

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

OCTOBER 2020, VOL. 47, NO. 7

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OUR COUNTRY IN CRISIS:

Justice for Breonna

Healthcare
is a right

Rent, evictions
& homelessness

#IamVanessaGuillén



Justice for
Breonna Taylor
rally, Louisville.

Photo / John Linton

Stop Trump and a police state!

Chicago rally
demands
government
provide for
people not
profits.

Photo /
Sarah-Ji Rhee



Mourners outside the Supreme Court express outrage
at Trump's haste to fill Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat.

Photo / Ed Eytan



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Welcome to the People's Tribune Digital Edition

We are doing issues in digital form because of the pandemic crisis, for financial reasons, and to facilitate the digital distribution of the People's Tribune. Please remember that we are supported entirely by donations, and we do still need your continued financial support. And please circulate this digital edition to your email lists and through social media.

As always, we welcome your feedback at www.peopletribune.org or info@peopletribune.org.

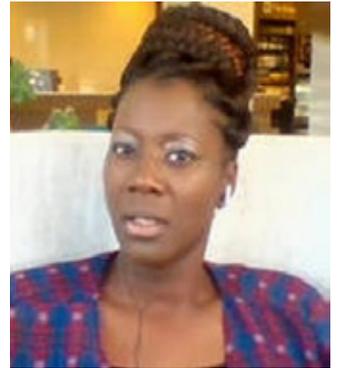
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Thank you!

Nurse condemns forced sterilizations of inmates

In this edition of the People's Tribune we continue to highlight voices fighting the assault on our lives by a system run to earn profits for corporations. Dawn Wooten, a nurse at a private immigrant detention center, put humanity first when she exposed the inhumane, illegal surgeries on women detainees who received unauthorized hysterectomies by a doctor dubbed the 'uterus collector.'

Dawn said, "[Women] come back and ask, 'Ms. Wooten, why did I have a hysterectomy?' Nobody explained. One young girl said she wouldn't have went if she knew he was collecting our uteruses. As a human, you don't treat people inhumanely. Why is nobody hearing them?" Like so many in this country who risk their jobs and livelihood, Dawn Wooten could not coexist with an inhumane system that doesn't care for ALL people. Her morality is that of millions. We can have a dictatorship by corporations or a humane America of, by and for the people. ■



Dawn Wooten

About the People's Tribune

The People's Tribune is devoted to the understanding that an economic system that doesn't feed, clothe, house, or care for its people must be and will be replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is a voice of millions of everyday people who are fighting to survive in an America in crisis. It helps build connections among these fighters and the awareness that together, we can create a whole new society and world.

Today, technology is permanently eliminating jobs. Our needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where we the people, not the corporations, own the technology and the abundance it produces. Then, everyone's needs will be provided for.

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.

Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story 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.

Designed by Mauricio Rivera / Rivera Design & Illustration

Our country in crisis: Stop Trump and a police state!

By the Editors

What little that's left of American democracy could soon be destroyed. Millions of Americans sense this. They are heartbroken by the 210,000 needless coronavirus deaths. They are shocked by the seemingly endless news reports of cops killing and brutalizing black people, and the new horror that women in immigrant detention centers are being sterilized. They are angry at the brazen effort by Trump to stack federal courts, and now the Supreme Court, replacing Ruth Bader Ginsburg — a renowned champion of women's rights and civil liberties — with an anti-civil rights conservative. They are horrified by Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacy, and by his ugly call for the vigilante Proud Boys organization to "stand by." And they are deeply concerned about Trump's repeated lies about mail ballots and his ominous suggestion that he won't leave office peacefully.

But people are standing up. Millions have already voted, often standing in line for hours to do so. Hundreds of grassroots candidates who refuse to take corporate funding are running for office. Thousands continue to take to the streets to demand housing, healthcare, and an end to police violence, most recently in nationwide protests demanding justice for Breonna Taylor. Millions understand that if the Supreme Court comes under the control of a solid bloc of extreme conservatives, that faction could destroy women's right to choose, labor rights, the Affordable Care Act, LGBTQ rights, voting rights, and all the remaining progressive legislation enacted since the New Deal — and at a time when millions face dire poverty.

This country's problems are deep and systemic. Today, a tiny handful of billionaires, the owners of the giant corporations, rule America. The richest one percent of the population owns more than the bottom 50 percent. Over decades, the ruling one percent has been moving systematically to gut democratic rights in favor of corporate rights.

While the motion toward an outright police state did not begin with the Trump administration and won't end with Trump's ouster, Trump represents a special danger. He has become the symbol of a militarized fascist movement, one backed by right-wing ideologues, and a section of extremely wealthy capitalists. Trump is now relying on this movement to stay in power, calling for "poll watchers" to act as thugs intimidating voters. Trump's ominous effort to call up the military during the George Floyd protests, his use of federal police in unmarked cars who snatched protesters off the street, and his effort to unleash police forces nationally, are more examples of the destruction of democracy and the danger of a police state.

Voting Trump out is a matter of stopping the shredding of democracy from going any farther, and setting the stage for reversing it. Trump's re-election would set back the movement of millions waging the fight for economic, environmental, and



Michigan youth fighting for change.

Photo / daymonjhartley.com

racial justice in this country. After the elections, our growing grassroots movement will keep pressing its demands for democracy and rights no matter who is president.

Voting is only one tool in the tool box of social change, but this year it's an absolutely essential one. People are already flocking to the polls, and despite waiting as much as 11 hours to vote, the sentiment is "it was worth it." Voting has become a social statement and a movement. Our goal should be not just to narrowly defeat Trump, but to trounce him and all his allies. Today, our battle cry must be the one shouted when a naval vessel comes under fire: *All hands on deck!* ■

OPPOSING A POLICE STATE

Detroit fighters against police brutality won't back down

In May, people in Detroit protested George Floyd's murder with a rally at Detroit police headquarters. These rallies continued and gave birth to the Detroit Will Breathe organization. Detroiters, including Detroit Will Breathe, have marched for justice continuously for more than 125 days. They demand justice for George Floyd and for Detroiters who have suffered from police violence and racist attacks by civilians, and for immigrants threatened by ICE raids. Marchers faced violent attacks and arrests by Detroit police officers who drove their cars into peaceful protesters and beat people with batons and shields. Detroit Will Breathe filed a lawsuit against the city over the brutality. Detroit Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib and other officials have called for public hearings to investigate the violence of the Detroit police. Below are excerpts from a People's Tribune and Tribuno del Pueblo interview with Lloyd Simpson of Detroit Will Breathe.



For over 125 days, Detroiters have marched for justice against police violence.

Photo / Detroit Will Breathe, Facebook

Lloyd Simpson: We want accountability for the police department. We want [Detroit Police Chief] James Craig to resign. We want to defund the police because the city is spending \$330 million a year on a police department when people are in a state of desperation in terms of housing, education, healthcare, and employment. That's an indication that city officials are not interested in addressing the root causes of crime. Sixty percent of police calls require social workers and healthcare professionals, not an armed response by police whose only method of de-escalation is violence.

...We have something called Project Green Light, which forces businesses to pay to have high definition cameras installed for the purposes of mass surveillance. And so we've been on a campaign to ban facial recognition in all forms, and particularly a campaign against Project Green Light, because in Detroit, you've had at least three instances of a mis-identification with facial recognition technology, because the

truth is, the algorithms are racist. They can't correctly identify anybody. In fact, out of James Craig's own mouth, the technology is 96% inaccurate...In a city that's 80% black, the use of facial recognition which is racially biased, is only meant to criminalize black people. That is just unacceptable.

...[Under Operation Legend, the federal government sent agents and money to Detroit and other cities for law enforcement.] Here, they're hemming up a lot of young men and women on bogus gun charges, and so our jails right now are filled with people who have been unjustly arrested and imprisoned....And in a city where COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted black Americans, where people are struggling in terms of employment and economic survival and from this pandemic, the federal government is sending money for law enforcement, and that speaks volumes. James Craig is the one who requested that money....We need federal aid, not federal raids. That's what's going on here, and it's not just by the ATF and DEA in black communities, but also by ICE in our immigrant communities....We don't want that shit here. Detroit should be a sanctuary city and people should feel safe in their homes. Any federal money that is coming here should be for social services, not for law enforcement.

...People have been emboldened by this movement. Whereas people may have feared police repression before, I think the will to change our society has really overridden that, and people are emboldened with a sense of purpose and have found courage in this moment....Detroit is a prime example of the oppression that exists under racial capitalism. Police brutality is a function of that failed system. But the people here are really resilient, we're fighters and we're going to fight for justice. We're going to fight for justice not just for Ahmaud Arbery, for George Floyd, for Breonna Taylor, but also for Hakim Littleton [killed by Detroit police in July] and the people in our own city, because this is something that's universal—the police are the domestic enforcers of state power and the state serves the rich. And I think that we've reached a moment in history where people aren't going to tolerate that anymore. We need fundamental change in our society, and that's what we're fighting for. That's what I believe people are fighting for across this nation, because black liberation is universal liberation, and the fight against police brutality is the fight for black lives. ■



Photo / Detroit Will Breathe, Facebook

OPPOSING A POLICE STATE

Breonna Taylor's boyfriend speaks out

Kenneth Walker:

"Breonna was my best friend, the most important person to me on earth. And they took her. [That night there] was a loud bang at the door. We were saying who is it several times. Dead silence. . . I grabbed my gun. I let off one shot . . . I [then] never heard



Photo / Terence Faircloth

so many gun shots. Bullets everywhere. She screamed. I was holding her hand. She was bleeding. I heard people outside. I thought they was coming for help. I come outside. Guns [are] pointed at me. An officer asks was I hit by any bullets. I said, no. He said, 'that's unfortunate.' I got dragged down the street [to police headquarters]. It's cold, wet. I didn't have any socks or shoes. In my cell on the TV I hear she died. . . [Walker said police body cams showed the Swat Team in the apartment with Breonna still there. "Let's go ahead and move out. She's done," said one cop.] Breonna took care of a lot of people. It's a lot of people that need her right now, including me."

(Excerpts from CBS Video) ■

Militarized raids against immigrants: the face of dictatorship

By the **Editors**

On Oct. 5, the Border Patrol carried out its second military-style raid in two months against Byrd Camp, a No More Deaths humanitarian aid camp near Arivaca, Arizona. Twelve people who were receiving care at the camp were detained. No More Deaths is a volunteer group that tries to save immigrants crossing the Sonoran Desert from dying for lack of food, water and medical care.

In a press release, No More Deaths said the Border Patrol "descended on the camp with an armored tank, ATVs, a helicopter, and many marked and unmarked vehicles. Agents armed with assault rifles chased and terrorized those that were receiving care, all while the helicopter hovered low above them kicking up dust and debris, making it nearly impossible to see. Border patrol smashed windows, broke doors, and destroyed essential camp infrastructure as well as supplies."

#CountOnUs: Massive youth strike planned if Trump tries to steal election



Photo / Dream Defenders

[Youth organizers have launched a new platform called #CountOnUs](#)

Leaders of Dream Defenders, March for Our Lives, Sunrise Movement, and United We Dream PAC announced that their youth-led advocacy groups have come together ... to defeat Donald Trump, "protect the ballot box from corruption, and lead a massive youth strike if Trump tries to steal the election."

"We are the Dreamers who won protections for immigrants. We are the kids who took on the NRA. Our generation made Black Lives Matter a national rallying cry and the Green New Deal a political priority ... Our generation is at the forefront of the fight for democracy ... What we're building together will be crucial towards plugging young people into action who are feeling anxious about the state of our democracy, society, and planet ... Together, we're going to vote and organize like our communities and planet are at stake, because they are."

Information is by [Jessica Corbett, Common Dreams](#) ■

Meanwhile, the Trump administration in September announced a new effort to target sanctuary cities with ICE raids during October. In fact, the ICE raids have been going on almost continuously across the country for years.

In fiscal year 2019 (Oct. 1, 2018 – Sept. 30, 2019), ICE arrested about 143,000 people and deported more than 267,000. The New York Times reports that, "Since mid-July 2020, immigration agents have taken more than 2,000 people into custody from their homes, workplaces and other sites, including a post office, often after staking them out for days." Some of those deported have lived in this country for decades, and are now separated from their children.

These raids are reminiscent of the Nazis rounding up the Jews in Germany, which helped make Germany a dictatorship in the 1930s and 40s. If we allow our immigrant brothers and sisters to be dehumanized in this way, all of us will lose our humanity and we will lose any semblance of democracy. No human being is illegal! Stop deportations! Abolish ICE! ■

Trump got free health care — Why can't the rest of us?

From the **Editors**

President Trump's refusal to take responsibility for either the more than 200,000 deaths from the coronavirus or the cost of his special medical treatment after testing positive for the virus highlights everything wrong with health care in America.

The New York Times estimated that Trump's three-day stint in the hospital would have cost the average American more than \$100,000, not to mention "significant surprise bills and medical debt even after the health insurance paid its share."

With America's for-profit health care system, about 44 million people have no health insurance, and another 38 million have inadequate health insurance. This means nearly one-third of Americans don't know if they'll have medical care when they need it, such as when they get Covid.

(And Trump has been criticized for undermining the efforts to fight the virus. Cristina Hops, a nurse based in Seattle, said, "How dare he [Trump] undermine all of the work that we have done as nurses and health care providers?" She works on the frontlines helping patients battling the coronavirus, spending five weeks this summer in Miami to help a hospital cope with its flood of cases. Hops was horrified after reading a now-infamous tweet that President Donald Trump issued after he left the hospital. Trump told Americans: "Don't be afraid of Covid. Don't let it dominate your life." Hops posted a video expressing her outrage. Within days, it garnered more than 300,000 views on Tik Tok.)

"For Trump, 'socialized medicine' is bad for everyone but himself." Those were the words of U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders on October 7. The Vermont Senator pointed out that the excellent care Trump received at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center was in "a 100 percent government-funded, government-run hospital."

If Donald Trump is guaranteed quality health care free of charge, why aren't the essential workers who clean the White House entitled to free health? Why aren't all of us? ■



Mobilizing to fight the pandemic

More than 214,000 Americans have died from Covid-19 as of this writing. New cases hit a two-month high, and 10 states report record increases. On these pages we highlight demands of educators for safe schools before returning to work, and the demand for Medicare for all. In the face of government failure, several things are needed: We need a massive movement demanding a coordinated, national response to the pandemic, directed by the federal government, so that resources can be directed to where they're needed. The president should immediately invoke the Defense Production Act, so that corporations can be ordered to produce the needed protective equipment, supplies, drugs, etc. Covid drugs and vaccines should be free. And we urgently need universal health care so that all of us can have quality health care, regardless of ability to pay.

#DemandSafeSchools

Editor's note: Covid cases are spiking in many school districts; at least six teachers have died. Excerpts below are from educators on what must be done to protect our communities.

Tanya Kitts-Lewinski speaking to Kenosha school board: I am a proud Special Education Teacher and President of the Kenosha Education Association. I've been called a bully, selfish thug, and recently told I should be charged with disorderly conduct and assault for going over my 3-minute allotted time at [the

last] board meeting. Myself and our union has been completely mischaracterized. Our educators, the people entrusted to educate, care for, and love our KUSD students, have been harassed and threatened and what should be confidential information has been shared across social media with the intent to bully educators. This is not the way to treat the people who dedicate our lives to Kenosha's children. KEA continues to believe that virtual learning is the most responsible option until this virus is under control. Until we can find better ways to enforce and implement safety precautions consistently in our buildings, maintaining in-person learning is just not safe. We will keep advocating for better solutions that prioritize safety.

This article continues on the next page (left side) . . .



Tanya Kitts-Lewinski, President, Kenosha Education Association
Photo / Joe Brusky

Stacy Davis Gates, Vice President, Chicago Teachers Union:

“Public schools must prioritize the wellbeing of students, educators, and the community. A healthy school system requires long-term public investment, not corporations that offer short-term, top-down, individual solutions. When government can bailout billionaires ... we see the money exists to build a system of public education that can build the leaders we need to transform the world. Scientifically, we see the only solutions that can work must be organized at the national level by government to benefit everyone. This moment requires communities to use their political power to reopen safely and reclaim public schools to address our needs.”

(Excerpt, FB Video, Illinois Federation of Teachers) ■

Movement to win a people’s govt. takes hold in WV

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from remarks made by Katey Lauer, co-chair of West Virginia Can’t Wait, during the Oct. 10 Unite Our Fight online rally for West Virginia US Senate candidate Paula Jean Swearengin.



Katey Lauer

West Virginia Can't Wait [is] a young and growing movement out to win a people's government.

Two years ago, a group of West Virginians got together to answer this question: What would it look like to use the vehicle of elections to build a political machine in West Virginia strong enough to take on the wealthy, good old boys club and win? This isn't just a question for West Virginians this year. This is the question of our times...Every West Virginian is working two or three jobs to get by, or knows someone who is, while stockholders make record profits.

...[First,] in every action we take, we must remember that our fight is with the wealthy, good old boys club and not with each other. Other working people are not our enemies... When we fight each other, we lose. When we fight for each other, we win. ... [Second,] we must put our might into building alternative democratic institutions that can contend for power and win. And those two things are exactly what we're doing in West Virginia. Two years in, 101 candidates, including Paula Jean, have signed on to a pledge to reject corporate PAC money, to never cross a picket line and to never hide from a debate. Half of those same candidates also signed on to a people's platform that we call the New Deal for West Virginia. It contains an education plan that was written by West Virginia educators, a farming plan that was written by West Virginia farmers, a plan for people in recovery written by people in recovery. It's the most ambitious, most bottom-up, most bold platform in West Virginia history. ... This November, we'll get our first slate of West Virginia Can't Wait candidates into office... ■

West Virginia Senate campaign demands basic human rights

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from remarks by West Virginia US Senate candidate Paula Jean Swearengin and Kentucky State Rep. Charles Booker during an Oct. 10 online rally for Swearengin’s campaign. Booker came close to winning the Democratic nomination for US Senate in Kentucky earlier this year in an effort to challenge Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell.

Paula Jean Swearengin:

We need a diverse economy. We need long-term solutions to the addiction epidemic. Everybody deserves healthcare. And we were begging for those things prior to this pandemic. This is about having people that are actually going to serve us. We have seen a movement of ordinary people running for office across the country, because we wanted a government that serves us, of the people by the people, for the people. The bulk of our incumbents are servants to corporations.



Paula Jean Swearengin

Charles Booker:

Paula Jean, although I didn't win at the ballot box, my victory is seeing you stand up and speak the truth. You speak for folks that don't get listened to...

We're being hit hard, especially all across Appalachia where infrastructure was already crumbling. Folks were already hanging on by a thread. ...In Kentucky, similar to West Virginia, we have a lot of health issues... and we need that relief [that the Senate has refused to pass] so that we can get through this time and then do the deeper work, because we've still got a lot of poverty...



Charles Booker

Swearengin: The people in pain should be in front of the power... We have a whole slate of candidates from the local level here to the federal level... We're just ordinary people. And this is a long game for all of us, no matter what happens with this election, we keep on changing the conversation, changing the political dynamic, and making sure we put the government back into the hands of the people.

Booker: That's right. We're doing the work to make democracy mean something... We're not asking for much, we just want...

Swearengin: Basic human rights from the hood to the holler.

Booker: From the hood to the holler. That's right. ■

Other speakers included Cori Bush, Nina Turner, Amy Vilela, Kaylen Barker, Mary Ann Claytor, Andrew Yang and others.

Carrol Fife: a candidate who puts people before profit

By Kari Napoli

“There’s nothing more radical and critical to transforming the world than a radical imagination.” — Ibram X. Kendi

OAKLAND CA — I first heard Carroll Fife speak at the Renter’s Assembly held in Alameda in 2017. Charismatic, like so many local leaders destined for the national stage, Carroll had something unique and hopeful: she had actionable ideas. Her moral compass due north and her gift for public speaking unmeasurable, she did not merely bemoan problems and corruption. Carroll presented actual solutions.

Carroll Fife, Executive Director of Alliance for California Community Empowerment, gained national attention with her recent campaign, Moms for Housing, where four homeless women and their children took possession of a long-empty, bank-owned house. The statement was clear: the age of property possessing more value than people must end.

Carroll stood front and center of that home in anticipation of the police who came in armored tanks to remove the unarmed women and return the house to the bank. And as trolls flooded the internet with cries of justice, supporters like myself saw something we have long awaited as embittered Democrats. I saw a woman who stood up for us not only with her body, her reputation, but also with her radical imagination and courage.

Battling corrupt laws such as California’s Costa Hawkins [that limits rent control] and fighting for protections like Measure Y which afforded Just Cause Eviction Protections to more Oaklanders, Carroll Fife knows the political landscape just as well as she knows the methods of activism.

Now running for Oakland City Council, her brand of Democracy has been coined “thuggish” by those who sit comfortably in their homes, blessed with some semblance of security. As we watch America fall into a wave of fascism, there is no better time for candidates like Carrol who understand the value of protest. If asking that every American be housed makes one a thug, I suspect many of us are prepared to adopt the misguided criticism. ■



Carroll Fife, a Moms4housing organizer running for Oakland City Council demands housing as a human right.

‘My Look at Family Homelessness in America’

In her forthcoming book, Dismazed and Driven: My Look at Family Homelessness in America, Diane Nilan describes how she hit the road in 2005 to chronicle stories of invisible families and youth experiencing homelessness in non-urban areas across America. For fifteen years, crisscrossing the country in her small van, she filmed scores of interviews of parents and kids. The excerpts below are from one of these interviews. Her book will be available soon. — The Editor



Diane Nilan

One woman I had the honor of meeting just days before she died was “Alicia,” a mother of 3 young children. They had stayed at the Hope Haven shelter in DeKalb, IL run by a longtime friend of mine, Lesly Wicks. She asked if I’d film an interview with Alicia so her children would have a memory. Yikes! Of course, yes, but the scope of this interview was far from what I imagined doing.

I connected with my friend Gary, the shelter manager. We went in and he introduced me to Alicia, “Derrick,” a friend of hers from the shelter, and her kids, ages 10, 6, and 3. The guys took the kids somewhere so we could have privacy.

Alicia sat on the couch, hooked up to oxygen. I tried to explain as gently as possible what I thought we should do, not having any clue how this was supposed to be done. I knew I needed to hold it together until I got out of her apartment.

This determined mother had used her short time at the shelter to put the pieces back together after personal crises. She earned her GED, became certified as a nursing assistant, and got a job. Bingo! They moved out, all looking good. About two months before I met her, Alicia called Lesly and said she was having trouble breathing. Lesly urged her to call the doctor and offered whatever support she could give.

Alicia’s life swirled out of control. The doctor visit, heart surgery, discovery of inoperative cancer brought changes she never expected. Was this trauma related? I can only suspect yes. The impact on her already-traumatized children agonized Alicia and all who knew and loved them. Alicia’s sister lived in town and was willing to take the children.

Alicia struggled to talk, especially when speaking about her children. The entire interview lasted less than 10 minutes.

When Gary, Derrick and the kids came back, I left. It was a beautiful day for a drive in the country. I hadn’t selected a route so I just headed in a general direction, north and west. I was numb. Alicia and her kids’ faces stuck in my mind. This interview took a toll on me. Life took a toll on Alicia. And her family. She died about a week later. ■

‘A Homes Guarantee’: the difference between life and death

Editor's note: These are excerpts from an interview with Tiana Caldwell by the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center.

“My name is Tiana Caldwell and I am a leader in Kansas City tenants. My family and I were evicted from our home after I received my second diagnosis and was actively in treatment for ovarian cancer. Like so many other people, I was forced to choose between protecting my health or staying in my home. I chose to live, and we were evicted.



Tiana Caldwell and son.

“For me, like for many, my struggle began long before I was even born. We are descendants of slaves, whose labor was exploited for property owners’ profit. My grandparents fought for the US in wars overseas and did not benefit from the GI bill. My struggle is the product of the horror caused by centuries of racial capitalism.

“We live in the richest country in the world, so why do so many people end up experiencing homelessness? It's almost impossible to imagine a different way than having to stress about paying rent every month. But there's another way, and we have imagined it. It's a ‘homes guarantee’.

Humanity lay dismembered
In knitted satchels
Strewn along pavement
Thrown from the buildings
Families kicked out,
their apartments removed
No body-parking on grass
Homes broken like sleep
Like the masses of those
Dotting the streets and doorways

— Ayat Bryant-Jalal

“A group of grassroots leaders have knocked on doors, organized our neighbors and developed our vision for housing justice, because we who have suffered from housing injustice are best equipped to imagine a different world, and to build the power to win it. A ‘homes guarantee’ would mean I wouldn't have to sacrifice vital medication to pay my rent. It would mean peace of mind because we wouldn't have the violent threat of homelessness, but could live with dignity. We could dream of a bright future for our son. It could be the difference between life and death.” ■

This painting by California artist Luis Garcia shows a typical vehicular dweller's home. Thousands of people have lost their homes and have taken refuge in their vehicles. Often these homes are impounded and lost.

We can build a society without poverty and fear

By the Editors

The government’s response to the pandemic and poverty has not been enough. The people need things like income, housing and health care now. Instead the government has given trillions to the wealthy and corporations, and a pittance to the people. The fact that the government could find trillions to give to business clearly implies we could meet everyone’s needs all the time, not just in a crisis.

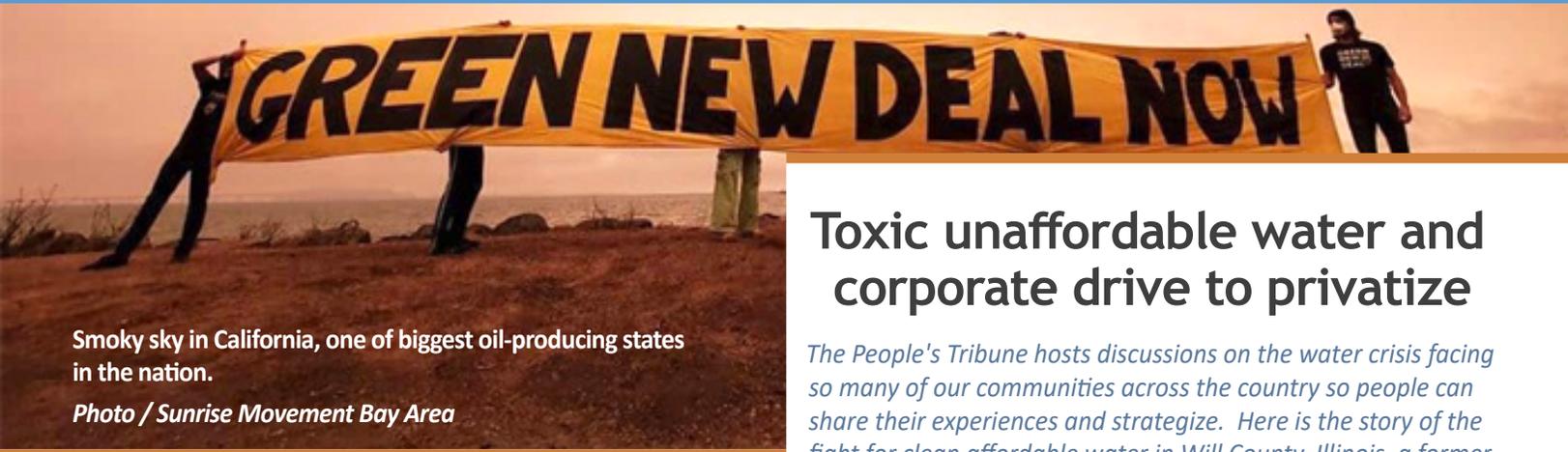
Even before the pandemic, jobs were already vanishing because of automation, and this will continue. The current crisis makes clear that we have to have a government and society that will take care of the people. The billionaires who control the wealth and the government are standing in the way of this.

Although our true nature as human beings is to unite and care for one another, capitalism has taught us to compete, to fear each other, to believe there is not enough to go around. Yet as a country, we already have the wealth to have a society free of poverty and fear.

In a 1967 speech, Martin Luther King Jr. said when you question why there are so many poor people in America, “you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth. When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. And I’m simply saying that more and more, we’ve got to begin to ask questions about the whole society...”

Today millions of people are asking questions about the whole society, and demanding that the government serve the people, not billionaires and corporations. We can make that happen if we keep pushing forward against the wealthy few who block our path.





Smoky sky in California, one of biggest oil-producing states in the nation.

Photo / Sunrise Movement Bay Area

‘We will not stop fighting for climate justice’ says Sunrise Movement

By [People’s Tribune correspondent](#), California

California, indeed the whole west coast, has been suffering from a triple whammy of health and environmental conditions: drought, extreme heat, and fires with smoky skies. Add COVID-19 and we can be neither inside nor outside. The temperature reached 121 degrees in Woodland hills and 130 in Death Valley. Wildfires have already burned over four million acres of California this year, making this year’s blazes the most widespread on record. A Stanford professor predicted there would be at least 1,200 additional deaths and 4,800 ER visits in California from wildfire smoke between August 1 and September 10.

Many environmental organizations, including the youth-led Sunrise Movement Bay Area, want California Governor Newsom to use his executive authority to stop all new oil and gas permitting. In September, protesters rallied at the California State Capitol demanding Newsom take action on climate change and racial justice.

Sunrise Movement says: “California is one of the biggest oil-producing states in the nation, while CO2 emissions from oil and gas extraction fuel the unprecedented heatwaves that started these fires in the first place. Meanwhile, as millions of Californians are sheltering in place next to toxic gas and oil drilling sites, @gavinnewsom has continued to issue new permits for fracking and drilling during the pandemic. So much of what we’ve experienced this year are the exact impacts that climate scientists have been warning us about for decades. . . We CANNOT afford four more years of Trump and a Congress that fails to act in the interests of its people. If you have been feeling helpless and overwhelmed, you are not alone. But you don’t have to act alone either. As a movement of young people, there is still time to change the course we’re on. Our movement will not give up. We will not stop fighting for climate justice. Fight with us: vote.sunrisemovement.org” ■

Toxic unaffordable water and corporate drive to privatize

The People's Tribune hosts discussions on the water crisis facing so many of our communities across the country so people can share their experiences and strategize. Here is the story of the fight for clean affordable water in Will County, Illinois, a former steel and manufacturing hub by Suzanna Ibarra. Please email info@peopletribune.org if you have a story to share.

"We're running out of water here in Will County where I live... it's estimated in the next 10 years, the aquifer will be completely dried up. There's literally nobody I know here that drinks the water...the issue is just so huge.... In University Park, after more than a year and a half of detecting high levels of lead...and trucking in bottled water... people still don't have clean water. The mayor turns her head. It's also an area that has a very high number of minorities. The other issue is they're trying to privatize water in an area of Joliet... [but residents] managed to not have it privatized by the same company that was poisoninmarting the people at University Park . . . it's going to cost between \$33 million to \$3 billion, which [will] triple water costs in Joliet.

"When I was running for city council two years ago, water — to be able to have clean water — was a passion of mine. ... When I talked about the issues [in University Park], water being one, people said, ‘Let me show you.’ I have pictures of them filling up a jug to show me that their water was literally brown. [They said] they complained and complained...[but it] fell on deaf ears. The company Aqua ... [switched the water over knowing] they were poisoning the water. It's the same company that tried to privatize water in Fairmont, which is the poorest area economically. Those residents fought it. They had an environmental commission that did studies [but] the decks were stacked. [Also, when they change] the main pipes in the streets...there's a risk of having those [old] pipes interfere with the pipes they're laying and residents once again, [can] be poisoned, even more.

"Honestly [in Joliet] we need to find someone qualified who we can get ready to run against the mayor. I think our best chance to have clean water in Joliet is to replace the mayor." ■

Communities across the country are paying for toxic water.

Photo / Government



Voter Suppression: We will not be deterred

By Rita Valenti

ATLANTA, GA — We here in Georgia are taking plans to vote very seriously. From over a 100-year history of Jim Crow voter suppression to the recent memory of a stolen election in 2018, we will not be deterred!

Just two years ago our current Governor Kemp rigged his election victory over Stacy Abrams through a tsunami of voter suppression. Georgia was among 21 States that raced to pass restrictive voting legislation after gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013. With preclearance rendered impotent, restrictive voter ID laws, voter purges, and massive precinct closures took hold even beyond the South. These were the conditions in 2018. The 2020 elections face a new set of complications: voting during an uncontrolled pandemic.

All 50 States determine their own voting procedures. Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Indiana, with a combined 34 million voters, will not allow absentee ballots for the reason of COVID-19. Millions who applied for absentee ballots are still anxiously awaiting them. Some states require absentee ballots to be received by November 3. Others permit ballots to be postmarked by the election day and received anywhere from 3 to 14 days after.

Multiple lawsuits are in process about deadlines to count absentee ballots. The New Georgia Project won a case to extend the vote count by three days after Election Day so long as ballots are postmarked by the 3rd. But that was reversed. Now only ballots received by 7pm on November 3 will be counted. Undaunted, the response to defend the democratic right to vote has been unprecedented.

Never have so many organizations moved so rapidly to mobilize for voting. Recruitment and training of new poll workers is ubiquitous. From offering water, snacks and a watchful protective eye to long lines of voters, to certification as poll workers trained to troubleshoot machines and/or registration issues, thousands of people have signed up in defense of democracy.

The technologies used to spew misinformation about the vote are now also in the hands of thousands who refuse to concede the electoral arena to a blatantly fascist agenda. This election is a continuation of massive social uprisings over the dual violence of the pandemic and police murders underscored by extreme economic insecurity. The follow up and follow through proceeding Election Day will forge even deeper and broader bonds of unity conscious that *“Nobody is Free Until Everybody is Free.”* (Fannie Lou Hamer). ■



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#IamVanessaGuillén

Spc. Vanessa Guillén, a 20-year-old U.S. Army, soldier went missing April 22. Vanessa had told her family she was being sexually harassed by a soldier at Fort Hood in Texas, where she was stationed.



Vanessa's remains were found on July 1 near a river. Spc. Aaron Robinson was suspected of bludgeoning her to death. As police confronted him, he took his own life. A congressional delegation is looking into a string of deaths and disappearances connected to the Army base, including Vanessa's murder. The public has shown its concern and love for Vanessa by painting murals and demanding justice. A national campaign #IamVanessaGuillén was launched — a continuation of the #MeToo movement on violence towards women. Vanessa's family marched in Austin before lawyers introduced a bill (#IamVanessaGuillen) to allow service members to file claims of sexual harassment to a third-party agency instead of through the military. Lupe Guillén, Vanessa's 16 year-old- sister, said Vanessa was afraid of retaliation if she made a report. "We still don't know the truth," she told a crowd outside the capitol. "The Army is trying to cover this up. My sister, a woman and a human being, is not a sexual object." She hopes the world will know that "the base's lack of safety and respect" is killing its soldiers, and that its leadership is "toxic."

Excerpted from article by Gloria Sandoval and Laura Garcia, tribunodelpueblo.org ■

Long voting line in Georgia. Some voters waited 11 hours.

Photo / Twitter