

‘Bail-out working people – Not the Banks’

Mass teach-in' scheduled in San Francisco

By [Eric Sommer](#)

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A Powerful Model for Public Action

A large-scale ‘Bail-out working people – Not the Banks’ teach-in’ and mass mobilization planning meeting’ scheduled for San Francisco May 9 is a hopeful harbinger of things to come.. This teach-in is heavily supported by organized labour and may well serve as a model for teach-ins in other areas. Such teach-ins can help to usher in a new era of greatly intensified grass-roots struggle against the power of finance capital in the U.S. and other countries with their anti-labour and anti-people policies.

Teach-ins first appeared in the U.S. in the 1960’s, when they played a major role in mobilizing mass resistance to the Vietnam War. A ‘teach-in’ involves peaches – and close interaction with the audience – by academic and social organizers seeking to inform students and the public about social or political matters which have reached the level of acute crisis.

With the appearance of massive unemployment, massive housing foreclosures, and the general rise in social misery ,the mood of the public in the U.S. – and around the world – has changed. People are more open to new information, new ideas, and new ways of acting. A recent poll in the U.S., for example, found that in those under 30 there were approximately as many favoring ‘socialism’ as favored ‘capitalism’, while a third were undecided!

The beginning of a mass teach-in movement in the U.S. is a good start in countering the view that banks and financial companies have to receive trillions in workers tax money, while the workers themselves are rendered jobless and homeless.

The teach-in described below can serve as a partial model for similar events in other areas and other countries.

Bail Out Working People — NOT the Banks!

Join us on May 9 in San Francisco for a

TEACH-IN & MASS MOBILIZATION PLANNING MEETING

Without joining together for our common interests, we don’t have the strength to change our government’s priorities. We must begin to build a massive movement that will have the power to impact government policy and give people genuine hope for a better future. Help organize a mass mobilization and ongoing action campaign around the following

demands:

- No layoffs. Massive job-creation program.
- Tax the rich — don't bail out the banks.
- Pass the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Single-payer healthcare for all.
- Affordable housing for all. Tenants' rights. Moratorium on foreclosures & evictions.
- Funding for jobs and for social services & infrastructure, not for war.
- Stop the ICE raids and deportations. Legalization for all!

Speakers:

- Art Pulaski, Secretary-Treasurer, California Federation of Labor;
- N'tanya Lee, Executive Director, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth;
- Mark Dudzic, National Organizer, Labor for Single Payer Healthcare Campaign (Washington, D.C.);
- Rosie Martinez, SEIU Local 721 (Los Angeles);
- Steve Williams, Executive Director, POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights);
- Conny Ford, Vice President, San Francisco Labor Council;
- Clarence Thomas, ILWU Local 10;
- Jack Rasmus, Professor of economics St. Mary's College and Santa Clara Univ.;
- Alan Benjamin, Executive Committee, San Francisco Labor Council and Workers Emergency Recovery Campaign;
- Student representative, City College of San Francisco, Mission Campus.

ALSO:

Extended remarks from Bay Area labor and community leaders — and ample time for dialogue among teach-in participants.

AND:

Spoken Word performance by YOUNG PLAYAZ

SATURDAY, MAY 9, 2009 - 1 to 5 p.m.

(registration begins at 12:30 p.m.)

Plumbers Hall,

1621 Market St. @ Franklin St.

(3 blocks from Civic Station BART stop; @ Van Ness MUNI stop)

San Francisco

Initiated by the San Francisco Labor Council, South Bay Labor Council, and Workers Emergency Recovery Campaign

(list of dozens of teach-in endorsers in formation)

Donations will be requested at door to defray cost of renting the hall, printing leaflets and posters, and copying teach-in packets for all participants. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Call for May 9 Teach-In:

Bail Out Working People, NOT the Banks!

The severity of the economic crisis we are currently facing is predicted to rival the magnitude of the Great Depression. Some say it could be even worse. Over 6 million jobs have already been eliminated since the current recession began. Millions of working people have lost their homes to foreclosures and evictions, and many more homes are in or near default, while housing remains unaffordable to millions of people. The ranks of those without health insurance continue to grow. But even these statistics fail to reflect the growing insecurity and stress of working people across the country as we wonder when we, too, might be next.

Meanwhile, the federal government has showered billions upon billions of taxpayer dollars on financial institutions in the form of bailouts. In other words, working people, who are bearing the brunt of the crisis, are being required to shoulder an additional burden. Our tax dollars are being funneled to the very financial institutions and wealthy investors whose reckless gambling in pursuit of unbridled profit was responsible for driving the economy over the cliff. They have refused to say what they've done with trillions. Worse still, to emphasize their contempt for public opinion, these priests of high finance have spent some of the bailout money on huge bonuses, office decorations and the purchase of more CEO jets.

In response to this unprecedented crisis, many organizations have emerged that are addressing specific issues. Some are fighting foreclosures. Others are fighting for a single-payer healthcare system that would guarantee health coverage for everyone. Still others are pressing for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, which, if passed, will greatly facilitate the ability to form unions.

Although our problems take many forms, most of them stem from a single source. During the past three decades, the inequality in wealth has surged to historic proportions not seen since the 1920s. The hourly wage of working people has actually declined, forcing many additional family members into the workforce just to make ends meet. Aggressive campaigns by employers have created additional barriers to unionizing, resulting in a sharp decline in the percentage of unionized workers. Without unions, workers have not had the means to struggle successfully for higher wages, healthcare coverage, pensions and other benefits.

Given these conditions, can there be any wonder that we have a housing crisis and a healthcare crisis? And during this same period, the taxes on corporations and on the rich in general have dramatically declined, thereby accelerating the accumulation of unprecedented wealth, on the one hand, and the decline of tax dollars for public infrastructure and services, on the other.

In order to have any chance of altering these trends, given the magnitude of the crisis we confront and the forces we're up against, we need to come together, unite all our separate organizations and mount a collective struggle around our common concerns. Without joining together for our common interests, we don't have the strength to change our government's priorities. Only in this way can we begin to build a massive movement that will have the

power to impact government policy and give people genuine hope for a better future.

We working people constitute the vast majority of the population. We need to ensure that our society operates in the interests of the majority. But we can only succeed if we stand together in solidarity with each other's demands and struggles.

The goal of the May 9 teach-in is to inspire other teach-ins. It is aimed at organizing massive Solidarity DAYS OF ACTION in support of our common demands. By bringing huge numbers of people together in common actions, people will realize through their own experience that they do not stand alone, and they will gain the confidence that by uniting we can begin to exercise real power.

- Join us and help build a movement.
- Together we can prevail.
- An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!

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