ANGER BOILS OVER AT DENIAL OF HEALTHCARE

Read the story on page 3

Susie Bell of Gilbert, Arizona, at a town hall meeting held by U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake (R-AZ). She said the health insurance she had saved her life when a doctor diagnosed her ovarian cancer at an early stage. Thousands are speaking out across the country about the government’s immoral attempt to deny healthcare to millions.

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS
PAGES 8-9

FLINT: THE FIGHT FOR WATER AND DEMOCRACY CONTINUES
PAGES 2 AND 7
EDITORIAL

Editor’s note: As we go to press, the Flint City Council passed a “bandaid” ordinance which enacts a one-year Moratorium on Water Liens. Meanwhile, the struggle continues for Suspension of Water Shutoffs and paying for poison.

Despite millions of dollars promised to replace lead service lines, the three-year nightmare of the Flint water crisis continues. The water crisis includes the dismantling of democracy through the draconian Emergency Manager system, continued toxic water flowing through the faucets, the highest water rates in the country, and health challenges as far as the eye can see. Meanwhile, just days after protest and rallies commemorating three years of the nightmare, over 8,000 residents received notices threatening water liens on their homes (which means eventually losing their homes) if they don’t pay past-due water bills.

Bondholders Walk on Water

Recently, the city of Flint (ordered by the EPA), was given the option to essentially stay on Detroit water (now Great Lakes Water Authority) or keep its contract with the Karagondi Water Authority (KWA), where the disaster began. In 2014, the switch from Detroit to Flint Riv er water by Dictate of Emergency Manager Darnell Earley created the water crisis until KWA was built.” “Stakeholders,” such as the State, Detroit, Flint, paid consultants and others, met for weeks to cobbble together the “plan.” Recently, Flint Mayor Karen Weaver announced Flint would stay with Detroit as Flint’s primary source. Genesee County Drain Commissioner Jeff Wright, who helped lead the charge in 2014 for the new pipeline, recently declared that despite Flint opting to now use Detroit as a water source, “the KWA will be made whole!” That means to date, JP Morgan, Wells Fargo Securities, and Stiefel, all who underwrote KWA bond deals, remain unscathed. In other words, the bondholders will be paid no matter what. And what about Flint residents?? In response to the lien threat resident Timothy Abdul-Matin told the Flint Journal: “I’m really flabbergasted. We have people who have made a conscious decision to switch over to this water source (Flint Riv er) without proper treatment and now they’re threatening to kick us to the streets if we don’t pay for it.”

The wholesale transfer of water and water rights from public assets to private hands is well underway in Flint, Michigan. Even the poisoning of 100,000 people did not stop this process. This is the untold story of what experts call one of the worst drinking water disasters ever. Lack of trust in the water is being matched by a lack of trust in government at all levels. (The current Mayor is facing a recall.) Water warriors and water protectors are scrambling to figure out who are their friends and who are their enemies. As the poster child of environmental disasters, Flint must forge a new unity based on meeting the water, health and democratic needs of its people.

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PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE

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 tribute 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.

The People’s Tribune, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY: Articles that are unsigned, such as the one of this issue and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

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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END FLINT WATER CRISIS

3 YEARS 2 LONG!

The Flint “Three Years Too Long Coalition” puts forth demands at a march and rally on March 25.

PHOTO/FACEBOOK

CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS
At a town hall by Rep. Tom Reed (R-New York), a woman angrily told him, “I’m a veteran and I have single-payer and it has saved my life four times. There is no profit [for private insurance companies] in single-payer. We have to get the profit [out of health insurance]… We are human beings… You boil everything down to money. We are not money, we are a nation.”

She is one of millions in the United States who are angry and fearful about what Congress may do about healthcare in the wake of the House passing the Trumpcare bill on May 4.

The Trumpcare measure still has to get through the Senate, but if the Senate bill is any indication, we can be sure whatever finally passes will be good for the rich and the corporations, and bad for the rest of us. Trumpcare could condemn millions of us to suffering and death.

**$880 Billion in Medicaid Cuts**

Most Americans who gained coverage under Obamacare got it through the expansion of Medicaid, and the Trumpcare bill would end Medicaid expansion after 2020 and also cut back the Medicaid program. It would reduce federal spending on Medicaid by a staggering $880 billion across nine years, starting in 2017. If you left Medicaid, even for just a month, you wouldn’t be allowed to return to it. Medicaid provides health coverage to millions of Americans, including low-income adults, children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities. Cuts in Medicaid will have a particularly severe impact on the disabled.

It’s estimated the bill would cause 24 million of us to lose our healthcare coverage. And a big chunk of the Medicaid cuts gets handed to the rich—the bill would cut the taxes of high-income people by nearly $600 billion over ten years!

Older Americans would pay more for insurance and get smaller subsidies. The states could choose not to require insurers to provide a minimum set of health benefits, such as maternity care and emergency services. Those of us with pre-existing conditions could end up paying more than others for coverage. The Trumpcare bill could also increase costs and reduce coverage even for workers who get their health insurance through their jobs.

Why the assault on healthcare? It’s partly because the big private hospital chains and the private health insurers want Obamacare revamped because it’s hurting their profits. It’s also because less and less of our labor is needed in this age of computers and robots, and business doesn’t want to spend money (public or private) on providing healthcare for workers they don’t need. And the Democrats have been as much a part of the assault as the Republicans. When there was the possibility of passing Medicare For All, the Democrats chose not to.

Healthcare is a life or death matter. We have a right to it. The fight for healthcare makes it all the more clear that either the corporations are going to run this country in their interests, or we the people are going to take the country back from the corporations and run it in our interest. The healthcare crisis gives us an opportunity to fight forward. We don’t need to settle for Obamacare. The entire healthcare system should be publicly owned and healthcare should be free and available to everyone.

We can take the first step in that direction by enacting a national single-payer public insurance system: improve Medicare and expand it to cover everyone.

**Healthcare: Will the people be crucified to profit the rich?**

Our ruling class seems to be putting into practice Mark Twain’s advice when he once said, “Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.” The American people are becoming aware of the fact that president Trump’s promises of “terrific” healthcare and “coverage for everyone” really means terrific higher profits for pharmaceutical companies and the healthcare insurance corporations at the expense of millions of us losing coverage altogether. As this awareness grows so do the protests.

On one side of the fight is the human right to healthcare for all Americans and on the other is maximum profits for the corporations. There is no middle ground. One exists at the expense of the other.

The moral question is, should the death and suffering of our children who are poor, our elderly or disabled, or anyone with pre-existing conditions be the currency that finances corporate private jets, Rolls-Royces and mansions? This is the system that we are at battle with and it must be replaced by free universal healthcare for all.

Ultimately the fight to remove the profit motive from healthcare is the fight for a cooperative society where access to the best health care—and everything else we need—is guaranteed to all. Then and only then can the Hippocratic oath taken by all doctors to “do no harm” have a real meaning. We can finally replace the imaginary banners that currently wave outside our hospitals that read, “Pay First,” with the more just banner that reads, “Everyone gets the healthcare they need.”
‘I’m embedded in the homeless condition of humanity in America’

By Don Blumenthal

LAS VEGAS, NV — The medical community and hospital security had me hauled away to jail for being in the waiting room at Desert Springs Hospital just nine days into post surgery. … while I was SLEEPING for Christ’s sake. No place is safe to sleep in Vegas. If you’re not gambling, you have no business being here… I’ve been thrown out casinos, off buses, slot parlors, Walmart, laundromats, Smith’s—but HAULED TO JAIL for sleeping in a hospital waiting room? I’ve never heard of such a thing. I was all alone at 4:30 a.m., nine days after being cut, gutted and stitched. I was manhandled out of the ER and thrown into the backseat cage like I was a ragdoll.

There’s a lot I can handle… I have done so for longer than I care to remember out here in the Urban Wild, but all this AND Trump on top of homelessness? It’s just way too much. I ask every day how much longer can this total displacement and tortuous nothingness of concrete, neon and desert dirt hold me in its bond? With little more than Social Security retirement, is this small gutter gig to be my final resting place? Living on my retirement and $15/month food stamps is a high wire dance I somehow managed, but the clatter wheels of paying Medicare doctors and technicians, with their insistant and petty co-payments, (ridiculous) while chasing the medical protocol for referrals, specialists and jumping through their senseless Medicare hoops and hospital policies… I’ve survived! But I can no longer justify it anymore, not living like a bug or a half-human being on these streets of Las Vegas every day without contributing something.

Thanks for reading… I’m hoping to get some help out of this excruciating, bad situation and its dulling depression. I’ve been embedded in the homeless condition of humanity in America.

Editor’s note: The People’s Tribune received this statement through our website.

Community helps families living in storage units

Editor’s note: This is an update of our story in the May, 2017 People’s Tribune about the flea market in Texas that rents storage units without electricity, heat, running water, or bathrooms to families in need of cheap rent. All of the residents are trying to survive one day at a time. Some are only a step away from homelessness.

By Juan Torres

DONNA, TX — Following the issuance of an eviction notice by the city, the tenants at Fiesta Flea Market living in storage units made plans to move out. The media was called after numerous accounts of harassment by the management and threats that families either pay the last month’s rent or the police would be called. The tenants called the media. Through the coordination of several activists, a local Baptist church from Weslaco provided transportation and gas. Also, an adult day care center provided trucks and vans. The County passed out vouchers for motel stays for eligible families and plans to take people to shelters.

Kindness was shared by everyone in the spirit of lending a hand to human beings without regard to nationality or legality. These workers and their families, like so many who are being cast aside by the capitalist system when their labor is no longer needed, are fighting for their survival. They are pointing to a vision of a different society that provides what people need, independent of the present economic system. Si Se Puede! (Yes we can!)
**First they came for the homeless**

By Sandy Perry

The “First They Came for the Homeless” California speaking tour brought together some key leaders of the movement against homelessness from April 22 to 24. The tour was named after a grouping of houseless people that emerged from Occupy San Francisco and then organized a series of dramatic encampments confronting political officials in Berkeley, California. The name is in fact an accurate warning to all of us: the fascist daily persecution of the homeless today is the likely future fate of all American workers if we fail to defend and unite with them now.

The tour featured leaders from Berkeley, San Francisco, San Jose, Merced, and Los Angeles, each sharing the aspirations and lessons of their respective battles with the system. In addition to unifying these leaders, the purpose of the tour was to raise funds to finance broader circulation of the Peoples Tribune and amplify the voices of the homeless leaders whose articles appear in it.

The message of the tour was unique, because like the Peoples Tribune, it was political and strategic. It was different from typical speaking engagements by homeless individuals that attempt to create an “immersion experience” or “reality tour” to expose people to the realities of homelessness, or make people feel sorry for them.

Speakers on this tour had a clear-eyed assessment that the system necessarily creates homelessness in order to make money for profiteers. The question is not to make a pitch for sympathy, but to sound the alarm about a system that has no respect for human life, and begin to organize the resistance.

These tour speakers remarked about their experiences with the tour and about the situation in the homeless movement:

“Money is the enemy, not the solution. Profit before people puts us here. People before profit will fix it.” — Mike Zint, San Francisco/Berkeley, ‘First They came for the homeless’ and the Poor Tour

“I am someone and I matter. Next is that we all need to believe it.” — Gena Mercer, Merced, California Central Valley Journey for Justice

“San Jose destroyed the ‘Jungle’ camp in 2014, but it has not made any progress since then. They say they have housed 1000 homeless people, but that doesn’t count the new people who become homeless all the time. Thousands are still forced to live outside every night. The City sweeps their camps and illegally takes their possessions, but they always come back because there’s no place for them to go.” — Robert Aguirre, H.O.M.E.L.E.S.S., San Jose

“It was a great privilege to attend and speak at the event and hear from those on the front lines experiencing homelessness and their grassroots efforts in the struggle to end homelessness.” — Bilal Mafundi Ali, San Francisco, Coalition on Homelessness and People’s Commission for Justice

The tour visited San Francisco, the California Central Valley, and the heart of Skid Row in Los Angeles. The message from the L.A. leaders was especially clear: the time has come to formulate a new paradigm. Merely reacting to the endless attacks is not effective.

What needs to be done, several speakers concluded, is to build a community in and around a section of the homeless to assemble at least the nucleus of a fighting force. Then we have to enter the political battle to hold the government accountable for ending homelessness. In L.A. they are calling on people to “disrupt the Mayor” until he answers their demands.

Political battle may start with confronting the government, but it also means organizing our troops, distinguishing who are our enemies and who are our friends, and uniting all who can be united in our campaigns for housing, basic human needs, and basic human dignity.

As one leader said at the end of the tour, “There are more of us than there are of them. The question is, how do we get ourselves united?”

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**Homeless, Not Hopeless**

- Sitting in my tent
- More time spent
- Defending
- Pretending
- Everything’s just okay
- That I will make it through another day
- Policy turns a blind eye
- Do they want me to die?
- My bones shake worse than earthquakes
- So, this is by my mistake?
- Say, by the hand of fate?
- I’ll wait
- Waiting to hear of something good
- Fairy tale endings like Robin Hood
- Can’t steal from the rich

- While they oppress the poor
- They won’t even let me in the store
- “I’m hungry sir” I implore
- Afraid of what they do not know
- Here’s a real reality show
- Hundreds dying by the year
- Am I the only one to shed a tear?
- This is not just my mistake
- Left in the garden, broken rake
- It’s something we all perpetuate
- This continued misguided, misplaced hate
- Maybe turn our eyes to our state
- To open up the Golden Gates
- — John Safari

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**Homeless movement speaks out about strategies and visions**

By the Editors

In these pages, leaders of the homeless movement and others, speaking up against a broken system that puts people in the streets, tell their stories and describe their strategies and their visions. A system of private corporate ownership of everything we need, including housing, must be changed if our class—the vast majority of us—is to find housing and everything else we need to sustain our lives.

The voices you read here are of people waking up to this reality in their own lives and in those they see around them, and organizing for systemic change. The billionnaire ruling class and its bribed politicians can no longer blame the victims of this broken system for its failures.

There is a mighty movement arising in this country and all over the world. An important part of that movement is alive in the tent communities and other actions that defy the rulers’ attempts to hide, isolate and criminalize the victims of private property and the capitalist system.

The People’s Tribune reports from the fronts of this movement, and has just completed promoting a national speakers tour featuring homeless leaders themselves. Read this and other stories, then donate, distribute and write for the paper; it is your voice, independent and reader-supported.

Visit peoplestribe.org, call 800-691-6888, or email info@peoplestribe.org.

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**Sebastian Higgins, of the Berkeley CA ‘Poor Tour’ protest tent community, wears a sign he made in solidarity with his immigrant brothers and sisters, many of whom are also homeless.**

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFEE
Coal miner: ‘We need to get together and build a huge movement for a better future’

Editor’s note: Chuck Nelson, a retired 4th generation Virginia coal miner, speaks with the People’s Tribune about the struggle for life itself in coal country.

People’s Tribune: Chuck, what did Congress do about the retired miners benefits?
Chuck Nelson: We won a permanent fix on healthcare, but many in Congress don’t want to give the miners their pensions. They’re afraid non-union miners will say, “You gave it to them, what about us?” Joe Manchin (Democrat, WV) is facing reelection and is worried about that. Any credit he can grab out of this he will. He had an opportunity when he was governor to help the miners, but didn’t. He always caters to the industry. Sherrod Brown, the Democratic senator from Ohio, played a big role in getting the healthcare bill passed, but Manchin wants all the credit. We need to keep fighting for the pensions.

PT: Tell our readers about work in the mines.
Chuck: After 29 years as a union miner, I lost my job and worked with Massey Energy. Massey came in and bought all the union companies, busted the union, and reopened them as non-union. The difference between union and non-union mines is unreal.

When I was a union “fire boss,” I made sure my coworkers were safe before going in the mine. In non-union mines the company does the inspections. The ventilation system (that protects against breathing coal dust and dilutes the methane) can interrupt production if kept installed. So they take all the curtains down and put them back at the end of the shift in case the inspector comes.

I worked under these conditions. You couldn’t say nothing or you’re fired. You work until they say you can go home, 14-16 hours.

It’s right back to where it was before there was a union in the 1920s. You’re going to see more of what happened with the coal dust explosion that killed the 29 guys in 2010.

Massey ended my mining career because I spoke out over what happened in my community. My house was close to the mines. The coal dust settled on our community. You clean the house, return home after work, and have ⅛-inch layer of dust on the coffee table, even in the refrigerator. You don’t see the dust you breathe—it’s fine particles laced with chemicals used in the coal cleaning process.

I couldn’t keep my mouth shut while people were poisoned. When I stood up with my community, they took my job and blacklisted me.

We relocated. We’re near where they blow the mountaintops off. The dust and toxins get in the air and streams. The scale of people sick here is unreal. It’s horrible what they get by with to maximize profits.

PT: Why did Trump carry the state? What’s next?
Chuck: They were shutting down the mines before the elections and laying off. People were desperate.

Hillary came in saying, “we’re going to put the coal companies out of business and take your jobs.” Trump came in saying, “we’re going to put the miners back to work.” So it’s not hard to figure out. People blame West Virginia for Trump’s election but we only have five electoral votes.

We’re getting a bad deal. It’s rough to organize people when payday counters their understanding. The industry makes it look like it’s a war on coal. It’s told to our kids in public schools. By third grade, they’re talking about how good coal is. It’s brainwashing. That’s how these corporations divide and conquer. But once you sit down and talk with people about the facts, they start getting concerned.

We need to get together and spread information state to state and build a huge movement.

And we need to get certain individuals out of office if there’s going to be a better future. That’s what Paula Swearengin’s campaign is about: a better future and a change from the same old political elites. Paula, a coal miner’s daughter, fights for the working class. Please give her your support. Visit paulajean2018.com [Read this story on page 8].

Keystone XL: Nebraskans uniting to fight pipeline

Editor’s note: The People’s Tribune interviewed Art Tanderup of Nebraska about the Keystone XL pipeline that has been approved by the Trump administration.

In our May, 2017 edition, Art talked about the danger to the Ogallala Aquifer, the largest fresh water aquifer in existence. In part two, Art refutes Trump’s claim that the pipeline will create jobs and emphasizes how the commonality of the need for water unites the pipeline fighters across the political spectrum.

By Art Tanderup

NELIGH, NE — The president talks about all the jobs the pipeline will create. Temporary construction jobs will bring people in but not jobs for a lot of local people. Only 35 permanent jobs; none will be in any of the communities along the route. A leak occurred last year on Keystone 1, in South Dakota, 75 miles from where I live. It just happened that the pipeline crossed a highway, and to get under the ground, had to be buried 30-40 feet. Thousands and thousands of gallons of oil and chemicals leaked out through pinhole type leaks which detection equipment missed.

A local farmer found it when it surfaced in his field; it had been leaking since it was installed, over a very heavy soil, so did not get into the groundwater. It ruined this guy’s field. They hauled the dirt out of there. Had that happened on my farm, it would have all been on the Aquifer.

Estimates are this could have been leaking for the lifetime of that pipe and it could have gone totally unnoticed. That’s where the jobs come in; people come in to clean up. The future is in renewable energy and that’s where the jobs should come in.

It’s amazing that our group of pipeline fighters come from every political spectrum. Don’t know how many voted for Trump, sure it was half. But we could not approach from a Democrat or Republican type thing. It had to be approached from “Let’s talk about water, our environment, our rights,” these are the things that draw people together and all on the same page. Because if we were not together as a group of landowners, that pipeline would be pumping tar sands today.

We have been networking (with other people) in states doing the same things. There are pockets of resistance, and the goal is to get them to come together.

To learn more on the resistance visit BOLDNEBRASKA.ORG. To see part one of Art’s interview visit peoplestribune.org.
Flint: Six arrested at ‘public’ meeting

Flint police use physical abuse and harassment to silence public

Editor’s note: As we go to press, the County prosecutor decided not to pursue any charges against the six. But the City can still charge them.

By People’s Tribune Flint correspondents

FLINT, MI — Just days before the three-year commemoration of the living Hell known as the Flint water crisis, six residents were arrested. The arrest took place at a local church. The meeting was called by Flint’s Mayor to hear public comments regarding the future of Flint’s long-term water source.

The meeting was already primed for police aggression. The Flint Police Department had officers lined up in the large foyer leading to the sanctuary. They wore Bullet proof vests, standing in formation as if they anticipated a social upheaval to ensue.

Some members of the public were told by the police they could not go inside unless they removed their hats, which also set off tensions. The atmosphere of harassment and intimidation escalated when the Police Chief Johnson opened the session stating: “Please don’t be in here trying to disrupt this meeting… I’m going to escort you out and I’m going to take you to the back door and then you’re going to jail.” (One woman was asked to leave when she uttered a curse word during the comment portion.)

Six people were indeed arrested, and supporters gathered at the police station waiting for them to be let go. The next day, dozens gathered at City Hall denouncing police tactics in general and the arrest of what is now called the Town Hall Six in particular. One of those was manhandled and bruised to the point where she had to be treated at a local hospital after she was let out of jail.

After suffering water poisoning, threats of water shutoffs and liens, health challenges, with no democracy in sight, do we now face police brutality and intimidation for speaking out about it? The Town Hall Six, as of yet, have not been charged. The local Michigan ACLU has stepped forward to defend them if needed.

Nevertheless, the Town Hall Six are an expression of the growing mass of resistance against the Emergency Manager political regime here in Michigan that denies us democracy and the water wars it has wrought. Other Flint Voices in this fight such as Gertrude Marshall, Councilman Eric Mays, Pastor Reginald Flynn have also been arrested or jailed for daring to speak out. The Homrich 9 of Detroit (case pending) as well as the Reverend Edward Pinkney of Benton Harbor (currently incarcerated) join these.

Meanwhile the fight for water, water rights, real democracy, and Healthcare continues.

A 500-pound rock broke my back in five places: A miner’s story and vision

By Douglas Hitt

HOT SPRINGS, AR — In 34 years underground, I had three very close calls.

First, I was at American Coal, and we were moving equipment. As I prepared to unhook the cable, the rope broke. All the tension in that rope and the hook securing the equipment came flying into me. It was like the hand of God smacking me—it sent me flying through the air, shattering a bone in my finger.

My second close call came when I was standing by machine controls. A 4x5 foot, 2-inch thick rock, fell on me. It broke my hardhat, gave me a central disk bulge, and cut my right arm to the bone.

The third close call, which put me on disability, happened in Arkansas as a shuttle car operator. I secured the ventilation curtain. As I was bent over, a 500-pound rock struck me and broke my back in five places. It bruised my heart, formed a blood clot in my lungs, and crushed my ankle. The coal on the mine floor trapped me face down. I yelled for help.

When the rock hit me, the cartilage where the ribs connect to the sternum was fragmented. At two miles underground, co-workers assisted me. When I rolled over, the pain was like fire. That mine later shut down.

I had difficulty getting rehired. When I finally got back in the mines, I couldn’t do the work. I came home and my legs were swollen and my back was killing me. My doctor told me my mining career was over.

Years ago, a study found that after coal is mined, if rock dust is applied over it, the danger of explosions is reduced. There is a lot of dust in the air from this process. You can’t come out of the coal mines and not have health issues. Even with water, dust suppression equipment, and air scrubbers on machines, you still breathe in a lot of dust and silica. There are injuries in every mine. We work understanding the dangers. But our benefits are guaranteed—lifetime medical, pensions, and security of knowing that if we survive, we will have secure retirements, and our families will be cared for. Those securities are paid for with our blood, sweat and dedication. Today, our guarantor (the US government) is working to abandon their promise to us.

If we want to continue to inhabit the Earth, we must invest in clean alternative energy sources. The problem is that all major coal companies invest millions and billions of lobbying dollars to a political structure run by a ruling elite. Corporations only care about their investors getting large returns on their “investments.”

My sons won’t have the quality of life I had because opportunities I had no longer exist, and clean energy opportunities are opposed by dirty energy stockholders. From my experience as a coal miner, I know that as long as you are healthy and productive, you’re OK, but once you’re broken, you’re tossed aside, and a new replacement “tool” is hired.

You have no more value to those corporations than does the dust you are buried in.

“A miner’s story and vision

By Richard Monje, Workers United

We’re at the end of an era. Right now our principal challenge is the construction of a new model of how people work and how they get the basic necessities of life. We’re no longer talking about a minimum wage. We’re talking about a guarantee of what society provides to us as we contribute to society. How do we distribute the wealth that is generated by the working people? Everyone has to set the task of solving the problem before us.

Knowing the experience of what happened in the past is absolutely essential, but the difficult part is to describe the vision of what we don’t see yet. Right now we need to create that vision and then build society around the model of elevating every human being to the level of a thinking designing person.

“From my experience as a coal miner, I know that as long as you are healthy and productive, you’re OK, but once you’re broken, you’re tossed aside, and a new replacement “tool” is hired. You have no more value to those corporations than does the dust you are buried in.

We must make some fundamental changes. We can’t have a society of extremely wealthy and extremely poor. People need a quality of life from cradle to grave that is satisfying and can provide opportunities for secure futures for ourselves and our families. Corporations need to contribute to the societal structure that feeds their wallets.

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Coal miner’s daughter runs for Senate to represent the people

Paula Swearengin

Editor’s note: Paula Jean Swearengin is challenging U.S. Senator Joe Manchin in the 2018 primary Senatorial election in West Virginia. Her campaign, which stands on the needs of the people of West Virginia for clean water, healthcare, education, and a safe environment, has significance for workers everywhere. The following is a statement from Paula Swearengin.

I am a native of West Virginia. I’m a coal miner’s daughter, granddaughter, niece and stepdaughter. As a child, I felt a deep sense of pride in our state’s coal industry. West Virginia coal powered a nation. West Virginia and Appalachia have sacrificed with their blood for this nation.

But I’ve also seen what happens when we let coal barons loot our land and pollute our water. I’ve seen some of the most beautiful mountains in the world blown up. I’ve been to funerals caused by black lung. I’ve seen friends and family sickened. I’ve seen and smelled poisoned water.

We are family, we are friends, we are neighbors, and we are workers. We’re not self-serving politicians or out-of-state industry executives. No one’s asking for a handout. We’re saying our mothers and fathers worked hard, and we will too, but not at the cost of our children’s lives and not so someone else can get rich off our toil. The last time I talked to Senator Joe Manchin and told him about our polluted water and our families dying because of coal, he was more worried about serving coal barons than our children.

I’m ready to fight back. I’m ready to make sure every West Virginian has healthcare as a right. I’m ready to raise the education standard so our kids can only find good jobs, but so they can start families in West Virginia and create more jobs for our state.

The question we face today is: What are we going to do when the coal is gone? And make no mistake it’s going. No one has given us an answer that doesn’t require the sacrifice of our health and our environment.

I believe our future is in building a 21st-century, clean economy. I’m ready to move our state to be a leader in renewable energy.

We have to depend on each other to build a future that is worthy of our children. I plan on primarying Joe Manchin for his U.S. Senate seat in 2018, and I hope you stand with me.

You can’t deport this problem

West Virginians tell Senator Joe Manchin to support refugees.

Editor’s note: Below we print, with permission, excerpts from an article which appeared in the journal Facing South: A Voice for a Changing South in March 2017.

By J.W. Randolph

What a nightmare.

[In March 2017], U.S. Immigration and Customs enforcement busted into a taco place in Raleigh County, West Virginia, as if this were Nazi Germany. Three men were arrested and face deportation, one of whom is married to a West Virginia resident and has been in the state for 20 years—and more importantly, each of whom is a human being who was simply trying to make it through the workday.

Perhaps this quote from “a local resident” represents the mentality of folks who think that sending brown people away will solve their economic problems: “[It] needs to be done, a lot of young folks need a job and why can’t they get that job.”

Raleigh County is about 1 percent Hispanic or Latino. According to the American Community Survey, there are 502 individuals who self-identify as “Hispanic/Latino” and are of “Mexican” descent in all of Raleigh County. If every one of those 502 non-“folks” was A) a working-age adult, B) employed, C) employed at a place where a “folk” could go work, D) undocumented, E) round up and deported at taxpayer expense, and then F) a young person “from Raleigh County” walked right into that job, it would impact the unemployment rate by less than 1 percentage point.

Kids in Raleigh County can’t get a job because most of West Virginia’s politicians have treated coal like a religious idol.

The coal industry has eliminated half its jobs in less than a decade for West Virginia counties in Central Appalachia. That isn’t because of workers of a particular descent, but because the coal seams are deeper, thinner, and of a worse quality—and the jobs are increasingly mechanized.

Life expectancy in Raleigh County is five years less than the national average. About one in five adults over 25 in the Beckham, West Virginia area don’t have a high school diploma.

There is real economic anxiety in our region and country, but we cannot and should not racism our way out of the problems that our country faces. You can’t deport this problem.

I am grateful to know and follow the lives of so many amazing people across Appalachia working to solve many of the problems that are inherent in America, but also many of the problems specific to our region which has never really gotten back from the coal industry what we put in.

Here is to a better future for our home.

J.W. Randolph is a husband and father who grew up in the hills of East Tennessee.

Water shutoffs to another 18,000 households

From a Facebook post by the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization

DETROIT, MI — In April, the Detroit Mayor and water department announced their decision to shutoff water to another 18,000 households, mostly poor people. A community research study led by We the People of Detroit found that homes where water was shutoff had a 1.5 times increase in water-related illnesses among patients who sought help at Henry Ford Health System. This is the making of a public health crisis.

A coalition of social justice groups is calling on the Mayor and the Detroit Health Department to deal with the outbreak. Our elected officials have a responsibility to address this matter, stop massive shutoffs on people too poor to pay high rates and institute a Water Affordability Plan based on 2% of income for water customers in poverty.

Water shutoffs to another 18,000 households
Inhumane treatment of immigrant women and children is America’s shame

From the Editors

Journalist Sharon Lerner recently reported for The Intercept on letters she got from immigrant women describing the cruel and degrading treatment they and their children received upon entering the US and being detained, either by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Lerner writes that “Obama’s family detention camps were strongly condemned for their inhumane conditions,” and that things have gotten worse under Trump.

ICE’s South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas is one of three ICE facilities that house women and children in the US. The government pays CoreCivic, a private company, $12.6 million per month to run the center. Women held at Dilley reported that the water smells and tastes bad, and sometimes makes them ill. Lights may be left on at night, making it hard to sleep. The restrooms lack privacy. Medical care is inadequate. Kids come out of Dilley sick with stomach and upper respiratory illnesses.

The women also wrote of their experience in the “hieleras” (“iceboxes”) where they were detained by CBP right after crossing the border. There they were kept in frigid temperatures. “My daughter was purple from how cold she felt. They wouldn’t give me any blankets. Her lips and her hands and feet were all purple,” one mother wrote. Women were separated from their children and not allowed to see them. Guards told one woman they would put her children up for adoption.

Women said that they and their children often did not receive enough to eat or drink at the hieleras. The bathrooms were filthy and smelled. Many said they were denied access to the bathroom, and soiled themselves as a result. “This is your punishment for coming here,” a guard told one woman.

A woman wrote that entering the US had always been her dream, but the day she entered “was the saddest and ugliest day I could have imagined.”

Is this the America we want? Surely this torture of human beings does not reflect the true morals of the American people. And the assault on the human rights of our immigrant brothers and sisters is an attack on all of us. If we allow a section of people to lose their rights, then everyone’s rights are in danger. Our only hope as a people today lies in unity with our fellow workers. We must not allow ourselves to be divided by the rich and the powerful.

We’ve got a world to win!

Editor’s note: The following excerpts are from a May Day speech by Ethel Long-Scott given to the ILWU, Local 10, in San Francisco, CA.

By Ethel Long-Scott

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — I bring you greetings from the Women’s Economic Agenda Project! I’m going to talk about advancing from a MOMENT OF RESISTANCE to a MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM. I don’t have to tell you what a hell of an attack is being waged on all of us workers.

The history of May Day is about how men and women in different parts of the world stepped forward to lead a class of exploited people, and how they understood the absolute necessity of the unity of the poor — across EVERY line that usually divides us.

Injustices are everywhere. Public services should benefit everybody! But our two-party political system has been captured by corporate money. President Trump’s proposed huge tax cuts for the wealthy, budget cuts, and austerity for everyone else and his savaging of the Affordable Care Act equals government of, by and for the billionaires.

And now — guess what! Capitalism is breaking down. Its contract of paying workers enough to purchase the products of their labor cannot be sustained when humans are replaced by robots. Because capitalism is dying, the society built upon it is being shaken apart. We’ve got government by corporate America determined to preserve their wealth at our expense.

We are operating under 21st century fascism. Fascism is when corporations take over the government and run it for their benefit instead of for “We the People.” The billionaires and corporations need fascism to steal our public assets by privatizing public resources. It is actually a corporate dictatorship.

Here’s some hope. All these attacks are generating a new social force. The dispossessed-marginalized people are being forced out of the economy, and are growing daily as technology replaces human labor. The revolutionary changes in the economy are creating a new equality of poverty that requires class unity. We may be different colors, genders, cultures, but we are all under attack. We can’t win if we fight each other and ignore the real enemy. Our government should benefit ordinary people, not the fortunate wealthy. It will take the united work of all struggling marginalized workers behind a new vision of an economy that works for all of us to win this fight.

Our vision is putting the robots that are killing capitalism to work on behalf of “We the People,” rather than more profits for the wealthy. The way to do this is to energize the rising new social force. This will be the fight of our lifetime, but we can do it! For the first time, it is possible to unite a section of the working class politically that can in turn influence broader sections of society in a fight for a cooperative reorganization of society. The wonders new electronic tools can create an amazing abundance but it requires a major transformation in our thinking about how best to take advantage of them.

We need to go forward from a Moment of Resistance to a Movement for Freedom! Freedom from Want, Freedom from Hunger, Freedom from Homelessness, Freedom from Trafficking, Freedom from Racism, Freedom from Violence. We’ve got a world to win!

Justice for teen killed by Texas police

Fifteen-year old Jordan Edwards was killed by Texas police, who opened fire on a car of kids leaving a party. The boys in the car saw smoke coming from Jordan’s head.

In May, an officer was charged with murder. However, the family’s lawyer reminds the community that he is not yet convicted. The attack on Black youth nationwide, and others, by police is not separate from the attack on immigrant families and other sections of the working class. All of these struggles are part of the same struggle against an oppressive system that threatens all of us.

Whether we are fighting hunger, lack of housing, police killings, or deportations, we must stand up whenever one of us is attacked. We must demand justice for Jordan Edwards.

— The Editors
The March for Science: Where do we go from here?

By Irving W. Wainer, Ph.D., DHC

WASHINGTON, DC — On April 22, 1,000,000+ scientists and supporters joined the March for Science in 600 events in 50 states and 66 countries (into@marchfora science.com). Most returned one week later to join the People’s Climate March. For many scientists these were their first steps into political protest. Brought to the marches by proposed cuts in science funding and the growing anti-science environment, we were determined to take a stand for science, humanity and our planet. It was a pleasure and an honor to join my colleagues and friends.

On May 5, an appropriations bill funding the US government for the rest of fiscal year 2017 was signed into law. The $1.1 trillion bill included a $2 billion increase in the National Institutes of Health’s budget and none of the major cuts to science funding that inspired the March for Science. Did we win? No, the appropriations bill only funds the US government until September 30, 2017. The proposed cuts in science funding were in the 2018 fiscal budget, so the struggle has only been postponed for a few months.

While the fight for science has to continue on many fronts, a key area is the defense of the climate change research and basic science in the EPA. Trump’s 2018 budget proposes a 31% decrease in EPA funding, which would decimate the agency. It is vital to protect the EPA’s budget; however, it is perhaps more important to look at what is happening to science at the EPA. In addition to removing climate change information from the EPA website, EPA scientists are being silenced and threatened. Scientific papers are now reviewed internally to ensure that they conform to the government’s stated view on climate change. The makeup of the EPA’s Board of Scientific Counselors is going to be changed. This board reviews scientific work and evaluates the scientists performing this work. The appointment of climate change deniers to this board will destroy objective science within the EPA, threaten the jobs of EPA scientists, set a precedent for scientific performance reviews throughout the government, and endanger the academic peer review process.

It will not be easy to protect basic research at the EPA or anywhere else. Our current economic system has little use for the development of ideas that do not directly create profit or, even worse, expose its destructive nature. But this is what we must do if we are to save our profession and help save our planet. We need to develop an analysis of what is happening to basic science in a dying capitalist system and what it can become in a world based upon economic and social justice. We need to understand what role we can and must play in the struggle for social change and how to unite with this movement. The March for Science was the first step, now we must continue the journey to defend and expand science.

‘Without justice there can be no love’

Editor’s Note: Janice Jo Lee’s album, Sing Hey, begins with three deep breaths, as if she’s thinking through what she has to say before launching into a kind of slam-sung poem of tough self-talk. That opener, “All the Times You Were Silent,” kicks off a seamless and stunning mix of soulful folk, blues and hip hop about struggling to pay the bills, standing up for one’s self and fighting for justice and community.

Known for her music, poetry and theatrical work in Kitchener, Ontario, Lee offered great insight into her work when she spoke with the People’s Tribune’s Danny Alexander.

PT: Why do you focus on social justice?

Janice Jo Lee: When we talk about social justice, we are talking about society, which for me is made up of the relationships between people—friendships.

I believe strongly in what bell hooks says, that without justice there can be no love. If you love me, and I love you, we must be dedicated to do the work to build bridges across our differences so that they do not become issues. This is what I write about in my music, the struggles of loving the people around you.

PT: And music’s role?

Lee: Music can transcend words because you feel music in your body, in your ears, in your head, in your heart, in your chest. There’s so much joy in music, and I think that’s necessary to prioritize as we build communities. To remember why we’re doing this. It is very celebratory.

PT: Many of our readers have suffered from the poisoning of their water supply, and you sing about this subject. What inspired it?

Lee: The song is called “Oil in the Grand.” It’s a new song. It will be on my new album Ancestor Song. My song is directly tied to the oil spill in Michigan.

There’s a pipeline that crosses the Grand River called line 9. It will be carrying diluted bitumen from the tar sands in Alberta all the way across Southern Ontario to Montreal. It crosses our watershed in Waterloo Region, the Grand River. It crosses Six Nations Treaty territory. And there has been a lot of organizing around stopping this pipeline and the reverse of its flow.

PT: Your album begins with a kind of political toolbox, but climaxes with some gorgeous pop music, like the wonderful “40 km to Pickle Lake.” How did you see it fitting together?

Lee: My intention with the album was to put the songs I think are the most urgent at the front. Organizing, politics and education is the means, and living a fulfilled joyous wonderful life full of friendship is the ends.

“Pickle Lake” [a song Lee wrote about a time in her life when she had to walk all day to reach a store] ends with a sing-along on the oohs. I’m a folk musician. I want everyone to sing along always. It’s a love lullaby for friendship…

My art is embedded in my community. Building relationships takes time, building trust takes time. I think if we were able to communicate and not be afraid about what we feel, be patient and understanding with each other instead of suppressing our feelings, we could be so much closer.

Janice Jo Lee. PHOTOS/(TOP) HANNAH MARIE, (BOTTOM) STEFAN CHIRILA
We have a right to healthcare

‘The moral argument that we cannot cut poor people off from healthcare to lower taxes for wealthy investors has united people across the political spectrum.’

By David Apsey, DDS and Maureen D. Taylor, MWRO

The USA is rapidly approaching a decision point regarding healthcare. There is a growing consensus among American workers across the political spectrum that we all have the right to healthcare.

The private property holders don’t want any part of this since workers are no longer needed to carry out production. Private property class interests dictate that they cut costs without regard for the deadly consequences for working class families. Tom Price, Health and Human Services secretary, has proposed policies that are estimated to cause 45,000 preventable deaths every year, up from 29,000 currently due to lack of access to health care.

The polarity has been fueled by the corporate plans to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act (ACA) with the American Health Care Act (AHCA) and wipe 24 million Americans off Medicaid by 2028, resulting in an 85% increase in the uninsured while cutting taxes for the wealthy by $800 billion by 2028. Medicaid is the state and federally sponsored (nationalized) health insurance program for poor and disabled people which also stabilizes hospital systems and pharmaceutical corporations. It is a lower quality plan of a two-tiered health care system. Most working people get employer insurance.

In response to the proposed Medicaid cuts, workers confronted their Representatives in "town hall" meetings all over the country to tell them what they are doing is immoral and the consequences would be clear in the 2018 midterm elections. The story was hardly covered in the media due to the explosive and unanticipated nature of this effective resistance.

The ACA was never a good plan for health care. Twenty-eight million Americans were left uninsured and although the Medicaid expansion helped approximately 15 million Americans gain insurance, premiums for private plans increased and services were reduced, leaving people with higher copays and fees. After the contentious 2016 elections, people are realizing they will have to fight for what they need. Health care promises of "better coverage and lower costs" were met with the reality of private health finance. When people are added, costs rise; to cut costs, people must be kicked out. American workers who got on Medicaid due to the ACA are not being cut kindly to losing that insurance. The moral argument that we cannot cut poor people off from healthcare to lower taxes for wealthy investors has united people across the political spectrum.

Everything makes it clear that the USA has plenty of resources to care for everyone. We have excellent quality hospitals with empty beds, plenty of well-trained professionals, superb research and our spending is more than adequate. There is no alternative anymore to fighting forward. Demanding government nationalization of health insurance in the interests of workers’ healthcare is our marching orders. Everybody In, Nobody Out!! HR 676—Expanded and Improved Medicare for All—is the solution.

An untold story of poverty

By Jan Lightfoot

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO — Too many of us who are lacking money are afraid and ashamed to stand up and build a country of liberties. In a society that teaches that money is God, it is embarrassing to admit you lack money to pay the rent. In fact if there was a call to “help pay rent” for families, too many people would have too much dignity to admit they need help. Yet rents can be as much as $1,000 a month or more.

Our government tells us there are only about 41 million out of 320 million people who cannot afford the 30 items of basic needs. And the newspapers do not get more advertisers by telling their readers the truth. Even advocates for the poor often see no reason to combat the falsehoods. They tell you when three out of ten children do not have enough to eat, that they are warm enough, or to work on a computer. That is three too many.

There is no reason why all persons should not have an equal share of the creator’s gifts. Yet the government of King Trump has reduced the amount of heat and electricity aid to children’s families from say $645, to $200 a year. People need to stand up and realize it’s not their fault that they are badly paid, and that the minimum wage is not a livable amount. There is a real income gap in America.

Half of the population of America is working for 1/2 of their real needs. This disaster is due to the employers and the owners; it’s not the employee’s fault. We cannot continue to be ashamed and remain quiet about the greed of others.

We have to build a functioning/loving government. It is time to say the truth—that nearly 4 out 5 children lack enough nourishing food to eat. We have to stop those working for a living from being badly paid.

Sharing society’s wealth is the answer to human poverty. Join our fight for an end to poverty.

Contact Jan Lightfoot at 719.465.3454

| do not know “what i am,” | all i know is that the world my parents gave me doesn’t work |
| except a worker | and i’m pretty sure the only chance that me and my fellow free-falling millennials have to keep on eating is to make the world again |
| trying to pay for groceries like you | or where my next paycheck is coming from… |
| i do not know what “race” to mark on legal forms | — Adam Gottlieb |
| means today | or what “middle class” |

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The battle for democracy in Benton Harbor, MI

From the Editors of the People's Tribune

Rev. Edward Pinkney, incarcerated for fighting the corporate giant, Whirlpool, on behalf of the poorest workers of Benton Harbor, has without fail written a monthly column for the People's Tribune for the last 15 years. This month the reverend asked the People's Tribune to say a few words about our experience participating in the Benton Harbor struggle and helping to shine a light on its political significance for all of America.

The People's Tribune met the Pinkney family (Rev. Edward and Dorothy) after the 2003 Benton Harbor uprising over the senseless police killing of the young Terrence T-shirt Shern. The uprising was a harbinger: it shook the corporate power structure in the region. It was a response to the poverty, racism, wanton police terror, murders and jailing of the youth. Underlying it was the automation and globalization that had destroyed industrial jobs and devastated this once stable working class town. Suddenly the people had no future.

Around this time, the Whirlpool Corporation (that dominates the region), along with local, state, and federal governments, run by both parties, worked together to secure the corporate takeover of the town. Once industry declined, a grand redevelopment plan began, starting with the theft of a cherished lakefront park. The aim of the plan was to turn the town into a profitable playground for the rich. It included the driving out of the poor.

This same process was occurring throughout Michigan. Gov. Rick Snyder launched an undemocratic new form of rule as part of the corporate takeover of the state. Called the Emergency Management system, state appointed “dictators” came into Michigan cities, breaking union contracts, denuding public schools and handing public assets over to corporations and speculators. Local elected officials were shoved aside. Democracy was denied. The problem the corporate government faces is that the dispossessed workers now number in the millions. The corporations have to prevent people from uniting around their common interests. The successful statewide vote to stop Michigan’s dictatorial emergency management system was a signal of the danger the corporations faced. The movement kept growing.

Rev. Pinkney warned about the growing dictatorship and his organization BANCO ran electoral campaigns to unseat Whirlpool’s people in office locally. The government lashed out arresting him on phony vote fraud charges to silence the movement. No evidence was presented at his trial, which saw the poorest of the community testify in his defense.

Today, a police state in the service of the corporations is on the rise in America to stop the movement for water, healthcare, education and other basic needs. This is why an uncompromising leader of the people like Rev. Pinkney is so key. He and the corps of leaders rising up today are leading the struggle forward. Like Rev. Pinkney, they are arousing the people with a vision of a different society. A movement of millions that is clear on where it is going cannot be stopped.

Johann Christoph Arnold

1940-2017

the 1960s, his interest in the civil rights movement led him to the American South where he worked with Martin Luther King, an experience that changed his life.

Arnold was a senior elder of the Bruderhof, a movement of Christian communist communities which originated in Germany in the 1920s. He was born in England, the country the Bruderhof fled to after being driven out of Nazi Germany because of their opposition to fascism.

As a young boy, Arnold lived with his parents in a Bruderhof community in Paraguay. There, the conditions of extreme poverty deepened his sympathy for the poor of the entire world. In 1954, he moved to New York. During

Rev. Pinkney’s lawyers speak on recent Michigan Supreme Court Order on Pinkney’s appeal:

“The Order of the Michigan Supreme Court for oral argument on whether prejudicial evidence was admitted at Pinkney’s trial and whether the statute is valid is good news. The first would get him a new trial, which they probably would not pursue because he has already served his sentence. The second would dismiss the charges.” — Hugh M. Davis

“It is clear that the Michigan Supreme Court has shown interest in the two issues it specified in the order. The first issue, involving the introduction [into the trial] of Pinkney’s political and community activities that went beyond the recall effort of the former mayor, should be of great concern to all—even to people who do not support Pinkney and are against his political and social positions. A great deal of that political and community activity was critical of local officials and a local corporation. The use of this First Amendment activity to obtain a conviction is very disturbing.” — Tim Holloway

My city Cries.

Pity lies under the Foot of the Heartless.
So much self Hatred Harassed.
Catastrophe and Carnage are the Guidelines for Modern Civilization.
Dedication to Devastation are the strongest commitments.
Actions committed against our own Leads to self Resentment.
I thought Life Matters.
Whatever happened to Aspirations of Peaceful existence.
The Reality is lives are being wasted in an instance.
Now’s the Time to Rebel against this.
I’ll lead the resistance.
Ensure every block has a Healing Corner.
Don’t Play with the Guns Concealed on Corners.

More Life Less Coroner.
The time is now for All who’s willing.
Let’s Break through these invisible Ceilings en Route to our Potential.
Its time for the Men to use their Credentials to be more positively influential.
The Change starts now.
Offsets feelings of Anguish with Acts of Love.
The Time is Now.
The Youth want to Live.
The time is Now.
Mindstate must be altered.
The time is Now.
Before the City is All cried out!

— Ollie Woods