



People suffering from the growing poverty in the country make their voices heard outside the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia in August. PHOTO/HARVEY FINKLE

ELECTIONS 2016: RAISE THE DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE

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Wide scale poverty makes class unity possible

EDITORIAL

Hardly a day goes by before some new video goes viral vividly showing police brutalizing and gunning down working class Americans. As the bodies of the poor murdered by police pile up, so do the protests against it. In response, the ruling class is criminalizing protests and targeting anyone who resists in the slightest.

When homeless protesters are caught sleeping or activists caught feeding the homeless, they are often routed, cited or arrested. When protesters for clean water get in front of judges they're having the book thrown at them. A woman was arrested at a protest in Flint, Michigan, charged with battery for trying to defend herself against security guards who physically attacked her and took away her bull horn. When she went before the judge, the judge likened her actions to the shooting of police officers in Dallas, Texas.

A reporter described her arrest in Baton Rouge while covering a protest against the murder of Alton Sterling by police there. "I was pulled into the street by the police and then arrested. Papers were already pre-filled out with charges. When police showed up to that protest, they were militarized with bomb resistant vehicles, body armor, and assault rifles which they pointed at peaceful protesters with their fingers on the triggers." This has become the norm since Ferguson.

So why is all this happening?

These are revolutionary times. Although none of the mainstream presidential candidates dare speak about it, the jobs aren't coming back. Laborless production is throwing more and more workers out of indus-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

trial manufacturing and even white-collar jobs permanently by replacing them with computers and robots. As a result, equality is being found in common poverty and violence from the police, and people are coming together.

Whites are showing up to protests with signs that read "Black Lives Matter" and "stop killing Black people." In Washington DC, a Black organizer told a crowd that suffering and being killed by police is spreading, adding, "We have to move beyond being allies to being comrades in this struggle." A son of Mexican immigrants, outraged about the police killing of a Fresno, CA teen, said, "He's white and he died in the streets the same way a lot of brown and Black people have."

While there have always been

workers who have attempted to reach across color lines to form bonds of class, now, because of the economy, for the first time in history, wide scale poverty is making class unity possible.

democracy—based in economic rights for all—is growing. The working class needs unity as a step toward building a cooperative future where human life matters and the means of life are

A powerful movement demanding true democracy—based in economic rights for all—is growing.

The electronic revolution in the economy is pulling all of us into the future. The ruling class is escalating their violence against us to prevent our unity. The rulers need a police state as a step toward a fascist future where their wealth and private property are protected. But a powerful movement demanding true

provided to all equally.

We must continue to utilize this electoral season to push forward our demands for an end to police violence, for food, housing, healthcare and for government to be our government. This is a step toward a cooperative future where everyone's needs are met.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

An economic system that doesn't feed, clothe and house its people must be and will be overturned and replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a 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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Rally in Chicago for \$15 an hour and a union. Workers are bringing their demands into the elections, saying there is no excuse for poverty wages. PHOTO/BOB SIMPSON

Elections 2016: Raise the demands of the people

If it wasn't clear before, the 2016 elections have proven to tens of millions of Americans that the current "two-party" system offers our people nothing. Both parties represent corporate America, and no matter whether Clinton or Trump is elected, the billionaires and the corporations will still be in power. But there is a path forward. Among the workers something new is arising.

We saw it in the 13 million who voted for Bernie Sanders, and who, with many others, continue to fight for a political program in the people's interests. People are demanding the government be taken away from the billionaires, and that its resources be used to provide jobs, education, housing, health care and protect the environment. They are demanding an end to government-sponsored violence against the people. They are demanding an end to war. Many are rejecting

the idea of voting for the lesser of two evils. Some people are moving toward other parties, such as the Green Party. We will likely see new parties arise from this electoral process.

We need to understand the situation facing both the billionaire ruling class and the people to guarantee our victory. This economic system is dying because it's based on people having jobs, but the jobs are being eliminated by labor-replacing technology. No business is going to employ workers to do something that can be done more quickly and cheaply by a robot or a computer. A growing number of us are permanently unemployed or marginally employed, and our problems can only be solved by the people taking over the corporations and running them in the interest of society.

The billionaires can't allow this. This is why we are seeing

the elimination of democracy, and its replacement with fascism. Fascism is the open dictatorship of the billionaires and corporations. Economically, it means the corporations use the government to guarantee their economic interests. Politically, it means the end of even the pretense of democracy. Fascism is not a choice the ruling class is making—it's forced on them. In an economy with fewer buyers, they have to funnel public money and public assets to the corporations to guarantee their profits, and they cannot allow the workers to have a vote on how society will be organized. Operating in different ways through both the Clinton and Trump campaigns, they are using this election to advance their goals—to mislead the people and rally them around divisiveness, fascism, and war.

During the elections and beyond, we, the people, must

continue making our political independence from the ruling class a reality. Throughout history, dying systems have been replaced with new ones, and we can do the same. In the end, the reforms we seek can only come about through building a whole new society, a cooperative society where the people, not the corporations, own the factories and other property necessary to society, and we guarantee everyone the necessities of life. This is the only way we will have democracy, peace, and prosperity.

We are taking a step toward that new society if we continue to reject all attacks on democracy. Whether it be through the Green Party or another party, we must put forward the demand that the government guarantee that the basic needs of the people are met.

Envision the new world that is possible

Everybody knows the billionaires are producing more and more today with fewer and fewer workers, and the time is around the corner where we're going to get that production with no workers. There won't be any work—the kind we could call work today won't exist. So what kind of a world are we going to have?

A vision is not a dream. A vision is based in what is possible. In the past, given the level of society's productive forces, it was simply not possible to feed every person on Earth. Today, science and technology has advanced to where we have the capacity to not only save the Earth, but provide food, education, healthcare, and a home to every human being. We have the possibility of every single person leading a happy life.

Vision is about what we can do with these robots and computers—whether they are used for the public good or private aggrandizement.

The future is up to us!

Editor's note: This article is based on the writings of the late Nelson Peery, a life-long revolutionary, member of the People's Tribune Editorial Board, and author of the book, The Future Is Up to Us. Nelson died in September, 2015. Order his visionary book at peopletribune.org.

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Barely surviving by using Florida soup lines. The state ranks number two in the highest homeless population and number one in criminalization of the homeless. State-wide groups are forming to defend the homeless.
PHOTO/REV. BRUCE WRIGHT

By Rev. Bruce Wright

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — In Florida, all is not sunshine and tourism. Florida is the third largest state in the country, with a population of more than 20 million people. It is considered by most political analysts to be a major swing state in elections.

Florida is a tourist state. Florida has many distinctions, many of which are not so positive, particularly, when it comes to homelessness and those experiencing it.

When the foreclosure crisis and the crash of 2008 happened, a new crisis emerged in Florida. That was an explosion of those experiencing homeless-

Florida is not all sunshine – especially for the homeless

ness, some for the first time. Florida ranks among the highest in homeless populations, currently number two in the country. People who had never been homeless or hadn't been homeless in a long time were impacted. And, the power structures of capitalism, tourism, and housing were unprepared for how deep this impact would be. Florida is also at the top of the list in the growth of women, veterans, and families experiencing homelessness. Florida is number one in criminalization of the homeless and hate crimes against those experiencing homelessness.

The impact was such that a statewide group was formed by currently homeless, formerly homeless, advocates, grass roots groups such as the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (Florida Chapter), and legal professionals, to both address the

concerns and the growing number of those criminalized by local municipalities. One of the things coming out of this has been a "Homeless Bill of Rights". (See fhbor.blogspot.com) This bill of rights is an attempt to protect those experiencing homelessness and their human rights, including the right to housing, clothing, food, living wage jobs, and other concerns. It is to look at those experiencing homelessness as a protected class.

Let me share with you the urgency. The organization I work with, Refuge Ministries and the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, is involved in an eviction action and defense of more than 400 people, including 100 children and 35 elderly, under Hospice care. The city of St. Petersburg, in cahoots with a big developer, is attempting to put these people on the street

without any affordable alternative and the big social services of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex are complicit in supporting this. The point behind things such as the "Homeless Bill of Rights" is to give people, such as the victims of the eviction, agency in their own decision making process.

This crisis of homelessness will only grow, especially in Florida. It is incumbent on all who believe in justice for the oppressed class of the poor to join this fight to end homelessness. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Injustice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere." Fight on!

Rev. Bruce Wright is Director of the Refuge, and National Committee of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign in St. Petersburg, FL.

Communities come together to protest vicious eviction law

By Jack Hirschman

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — An extraordinary protest gathering was held recently in North Beach, San Francisco's Washington Square Park, against the vicious Ellis Act, a law that created a scourge of evictions all over California cities on the part of the class of landlords. It highlighted the threatened eviction of 81-year-old Diego De Leo, an Italian immigrant and North Beach resident for more than 30 years, who, after his wife Josephine passed away four years ago, began to write poetry for the first time in his life, just as he was told he was going to be evicted.

The event for Diego and other Ellis Act victims before a crowd of more than 100 people fea-

tured—perhaps for the first time in a generation—the reading of poems in Chinese against the Ellis Act by Chinatown poets, Guang Jian TANG, Zhi Xiong LIU, and Qing Zhi DENG, which were translated for the crowd. Diego De Leo also read his "Eviction!" poem, as did poets Tommi Aviccoli Mecca, and Agneta Falk and Jack Hirschman of the Revolutionary Poets Brigade of San Francisco and the Juana Briones Cultural Committee. Eternally young seniors chanted their disdain for the immoral Ellis Act, as did Lotta Garrity and Maria Maranghi, who are venerable fighters against that malicious legislation.

The beauty of the event was the coming together of the com-

munities of North Beach and Chinatown with young and old in a just struggle against the greed-for-profit that underlies the evictions. The Senior and Disability Action group, the Chinatown Tenants Association, Eviction Free San Francisco, the San Francisco Tenants Union, the Manilatown Heritage Foundation and the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco all participated, and Diego's fighting attorney Steve Collier, also addressed the gathering with fervor, as did brilliant organizers Theresa Flandrigh and Tony Robles, and Lee Hepner of Supervisor Aaron Peskin's office.

It was one of the most momentous events in North Beach in years!

EVICTION!

*I'M BEING EVICTED.
I'M INNOCENT.*

Evicted for whatever reason,
the obvious one is greed.
Seniors at age 70 (me 81), some older,
to be castigated by this snake of law
might be legal, but it's immoral for sure.
Having lived where I am for decades
with my family (a widower now), it
isn't just a place to stay, it's my home
—an emotional investment.

Mayor Lee, Supervisors, you've entered
the elite group with the honorably attached.
Very well then, act like it, do the honorable thing:
make the active evictions "null and void"
so I can live the rest of my life in peace.

— Diego De Leo

Bring Speakers for a New America to your city!

Contact us today about bringing a speaker to your city during this election season. Our speakers are leaders in the fight for a new society.

Today, millions are breaking away from the twin corporate parties. People are demanding the government be their government, not the government of the billionaires, and guarantee jobs, education, housing, healthcare, water, and a safe environment.

Let's discuss how we can achieve this new society where everyone's needs are met.

Call 800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com

Resisting homelessness in the richest place on Earth



Two men pack all they own in a shopping cart during one of San Jose, CA's police sweeps of homeless encampments. PHOTO/SANDY PERRY

By Sandy Perry

Editor's note: Sandy Perry, for the People's Tribune, interviewed some of the leaders of the movement to end homelessness in Silicon Valley.

We asked them: What needs to be done immediately to address the homelessness crisis in Silicon Valley?

Recent studies show that 10% of California university students experience homelessness and 20-40% experience hunger and food insecurity.

Alma Rosas, Affordable Housing Network:

We need to end landlord discrimination against people in the Section 8 housing program. The landlords have a freeze on renting to anyone that receives housing assistance. No one on Section 8 can find an apartment to rent, because either the rent is too high or the landlord will not accept them. Some people on housing are even forced to leave apartments they already have. Then they lose their Section 8, because they do not speak up to demand that the Housing Authority renew their certificate.

Mercy Wong, CHAM Deliverance Ministry:

We need to open up empty buildings so homeless people can move into them. We need to build tiny homes for people that have no place to stay. We also need legal encampments for as long as people need them until there is housing for everyone. Everyone deserves a home, especially the families with children.

Pastor Scott Wagers, CHAM Deliverance Ministry:

When CHAM's Mercy Mobile visits the homeless camps, it is about more than mercy. We not only organize church groups to help the homeless, we organize the homeless to help churches, and everyone to help one another. We strive for the vision of Dr. King, a non-violent army demanding that the government abolish poverty. We preach power, the power we all access when we understand how precious we are in the eyes of God.

Rose Wallis, Low-Income Self-Help Center:

They need to stop police sweeps of homeless encampments. People need a common place to lay their heads at night, a place to get food, showers, and resources. They need a place where they can find the things they need. Without that they can't move forward, they are just living day by day, second by second.

Detroit tax foreclosure crisis hits historic neighborhood

By G. Errol Jennings, former president, Historic Russell Woods-Sullivan Area Association

DETROIT, MI — Historic Russell Woods-Sullivan area of Detroit is a historic district credited with being a premier African American neighborhood. Residents who lived in the neighborhood, in consideration of our historic designation, included all three of the Supremes, Dinah Washington, Brazeal Dennard, Dudley Randall and Civil Rights champion Nicholas Hood, Sr.

Russell Woods became the premier African American community between 1952-1970, partially due to the invisible line of

Livernois Street, which oral history confirms was the racial barrier that Blacks could not cross.

Over the past two years, Russell Woods began the foreclosure season with 200+ homes in foreclosure; a disturbing number considering the neighborhood has 1,100 homes. Assessment values were out of line, some 100 times in excess of other Wayne County cities.

People in Detroit, whose racial makeup is 88% African American, have been for the past six years in perpetual crisis concerning property. The ability to be fairly treated as property owners has impacted as many as 1/6 of the population of Detroit. People

were foreclosed upon for as little as \$200 in a 2015 auction.

To apply for a poverty exemption, one resident in Russell Woods—87 years in age, with a bad hip, and low income—is expected to go downtown, fill out the pre-application, get a real application, prepare a lengthy document and submit it. This could take two or three trips. This resident owned her home since 1959. In her own words, "I used to be able to afford [taxes,] but they skyrocketed and my only income is Social Security." She never qualified. A Good Samaritan paid the back taxes in full.

I helped move a 68-year old music teacher from her home



Homelessness and revolution

Homeless youth protest the "lodging" (don't try to sleep) law in Berkeley, CA, as part of "Occupy the Sidewalks" protests in the San Francisco Bay Area. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

From the Editors

The homeless are those on the leading edge of this great economic tsunami that is threatening to drown us all. There on the streets and in the illegal tent encampments, on the sidewalks under high-rise buildings and hiding in empty foreclosed or burnt-out houses—in every town and city across the country—are people who have been pushed out of the capitalist system. They are united by their common poverty and common demand for the right to what they need to survive, whether they have money or not. This demand is a revolutionary one: it can't be answered without a revolution in the economy to a system based on distribution of all we need according to need. As the economy, based on the buying and selling of people's ability to work, is destroyed by labor-replacing robots, more and more people from all walks of life are pushed out, losing jobs and homes and then falling into the streets. This is not being stopped, and can't be, in a pay-to-play economy. No one who isn't in the owning corporate class is safe. The presence of millions of homeless people of all ages, colors and backgrounds is evidence that the system of corporate private ownership is morally and practically bankrupt. Homelessness unites people across all the false divisions, and is the Achilles heel of a system based on class exploitation. The question of homelessness is a revolutionary one. That's why neither of the major parties can seriously address it, if at all. The fight to end homelessness is the fight for a government that serves the needs of the people and for a new society where everyone's life has value.

which been in the family since 1954 after four attempts in applying for the Michigan Step Forward program, and a poverty exemption through the city. A Russell Woods resident opened her home because she was unable to find public housing and actually faced homelessness. Both seniors tried multiple avenues for remedy and suffered great emotional stress because they faced homelessness for the first time in their lives!

Russell Woods has been

greatly impacted by the transfer of wealth to investors that do not live, interact, or participate in the community. There seems a motivating factor like the \$90 million raised in the 2014 Wayne County Tax Auction and the \$180 million raised in the 2015 Wayne County Tax Auction. The severity of the impact and crisis on human life, cost of living, safety, and blight it generates is catastrophic. The system completely failed its citizens.

Bus trip to Court of Appeals hearing on Michigan's dictator law

By Jim Bish

DETROIT, MI — The Federal Court of Appeals hearing in Cincinnati is a significant fight by the victims of Michigan's Emergency Management (dictator) law. The challenge to the law's constitutionality has now been effectively raised at the Federal level. The appellants need and deserve our full support.

Michigan courts have been in lock step with the decisions to strip local school districts, cities and local government of democratic authority to govern, giving authority to the governor, who exercises it through the "emergency manager system", a truly dictatorial system serving only the corporations. The appellants have made a compelling record that the law's application is targeting communities of color, primarily African American. Whether the Federal judicial system will

side with the state of Michigan and the corporations or with the people remains to be seen.

The people of Michigan, once a heavy industrial state, are facing a double whammy: massive unemployment and under employment in jobs where we barely survive. To top it off, we have to fight off the dictatorial emergency manager laws that are driving us further into poverty, "stealing" our pensions, gutting public education, cutting health care, poisoning and cutting off water to tens of thousands. This is the context in which Michigan residents boarded busses and packed the Cincinnati courtroom to hear the people's case argued.

In the course of the struggle, leaders in Michigan who challenge the law's impact on the people have been targeted by the judicial system. The corporations don't want resistance to their outright theft of public property. Rev.

Edward Pinkney of Benton Harbor, MI has been imprisoned for challenging Whirlpool's corporate vision for the area. Marian Kramer and Rev. Bill Kellerman, charged with obstructing Detroit's massive water shut offs in 2014, are in legal limbo. The Judge refused to let the jury render a decision, while charges remain. More recently, a Flint judge, while sentencing Gertrude Marshall for an altercation with a security guard, who snatched a bullhorn out of her hand during a water protest, compared her actions to what happened in Dallas where five police officers were killed.

The significance of the Federal appeals case is that it connects the dots, tying the many struggles directly to the Emergency Manager law. It makes clear that our fight is with the State as it merges with the corporations. Michigan is a template for what is sure to become national.



People gather in front of the Federal Court building in Cincinnati, Ohio, where a challenge to the constitutionality of Michigan's Emergency Management (corporate dictator) law has been raised to the federal level. This challenge, and the movement around it, is crucial to the struggle for democracy in America. PHOTO/ANNIE KUYKENDALL

Teachers pick up battle for clean water and democracy in Flint

Editor's note: The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) issued a resolution demanding no more Flints. Below are excerpts.

WHEREAS, an estimated 500,000 children in the U.S. have elevated blood lead levels...
WHEREAS, the CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program was stripped of funding in 2011, from \$30 million

to \$2 million...
WHEREAS, the water crisis in Flint is the result of broader policies that include disinvestment in cities, [and] an emergency manager law that nullified local democracy...
WHEREAS, federal, state and local officials have yet to guarantee Flint residents—especially children—safe and clean drinking water...

WHEREAS, the technology and science have existed for several decades to guarantee every U.S. child and residents housing free of lead contamination...
RESOLVED: The AFT... will advocate for federal legislation that: provides funding... for local education agencies to test and remediate lead in school drinking water... to

prepare all school personnel to support children at risk of and affected by lead exposure... [and] supports... mental health, maternal and child health, physical health and public health insurance programs...
RESOLVED, that the AFT will unequivocally support the repeal of Michigan's emergency manager law, Public Act

436 (2012), and support the Flint community in its efforts to have Flint declared a federal disaster area.

See full resolution at www.aft.org/resolution/no-more-flints-stop-childhood-lead-poisoning-guarantee-all-us-children-lead



"[There] should be a media outcry that only 33 houses with lead pipes have been replaced with lead free water service piping to this day. Shame on GOP government control in Lansing. They are not caring about the kids, seniors, all residents in Flint."

— Letter to the *People's Tribune* from Percy L. Johnson

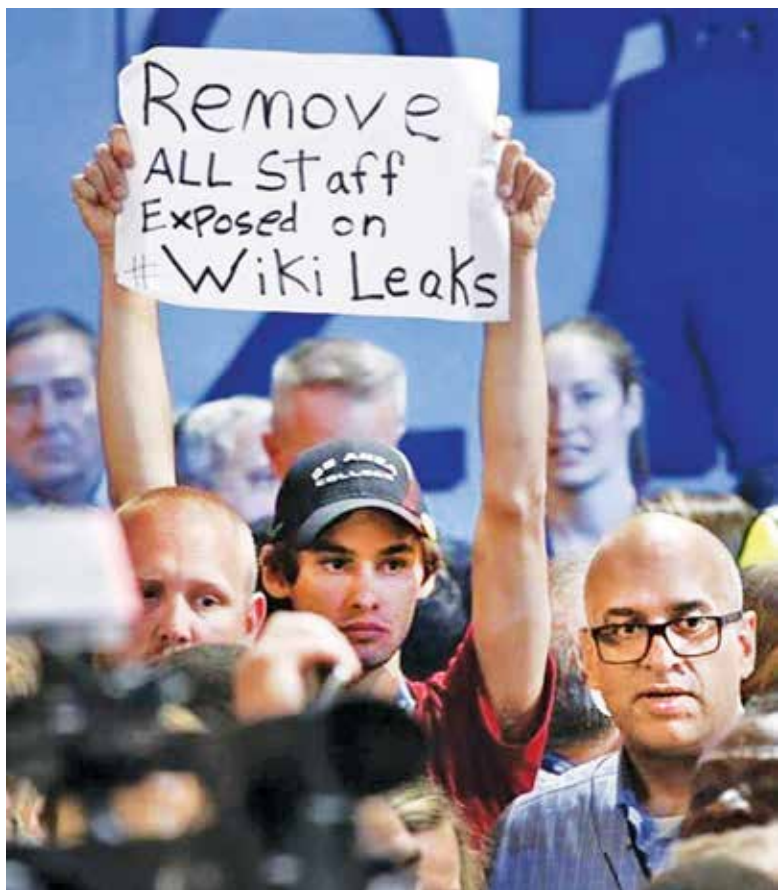
"Flint's about to find out what they are going to shoulder... the water system is threatened to be privatized... Two years ago United Water put in a bid [for Detroit's water]... [But] this is our water system... our mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers paid for this and built this. If water is not a commons what is? If we can't turn on the faucet and brush our teeth, or flush a toilet, then what are we doing? A common is everything we share."

— Charity Mahouna Hicks, a beloved water warrior who died in 2014, said in 2014

"They're trying to tell us the water is getting better? My water has never looked like this since the water crisis began," said Eric Brow of Flint, MI who took this photo.



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



Top left: Bernie delegate Eddie Cisneros stands up for the truth at the Democratic National Convention. An interview with Eddie will be in the October, 2016 *People's Tribune*. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

The elections and the struggle for people's needs

On these pages are expressions of a powerful movement. People are utilizing the elections to put forward demands for what people need and for a government that guarantees these needs. People in Michigan are fighting against fascist laws that strip people of their democracy in order to block their struggle for necessities like clean water. The answer to the billionaire's fascist threat is to demand that the government meet the people's needs. In this fight, we can put forward the vision of a new cooperative society.

— The editors

Voices from the people about the elections

“There’s something many Democrats just don’t get about Bernie supporters. It’s actually pretty simple: many of us are drowning. We can’t find steady work. We can’t afford health care. We can’t send our kids to college and we’re suffocating from school debt. We haven’t had a vacation in years. We are lucky if we get from one paycheck to the next.

You all are quite reasonably afraid of the nightmare that might come with a Trump presidency. We fear that, too. But we are already living in crisis mode. While the candidates differ in significant ways, both offer unthinkable options, whether cutting services, limiting our rights, inciting hatred or promoting an increasingly pro-corporate agenda, destroying our planet, or sending our children to endless war.

Please hear this: I’m furious. I’m furious that my hard work to leave my kids a brighter future is being belittled. I’m furious that Obama protected Clinton. I’m furious at Elizabeth Warren who built a career on getting big money of politics and then, went all in for the Wall Street candidate. I’m furious at the lies the Clinton campaign told about Sanders. I’m furious that the media created the Trump monster. I’m furious that mainstream media lied to suppress the vote. I’m furious that hundreds of thousands of folks in Arizona and New York were denied their right to vote. I’m furious that polling stations closed with lines so long that elderly Puerto Ricans fainted in the hot sun. I’m furious that Clinton declared victory before half the votes in California were even counted.”

— Melisa Crosby, excerpted from a Google document

‘Desperate for Change’ Interview with front-line fighter to end poverty

Editor’s note: After the March for Our Lives and the Democratic National Convention, the People’s Tribune interviewed Cheri Honkala, the director of the Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign.

People’s Tribune: Describe the poverty in Philadelphia and around the country that you addressed with the March for Our Lives.

Cheri Honkala: Poverty is devastating Philadelphia. It is the poorest large city in the U.S., and number one in death by drug overdoses. Poverty is growing everywhere I travel, in Baltimore, Virginia, Ohio, and New York. Recovery programs are getting shut down, housing programs are cut, and shelters are overcrowded everywhere. People are being denied health care. A lot can’t afford to buy Obamacare, so they have no health care and then they get a tax penalty at the end of the year.

PT: What Happened at the March for Our Lives?

CH: This year there were lots of young people, and lots more expressions of political independence from the two party system. The Democrats always corral low-income people through their programs, but now, when the programs are cut they are losing their hold over them. The youth brought a lot of energy to the march and a lot of support to our campaign against poverty. Most of them were for Bernie, and they got their hearts ripped out when he endorsed Hillary Clinton. They are desperate for change, and they can’t get change in the two party system. We can’t go back, we have to go forward, and we are still feeling out what that means and where we go from here.

PT: How did people respond to the Democratic National Convention?

CH: A lot of people experienced a change in consciousness. They said, “Oh my God, the corporations have taken over both parties!” It was like a loss of innocence. At one point, 2000 people were outside chanting “Jill, not Hill!” for the Green Party candidate, Jill Stein. There were young people, people with disabilities, and homeless people. This is an important moment for our country. People will look back at 2016 and say, this is when the two party system started to change. People are looking for a new kind of politics, a politics that doesn’t take money from corporations and doesn’t sell itself to billionaires. This is where the movement has to go if we want to end the poverty that is crushing our people.



People listen to a report back from delegates to the Democratic National Convention at a Detroit Labor for Bernie gathering.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY

“The Sanders campaign was an opportunity to talk about socialism, an opportunity to get millennials to reinforce their anti-capitalist feelings. What kind of organization will come out of this that establishes something of a permanent movement? Some are not going into the Hillary camp, others are reluctantly voting for her. Many are insuring that Republicans are defeated in state elections. The only way I saw to carry on the “political revolution” was to go into the Green Party.”

— Fran Shor, Green Party candidate for Wayne State University Board of Governors

“I’ve never voted in a presidential election, but I knew I would have for Bernie. It’s pretty wild that the oldest candidate running had a majority of the younger generation’s support.”

— Logan, a college student with a lot of student debt

Comments from participants at a Detroit Labor for Bernie gathering:

“Bernie said we want something that is good for people— why are you poisoning and killing the people— 100,000 people in Flint poisoned. They are killing us literally.”

“How proud I am of all of the people that created the political revolution. I saw ordinary working people...”

“We have to be prepared to go from the Democratic Party to a viable third party.”



Akiko Abe says, “Through collaboration, this revolution will succeed.”

PHOTO/PHOTDAYMONJHARTLEY



Protests at Standing Rock. People are standing together at Standing Rock to protect the sacred water. PHOTO/MALIA HULLEMAN

By Malia Hulleman

CANNONBALL, ND — The Standing Rock Sioux tribe of North Dakota got word of the Dakota Access Pipeline and its revised route in early April. Originally, the pipeline was to snake through Bismarck, but that was deemed too dangerous for the highly populated area if it were to burst. The solution: run the pipeline through reservation lands,

fewer people would be at risk.

The Dakota Access Pipeline would be transporting sweet-light crude oil through 50 counties in four states—North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois—while crossing the Missouri River not once, but twice.

Pipelines are notorious for breaking, so it's never a matter of "if, but" when." And when it does burst it would take just five minutes to contaminate the water.

A short two hours later, the polluted water would reach the Cheyenne River, a tributary of the Missouri River, which the reservation has relied on for generations. The contamination would leave absolutely "no warning for us," said Cheyenne River resident Jassilyn Charger. "Some of us will be drinking it without knowing." Both tribes have no filters on their intake system. Their drinking water would be directly

Sacred Waters: Standing with Standing Rock Sioux

mixed with crude oil—among the worst kind of oil that can be introduced to the environment because of the heavy saturation.

Since April, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has been tirelessly working to protect the sacred waters. "Mni Wiconi" in Dakota/Lakota/Nakota means "water is life." It is this mantra that is echoing throughout the world now in the "No DAPL" movement to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Four months into the movement, the protection of the water continues to strengthen as Cannonball, N.D., becomes the forefront of those who stand in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux, Oceti Sakowin collective Dakota, Lakota, and Oglala nations. In just one week, the front line protector numbers grew from a handful to as many as 1,500 people strong. The Standing Rock Sioux officially put the call out for help, and in a matter of days, people from tribes across the county and those of "The Medicine Tribe," comprising of individuals of all backgrounds, made their way to stand together

to protect the sacred water.

The two camps—another had to be added to accommodate the mass influx of water protectors—are a mix of races and represent a powerful statement to the world. It's a display of unity among native people, or people of color and those of European ancestry. Native American tribes, who once stood against each other, are now coming together, after years.

The statement is simple: We are all one race—the human race, and we all need water to survive; we all need land to thrive—and now, for the generations who follow. The peaceful protection is what makes this a sustainable stance.

For now, no drilling can happen, thanks to the peaceful work of the front line protectors and to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's lawsuit against the Army Corps of Engineers who approved the route change in early April. The hearing was held Aug. 24 with a decision to be made by Sept. 9. If an appeal is necessary, a final verdict will be made by Sept. 14th.

The water is not fine

The President says,
 "Drink up! There's no more
 poison here in Flint!"
 But I can still hear the cough
 in these pipes.
 I can still smell the rot
 on these politician's
 dirty tongues.
 Don't come in.
 The water is not
 fine.

— Eric Allen Yankee

Invitation to rally and celebrate water solidarity!

By Nick Bryce, Hans Barbe and Sink Or Swim Charity

DETROIT, MI — In response to the water crises of Detroit, Highland Park and Flint, Michigan, we invite all people of good will to a community festival benefiting the relief efforts, building the movement for life-giving water access and celebrating life itself, this September 23-25 in Detroit. Performers, artisans, parade contingents, speakers, sponsors and festival goers are all called upon to unify their voices, creative talents and resources in solidarity with the thousands of our population cutoff from clean water access.

Our coming together is intended to: Renew the community and media spotlights on the water crises. Give space for victims to share their experiences. Drive charitable donations of money, water, filters and other resources needed in the relief efforts. Educate about the underlying issues and advocate for proposed community and legis-

lative solutions for water access, decontamination and lead poisoning response... all in the midst of a festival atmosphere featuring an eclectic variety of music performances, artists and vendors; speeches from leaders in the water crises response efforts; a city/suburb "unity parade," converging from two opposite directions along Woodward Avenue and rallying at the festival site: kids play areas with games, face painting and bouncy houses; group yoga, meditation and other workshop sessions... and much more.

The struggle for water is a struggle for life, informed and emboldened by the love, culture and community that make life worth living in the first place. In this spirit, the "Sink or Swim" festival invites you to show that the people of Detroit, Highland Park and Flint, Michigan are not alone in their struggle! Join us September 23-25 at The Stone House, 19803 Ralston St, Detroit, MI 48203.

Current list of supporters:



Green Party of Michigan, People's Water Board, Flint Lives Matter, Phoenix Cafe, 3rd Eye Horizon, League of Revolutionaries for a New America (LRNA) and more to be announced!

Solidarity for water rights!

For more information, to contact us, and to get involved with planning, supporting, or contributing email: sinkorswimcharity@gmail.com or visit www.sinkorswim.org.

‘Mothers Against Senseless Killing’ promote new vision

By Andy and Leslie Willis

CHICAGO, IL — Chicago is not only a tale of two cities—the Magnificent Mile vs. poverty stricken neighborhoods—it’s also the tale of two visions. One vision is to secure our city with military-style police who terrorize dispossessed communities. The other vision is to have sharing and nurturing neighborhoods where resources become the property of all. Mothers Against Senseless Killing (M.A.S.K.) is an organization that works every day to make that revolutionary vision a reality.

M.A.S.K. has been in operation for two years on one of the most dangerous corners in Englewood, one of Chicago’s poorest neighborhoods. They bring peace by feeding people, by meeting and talking with each other; they provide a friendly place for children to gather. The love demonstrated by the men and women of M.A.S.K. has real effects. Violence

has been greatly reduced and everyone agrees that they represent hope for a different reality, free of deprivation.

You would think M.A.S.K. would be heralded as heroes. But no, they face constant harassment by property owners and police. When a landlord complained he didn’t want them set up near his building, he complained to the alderman and M.A.S.K. leader, Tamar Manasseh, was forced to come to a meeting at the police station. Neither the landlord nor the alderman showed up, but about 30 community supporters of M.A.S.K. did.

Supporters came from all over Chicago, where the model of going to trouble spots to share a meal and conversation has caught people’s imagination. Some call them healing corners. But the police and often government officials don’t like it. Such sites present an opposite narrative to the zero tolerance, mass incarceration, police beatings and murders that

are more and more the daily lot of our poorest communities.

Supporters left the police station with a tentative agreement for this summer and some assurance that the harassment from the landlord was over for the time being. But that very evening one of M.A.S.K.’s members returned home to find an eviction notice.

As the incidents of harassment and such obstacles pile up, Tamar Manasseh issued this statement on her Facebook page: “We try to make people’s lives better and the government doesn’t come up off a dime in support of it... but we have to constantly beg you to not be a hindrance! We have to beg you to let us feed your people somewhere that’s clean. We have to beg you to not harass and threaten us while we’re doing our good work. Now we even have to beg you to grant us a permit to host a block party, an event you don’t have to spend a dime on, to supply the children



Tamar Manasseh, founder of Mothers Against Senseless Killing (M.A.S.K.), and supporters raise questions at the 6th District police station about why they are being harassed for doing life saving work in Chicago. PHOTO/ANDY WILLIS

in YOUR area with all of the necessary tools they need to return to school!!!! I’ll be damned if I’m gonna BEG anybody to allow me to help the people that they should already be helping!”

If the government can’t provide it’s people with the neces-

saries of life then they are unfit to rule. They need to turn over the abundant resources to the people who need them. Our neighborhoods have leaders, like M.A.S.K. who know what it means to build a sharing and cooperative community.

#FreedomSquare: Occupying a torture site In the name of a new system

By Adam Gottlieb

Editor’s note: The following are excerpts from interviews and posts from organizers of the #LetUsBreathe Collective’s occupation of the vacant lot across the street from Homan Square, a historic police “black site” in the North Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago. The project, called “Freedom Square,” integrates anti-State violence activism with cooperative societal experiments—with a focus on living independent from the police.

CHICAGO, IL — “Join The #LetUsBreathe Collective at Freedom Square—a community block party and occupation to imagine a world without police... Show up and show love—enjoy FREE food, FREE books, music, and political education from local resource providers. In addition to serving the community, Freedom Square is a call to action. The occupation will remain until the family of Pierre Loury [a 16-year-old killed by police in April 2016] is given the official police report from Chicago Police Department. The occupation will remain until Alderman Ed Burke and other councilmen on the City’s Public Safety Committee immediately recall a proposed ordinance that would make protesting police

violence a hate crime, [which is] commonly known as “Blue Lives Matter.” The Collective also gathers in support of the newly introduced ordinance for a Civilian Police Accountability Council (CPAC)! We are honoring the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s legacy and resistance living in North Lawndale. Freedom Square continues the struggle for fair housing, employment as well as an end to police brutality and all forms of structural racism in the city of Chicago and throughout Black communities nationwide.”

— #LetUsBreathe Facebook Page

“This is system-building. We are here in opposition to what I believe to be the greatest physical example of how violent and destructive our system is. And that opposition is happening in the name of creating a new system... Freedom as an idea can’t only be oppositional.”

— #LetUsBreathe co-founder Damon Williams, 23

“#LetUsBreathe has been occupying Homan and Fillmore and rebirthing the space as Freedom Square. Our camp is set across the street from Homan Square known for snatching up black folks, torturing them, or



Occupation of the vacant lot across the street from Homan Square, a historic police “black site” in Chicago. PHOTO SARAH JANE RHEE

making them disappear. The other night around 3 a.m., an old Black woman and her kids walked by and saw the camp we set up. I offered her the free food/snacks and water we have been giving out. I tell her why we’re here and her kids are in awe. She says to them, “Oh yeah, that’s the beat up place, where they take you and beat you up.” I have never felt

so liberated, worried, tired, and energized at once.”

— Sol Patches, 18

“Freedom Square is all of our building with North Lawndale... coming to fruition. We finally reached a place where we can create a space that centers the needs of folks in North Lawndale, and that, is for *them*, completely.

It’s really just an act of service. With direct action, there’s a lot to do with visibility and who sees you, and who you’re opposing, right? But the people come here and see us, and they see community and family. And that’s different than just one direct action at City Hall. It’s a larger vision of what the world should be.”

— Jennifer Pagán, 23

Justice Department investigation condemns Baltimore Police

By Jim Fite

BALTIMORE, MD — The Baltimore Police Department has shown the City who is boss. After “a homicide” was committed on Freddie Grey while in the custody of six Baltimore City police officers, the officers were found innocent in court and awarded back pay.

The US Justice Department has been investigating the Baltimore City Police Department (BCPD) because of hundreds of citizen complaints that they were racist, sexist, violent toward those arrested in handcuffs and gave ‘rough rides’ to prisoners in police vans. The City has paid millions of dollars to innocent people who were maimed and terrorized by the Baltimore police.

The Justice Department recently released its report that made official that the BCPD violates the rights of citizens every day. Police leaders filled out arrest forms in advance in which the subject was listed as a “Black male.” Police commanders order the arrest of young men without

cause, instructing their officers to “make something up.”

Police laughed about violating people’s rights in front of US Justice investigators riding along with them. People were beaten while handcuffed. Women were maced just because they did not move fast enough while under arrest.

The Justice Department ordered many cosmetic changes, but BCPD had the last laugh.

Under the nose of the US Justice Department, the BCPD operated an illegal spying operation that spied on all the people of Baltimore, including the Mayor and City Council.

Baltimore City Police received funds from a wealthy Texas capitalist, who shifted millions of dollars through a Police foundation in Washington, DC, and a “community organization” in Baltimore City. The foundation took a cut of the cash and passed the rest to the police department as a grant.

The police then purchased surveillance from contractors who formerly worked for the US Army in Iraq. The contractors

flew airplanes above the city and recorded all motion in a 30-mile radius. This allowed the police to see when the Mayor left her house in the morning or when the District Attorney left her office in the afternoon. It also allowed them to trace the movements of the Justice Department investigators. This activity was just recently made public by accident and the people of Baltimore are left to wonder what next?

Dropping the benign mask of “Serve and Protect,” the police stand exposed as the “watchdogs of private property.” Militarized, divorced from society, striving to become a law unto themselves, their every brutal, illegal act shapes and concretizes an American fascist police state.

We must confront each and every attack on what liberty we have left. Most of all, we must see that new labor replacing technology has fundamentally changed the world. There is no going back. We must visualize the world of peace and freedom that electronics makes possible and fight for that future.

Workers rebel in the berry fields

By David Bacon

On the edge of a San Joaquin Valley blueberry field, hundreds of workers lined up in the pre-dawn darkness in May, ready to vote in a union election. Most wore red t-shirts emblazoned with the black eagle of the United Farm Workers.

As the sun came up, their lines moved slowly toward the ballot boxes. By eleven o’clock it was over, and they watched an agent of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board count the ballots—347 to 68 in favor of the union. The cheering started.

Most were from Oaxaca—Mixtecos and Zapotecos. Like many of the 165,000 indigenous Mexican migrants in California fields, many don’t speak Spanish well. “The foreman humiliates them,” one worker said. “He makes fun of them and says they work like turtles.”

Conflict about the piece rate paid by Klein Management, the farm’s owner, led to a workers’ rebellion. In April, the company was paying pickers 95¢ per pound. By mid-May, the price had dropped



The strike and union campaign at Klein Management are part of a larger movement among Mexican indigenous farm workers sweeping through the Pacific Coast. The struggles of the farmworkers must be supported. We are one working class. United we stand, divided we fall.

PHOTO/DAVID BACON

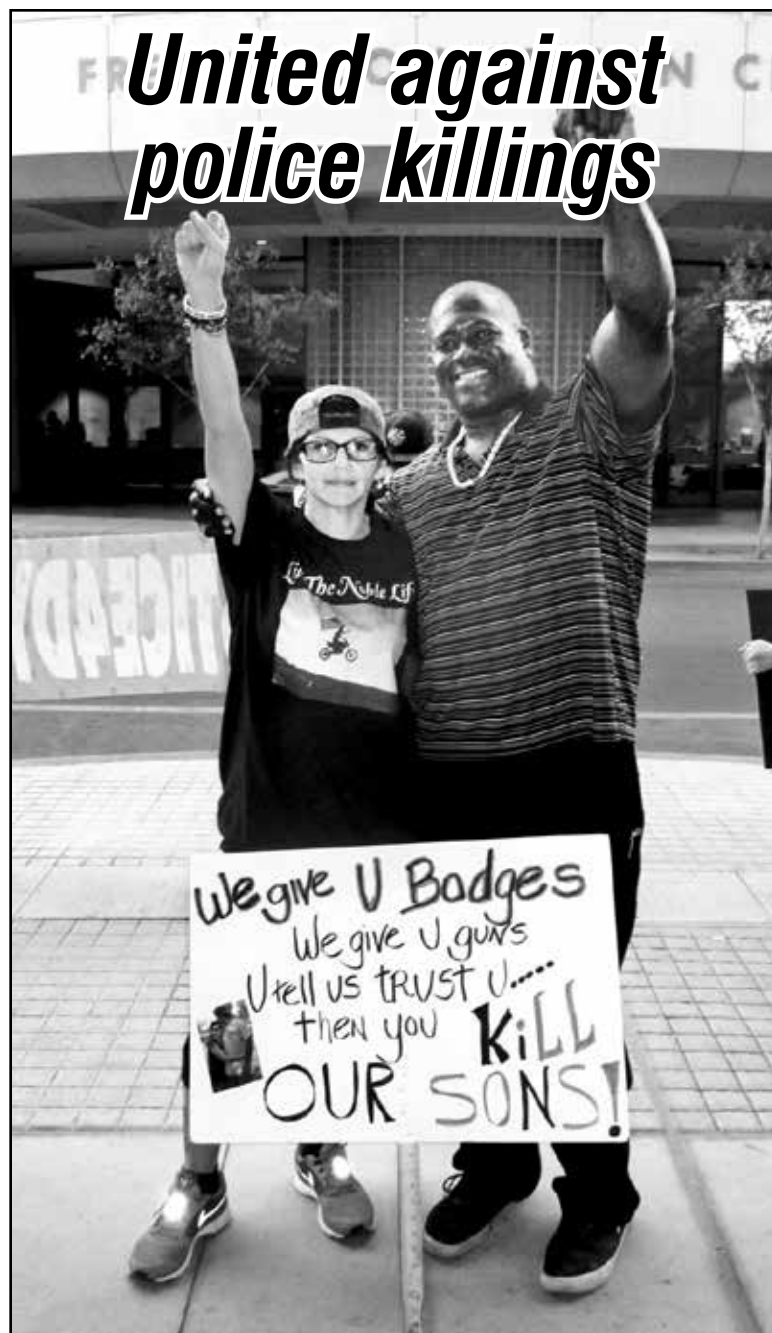
to 70¢, then 65¢. Finally the company announced it was dropping it again—to 60¢. Workers refused to go in to pick. The strike was on.

While the piece rate cut was the most immediate cause of the strike, workers had other complaints as well. To earn an average paycheck of \$700, workers pick seven days a week. And despite a recent court decision

that even piece rate workers must be given paid breaks, the first paid break in the Klein fields came on the day of the election.

The strike and union campaign at Klein Management are part of a larger movement among Mexican indigenous farm workers sweeping through the whole Pacific coast. Work stoppages by Triqui and Mixteco blueberry pickers

United against police killings



Police brutality protest in Fresno, CA. Left: Mother of Dylan Noble who was killed by Fresno police. Right: Rev. Floyd D. Harris, a leader in the struggle for justice. PHOTO/FLOYD D. HARRIS, III

“Today at the protest I met the mother of Dylan Noble [whose teenage son was killed by Fresno police]. She is a loving mother who is seeking justice for her son. We had a great conversation on collaborating our efforts: Black, white and brown people in Fresno County, and we will stand with each other starting today, going forward. I want to thank the African American community who came to show their support to the Noble family. We will be planning another action soon.”

— Rev. Dr. Floyd D. Harris, Jr.

have hit Sakuma Farms in Burlington, Washington for the past three years. Workers there launched a boycott of Driscoll’s, the world’s largest berry distributor.

In the San Quentin Valley of Baja California, thousands of blueberry and strawberry pickers walked out for three weeks a year ago. They joined the boycott of Driscoll’s, which also distributes berries from the area’s largest grower, BerryMex.

According to a recent survey, a third of indigenous workers earned above the minimum wage, a third reported earning exactly the minimum, and a third reported earning below the minimum—an illegal wage.

The lopsided union majority in the election may convince

the company to negotiate. But Buck Klein, owner of Klein Management, told the Californian’s reporter, Lois Henry, “The market is the market. That’s what dictates our prices. Even if there’s a union contract and we negotiate a price with them, it’s the same thing. The market is the market.”

Jessica Ruiz responds: “We work in the sun all day, and we work hard. I have no problem with the work, though. My problem is with the things they do to us. I’ve been waiting for this for a long time. I’m very proud of my people and what we’ve done. One of the owners said they’d send me to jail when I took the people out. But they’re not going to stop us.”

A version of this story appeared in *In These Times*.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE WELFARE RIGHTS MOVEMENT 1966-2016



Editor's note: Below we resume our coverage of the celebration of the Welfare Rights movement's 50th anniversary in the fight to eliminate poverty. It is fitting to note that August 22, 2016 marked the 20th anniversary of Bill Clinton's signing of the welfare reform law that, as one speaker noted, "legalized the death of the emerging new class of unneeded workers; legally ending the right to survive. Now, decades later, the bankruptcy judge tells us, "you don't have the constitutional right to water, even though you need it to live."



Following are more voices from the conference who are committed to carry the struggle forward:



"I want to speak of the reach of the National Welfare Rights movement, not only in this country but internationally. I'm from a little village in a little island that was a British colony for over 300 years, growing up with no running water, no electricity and one meal a day. The poverty of those of us in the global south... when you go to Haiti, Jamaica, Kingston, when you go to the backstreet of my father's village, you will see what they have done to us, and

what welfare rights has meant to people like me... it's about reclaiming what was stolen from us, not only in this country, but in the global south and other parts of world. We intend to reclaim it and take every damn penny they have stolen from us. That's the reach of welfare rights and I want to lift those women up."

— Margaret Prescod, Radio producer, Women's rights and anti-poverty activist

"There is the possibility of an even more fascist America... we need to reach those young white kids. The most donations at the Sanders campaign averaged \$27. These kids have been giving their life up to work for a socialist. Maybe not the same kind of socialist. But these young people know that by the time they graduate, they will owe more than what a home will cost. People who lost their jobs are losing their homes, and their retirement. We need to come together with those other people."

— Karen Shaumann

Other speakers add:

"Tax foreclosure here was the largest tax foreclosure in the country: 100,000 homes. When they



Welfare rights activists from across the country gather in Detroit to celebrate 50 years of the movement. Shown here are Margaret Prescod (left top), Selma Goode and Marian Kramer (left middle), Karen Shaumann (left bottom), Sylvia Orduño (above left), Rick Tingling-Clemmons (above middle), and Michelle Tingling-Clemmons (above right).
PHOTOS/MARY KAY YARAK

dismantled the social net of welfare, a thousand heads of the snake popped up—homes under attack, water under attack, schools under attack, we're under attack."

"The water struggle here is heating up. It taught us how important welfare rights is to water rights and social justice... they've been fighting for access to clean affordable water for 15 years. That welfare rights is about poor people... that they are not trying to make a profit off of poor

folks... makes me proud."

"Welfare Rights has accumulated 50 years of experience and knowledge fighting on behalf of the poor for the new wave of fighters to learn from and take to the next level. I've learned so much from these fighters."

Visit peopletribune.org/pt-news/2016/08/50th-anniversary-celebration-welfare-rights-movement-1966-2016/ for more coverage.

Culture is the bloodline of the movement

By Sojourner Zenobia

CHICAGO, IL — Since 2012, a cultural-political movement of creativity and connection has swept through Latin America. Cultura Viva Comunitaria or Live Community Culture (LCC) activates art-ivists to facilitate days of action and caravans of joy where communities encounter a magnification of their own culture. LCC builds solidarity in neighborhoods across the country (and even internationally), in opposition to a worldwide systemic culture of death.

North America's first day of action took place in Rogers Park, Chicago, on June 11, 2016. At the opening ceremony a small circle gathered under a shady grove of trees overlooking the lake. We opened with a practice of historical memory, a key component to the methodology of Live Community Culture. We told stories of what we remembered about our childhood neighborhoods. A resident of the far South Side of Chicago shared their feeling of displacement when they travel to white neighborhoods; then offered

a participatory performance with their 10-year-old daughter about the inheritance of trauma through the mother lineage.

The circle dispersed to experience a day full of Rogers Park Culture, a few highlights being: a peace circle on healing violence, international residents of Rogers Park performing music and stories and a teach-in about how education budget cuts have most impacted Chicago's Gale School.

Chicago's archetypal culture is one of segregation and corruption. Communities are tactically isolated and the poor and Black grasp for security and visibility. Last summer, 12 community activists in Bronzeville, a predominately Black neighborhood, went on a hunger strike for 34 days. They were willing to give their lives to re-open Walter H. Dyett High School after it had been closed due to Chicago Public School (CPS) budget cuts. During their strike, CPS gave Lincoln Elementary, a school in a primarily white affluent neighborhood, a \$21 million expansion. The hunger strikers protested the

ribbon cutting, enraged at the double standard.

How does the working class unite to oppose the neo-liberal war machine privatizing basic needs such as school, food, water, education and health care? Without these basic needs met, our humanity is lost as we fight for \$15/hr, with no time, energy, or resources to offer our children as an alternative to violence and self destruction. It becomes easy for the rich to justify to themselves and the divided masses that the poor and dispossessed are disposable.

We must remember and imagine our humanity like warriors. Our unity depends on creating a strong political and cultural opposition. Our ability to practice truth, tell stories, find joy, play music, give and receive touch and seek our own education cannot be privatized. LCC empowers artists and cultural workers to step into the spotlight as the bloodline of the united movement, encouraging each neighborhood to hear its own heartbeat. Caravans move from one neighborhood to the next diminishing borders and reclaiming public spaces as our



A banner for the Live Community Culture Day of Action hung outside the open mic at the Royal Coffee in Chicago.

PHOTO/SARAH-JI RHEE

own. As the collective heart of the people strengthens, so does the clarity of the demand for a reordering of society around the needs of the people. Viva Cultura Comunitaria!

To learn more and get involved, contact Angelina Llongueras at angelina.llongueras@gmail.com, and visit livecommunityculture.com

Baby illegally taken from mother by Oregon Child Protective Services

These attacks against the children of poor families are sweeping the country. Children are being put up for adoption. Read the October, 2016 edition of the *People's Tribune* for a story on this.

30 Stolen Months: A corrupt Berrien County court system

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

MARQUETTE PRISON, MI — Some of my personal suffering over the last few years have served to shape my thinking. I always hesitate to mention these experiences for fear of conveying the wrong impression. A person who constantly calls attention to his trials and suffering is in danger of developing a martyr complex and making others feel he is consciously seeking sympathy. It is possible for one to be self-centered in their self-sacrifice. So I am always reluctant, but feel somewhat justified in mentioning them today, so everyone can know how I feel!

Due to my involvement in the struggle for freedom of my people: Black, white, brown, red, yellow, and all others, I have known very few quiet days in the last few years. I have known little peace. I have been arrested several times and put in Michi-

gan prisons a few times. A day seldom passes that I or my family are not recipients of hatred. So in a real sense, I have been battered by the storms of persecution. I must admit that at times I have felt I could no longer bear such a heavy burden. I have been tempted to retreat to a more quiet and serene life, but every time such temptation appeared, something comes to strengthen and sustain my determination.

My personal trials have taught me the value of unmerited suffering. As my suffering mounted I soon realized there were two ways I could respond to my situation: either react with bitterness or seek to transform the suffering into a creative force. I decided to follow the latter course, recognizing the necessity for suffering. I have tried to make it a virtue, if only to save myself from bitterness. I have attempted to see my personal ordeals as an opportunity to transform myself and heal

the people of Berrien County, Michigan—from Judge Sterling Schrock, prosecutor Mike Sepic, Sheriff Paul Bailey, County Clerk Sharon Tyler, Election Clerk Carolyn Toliver, and Juror Gail Freehling, who are involved in this tragic situation. I have lived these last few years with the conviction that unearned suffering is redemptive.

There are some who find the cross a stumbling block and others consider it foolishness, but I am more convinced than ever that it is the power of God unto social and individual salvation. So like the Apostle Paul, I can now humbly yet proudly say: I bear in my body the Mark of the Lord Jesus. The suffering and the agonizing moment through which I have passed over the last few years have also drawn me closer to GOD. More than ever before, I am convinced of the reality of a personal GOD!

I now understand the hypoc-



Rev. Pinkney speaking at a memorial rally for “T-Shirt” Shurn, a young man killed by police in Benton Harbor, MI in 2003.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

risky of the corrupt Berrien County criminal justice system which has no limit. My suffering will not be in vain.

We have budget cuts
Schools getting shut down
teachers getting cut
Not enough books go
Home
resources real low
But they wanna point
fingers at Teacher for
why students failing
tests and classes
Yet the City Wants to
Build a \$12,000 museum
based on Beer.
Stop pointing fingers
and fix the problem
that's being addressed.

— DeAnna, 11th grade,
Harlan Community
Academy High School,
Chicago, IL projectode.org

Rev. Pinkney and the corporate takeover of Michigan

Rev. Edward Pinkney sounded the alarm early on about the threat of the emergency manager system of corporate dictatorship in Michigan, which denies democracy so corporations can buy up public resources. For this, he was imprisoned without evidence on phony charges in his community's ousting of a corporate-backed mayor. Michigan is now criminalizing those fighting for the peoples' water rights. Like Pinkney, these leaders are coming up against the same corporate-run emergency manager system; it ushered in the state's massive water shutoffs and the poisoning of Flint's water.

The fight to free Rev. Pinkney is the fight to stop the corporate takeover of our country. It is the fight for democracy itself.

— From the Eitors

Keep the Pinkney case in the public eye. Donate at bhbanco.org. Write Pinkney at: Rev. Edward Pinkney N-E-93 #294671, Marquette Branch Prison, 1960 US Hwy 41 South, Marquette, MI 49855.

'If we want change, we must speak out!'

By Pati Heinz

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The community of Benton Harbor has been under economic oppression for a long time. But, since the Emergency Manager law swept through Michigan, it has worsened. Whirlpool Corporation and their non-profit community development service, Cornerstone Alliance, have been instrumental in the gentrification of Benton Harbor. They are buying up large parcels of land and blocking the development of resident-owned businesses.

This was made clear at the August 15 Benton Harbor City

Commission meeting. Robert Jackson and Jeremy Buckner, of the Freedom Life Church, came to the meeting to inquire about a property (200 Paw Paw). They had made an offer on it in May. They wanted to start a small business incubator for the residents of Benton Harbor. I found it strange that the City Manager Darwin Watson seemed to have no knowledge of this. Once again, “roadblocks” in the way of the people!

The city has also levied high water bills on the residents for a couple years now, along with outrageously high charges (\$200 per city lot!) for those who don't or can't mow their lawns. The “fees”

are attached to the resident's taxes if they are unpaid, and can result in the loss of their homes if left unpaid! This is a direct attack on less fortunate people, who can't afford the fines and fees they are being oppressed with.

We MUST stand against such corruption! When those we've elected fail to stand for us, we have no choice but to remove them. We must stop paying to be abused by those we elect! Economic standing should not determine if and when your elected officials stand with and for you. If we want change, WE must help bring it about—by speaking out!