the most complete list of the companies that are getting ready to renegotiate or demand complete payment of the debt.

Which are the hedge funds that will make millions of dollars from the debt of the government of Puerto Rico? Politicians and agency chiefs know, but they protect their identities.

For the last four months, the Center for Investigative Journalism has requested information from the Government Development Bank (GDB), the Office of the Resident Commissioner, Anthony Princi, speaker for the Ad Hoc Group of Holders of Puerto Rico Bonds, made up of hedge and vulture funds, and others. The result: run-arounds and silence.

They also keep secret the documents that state the conditions established by the U.S. bondholders to collect or lend more money to the Puerto Rican government.

A mandamus was presented at the Court of First Instance in San Juan by

SOME OF VULTURE FUNDS IMPOSING PUERTO RICAN DEBT

Aurelius Capital; Monarch Alternative Capital, Canyon Capital, all profit from debt imposed on Puerto Rico, Greece, Argentina and Detroit. In addition, Marathon Asset Management, Appaloosa Management LP, Perry Capital LLC, Third Point, Fir Tree Partners, Knighthead Capital Management, Fortress Investment and many others also profit from debt imposed on Puerto Rico, Greece and Argentina.

the CPI (Spanish acronym for the Center for Investigative Journalism) legally requesting this information of high public interest, since the investment firms that are interested in collecting their debt are trying to influence economic and political decisions to secure their gains, which would impact essential services for the citizens of the island.

Melba Acosta, president of the GDB, confirmed this. "We can use all of our budget to pay the debt, but forget security, forget health, forget education. If we focused on paying the debt and nothing else, eventually, yes, services would be affected. That's what we are talking about."

Hedge funds do not have to disclose bond buys, either in the primary market (a

new government issuance) or in a secondary market sale (when one investor sells to another)...The lack of information on hedge funds is due in part the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the U.S. federal agency that regulates securities. The SEC exempts hedge funds from revealing certain details that it demands from other traditional investment funds.

But this does not mean that government officials do not know. [...]

Although the government and politicians protect the identity of the hedge fund companies that hold part of the debt, the CPI has developed a verified and updated list of the companies that are going to renegotiate the debt or demand its total payment. The list is not exhaustive.

The 2015 Elections and the Fight for Change

Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada

(Federal elections are taking place in Canada October 19 and the campaign is currently underway. Harper heads the ruling Conservative government, with the Liberals and New Democratic Party (NDP) two of the other parties involved. The problems and solutions presented by the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC) are similar to those faced by people in the U.S., as the 2016 elections also are underway. For the information of our readers we reprint three articles from Renewal Update and encourage our readers to follow the Canadian elections at mlpc.ca)

* * *

The Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC) will field at least 70 candidates in the 2015 federal election. It will focus its attention on the creation of conditions so that the working people can contribute in a practical way to occupying the space for change in a manner which opens society's path to progress.

"As the Harper government plunges the country into the longest federal election since 1872, the most important underlying theme over which the election will be fought is the necessity for change," MLPC National Leader Anna Di Carlo says. "Who will define the change which is required and who will occupy the space for change? These are the fundamental questions of the day and they require answers that favor the people of this country, not the rich and their foreign masters," she said.

In this regard, it is crucial to reverse the



current trend which eliminates the electors as those who determine the outcome of an election, Anna added.

"The MLPC is calling on Canadians to participate in this election by taking an active approach to their own empowerment," she underscored. Addressing how their participation in this election can bring about change, Anna said, "They must make the contest one between people striving for empowerment and the insistence of the establishment parties to use the election to block the people's movement for change in every sphere of human endeavor. Canadians must not let this pass." Otherwise, Anna said, "they could be saddled with

another Harper government which would put the country in ever greater danger as the disasters his government brought into being play out."

The changes required in the political process are of the kind which go directly against maintaining the positions of privilege and power of the so-called major political parties to decide everything and negate the people's right to decide. They represent powerful financial interests that determine the fate of the society and impose an anti-social agenda. For its part, the MLPC champions the cause of the working people who are the ones who produce the wealth the society depends on for its living but are put in a subordinate position.

"The fight for change carried out in this election must assist the working people to overcome their position of subordination," Anna said. "This begins by joining their peers to work out how best to intervene in the election so that the Harper government does not get re-elected and they can exercise control over the decision-making process. The changes must be the kind which affirm the right of the working class to present its own agenda and implement it for the advancement of the society."

12 • DEMAND U.S. FUND HEALTHCARE

The Medicare Advantage system's collapse will cause the migration of patients to Mi Salud, the Island's Medicaid program, resulting in a \$400-\$800 million cost to the already cash-strapped program. Restoring the financial integrity of Mi Salud will require raising reimbursement rates pursuant to an act of Congress. The inequitable rates are already taking a toll on patients and hospitals, and causing doctors to leave the Island.

"Puerto Rico can no longer bear the

burden of inequality from unconscionable federal cuts to essential services," said Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez. "Access to quality healthcare is not a privilege; it is a right for every American. Puerto Rico is simply asking to be treated with fairness and dignity."

The Coalition intends to engage in a robust campaign to convince the U.S. Government to act, which will include lobbying, public relations, paid media and grass roots mobilizations.

ELECTION 2015

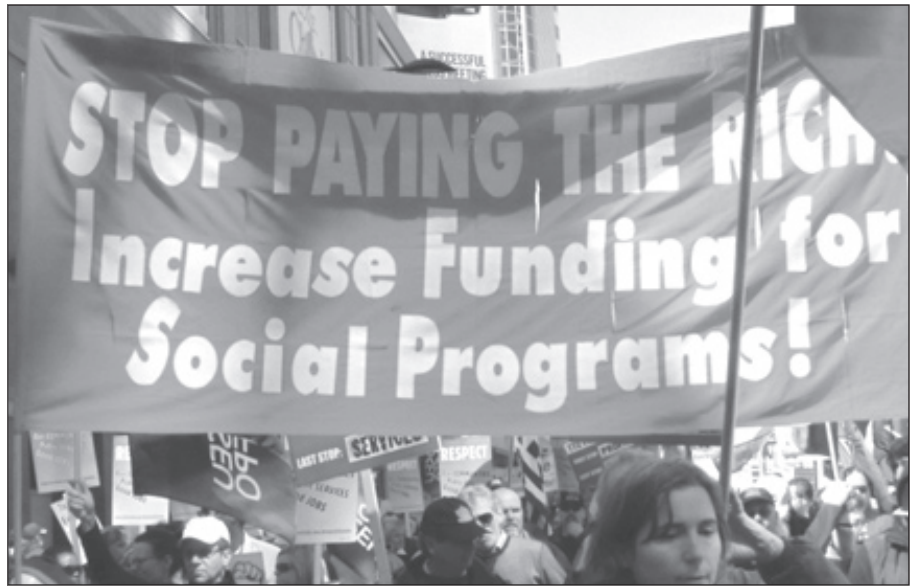
MLPC Appeal to Ontario Working People

In this election, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada (MLPC) is appealing to the working people and youth of Ontario to make a clear statement that they oppose the neo-liberal anti-social offensive, that they want a new direction for the economy without nation-wrecking and privatization of health care and education, that serves the working people with jobs, manufacturing, pensions, care for children, seniors, veterans and those in need. This clear statement must also be against Canada's warmongering role abroad and its integration into Fortress North America.

Such a statement can be made if we defeat the Harper government. Also in Ontario, our duty is to defeat the Liberals who we have seen time and time again stand for the same neo-liberal agenda as Harper.

We are appealing especially to the 50 per cent of Ontario voters who have not been voting because they consider all the so-called major parties to be those who implement the neo-liberal program against their interests, a program the international financial oligarchs and global monopolies demand and equate with good governance in their narrow private interests.

In this regard, Ontarians are very leery that if the NDP is elected it will pull a Bob Rae on them. In our opinion, this is more than likely, but if a strong statement is made that we oppose the neo-liberal pro-war austerity agenda, we place ourselves in a much better position to hold the NDP in check. This is because instead of choosing between this and that political party, we will be advancing our own demands.



The challenge Ontario voters face in this election is how to make our votes count. In our opinion, we can do so by making a strong statement against the neo-liberal pro-war agenda by rejecting en masse the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Such a voice will strengthen the people's hand in holding all the parties in check after the election.

We need to appeal to the 50 per cent who have not been casting a ballot, and involve them in making a difference. In Ontario, many of the unions have laid out a plan to appeal to Conservative voters to change their vote. We join the desire of the labor movement to turn things around by appealing to the 50 per cent of non-voters to vote to defeat the Conservatives and Liberals. They can make a difference and we call on

labor to join us as well to get out the vote of the non-voters.

The candidates of the MLPC are all working people and youth who fight for the empowerment of the people not only between elections but during elections as well.

We call for a new

direction for the economy and renewal of the political process so that Canadians can directly decide the matters that concern them and affect their lives.

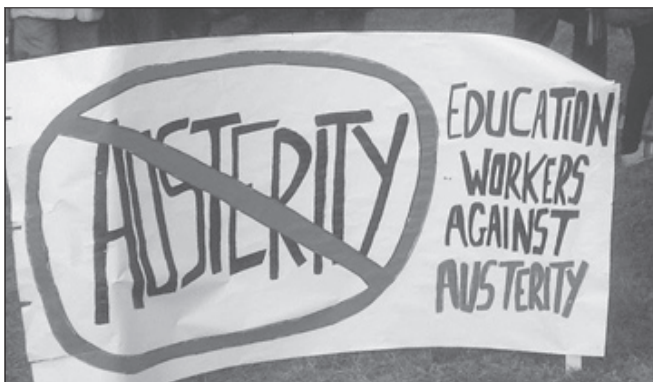
We want a modern constitution so that all vestiges of privilege are eliminated, citizenship rights are affirmed on an objective, non-racist basis and the rights of residents and refugees are provided with a guarantee.

We seek to end colonial injustice and restore nation-to-nation relations with the Aboriginal peoples and uphold Quebec's right to self-determination.

We also see the need to establish an anti-war government and believe that security is defended when the rights of all are defended. In this regard, we join with others in demanding the repeal of Bill C-51.

On climate change and environmental destruction as a result of monopoly interests running roughshod over public right, Indigenous rights and Mother Earth, we think the problem can be solved if human beings, especially the working people, are in control of the decisions about what to produce and how to produce it. Taking care of Mother Earth and taking care of human beings are intertwined. Without looking after human beings and upholding their

Appeal to Ontario Working People • 15





On October 19 Vote for a New Direction for the Economy

Defeating Harper in October is one step that can be taken on the path towards a new pro-social economic direction where the people can exercise their right to decide. Harper's defeat in October will open a path which can be taken up by the working people to go further in fighting for a pro-social agenda to solve Canada's economic problems. By overcoming such hurdles as the Harper dictate the world is full of opportunities for a new nation-building direction.

Measures must be taken to restrict monopoly right so that the country is put on a path of nation-building. Under the direction of the Harper government and its mania for monopoly-controlled free trade, privatization and wrecking of the public sector and social programs, monopoly right is running amok. Sovereign decision making over the economy has to be restored. This means reversing the free trade deals and favoring trade on a mutually beneficial basis. It requires establishing public authorities with power to restrict

monopoly right and its current free rein to wreck the economy and nation. This is what U.S. Steel, Vale Inco, Kellogg's, Heinz, Cascades, CAMECO, Alcoa, Resolute Forest Products, Cargill, Irving and others are doing. Manufacturing must become a priority using the natural resources as a base for development — not sell-out.

The public assets, services and systems that we have must be protected such as Canada Post, our public utilities and what is left of supply management in agriculture. Public enterprise should be extended especially into the financial and wholesale sectors. In this modern age, no excuse or possible reason exists for private dictate in opposition to public authority and decision-making directly accountable to the people and the broad public interest.

The people must have the freedom and political power to say what they see as necessary and what direction they want to take the economy. Global social wealth

and political intrigue from the centers of the big powers must be restricted. Their self-serving dictate for secret terms and demands contradicts the well-being and security of Canadians and the public interest. The annexation of Canada into the United States of North American Monopolies must be halted. Canada's armed forces must play their role to defend the country, not threaten and attack other nations.

A new human-centered thinking about the economy and its direction, whom it should serve, and its relation with the social and natural environment is ready to come into being, if only the obstacles such as Harper and his unprincipled neo-liberal ideologues and privileged patrons are deprived of their power.

*The Time is Now for a New
Pro-Social Direction for the Economy to
Serve the Public Interest!
All Out to Defeat Harper
on October 19!*

14 • APPEAL TO ONTARIO WORKING PEOPLE

rights, including their right to decide, and without restoring nation-to-nation relations with the indigenous peoples, neither human beings nor Mother Earth stand a chance.

In this election, we can all make big strides to make the vote of Ontario workers count. We have to overcome the split in the workers' movement. This split contributed to giving Harper his majority in the last election despite the heroic effort made by Quebec workers who voted in a bloc for the NDP to defeat Harper. This election requires the same kind of commitment and resolve Quebec workers displayed in 2011.

We are calling on the 50 per cent of

non-voting Ontarians to cast their ballot this time around, not for parties they do not support, but to use the election to make a clear statement against the neo-liberal pro-war austerity agenda by making sure to defeat the Conservatives and Liberals. This broad mobilization for a definite aim to oppose the neo-liberal war agenda opens a path to hold any government in check, including the NDP.

We share the concerns of those who do not vote because none of the big parties represents what they want and need. And, as far as making a statement goes, if you all vote Marxist-Leninist, the ruling

circles will definitely receive the message loud and clear: Stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programs or watch out!

To cast an informed vote in this election we encourage everyone to read *Renewal Update*, our online daily newsletter. It contains important discussion and information on political affairs and the work for people's empowerment nationwide and provides a space for the missing voice of the working class to be heard in this election and beyond. Please share it with neighbors, family and friends and send in reports, photos and opinions.

REFUSE STATE TAKEOVER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RALLY FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 3:30PM
WATERFRONT SCHOOL BEHIND CITY HALL

RECEIVERSHIP IS STATE TAKEOVER OF 25 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The state has said that barriers to improving schools are:

- *Governance, meaning school boards and democracy*
 - *Collective Bargaining Agreements*
 - *School Leadership and Staffing*
- *Parent and Community Engagement*

None of these are barriers! Removing them, the intent of receivership, means parents have even less control. We say enhance and expand democracy so teachers, parents and students together decide.

WHY REFUSE RECEIVERSHIP?
BECAUSE WE THE PEOPLE OF BUFFALO:

- *Lose schools and their traditions*
- *Lose teachers of color and face the firing of more teachers without cause, including potentially the entire staff of receivership schools*
- *lose music, arts, sports, history, social studies, history, libraries*

Receivership means power is in the hands of the receiver and the state who can divide our district and privatize our public schools using public funds.

Our Schools, Our Rights, We Decide!

HOW TO REFUSE RECEIVERSHIP

Join organizing efforts and attend rallies, forums, school-based actions:

- *Refuse firing of teachers and staff without cause*
- *Refuse separate "receiver agreements" for each school*
- *Refuse testing so schools cannot be labeled "failing"*
 - *Demand Buffalo City Charter calling for elected governance be upheld*
 - *"Refuse Days" at receivership schools*
- *Refuse to support the receiver, Commissioner, Cuomo or any politician that supports state takeover of our public schools*

