



Detroit is beginning tax foreclosures on nearly 30,000 homes that could threaten 100,000 people. With the elimination of industrial jobs, people cannot afford to pay.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

INSIDE:

Stop the killings	2
Hunger strike forces city to reopen school	4
Toxic water in Flint	5
Renters' protest in Silicon Valley	6
Unify to stop mass jailings	12

HOUSING CRISIS REFLECTS A DYING SYSTEM

[Read story on page 3](#)

Stop the killings

A young reporter and cameraman killed on live television. A nine year-old girl shot dead through her bedroom window as she sits doing homework. A mentally ill man held in jail until a bed in a hospital opens up beaten to death by three guards for refusing to take medication. A police officer slain in a northwest Chicago suburb. These are only a few of the recent recorded incidences of violence making the headlines.

Capitalism is dying. The economy is transforming from an industrial base to production with labor replacing robots and computers. The gap between wealth and poverty grows. (Oxfam estimates that by next year, 99% of the world's wealth will be owned by less than 1% of the population.) As a result, society is turning in on itself and becoming more violent.

Our rulers cultivate this violence through a culture that equates militarism with patriotism. They cultivate a culture that exalts acts of individual and collective violence, starting with government war and torture policies, glorified by TV, radio and movies. They defend placing militarized police not only in urban centers but also suburbs and small towns in rural America. What are its roots?

Our economic system and the society built upon it were founded upon violence. The wholesale slaughter of Native Americans in the quest for land; the African slave trade that sold human beings as commodities to be worked to death in seven years; the maiming and deaths of children exploited in the mines and factories; the wars of imperialist expansion; these are the foundations for the profits amassed by a ruthless ruling class. Today's violence cannot be separated from American history. We cannot change this psychology of violence without changing the economic and social system.

Where once the rulers were



Protest against the Chicago police killing of a youngster.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

able to use a part of their profits as a bribe to keep people tied to the system, the bottom line is that the capitalists will not support workers they no longer need. The owners of the economy, along with their servants in government, are devising new ways to guarantee their profits.

Passing laws that criminalize impoverished workers while guaranteeing 95% occupation rates for private prisons. Privatizing water to be sold only to those who can pay the higher price while deny-

ing life-sustaining water to those who cannot. Turning over our public schools to corporate profiteers. Selling off our public parks to private interests. Foreclosing on workers' homes, forcing families into the streets as they are sold to hedge fund speculators for pennies on the dollar. The list goes on and on.

The burning question today for those of us in a fight for our survival is: Will we allow a system built upon violence to destroy us? Or will we unite around our

common economic interests, remove the roots of this violence, and build a new society based on caring and sharing the abundance created by the revolutionary new technologies?

Today it is possible to create such a society. But to do so we must counter the culture of violence and individualism our masters have created. We must replace it with a culture that says the well-being of each individual depends upon the well-being of all of humanity.

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

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

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

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.

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

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Housing crisis reflects a dying system

COVER STORY

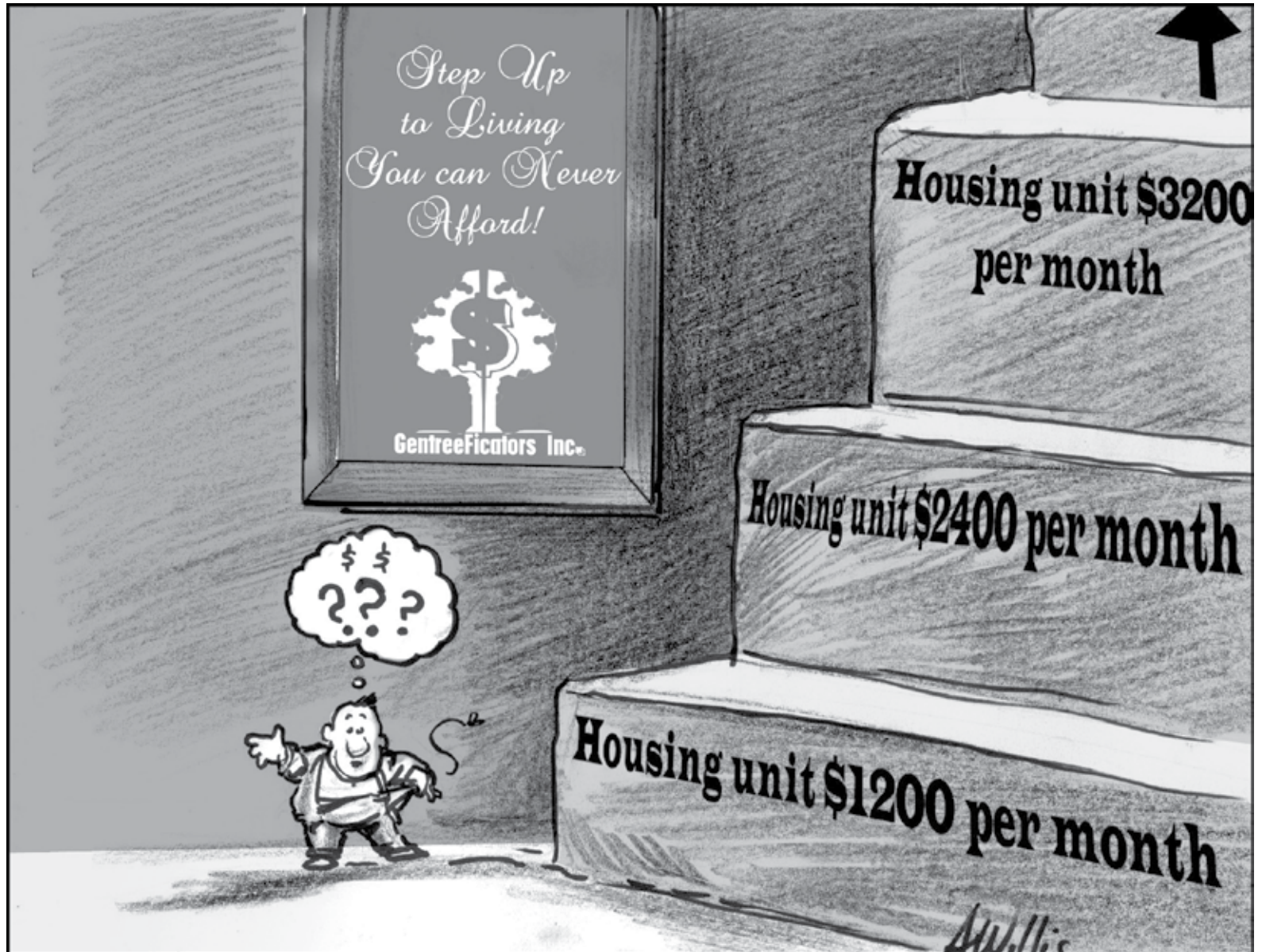
The city of Detroit recently announced it will begin foreclosure on nearly 30,000 tax delinquent homes. It is believed that 100,000 people could be affected.

Around the same time, it was reported in the news that a landlord in San Francisco charges \$3,000 per month rent for a sleeping space in bunk beds that come with commonly shared kitchens and bathrooms.

These examples represent the process of gentrification, the tip of an iceberg of a housing crisis that is sweeping the country. At the basis of that crisis is the fact that housing is connected to jobs and jobs are connected to the tools used in production. Today's tools are the computer and the robot.

It is a common characteristic of all human societies, past and present, that we organize around our tools. As long as those tools were of the industrial manufacturing type, a huge, literate, somewhat educated working class was required to wield those tools. The relatively stable neighborhoods and communities in and around the large urban areas where industrial manufacturing was based is, in the main, where those industrial workers lived.

Over a period of decades, high-tech automated tools began replacing industrial manufacturing tools, and along with them the industrial worker. Service jobs with their low pay and fewer hours proved a poor substitute, especially for those locked into 30-year mortgages. Now, the electronics revolution has spread to all sectors of the economy, and threatens the entire concept of a job to go the way of the dinosaur. From the standpoint of the ruling class, there is no need for



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

workers it has made permanently unemployed, destitute and homeless, and therefore no need for them to be housed.

Under capitalism, a community without jobs is a community targeted for extinction. Only those with money will be allowed. It is no accident that safety net governmental programs of the past era like public housing are also being severely cut back or diverted toward privatization. As Sean Donovan, a former Secretary of HUD (Housing and

Urban Development) put it to a group of public housing residents at a meeting in Washington D.C., "We are going to save public housing by making it private."

And so it is under these conditions that the former industrial worker faces homelessness, destitution, dispossession and early death on the streets while there are more than enough empty homes that would literally save their lives.

If humanity faces a future society where human labor is

replaced by machines, then money must be replaced by the currency of human need. A society is needed where the abundance the new technology produces is distributed based on people's need, instead of money.

As a first step toward that new society, the government must turn over the hundreds of thousands of government-owned foreclosed homes to those who need them, instead of to private investors who use them to make money.

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Hunger strike forces city to reopen school



Twelve people were on a hunger strike to get Chicago Public Schools to re-open a high school.

PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — Twelve people—teachers, parents, grandparents—began a hunger strike in early August to get Chicago Public Schools to re-open Walter Dyett High School as a neighborhood public school, open to

all, with a focus on “Global Leadership and Green Technology.” The Coalition to Revitalize Dyett High School, comprised of the Chicago Teachers Union, Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO), Teachers for Social Justice, University of Illinois College of Education,

the DuSable Museum of African American History and others crafted this proposal. Chicago Public Schools blocked every effort by the community, which provoked the hunger strike. On the 33rd day of the strike, September 19, the strikers held a press conference to announce

victory. They stopped privatization of this school and prevailed in getting an open enrollment traditional public school.

Jitu Brown, one of the hunger strikers and a leading KOCO educational activist, had declared, in the midst of the strike: “I don’t want people to say I fought the good fight. I’m in this fight to win!” He echoed this on day 23, when the strikers marched from Operation PUSH to President Obama’s Chicago residence to convince Washington to put pressure on the Mayor. The strikers initially rejected Chicago Public Schools’ first offer, on day 18, to reopen Dyett as an arts based school. Then, on day 25, three more Chicagoans joined the strike.

The hunger strike is a movement born out of complete desperation. This is how Anna Jones, one of the strikers, put it: “...my children have been robbed of their education. Our schools and communities are impoverished and becoming more impoverished due to the misappropriation of tax payer’s dollars as a plan to wipe-out low-income neighborhoods intentionally for personal profit and gain. WE PAY TAX DOLLARS—WE’VE INVESTED IN EDUCATION JUST LIKE THE UPPER CLASS.”

What Anna Jones said about her community is replicated

in working class communities across the country. Destruction of the schools is only part of the picture, as jobs disappear, swallowed up by advances in automation. As workers become superfluous to a system that thrives on profit, the ruling class will neither feed them nor educate them. The bones capitalists used to throw us to keep us divided are becoming more difficult to get, as the Dyett experience has shown. The only sacred thing to the capitalists now is the protection of their private property, and that includes turning everything public into private hands, even the schools.

What is at stake in this fight is much more than Dyett. The fight to make the government responsible for services to the community is the germ to reorganize a cooperative society for the needs of the people. We can’t go school by school, community by community, to achieve what we need. That is the significance of people in other cities joining the hunger strike. That is the significance of going to Washington to demand education justice. National full funding of public education with local implementation according to the needs of the people could resolve this impasse and end the destruction of public education.

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Vision of a just society

By Rev. Bruce Wright

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — Some have asked what my vision, as a Christian is, for a just society. So, for what it is worth, here it is:

Well for one, Acts 2 described an egalitarian society, in the early Church, where resources were shared equally to each according to their needs, from each according to their ability. Secondly, both in Scripture and in early church history, as well as the Jubilee and Mosaic Law, preferential option of the poor is taught. The current Pope has spoke of this, as has Liberation Theology.

Ron Sider, in his book “Rich

Christians in an Age of Hunger” and Shane Claiborne in his book “Jesus For President,” spoke of the thousands of scriptures that speak of Social Justice, what Dr. King spoke of as the “Beloved Community,” hence the connection between Community, Communion, and Communism.

We should create communities of Love, Cooperation, sharing of resources, respect of all people without prejudice or judgment, nonviolence, and peace making. Not just spiritual, but social, ecological, and political transformation.

We need to create this locally through sustainable, just, local

economies. Then move to regional, National, and then Global economies. We must give say so to all groups of people via self-determination. And, we must end the nation state, empire building societies that thrive on conflict and war and become egalitarian, grassroots from the bottom up, governed societies that seek the Common Good where everyone’s needs, not “Greeds” are met.

This is what we should strive for as Christians, as humans, knowing that Christ will finish this process when he comes back.

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'Lead astray' – Drinking water in Flint, MI is unsafe

By Curt Guyette

FLINT, MI — Despite claims by city and state officials that the water supply in Flint is safe to drink, independent expert tests conclusively show that city's drinking water is contaminated with dangerously high levels of lead.

In an equally damning conclusion, the researchers contend that the city's own water-testing procedures and the state's oversight are badly flawed, leading them to claim that the water is safe.

Researchers at Virginia Tech, led by civil and environmental engineering professor Marc Edwards, working closely with a grassroots group of citizens representing the Flint Clean Water Coalition and the ACLU of Michigan, studied water samples from 277 homes in Flint over the past several weeks and concluded that, unless run through a filter designed to capture lead, the city's water is unsafe for drinking or use in cooking.

These results were announced at a Flint press conference and town hall meeting held Sept. 15.

In citing their conclusions, the researchers also heavily criticized the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for its contention that the water is safe.

"On the basis of these facts, we consider MDEQ's position to

be both unscientific and irresponsible, and we stand by our recommendations to Flint consumers, that they immediately reduce their exposure to high lead in Flint's water by implementing protective measures when using tap water for drinking or cooking," according to a post on the project's Flint Water Study web site.

In a statement made to the *Flint Journal*, MDEQ spokesman Brad Wurfel attempted to discredit the Virginia Tech study.

"The issue here isn't Flint's water source or water plants," Wurfel asserted. "It's the high number of older homes with lead pipes and lead service connections...lead and copper are home plumbing problems that no water source can eliminate entirely."

In a post on a website about the study, known as the Flint Water Project, the research team notes that the problem isn't limited to aging residences with old plumbing.

"During our sampling events in Flint homes, we are finding very high lead in other homes with modern lead free plumbing, which again points to city owned lead pipes and corrosive water as the problem," read one post.

For its part, the MDEQ has a vested interest in defending the quality of Flint's water. After Flint received much cleaner Detroit water for decades, Darnell Earley, an emergency manager

appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder, decided in a cost-saving measure to switch to the highly corrosive Flint River in April 2014 as the city's main water supply until the Karegondi pipeline is built.

According to Edwards, MDEQ and the city did not consider it necessary to address the threat of corrosion that the river water posted to the iron and lead pipes in the city's delivery system. This failure, he said, is wreaking havoc with Flint's infrastructure and causing the very high lead levels.

The ACLU of Michigan's investigation has also uncovered a number of problems with the city's testing procedures and with the state's oversight, both of which helped assure that the city would be able to claim compliance with federal regulations.

Curt Guyette is an investigative reporter for the ACLU of Michigan. Reach him at 313-578-6834 or cguyette@aclumich.org.



A Flint, MI resident holds up toxic water at a community meeting. The fight for quality water in Flint has reached a critical mass with the discovery of lead in many residents' water (based on a Virginia Tech research study). PHOTO/RICHARD FAHOOME

Letter to the Editor

This letter was sent to the People's Tribune in response to the article in the September 2015 edition entitled, "Judge drops bomb on illegal water rate hikes in Flint, MI."

FLINT, MI — Our water bill has tripled since we moved to Flint, MI. We lived in Grand Blanc, MI and our water bill was way less, and for clean water! Not triple for dirty, contaminated filth! Now we pay more in one month than we did every three months in Grand Blanc! And did I mention it was clean water, useable water! We're over charged for filth we are forced to use, and expose ourselves and children to lead and other nasty things! What kind of city mayor does this to his people? Who? What is this!

— LaRee Tibbitts

HUD 'learns' about Detroit's foreclosure and water crisis

By Valerie Jean

DETROIT, MI — After months and months of DAILY emails from Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (MWRO), on September 8, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) came to the MWRO office to hear horrific, first-hand accounts of water shut offs and foreclosures.

The representatives from HUD sat quietly listening with an occasional yawn. Emotionless. After WE were done telling our stories, the head dude in charge, Mr. Whoever, stood and said something patronizing like, "I know what its like to be without heat and have to boil water to bathe, so I am going to pray for you all... I don't know what

you think WE have the power to do AND WE will look into the HUD related testimonies, BUT don't expect milk and honey to run through the taps."

Maureen Taylor, chairperson of MWRO, made it clear that WE didn't need him to pray! WE expect them to act! She made clear our needs and intentions, smiled, thanked them, shook all their hands, and sent them back where they came from.

They were given a bag that said water is a human right! Support the water affordability plan! The bag was full of resource papers and first hand testimonies.

WE shall see what becomes of this visit.

The feelings and views expressed are mine.



People marched from Detroit to Flint to raise awareness about the Detroit water shutoffs and the poisoning of Flint's water to "save money" for the city.

CREDIT/VALERIE JEAN

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Homeless man beaten to death by jailers

By Sandy Perry

SAN JOSE, CA. — Friends, families, and supporters of inmates incarcerated in the Santa Clara County Jail here rallied on September 4 to protest the brutal murder of Michael Tyree in his cell by three correctional officers. Tyree was in jail awaiting a bed in a drug treatment program, and actually would have already been released except for the fact that he was homeless and had no place to go. The cause of death was blunt force trauma, from repeated body blows by the three officers when he allegedly refused to take his medication. They then turned out the lights and left him unconscious in his cell until he bled to death from a severely lacerated spleen and liver.

The facts of the case were so indisputable that the Sheriff had to arrest the three officers on September 3 and charge them with murder, the first time this has happened in the 165-year history of the Sheriff's Department. Community members were outraged that it took such an appalling murder to force the Sheriff to act, when they had been complaining about guard violence and abuse for years and even decades. Rev. Nolan recalled the Sheriff's

“Goon Squad” of the 1970s. When they came for you, you knew you were going to end up in the hospital. According to the Prison Law Office, Santa Clara County has one of the worst jails in the state.

The Rally was called by Silicon Valley DeBug, NAACP, PACT (People Acting in Community Together), and Coalition for Justice and Accountability. The crowd was addressed by the mother of Mario Martinez, who died from an asthma attack after being denied medical treatment in jail in nearby Alameda County. Laurie Valdez and Jim Shulman, whose loved ones were killed in separate incidents by local police, testified as well.

“We want justice for our people,” chanted the demonstrators as they marched around the high-rise jail, while inmates banged on the bars above. Who are our people? They are certainly our friends and family, but more. As one supporter told me, “If they are human beings who are being mistreated, they are our people.” If the homeless, the poor, and all people discarded by the system can learn to stand up for one another, regardless of color or nationality, as these ralliers did on September 4, then Michael Tyree's death will not have been in vain.



Supporters protest the brutal murder of homeless inmate by jail guards in Silicon Valley in August.

PHOTO/SANDY PERRY

Tenant uprising in Silicon Valley

By Sandy Perry

SAN JOSE, CA — People in San Jose, California and elsewhere in the Silicon Valley area have erupted in a surge of organizing activity around skyrocketing rents and deteriorating housing. Their desperation had been building for years and finally reached a tipping point in May, motivating Downtown Councilmember Raul Peralez to release a memo calling for rent reform. Hundreds rallied to support new rent controls, while the Mayor and other Councilmembers hurried to jump on board. According to poll results released in August, 72% of San Jose residents now support a strict 2% cap on annual rent increases in the city.

The crisis in housing and homelessness in Silicon Valley has been severe since the 1980s, but recently it has become extreme. Over time, as corporations replaced workers with automation, they more and more refuse to pay taxes to support housing programs for workers they do not need. In a capitalist

economy, they cannot support policies that do not increase their profits. As a result the government is forced to starve the federal Section 8 housing program, to the point where the Housing Authority proposes new cutbacks almost every year.

In the meantime, a temporary boom in demand for highly paid technology workers has driven housing prices and rents through the roof. One recent report showed average rent for a two-bedroom San Jose apartment is now \$2917 a month. The surge in median incomes is also pushing up rents for “affordable” tax credit housing to the point where fixed-income seniors and people with disabilities fear being forced out of their homes. Many case workers simply advise seniors and disabled to leave the area (and their support systems) because there is no housing available here for people like them.

Stopping the cuts and enacting stricter rent controls by themselves will not end the crisis, but they are an opportunity to engage and educate the people around



Renters' protest in San Jose, California, home of the billion dollar high tech industry. Skyrocketing rents of up to \$3000 a month are forcing low-wage workers out.

PHOTO/ KRISTIN PEDDERSON

their true class interests. People without property have nothing in common with capitalist corporations that prey on them to make money. Corporations are refusing to house people unless they can make a profit by doing so. Government refuses to help because it has been more and more taken over by the corporations. This is a systemic breakdown and requires a systemic solution.

We cannot change anything unless we fight for our rights, including our right to decent,

safe, affordable housing for ourselves and our families. We have to demand stronger rent control and restoration of every program, but we need to understand that these are only temporary fixes. The real victory is our unity, and our realization that the system is abandoning us and we need to rely on one another to survive. These are the first steps on the path to building the new society we need and deserve, one based on human rights instead of private profit.

2011

Kelley Thomas
Thirty-seven years old
Homeless, Anglo,
schizophrenic man.
Citrus-scented
hallucinations
Taunt his fevered
Fulterton, California,
street dreams.
Beaten to death by the
police.

— Lew Rosenbaum

Housing is a human right

By Leslie Willis

CHICAGO, IL — “Human bodies need sleep—Humans need a place to sleep!” read the sign in front of a Tent City in Chicago’s Uptown neighborhood.

Hot dogs off the grill fed the crowd of homeless people that gathered for a protest. Those who had tents pitched them on a grassy area near the viaducts where they had been allowed to sleep until the city forced them out, using the excuse of upcoming lakefront concerts.

“I don’t understand the harm in allowing them to rest their tired feet at the end of the night by sleeping under a tree? I don’t understand why you have taken a personal vindictive against someone who has no money in their pocket to pay for a room or to provide a home for themselves? Why has the homeless become your enemy? Why do you pick on them by demanding the police department wake up, kick out and force hardship on a man or woman who has no place to go?” wrote Tent City organizer, Carol Boyd, in a letter to the Chicago Park District.

Everyone at the protest had hardships that were painful to even hear about, let alone bear: from endless rounds of bureaucracy that never result in aid to unbelievable cruelty at the hands of our government. One young woman had her baby taken away from her at the hospital, because she could not find a shelter that would take them both.

Such hardships are a motivating force for people to join together and organize to resist the growing anti-homeless ordinances and harassment, and assert the natural rights of all human beings to have a place to sleep undisturbed through the night.



Protest in the Uptown neighborhood in Chicago to resist the growing anti-homeless ordinances and harassment. PHOTO/LESLIE WILLIS

During the evening, Chicago Police threatened to arrest the protesters. Organizers asserted their First Amendment right to protest in a “public right of way,” and the police backed off. “Tonight is a victory, but it’s only the beginning of our fight,” Carol Boyd told a cheering crowd, despite the drenching rain. As soon as the protest was over, however, the police moved in, uprooting the homeless from the area.

Organizers point to Alderman James Cappleman as a driving force behind the harassment of homeless people in Uptown to accommodate wealthy property developers who are drooling over the dollars to be made off lakefront properties. This story is repeated throughout the city. Property developers’ desires come before the needs of Chicago’s people.

Anyone standing in the way of the needs of these large private property owners is considered an “enemy” and apparently there are no human rights that they have to respect. As more and more of us find our situations deteriorating, something definitely must give. Besides the growing homelessness, most people are fighting a losing battle attempting to make the rent, the house note, and take care of all the other needs that we humans have.

What if we the people could confiscate the land that is now in the hands of large private property developers and use it to provide housing for all who really need it whether they have money or not. Isn’t it time to assert this new thinking: that housing is a human right that no one should be allowed to deny.

Help get the People’s Tribune out to homeless and housing groups!

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing is a stark example of the degeneration of an economic system based on the private property of a billionaire owning class. Automation is throwing workers out, permanently. The corporate government will not provide for workers that can no longer be exploited. The only solution is a cooperative society where the needs of all will be met. As a first step, the government must release the housing it owns to those who need it, not to the speculators.

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Everything

I am reminded again
as though I didn’t know
down in the broken
homeless camps
down at the curb

down by the
Bryant St shelter
under the overpass
where people chased away
the water-torture trucks

at the foot of the condo of
the latest ambitious
scapegoater aiming
for higher office
we are down here
mighty in the gutter

playing the fools
of liberation
because they stole
all our chains

he said ‘it was all those
occupy drunks who
tossed the tea into the Bay’

the crackbrained who sit
outside everything
backs to the wall
writing our manifestos

in every layer of meaning
the same cry and call
we are hearing

out of what is arising
out of this cracking
heard round the world

it is we
who have nothing at all
who are simply everything

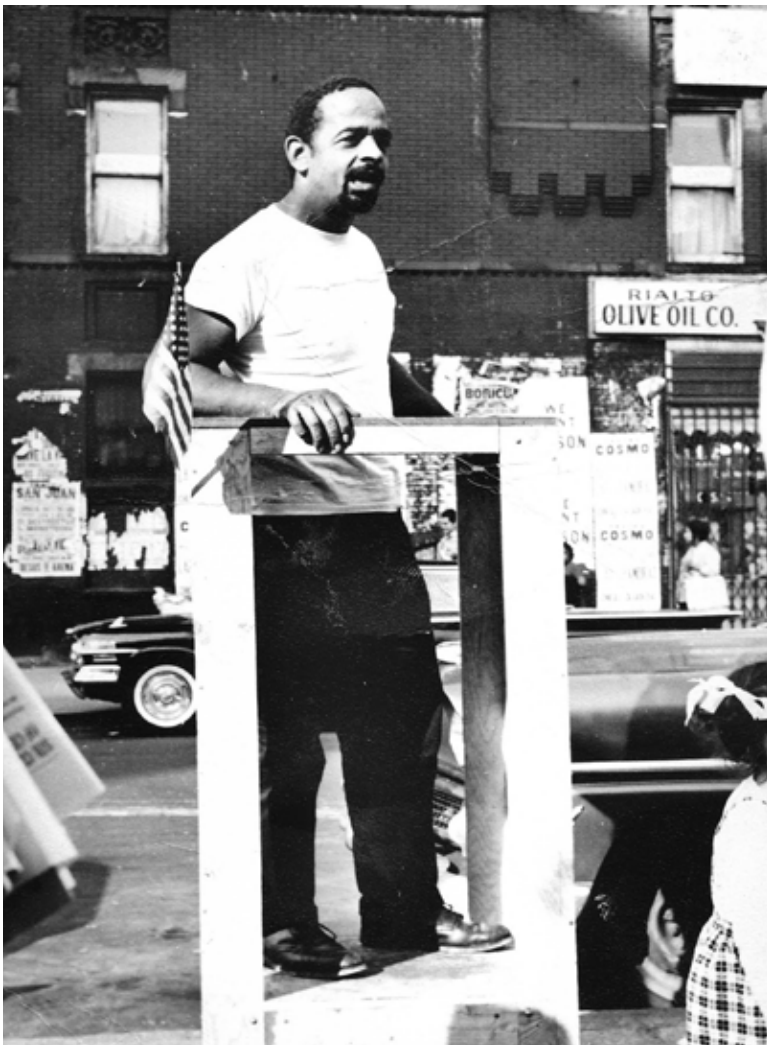
— Sarah Menefee

Thousands of tax foreclosures devastate Detroit

By Geo Errol Jennings, President, Russell Woods Neighborhood Association

Please understand why coming together is important! The NAACP is not doing it. The churches are not standing with us! Where are our people? Around 28,500 homes are being loaded to sell online right now! We should have thousands at every rally! We are running out of time but we can stop this if we unite. How is displacing a 100,000 people not a humanitarian crisis? Oh, and the water shutoffs— that too! Please watch this video. See a 68-year-old get thrown out of her family home! The taxes are trumped— illegal—but we need to be united! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s69HSYSx0>

Nelson Peery, 1923-2015



Nelson Peery speaks on a soap box in Harlem in 1960. People were interested in the cause and solution to problems in their lives and the world.

The Bricklayer In Memory of Nelson Peery

At 92 years young,
He had to know
He would not see
The future he envisioned

He fought for it anyway
Brick by brick

A society where all
Have their basic needs met
And the means of production
Is in the workers hands

Tomorrow is Labor Day 2015
Is it mere
coincidence
That we have
Lost Nelson Peery today?

I met him
On his 92nd birthday
Where I learned
He had climbed a roof
In his 80s
He was always ready
To do the work

He laid the first bricks
Of the new society
For us

Rally comrades!
Take up your spade
And continue the work!

— Eric Allen Yankee

Dear Readers,

It is with great sorrow that we inform you that our beloved comrade, Nelson Peery, editorial board member and founder of the People's Tribune, died on September 6, 2015, in Chicago at the age of 92.

At given moments, history creates possibilities for humanity to progress. Whether the opportunity comes to fruition depends on the conscious activity of people. In such periods, outstanding individuals who understand what history has made necessary and possible can make a decisive contribution to liberating humanity. Nelson Peery was such a person.

He was an American revolutionary and lifelong communist. Nelson fought capitalism throughout his life, never failing to educate everyone he met about the vision of the new world that is possible and how to achieve it. A World War II veteran with three campaign ribbons and four battle stars, his life and revolutionary work is documented in his published works. He was a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America.

Nelson, almost certainly the greatest revolutionary thinker of our times, helped develop the theoretical, philosophical, and organizational foundation for the time when conditions would make revolution possible. He understood that individuals can accomplish nothing acting alone, and he worked constantly with others to build revolutionary organizations aimed at making workers conscious of their revolutionary role. He always said that organization and consciousness are the only weapons the workers have in their struggle for a new world. Nelson stressed the importance of studying and learning how to analyze the world in order to change it, and he felt any worker could do this.

Nelson's contribution bridged two historical epochs, beginning in capitalism's industrial era and ending in the era of electronics. He was among the first to grasp that electronics is permanently replacing human labor, and that this fact means that a

cooperative society where society's abundance is distributed to all is no longer a dream. Such a new society is simply the practical solution to the crisis of a dying capitalism. Nelson also wrote groundbreaking works on the color (race) question, and was among the first to recognize that the economic changes wrought by electronics—which results in growing sections of workers becoming equally impoverished—is today undercutting the rulers' ability to use color to divide workers. "I don't care whether you are Black or White or Latino. When the robot comes into your factory, you are laid off," he said. But, he also understood that working class unity must be fought for.

As part of the struggle for this unity, Nelson fought for the role of a revolutionary press in educating and arousing the people. "A movement," he said, "is a cause and a press." He pushed for the People's Tribune, and its sister publication, the Tribuno del Pueblo, to be visionary papers of and for the growing revolutionary movement. These papers are today emerging as a voice of the homeless and other struggles for survival.

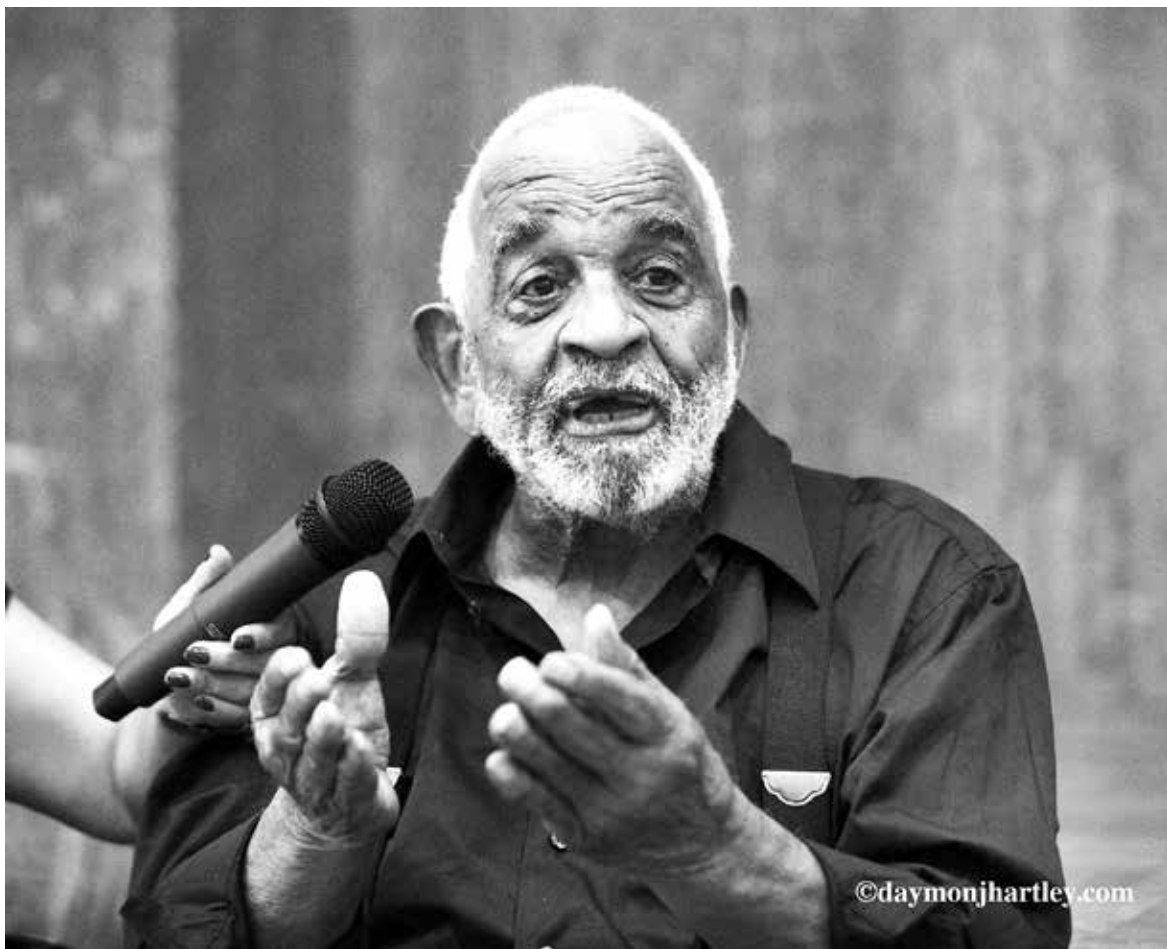
Comrade Nelson, we thank you for your profound devotion to and faith in the working class and your conviction that this fight can be won. We call on our readers to continue to help build a revolutionary press that the movement so urgently needs. We call on you to contribute articles, raise funds and distribute the People's Tribune and Tribuno del Pueblo in order to help humanity fight for the new, cooperative society that history now demands. Time is short.

Where our rulers offer only poverty, fascism, war, and possible nuclear and environmental destruction, the unity of workers at the core of a huge movement for a new cooperative world has the potential to save humanity. Nelson's message to revolutionaries would be: "To the forge, Comrades! Strike where the iron is hot!"



Family members gather around Nelson Peery on his 92nd birthday.

PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS



Nelson Peery speaking at the celebration of his life on his 90th birthday. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

Portrait of Nelson Peery

With a small stick he worked the grains of wheat
out of the cracks between the rotten boards
of the boxcar floor flying through the Depression

and built a little mountain of them in his palm,
which he'd carry in his pocket
down to the twilight hobo jungle to share.

But as if from inside his guts in that rattling,
old snake of a train, those grains would burst into
ideas about how to make it so's a man would

never have to earn his meal on his knees
in this king-hating country, a generation before
a prophet turned up named King.

Now we're all together whether we like it or not.
The snake's even snakier; you can crawl or
flop down in the corner of the car, do whatever

you can get away with in this thing hurtling through
space. But half a hundred years later, a piece of
something to eat can still work up an appetite for Revolution.

— By Jack Hirschman

Editor's note: As a young man during the Depression, Nelson and millions of others rode the rails West looking for work. What Nelson experienced, including this description of hunger, is a powerful story from a great revolutionary's life.

Upon Reading 'Man With The Hoe'

Strangling in the muck of history
He leans against the tavern wall
And silently gazes across the Avenue
Where watchdogs of property
With vulture eyes and shotguns
Impose Pax Americana.

With the brooding hatred of the helpless
With the weight of tradition's chains
Upon sagging shoulders,
He indicts
The lords of heaven and hell

You, who stole the rapture of his youth,
You who heaped grief upon sorrow,
You who hoped to silence hope
With the authority of fear —
Listen to the silence —
Do not believe
It is submission,
Or that the lowered eyes no longer see
The mountain.

For he is the son of the slave
Who built and brought down
Empires of the ages.

His are the hands that created
The vaulted heaps of gold and silver,
Inspired the art, the soothing music —
That dragged humanity from the swamp.

You! Lords of the universe!
Do you believe those who concretized dreams
Do not dream?
Or those who materialized vision
Have no future?

He is the gathering storm,
The whirlwind that thunders
Condemnation!

More than destroy the old —
The guns of pride, of property and privilege,
He will build the world of peace and love.
And dance with six winged Angels.

— Nelson Peery

Editor's note: "The Man With the Hoe," by Edwin Markham written in 1871, showed the laborer bent down under the system that oppresses him. Nelson's poem shows a worker, not submissive, but part of the gathering storm of revolution.

Corpses discovered in unmarked graves in Texas

By Juan Torres

WESLACO, TEXAS — The dog days of summer and climate change are present in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. Experiencing 105 to 108 degrees in the shade and more in direct sunlight, a toll is taken on the region with endless drought and occasional downpours causing flash flooding and property damage, including loss of livestock and worthless land.

Once again we hear of another surge of immigrant refugees coming through our southern borders with Mexico, especially the Rio Grande Valley. Now, with the fall of the Mexican peso and world trade markets plunging to historically low levels, the influx of immigrants could become the same as last year.

Bypassing the valley and entering through Falcon Dam, they traverse the northern parts of Zapata, Starr, Jim Hogg and Brooks counties, in an attempt to avoid the Border Patrol. They arrive at a point north of Falfurrias, Texas to get a ride to Houston or Dallas. This is a desolate

land of cattle “Rancherías”, no water, rattlers and high chaparral. Carrying only scant water and food, immigrants traverse these 50 miles of wilderness at a fast trot. Don’t get lost or disoriented, or run out of water. At times you may want to give up, get help at some ranch, turn yourself in and get deported or you can die out here. Many are successful but many are not that lucky.

In the summer of 2014, between 300-400 corpses were discovered in several mass unmarked graves around the Falfurrias, Texas area. The bodies were turned over to local funeral companies which discarded the remains when no one claimed them. Through the efforts of Eduardo “Eddie” Canales, the South Texas Immigration Center in Falfurrias, Texas, a number of the bodies have been identified. The families would appreciate anything that could remind them of their lost relatives to bring closure.

The center, along with some progressive ranchers, set a network of watering stations and resting areas on private land



Graves in a cemetery in Falfurrias, Texas where unidentified migrants are buried. Dozens die in the long, hot walk around a Border Patrol checkpoint north of the Mexican border. This marker says, “Unknown Male.”

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

to assist stranded immigrants and help them in their trip to

the Norte in search of the illusory American Dream.

We have to ask: is this the kind of society we want?

Migrant deaths at the border occur every day

By Jim West

DETROIT, MI — She stepped out of the Border Patrol truck sobbing. From San Luis Potosi in north central Mexico, the attractive 39-year-old woman had successfully slipped across the Rio Grande and had been trying to walk around a permanent Border Patrol checkpoint on Highway 281 near Falfurrias, Texas. It’s what some call the “second border,” 70 miles north of the river.

I didn’t ask her name. I don’t know if she was entering the U.S. to find work. I don’t know if she had children. I don’t know what her hopes and dreams were. All I know is that they ended on July 24 in the inhospitable terrain of the world-famous King Ranch. A few feet away, her husband lay dead in the sand.

Brooks County Chief Deputy Sheriff Benny Martinez had arranged for me to ride along with one of his officers to see what the terrain looks like that

swallows so many migrants. Relatively few die trying to cross the Rio Grande. The second border is the real killer. The coyote will drop them off around Encino, south of the checkpoint, with instructions to walk to Highway 285, maybe 20 miles away. Sometimes the migrants will be told it’s a 30-minute walk.

But even if they know the highway is a couple days away, few are prepared for the conditions. The temperature in Falfurrias today was 100 degrees. Tomorrow 99. Friday 99. Saturday 100 again. The scrub brush is thick enough that it’s easy to get lost, and heavy enough to block any breeze. The sun beats down all day.

The couple was found because the wife called 911. Her husband had laid down to rest, and then stopped breathing. By the time the Border Patrol arrived, he was gone.

When we got there, he lay under a tree, one hand out-

stretched, the other on his belly. A sheet covered his face.

Before she was led away, the new widow was given a chance to say good-bye. Tears running down her face, she walked back to her husband’s body, laying her hand on his chest. As she was driven off by a Border Patrol agent, the funeral home workers wrestled the corpse into a body bag. They had a difficult time carrying it away through the deep sand.

I asked the Justice of the Peace how often his happens. “In the summer?” he asked. “Almost every day.”

Divided we fall

From the Editors

The attack on immigrants in America is relentless, as the articles on this page illustrate. We must draw a line now. It is not possible—and our rulers are well aware—to have a democratic society when any sector of the working class is denied their humanity and isolated from the rest. And, that’s the point. Capitalism is a dying system. With its permanent displacement of more and more workers of every color and nationality by automation, the rulers need a dictatorship to contain the inevitable struggle for food, shelter, healthcare and a decent life. That’s why they must divide us.

We must unify and fight for a new society where the people, not a small billionaire class, with their lackies in the Democratic and Republican parties, run society. As a first step toward that vision, we must embrace the immigrant worker as an essential part of the working class. In Europe, the people are defying their governments and coming out to support the refugees. Let’s attack the rulers’ strategy by uniting our class.



People’s Tribune Radio podcasts are available at peopletribune.org. Hear from people at the forefront of the struggles for a new America.

Why are children denied birth certificates in America?

By Jose Torres

WESLACO, TX — The state of Texas is already practicing Donald Trump's and other candidates' propositions to deny citizenship to U.S. born children whose parents are undocumented.

The children's parents are undocumented and do not have the documents the state of Texas suddenly decided to require. The old regulations said that a registration, driver's license, or voter identification card from the parent's country of origin were enough for the parents to obtain a birth certificate for their U.S. born child.

As of 2013, however, the Department of Vital Statistics decided that such documentation is no longer sufficient. Texas knows a big percentage of undocumented parents will not be able to provide the documents the state is asking for.

This is happening alongside of the large influx of immigrants from Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala who

are fleeing the violence, much of which is U.S. inspired, in their respective countries. The real reason the state of Texas is imposing these new regulations is to criminalize undocumented immigrants and their children.

The position the state of Texas has taken leaves U.S. born children undocumented. The children cannot prove they are U.S. citizens because they do not have a birth certificate. Furthermore, the state of Texas makes them second-class citizens exposing them to all kinds of abuses. They will also be denied benefits like an education and medical treatment—benefits every other U.S. citizen has.

The state of Texas treats undocumented immigrants like criminals. Undocumented immigrants have to hide in the shadows. It is for these reasons that parents decided to speak out against the new regulations imposed by the state of Texas. They do not want their U.S. born children treated in the same manner, and with the possibili-

ty of never obtaining a birth certificate. Different organizations have offered support to the parents. The parents, along with these organizations, have filed a lawsuit in federal court to stop the state's unlawful and repressive practice.

The ramifications of the new regulations are much more than just denying citizenship to children. This is an attack on the U.S. working class as a whole; it gives the government power to deny citizenship to any U.S. born child. No one is safe.

This is happening because the U.S. economic crisis is forcing the rich/capitalists to find a group of vulnerable workers and use them as an excuse for the economic crisis so the working class does not see who the real enemy is. As the way products are produced—from manual labor to robotics—with the resulting low wage or permanent unemployment in many industries, the capitalists need to make it seem as if one section of workers is causing the problem rather than the sys-



Protest in defense of the immigrant worker in Michigan.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

tem itself.

This is why undocumented workers and their children born in the U.S. are constantly attacked. The capitalists will try to keep their power at any expense. We

must not fall for the capitalist propaganda. We must defend the undocumented workers. If we don't, the entire working class—regardless of nationality or color—might be next.

Is Trump the new Hitler?

By Alex Suarez

TAMPA, FL — Trump's latest call for pogroms against about 12 million people, including "anchor babies" who are half this amount, and deporting all undocumented workers in the US, is unconstitutional to say the least. The fact is that the most people ever deported in a year in the US was under Obama. But who has foreseen the wall being built on the Mexican border as Bush did, and the quarter of a million people taken through the process of each immigrant having a hearing, right to appeal, legal counsel, etc. To deport 12 million that way would take 40 years. Trump wants to make an executive order and now wants the rest of the wall built, and for Mexico to foot the bill. He fails to mention a partial wall has already been built.

Trump probably wants all 12 million people put in concentration or FEMA camps, and processed rapidly to be sent back. Many will likely face death as refugees who are supposed to be protected by international norms, if they return to Central America, to countries destabilized by the US since the 1950s. This was begun by Reagan, and continued with the US backed coup against democratically-elected progressive



Dump Trump and his hotel March in Washington DC.

PHOTO/ELVERT BARNES PROTEST PHOTOGRAPHY

Zelaya in 09' in Honduras.

Back in the US-Mexican war, the northern half of Mexico was taken mostly by conquest, and this was expressly to expand slavery. Women were raped, civilians burned in churches for being Catholic or Mexican, to the point that many of the Irish recruited on the American side ended up changing sides. To the many of these Mexicans returning to their ancestral land, or having been there all along, being called illegal is ironic, let alone Native Americans whose land was stolen

by the US as well.

Whether or not you agree with Obamacare, 90% of Americans signed up for it. As one of Trump's executive orders, he wants to repeal this and make all those Americans covered by insurance pay expensive bills again to survive. Trump is a billionaire and is not in touch with the working class of the US, even if he pretends to be anti-establishment. Trump's idea of strong-arm politics could lead us into WWII. His plan to demand from Putin, in his first meeting with

Letter to the Editor on Donald Trump

Editor's note: Reader Francesco Reyes responds to a People's Tribune article entitled, "Attack on Immigrants Aims to Cultivate a Fascist Movement" in its August, 2015 issue.

Can I sue Donald Trump for defamation of character?

My parents brought me to the US from Mexico. I am a proud father of two children. My wife and I have taught our two kids to be honest, have a good work ethic and integrity. We are proud of their degrees from prestigious universities.

I worked twenty plus years without missing a day of work, even when sick. Now Donald Trump, possibly the future president of the United States, is telling my kids that I'm a criminal and a rapist, expelled from Mexico because of my criminal activity.

Promoting hate to gain the presidency should not be tolerated. Either he gives names and clears mine, or pays for defaming my honor.

Donald Trump is not a late night comedian, he is aiming for the Presidency of the US. People believe what he says. Can I sue Donald Trump to clear my name?

him, that he deport Snowden, to face execution or imprisonment in the US, is not a good one to say the least.

Having studied what happened in Germany, I see many similarities with Trump. People see Trump as a joke, underestimate him, ignore his rhetoric, and do not see the danger of what can happen if he takes power. For

Trump to fulfill his promises he would have to make himself dictator and would start war, possibly even a civil war, as millions of people would be rounded up and prepared for deportation. If they come for the Mexicans they will eventually come for you. It's time once and for all for Trump to be exposed and shunned in our political process.

Mass incarceration! We must unify to stop it



PAINTING/ANDY WILLIS

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

COLDWATER, MI — You better keep your mind on your freedom and freedom on your mind. You may think you know how the criminal justice system works. But TV is overloaded with fictional dramas about crime, police, and prosecutors—for a reason.

These dramas, including the evening News, focus on stories of victimization and punishment. A charismatic police officer, investigator or prosecutor struggles with his own demons, while heroically trying to solve a horrible crime, made for TV. He ultimately achieves a personal and moral victory by finding the bad guy and throwing him in jail. This is all made to brainwash the public, and get them to accept mass incarceration and a police state that is put into place to contain the poor.

Such stories perpetuate the myth that the primary function of the system is to keep our streets safe and houses secure by rooting out dangerous criminals and punishing them. TV shows, especially those that romanticize drug law

enforcement, are the modern day equivalent of old movies, portraying happy slaves. They are the fictional gloss placed on a brutal, fascist system of oppression and control based on the slave patrols of yesteryear.

Those swept into the criminal justice system know the way the system actually works. When trying the poor, it's easy to get convictions through a justice system that looks after the interests of the wealthy. When the poor are also Black, convictions are often guaranteed by all white juries who are motivated by something other than the truth. Full blown trials, supposedly to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, rarely occur; most of the poor never even have an attorney. Witnesses are routinely paid and coerced by the government. Penalties for many crimes are so severe that innocent people accept plea bargains. Even children as young as 14 are sent to prison. And in Michigan, the over 45,000 inmates includes 43 older than 80, 414 ages 70 to 79 with more than 2,000 in their 60s. Prisoners over 80 years old can

barely walk and are not a threat to society.

Convictions for drug offenses are the single largest cause for the explosion in incarceration rates in the US. Drug offenses account for 2/3 of the rise in the prison population between 1985-2000. Approximately 1/2 million people are in prison or jail for drug offenses compared to an estimated 41,000 in 1980, an increase of 1,100 percent. Nothing has contributed more to the mass incarceration of people of color in the US than the “war on drugs.” The myth is that the “war on drugs” is aimed at ridding the nation of drug kingpins or big time dealers, when in reality it is a war on the poor, those the system has discarded.

Although the government is discussing prison “reform,” real change cannot come about without the poor coming together and unifying themselves. This means the Blacks, Whites, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, whatever, must stand together to fight this monster. Ultimately we are talking about a totally different type of society.

Benton Harbor: ‘You deserve to be heard!’

By Emma Kinnard

BENTON HARBOR, MI — I'm running for Commissioner at Large in Benton Harbor, MI. Mary Donald, the previous commissioner passed away. Up to then I had no desire to run because I felt she was doing a good job. So, now I'm running as a write in candidate. After she passed away I knew the wolves would be out and I didn't want to make it easy for them. Once they get your vote and they're in, you never hear from them. They have their own agenda.

My platform is “You deserve to be heard!” I will be your voice. That's why I'm running.

The city needs so much. One of the things involves water. Drains are plugged up. You can't go in and clear them out. In the winter, there's ice and it's easy for a car to start sliding and hit another car. Water bills are crazy. They won't do anything about it, but, anytime the downtown people ask for something, they jump right to it.

The phone and cable company cut branches and leave them on your property. Then that person gets ticketed to get the

branches out. They don't even have a service to pick up branches. You have to call a company and pay.

They want the city to become decayed so they can get the properties for zero. Whirlpool then comes in and has access to the best property. They want us out of here. They closed most of the schools. The high school will be moved way out of town. The gimmick is to run residents out by moving schools further out. Children have to catch a bus to get out there. Then they'll say they don't have money to bus the kids and the parents will have to move out there.

The officials like the city manager that runs the city, and even the school superintendent, don't do anything without making a phone call, to get an OK from Whirlpool. We've got a city of puppets. They only move when the strings are pulled. We're knocking on doors and telling people what is going on. We want to make the people a part of it. I tell them, “You voted me in and now you come and support us, because I'm supporting you. I'm a resident here too and what happens to you happens to me.”



Emma Kinnard is running for Commissioner at Large in Benton Harbor, MI.

PHOTO/PATI HEINZ

The former County Commissioner Bob Wooley stole money yet he is treated better than Rev. Pinkney who they weren't able to nail down with any evidence, but convicted him anyway. Now they want to get the dirt they want done before he gets out. We need to raise funds for Rev. Pinkney's defense. Let him know we're still here fighting and that we support him. Make a donation at the BANCO website, bhbanco.org. And, vote for Emma Kinnard as a write in.

Support the People's Tribune!

Benton Harbor, MI is ground zero in the corporate privatization of all things public and the outright theft of government of, for and by the people. Corporate owned media will not cover that story and keeps it out of the news. On this page is an article by Emma Kinnard entitled, “You deserve to be heard,” which sheds light on the struggle to change that. If you are the homeless, the dispossessed, the underemployed or the family just struggling to survive, the People's Tribune opens it's pages to your story. Get bundles of the paper, pass them out and spread the word. Call 800-691-6888, visit peopletribune.org or email info@peopletribune.org

Free Rev. Edward Pinkney!

We encourage our readers to visit justice4pinkney.com on Facebook, the web, and Twitter. This is the official website for the Free Rev. Pinkney defense. Rev. Pinkney is incarcerated because he stood up for the poor against the giant corporations that have taken over our country. This struggle is everyone's struggle.

Write Rev. Pinkney at Rev. Edward Pinkney, #294671, Lakeland Correctional Facility, 141 First St., Coldwater, MI 49036.

Donate for the defense at bhbanco.org.