

## ***WATER WARS:*** **TRUMP'S EPA WILL CREATE MORE FLINTS**

*Read the story on page 3*



Water protectors in New Orleans marched recently in opposition to the Bayou Bridge pipeline which would carry oil fracked in North Dakota all the way to Louisiana.

PHOTO/JULIE DERMANSKY FOR DESMOGBLOG

*Attack on  
immigrants is an  
attack on us all*  
*Pages 10-11*



*The homeless  
demand their  
voices be heard*  
*Pages 6-7*



# Unity forged in the fight for human needs and rights

Society is going through epochal changes. We live in a time of revolutionary transition from an economy based on securing a living through working for wages to one based on robotics, which makes human labor unnecessary. This new technology creates an abundance of everything we need to survive and thrive without the back-breaking toil of yesteryear. But because this technology is owned by a tiny corporate class which has accumulated unheard-of wealth while “we the people” fall into an abyss of poverty and despair, the American Dream we once aspired to has for millions become a hellish nightmare. Workers who are displaced by robotics, and those who are threatened, are in a fight for our lives against a corporate class which is moving rapidly to do away with any democracy left and impose a police state to resolve the crisis in their favor.

They are demanding that we give up any rights to the social wealth we have created over generations in order to save the system of corporate private property. They want us to give up public education, healthcare, housing, parks and forests, clean air, clean, affordable water, energy, pensions, and social security, which they want to turn into private property assets for themselves.

But the people are not going quietly into the abyss. There is a great groundswell of resistance! Millions marched against the hateful rhetoric and executive orders of Trump, in defense of women, immigrants and Muslims, for science, the Earth and for a future where our children can thrive. More marches are planned.



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

As the people resist the in-your-face assaults of the Trump gang, let us not forget the struggles against police killings from Anaheim to Albuquerque, Chicago to Ferguson; against the wanton corporate/government disregard of the peoples of Standing Rock and others in the paths of destructive tar sands oil and fracked gas pipelines; against the effort to privatize water which led to the poisoning of Flint and exorbitant rates and shut-offs in Detroit and Highland Park, MI; and the struggles of our falsely imprisoned leaders such as Rev. Edward Pinkney, who stood up for the people of Benton Harbor, MI against the tyrannical Whirlpool Corporation and the Emergency Manager laws that turn our land and other public assets

over to the corporations. All these struggles preceded Trump under both political parties.

These times call for big solutions to big problems. We can't wage this fight without hope. We can't win without a vision and without unity. The times demand a political movement unified around the fight for the people's basic needs—for clean affordable water, housing, healthcare, education, and the end to oppressive police. We must demand of every politician that the needs of

the people be met. These struggles for human rights must be made inside as well as outside the Democratic Party. The fight for basic needs will likely give rise to a new political party that will seek to lead the struggle. The people must push that party to fight for a new society—where the abundance produced by the new technology can be distributed according to the needs of “we, the people,” and not for the profits of the corporations.

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 (800) 691-6888 [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)

An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe and house its people must be and will be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of those struggling to create such a new economic system. It is a vehicle to bring the movement together, to create a vision of a better world and a strategy to achieve it.

Labor-replacing electronic technology is permanently eliminating jobs and destroying the foundation of the capitalist system. The people's needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where the socially necessary means of production are owned by society, not by the corporations.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

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**Deadlines for articles and art:** The deadline for articles, photographs and other art is the first of each month for the issue that comes out at the beginning of the following month. For example, the deadline for the June issue is May 1. Articles should be as short as possible, and no longer than 500 words. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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# Water Wars: Trump's EPA to create more Flints

## COVER STORY

America is heading for a showdown between the corporations and the American people. Corporate owner Warren Buffett gave notice in 2006 when he said, "There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning." One of the leading edges of the war Mr. Buffett is talking about has become known as "water wars."

Donald Trump's proposed budget intends to eliminate one quarter of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 15,000 jobs as well as slash the agency's budget by 31%. Where are people supposed to take their just grievances if this crippling of the EPA succeeds? With ever-new revelations of poisoned and polluted drinking water popping up all over the country, it's just a matter of time before other disasters like Flint, Michigan occur.

Just four days after President Trump's inauguration he issued a memorandum ordering the restart of construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline. This reversed months of successful protests by water protectors and thousands of supporters at the Sioux Standing Rock Reservation who feared that the pipeline would pollute their drinking and fishing waters.

While the government is try-



**Gulf Coast residents and people from across the country protested last year in New Orleans against a federal lease sale of 44.3 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to the oil and gas corporations. People stood up to defend humanity's right to clean water, to protect the environment and the health of people along the coast.**  
PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN

ing to get us to focus on making war abroad, the same government is eliminating all restraints on the corporations, and the result is what amounts to a war being waged against our children and us.

We see this in Flint and the other Flints that are yet to come. Whether it's Detroit, Michigan; rural West Virginia; Dimock, Pennsylvania; Corpus Christi,

Texas; East Chicago, Indiana; or rural Nebraska, water wars are being waged on us and we have no rights that this corporate government is bound to respect. Our children, their bodies ravaged by lead and other poisons face early death preceded by a lifetime of illness, lowered IQs and behavioral problems. To add insult to injury the people are forced to pay inflat-

ed water bills for water they and their children still can't bathe in, cook with or drink. And if Trump and his ruling class have their way, people will be denied needed healthcare that could help alleviate their suffering.

The corporate governmental power that is being consolidated in the Trump administration recognizes no human right to

water. There is simply no profit in that for the billionaires. Once it became cheaper and more profitable for them to use robots and computers instead of us, our access to clean, safe water came to an end. They are not going to provide water for people they do not need. The only rights they recognize are corporate rights to steal our publicly owned waterways, rivers, lakes, aquifers and water infrastructure, make them their private property and then sell it back to us for a profit, while denying it to those who can't afford to pay.

Water is life. It is not something that should be owned by corporations. If we don't have control of our water we cannot survive. Ask yourself, on a planet where three fourths of the surface is covered by water, why should corporations have rights to all that water while the human right of "we, the people," is denied? In fact, under such conditions, why should anyone get a water bill at all?

An economic system that creates unusable water for the people by dumping toxins under the guise of trying to save money, and on the other hand, steals the water rights of the people in the service of the corporations, must be replaced. Our water, our economy and our government must be publicly owned and run in our interests, not the corporations.

See pages 4-5 for updates on water wars in Flint, and other stories.

## Proposed EPA cuts: Corporations are making the rules

President Trump's proposed cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would nearly eliminate all regional cleanup programs, including those for the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The second-biggest cut would be the program which helps deal with pollutants from sources not directly regulated under the Clean Water Act, such as the phosphorus that flows into Lake Erie from fertilizer, harming fish and other wildlife.

The cuts would also: reduce grants that help states monitor the

safety of public water systems; curtail the EPA's ability to police and impose penalties on environmental offenders; and reduce funding for the Climate Protection Program.

The attack on the EPA may also include closing the agency's Region 5 office in Chicago. Observers say this could undermine the EPA's ability to monitor pollution and curtail its ability to carry out enforcement actions against coal-fired power plant owners in the Great Lakes region.

Whatever the final picture looks like, you can bet there will be cuts of some kind, and they will be an attack on our lives and on the planet in order to make greater profits for big business. Whether it's Democrat or Republican politicians in charge, it's the corporations that are making the rules, and that's what we need to change. We have to fight for a government that reports to the people, not the corporations. We have to get control over the corporations before they destroy society and the Earth.



**Residents of East Chicago, Indiana, on April 19 protest the visit of President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt. Soil and groundwater in the town has been seriously affected from industrial lead waste, tar sands, and other contaminants. Trump and Pruitt may de-fund the EPA and close its Region 5 office in nearby Chicago. That would effectively end federal enforcement of environmental regulations that protect public health.**  
PHOTO/ALLEN HARRIS

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The *People's Tribune* welcomes your comments, especially on our covers and editorials. Your feedback helps us stay on course as a paper that points the way forward to a new cooperative society. Email [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org) or call 800-691-6888.

— The Editors



People pack a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality hearing in April, demanding the Michigan governor stop gifting their water to Nestlé, and the people won a local victory in this fight—the new permit was denied locally, putting more pressure on the state. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

## Stop gifting Nestlé, Gov. Snyder!

*Editor's Note: This just in, the Osceola Township Planning Commission just denied the water permit for Nestlé. Evidently, the (growing) pushback from activists all over the state is having an impact. Stay tuned. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has not yet ruled. The People's Tribune will follow this story.*

*The following are excerpts from an April press release from Michigan Citizens for Water Preservation over Governor Snyder's gifts of the state's water to the giant conglomerate, Nestlé.*

Now is the time for leadership from Governor Snyder to halt the permit for Nestlé to increase their water taking in Evart, MI...

The people of Michigan have made Nestlé one of the most gifted companies in history. Nestlé has profited by taking and bottling tens of billions of gallons of Great Lakes Basin water while paying almost nothing in fees...

Millions of Michigan citizens are no longer willing to gift Nestlé and want the current system to be abandoned and a new system developed...

Governor Snyder needs to call a moratorium now. Nestlé is seeking a permit for 210,000,000 gallons of water for a permit fee of \$200. If Flint residents were allowed to pay the Nestlé rate for water, their annual household cost would be less than 75 cents, instead of more than \$900, for water they can't drink and don't want to bathe in. There have been 90,000 Detroit residents without running water in their homes for failure to pay water/sewer bills. If these Detroiters were allowed to pay the Nestlé water rate, very few would owe more than a dollar...

Bottled water has gone from a novelty drink to the most popular purchased beverage in the US. Approximately 26 billion bottles a year... are being consumed in the US... water bottles must be included in the deposit laws of Michigan... there is

no ditch or section of road anywhere in the state that is likely to be free of discarded water bottles. Nestlé has been responsible for billions of these bottles and Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation calls upon Nestlé to begin an aggressive recycling program...

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation calls upon the DEQ to require that the US Geological Survey be responsible for all monitoring and data collection under the DEQ permits for water taking... The DEQ needs to change their permitting procedures to become transparent and provide the citizens of Michigan broad public notice and the opportunity to participate in the DEQ permitting activities [including]... permits for large scale water taking.

Governor Snyder must stop the gifting of Nestlé. It is in Governor Snyder's hands. Clearly the people of the state are totally against further gifting.

Contact [michiganCwaterC@gmail.com](mailto:michiganCwaterC@gmail.com) for information.

## Movement for clean water grows

From the Editors of the People's Tribune

On these pages are stories from the nationwide battle for clean water. From Flint, to Standing Rock, to West Virginia, to the pipeline fights that are erupting in rural America, the struggle is butting up against corporate power.

This battle did not begin with Trump—but it is escalating rapidly under Trump. The further unleashing of the fossil fuel corporations, the stepped up drive to privatize our water and the dismantling of the EPA, exposes naked corporate rule. The corporations are unashamedly maximizing their profits at the expense of humanity.

A powerful movement is galvanizing to exert power over the corporations. Either the corporations take over society or the people take over the corporations.

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(Right) Across the nation and world, thousands of scientists and their supporters convened on Earth Day to defend science against proposed government cuts. "Basic scientific research, aimed at producing ideas, not commodities, is useless to a system that needs to continue expanding profits. Today, everything is directed at making money, not at making the world a better place to live. Our dreams are in danger and it is time to defend science and unite with the active struggles for a better world," says one of the scientists that marched.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM



## East Chicago fights for environmental justice

East Chicago, a small town in northwest Indiana, devastated by extremely high levels of lead contamination, protested the visit by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Scott Pruitt, who came amid rumors the federal agency intends to close the regional EPA office in nearby Chicago, which is responsible for carrying out environmental cleanup.

East Chicago has three Superfund zones, one of which includes the West Calumet housing complex, built in 1972 on top of land used to dump toxic lead waste. The land under West Calumet's homes has lead levels 228 times higher than the allowable limit, according to East Chicago resident and environmental activist Thomas Frank.

"This is a national crisis," said Frank. "It talks about a lot of the issues that we face throughout the country. We have a regressive system. It protects those at the top of the economic food chain while concentrating the contaminants and issues in low-income, vulnerable communities like ours. We're looking to reverse that."

PHOTO/ALLEN HARRIS

## March for Science





Art Tanderup (right) with others who oppose the proposed pipeline through Nebraska that threatens the water. Four years ago, they planted Ponca Sacred corn, including the Ponca's most Sacred Red corn, also known as "seeds of resistance," on Art's farm in the path of the pipeline. PHOTO/ BOLDNEBRASKA.ORG

## Nebraskans fight to stop pipeline and protect the water

*Editor's note: Art Tanderup is a retired school teacher and farmer, and member of the Cowboy Indian Alliance opposing the Keystone XL II pipeline carrying tar sands oil which will cut across Nebraska. Art discusses with the People's Tribune how the pipeline will jeopardize the largest fresh water aquifer in existence.*

Our number one focus is the water. I live in northeast Nebraska. Once that pipeline enters Nebraska it gets into the sandhills. The sandhills have a fragile environment, poor soil. All of us have to be stewards of the land. If we don't, sand will drift like snow. People like me that farm in this area have adopted conservation practices. I use no-till farming which involves not tearing that soil up so it is open to erosion and drainage.

All that sits on top of the Ogallala Aquifer, the largest fresh water aquifer in existence. It starts in South Dakota, covers most of Nebraska, a good part of Kansas, parts of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. It's huge. The people of this area depend on that aquifer for our water. We obviously drink it, irrigate our crops with it, the livestock drink it, small towns and rural areas have wells and drink that water.

If the pipeline is built, once there is a leak, and it can be a leak that can't be detected, those chemicals will be forced down into our aquifer and could be undetected for awhile. Once those chemicals are in the aquifer, there is no way the water can be cleaned.

When this thing was first pro-

posed, TransCanada came in and told everyone that this is an oil pipeline. A lot of my neighbors believed that if there's a leak, all they have to do is dig down, skim oil off the top and we'll be fine. Wrong. It doesn't take much Benzene to start killing animals and everything else, and that's not the only chemical. If it gets in there—the aquifer is not 100% stationary but continues to move underground—chemicals will be distributed as time goes on. So we're looking at a very dangerous situation that TransCanada can't seem to understand and a lot of our politicians don't understand.

Water is our most valuable resource. Right now if you buy individual bottles of water to drink, that water costs more than a gallon of gasoline. As time goes on, as clean water becomes more and more scarce, that difference will continue. What happens down the road as more and more water becomes contaminated? The clean water that remains will be sought after by the huge corporations (they will have a fifty-foot easement on everyone's property along the pipeline), and they will control the water, the availability and price of water. Many of us on this Keystone route through Nebraska believe one of the reasons they want the route over the Aquifer is so that when the tarsands go by the wayside, they will have another source of revenue.

*Next month Art discusses the pipeline fighters from every political spectrum who have joined this fight, as well as jobs, poverty and the importance of renewables.*

# Water is our Mother – Without it there is no life

*Editor's Note: Dana Eldridge (Diné Navajo) spoke to reporters after an action she led in March 2017 where Water Protectors disrupted a Chicago City Council meeting to demand the city divest from banks backing the Dakota Access Pipeline. Below are excerpts from her comments.*

CHICAGO, IL — Without water, there is no life. So, we do the things we do—these crazy water protectors—for the plants, for the animals, for the future generations. 'Cause we understand that even though the society may make you think that the most important thing is to go to your job, to carry on business as normal, we cannot wait.

The oil could be flowing in the Dakota Access Pipeline very soon. But the people have power. And the way we can cut the head off this black snake is to divest from these banks, because that is essentially the bloodline for the Dakota Access Pipeline.

And one thing that we were trying to bring attention to is the threat that these pipelines pose to Lake Michigan. Right now, there's Line 5 that passes under the straits of the Mackinaw, a pipeline that was built in the 1950s, and it's starting to rupture. If that pipeline bursts, Lake Michigan will be contaminated with oil. And they've sent divers down, they've seen that it's starting to come apart, and nobody's talking about it. Nobody's doing anything about it.

Maybe I seem extreme, but the situation is extreme. Can you imagine this beautiful lake contaminated with oil—what that looks like? How is that going to affect people? The Great Lakes contain a third of the world's fresh water ... people need to know the importance of that.

## International gathering of social movements on water

Attend the second International Gathering of Social Movements on Water, plus the second Legal and Legislative Summit on Water.

Discuss Water Rights: Reports, Analysis, Documentation, Solutions, Strategies, June 8-11, Detroit, MI

Sponsored by Michigan Welfare Rights Organization/ Lydo Pro Bono Legal/Legislative Committee People's Water Board Coalition/National Coalition for Legislation on Affordable Water

Visit [SocialMovementsOnWater.info](http://SocialMovementsOnWater.info) to sign up or get more information.



Dana Eldridge (Diné Navajo), after having walked 88 miles through the desert of the Navajo reservation in 2015 as part of a protest against fracking. PHOTO/MATIKA WILBUR

I'm Diné. I'm from the Navajo Nation in so-called Arizona-New Mexico, and people should understand that the way we are taught to treat water in this society is to take it for granted, is to not acknowledge the life-giving essence that she provides for us. She is our Mother.

And back home, I think we understand this because we live without running water. A third of my people live today without running water. A third of our people live without electricity. They're on the reservation, which is huge. It's the largest indigenous-held space in the so-called United States. And we have to haul water.

We live in the desert. We're people from the desert. And when you have to haul water, you start to understand the value of every drop. Value is not even the right word, but how important every drop is. And not to waste water, not to play with water, not to disrespect water.

And here in the city, especially when you're by such a big body

of water, it's easy to take that for granted. ... But I really hope that people up here are able to open their hearts and understand how essential water is for our existence. Our Mother, our precious Mother Water, and how we need to honor her. We need to respect her. We need to acknowledge her. ... And I just really hope that people who hear about this, who read about this, that they take that away: to respect our Mother.



**Blood on the Mountain** is a searing investigation into the economic and environmental injustices resulting from coal company control in West Virginia. The documentary brings a striking portrait of a fractured population, exploited and besieged by corporate interests, and like so many workers in this country, abandoned by the powers elected to represent them. The film is produced by Mari-Lynn Evans and Jordan Freeman.

# “We are first to take the ‘Survival Ban’ to court,” say Denver’s homeless



Denver police tore blankets off of the homeless in freezing weather to be used as evidence of a camping ban, more commonly known as a “survival” ban. These three are fighting their charges in court.

PHOTO/CHRIS WALKER

*Editor’s note: This article was compiled from news reports and transcriptions from a video produced by Unicorn Riot.*

DENVER, CO – On April 4, Jerry Burdon, Terese Howard and Randy Russell pled not guilty to charges of violating Denver’s Unauthorized Camping Ordinance, also known as the “sur-

vival ban.” “We are the first to take these tickets to court,” says Terese. This “survival ban” criminalizes anyone who is resting or sleeping in a public place with anything protecting them besides their clothing! The cops tore blankets off of the homeless in freezing weather to be used as evidence against them when taken to trial, charged with violation

of this mean law.

Potential jury members who had relatives who were homeless, who thought the law was unjust, or who said that they couldn’t be “impartial,” were dismissed; but a man who called the homeless “vagrants” was allowed to sit on the jury. That is the way the deck is stacked and these absurd laws perpetuated.

All three defendants were found guilty of violating the “survival ban” and sentenced to one year of unsupervised probation. They may appeal this unjust and inhumane ruling.

Terese says, “Many people don’t realize there’s a law on the books making illegal any form of protection from the elements. This means if you’re sitting on cardboard, if you’re protecting yourself, you are considered a criminal. The law is used to try to move people out of sight, out of mind. We have been facing this for years now here in Denver. It’s getting worse and worse. It’s gotten to a point where they’ve swept everyone from everywhere they were trying to survive. They came in and gave us tickets for surviving.”

## When I meet a homeless person, I think ‘That could be me’

By Brian Crandall

Today I met a man named Josh standing out in the cold weather, standing on ice and snow, holding a sign that says, “Waiting for Social Security Disability.” I asked him if he wanted to go to lunch and he said yes.

Josh was glad to get out of the cold and very appreciative to receive a warm meal. I asked him to tell me his story. I asked him how he ended up where he is today, standing on a corner asking for help. He talked about the variety of jobs he’s had over the years. It sounds like the job he takes the most pride in was as a luthier, a craftsman who builds and/or repairs stringed instruments like guitars and violins. Regardless of the job or the pay, he was always ready and willing to work for a living.

Until his spine went bad.

Josh has applied for Social Security Disability but he was denied. The process proved to be an almost impossible task without having a home and a mailing address where he can send and receive the necessary documentation.

What is a man supposed to do to survive when suddenly his ability to work has been taken away, due to health reasons beyond his control?

In America, if we don’t have friends and family to help, we stand on a corner and hope for mercy.

Josh gets a little bit of temporary assistance

from social services, enough to pay the rent to live in an old camper in another person’s backyard. The camper is old and tired, trying unsuccessfully to keep the cold winter chill out.

The more we talked, the more I felt like I was talking to an alternate version of myself, from a parallel universe. You see, the only difference between Josh and me is that I have friends and family who were of tremendous help when my spine got to the point where I could no longer return to work.

I kept thinking, “This could have been me.”

For almost two years after surgery I couldn’t move. It was all I could do to breathe. Without friends and family there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I would be homeless. That’s why I offer to buy a homeless person lunch on the rare occasion I myself am out and about, because every time I see a homeless person I think: That could easily have been me.

I don’t write about every homeless person I talk with, but I do write when I am inspired after a conversation. My reason for writing is to point out how easily a person can go from having a home, to being homeless. My reason for writing is to encourage compassion, as I hope to inspire more people to help others in need.

Because I talk to a man like Josh and I think: That could have been me.

## The homeless point to a new concept of community

From the Editors of the People’s Tribune

The *People’s Tribune* features reports by the homeless and others joining their fight to hold the government responsible for housing its people. We report on the campaigns of the homeless-led organizations and from those who are resisting the attack on their existence, for a better world for all. The voices of these leaders come from tent encampments where people take care of each other and everywhere people are protesting the criminalizing of sleeping, sitting, and surviving.

Widespread homelessness in this richest of nations condemns the capitalist system, where what we need, including housing, is only for profit and denied to those who are too poor to pay. The demands of the homeless points the way to a new concept of community based on sharing and the fulfilling of human needs.

The *People’s Tribune* is a newspaper of this movement and its leaders. Please send your stories and order papers at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org).

## Families living in storage units

By Juan Torres

DONNA, TX – Fiesta Flea Market is classified as a commercial vending establishment for sellers. The site includes almost 100 storage units which are used as living quarters as well as for sellers in a Texas community.

The units are rented with nothing inside and with two electrical plugs on the outside. There is no lighting, no heat or running water in half of the units. The showers are outside and they are co-ed and serve all 100 units. Added to this are another 100 family members.

The six commodes serve all the residents and the sellers and buyers on weekends. The toilet system breaks down and overflows. There are no water faucets, no fire extinguishers, no visible fire hydrants. The units have only one entrance or exit in case of a fire.

The flea market is surrounded by a 10-foot-tall metal fence with three gates. The gates are locked at 9 or 10 p.m. and unlocked at 6

a.m. There’s no traffic in or out during that time.

The rents have recently been raised from \$165 – plus a \$50 deposit – to \$200 plus \$50 for deposit. A late charge is applied if not paid on the first day of the month.

Apart from the bad living conditions there are complaints from present and past tenants of illegal evictions. The evicted tenants do not receive due process and are given days to clear out. Most do not have transportation and no way of taking their furniture, which becomes the property of the landlord.

The tenants have met and decided to notify the local city department heads and Hidalgo County commissioners to address this problem. The next step is to seek aid and assistance from local groups that assist tenants in colonia-style dwellings who ask for help. The last step is to notify the media and publicly expose the situation since the city never acts on these matters.

For more information, contact Juan Torres at (956) 463-9537 and Graciela Luna at (956) 266-0037.

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Chicago seniors must routinely fight the Chicago Housing Authority bureaucracy. PHOTO/JANE ADDAMS SENIOR CAUCUS

## Bureaucratic nightmare for seniors

By Linda Armitage

CHICAGO, IL — In Franz Kafka's novel, *The Castle*, a land surveyor, as ordered, leaves his home, travels a great distance, and arrives at his ruler's village to discover his services are no longer required, despite the summons. An official explains the situation: In an administration as large as [this], it can happen at some point that one department issues an order, another a second, neither department knows of the other... and so a little confusion can nonetheless arise. Angry and perplexed, the surveyor responds that the explanation supplies "some insight into the ridiculous tangle that may under certain circumstances determine a person's life." Later, he emphatically insists upon knowing exactly what his rights are.

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is a bureaucratic labyrinth that has *carte blanche* to treat its senior residents with no respect for their rights or their physical and emotional health. The building where I live, owned by CHA for just over a year, is about to undergo renovation and we may be subject to relocation. I investigated to find out what we might face and what rights we have.

CHA and its agents inform residents of renovations with very little notice and with no specific person consistently available to answer questions or provide exact details. They supply written updates and notices, but only in English, ignoring the needs of non-English speaking residents. Residents are often requested to waive their right to the minimum 30-day notice. Regardless of disabilities or specific needs, there is no individual planning for each person's move. Required assistance in packing and moving is

not regularly available. A few days can elapse between notification and move, or moving schedules can extend to months while residents wait and live out of boxes.

Residents are given lists of CHA buildings to investigate for relocation, with no transportation assistance or any idea of what might be available. In many cases, these buildings do not know that people will be visiting to find apartments nor do they have the necessities such as grab bars, wheelchair ramps, accessible doorways and the like. Necessary transfer of utilities to their new apartments, with required transfer fees, etc., become the responsibility of the residents. At one building, residents fought for months and finally received, with the assistance of Jane Adams Senior Caucus and attorneys at the Shriver Center, rent credits to offset some of the financial hardships incurred.

While those that remain in their buildings are exposed to noise, dust, lead, perhaps even asbestos hazards, and lose community rooms, computer facilities, cafeterias, and other amenities, those who are relocated often are nowhere near their original buildings, miss their familiar communities and social contacts of many years.

This is about senior citizens, many in frail health, and who, like the land surveyor, have traveled far, seeking to live with dignity, something that the CHA apparently does not consider a human right.

*\*I want to acknowledge information and assistance shared with me in the preparation of this article by JASC, Shriver Center for Poverty Law, and the wonderful activist residents of a number of CHA buildings.*

# What does 'community' mean?

By Adam Black

BERKELEY, CA — To some people, "the community" means "the people who live here" and to others it means "the people who pay to live here." To me, a community is not a group of people, but a group of people unified by a common culture and spirit.

In the Peace Corps, I lived for two years in an ancient village of the Mbukushu people. Traditional Mbukushu housing compounds feature one- or two-room houses and shared kitchens and toilets. Nuclear families share small courtyards, and a ring of nuclear families surrounds the extended family's greater courtyard. The entire compound is surrounded by a reed fence. The fence's gates are never locked. Culture, not force, produces order.

The government housing projects tend to isolate people. They inhibit the formation of community by assigning roommates randomly and organizing the entire population under a hierarchy led by bureaucrats. This order produces a culture, but it is not a culture conducive to the development of independence, cooperation, or initiative.

The government coerces people into their programs by refusing to dignify life on the streets with any measure of legal standing. They claim that their programs are voluntary while "service resistant" homeless are routinely harassed by the police and dispossessed of their survival gear. This constitutes coercion. Government shelters, in their present form, can never be homes and barely qualify as shelter: in fact, they more closely resemble prisons.

Mbukushu compounds are usually shared by families, but the model can be adapted to serve intentional communities. By recognizing multiple respected leaders, but not a single master, and by sharing resources to maximize their utility, we



Homeless in San Francisco with a Limo parked nearby. The article on this page points out that community is about sharing and taking care of one another. PHOTO/SHANI HECKMAN

can liberate and uplift people simultaneously. By giving people the freedom to take charge of their lives, we can cure them of dependence and produce true empowerment. But only a community can do this, not a bureaucracy.

I've seen what a community can be, and First They Came For The Homeless is as fine a community as has ever existed. It is ruled by consensus democracy, not bureaucratic hierarchy. It keeps order by culture, not force. It creates prosperity by granting freedom, security and prosperity through mutual aid and support, practicing a new lifestyle which is, in reality, the oldest lifestyle on Earth. Local governments resist it for two reasons: firstly, it disrupts established orders; and secondly, the inability to produce radical solutions is a job requirement for these politicians, imposed upon them by their masters, the real estate developers.

*Adam Black is a homeless resident of the 'First they came for the homeless' intentional tent community/action, the Poor Tour, in Berkeley, CA.*

## Stopping eviction of 92 year old vet



San Jose, CA — On April 6, renters protested the cruel and senseless eviction of 92 year old World War II veteran Paul Mayer from his apartment of 44 years. A tsunami of evictions is sweeping San Jose, targeting especially women, families with children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Class lines are emerging between those City Councilmembers who staunchly defend the human right to housing, and those who place landlord property rights before the lives of human beings. The City Council will vote on just cause eviction protections for people like Mr. Mayer on April 18.

PHOTO/NASSIM NOURI, GREEN PARTY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

# Coal miner: The fight to save miners' healthcare

By Chuck Nelson,  
interviewed by Sandy Reid

*People's Tribune: Chuck, what is going on with the miner's benefits?*

**Chuck Nelson:** Back in 1946, Truman said if miners go back to work and mine the coal to build the steel to win the war, the government would give lifetime healthcare after 20 years in the mines as a UMWA member. Now they want to take our healthcare away. We've been writing Congress and senators. We're going to DC to target people in the Senate Finance Committee, where the bill is. The senators need to hear our stories.

*PT: How are the Democrats and Republicans lining up?*

**CN:** Most of our support is backed by the Dems, not so many Republicans support the working person. Mitch McConnell (Republican and Senate Majority Leader), from a coal producing state, (KY), does not support the bill. They're all playing politics. Our Senator Joe Manchin, a so-called Democrat, had an opportunity to help the miners in the



**Chuck Nelson, a retired West Virginia coal miner is a long-time leader in the fight for workers rights, clean water, the environment and healthcare.**

past, but he always supports the industry. The companies walk all over the miners, take and take until you have nothing left to take.

Our governor, Jim Justice, who ran as a Democrat, is a coal operator. What they're doing on the Federal level, dismantling of the EPA, rolling back regula-

tions, is happening here too. It's all politics. Manchin is worried about the upcoming election. If he could get something for the miners, he could get lots of votes. But he'll jump ship. He's, rubbing shoulders with Trump. It's the same old political game.

We heard rumors they're

talking about a settlement. I think if they do, it will be another extension. It's good to have it a bit longer, but creates uncertainties. A lot of us have illness in our family. I was really sick last year, liver and kidney failure, cancer on top of my head. I was on dialysis. I had 12 surgeries. I incurred a lot of doctor bills. The benefits are not as good as before the coal companies filed bankruptcy. We're worried about losing our pensions. A lot of widows depend on it. I'm running a paper route trying to take care of my doctor bills.

The coal companies were required by law, to pay into a health and retirement fund, but with the dip in coal, the companies used the courts to file bankruptcy and get out of their liability. Alpha National Resources, one of the biggest coal companies, filed bankruptcy in 2015 and terminated the miners' health care. The day before filing they gave the CEO a \$10 million bonus check. And they're still in our backyard mining coal. Peabody and Arch Coal created a company, knowing it would fail called Patriot Coal Company and dumped all the retir-

ees' liability onto them, to get out of paying the miners' healthcare. The Federal courts go along with this. Manchin's daughter is CEO of Mylan Pharmaceuticals. She made \$19 million last year, while raising the price of the medicines. It's all connected. Alpha is the major company, doing Mountain Top Removal. Health studies show that people living around these operations have a high rate of cancer, birth defects, kidney problems—the water is filled with heavy metals, arsenic and chemicals used in cleaning coal. Now that they're rolling back regulations, they can pollute more. None of them care about the workers, or the environment. Government should be held accountable. People are not getting information. We need more education. Education is a huge task.

*Next month, Chuck discusses why he was blacklisted, non-union mines, why WV went for Trump, and corporate-government collusion in the destruction of an environment and people's lives in the name of profits.*



**Alysha Brilla.**

*Editor's note: Multi-instrumentalist songwriter Alysha Brilla's new album, Human, has the power of a unifying manifesto. Inspired by singers Selena Perez, Amy Winehouse and Bob Marley, Brilla's vocals are, at once, fun, soulful and exciting. The music she makes is every bit as remarkable as that mix. A Canadian of Tanza-*

*nian and Indian heritage, Brilla weaves a tapestry of sounds from every reach of the African diaspora. With eclectic hip hop-flavored mixes, R&B and jazz horns vamp off Indian tabla over reggae and African rhythms, creating a sound both inviting and invigorating. Thematically, Human climbs the walls people try to build*

## Alysha Brilla's new album envisions a future founded on love

*between one another ("Bigger than That"), dreams of a future founded on love ("No More Violence") and embraces the process of change before us ("Change the World").*

*In an interview with the People's Tribune's Danny Alexander, Brilla explains her vision, a brilliant counterpoint to that of our corporately-run government and media.*

*People's Tribune: When I first heard you sing "Bigger Than That," I was in awe of how you could say so much so playfully. How do you remember music shaping your perspective as a child?*

**Alysha Brilla:** Music was a huge life source for me as a child. I was always the odd one in my family and in general, so music became a language with which I could translate my thoughts and feelings, and one that people would respond to positively. My mom sang to me, making up lyrics, and my father played guitar on occasion. I was completely fascinated.

*PT: How would you describe your approach?*

**Brilla:** Growing up near Toronto, in a mixed household, I heard a lot of different music. I have always loved rhythm. Good rhythm. Good melody. Good lyrics. A song doesn't need to be complicated. My love for pop music is that it embraces simplicity, as does most folk music around the world. It's music for people to sing along to, and gather. It connects us to ourselves, each other and a greater unifying force.

*PT: What is the story behind your decision to write "Human," a song about being one of 7 billion others?*

**Brilla:** I like the idea of objectivity. I like the idea of humans having a capacity to zoom out, over ourselves, and look from a bird's eye view. To look at where we fit in our families, societies and in the world. I think there is nothing more important at this time in history than understanding ourselves and each other. It's our only hope.

*PT: You seem to be a part of a strong, nurturing community of musicians. How did that community and/or that approach develop?*

**Brilla:** I was welcomed by different communities, especially in K-W (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario). I have a friend and artist named Janice Lee [a wonderful musician herself] whose love for community always inspires me. Without community we feel empty.

*PT: If you could change the world, what do you imagine that world might look like?*

**Brilla:** It would look balanced because humanity would collectively be doing the work to ensure that voices formerly silenced now have a platform to express and teach us. It would be a lot greener, too. Borders wouldn't be so strict because nationalism would be a dated value.

# 2017: The significance of May Day

By Richard Monje

CHICAGO, IL — May Day signifies a very important moment for the working class. It's a time to examine our experience and put forward a program and vision of what needs to be done. Even though the historical content of May Day has been lost to most in the US, it's still an important day throughout the world. In the US, the immigrant marches of 2006 brought it back to the US.

The process of the dismantling of the infrastructure of capitalism, including the workers' organizations and institutions, began in the 1970s. This saw the reversal of what you might consider a society engaged to solve society's problems to one where society's accumulated wealth has no responsibility to the working class.

Under Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, even the Clinton administration, and now under Trump, this process is going to a new level.

During the Reagan era, a section of the working class adopted the ruling class' criminalization of the youth as our principal problem. And a section of the trade union movement came to the side of Reagan. In this way, the workers were distracted from what was really taking place. Capitalism was being dismantled and reconfigured in a way to allow unlimited profitability by moving work globally.

This shift left a vacuum. The US worker, who in the past was the motive force of creating the wealth of society, was left jobless. Gone were the opportunities that the exchange of commodities and the national market provided.

So, we find ourselves in a particular moment today where the social consequences of these economic and political developments are reaching a higher and higher level. This May Day, we have to examine what we must do differently. What did we learn in the last 40 years? What

worked and what didn't? This is our challenge.

Our message is the same for every sector of the workers—to those who feel under the weight of domestic violence to the inequality in the workplace; to the African Americans who feel the pressure of the potential killing of their children in the street and to the workers in the Rust Belt areas in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, to the undocumented traveling sometimes thousands of miles to try to stabilize their family and survive. It's to say: We are the workers who built the dams, electrical grid, interstate system, car manufacturing, and the ability to go to the moon. Our labor accomplished the technological wonder in the US, and now we're being cast out of this system?

So it's time for us to design a new way of operating.

Our challenge today is a vision for the future. Today, the battle is for the survival



Fight for 15 activists outside a McDonald's near Philadelphia. A former McDonald's president said last year that if wages for McDonald's workers hit \$15 an hour, they could be replaced with robots. McDonald's had net income of \$4.6 billion in 2016.

PHOTO/JOE PIETTE

of society, our communities, for a future for our families, or whether there will be a future. That has to be answered by concrete practical steps towards something, not against something.

This is what we need this May Day—to start that visual-

ization of what do we want and what are we fighting for.

*Richard Monje is Manager of the Chicago and Midwest Region and International Executive Vice President, Workers United.*

## Facing a jobs 'apocalypse'

By Dave Ransom

Bruce Taylor is one of the biggest growers in California. Never a great friend of the workers whose labor has made his fortune, he told the AgTech Innovation Forum in Salinas recently that Trump's immigration policies "are going to force us to solve our labor problems faster."

His solution is robotics. He's experimenting with a harvester that uses a water jet to cut leaf crops like lettuce, replacing workers that bend and use a knife. And that's after a Lettuce Bot thins the heads—5,000 plants a minute.

The replacement of humans with robots has actually been underway for more than a decade and now is gaining steam—not only in agriculture but in every industry.

In California's Central Valley, the huge warehouses of e-commerce giants like Amazon have recently created thousands of jobs where almost the only option before was working in the fields. But Amazon now has 45,000 robots working in those warehouses—with more to come.

New warehouses are ever more robotic. When Skechers opened a big new shoe warehouse in California's Moreno Valley recently, it shut down five others and cut its workforce by half.

This is part of the seismic shift underway in retail trade—from brick-and-mortar stores to buying on the Internet. Not only are the big chains like Macy's and Penney closing stores (with Sears and Kmart near bankruptcy) but many of the smaller niche shops are also closing outlets—or closing down entirely.

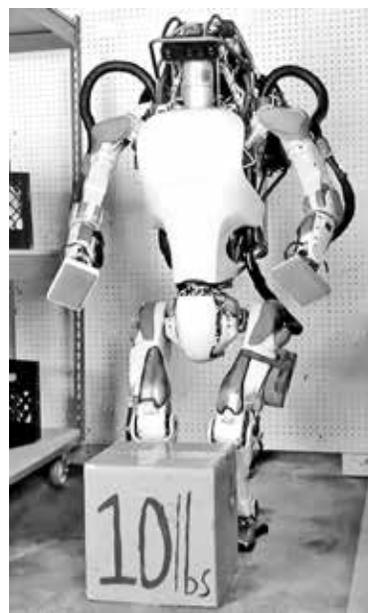
Business Insider calls it "the retail apocalypse" and forecasts that "as stores close, many shopping malls will be forced to shut down as well." Nearly a third of malls are threatened, it says. Already, some mall landlords are walking away from their investments.

But, dying malls and robotic warehouses aside, truck driving should remain a viable job, right?

In your dreams. Industry executives expect to have fully automated trucks on the road within five or 10 years. Nearly two million truck drivers in the U.S. alone could be affected.

Was driving a cab for Uber your back-up job—or your real one? Uber now owns the company that made the beer-truck delivery and is hard at work developing autonomous cars to replace its drivers—as are Amazon, Facebook, Google, Tesla, Ford, General Motors, and the like.

Which leaves burger flipping.



This robot can lift and carry a 10-pound box.

PHOTO/BOSTON DYNAMICS

You can watch Miso Robotics' Flippy the Robot at work on the web—and soon see it in person at the CaliBurger chain's Pasadena location. If it works out, CaliBurger plans to have Flippies in place in 50 restaurants within two years.

We are seeing the end of the job world as we know it. While forecasters differ as to how many jobs will be roboticized (40-80 percent) and how rapidly it will happen (10-50 years), the trend is disturbingly clear.

And if we don't manage it, it will manage us.

## Hope lies in those who survive suffering

By PJ Damico

DENVER, CO — I have never been more optimistic about the future of our planet than I am today. My hope is not rooted in the moral monstrosity that is mainstream America but in the people who have survived and thrived in the face of its radical suffering. America is somewhere between an absurd comedy (Trump) and a horrifying tragedy.

We as a species are now at the crossroads. We will live together in harmony or we will perish. We live in this dialectic tension. The mother is eating her own baby and we wonder why. Should we abort or should we be her midwife. What of America is worth saving let alone each other. The saving of America is really a false choice once we realize that she never existed, and yet the promise of Lady Liberty—Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free—remains a promise worth fighting for—worth dying for—worth loving back into possibility.

America now finds itself in a state of liminality, we find ourselves waking up from a drunken stupor, powerless to make change and yet wondering what can we do now in this state of dystopia. I pray, that we first grieve. For a democracy that never was, for people who we have and continue to oppress and as strange as it sounds—for our own complicity in the design of this glorious myth that we must now salvage from her heap of lies: "America, you've never been America to me, but I swear this oath—you will be."

# ‘Humans have a higher moral value than a dollar’

*Editor’s note: These are excerpts from a speech by Laura Garcia at Harold Washington University in Chicago. Laura is the editor of the Tribuno del Pueblo, sister publication to the People’s Tribune.*

Everyone is aching for the kind of America we need, and against what Trump and the class he represents wants. Trump is not alone, he represents a class, that is organized and prepared to keep ruling.

As parents, we are asking, “will our kids go to school, to college? What will happen to them, to me? Will I end up homeless?”

The situation is different today. It will only continue if we don’t reach out and support one another’s struggles and keep them from dividing us.

Trump used the undocumented as a scapegoat for all the economic ills of this country. No jobs, it’s their fault. Scared you will get bombed? It’s the refugees’ fault.

He used immigration to form a social mass of people to support his policies by promising jobs, building a wall, keeping refugees

out, and saying it will get better. We know automation is taking the jobs. There won’t be jobs.

Meanwhile, they are planning to keep corporations in power, take more out of our paycheck, and deny us the necessities of life. Immigrants are used as a scapegoat to keep us from seeing who is taking the money.

From this perspective, we want to discuss the situation of the undocumented immigrants. Guadalupe, a mother whose children are citizens, was deported within 24 hours. Her daughter said, “the only crime my mother made was trying to feed her children.” She’s not a criminal.

ICE agents took a Texas woman with a brain tumor and in need of surgery from her hospital bed, hands and feet shackled. Why such a lack of humanity?

People are responding and its not just Latinos, and its not just the undocumented. Its people rising up in the defense of civil rights—African Americans, white, all saying this is not right. It’s not the country I want.

What trump is unleashing is not only a violation of civil rights



People say they will not be silent as human beings are denied sanctuary.

PHOTO/ERIK MCGREGOR

but human rights. And it doesn’t end with the undocumented. It’s extending to other sectors of the population. For example, Mohammad Ali’s son was stopped in the airport because of his name.

Why is it happening—eight billionaires control the same wealth as half of the world’s population. What are they going to do with that wealth? Homelessness is growing; 49 million people go to bed hungry; 16 million

are children. How much longer can we put up with it?

It’s time to unite as a people based on a higher law, human rights. We’re the majority and either we’re going to win or they’re going to. Our children face this world. It’s up to us to do something.

Let’s talk, read about the issues, network and unite. We have to find answers, map out our course and move forward.

My generation was fighting

to get into the system. Your generation has a more difficult situation because a lot of you are getting kicked out of the system as the jobs vanish.

Human beings have a higher moral value than a dollar. We’re coming together. We’re on the march. I saw this in the Women’s march, marchers upholding the workers’ demands: Women’s Rights. Healthcare. Education. Worker and Immigrant Rights. No Ban. No Wall!

## Fresno church declares itself a sanctuary

By Eduardo Castro

FRESNO, CA — Rev. Sharon Avril of Carter Episcopal Church recently announced that her church is now a sanctuary for all immigrants. Carter Memorial has been in existence for 135 years in Fresno. The U.S. Episcopal Church is 210 years old. The original church started during the period of slavery when it helped the slaves escape from the South to non-slave states.

The role of the religious community is to take in foreigners coming to the U.S. with open arms, dignity and respect as human beings. Rev. Avril stated she will not allow ICE or law enforcement to enter the church.

She will not abide by any laws which are illegal and immoral. At Carter Memorial, they want to create an atmosphere where immigrants feel safe by not allowing any law enforcement agency to enter. They will provide food and shelter.

Through ‘Faith in the Community,’ the church will provide

services such as ‘Know Your Rights’ and refer immigrants to other services they may be eligible for.

Carter Memorial wants to provide moral support to the Spanish-speaking community by not allowing Trump’s threats to put fear into their hearts. The religious community is there to act as a buffer in their defense against raids by ICE.

Churches in the community only need to look at U.S. historical facts such as slavery, Japanese encampments, etc. to see how similarly cruel the government has been in treating immigrants. The church has a moral obligation to help serve those most in need.

Rev. Avril sees ICE as bounty hunters who resemble the slave catchers during slavery. She sees their role as to arrest immigrants even if no crime has been committed. ICE should be there to protect everyone in this country, even those here illegally.

Rev. Avril sees as a possible solution to the immigration law problem the allowing of those

interested in becoming U.S. citizens to apply for a petition. The petition would list reasons why they want to become citizens and how they can contribute to the country. Immigrants provide skills to the U.S. economy and are not a detriment.

Rev. Avril defines sanctuary as a safe haven where immigrants are welcomed and feel safe and secure from ICE raids.

The Trump administration does not have the right to say who is worthy to stay or to leave. Trump’s message to “Make America Great Again” is a fallacy. The question should be: When has America ever been great?

History has shown that immigrants have always been under attack. The capitalists of the U.S. have reaped profits from the slave labor of immigrants who have made this country prosperous. There is a need for all like-minded people to become united in the immigrant struggle.

*Carter Memorial*  
**African Methodist Episcopal Church**  
940 Waterman, Fresno, Ca. 93706  
559-445-1890  
Rev. Sharon Avril, Pastor  
Sunday School-Sunday Morning-9:30AM  
Sunday Morning Worship-11:00AM  
Wednesday Evening Bible Study-6:00PM



Rev. Sharon Avril of Carter Episcopal Church in Fresno recently announced that her church is now a sanctuary for all immigrants.

PHOTO/ED CASTRO

## Women on Hunger Strike at Immigration Prison

TACOMA, WA — Eighty women caged at the Northwest Detention Center are on a hunger strike over conditions. “We came here fleeing from our countries so we could be heard and to ask for help. We are not criminals, but we have been forgotten here. Many women here have had their court dates postponed [for months.] The food is terrible and we women are given old and used underwear. One officer asked us why we are not eating, telling us there is no one outside supporting us so our efforts are in vain, but we will continue,” said a prisoner. Supporters continued an outside encampment, organizing rallies and receiving constant updates from people detained.

The strike comes as the Trump administration awarded a \$110 million contract to GEO Group, a private corporation that builds immigrant prisons that profit off the misery of our brothers and sisters worldwide.

*Excerpted from NWDC Resistance. For information contact Maru Mora Villalpando at [www.latinadvocacy.org](http://www.latinadvocacy.org).*

## If your wages cannot pay your rent then you live on the street!

By Retirees for Single Payer Health Care

DETROIT, MI – According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, “Whatever definition one uses, authorities and laypersons alike commonly assume that the effects of poverty are harmful to both individuals and society.”

So, let’s use the Health and Human Services (HHS) definition of poverty: For one person, the poverty line is \$12,060 per year, and for more than one person add \$4,180 per member. For example, a family of eight would still be in poverty if their income is \$41,320.

In 1965, when Medicaid was passed, 5 million people qualified. Today, 73 million qualify for it.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) makes everyone living below 138% of the poverty level eligible for Medicaid in the states that expanded Medicaid. The result is that those people’s poverty level for the purposes of Medicaid now runs between \$16,642 and \$57,021 (see example above).

We know that poverty causes all of this. So, what causes poverty?

We are more productive than ever. We have the capacity to feed, clothe, house, educate and provide medical care to every person who lives here and more.

The problem we are faced with is that we don’t own the

technology we use to produce what we need. We don’t even own the products we produce. We are allowed to buy what our wages allow us to purchase and that includes a place to live.

If your wages are less than your rent or mortgage payment then you live on the street.

“On a single night in 2016, 549,928 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States” (2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress). They either sleep in the streets or in temporary overnight shelters across our country. They have no permanent homes.

In 1979, the United Auto-workers Union (UAW) had one million members working at GM, Chrysler and Ford. Today there are approximately 140,000 UAW members working at GM, Fiat/Chrysler and Ford.

Those 860,000 jobs did not go to Mexico. GM, Fiat/Chrysler and Ford employ 36,600 workers there, paying approximately \$4 an hour.

At GM, Fiat/Chrysler and Ford, there is now an eight-tier wage system in this country. It starts at \$14 an hour and takes eight years to reach 90% of the pay that existed before September 2007.

The “Motor City” is now a giant scrap yard. There is a 30% poverty level and 40% of the peo-

# Solidarity and protest: California and Mexico



A protest along the US-Mexico border demanding a halt to deportations, the separation of families and other attacks on immigrant workers. The attack on immigrants is an attack on everyone’s rights. PHOTO/CATHLEEN WILLIAMS

By Cathleen Williams

SACRAMENTO, CA — More than 700 people turned out on March 28 to protest the appearance in Sacramento of Thomas Homan, acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), who was invited to speak at a “town hall” by the right wing Sacramento Sheriff, Scott Jones. Mothers and grandmothers spoke against ripping families apart. Hundreds chanted, “No ban! No fear! Say it loud, say it clear! Immigrants

are welcome here!”

“The community voiced a solid ‘get out,’” according to Mackenzie Wilson, local organizer. “The rhetoric they used is that they [ICE] would come after career criminals. But we know it is going to be the mother coming home from work with a broken tail light.”

Bernard Marks, in his eighties, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, compared the targeting of migrant workers with the Nazi assault on Jews in Germany. “When I was a little boy in

Poland, for no other reason but for being Jewish, I was hauled off by the Nazis... My family died in Auschwitz and Dachau... Stand up here, Sheriff Jones. ... Don’t forget—history is not on your side.”

Al Rojas is an original founder of the United Farm Workers union and current president of the AFL-CIO’s Northern California Chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. He points out that “The corporate agenda is to attack labor—the minimum wage, worker’s compensation, health and safety, even social security. Unions won these benefits because the working class was organized and unified. That gave us power. They intend to take away that power.

“Racism is used as a cover, but it’s all about economics—cheap labor. They want guest workers, they want to break up and expel migrant families, they want temporary, single workers, both men and women, not only in agriculture, but also in the expanding service industry. No right to report labor violations. No right to organize. No freedom of movement. No path to citizenship. Recruited in Mexico, desperate for work and totally controlled—by the employer, by Homeland Security, by the Mexican government.”

ple living here cannot afford a car. The other 60% can barely afford auto insurance. Land speculators are salivating as poverty grows and 100-year-old houses are abandoned by absentee landlords.

Poverty is caused by a combination of private ownership of society’s productive capacity and increased productivity, which causes increasing unemployment and falling wages. That does not mean the answer is to get rid of technology, but instead to nationalize the technology in our own interest.

Our future is what we make it. We must agree on that future and learn to fight for it.

For us retirees, we have chosen the fight for healthcare access for everyone. That means a political struggle with the “new” government to win H.R. 676, the Expanded and Improved Medicare For All Act. In other words, Nationalize access to healthcare for all of us.

## Bees

Lead in Flint water  
Poison in Syrian air  
Cancer in the dirt,  
Cancer on the airwaves,  
Tumors in the White House.  
Daily absurdity,  
too much for a poet to keep up with,  
so I just write these words  
and pray for the bees to survive.  
What will the flowers do  
when the buzzing stops?

— Eric Allen Yankee

# ‘Benton Harbor city income tax must pass,’ says Rev. Edward Pinkney



By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BROOKS FREMONT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, MI — We are in life or death struggle in the city of Benton Harbor. Our living conditions (and the planet) are being assaulted by the capitalist system from all directions in order to make bigger profits for the corporations.

In 2013, Benton Harbor residents proposed that the city enact by a referendum a 1% income tax aimed at the Whirlpool Corporation and other business that do not hire Benton Harbor residents.

Less than 1% of Whirlpool’s employees live in Benton Harbor. Businesses and city residents would pay 1%, and non-residents would pay ½ percent on the portion of their earned income in the city. This was seen as a way to solve the city’s financial crisis. It was estimated that the tax would have raised \$2.5 million for the community every year.

Whirlpool and Benton Harbor’s former mayor James Hightower worked to defeat the measure with a massive misinformation campaign full of lies. They promoted class, racial, reli-

gious, ethnic, gender and educational divisions to keep us fighting one another. The purpose was to make us blind to our overwhelmingly common needs and interests. This is how they preserve their power and control over the profit that working people create with their labor. On November 5, 2013, by a 667 to 553 vote, the income tax proposal lost.

Benton Harbor officials are now considering asking the voters to approve a city income tax proposal in the near future. The idea was brought up during the City’s Legislative Committee meeting recently. The city must

do something to generate funds. Whirlpool refuses to pay taxes or pay their water bill. The potholes are getting worse, trees are dying, we have so many abandoned buildings. The income tax is a means to build up the community. The tax should be used for capital improvement, rent, infrastructure and city maintenance. We must pass the city income tax proposal.

*Rev. Pinkney is serving a 30-month sentence for leading the community’s fight against the Whirlpool Corporation in Benton Harbor, MI.*

## Voices of Benton Harbor

“I want to comment about the *People’s Tribune* health care articles. The *People’s Tribune* is right on time, and I thank you. I live this—that’s the way they treated me. They took my Medicaid. I’ve been fighting my case for six months.”

— Charles Williams, Benton Harbor

Editor’s note: The healthcare articles are “Medicaid Still in Crosshairs” and “Why Can’t healthcare Be Free in America?” View them at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org).

## Surveillance self-defense

By Travis McDermott

CHICAGO, IL — I’m a tech worker living in Chicago. In the past few years I’ve been on a mission to teach activists, journalists, and lawyers how to protect themselves against electronic surveillance. To many that seems like an unrealistic goal. With frequent reports of the Orwellian surveillance capabilities of the state, many succumb to nihilism, assuming resistance is futile.

The first time a fellow activist told me they weren’t willing to attend a free class to protect themselves I was floored. At first I assumed it was because I was a stranger. As I grew in my relationships with community organizers I saw a pattern emerge. Most people just don’t know what they’re trying to protect against. It doesn’t help that non-technical journalists almost always misrepresent technologically complex subject matter.

What’s at stake here is, I think, best characterized by the following quote: “If I know every single thing about you, about what you think, how you reason, what your fears are, what your planning, what you’re doing, and you know nothing about me... The power imbalance between us

is immense because I can now manipulate you, I can threaten you, I can alter your behavior, I can anticipate your behavior, I can always stay many steps ahead of you.” (Glenn Greenwald, “The Hacker Wars”)

When organizers use tools like Facebook or text messaging to coordinate efforts, we put a ceiling on our potential for success. Even as non-organizers, many are uneasy about the collection of personal data by corporations or even your ISP. S.J.Res.34 has passed both the House and Senate and if signed into law will allow your Internet provider to monitor your activities and sell the information for profit. The good news is that tools like Signal and Tor have proven successful at curtailing surveillance capabilities without inconveniencing the users. They act as drop-in replacements for the tools we’re already using.

Even if you don’t think you have anything to protect, you should use them for the people who do. They prevent service providers from storing your activities, so dragnet surveillance could be abolished if everyone in the world used them. Each person would have to be targeted individually and that makes the work



of three-letter agencies far more impractical. That isn’t to say surveillance would go away, just that collecting the communications of everyone and storing them indefinitely would become a thing of the past.

There is a very thorough and recent guide on Surveillance Self-defense, which can be found at <https://ssd.eff.org>. It outlines the best tools available currently as well as the security mindset required to minimize the risk of improper use.

We are up against powerful adversaries. It has never been a more important time for individuals to take action, and the technology to empower us isn’t reserved for any color, class, or creed. The laws of mankind are subject to the interpretation of those enforcing them, but the laws of mathematics are governed by the physical universe and can’t be broken. Use them to your advantage!



Grady Smith, the father whose son has been abused, is on the right. PHOTO/AVIS CREWS

## ‘Help save my child from a corrupt system,’ says father

By Grady Smith

ATLANTA, GA — Georgia’s Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS) web site states: “Child Protective Services staff investigates reports of child abuse or neglect and provides services to protect the child and strengthen the family. Every child needs to be treasured, protected and nurtured. Unfortunately, some parents can’t—or won’t—care for their children. When they neglect or abuse them, someone must step in to ensure the children’s safety.” That’s the job of DFCS, along with the police and the courts.

Over 100 children are killed or die in Georgia DFCS custody yearly according to the SCLC. Georgia ranks sixth in child abuse that leads to death. Seventy percent of children in DFCS care are in prison by age 23. Child Protective Services, along with the police and courts, fail to protect

the most vulnerable children.

Grady Smith, father of Ryan, says this is unacceptable. “It’s been almost three years now since my son revealed to his licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and myself of the abuse and molestation he endured with evidence. He has never been rescued from the perpetrators and is still living with them in a harmful environment because of DFCS. According to his LPC he is at risk of being abused and molested again and could end up dead if not removed. Until Newton County is forced to do the right thing and remove him instead of pretending child abuse never happened so they’re not held accountable for knowingly failing my child when we called on them to help protect him and they did not, he is still at risk. Please help to save my child from his perpetrators and a corrupt system.”

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