

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

April 2021, VOL. 48, NO. 3

peopletribune.org



Photo / Barbara Ingalls

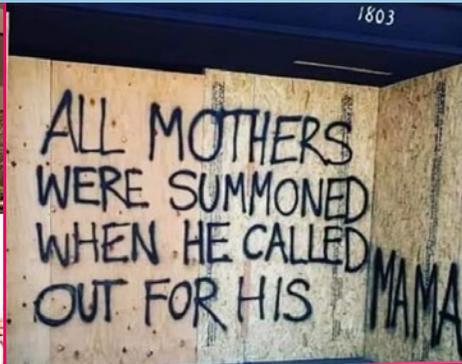
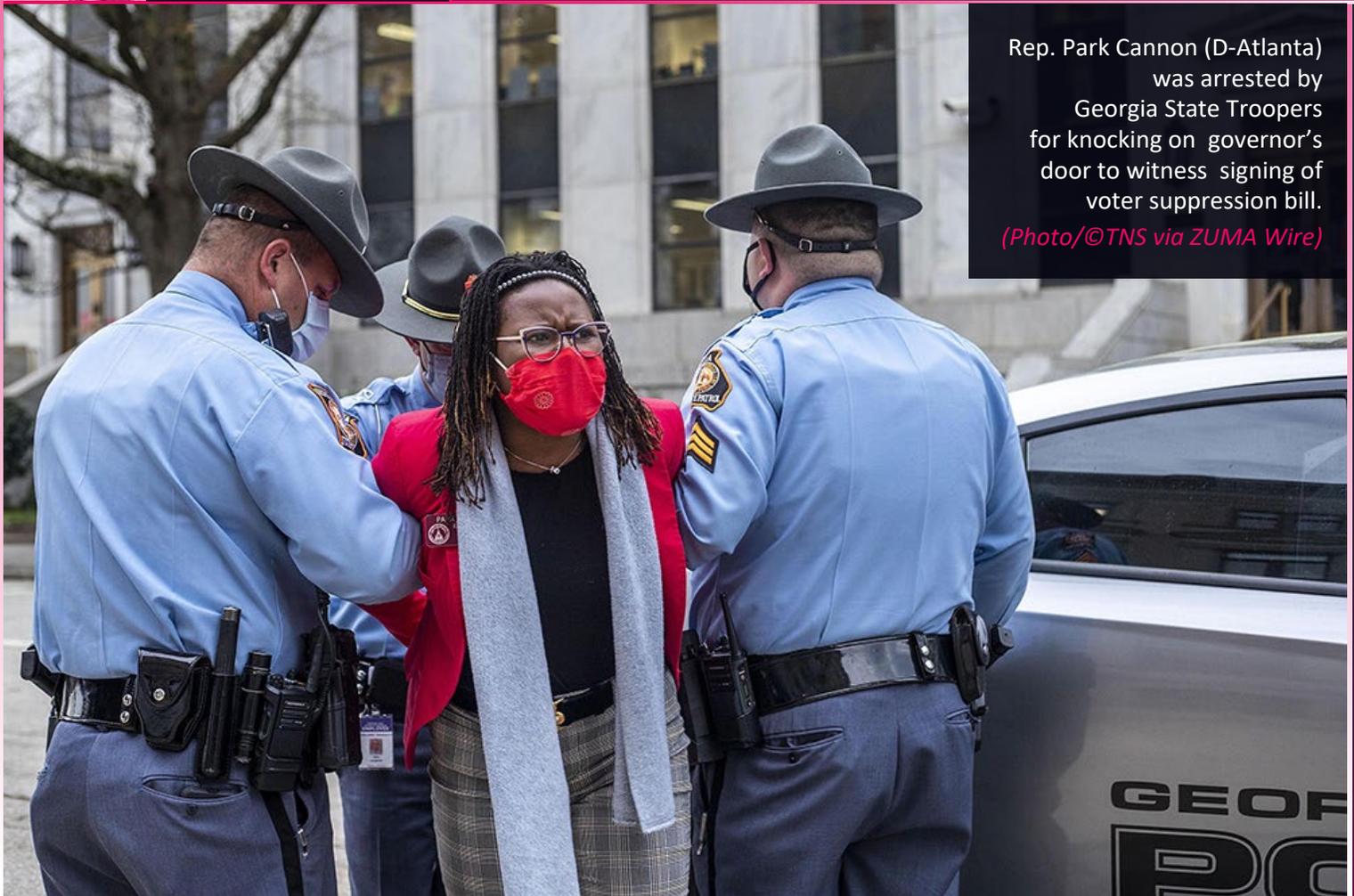


Photo / Valerie Jean

MOVEMENT RISES TO DEFEND THE VOTE AND DEMOCRACY ITSELF



Rep. Park Cannon (D-Atlanta) was arrested by Georgia State Troopers for knocking on governor's door to witness signing of voter suppression bill.

(Photo/@TNS via ZUMA Wire)

▶ DONATE OR SUBSCRIBE ◀

CONTENT

April 2021

- 3 ▶ **Movement rises to defend the vote and democracy itself**
- 4 ▶ **Stop Asian hate**
- 5 ▶ **George Floyd Square: A return to the commons**
- 6 ▶ **Police kill 13-year-old: Community demands answers**
- 7 ▶ **Abolish the filibuster – completely!**
- 8 ▶ **‘Fight for the Good Life!’: Chicago Homeless Union**
 - ▶ **Like You (Poem by Roque Dalton)**
- 9 ▶ **Los Angeles: Tent community and supporters stand up to riot-clad police**
- 10 ▶ **Year seven of Flint disaster**
 - ▶ **Biden sued by 21 states for revoking KXL pipeline permit**
- 11 ▶ **Water Is Life: An Indigenous Perspective**
People’s Tribune water discussion webinar series
- 12 ▶ **The magnitude of Al Rojas’s contribution: A tribute**
- 13 ▶ **The real crisis is not a ‘border crisis’**

Welcome to the People’s Tribune Digital Edition

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this digital edition of the People’s Tribune. Please remember that we are supported entirely by donations, have no paid staff, and we do need your continued financial support. Donate at <http://peopletribune.org/pt-news/subscribe/> or mail to address below. 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.

773-486-3551, People’s Tribune, P.O. Box 577250, Chicago, IL 60657-7331

Thank you!

Pandemic anywhere = Pandemic everywhere

Despite our progress, we are entering a fourth wave of the pandemic. Virus cases have increased 10% globally, and cases are rising in about half the states of the U.S.

Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove of the World Health Organization attributes the spike in cases to various causes: the virus mutating, people not complying with social distancing and mask-wearing, pressure for societies to open back up, and also the “uneven and inequitable” roll-out of the vaccines, with rich countries hoarding the vaccines to vaccinate their entire populations. Instead, she said, the vaccines should be going out worldwide to those populations in every country—such as frontline workers, health care workers, the elderly, etc.—who are most at risk. She said this, coupled with measures like mask-wearing and distancing, is the only way to stop the spread. We must pressure the U.S. government to do the right thing, both within this country where vaccines are limited in poor communities, and in relation to the rest of humanity. Pandemic anywhere means pandemic everywhere. — *The editors*



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. Ultimately, 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.

Editorial staff: Bob Lee, Editor, Ran Dibble, Chris Mahin, Sarah Menefee, Sandy Reid, Cathy Talbott.

Movement rises to defend the vote and democracy itself

From the **Editors, People's Tribune**

The movement for a new America is standing up to defend democracy. Most of us are under no illusions. We see that the assault on voting rights is at the moment the leading edge of a drive toward dictatorship.

Georgia's new voter suppression law gives the state legislature power to overrule local elections boards, reduces 33 ballot drop boxes down to nine, institutes new ID requirements for voting, and even makes it a crime to give food and water to people standing in line to vote (in hot sun), among many other outrageous provisions. More than 250 voter suppression bills are being considered in 45 states. Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania all have U.S. Senate races in 2022, and all have passed or are considering voter suppression bills. Georgia was the first to pass a comprehensive bill, in late March.

As Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed the bill, Rep. Park Cannon, a Black female lawmaker, was arrested and dragged away for the "crime" of knocking on the governor's door while trying to enter to witness the bill signing. Historian Heather Cox Richardson noted that Gov. Kemp signed his state's voter suppression bill surrounded by six white men while seated under a painting of the Callaway Plantation on which more than 100 Black people had been enslaved. "It was a scene that conjured up a lot of history," wrote Richardson.

Attacks on democracy in the United States have from the beginning of the country relied on denying or suppressing the Black vote, and of course this tactic has deep roots in the South. We should make no mistake:

This is not only a vicious attack on the Black vote and the Democratic vote, but an attack on democracy itself. In an era of growing poverty and economic instability, the powerful want only the privileged to vote.

Meanwhile the For the People Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, two federal bills that would protect the right to vote, are facing resistance in the U.S. Senate.

If the attack on voting rights succeeds, the gains we the people made in the 2018 and 2020 elections could be rolled back, and any future progress would be much more difficult.

The vote was the weapon the people used in the last three years to elect new people to office such as Warnock and Ossoff from Georgia, and many

others, and to force the government to pass more stimulus legislation that included things like the \$1,400 stimulus checks, extended unemployment benefits, assistance for children in poverty, money for states and cities, etc.

Michael Waldman, president of the Brennan Center for Justice, called the wave of voter suppression efforts "the most significant attempted cutback of voting rights since the Jim Crow era."

Waldman testified in a U.S. Senate hearing in favor of the For the People Act, a national voting rights bill. Waldman said the bill "would be the most significant democracy reform measure in over half a century." Among other things, it would make automatic voter registration the law of the land, ensure access to vote by mail and early voting, and restore the voting rights of former prisoners. The bill has passed the House, but is liable to die or be emasculated in the Senate unless the filibuster is eliminated and all the Democratic senators are forced into line.

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act also faces an uncertain fate in the Senate. It would restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (which was eroded by a 2013 Supreme Court decision) and strengthen the provisions in it to protect the freedom to vote for all Americans, particularly voters of color.

People have fought and died for the right to vote. The vote is a crucial weapon, and if we are to build on the gains we've made, the vote must be defended. As Helen Butler of the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda put it, "we don't have a democracy without the right to vote for all people." Another Georgia activist put it this way: "They can make it as hard as they want to vote, but we are still going to come out."



GOOD TROUBLE



Mourning with Asian massage workers in the Americas

None of us are free until all of us are free

The statement below is from **Project South** in Atlanta.

On March 16, in the Atlanta area, we witnessed the calculated targeting and racist mass murder of Asian women at their workplaces. Although fueled by Trump and the constellation of media and white supremacist forces that he represents, this horrifying violence is directly connected to the same anti-Black violence and rising threat of fascism that social movements in the South have been working to disrupt and defend against for decades.

We stand in solidarity with the families of the people killed, the Asian communities in Atlanta and across the South, and the organizations that renew our shared commitment to protect our people.

"Whenever people are killed senselessly it's a tragedy.

When those killings are part of a wider campaign of white supremacy and hate being perpetuated by those in power with genocidal intentions for us all, this tragedy is compounded. As people who know from our lived experience what racial, gender and economic violence feels like and as an organization rooted in the Black Radical Traditions of the U.S. South, I think we have an extraordinary responsibility to show solidarity in moments like this. I wish there was more as an organization we could do today in response to this violence and all the other violence we have been experiencing over this last year — from Rayshard Brooks in our neighborhood to the many other examples we have witnessed and lamented in this country and globally.

However, I believe in my heart that the work we are all engaged in will put us in an increasing position to work with our partners to build a movement with the power to defend our people and build liberation in our communities."

— *Emery Wright, Project South Co-Director*

[Listen to audio statement here.](#)

Chicago vigil for victims of Georgia shootings where 8 people were killed, including six Asian/Asian American women who worked in massage parlors.

Photo / Love & Struggle photos (Sarah-Ji Rhee)

Excerpts below are from a press statement by **Red Canary Song**, a grassroots collective of Asian and Migrant sex workers, organizing transnationally.

"In the wake of the deaths of multiple Asian women massage workers in Georgia, we are sending radical love, care, and healing to all of our community members. We acknowledge the ongoing pain and grief from continued violent assaults on our Asian and Asian American, APIA community, which has been compounded by the alienation, isolation, and violence brought on by racist rhetoric and governmental neglect in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic . . .

"We reject the call for increased policing in response to this tragedy. . . We understand the pain that motivates our Asian and Asian-American community members' call for increased policing, but we nevertheless stand against it. Policing has never been an effective response to violence because the police are agents of white supremacy. Policing has never kept sex workers or massage workers or immigrants safe. The criminalization and demonization of sex work has hurt and killed countless people—many at the hands of the police both

directly and indirectly. Due to sexist racialized perceptions of Asian women, especially those engaged in vulnerable, low-wage work, Asian massage workers are harmed by the criminalization of sex work, regardless of whether they engage in it themselves.

"Decriminalization of sex work is the only way that sex workers, massage workers, sex trafficking survivors, and anyone criminalized for their survival and/or livelihood will ever be safe.

"We are asking that the community stand in solidarity with us and all immigrant and migrant massage workers and sex workers . . ."

Contact:

redcanarysong.org,
redcanarysong@gmail.com



George Floyd Square: A Return to the Commons

Editor's note: Excerpts below are from comments made by community defenders at George Floyd Square (GFS) in Minneapolis, a space of protest and autonomous zone in the area where George Floyd took his last breath.

See Unicorn Riot's:

[Beyond the Barricades: A Look At George Floyd Square](#)

"No justice, no justice. Let me tell you that the city killed a man. And that is why we are here. That is why the community is standing for justice and asking and demanding for justice. This street does not belong to you anymore, City of Minneapolis. You will have to negotiate. You will have to give us some justice if you want that street back."

"George Floyd was murdered. The barricades went up and the demand went out. And those demands, the justice resolution, played a key role to establish this as a space of protest and establishing this as an autonomous zone. That's the reason the barricades stay up, for holding the police accountable."

"It's for demanding justice, and it's also demanding structural changes and investments into the future. It isn't any one individual's demand. It is a collection of needs and wants from this community saying: these are the things that we need in order to move forward to heal. And it's just talking about the beginning steps."

"We're not asking you; we're demanding. Play your role. Bring the resources. We have the healers. We have the teachers. Quit pimping us. Quit prostituting us, expecting us to run into a burning building with a water gun. Give us the resources so that we can now heal our own land with our own bodies, people who look like us, sound like us, move like us and beat like us."

"We say we hold the space until the demands are met, and the city certainly does not want to meet the demands. And so they won't take back the space. They're going to have to meet those demands before we give up 38th street. We're not giving it up! We not giving it up! We not giving it up!"

"No Justice, No Street!"



Photo / George Floyd Square

Video Still / Unicorn Riot



"Every day there's a meeting in the morning and a meeting in the night. And that has been one of the ways that community has really, really developed. . . . You look around here, you see bus stops turned into storage and bus stops turned into people's closets. You see bookshelves going up; you see we've got a medical shed; we've got a greenhouse."

"612 Mash is a medic organization that operates out of the square the people's way. This is a public space. You know, it's a public meeting space and it's a public space of real community, and joy, and unity. It's a sacred space, and it's a space of grieving, and also of liberation for people who are coming in here."

"People come from all over. It's almost a pilgrimage site in that way. I think there is something really to be said about how the common spaces and collectively maintained spaces have been eroded by capitalism. You can see this as a return of the commons in a lot of ways."

"This is a blueprint for how society can be: how society can be organized, how we can develop community and come here together and meet the needs of the community."

"Every day there are people who are unhoused, who will come here to find sanctuary. They'll come here and they'll get fed. They'll get clothes and they'll get resources to get housed. And that's a thing that the state has been unable to provide. And the fact that community has been able to come in and fulfill that role, spells out exactly why this is the way of the future and not the way of the state."

Witnessing a Murder

"I stay up nights apologizing to George Floyd," 18-year-old Darnella Fraizer said through tears from the witness stand today. "It's not what I should have done," as she pointed at former Minneapolis Police officer Derek Chauvin, "It's what he should have done." [Darnella videotaped the murder]

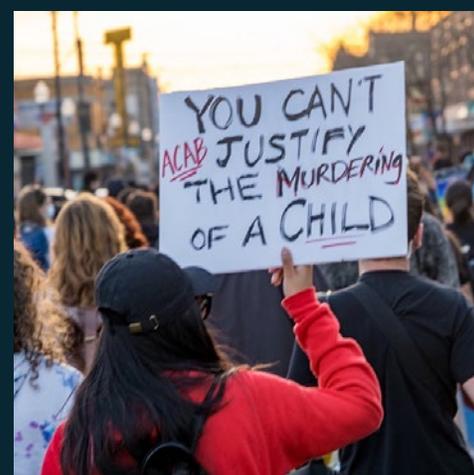
The above is from an article by [King Demetrius Pendleton](#) and [Tigger Lunney](#) on Day 2 of the trial of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd. [See article here.](#)

Police kill 13-year-old: Community demands answers



"I just want to know what really happened to my baby . . . he was a little boy . . . he still played with Hot Wheels. . . He would cheer everyone up just with his smile ... [Police] could have done something else, not kill him...If they are trained to shoot, why shoot to kill him. I want justice for my son Adam."

— Elizabeth Toledo (from news stories)



VIGIL FOR 13-YEAR-OLD BOY KILLED BY CHICAGO POLICE

This statement from Facebook and the photos are by Sarah-Ji Rhee, loveandstrugglephotos.com, and are used with permission.

In the early hours of Monday, March 29, Chicago Police shot and killed 13-year-old Adam Toledo in Little Village. Today, the community gathered to mourn and honor Adam's life in a vigil and to protest the police in a noise demo and march through the neighborhood. We have heard [Chicago] Mayor Lori Lightfoot blame the lack of a social safety net for Adam's murder, the same mayor who is perfectly OK with CPD's (Chicago Police Department) bloated budget of over \$4 million/day, who adamantly refuses to defund CPD, who still wants to send people with guns to situations involving mental health crises, who insists on putting cops in schools, whose response to neighborhood problems is more and more police and more and more surveillance, and who gave away 65% of Federal emergency COVID C.A.R.E.S. funding to CPD while our most vulnerable communities continue to suffer. Adam is one of three youth who have been murdered by CPD in less than two weeks. Adam should still be with us today. 18-year-old Travon Chadwell should still be with us today. 22-year-old Anthony Alvarez should still be with us today. Justice for Adam and Travon and Anthony would look like their families and communities having the resources to thrive so that they never would have been murdered by police in the first place. #DefundCPD #AbolishthePolice #AbolitionNOW



Abolish the filibuster — completely!

Earlier this year, the U. S. House of Representatives passed a comprehensive measure to expand voting rights and also passed an important change in labor law. Like all bills, these measures will have to be passed by both houses of Congress and then signed by the president to become law. However, both measures — and many other progressive proposals — may be doomed. They'll die unless the U.S. Senate gets rid of one of its worst practices: the filibuster.

The filibuster is an anti-democratic procedure designed to allow a small minority of senators to stop any bill they oppose from coming to a final vote. In 1805, an omission in an updated version of the Senate rulebook eliminated a formal means to cut off debate. Seizing on this loophole, Southern senators before the Civil War would give lengthy speeches to block passage of measures they opposed. The first filibuster was engineered in 1841 by U.S. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, a fervent defender of slavery.

For many years, there was no way to cut off debate in the Senate and if a small minority of senators were willing to drone on for hours they could disrupt passage of laws supported by the majority — especially when Congress was near adjournment. In 1917, the Senate adopted a new rule allowing for debate to cease if two-thirds of the Senate voted to end debate. (This was later changed to three-fifths of the Senate.) The practical result of this today is that unless 60 senators support a proposed law, it will die because it will never be brought to an actual vote on the Senate floor.

Adam Jentleson's book "Kill Switch: The Rise of the Modern Senate and the Crippling of American Democracy" describes the brutal impact of the filibuster:

"From the 1920s through the 1940s, legislation to end poll taxes, combat lynching, and roll back employment discrimination possessed everything bills had previously needed to become law. They were passed by majorities in the House of Representatives, supported by majorities in the Senate, and backed by presidents of both parties. ... But for decades before [1957] ... southern senators' obstructionist innovations succeeded in blocking every civil rights bill. ...

"[T]he filibuster has mainly served to empower a minority of predominantly white conservatives to override our democratic system when they found themselves outnumbered, blocking progress that threatened their power, their way of life, and the priorities of their wealthy benefactors, from the slaveholders of the nineteenth century to the conservative billionaires of today. From John Calhoun ... to Richard Russell, the post-World War II puppet master of the Senate who swore that 'any southern white man worth a pinch of salt would give his all to maintain white supremacy,' to Mitch McConnell ... southern senators invented the filibuster, strengthened it, and developed alternative histories to justify it."



Members of the group of Southern senators who filibustered anti-lynching legislation in 1938. Left to right: Tom Connally, Texas, Walter F. George and Richard Russell, Georgia, and Claude Pepper, Florida.

(Photo, Library of Congress)

Originally, a senator had to be present on the Senate floor for hours to filibuster. Today, senators simply have to indicate their willingness to debate. That triggers a requirement that three-fifths of the Senate — 60 members — must vote to cut off debate in order to proceed to a final vote on the measure itself. This means that a mere 41 senators can block any measure. This is the case even if those 41 senators come from the 21 smallest states (which contain only 11 percent of the U.S. population.)

Some forces are calling for filibuster "reform." They want to placate "moderates." The chief "reform" proposal is to return to the days when senators had to be present in the chamber to filibuster. Others include limiting the kind of bills that can be filibustered or reducing the number of senators needed to cut off debate (while still requiring more than a simple majority.) The millions of people who risked their health and safety to march in the streets and vote at the polls in 2020 and early 2021 should not accept half measures. We need to bombard the Senate with a simple message: The filibuster must be done away with — utterly and completely. It's time to scrap this relic from the days of slavery and segregation!

'Fight for the Good Life!'

Homeless Union demands rights of the homeless be respected

By **Bonnie Contreras**

President, Chicago Union of the Homeless

CHICAGO, IL —

Me becoming homeless was because I was in a domestic violence relationship, so I had to make a choice. I worked as a registered nurse for 15 years before I got disabled.

I knew a veteran who fought for this country. He was out there for two and a half years, rain sleet and snow. He died in February last year, my companion is the one who found him, he had froze to death.

From my experience being a disabled homeless woman, it don't make no sense

that the country we are living in be named 'united', cause there ain't nothing about it united. When they wrote 'we the people' they didn't tell us they was talking about people that have power, the people that got the money.

The Constitution doesn't say it only applies to you if you're in a house or have a job. We the people, not no specific race. The reason is not because I'm Black, not one particular race, cause all our nationalities have had a struggle and have went through something, all of them.

We formed a Union of the Homeless in October. The Chicago Union of the Homeless was able to put people in hotels. The government gave \$200 million to the police – for what? They ain't doing nothing but killing us.

Homeless people want what everyone wants, to wake up in bed, in an apartment. Housing is a human right. You've got 465 vacancies in Cabrini Green alone. Clean up these buildings and put homeless people in there. Give us access to those things and stop withholding them.

There are people out here that are willing to fight back. Give us access to the things we need. We need to stand together and not look down on each other, not just the homeless but all of us. I am going to encourage my brothers and sisters to fight for the good life, fight for our lives. I feel in my heart if we all come together we will get what we need.



Bonnie Contreras

Photo / Adam Gottlieb

Like You

Like you I

Love love, life, the sweet smell

Of things, the sky-blue

Landscape of January days.

And my blood boils up

And I laugh through eyes

That have known the buds of tears.

I believe the world is beautiful

And that poetry, like bread, is for everyone.

And that my veins don't end in me

But in the unanimous blood

Of those who struggle for life

Love,

Little things,

Landscape and bread,

The poetry of everyone.

— **Roque Dalton** (1935 – 1975)

(Translated by Jack Hirschman)

Roque Dalton was a Salvadoran poet, essayist, journalist, political activist and intellectual, considered one of Latin America's most compelling poets. He was assassinated four days before his 40th birthday.

GIVE TO A REVOLUTIONARY PRESS

We need your help. We're living in tumultuous times: Times of danger and opportunity. Please help us get out the truth, the voices of grassroots leaders fighting for a democratic society where no human being is killed by police, goes hungry, without health care, water or a home. We're all volunteers; no paid staff.

Please [donate here](#), or mail to People's Tribune, PO Box 577250, Chicago, IL 60657-7331

Thank you!

We are always looking for voices from the frontlines of the struggle.

Please send us your story!

Email info@peopletribune.org

Tent community and supporters stand up to riot-clad police

LOS ANGELES, CA — “They have deemed people like this a lower dredge of society, even when a majority of people are a paycheck away from the same thing...this is a really painful moment. You’re watching my things being ripped from me. Watching my friends go through the struggle — that’s what bothers me a lot.” [Jerome Noll, 32, Echo Park camp resident, L.A. Times]

On March 25-26, hundreds of residents and supporters stood up to a mass of riot-clad police, attempting to defend the Los Angeles Echo Park tent community from destruction. Dozens were violently arrested during the resistance, including a L.A. Times reporter. Despite this strong resistance (see story below) and wide support, the large orderly tent community, there for at least a year and at its peak with 200 tents, was razed. Many people were scattered to the streets, their possessions lost, and those given temporary shelter will soon join them



Video Still, KCAL News, Tent community prior to its destruction.

there. With the pandemic still raging, and the homeless count in L.A. county 66,000, and in the city 41,000, the suffering is great. And despite the governor’s directive early on to house people, the powers that be instead turn to sheer organized brutality and displacement. This is an outrage. That it was met with such strong opposition from residents and supporters is a harbinger. — *The Editors*

Echo Park Lake residents and supporters resist a brutal sweep

By General Dogon

LOS ANGELES, CA — “This was one of the most successful housing actions ever.” — Steve Diaz, LA CAN, referring to the protestors who gathered to oppose the Echo Park sweep, one of Los Angeles’s largest encampments.

One hundred people came in to support encampment residents in the morning. Sanitation was already there. During COVID the city created a “Jim Crow” situation — that is, no water, no trash cans, no hand washing stations and armed guards at the restrooms. So folks in the community created their own showers, a garden and a kitchen, and a meeting area with couches and chairs and provided the community with brooms and rakes so people could clean their own area.

On March 25 the LAPD put police tape on the block, giving demonstrators 5 minutes to disperse, using tactics similar to a police action during the George Floyd protests during the summer. Forty people in vests unloaded gates from flat-bed trucks and put chain-link fencing around half the park.

It was a well-organized raid. The LAPD had commanders at every edge of the park. Part of the statement by the LAPD was that four people had died at Echo Park. This is the only time this fact has been mentioned by the city, despite the fact that there are four houseless residents dying every day in Los Angeles.

This action is the “Safer Cities” initiative spread to all over the city. Under the guise of “fighting crime,” this “initiative” has increased the number of police in the Skid Row section of downtown Los Angeles with its 12,000 residents, to create the most heavily policed area in the world, “higher than Baghdad, Iraq.” [People’s Tribune, September 2015]

“In Van Nuys 40 police will surround a tent. These actions are traumatizing people, make unhoused people afraid to talk to anyone. It is a shame-based police model. We’ve seen versions of this in other parts of the city,” stated Carla Orendorff of *Services Not Sweeps Coalition*.



Video Still, LA Times

Year Seven of Flint Disaster: Michigan Poor People's Campaign Seeks Justice

The statement below is from the [Michigan Poor People's Campaign](#).

We demand restorative justice for Flint in the wake of the water crisis of 2014 and 2015. During those years, thousands of Flint residents of all ages were poisoned by their own government. A pending settlement is now in Federal Court that will provide restitution to some Flint residents but not all.

The Michigan Poor People's Campaign believes that the proposed settlement does not go far enough in providing long-term support for residents of Flint whose health has, or may be impaired by the poisoning of Flint's water. In addition to the pending proposed court settlement, we are demanding that all Flint residents receive Medicare for their lifetime. The precedent for this action was incorporated into the Affordable Care Act of 2010 for the community of Libby, Montana.

Please join the Michigan Poor People's Campaign letter campaign and demand that Michigan Senators Stabenow and Peters introduce and advocate for passage of federal legislation that will provide Flint residents with Medicare. Can you join us and write a letter?

Write a letter: [Demand Michigan Senators Stabenow and Peters Support the People of Flint](#)



Flint residents march in 2018 at the state capital about the governor's decision to shut down water distribution in Flint before the toxic pipes are fixed. Flint still seeks water justice.

PHOTO / DAVE OLDS, MI SENATE DEMOCRATS

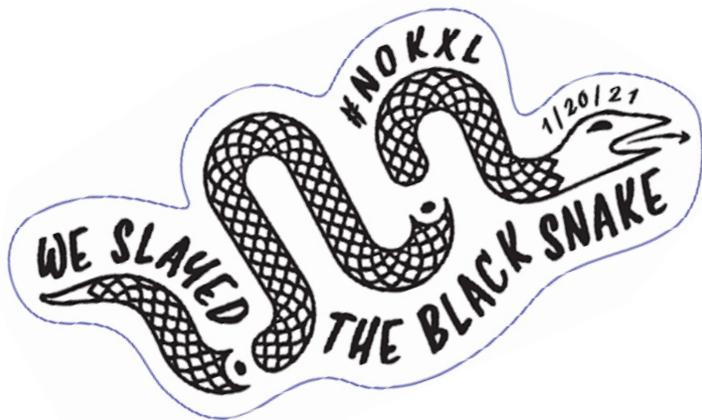
Biden sued by 21 states for revoking KXL pipeline permit while those affected rejoice

Editor's note: President Joe Biden signed an executive order revoking the Keystone XL pipeline permit. A coalition of 21 states is now suing him for revoking the permit. The proposed 1,200 mile KXL pipeline, which groups have fought for years, would carry dirty tar sands oil from Canada to the U.S., threatening the Ogallala Aquifer, the largest fresh water aquifer in existence, native lands and farmlands. **Art Tanderup**, a Nebraska farmer and a long-time leader of the fight, comments on the victory:

I believe that the attorney generals suing Biden is an attempt to keep KXL in the news, hoping their attempts will gain some traction as they continue to put pressure on the President.

Landowners along the route are obviously excited that President Biden has rejected the pipeline and is tackling climate change head on.

In Nebraska, Trans Canada is still pursuing eminent domain on the remaining landowners. There is no permit, yet they insist on continuing the eminent domain process and taking possession of the easements. Consequently, we are working to stop this total unnecessary property rights violation. We know that the President is solid on his commitment to stop this pipeline. Trans Canada must think that a pro-pipeline President will win in four years. — **Art Tanderup**



"The Lakota and other Indigenous traditions have prophecies about the threat posed by a "black snake," a manifestation of the sickness of society, which at times has been interpreted as the construction of highways or railways, but mention that the black snake "goes underground" has more recently been seen in dirty fossil fuel pipelines that threaten land and water — like Keystone XL, Dakota Access, and Line 3. . . But the black snake that was the Keystone XL pipeline was finally slayed . . . There are many more "black snakes" still to be slayed."

(Excerpts, Bold Nebraska)

Water Is Life: An Indigenous Perspective

*People's Tribune
Water Discussion Webinar Series*

The *People's Tribune* water discussion group presented a webinar on water titled "**Water Is Life: An Indigenous Perspective**" on March 25. This webinar, sponsored by the *People's Tribune/Tribuno del Pueblo*, Our Illinois Revolution, People's Water Board, Denmark Citizens for Safe Water, Youth for Global Health & Social Justice & Walk Around the World for Water, Democracy Defense League, and many others from across the country, heard from Indigenous voices. It was the first in a series of webinars under the theme "**Quench: Voices from Communities on the Frontlines of Our Water Crisis.**"

Panelists included **Tania Aubid**, front-line Indigenous water protector from the (Enbridge) Pipeline 3 Encampment; **Adrian Herder**, Dine Nation of the Black Mesa of the Navajo Nation; **Saundi McClain Kloeckner**, Native Women's Care Circle of Cahokia, Illinois; and **Saul Levin**, environmental policy writer for Congresswoman Cori Bush. Short excerpts from the panelists' presentations are below.

Tania: "I was on a hunger strike for 38 days fighting to stop Line 3. I appreciate the group here, Quench, because in reality we will at some point in our day get thirsty and rely upon our water to give us that healthy drink. And the wild rice is vitally important for the Anishinaabeg people as part of their dietary needs and their economy. So I'm doing my best to fight for the 5% of the world's fresh clean water. This pipeline needs to be cancelled."



Adrian: "My organization in English means "Sacred Water Speaks." We don't have water here in our homes but back in the '50's and '60's in my parents' youth, they had access to pristine well water from the aquifer on Black Mesa. Then Peabody Coal came in [creating] one of the largest open pit mines in the world. Peabody has [been draining] our aquifer to slurry the coal and transport it 270 plus miles to the Mojave Generating plant in Nevada. The ground is fissured from loss of the water. We (the youth) began to educate the people. There's a need to be aware of what's going on in our backyards. I fear that this state (Arizona) might come after our water so we have to be very careful what happens with these legislations."



Saul: "We have an important window right now where people [in government] are spending money based on actual needs . . . they've been spurred to action by the Coronavirus pandemic. Congresswoman Cori Bush used to be an unhoused person who couldn't afford AC when housed or heat in the winter in St. Louis so there's these types of experiences in what we're legislating based on the crisis . . . right now."



Saundi: "What will you do for the water? We are water. You need to go back to what this land was and that doesn't mean you have to give up your electricity. It's all about respect and using our resources in good ways. The big thing is privatization. When you start putting money onto water—that means that it's not a human right to have it."



The next webinar will be on the fight for clean and affordable water in Michigan on Thursday, April 29. Follow the links below for details.

To view the webinar visit the following sites:

<https://www.facebook.com/watervoices>

<https://www.facebook.com/peoplestrib>

On Georgia's denial of water to voters in line:

I'LL BRING VOTERS ALL THE DAMN WATER I WANT. I'M GONNA HAVE A CART OUT THERE LIKE A MOTHER-FLETCHIN' FLIGHT ATTENDANT. MINERAL WATER. SPRING WATER. SMART WATER. VITAMIN WATER. HOLY WATER. MUDDY WATERS. ALL THE WATERS! JIM CROW CAN KISS MY BLACK ASS!

@MrGeorgeWallace



actlv

The magnitude of Al Rojas's contribution: A tribute

By Cathleen Williams

The Sacramento community has lost Al Rojas, who passed away Saturday, March 20, 2021 in Sacramento. He came from the fields of the valley and now he has returned to these spaces in spirit.

We honor him by following his example in living a committed life. He was a leader of union democracy, a fighter for farmworkers, and all workers, an internationalist who understood that the political destiny of Mexico and the United States were linked and inseparable. As he saw, both countries are under the domination of transnational corporations concerned only with cheap labor and high profits.

Al could be soft-spoken, his voice could be gentle. But there was no mistaking the fury of his love for farmworkers as the most exploited and oppressed members of the working class and the energy he brought to the struggle against injustice whenever and wherever he found it. Or his contempt for those who, through hypocrisy and self-dealing, betrayed the workers and their unions.

It's well known that he co-founded the UFW (United Farmworkers Union) and dedicated decades of his life to organizing the union and the grape boycott. It's well known that he stood against the UFW in later years as a result of its failure to maintain union democracy and its failure to represent the interests of its members. He served as president, and in other official roles, of the AFL-CIO's Northern California Chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA). He fought to expose the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the cause of the forced migration and separation of millions of undocumented workers families.

He never stopped fighting for the rights of migrant and indigenous people – don't call them immigrants, he would say – victimized and imprisoned by ICE and stripped of their human rights by US law.

He brought the Driscoll Berry Boycott to Sacramento, exposing the Driscoll corporation over the environmental degradation, inhuman working conditions and *daily* wages of \$10 or less in the San Quentin valley in Baja California.

This brief description cannot do justice to the magnitude of Al Rojas' historic contribution to the movements of our time. But there are the little things that show his heart. In 2008, Maria Isabel Vasquez Jimenez, a teen age farmworker, died because of extreme heat in the fields. It was Al Rojas who stepped forward to expose the criminal political complicity that led to her death. In 2009 Luis Gutierrez was killed in cold blood by the Woodland Police. It was Al Rojas who gathered supporters together, four years after his death, for a candle light vigil on the lonely roadside where Luis was shot down.

Al Rojas will be missed. The deepest condolences are offered to his family.



Al Rojas with the future generation of fighters for justice.



Al Rojas at the center of our fight.

The real crisis is not a 'border crisis'

In a recent article in Common Dreams, Jessica Corbett described how U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez took to social media March 30 about the root causes of Central Americans and other migrants seeking asylum at the United States' southern border.

"It's not a border crisis," said Ocasio-Cortez. "It's an imperialism crisis. It's a climate crisis. It's a trade crisis. And also, it's a carceral crisis, because as I have already said, even during this term and this president, our immigration system is based and designed on our carceral system."

"Then we have the issues of trade, which economically contribute to... some of these conditions that add fuel to the fire," Ocasio-Cortez said further.

The congresswoman put out the videos as critics have raised questions about how the Biden administration is processing asylum-seekers at the southern border—particularly children.

Ocasio-Cortez said that America's "interventionist history... over decades of destabilizing regions drives people to migrate." She added that the U.S. has disproportionately contributed to the climate crisis, which is also causing migration.

She also said, "Our immigration system is built on a carceral framework," and called for boldly "reimagining our relationship to each other... ." Ocasio-Cortez called for creating a special status for climate refugees, and for eliminating the Department of Homeland Security and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

In a similar vein, Fernando García, executive director of the Border Network for Human Rights, issued a statement in February that says in part:

"This idea of an 'immigration crisis' caused by an influx of migrants

to our southern border is not only false but also a testament to the ugly legacy of the Trump administration... The truth is, border communities are, in fact, facing many crises: the crisis of COVID-19; the crisis of police brutality; the crisis of family separation and child detention; and the crisis of white supremacy and xenophobia, among others. Border communities have endured the most harmful effects of the Trump administration's cruelest policies against immigrants, and as such, we know that the answer to solving these crises is not turning away people seeking safe haven at our borders or furthering criminalizing immigrant communities and new arrivals.

"Migration is not the problem. Immigrants are not the problem. Our broken immigration system is. We call on the Biden administration to fulfill the promises they made and address

the root problems by fixing our broken immigration system and passing comprehensive and inclusive immigration reform. This includes immediately ending cruel Trump-era immigration policies... and building the necessary infrastructure to process asylum claims, address the needs of families seeking safe haven at our borders, and help them fully integrate into our communities.

"Additionally, the Biden administration must act to demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border, end family separation and detention, and instead focus on fortifying and creating pathways to lawful status for all immigrants, including the more than 11 million undocumented people who call our country home."

Help get the voice of the movement out

Like, Comment, Share, Tweet

PT Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/peopletrib/>

PT Twitter

<https://twitter.com/peopletribune>



Immigrant Bars. Art / Luis Garcia