



Pepper spray covers the journalist's lens as the police and military attack Water Protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota. "Water is Life" is the slogan of this movement to protect the watersheds of more than 17 million people. Police are used to attack peaceful and prayerful protests in the interests of the oil corporations and investment banks. Read more about the attack on the media on page 2 and on the fight for water at Standing Rock on pages 6 and 7. PHOTO/UNICORN RIOT

FROM THE BALLOT BOX TO STANDING ROCK – THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA INTENSIFIES

Read story on page 3

***See special coverage of the nationwide
struggles for water on pages 6-7***



Militarized police on the Cannon Ball River shoot pepper spray directly onto journalists covering the events of Water Protectors praying and protesting to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline construction near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. It is reported that anyone with a camera, from Water Protectors to professional journalists, is targeted for arrest and violence by the police and military at Standing Rock.

PHOTO/ADAM JOHANSSON

Attacks on free press are an attack on democracy

EDITORIAL

As the corporations move to complete their takeover of the government, stamping out whatever democracy we have, the attack on the press and journalists, along with other human and civil rights, is heating up. Our First Amendment rights of freedom of the press, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly are being targeted.

In the ongoing standoff at Standing Rock, ND between the Sioux people and allied water protectors and the pipeline corporation, there have been arrests and attacks on protesters and on journalists who are there to document this historic resistance. Amy Goodman of 'Democracy Now' was arrested on trespassing charges, since dropped, for documenting the brutal attack against peaceful protesters by the

pipeline company. Documentary filmmaker Deia Schlosberg faces up to 45 years for three felony charges for filming an act of civil disobedience there. A journalist was struck with a rubber bullet.

Citizen journalists recording police brutality and murders in other cities are being targeted and arrested. Ramsey Orta, who recorded the choking death by police of Eric Garner is in jail, on trumped-up charges. Others are being assaulted by the police and their cameras confiscated and destroyed.

When still a candidate, Donald Trump declared that if President he would amend laws to make it easier to sue the press and to weaken its First Amendment protections, targeting news outlets he considers "unfair." Such laws will be aimed at all media that speak the truth.

The billionaire class that no longer needs the labor of mil-

lions of us is consolidating its power using fascist methods. They must impose austerity and a police state to enforce their rule and continuing profits as millions fight for their survival. They cannot allow news of the growing unity of our demands for a transformed world and for a government that represents our interests and not corporate interests.

In 1837, the abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy was murdered by a pro-slavery mob in Alton, Illinois. His newspaper office was burned and his printing press dumped in the river. This attack showed the power of a truth-telling press and what the enemies of freedom will do to try to silence it. Instead, it became a rallying cry for the movement to abolish slavery that led to the Civil War and emancipation.

Our fight continues under new conditions as our class struggles to throw off the chains

of want expressed as homelessness, mass incarceration and the destruction of the environment in the name of private profit. The press of a movement and a cause, and all voices that speak the truth, will be the target of those who seek to perpetuate a profit-driven system in the interest of the corporate class.

There is an old saying: no force on earth is as powerful as an idea whose time has come. The movement to save the Earth, for the necessities of life and a right to share in the abundance the new technology is creating, is today's cause. Its outcome will be a transformed social system based on sharing and cooperation. A truly free press, especially one that spreads this vision, must be fought for. Defend the First Amendment. Defend the truth-tellers!

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.

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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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The struggle for democracy in America intensifies

COVER STORY

The 2016 presidential election was one of the most divisive in our country's history. This is no surprise, given the economic, moral, and political crisis we face, combined with Trump's hate-filled rhetoric. Millions have been made fearful by Trump's election, while millions of others voted for him.

The hatred and bigotry spewed by Trump has left undocumented immigrants, especially from Mexico, Muslims, people of color, women and anyone who loves democracy living in fear. On a more hopeful note, tens of thousands have demonstrated since the election to reject the politics of hate.

Many people blame white racism for Trump's election. Others called it a working class revolt. Which one is it? Race or class? The fact is, it's both. While there is a racist element among Trump's supporters, it appears the bulk of his backers accepted Trump's promise to "bring the jobs back" and they believed his masquerade as an "outsider" running against the Wall Street elites personified by Clinton. And while exit polls suggest that the majority of Trump voters were white, they also indicate a small percentage of his votes came from people of color who also believed his populist rhetoric. (We should also note that the majority of the voters didn't vote for Trump; Clinton won the popular vote, and more than half the electorate didn't vote at all.)

This is not to suggest that Clinton could solve our problems. But the elections reflected the economic crisis. People's lives are being wrecked, and they are looking for solutions. Whether they voted for Sanders, Clinton, Trump, Jill Stein or Gary Johnson, they voted for someone they thought might solve the crisis. In some cases they voted for what they thought was the lesser of two evils.

As the saying goes, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything." We need to know what the situation is and where we're trying to go to know which road to take.

The old industrial way of

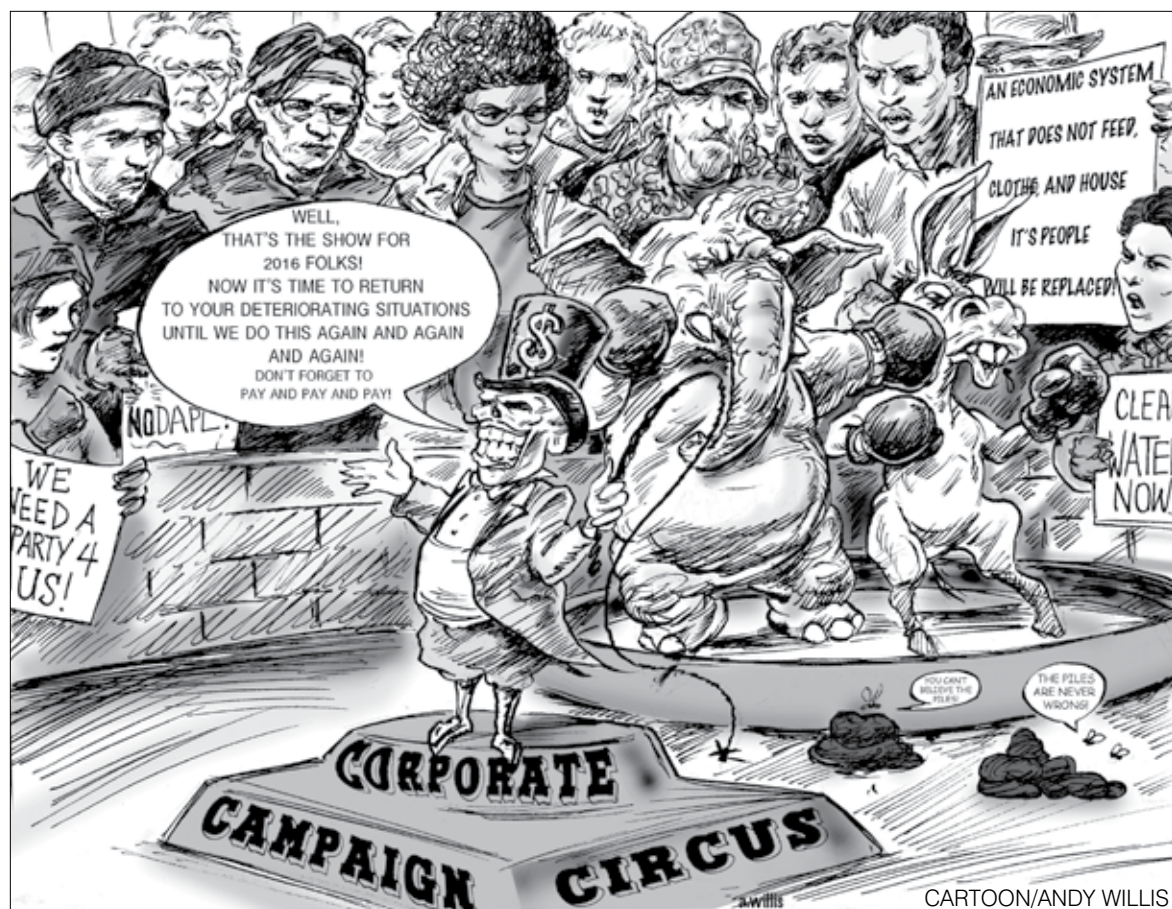
life has been shattered forever. Technology and globalization are eliminating jobs here and worldwide. Millions migrate in search of work. The rising poverty, homelessness, hunger and lack of health care for millions in America is testimony that the economic system is failing.

The crisis can't be solved within an economy controlled by corporations and billionaires. The corporations won't support workers they don't need. At the same time, masses of unemployed people are a threat to the system, so the billionaires use racism and every other divisive ideology to pit us against each other.

Trump's campaign relied on an openly racist form of fascism rooted in the worst aspects of American history. But both parties are complicit. Both the Democrats and Republicans represent the billionaires. Both parties have the same fascist program: use the government to make the corporations richer; replace democracy with a militarized police state to crack down on those whose labor is no longer needed; and make war to boost the economy. Clinton couldn't bring the jobs back any more than Trump. Technology is eliminating all jobs. (Only Sanders and Stein had any realistic proposals that could help people, and they were effectively silenced.)

The corporations ultimately dictate government policy, not the president. Still, Trump's election means a more rapid advance of fascism, and we should be on our guard. His administration will continue using racism and bigotry to keep pointing the finger away from the real culprit: an economic system that doesn't give a damn about workers no matter their color or ethnic group.

Our society will either be reorganized around the fascist vision of the billionaires, or it will be a society that serves the needs of the people. The new technology allows us to produce unlimited abundance. If the people controlled the economy, the computer and the robot could be used to provide food, housing, health care, education and every necessity to everyone. This would be a cooperative society, where the necessities of life are distributed based on need, not money.



Some of the thousands of people who marched in Los Angeles recently to protest the election of Donald Trump. Millions are rejecting the politics of hate, division and repression and calling for unity and a society that serves the mass of the people.

PHOTO/JOE FENSTERMAKER

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A homeless veteran at a tent protest in Berkeley, CA. Neither of the corporate presidential candidates dared to address homelessness. Homelessness, which is primarily a result of joblessness, is an indictment of capitalism. The only solution is a new society where food, housing, and medical care is owned publicly and provided to all. PHOTO/DAVID BACON

Elections: Growing poverty sets conditions for a new type of politics

By Cathy Talbott

HERRIN, IL — On a recent trip to the northern part of Florida, and in discussions with co-workers following the elections, I listened to the worries of workers who sit on the edge, living a precarious existence.

Their underlying concern is the economy. Many of my co-workers manned the factories and mines of Southern Illinois until they closed. We are worried about retirement—will we be able to live on our retirement and social security if we live long enough to do so? What about the future of our children and grandchildren? Will we be able to afford health care given the huge increases in premiums, co-pays and deductibles leaving many of us in debt?

These concerns motivated the vote, whether it

was for or against Clinton or Trump, or for third party candidates. The growing impoverishment of the working class must be seen as a condition for a new type of politics. We must take this opportunity to unite as a class around a program and vision of a society that meets our needs.

The vision for a cooperative society is where we, the people, own the social wealth as a whole and distribute it according to need, regardless of the color of our skin, our ethnicity, gender, or whether or not we have a “job.” Achieving this vision depends upon recognition of our common needs, and the necessity of our taking over the corporations, which currently have control of the economy and government.

The future is truly up to us now if we are to survive.

Flint Water Crisis: Why I voted for Jill Stein

By Yalonda Cooper

FLINT, MI — I put my heart, soul, spirit and HOPES in Bernie Sanders.

HOPE that we could restore the wrongs. HOPE, that together, we could take back our government, and make it work for all of us. HOPE, that for my city of Flint, we could restore our dignity, put our people back to work, and stop our home values from falling.

I watched as our State was gerrymandered away from us, when our governor, Rick Snyder, took office, replaced our elected officials, and took steps to appoint ‘emergency managers’ to take control of local financial decisions.

The people HOPED to repeal it in 2012. Republicans, with their gerrymander-protected majorities, simply passed it again, adding a small fiscal appropriation that rendered it immune from a ballot-box veto.

Hillary Clinton came to Flint and created a program called the Flint Water Works, which would train and employ up to 100 young adult Flint residents. I can only find record of one time that 78 people were hired to deliver water and filters.

I gave an elderly woman a ride home from the grocery and noticed she bought two bottles of water. I know she was HOPING someone would deliver water to her. (I took her two cases.)

I called Flint’s Mayor’s

office last summer trying to alert them to my concern that donated bottles of water were sitting in direct sun light in high temperatures. I was told they would look into the science of it and get back with me. It is well into Autumn and I am still HOPING for a call.

Last month a sister near the water treatment center had her pipes replaced. She was diagnosed with stage four cancer. I am trying to get someone to track the cancer rates we are seeing, but have had little success there either. She has HOPE in living.

I had HOPE, that by being an activist, I could unite, in solidarity against the corruption I was seeing inside the Democratic Party. I marched against Monsanto and Enbridge’s line #5, the two 60-year-old pipes, that push through 23 million gallons of oil a day and lies exposed in the water at the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac.

Jill Stein is willing to stand up for the Earth, against the two-party system. She gave me RENEWED HOPE that we can leave a better world for our children, but then I heard her say, HOPING isn’t enough! “This new world is not in our HOPES, it’s not in our DREAMS—it’s in our HANDS.” It’s in our hands to turn over the best world we can to future generations, I HOPE many will join us.

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Two women suffering from mental illness murdered by police

From the Editors

Renee Davis, a pregnant 23-year-old mother of three children 2, 3, and 5 years old, who suffered from depression, was shot dead by police in her home on Muckleshoot tribal lands in Washington state October 21. A friend had requested a wellness check on her after getting a text from Renee saying she was “in a bad way.” The officers claim they knocked and got no answer, so they entered and further claimed they found her armed.

Deborah Danner, 66 years old, was shot dead by the NYPD in the bedroom of her Bronx, New York home on October 18. Police said Deborah, who suffered from schizophrenia, came at them with a bat. Both the mayor and the police commissioner have publicly stated that the shooting was unjustified.

A system whose police forces murder with impunity while at the same time cuts services for the mentally ill because there is no profit in it must be changed.



Deborah Danner, age 66. PHOTO/TWITTER



Renee Davis, age 23, pregnant mother of three. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Legalizing civil disobedience to stop fracking

By Bob Lee,
from a Community Environmental
Legal Defense Fund press release

Grant Township, in Indiana County, Pennsylvania, has been fighting the energy industry since 2013 in an effort to prevent the creation of fracking wastewater injection wells within the Township. Earlier this year, the Grant Township Supervisors passed a first-in-the-nation law that legalizes direct action to stop creation of injection wells within the Township.

“We’re tired of being told by corporations and our so-called environmental regulatory agencies that we can’t stop this injection well! This isn’t a game. We’re being threatened by a corporation with a history of permit violations, and that corporation wants to dump toxic frack wastewater into our Township,” Grant

Township Supervisor Stacy Long explained.

The wastewater, a byproduct of oil and gas drilling, can contain toxic metals, benzene, and radioactive materials. Energy companies typically dispose of it by pumping it into the ground through injection wells, but the toxic water can leak out of the rock layer where it’s injected and contaminate drinking water supplies.

According to a press release from the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), Pennsylvania General Energy Company sued the Township to overturn a local law passed in 2014 that prohibits injection wells. In October 2015, a judge invalidated parts of the law, stating that the Township lacked authority to ban injection wells. In November 2015, residents voted in a new Home

Rule Charter that reinstated the ban on injection wells by a 2-to-1 vote, effectively overriding the judge’s decision. The suit is still ongoing.

In May 2016, the Township Supervisors passed the law legalizing direct action to stop the injection wells. Under this latest law, if the courts fail to protect the community, the people have the right to enforce their Charter through nonviolent direct action. The ordinance also prohibits “any private or public actor from bringing criminal charges or filing any civil or other criminal action against those participating in nonviolent direct action.”

Other communities across Pennsylvania and the US are fighting similar battles to prevent pollution. Grant Township Supervisor and Chairman Jon Perry said, “Sides need to be



The show of hands reflects people’s decision to reject an injection well in the town of Grant Township in Pennsylvania. People also passed legislation legalizing civil disobedience.

PHOTO/ INVISIBLE HAND DOCUMENTARY
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picked. Should a polluting corporation have the right to inject toxic waste, or should a community have the right to protect itself?”

If you are interested in supporting the efforts in Grant Township, please contact Stacy Long at lemonphone28@gmail.com or 724-840-7214.

‘Golden years’ nightmare

By Linda Armitage

CHICAGO, IL — Last year, I moved into one of three buildings for low-and fixed-income seniors, owned and operated at that time by Presbyterian Homes* (a non-profit company). I signed a standard Chicago Apartment Lease and a subsidy agreement for a one-bedroom apartment with a monthly rent of half the market value. I moved into the building, believing the company’s website, and what I heard from management and a friend, that I would have a home for life unless I failed to pay rent or broke the rules.

Six months later a letter came stating that the buildings would be sold and we had to move out because “the program has become financially unsustainable.” The irony of a non-profit company crying “poor mouth” to us did not go unnoticed!

We in my building led the way to save the communities. We enlisted local political and religious activists and also reporters who wrote a number of articles. The Jane Addams Senior Caucus and One Northside helped us organize a press conference at the headquarters of the owner on October 5. Police arrived in bulletproof vests carrying rifles as if

we 65 to 92 year olds, a few in wheelchairs, some with walkers or canes, were a threat. We left the premises when asked.

We hired an attorney and held a press conference on October 16, after filing a class action complaint based on breach of contract and consumer fraud. Our lawyers met with us about a month later to advise that negotiations had produced a tentative settlement.

We received copies of the proposed agreement. The buildings were to be sold to Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) effective March 2. If we signed we would receive one month’s rent plus the security deposit. Anyone who did not sign could not stay and would receive no financial benefits. We had to “submit to an eligibility determination” by CHA and if we did not do this and sign the required CHA lease, we had no right to anything. We had to dismiss our lawsuit and sign away our rights to pursue any further legal action against either the old or the new owners. Signatures of a majority of the residents were required or the deal was off. Our attorneys, however, negotiated a six-figure payment for themselves.

Some of us wanted to continue the lawsuit. But we received



Seniors in affordable housing protest Presbyterian Homes plan to throw them on the Chicago streets and sell their buildings to the highest bidder.

PHOTO/JANE ADDAMS SENIOR CAUCUS

threats and risked losing our communities. The settlement was signed and the sale took place effective March 2. It is almost November and we still do not have leases. We lost free cable and the grocery bus. We live in

month-to-month limbo.

Wealthy residents of senior suburban campuses who can afford to pay six-figures to move in and four-figure monthly rents, are guaranteed lifetime residency and healthcare even if they out-

live their financial resources. But for us, our saga is not over. Our so-called “golden years” continue as we try to deal with this trauma with no guarantees for our future.

*Now called Westminster Place

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— The Editors

Standing Rock, 24 Hours, 2400 miles, 600 words

Editor's note: Below are excerpts from a statement on Dr. Conrad's blog. See www.mendtheworld.me/blog.

By Dr. Deborah D Conrad

FLINT, MI — More than 500 clergy and faith leaders from across the country converged at Standing Rock, in support of the Sioux people and in solidarity with water protectors, protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. I and two members of Woodside Church of Flint were among them.

Folks may know that Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) is the latest offense to a people who have long felt the effects of centuries-old conquest and colonization. It is also the latest offense against the rights of people to safe, accessible, affordable water—a fight the people of Flint and southeast Michigan know fairly well.

Folks may also know that the pipeline route was originally drawn through Bismarck, the state capital; because of fears of oil leaks and spills that could endanger the majority-white city's water supply, the route

was shifted perilously close to the Standing Rock Reservation—where the tribe has expressed the same fear of contaminated water, as well as its anger that the construction is already desecrating sacred land.

What is less commonly known is that the laws in the US undergirding our treatment of America's "First People" derived from a proclamation of a pope in the mid-1400s, declaring that in the age of exploration, possession of "newly discovered" territories could be claimed by the first white Christians to get there. This Doctrine of Discovery continues to define US treatment of Native Americans five centuries later.

The Doctrine of Discovery was the centerpiece of our gathering at the Oceti Sakowin Camp. There, leaders of Christian churches took turns reading aloud their denominations' statements of repudiation of the doctrine, and then a copy of the doctrine was burned in a symbolic rejection of such an egregious disregard for human rights.

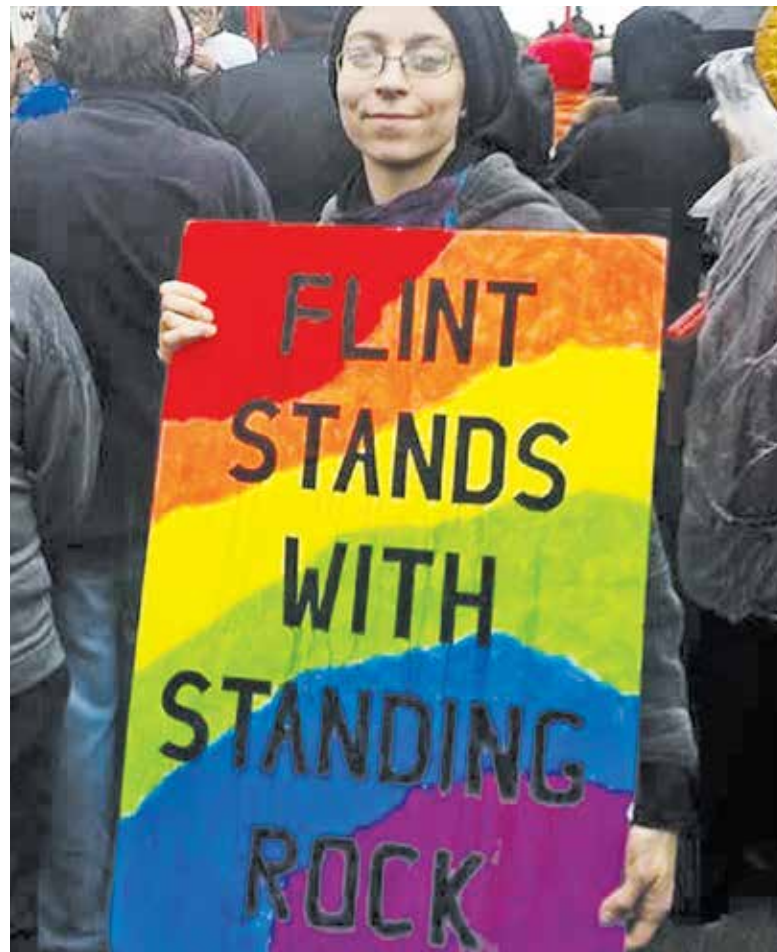
After the fire, we walked in procession to the backwater bridge on highway 1806, the

demarcation line held by a fairly massive law enforcement presence protecting the pipeline—a reminder that human rights in America continue to be quite tenuous.

As I'm writing this, the people of Standing Rock are still standing; Virginia Tech researchers are in the midst of the latest round of water testing to tell us whether it is yet safe to drink the water in Flint; presidential election returns are shifting America to the right, white and Christian privilege showing its supremacist underbelly; and I'm not always sure how to be an ally.

Somehow we have to be in solidarity, to care for one another, to seek the common good, to know that wisdom is also a collective effort. The Doctrine of Discovery had to go. It still has to go. We have a lot to learn.

Rev. Dr. Deborah D Conrad is Senior Minister of Woodside Church, Flint MI, a congregation of the United Church of Christ (Michigan Conference) and the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.



The destinies of the struggle for water in Flint and in Standing Rock are bound together. As the Flint Water Crisis approaches its third year, and Dakota Access prepares to tunnel under the Missouri River, we must continue to force the government to serve the people, not the water-poisoning corporations. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Global anti-poverty and pro-humanity activists present to the Vatican

By Maureen D. Taylor, State Chairperson, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization

DETROIT, MI — Visionaries and organizers worldwide met at the invitation of the Vatican to review, then offer proposals that addressed issues such as poverty and lack of clean water that harm working people everywhere. This small handful worked to develop concepts, which were presented to His Holiness, Pope Francis. He stands in lock step with those who decry the unholy manner in which the poor are treated worldwide. It was he who asked the question, "How is it that when the rich declare bankruptcy, millions of dollars show-up to help, yet when a regular person makes the same claim, two pennies can't be found to help?"

These few civil-society organizers were challenged to speak-up, to point out, and to suggest outcomes that require systemic change.

Pope Francis is a vessel of peace, a chalice of courage, and a man for all seasons.

California's water: A human right or private property?

By Salvador Sandoval MD, MPH

MERCED, CA — Despite California having the first law in the U.S. declaring water a human right, the situation is growing worse as the state enters the 5th year of drought. And it is the worst for the most vulnerable, the largely Latino farm laborers and their families in the predominantly agricultural Central Valley of California.

In 2012 Governor Brown enacted AB 685 into law, declaring the right to clean drinking water an inalienable human right. Prior to this in March, 2011, United Nations representative Catarina de Albuquerque visited Seville, California to evaluate the community's water system. She found that many families in Tulare County spend more than 10 percent of their income on tap and bottled water because the tap water is contaminated with nitrates from agricultural fertilizers, septic systems and dairy farms.

Nitrates are known to cause serious injury to newborns by interfering with the ability of their red blood cells to carry oxygen, a condition called Methemoglobinemia, or blue baby syndrome. In addition, nitrates are implicated in various cancers. Nitrates are concentrated in declining underground water tables, the primary source of drinking water in California, as farmers drill deeper wells due to the drought.

To make matters worse, in Tulare Coun-

ty, the Board of Supervisors recently voted to allow the unrestricted drilling of deep wells, despite the opposition of the AGUA Coalition (Asociación de Gente Unida por el Agua) and others. This is certain to aggravate the dire situation of farm worker communities such as Monson, CA, whose wells have run dry, while across the street there are lush green orchards that many of them harvest.

According to the Environmental Justice Coalition for Clean Water, these communities pay the highest water rates in the state for drinking water and grey water that is used for showering, dish washing, etc. If they complain, they are promptly silenced as happened in a Fresno County Supervisors meeting. A spokesperson for farm workers protesting rising water rates was told to "shut up and sit down" as Board Chairperson Buddy Mendes did not want to hear from "left wing environmentalists." (Fresno Bee, 4/14/15).

Increasingly, water is pumped from underground water tables in California and around the country and sold by private bottling interests such as Saveway Bottling in Merced, California (Merced SunStar 4/16/15). In Weed, California, in the foothills of Mt. Shasta, the local lumber company has told the city to look for another water source, as bottling water for sale by Crystal Geysers Alpine Spring is very profitable. (New York Times, 10/2/16)

Clearly, water is not being dealt with



Water drive in Porterville, CA. During the drought, farmers pump with deeper wells and the residential wells run dry due to over-pumping of groundwater. PHOTO/CHIEKO HARA

as a human right in Tulare County, nor in the cities of Merced and Weed. We are all affected by unrestricted pumping and increased water contamination for short-term gain and profit.

It is time to stand by the most vulnerable and demand an equitable water system that serves and protects all of us and our fragile environment.

For more in depth analysis of California's water situation read "*The Politics of Water and the Drought in California*", available at peopletribune.org.

THE FIGHT FOR WATER AS A HUMAN RIGHT

THESE STORIES SHOW THE STRUGGLE FOR CLEAN, SAFE, RUNNING WATER ACROSS THE COUNTRY. WATER IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT. THE STRUGGLE FOR WATER IS POSED AGAINST A CORPORATE GOVERNMENT AND NEW LAWS THAT HAVE AS THEIR GOAL THE PRIVATIZATION OF ALL THAT REMAINS PUBLIC. THE ONLY SOLUTION IS PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF WATER AND DISTRIBUTION OF WATER TO ALL WHO NEED IT. THIS IS A FIGHT TO TAKE OVER THE CORPORATIONS BEFORE THEY TAKE OVER ALL OF AMERICA. — THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

The struggle to protect Appalachians from poisonous water and air pollution



Maria Gunnoe of West Virginia stands in her yard which is 3,500 feet from the mountain in the background that was blasted away by Jupiter Coal Company.

Editor's note: What follows is an interview of Maria Gunnoe by Sandy Reid for the People's Tribune. Maria is a 2009 Goldman Prize winner who has organized against mountain top removal in Appalachia for 20 years and speaks nationally.

BOONE COUNTY, WV — We are losing about 4,000 people a year from the impact of mountain top removal coal mining. My daughter, who is only 22, has lost four friends to cancer. Her best friend died of four different cancers.

There's nearly three million pounds of explosives detonated every day in our communities. That's like a Hiroshima every week. The blast can shake your foundation. It breaks windows. It creates dust that consumes everything, including people's lungs. There have been 28 peer reviewed scientific studies that show this dust causes lung cancer and birth defects in the unborn.

Everything in the coal mining environment ends up in the water. Most people here have wells. They don't have access to municipal water. A lot of the water is polluted. I saw diesel floating in a man's well. The man, and many

of the area's children, have health issues. It is his only water source. He lives on a fixed income. It's horrible to see people drinking water laced with diesel.

Another big impact here is pollution from underground sludge injection. The West Virginia DEP used to hand out permits to coal companies to inject coal sludge into underground mines. That sludge flows into the aquifer and then into wells. We tried to find out what was in the sludge. The coal industry told us it was a trade secret. The government agencies protected them. Now we know it causes cancer and mental disabilities in our young children. It causes kidney disease, liver disease, stomach cancer, gall bladder disease. In Prenter, W. VA, 98% of the people do not have a gall bladder.

With all this, we're dealing with poverty. They keep our people poor so we don't have

resources to fight the permits.

It's affecting the entire culture of a people. My family came here in the 1700s before coal was discovered. It was a wonderful place as my ancestors explained it. The waters were clean. There was abundant wildlife. When I was a kid, there were natural springs everywhere. They didn't run red. They didn't make you sick. Now it's dangerous to drink out of natural springs. Everything has been destroyed. The only thing I can think of is genocide.

The corporations and the government, their agencies, politicians, all know what they are doing. We don't have the right to clean water and clean air, but they have the right to poison countless people's water and pollute the air with no recourse. They don't like it because the people are starting to figure out the truth.

We need a new world that creates energy without poisoning

people. If you don't have clean water and clean air, there's no future for our children.

Corporations and our government don't want renewable energy because they can't figure out how to own it and make billions out of it. The only way we can get beyond this is to do it as a nation.

People are struggling for water: out West in California, in Florida, Michigan. The people at Standing Rock are putting their lives on the line to protect their water.

When we come together as a country and expose that our life giving water resources and our air is being polluted, then, as a nation, we can force Congress and the new president, Donald Trump, to protect water and air before corporations.

Maria is a Board Member of SouthWings.org and a volunteer organizer with Coal River Mountain Watch at crmw.net.

'The start of an important shift' Water rights and human rights at Standing Rock

People's Tribune correspondents Brett Jelinek, Diana Zwinak and Adam Gottlieb travelled to North Dakota where the Standing Rock Sioux lead the struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Cannon Ball, ND —

"The last world war will be fought over water... You can't eat or drink your money."

— Kylo Prince, spiritual leader, Dakota and Ojibwe

Standing Rock has become a rallying cry for people to unite against the absolute sovereignty of corporate interests, representing the battle between the corporations and life itself. "What is happening here in North Dakota is like nothing I have ever seen in my life, anywhere in the world. This is a fight to protect and defend the water for 17 million people, for a livable planet,

for Native and human rights, for peace, for justice," said Water Protector Erin Schrode.

Struggles for Native American treaty rights, water rights, environmental safety, resistance to police terrorism, and other human rights all intersect in the battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. "We are divided on so many fronts on so many battles, but when it comes down to the water, that's where we can all stand together, because we all need it. It's not an Indian thing anymore, it's an everybody everything thing. That's why it's so important we're all here together," said Prince.

Not only have over 300 Indigenous nations from across the Americas gathered and planted their flags at Standing Rock—thousands from all over the country and the world have travelled to participate in this historic effort. Rhiannon Moon of the

Standing Rock Lakota Nation remarked, "When people unite like this, it speak volumes... if stuff like this continues and people have the ability to see, we can make a difference."

Steven Moon, Standing Rock Sioux, described what is at stake: "It's good to talk about water. It's also good to talk about the burial sites and the way that corporations can buy their way onto land and not pay the consequences for destroying somebody's sacred burial sites. I can't get away with going to a graveyard and kicking over a headstone and not think that I'm gonna get a vandalism charge... Our burial grounds, our sacred sites, some of them are thousands of years old. Those sites are now gone. He [gesturing at his six year-old son] can't go walk on his relatives' land to go witness something like that."

When asked how he felt



A scene from the Sacred Stone Camp, started in April to protect the Standing Rock Sioux's water from the Dakota Access Pipeline, which threatens the water of over 17 million people downstream from contamination by fracked oil.
PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

about the presence of all of the supporters, he said, "I for one welcome everybody. I'm happy. Look at them—they're putting things together, they're getting the word out." Nearby, people were playing music around a fire, singing, "We have come to unify, protecting our water!"

Water Protector and Indigenous Life Network journalist

Nirvana Anulekha, of the Muscogee Creek Nation, who had been arrested, remarked, "This seems like the start of an important shift... We need a beginning. If people don't start caring, then our world is never gonna move in the direction that we're supposed to move in... We just want a better world to live in, with clean water."

Housing is not a right for an entire class in our society

By Mark Saulys

CHICAGO, IL — The homeless are trying to survive and make it, we're not trying to bother anyone. In Uptown, under the viaducts of Lake Shore Drive, there are encampments, "Tent City" or "Uptown Tent City," AS WE are called.

Recently, the Commissioner of the Department of Family Support Services (DFSS), the agency designated to implement policy affecting the homeless, said that on any given night in Chicago the shelters are 95% full. Three are set to close this winter, one in Uptown 1/2 mile from Tent City under the viaducts. Tent City is expected to swell in size as a result.

In spite of this DFSS recently tagged our tents for removal, likely at the direction of the alderman. Chicago's true policy toward homelessness, and that of many cities, is one of refusing to recognize it. The homeless are not powerful enough for their concerns to be considered. They are insects to be swept away.

The central issue for all homeless people, under the viaducts or elsewhere, is not of tents or of encampment cleanings, however, but that of housing. Without housing we must be preoccupied with day-to-day survival and cannot advance our lives or even very well live them.

Housing is increasingly inac-



Homeless people and housing rights activists in their ongoing fight for their right to housing in Chicago. In September, they shut down Chicago's busy Lake Shore Drive during rush hour to raise awareness that luxury housing is going up while housing for the homeless is being destroyed in their neighborhood. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

cessible, becoming more and more a luxury rather than a basic right. In our two-tiered economy, there is an entire stratum of low wage workers, unskilled laborers and unemployed for whom housing is becoming so prohibitively expensive, as to make it so they must often do without it. Then employment becomes very difficult and re-entry into either the job or housing market is a tremendous feat. Once homeless, people are commonly homeless for 15 or

20 years, or even more.

The "Housing First" model for housing the homeless, in which housing is provided to homeless persons unconditionally and the recipient's personal and financial problems are dealt with afterwards, is the only one that will work now. The barriers to housing are too great and often unreasonable. One elderly couple currently living under the viaducts, both of whom have income, can't be approved for housing

because of a 40-year-old criminal conviction of her husband. Both husband and wife have cancer and the wife is refused treatment because she doesn't have a conventional home that her health-care providers insist is necessary for the treatment's best success.

Twenty years ago I was homeless (as I am again now). I found a job and rented a cheap room with my earnings. I worked my way out of homelessness with nobody's help at all. Today that can't very

well be done, our society and political economy has changed immensely. The job I got then is gone and so is the cheap SRO I rented. There is an entire class in our society for whom housing is not a right. We are fast becoming like an "underdeveloped" country. We need more regulation of the housing industry, more power for workers and other ways of addressing income inequality to resolve the housing crisis.

Housing for all

From the Editors

Housing insecurity is at an all-time high. Gentrification in our major cities is spreading a cloud of doom over once stable communities. Small homeowners can't afford the ever-increasing taxes, and renters are driven out by impossible to pay rent increases. Public housing is simply disappearing. Is it any wonder that homelessness is now estimated in the millions?

All this is happening under a pretext of legality. Corruption of government funds earmarked for public housing is carried on quite openly. Backroom deals push people out so huge property-holding companies can make a killing in turnover profits.

While masses of people are dislocated, millions of houses and apartments stand empty, just waiting for another property flip. To most Americans, this makes no sense. Why should so many suffer when relief of our misery is at hand?

It may be that technology is replacing the need for human labor in the economy, driving our value as workers down—but can we allow the new "winners" in our society to dictate the fate for the majority of us? Will we continue to be manipulated by a system rigged against us or will we stand up for ourselves?

Housing is a human right and must be protected by any government that calls itself "for the people." Renters, homeowners, and homeless—we all need to join together with one voice on this issue to demand that "we the people" are guaranteed housing, no matter what our income is.

Politically protected gentrification in Chicago

By Joseph Carillo

CHICAGO, IL — One-year ago, gentrification developer, Brehon Capital LLC, Paul Callero and Scott Holloway, purchased a 12-unit building at 1606-10 N. Harding Ave. in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. As months progressed, the low-income tenants noticed the new owners were intentionally ignoring their concerns regarding a front building entrance door that continuously locked tenants inside the building's entrance vestibule, and simultaneously allowed strangers to enter the premises without a key.

Other tenant concerns and requests are: holes in apartment floors; roach infestation throughout the building; rat infestation; strangers entering premises at all hours of the day; used syringes littered in the backyard area; no

keys issued to tenants for rear building exit doors; abandoned ground floor unit being used by strangers; non-functioning smoke detectors; no smoke detectors; unattended garbage dumpster and garbage area; unattended building security; electrical short in senior tenant unit light-switch; exposed electrical wiring in exterior and interior of the building. All the tenant complaints and requests for repairs have been met with hollow promises. No true repairs are ever made.

The owners' tactic is to allow the property to deteriorate until the low-income tenants eventually move out or their units can't pass government inspection for Section Eight housing. This would allow Callero and Holloway to convert their building to high-income units.

On August 9, 2016, Paul Callero illegally dumped the contents

of an evicted tenants' unit into the alley behind Youth Service Project Inc., and Walgreens. Alderman Roberto Maldonado was immediately notified of this illegal act. Despite notifying the alderman and the seriousness of the tenant's deplorable living conditions, a check on the official website for the City of Chicago's Department of Buildings shows no record of any inspectors at the 1606-10 N. Harding Avenue property in years, nor any record of any illegal dumping citations ever recorded.

On August 1, a rent-strike was called by Migdalia Torres, 69. "We Are Logan Square" organized Torres and other tenants of 1606-10 N. Harding, on how to legally stand up for their tenant rights. As a direct result of this training, Brehon Capital LLC, Paul Callero and Scott Holloway, immediately negotiated with Tor-



Organizers of a rent strike at a Chicago apartment building. Owners want to drive low-income tenants out and convert to high-rent apartments. PHOTO/JOSEPH CARILLO

res in order to avoid legal tenant maneuvers that would cost them financially. On August 20, Brehon Capital LLC agreed to reimburse an unspecified amount of Torres' previous rent payments made over the last year.

But nothing has changed for the remaining tenants. On September 9, a ceiling collapse severely injuring tenant Carla Calicut, age 45, as she slept on her living room sofa.

Poor Tour of the homeless: *We have a right to exist!*

By Mike Zint

BERKELEY, CA — Recently, ‘First They Came for the Homeless’ was approached by Dan McMullen, Berkeley City Commissioner for the Disabled People’s Outdoor Project. Berkeley’s one-stop solution for homeless services, the HUB, was not working. Many agencies lost funding to fund the HUB. Those agencies are now finding it impossible to help people.

We organized an occupation. We brought tents to the HUB’s front door and occupied. In four days we witnessed horrible things. The worst was when a 55-year-old woman who couldn’t walk was sent away because she couldn’t prove her disability. Instead of letting her go back to the streets, we took her in. The HUB also does not allow home-

less people to use their bathroom unless they have an appointment. Lack of bathrooms is a major issue, and again the HUB says no. Most of the people leaving the HUB were told no.

The person who runs the HUB ended up calling the police on the occupation. She complained about trash and human waste. Of course, none of it was true, but we are homeless, so we are automatically guilty. The cops raided on the fourth day. Cops, city workers, and city officials swept in at 5 A.M to remove us.

Instead of succeeding in crushing our protest, we quickly relocated to a predetermined location. Within a few hours, the occupation was piled in front of the office of the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA.) We laid around for a day making a

nuisance of ourselves. Then we moved to another location. We popped our tents in a median with very high traffic. Over the next few days, we grew in support and numbers. At this point a storm was coming. The severely disabled woman was still with us. An employee from the HUB came out to try to get her inside. A hotel voucher, which had been available the entire time, was offered and the woman accepted. She is now inside.

We lasted about a week before the city moved on us again. A major raid lasting over six hours and requiring dozens of city employees happened. They succeeded in moving us 200 feet. We had tents back up that night. They came the next day and we moved again. Now, we are back at the HUB, three times the size, with massive commu-



Dimitri rests from his overnight security shift at the Poor Tour. “First They Came For The Homeless” tent community in Berkeley CA.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

nity support.

The City Council is now discussing a sanctioned tent city and people are looking into the HUB. We are going to stay here

until things get resolved. We want tents for the homeless as well as tiny homes. Later today, I meet with council members. Stay tuned.

Homeless in Los Angeles: Welcome to Garcettiville

By Chris Venn

LOS ANGELES, CA — Eric Garcetti, the Mayor of Los Angeles, has instituted Project H.O.P.E, a thinly veiled attack on the homeless population of Los Angeles, the largest in the country. Masquerading as a humanitarian effort to help homeless residents, Project H.O.P.E sets up teams of police, workers from the sanitation department and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Administration to focus on tracking (hunting?) homelessness.

Reports from the San Fernando Valley (the northern part of L.A. City) tell of garbage trucks, followed by squads of 12 policemen confiscating property of homeless residents who are sleeping or resting on the sidewalk. Reports from the mayor’s office celebrate this illegal confiscation of private property by describing it as “more than 500 tons of trash, 20,000 pounds of hazardous materials, and 1,500 sharp objects and needles have been taken off the streets.”

The confiscation of the private property of the homeless, which in reality includes personal IDs, prescriptions, and family photos has become so egregious that the Federal government has suspended federal funding to Los Angeles, until the city provides 1,000 housing units for the homeless.

“Currently the L.A. Police Department leads the nation in shootings. The City is on edge. In 2009, the city launched the Safer City Initiative. This led to the highest concentration of police in any community, not only in the US, but in the world. There were more police on skid row than in Baghdad. This led to 24-hour harassment. There are 15,000 living on the streets of Skid Row and 1,500 living in shelters. At this time, the city could have ended homelessness. Instead they advertised that Skid Row was full of addicts. At this time, there were 750 arrests a month; 75% of the arrests were Blacks, 50% of the arrests were disabled. The city was writing 69% more tickets in Skid Row than any other part of the city. The city thought they could arrest their way out of homelessness,” said General Dogon of L.A. Community Action Network.

At the very center of the criminalization of the homeless is the L.A. Municipal Code (LAMC) 56.11.



Protest in front of City Hall demanding housing and services for the homeless living on Skid Row.

PHOTO/CHRIS VENN

Los Angeles taxpayers fund a \$100 million program to address homelessness with over \$80 million going to the police. LAMC 56.11 stipulates the confiscation and destruction of the personal property of individuals living on the street.

On September 28, as part of a people’s campaign called “Welcome to Garcettiville,” a coalition of organizations from across Los Angeles, including the Los Angeles Community Action Network, Hunger Action LA, LA Human Right to Housing Collective, LA Catholic Worker, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and others appeared at City Council chambers to demand an end to ongoing homeless criminalization and the immediate installation of mobile public health resources. Mayor Garcetti skipped out of appearing at City Council when he heard these organizations were present.

Mayor Garcetti must provide emergency public health resources and stop the enforcement of laws that largely punish homeless individuals simply for being homeless. This type of enforcement—for largely non-violent, “quality of life” violations—is not only cruel, but can make it even harder for the cited and arrested residents to get off the streets and into housing programs.

A Mockery of Court

Justice was never meant for the poor,
only injustice knocks at our door.
Subjected to all forms of hate,
while ‘just us’ become wards of state.

Justice deluded by man,
an injustice breeds the Klan.
Juries refuse to accept the truth,
while ‘just us’ die in our youth.

Justice is blind to us
injustice breeds the must.
Freedom and equality is a fake,
while ‘just us’ our lives they take.

Justice we may never see,
an injustice becomes the norm of life to be.
Judges configurate all the lies,
while ‘just us’ are the only one dies.

— Al Cunningham,
San Quentin State Prison

Freeing healthcare from private ownership

By Rita Valenti

ATLANTA, GA — Imagine being in the middle of chemotherapy for cancer or prenatal care for pregnancy and losing your insurance and likely the treating physician.

Twenty-nine million Americans are uninsured and 31 million dangerously underinsured. Many of the 57% of Americans with workplace insurance have seen premium increases reaching 10% of their median income. The 2017 premium increases in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) ‘market place’ exchanges are double digit averaging as much as 25% more than a year ago. Even with a subsidy, the huge deductibles are unaffordable. Scores of insurers are pulling out of the exchanges they deemed unprofitable leaving millions with anxiety ridden health insecurity. Aetna and United Healthcare are exiting in nearly every State. In Georgia, only Blue Cross and Blue Shield will be offered in every county and that with a rate increase of 21.4% even as Georgia continues to resist traditional Medicaid expansion leaving 309,000 families, most with working adults, uninsured.

Meanwhile, our public health insurances are rapidly being priva-

tized. Private Medicare Advantage plans now cover over 31% of all Medicare patients and growing. Medicaid covers 73 million Americans with 72% shunted into private managed care plans.

A publicly funded and government administered single payer, Medicare for All plan is certainly an important step toward breaching corporate control of government. But building a vision that’s more compatible with emerging revolutionary technologies in healthcare requires liberating medical and wellness resources from private ownership.

A new threshold of human development is peeking through the crapshoot of stale and failed policies on healthcare. From electronic medical records to IBM’s Computer Watson, a cognitive technology that can purportedly think like a human, the poles between what’s possible and what’s present are colliding in the moment.

“Watson” can ‘read’ and process 40 million documents in 15 seconds. In other words, in less than a minute, “Watson” can digest roughly all of the 50-60 million medical and scientific documents published throughout human history and make recom-



IBM’s supercomputer “Watson” can process 40 million medical and scientific documents in seconds, make recommendations on diagnosis and propose treatments. CARTOON/MOLLY KIELY

mendations on diagnosis, answer complex questions and propose best treatments for diseases.

The application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to healthcare stands in stark contrast to the outmoded role of private health insurance as the dominant financing mechanism to access healthcare providers and institutions. How is it that the universality of the knowledge that Artificial Intelligence can realize and ex-

ecute be contained within a shell of capitalist private ownership?

Though AI’s knowledge base and application is global, even basic healthcare can be inaccessible today to undocumented U.S. residents who are prohibited from purchasing health insurance.

Certainly technology alone is not the answer to the crisis in healthcare but it does compel us to think in new ways about solutions. Renewed calls for a Public

Option health insurance ‘buy-in’ feel woefully inadequate and opportunistic in the face of emerging cognitive technologies. Thinking robots don’t need healthcare but humanity does. The future is starting now and the thinking and strategy of our class, excluded from its promises, will determine if it’s a dystopian future or one of equality and cooperatively shared abundance.

We need a vision of a new society to move forward

From the Editors

The question before us is: what kind of new society will replace this dying system? Will it be a police state that suppresses our struggle for survival and protects the property and wealth of the corporate class? Or will it be a cooperative society where the means of producing the abundance of food, healthcare, housing, water—and everything else that we need to survive—is owned by society, not by the corporations?

An era of revolution is upon us. Revolution in society is triggered by revolution in the economy. Today, labor-replacing technology, robots and computers, is permanently eliminating jobs and in the process of bringing capitalism to an end. How will we, the people, survive without jobs and money to buy what we need? The poisoned city of Flint, MI, shows what the corporate-government offers those whose labor is no longer needed: Nothing. People are left on their own, to live or die.

Now, more than ever, the growing movement for a democratic, peaceful, humane society based on equality for all needs a core of revolutionaries—leaders who devote their lives to uniting all who can be united around a vision of a new cooperative society. In such a society everyone’s needs will be met and everyone will have the opportunity to contribute their talents and skills for the betterment of humanity.

Read the People’s Tribune. Write for the People’s Tribune. Our mission is to help the movement unite around the struggle for basic needs and a cooperative future. Order bundles of the paper to get out to your organizations, family, and friends! Visit us at peopletribune.org.

The People are the Power

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”
—Alice Walker

The power is the people
and the people are the power

The power is the people
and the people are the power
(repeat)

Listen up to this tip
we gotta flip the script
and be declarative
and change the narrative
the power’s not out there
the power is in here
when we wake up
to this stuff
there is not a thing to fear

The power is the people
and the people are the power

The power is the people
and the people are the power

Your power is your right
you took that breath of life

with your words, you affirm
you will not give up the fight
This system’s gotta change
if we want to sustain
healthy minds, now’s the time
write new rules for the game

The power is the people
and the people are the power

The power is the people
and the people are the power
(repeat)

1---2---3---4---5 count ‘em
Together we move mountains
Unity on the streets
With the people is astounding
Raise ‘em up in the air
People power everywhere
We fight for what is just
And we fight for what is fair
In Oakland, California
For food, fair housing
& fresh air

The power is the people
and the people are the power

The power is the people

and the people are the power
(repeat)

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Who’s the strongest of them
all?

People power’s like a flower
That grows up straight and
tall

Rising up to the sun
We each are The One
Corporate greed can’t
profitize

What belongs to everyone

The power is in the people
and the people are the power
(repeat)

Listen up to this tip
we gotta flip the script
and be declarative
and change the narrative
the power’s not out there
the power is in here
when we wake up
to this stuff
there is not a thing to fear

—Jackie Graves ©2016

Child poverty in Washington, DC, the first Human Rights City



Rally for a Moral Revival in Washington, DC.

By Dr. David Schwartzman

WASHINGTON, DC — This photo is from the September rally for a Moral Revival at DC's Wilson Building that houses the Mayor and DC Council. The reverse side of the placard says, "DCs Mayor/Council violate Human Rights, Raise TANF Income. Support to above Federal Poverty Level!"

This link afsc.org/resource/report-state-human-rights-dc provides reports on how well

DC's elected government has done in fulfilling its commitments as the U.S.'s first Human Rights City, 2008. Short answer: very poorly with regard to the welfare of children and other economic and social criteria. Now income support for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) amounts to 26% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), while those recipients exceeding 60 months are scheduled to drop to 9% of the FPL for one year and then be cut off. Our mayor and Council do not take child poverty seriously as a moral issue, and continue to follow the agenda of the Federal City Council, the lobby of the billionaire class/big developers who are gentrifying DC, displacing mainly Black residents and making housing unaffordable for the majority of residents.

Dr. David Schwartzman is an organizer for the DC Statehood Green Party and has been active in defending the human rights of DC residents for 40 years.

Poverty is not a crime

Editor's note: The New Orleans City Council considered an ordinance to abolish bail for some minor offenses. A long-time New Orleans activist for the rights of the poor testifies below.

By Ted Quant

NEW ORLEANS, LA — My name is Ted Quant. I am here to speak in support of the ordinance to end the policy of keeping people in jail on non-violent municipal charges simply because they are poor and don't have bail money.

When I first arrived in New Orleans I got stopped for a traffic ticket, but because I had an out-of-state drivers license, I was arrested. I had just started work as a janitor. I needed to get to work or I could lose my job, but I didn't have bond money.

When it is poverty and not the alleged violation that keeps a person in jail, then the real crime is poverty itself. We have made poverty itself a punishable offense under the bail bond system.

Twenty-five percent of the people of New Orleans are guilty of being poor and none have the



PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

same rights as a person who can pay a bond and be free until his or her day in court. And what is the cost to the 44% of children living in poverty when their parent is held in jail for lack of bond money?

The system stays in place because it serves the interest of all those people and systems that prey upon the poor. The bondsmen, the jailer, the court, the District Attorney's office, the City, the payday loan sharks, and the check-cashing business, all get paid. A 10% sale tax on all the necessities of life insures that the

poor will finance the city and the state, but those taxes will not be used to insure the constitutional rights of the poor to competent legal defense. Instead, they will pay for jails and prisons.

When poverty is the crime, the system is the criminal.

Passing this ordinance is just one step in the direction of radical reform of the entire criminal injustice system.

Editor's note: The ordinance was defeated in a 2 to 2 tie vote.

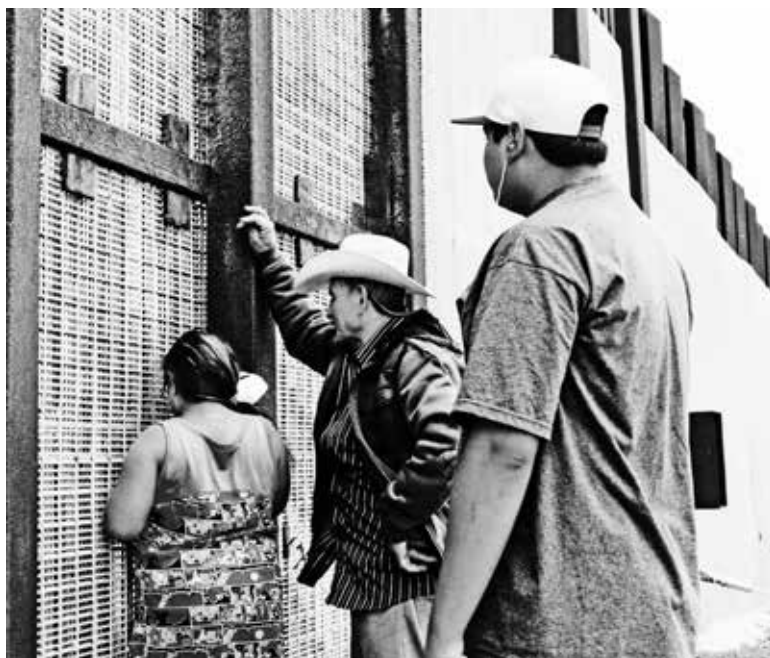
No more walls along the border!

From the Editors

There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. This is a photo of the wall at the US-Mexican border, where family members on the US side speak through a mesh fence with their loved ones on the Mexican side. They can only touch with their fingertips. This image shows just how inhumane the wall is.

President-elect Donald Trump promises to "secure" the entire border by adding to the existing wall. His reasoning is that the immigrant workers are coming here illegally to take the jobs of American workers. We have to ask why this lie is coming to the fore so vehemently now.

The truth is, the immigrant workers are not taking the jobs. It's the robots and computers. It is more profitable for the capitalists to produce with a robot than with a human. Robotic production is therefore the wave of the future. And neither presidential candidate can do anything about this, even if they wanted to. The law of capitalism is the drive for maximum profit. So the problem



PHOTO/PEDRO RÍOS

is systemic. Capitalism and its billionaire ruling class, Donald included, is the problem, the real enemy. Capitalism is antiquated. It's dying. It must go.

The reason we are hearing this racist, divisive fascist propaganda now is because, at all cost, they must keep us from seeing our common poverty—and who our real enemy is. They must keep

us from uniting as a class that can only survive by selling its ability to work. Now that the jobs are going, we are in a fight for our survival. We must join together. Together we can create a new world where the robots work for us, and where everyone's needs are met. All for one and one for all. No more walls!

What Happened?

I remember when teachers and students looked forward to school,
We thought it was cool.

What happened?
The government corrupted;
Budget cutting.

Unequal opportunities across the city,
We don't need the pity.

Do they even care?
Doesn't seem so, or things would be fair.

What we need are more diverse classes,
So we're not labeled lazy asses.
We want to learn,
But we're stopped at every turn.

We don't want, nor need limitation,
We need better and diverse education.

— Ariana S., 11th Grade
See more poems like this at projectode.org
STUDENTS: submit writing on education to
revolutionarypoetsbrigadechi@gmail.com

Judges, prosecutors and law enforcement are parasites

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

WEST SHORELAND CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, MI — A worker is above all a producer. The workers produce all of the wealth in the possession of the billionaire corporate class. The corporate class are parasites, as are the judges, prosecutors and law enforcement, who also live off the workers' stolen wealth.

How has the criminal justice system contributed to this theft? In fact, the principal function of the criminal justice system is to guard the wealth for the capitalists and protect their profits from the demands of the workers.

The judges, prosecutors and law enforcement are hired by the capitalist class through their agents to keep the mass of the people in complete subjection. They utilize all the force and violence at their disposal whenever the people rise up in rebellion against the unendurable con-

ditions imposed by the master class. They send cops that practice the most inhumane brutality. They are trained in the spirit of war against workers—disproportionately Black—but also other minorities and poor whites, the homeless population, and all who struggle for their survival. The judges, prosecutors and the rest of law enforcement are mercenaries. When they do work, if that is what it can possibly be called, that work is directed against the people, to oppress, destroy, imprison, or even kill!

In addition, judges, prosecutors and law enforcement are utterly inseparable from crime and corruption. They collaborate in shady businesses, such as gambling and drugs, in order to profit. This is what the criminal justice system really is engaged in. It is all part of capitalism. The billionaires cannot exist without them or they without the billionaires. All are nourished and supported by the profit-driven nature of capi-

talism and by its criminal justice system. And, every cent paid to the criminal justice system comes out of the hides of the people, the workers.

The struggle that is taking place in Benton Harbor, Berrien County in Michigan, is a case in point. It holds lessons for the American people. The fight is a war over whether Americans will have prosperity and democracy or live in poverty under the heels of open corporate rule. The attack on the poor in Benton Harbor shows that the corporate power structure, along with its corrupt criminal justice system in Berrien County, Michigan and around the country, are determined to crush anyone who stands in its way. Let the truth be told. The attack on democracy is an attack on the workers. It is part of a process under way across America. Only we, the people, can stand up, speak up, fight back, and stop the crimes of the capitalist system!

'When a corporation can own a town, we're in trouble'

Editor's note: Rebecca Fritz, mother of five, spoke at the anti-PGA rally in Benton Harbor, MI in support of Rev. Edward Pinkney, imprisoned for leading an effort to unseat a corporate backed mayor.



Rebecca Fritz, with one of her children, is sounding the alarm about fascism. She fights poverty every day, trying to raise a family on her own. She joined the bus to Benton Harbor for the protest because she recognizes the importance of the struggle there to the overall struggle against fascism.

PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

BENTON HARBOR, MI — It's nice to see how many people showed up despite the weather. I am always pumped by everyone's enthusiasm. Our enthusiasm and fight for what's right is all we have. I want to say something about fascism in America. Everything is being privatized. Everything comes down to the bottom line of profit. Our children are born into this materialism and it's difficult to get them out of it. They see what other people have and want all these material things. Everything is a commercial.

I never met Rev. Pinkney, but heard about him. I could see that this is one of the towns hardest hit by corporate fascism. When a corporation can own an entire town and do what ever they please, justice be damned—and do it openly, not even try to hide it, and get away with it, then you know we're in trouble.

Between the Emergency Manager system in Michigan that turns public assets over to the corporations, and things going on in Flint, Detroit, and here—it's a huge warning for everybody of things to come. Precedents set here will be going on all over the country. It's looting in the name of legality. What's legal is not what's right; and sometimes what's right is not legal. One has a responsibility to disobey unjust laws.

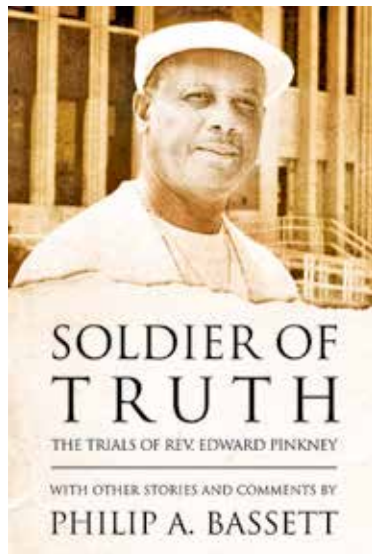
A lot of people don't stand

up. People are still trying to hang on to their comfort and hope things will get better and that the American Dream is still alive. But the American Dream is false. Everything is rigged. Electronic voting machines can be rigged. It's good to see a lot of people out here trying to change things by voting. But we have to realize that maybe this voting thing isn't all that's needed. We have to be strong on all fronts and be adaptable and put ourselves out there in multiple avenues in order to seek justice in creative ways—because there's a whole lot of FEMA camps waiting to be filled. I think this is the direction things are going. Now they're talking about making prisons into communities. You are talking about a legal martial law—unannounced. You're talking about some sneak thief bull-shit. Keep your eyes open and get people you know involved. First they ridicule you and then they attack you, and then you win.

A Great Read: 'Soldier of Truth, The Trials of Rev. Edward Pinkney'

Editor's note: Phillip A. Bassett's new book, Soldier of Truth, is about the author's eyewitness account of the persecution of Rev. Edward Pinkney for his leadership in a fight against the takeover of a town by a corporate giant. Purchase the book on amazon.com.

"This book gave me a new perspective on what my stepfather has been called by God to do. It gave me insight on what was done, what was said, some insight on what happened in court. It also gave me insight on what happened when he first heard the voice of God. He truly has a purpose and it is bigger than Benton Harbor, MI. He's truly a fighter and has always stood up for what was right. Many people said negative things but if these same people were to walk in his shoes and do what he's done and continues to do, they wouldn't last an hour let alone a day. Maybe it's because of fear or not being people's favorite. But I stand to say that I'm truly proud of him and all that he has accomplished



and continues to accomplish! A real soldier is what he is to me! Good job Philip Bassett. This is a great read."

— Latoya Williams

"At the very heart of the story is the Whirlpool Corporation, the shaker and mover behind the courts, the police and the prosecutors. Whirlpool, with its headquarters in Benton Harbor, is in complete control of econom-

ic and political life in the county. Whirlpool's use of the state's Emergency Manager dictator laws to steal Benton Harbor's assets from a jobless, impoverished town, especially the Jean Klock Park, which sits on the lakefront, in order to gentrify the town explains their need to quiet all opposition, especially Rev. Pinkney.

"However, even in prison Rev. Pinkney would not remain quiet. Within a week of arriving at a Michigan prison, he organized more than two-thirds of the prison inmates in an action against 'Buck Naked Fish,' the smelliest, worst item on the menu of the generally bad food served there. What was remarkable was that unity was forged across religious, ethnic and color lines among inmates who normally would be at each other's throats. Events from Rev. Pinkney's youth that helped mold him into a leader are also touched upon in the book, much of it, in Rev. Pinkney's own words."

—People's Tribune

Support imprisoned Rev. Pinkney

Send donations so healthy food can be purchased for the unjustly imprisoned, Rev. Pinkney! Show your support for his sacrifice in the movement for a just society.

Donate at bhbanco.org, or mail to Dorothy Pinkney, 1940 Union St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022