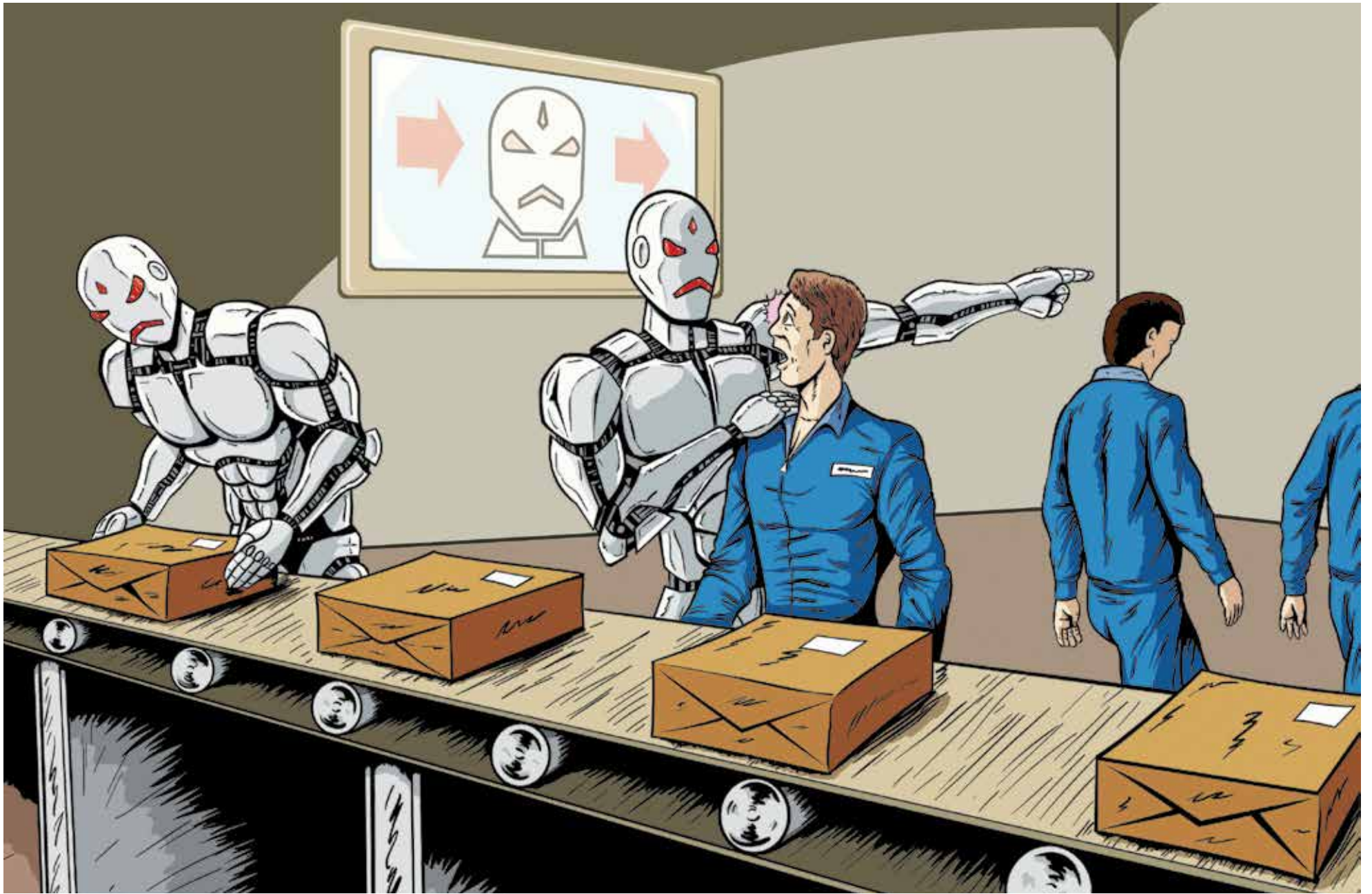


## **TRUMP: WHY HE CAN'T AND WON'T BRING JOBS BACK**

*We are fighting for a new society* [Read story on page 3](#)



CARTOON/ DANIEL VILLENEUVE , THINKSTOCKPHOTOS

**Outrage over cops snatching blankets away from homeless in frigid weather – [See page 5](#)**

**Vatican condemns poverty and water privatization – [See page 6](#)**

**Inauguration Day rallies to defend democracy – [See Page 9](#)**



# ISOLATING THE HOMELESS: A step to imposing fascism on us all

## EDITORIAL

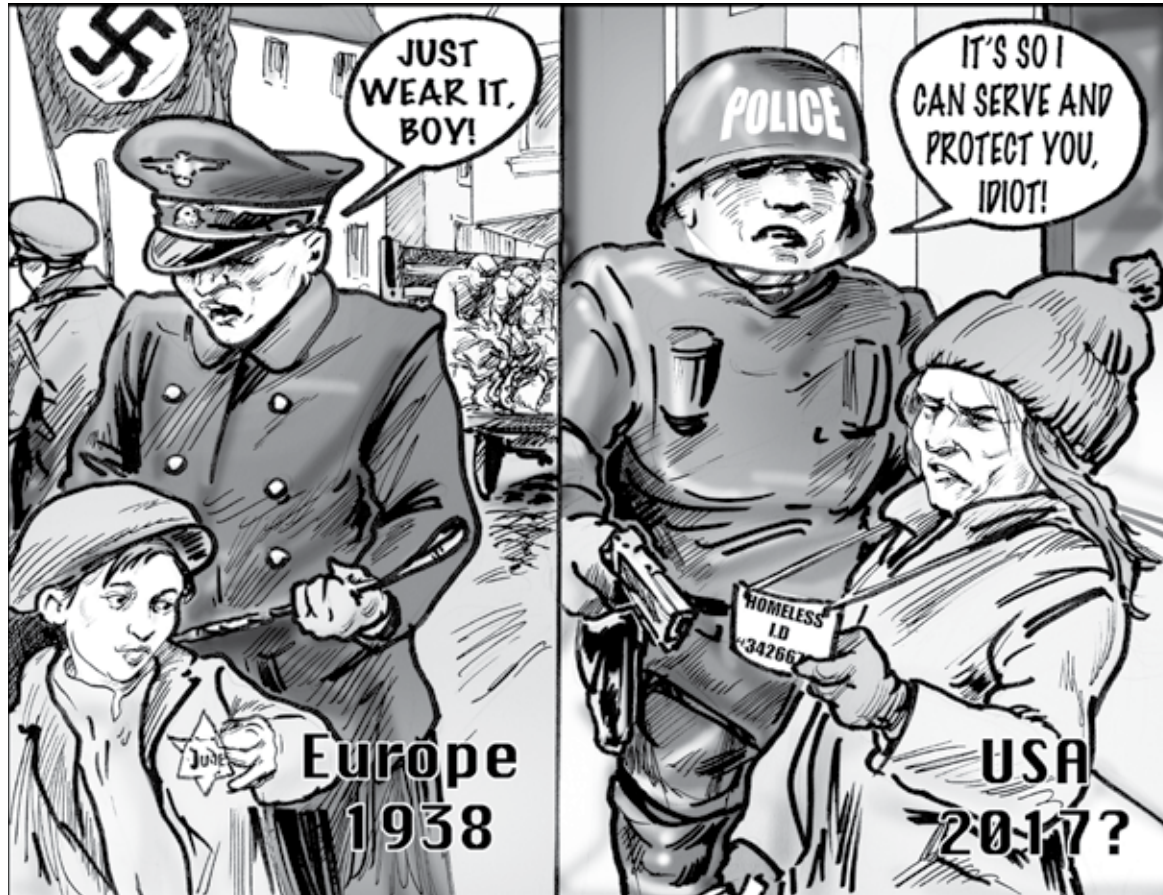
Leading up to WWII, the German government forced Jews to wear identifying badges (the yellow Star of David) as one of many psychological tactics aimed at isolating and dehumanizing them. Refusal to wear the star meant severe punishment and even death. Marking them and scapegoating other groups as different (inferior) to everyone else allowed for their separation from society. This ultimately led to the deportation and murder of six million Jews, the imposition of fascism on all of Germany, and the murder of millions more.

Fast forward: 2016.

Homeless residents in California were recently mandated to wear name tags to get services such as food at a provider. In Florida, the homeless were mandated by both the city and police department to wear yellow wristbands at all times. Refusal to wear one would result in denial of food, and other life-sustaining services. A temporary victory was gained after resistance by homeless organizations and advocates was planned. In California, the homeless still are forced to wear badges.

While “official” government statistics claim homelessness is on the decline, those of us on the front lines know better. Go to any big city and witness the growing tent cities and encampments under bridges, along city sidewalks, parks, any public space, where not only individuals, but families gather to survive.

Gentrification is forcing more families and youth out of housing and into the streets. The “Ghost Ship” fire in Oakland, CA killed 36 residents of an artists’ collective formed around their mutual survival in the face of



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

gentrification there. Rather than exposing the rising cost of rents, and lack of affordable housing, media pundits and others blame the victims.

In Berkeley and Denver, the police remove the tents and blankets of the homeless, including the disabled, as “evidence” of a crime. They are “just doing their job” enforcing laws which ban public camping.

The homeless are demanding an end to the ban and taking their demands to a broader audience. They reject the rulers’ use of racism to try and keep them divided.

But it is becoming more apparent to greater numbers of us dispossessed workers that the system is the problem. An economy built on everyone having a job in order to buy back what they

## Read stories written for the People’s Tribune by the homeless on pages 4 and 5.

need, like housing, is incompatible with robotic production.

As more and more jobs are lost to robotics, and the jobs remaining pay wages too low to survive on, more of us will be homeless. Millions of us are at risk of being targeted as the “other,” rounded up into government camps, or just left to die on the streets and at the hands of the police.

“We, the people,” renters, homeowners, and homeless,

need to join together and demand housing for all as a human right. This is a first step in opposing fascism here. As the demand for our labor decreases, our demands for a government that meets our needs must increase.

We do not need a militarized fascist police state. That’s what the rulers’ want: to protect their wealth at our expense. We want a government that truly is “of, by, and for WE, THE PEOPLE!”

## 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.

**PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE EDITORIAL POLICY:** Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

**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.

**People’s Tribune Editor:** Bob Lee

**Editorial Staff:** Ran Dibble, Brett Jelinek, Sarah Menefee, Joseph Peery, Sandra Reid, Cathy Talbott

**Photo Editor:** Daymon Hartley

**National Office:**  
People’s Tribune, P.O. Box 3524  
Chicago, Illinois, 60654  
e-mail: [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)  
Phone: 773-486-3551  
Toll Free: 800-691-6888  
Fax: 773-486-3552  
Web: [www.peopletribune.org](http://www.peopletribune.org)

**Publisher:** People’s Tribune  
ISSN# 1081-4787

**Reach us locally at:**  
**Chicago, IL:** 773-486-3551  
[peopletribunechicago@gmail.com](mailto:peopletribunechicago@gmail.com)  
**Ann Arbor, MI:** [zettir@gmail.com](mailto:zettir@gmail.com)  
**Atlanta, GA:** [atlanta@peopletribune.org](mailto:atlanta@peopletribune.org)  
**Carbondale, IL:**  
[carbondale@peopletribune.org](mailto:carbondale@peopletribune.org)  
**Denver, CO:** [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org)  
**Detroit, MI:** 248-629-0897  
**Houston, TX:**  
P O Box 231281, Houston, TX 77223-1281  
**Los Angeles, CA:** 310-548-6491  
**Oakland, CA:**  
[oakland@peopletribune.org](mailto:oakland@peopletribune.org)  
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# Trump: Why he can't and won't bring jobs back

## We are fighting for a new society

### COVER STORY

So, is it possible, can jobs be brought back? At the top of the list of Donald Trump's promises to the American people is that he will bring jobs back. Many who voted for him held their noses or at least turned a blind eye to his divisive, racially charged rhetoric believing or hoping he could make good on the promise. But, for as far back as our collective memory goes as a nation, politicians have always made campaign promises designed to get them in office only to break those promises once they get in.

Trump is no ordinary politician. He is a corporate owner and member of the capitalist class, which contrary to his claims of being an outsider, makes him the ultimate insider. His cabinet choices confirm that he represents the billionaires. Trump knows that whatever jobs are saved, brought back or created will be mainly poverty-wage or temporary at best. The real killer of American jobs is not some foreign country or immigrant worker. It is the robot and the computer. And it is Mr. Trump's fellow capitalists who have been introducing this technology into the workplace for quite some time now.

Take a look, for example, at the valiant struggle of minimum wage workers who are demanding \$15 per hour so that they may have the dignity of feeding their families. In response to the *Fight For 15* demonstrations that have taken place in hundreds of American cities, the McDonald's Corporation has warned that rather than pay those wages, they will automate their restaurants. Once automated, those jobs are gone forever, just like what has been going on in the manufacturing sector for decades. This has the added effect of forcing the competi-

tion to lower costs by lowering the wages of their workers or replacing them altogether with robots to avoid being priced out of business.

In the short term, on the one side amasses maximum profit and wealth for the capitalist while on the other side is perpetual poverty, unemployment, dispossession and homelessness for workers. Keep in mind that while robots are more productive and cheaper than humans, they don't shop. Obviously, this cannot continue without in the long run pushing us into another economic crisis more severe than the last. This is a market driven phenomenon and it's spreading globally. No "wall" can stop that.

It is in this context that Mr. Trump is asking the American people to unite behind his presidency and his program to get jobs. However, even if Trump is successful at getting some manufacturers to return because of his relaxed regulations and tax breaks, there is no guarantee that those jobs won't be replaced by robots. The only guarantee we do have is we the American worker are going through this nightmare together.

It is we who must view any program for jobs, not from the point of view of how much profit it makes for this or that corporation, but from how many of us who are homeless get housed, or how many people get healthcare, food, and clean water.

Just as what has happened to us transcends race, religion, ethnicity or national origin, so must be our unity. Without that unity there is little chance of building a new America where the human and economic needs of all our people are met. The robot and the computer make such a new America possible but it will become a reality only when they are publicly owned and operated in the interest of "We The People," and not the corporations.



Protests of low-wage workers are sweeping the country. Meanwhile, companies say they will put robots in to do the work, rather than pay higher wages. The fight for a new society based on human need, not corporate profit, is a life or death question. PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

## 'Fight for \$15' organizer calls for unity

Nic Smith, a union organizer and self-described "white trash hillbilly," makes \$2.35 per hour plus tips at a waffle house. Below are excerpts from his interview with TYT's Eric Byler in Dickenson County, Virginia outside McDonalds at a Fight for \$15 rally.

"There's over 25% poverty here. The average annual income is under \$25,000. People are relying on public assistance. We need \$15. We need a union. A white family dependent on food stamps is going through the same financial struggles as a Black family. Now there are these racial issues that the white poor don't have to go through. My people aren't getting shot by the police every week. When it comes to common struggles, we need unity. I grew up where most households were not employed. People were selling drugs. Meth is a big problem. Are you telling me it's just Black folks on welfare, just Black people selling drugs? No, it's poor people. It's us doing what we got to do to survive. Corporate growth is going up. Wages are stagnant. Top 1% is holding that wealth. Need to redistribute it in the economy. If you are even making \$15, you are forced to spend it. You don't have any other choice. That's what stimulates the economy."

## Trump's cabinet picks show who he really represents

Trump says he's for us workers. Really? Trump's cabinet nominees so far are worth \$13 billion, greater than the world's 70 smallest countries. The truth is, Trump is part of the American ruling class.

The rulers use the power of government to reconstruct our society in a way that's most profitable for them.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (worth \$150 million), CEO of Exxon, will clear the way for the energy industry to be more profitable, as will Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, who thinks climate change is a hoax.

Secretary of Treasury Steve Mnuchin (\$40 million), a former Goldman Sachs banker, will guarantee Wall Street prospers.

Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos (\$5.1 billion) aims to privatize public education.

Head of Housing Ben Carson, (\$26 million) aims to end public housing. He doesn't think government should help our poor.

Then there is immigration hawk Jeff Sessions

(\$7 million), Attorney General, who said the Klan was OK.

Tom Price (\$8 million), Secretary of Health and Human Services, says government programs like Medicare are detrimental to medicine.

The situation is dangerous. It's fascism. The reality is that the rulers are trying desperately to save their power and property in a dying economic system. The new digital and robotic means of producing is destroying a system based on the buying and selling of our ability to work. Capitalism can stay alive only at the expense of us, the people.

This process has been underway under both Democratic and Republican administrations, and is now accelerating.

We the people are in a fight for the ecology, civilization and our very lives. We cannot win if we only fight *against* something. We must fight *for* something—a party that represents us, and a world of peace and prosperity made possible by putting the robots to work for us, not the billionaires.

### People's Tribune discussion groups!

Call or email us to find out if there is a *People's Tribune* discussion group in your area.

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# Badge System: Discriminating against the homeless

By Igmarr Rodas

SANTA ANA, CA — Many homeless people have come forward with allegations of discrimination, favoritism and now, with the implementation of the so-called badge system, it's more obvious.

As persons get escorted out of the shelter and are denied access to it without due process, I'm concerned that Constitutional rights are being violated by Orange County officials.

On the inside operation, with the badge system implemented, it's been documented that staff and security guards are denying food to the homeless on a first-come, first-serve basis. Now, with the implementation, two lines are formed at the feeding site. One is for residents with a badge and the other is for non-residents without a badge. The issues are simple and people have come forward with their complaints of food running out and not being fed, being denied food for not having a badge, and the new home-

less from outside of the Civic Center area are the ones getting the badges first.

In a video interview, a homeless person who has resided at the Santa Ana Civic Center for years stated that he was denied food and when the security guards sent him to the registration desk to ask for a badge, he was denied a badge. The staff stated that they weren't giving out badges.

The homeless people without badges are being denied access to services, food, and a place to

sleep in the shelter.

Susan Price, the Orange County Homeless Coordinator hired by the county to oversee the homeless crisis stated that the badge program has not been fully implemented. In fact, it has, as several complaints from people that have come forward has shown.

The Midnight Mission Administration doesn't want to comment regarding this badge system.

## There is plenty of housing

We can easily house everyone. No one should be abandoned to the streets to die. This criminal system has to go and in its place a cooperative society must be built where all human needs will be met whether one has money or not.

The *People's Tribune* is helping to bring this vision to the people. We print your stories. Donate. Order papers. Visit [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org) or call 800-691-6888.

# Chicago homeless get city to back-off on tent removal

By Mark Saulys

CHICAGO, IL — The homeless in the Chicago neighborhood of Uptown are up against the harsh, natural elements: a rigged housing and job market, a society and political economy that simply doesn't take our existence into account and, not least, an intolerant and hateful but well-off and privileged element of the general public. They hate us and want us eradicated like so many insects, and have the ears and loyalties of the mayor and local aldermen who are of a similar ilk.

This group is of newer arrivals to Uptown and they don't share the values traditional to Uptown of acceptance of and service to the less well-off and poor. They are, in fact, quite hostile to them. They are looking to exploit and profit from the poverty of the neighborhood by buying properties cheaply and selling them expensively after having driven out the long-term residents of the community through "gentrification."

Thus the homeless people's encampments under Lake Shore

Drive in Uptown are under constant attack from City Hall and the local aldermanic offices.

Recently, an attempt was made to close a shelter less than three blocks from the viaduct encampments. This is a culmination of years of effort by the ward alderman to close all the shelters and social services to the poor and homeless in Uptown. They are granting the wishes of the wealthy, newer residents of the neighborhood who seek to expel the current and long-time poorer ones who increasingly have nowhere else to go in a gentrified world, thus creating more homelessness. They profit from their investment of buying properties cheaply and for personal comfort in their frank and belligerent intolerance (funny how *our* comfort level is never considered.) This began even before the alderman was elected.

According to city officials, the shelters in Chicago are 95% full on any given night, but city agencies under the direction of this Alderman were poised to seize our tents under the via-

ducts in September. This was done with the expectation that we would survive the winter without tents (apparently hoping we would not or certainly not caring if we did.) The city maintains tents are illegal (our lawyers interpret the law differently and claim they are not) but nevertheless tolerates them, thus, it seems, choosing not to enforce their interpretation of the law.

Before tents were tolerated the homeless under the Uptown viaducts would huddle together under blankets sometimes building snow banks on each side of the viaduct to try to keep out a blizzard. Barbecue grills were used to provide whatever heat they could. It was not uncommon to wake up and find the person next to you dead after a cold night.

Several collective, public, direct actions, including one in which we set tents on Lake Shore Drive stopping morning rush hour traffic for some minutes, seems to have gotten officials to back off on the intention to evict us from our tents—for now. *To be continued.*



Resident homeless men residing at the Courtyard Transitional Center in Santa Ana, CA. Homeless people at the Center have been denied services like food for not having a badge.

PHOTO/IGMARR RODAS, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

# Nazi Germany? Homeless must wear wrist bands to get services

By Rev. Bruce Wright

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — These are the WRISTBANDS that St Vincent De Paul in the City of St. Petersburg is forcing people to wear in order to get services, ala Star Of David that happened in Nazi Germany.

Further, they are limiting those who receive help only to those who wear this and they must have it at all times.

As of December 31, they will no longer service single homeless folks, thus putting hundreds on the street.

We at the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign are documenting this and will seek legal action as this violates human rights and international law. We are organizing a protest for and with the homeless community and supporters.

We are asking everyone to wear yellow wristbands. Email: [bruce@stpetprogressives.org](mailto:bruce@stpetprogressives.org)

*Editor's note: The mandate for wristbands was dropped after the plans to demonstrate were released. A temporary victory perhaps, but a victory nonetheless!*

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People's Tribune Radio podcasts are available at [peopletribune.org](http://peopletribune.org). Hear from people at the forefront of the struggle for a new America.

# Cops take blankets away from homeless in Denver's cold

*Editor's note: Below are comments by Denver's homeless transcribed from a video by PJ DaMico. The homeless speak about the city's camping ban, jailings for sleeping outside and about people freezing to death. As we go to press, Denver cops were caught on video tearing blankets off of homeless people in frigid weather. The video was viewed 20 million times. The outrage was so widespread the city had to stop the practice, at least temporarily.*

*First man:* "What is going on here is that the police are putting us in jail for sleeping. We're trying to be downtown so we can be closer to work and other things. The police come by here and take everybody's things."

*Second man:* "They came by here and gave us a warning. They said, 'the shift coming on is the a-hole shift. We're the ones giving you the warning. The order comes down from the chain of command.

We're only doing our job and need to put food on my kids' table'. So, seventeen to 25 people out here have to move to nowhere. We're going to go sit in the Rescue Mission cafeteria and think about what we're going to do tonight, cuz we can't come back out here. We're not committing one crime, ne'er one, but if you want us to we can, keep moving us.

"People are dying and freezing. You're running us off the street where we're warm down to the river where they're freezing to death. You're moving us to nowhere. They're dying! Why am I going to jail, what law am I breaking by just sleeping at night? There have been three or four confirmed deaths on the river because—this is a quote from their mouths—they didn't want to go to jail so they moved to the river and froze to death! Any is too many, one is too many! Pick a spot and say this is for camping only. Tell us somewhere we can stay and be in the area of resources."



The homeless are continually driven out of Denver's downtown. People have frozen to death as a result. The American people are joining with the homeless, demanding that government provide homes to those in need. PHOTO/PJ DAMICO

*Third man:* "I've said this before on the news: they should get a place that helps people, build houses, tiny homes—build houses for the homeless."

## When poverty attacks: Women on Skid Row in Los Angeles

By Silvia Hernandez

LOS ANGELES, CA — "One in three homeless people in Los Angeles County are women. ... The total of more than 14,000 women is a 55% increase from 2013. The number of women camped out in RVs, tents, and lean-tos has doubled in the last three years," reports the Los Angeles Times on October 28, 2016.

When poverty attacks, it affects all groups of society. I never thought we'd have to talk about women. It's hurtful. Homelessness leaves women with high risks. Unfortunately, you're more vulnerable. When I became homeless, I experienced discrimination in the way I was treated compared with men. I saw so much pain and despair. I saw women experiencing homelessness, barefoot and naked. Harassed by the police, I was told to "back-off" when I challenged their harsher treatment of women.

After experiencing this, I paid more attention and was determined to speak for those who couldn't speak for themselves. I met the Los Angeles Community Action Network through a showing of the Vagina Monologues. This is the language I wanted to speak.



Silvia Hernandez

There's a lot of strength in the community, a lot of experienced people in the Skid Row community. We know the issues because we've been there: experiencing drama and violence, experiencing living on the streets. This is not only addiction or mental illness. The Downtown Women's Action Coalition (DWAC), the organization I belong to, tells public officials these are the issues.

We need resources to make the leap to a better life. What is going on? This isn't right, it feels like genocide. People should never be on the streets. Cure the illness of poverty. You and I are making the revolution by talking. These are the steps we need to make the change. We need to create this consciousness, particularly after the presidential elections.

## Posts from the frontlines of the homeless movement

By Mike Zint

BERKELEY, CA — Today we again lost gear. Two truckloads. Including brand new gear we were storing. Day 2 of the new Arreguin administration is not looking good for the poorest. HIS government just raided and forced the disabled to move 30 feet. They threatened, coerced, grabbed, blocked observers, shut down several roads, all without planning? Our response from the new government is they did not know.

This took planning! This took coordination! This took city staff! Are we to believe they did it without the new mayor's knowledge?

Now, where do we go Mr. Mayor?

\*

We have this gang of thugs (police) chasing us and stealing our stuff. They have sticks and guns. They keep putting us in cages for being disabled. I think they do drugs because they don't seem too smart.

I thought kidnapping and theft were illegal.

\*

We have been raided the day after every meeting with the city. It is acknowledged by the city that the city manager is targeting our group. She is responsible for the attacks, torture, arrests, injuries, and theft of our gear, including EVERYTHING I owned. And nothing can be done to stop her. That should upset everyone.

The good news is our people will be in the working groups for tiny homes, navigation centers, mental health, addiction, and our intentional community. There is hope. We just have to survive a vicious city manager with a vendetta

\*

Our response to the bullies and criminals in



Tyler and his friend after the second raid in 12 hours of the Poor Tour tent protest in Berkeley CA. People lost everything to the cops and the jaws of a city truck. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

charge was to burn the latest notices to vacate handed out to us. We aren't scared because we are being killed by the city anyways. Berkeley chases and tortures seniors and disabled. They steal the possessions of the poor. And they try to disappear anyone who can no longer afford to live there.

\*

Why is the truth so important? Because it will help unite everyone. There is a class war going on. Do not fall for their attempts at division. We are all ONE PEOPLE!



# Flint water still unsafe: Michigan State Attorney issues new indictments and Congress finally acts



PHOTO/MEGAN KREGER, ISOMESOMEDIA

## Vatican condemns poverty and water privatization

### Pope Francis tells people's movements: Be sowers of change

“Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

— Pope Francis, 2015

Pope Francis addressed 5,000 participants in the Third World Meeting of Popular Movements in Rome on November 5, 2016. The Holy See Press Office reported that

the pope “reminded the members of the movements that inequity is at the root of all social ills and warned them against the fear, fomented by tyranny, that leads us to consider the other as an enemy and to raise walls, exhorting them finally to engage in dialogue with political groups and not to let themselves be confined.”

In an excerpt from the *summary of the Pope's discourse*, Francis told the gathering: “In our last meeting, in Bolivia [in 2015] ... we listed various indispensable tasks for journeying towards a human alternative faced with the globalization of indifference. 1) Place the economy at the service of the people; 2) to build peace and justice; and 3) to defend Mother Earth. That day ... at the conclusion, the ten points of Santa Cruz de la Sierra were read: dignified work for those who are excluded from the job market; land for peasant

farmers and indigenous populations; dwellings for homeless families; urban integration for working-class neighborhoods; elimination of discrimination, violence against women and new forms of slavery; the end of all wars, organized crime and repression; freedom of expression and democratic communication; and science and technology at the service of the people. We have also heard how you are engaged in embracing a project for life that rejects consumerism and recovers solidarity, love between us and respect for nature as essential values.”

See full summary of the Bulletin issued by the Holy See Press Office at: [press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/11/05/161105e.html](http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/11/05/161105e.html)

Contributed to the *People's Tribune* by a Flint activist

FLINT, MI — Four more indictments have been issued regarding the Flint water crisis. This brings a total of 13 people charged to date. But for the first time, Emergency Managers (two) were among those charged. Residents here are heartened that Emergency Managers, especially Darnell Earley, face felony charges since he switched the water from Detroit to the toxic Flint River in April, 2014. A few months later, ignoring residents hue and cries about odors, discoloration, rashes, hair falling out, lead poisoning and more, Earley granted permission for the General Motors Engine Plant to return to the Detroit water source because the Flint water was rusting their parts! When publicly confronted about allowing GM to restore it's water source for the benefit of engines—yet denying Flint residents the same—Earley callously declared, “That's apples and oranges!”

Karen Weaver, who is Flint's Mayor, and Congressman Dale Kildee stated that the charges

expose the Emergency Manager law that has robbed cities of their DEMOCRACY.

Meanwhile, the Federal government finally moved on a \$170 million dollar bill to aid the city of Flint. The funds are earmarked to replace infrastructure, health issues and forgive some of Flint's water debt.

The long suffering but resilient people of Flint have a long ways to go. We are encouraged by these victories, yet far too many are still dealing with life-changing and life-threatening health challenges, physically and emotionally. The shutoff notices have arrived for water we can't use. The residents of a housing complex are headed for eviction because the absentee LLC landlord refuses to pay their water bill.

Watch on TV while the former public works city employees and Emergency Managers arraigned on felony charges that could send them to prison for 20 years or more—Hallelujah!!!

Now it's time to pick up another case of bottled water to cook dinner tonight!!

## Water rights bond Flint and Standing Rock

Editor's note: The following comments were excerpted from Facebook posts about the fight for water in Flint and Standing Rock:

“I have one message, we have to stand as one, we have to unify, we have to continue to love each other and trust each other in a one-step movement with each other. I have been rejuvenized. I can go back home a little bit stronger because it gives me hope to continue the fight we have fought for the last two years.”

— Flint activist who went to Standing Rock to join the fight for clean water

“The state is forcing Flint to push everyone to pay their water bills. We never stopped receiving water bills for the poison flowing through our taps. The state says that people need to pay otherwise they'll stop sending infrastructure money. Keep in mind that the state poisoned our water and destroyed our infrastructure which is crumbling right now. All we want is new pipes to stop poisoning the water. Flint is charged the highest rate anywhere in the state—in a city that's 40% or more below the poverty line. No one is refunding us for the poisoned water, damage to our homes or health.”

— Melisa Mays, *Water You Fighting For*

The following are excerpts from a video recorded at Standing Rock by Josh Fox:

“Black people live in Flint. Our water is messed up. I just left South Africa. You go to the Eastern Cape, its mining towns. Their water is messed up. I'm up here, they're trying to poison the water. It's universal. Big Mama would say the same thing Native Americans say: ‘God made that mountain baby, how can you own it?’ ... Racism and capitalism, doesn't care who you are or what land you're on. They will try to defeat you.”

— Tory Russell

“Veterans who went to Standing Rock are coming to Flint. We're going everywhere when we see something wrong is happening. No one is going to pay us. We're never going to raise money other than for equipment and transportation.”

— Wes Clark, Jr., a US Marine veteran and son of a former NATO commander





## Thousands of veterans stand with Standing Rock

In early December, in an unprecedented show of solidarity, more than 2,000 U.S. military veterans converged in Standing Rock to form a human shield around Dakota Access pipeline Water Protectors. A contingent met with tribal elders in a forgiveness ceremony, apologizing for past and current crimes com-

mitted against indigenous people by the U.S. government. The veterans say there are millions of them who feel the same way.

Many veterans have pledged to go everywhere where something wrong is happening, where people struggle for survival while the government does nothing or is part of the problem.

**(Left) On December 5th, thousands of veterans marched through blizzard conditions to the front lines at Standing Rock, adding their bodies and voices to the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, and to protect the Water Protectors.** PHOTO/JAKE WESTLY ANDERSON

## Standing Rock: 'We're all in it together – we're all made of water'



By Kylo Prince,  
interviewed by Brett Jelinek

OCETI SACOWIN CAMP, ND — The last world war will be fought over water. Never mind the oil that they're trying to ship out and sell. They'll be choking when they try to eat their money. You can't eat or drink your money.

In Boulder Colorado, I got to meet one of the oil execs from here in North Dakota. So I called that oil exec on stage. I really wanted to hurt the man, but I said, "You know what? I want to thank you for giving our young ones scars, because our scars define us as warriors. I want to thank you for trying to destroy the water, because in doing so you've been able to unite a whole bunch of nations that previously wouldn't even get along." He thought it was great that I was thanking him, that he let oil companies sic dogs on our people, that they used the tear gas, which in itself is an act of war. Why are all these police and military people protecting the [oil companies] who are trying to destroy their water, too? They should be arresting them, not us. They've already been told to stop.

Back home in Canada I've been urging the chiefs to get everybody into Ottawa, into Parliament Hill, let's do something. "Oh we can't afford it." Well if you wait any longer then you

won't be able to afford it and you won't be able to do anything else either, but perish surrounded by water that you can't drink.

Under the [former Canadian prime minister] Harper administration, they passed the bills, a whole bunch of them... a whole new genocide policy. They're gonna start reclaiming First Nations [reservation land] and do with them what they wish, and evict all the people and leave them homeless. It's terrible. And people say, "Well why don't you just get a job?" Where? Where? And I agree, we could start harvesting our own crops. We could start fishing, hunting again. But some of the ones that have started to do that, they ended up in legal battles where they lose everything because of the greed, because of the greed of the corporations; they don't want us to feed ourselves. They want us to depend on everything they can [sell] us.

It's corporations that rule. There's a few wealthy [people] that own all those corporations. ... Look, they're gonna start treating the average [non-indigenous] citizen like they've been treating [the First Nations]. It ain't gonna fly very far before people start standing up.

It's time that we all stood together. Under the prophecy of the eighth fire, of the Anishinaabe, we all stand together and we heal each other and our Mother [Earth]. The healing of forgiveness. We can never forget, but we can always forgive.

That prophecy of the rainbow, it's not a made-up thing or a New Age thing. When we ignite the fire within us, we all shine that different color, we all burn that dif-

ferent color. It has nothing to do with the color of our skin, but the color of our medicine, the color of our spirit. And when we can all shine together, ignite that fire together, within each other, that's where we get that rainbow, that bridge across the sky.

I know that when I was lit on fire, it was the most amazing experience of my life. ... That was my vision, to take down those barriers that we've been hiding behind so that people know who the warriors are; and it's not just American Indian Movement people, it's everybody.

They tried genocide on us, and it didn't work, and now they're trying it on everybody. Obama already signed everybody's rights away anyway. Nobody has any rights. Unless we take them back. Unless we pray together for our water. Again, it comes back to that spirituality. Colonialism came in and robbed us of our spirituality. So then our people, starved of spirituality, fell into the addictions. And a lot of them can't find their way out, until we take them to that sacred fire. Because that's what our spirits are starved for. Because we're all fire and we're water. That's what we are. We need both: We need that sacred fire. We need the water. And it's the fire that's gonna save the water. The fire that consumes all of us, the eighth fire.

*Editor's note: Kylo Prince, Dakota and Ojibwe, is a spiritual leader with the American Indian Movement. He was interviewed by Brett Jelinek for the People's Tribune in October at the Oceti Sakowin Camp near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota. Edited for publication.*

## Stand Strong, love each other. That's the way

More from the interview with Kylo Prince

*People's Tribune: What's your vision for the future?*

**Kylo Prince:** People learning to forget about self. We are all so selfish. All we think about is what we need, what our family needs. I know through colonization we have become consumers. We have to have the best tent, or the best teepee, or the best TV, or the best car. "Oh, there's a new iPhone, I better have that one, too!"... In a society with instant everything, we forget to go back to our ceremonies. We forget that through our suffering and our ceremonies that we have life. We have good life for all of our people—all the people—if we come together like this.

When I think of the beautiful people I've seen and met, and I think about people on the rez just as beautiful, but broken and hurting, have not found that love yet, have not found that self yet, that fire yet. We all need to learn to help them up, too.

That's one of the other things of being oppressed, is we are divided on so many fronts on so many battles at once. But when it comes down to the water, that's where we can all fight together, 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. And that's why it's so important that we're all here together.

Just like the directions. When we do the directions [ceremony], we are connecting all of creation. Not just you or me, but all of us. Even the ones without the voices, everything that uses that water to live. The birds that come and visit and eat the fish. The turtles. Us, we drink the water. We eat the fish, we eat some of those birds. That's what life is, is a circle. And we're about to lose that circle in a big way if we lose all the water. And that's why it doesn't matter if you're calling yourself a Water Protector or Water Warrior or 'water worrier,' because we're all in it together. We're all made of water. That's what it is.

If you can't come here, go somewhere to protect the water. There's places all over the country where that help is needed. Facebook is a good place to get educated on those things. Not to get lost on Facebook. That's what Robert said, from Sacred Stone Camp—he's been there since the beginning. "If it wasn't for Facebook," he said, "none of this would have happened." They would have still been a small little camp over there. So yeah, we do have social media, and media outlets like yours like you're reporting for [the *People's Tribune*]. The Small victories, add them all up, we can stack them all up, and when we're done we'll be victorious through unity.

*PT: Do you have a message for all the other water warriors and water protectors out there?*

**Kylo:** I have to say thank you. Thank you and stand strong. It might sometimes seem like what we do is thankless, but it doesn't go unnoticed. And if you keep doing it, maybe we'll get that attention that we need. When after all the elections are done, and everybody says, "Holy shit we're fucked, again. Now we'd better stand up together." So yeah, stand strong, stay strong, support each other, love each other. That's the way.

# ‘The water turns black’



By Chuck Nelson,  
interviewed by Sandy Reid

SYLVESTER, WV — I have almost 30 years underground. I worked for Massey Energy, the same company where the explosion killed 29 miners. They took my job because I stood up to defend my community.

In the community I live, mountain top removal has had a big impact on health. There’s a lot of brain tumors, kidney disease and birth defects. I’ve gone around for years talking about people having kidney cancer.

## Coal miner speaks out about the fight for water, a safe environment, and healthcare

I’ve had kidney and liver failure. I’ve had 13 surgeries this year.

Now they’re getting ready to take our healthcare away. Congress tried to pass a spending bill. A few Republicans wanted to block having the Miner’s Protection Act in it. It would protect healthcare and pensions. This was guaranteed in 1946 when the country was facing war and needed coal.

Recently, when coal companies filed for bankruptcy, they tried to get out of their responsibilities. Now a lot of coal miners may be losing their benefits. These benefits are crucial for widows of miners and disabled coal miners. Congress left for the holidays, giving a 4-month extension.

I’ve been in this activity since 2006, with others, sever-

al of whom have passed away. When you speak out about the coal industry you are targeted. I’ve been beaten up. Miners think we’re taking their jobs. I stand with my community when it comes to the jobs issue. I ask what good are those jobs if you don’t have a planet to live on?

Their propaganda is that they are creating jobs. They are not. They use 12 men to blow a mountain top off, poisoning the water and air. If you do deep mining it will take 200 miners. They are eliminating jobs to maximize profit.

Communities are disappearing that have been here for hundreds of years. They’re just wiped off the earth. As more jobs dry up, people have to leave. If a community stands up against the coal industry, they buy out the commu-

nity, drive people out and bulldoze it. They are depopulating the community as they mine the coal.

I can’t tell you how many trips I’ve made to Washington, DC, to the EPA Office of Surface Mining. We had perfect water before, stream/mountain water. You can’t drink it now. It’s poisoned with toxic coal waste. They injected stuff into old abandoned mines and now, with mountain top removal blowing up the mountains, it’s cracking these mines and leaking coal waste into the aquifer. The water turns black. People are getting cancer.

In a town called Prenter, WV, a lot of people died from the well water. We fought for years to get city water. The regulatory agencies don’t want to point the finger

toward the coal industry. Getting people to fight in these small communities is difficult because they are linked to the industry.

We have to have water. It’s that or all of us are going to be destroyed. We need to make this a global issue. It’s the only way we can get anything done. With the Paris talks on climate control, other countries are getting involved. Now this administration says they’re going to do away with everything. It’s really a time when we need to come together.

*Editor’s note: Chuck Nelson, a retired West Virginia coal miner is a long-time leader in the fight for clean water, the environment and healthcare.*

# The Truth About Fracking— part 1 Exempt from environmental laws

By Bill Bunting

We hear so much these days about energy sources and our future. Many speak out against oil and coal as being outdated and dangerous as well as toxic to our environment. Many communities as well as countries have turned to natural gas for power because of this. Natural gas burns cleaner and is normally found in pockets in our earth and easily retrieved through conventional drilling with no real harm to the planet.

Yet over the last 30 years, energy companies have found another type of gas and oil that are not so easily and cleanly obtained. These are coal seam gas and shale oil.

Coal seam gas, or CSG, is obtained by drilling horizontally through underground coal beds that are too deep to mine. They then fracture this bed with small uranium tipped charges and capture the gas from within as it escapes. This process is called hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”. And this is what I wish to bring to your attention.

Fracking is an invention of Halliburton, and as many of you know, Halliburton is a major player in drilling and the nation’s largest defense contractor. They build and maintain many offshore oil rigs as well as own all the patents in fracking. It was first used in the mid-1960’s, and back then, considered too dangerous and expensive to use. But as oil and coal seem to be getting scarce, and we search for new ways to power our infrastructure, it has been taken up again.

Many people support fracking but don’t seem to understand the impact it has on water and our planet. It takes two million gallons of water to frack one well. In California alone, there are over a million fracking wells. If this isn’t bad enough, fracking uses many chemicals that are kept secret from the general public due to the “Cheney Loophole,” a law put in place in 2007 by then Vice President Dick Cheney who was the CEO of Halliburton before coming into office. He made fracking exempt from the clean air, water and land acts



**Fracking permanently poisons groundwater.**

that protect the public and the earth from poor drilling practices often used by drilling companies. Like many others, I saw this as criminal being that he owned a major part of the company doing this. But the process is still going strong, and many regions even have nondisclosure laws preventing people from even telling others what is being used.

*This article will be continued in the February edition of the People’s Tribune.*

## ‘Locked out of healthcare access’

By Retirees for Single Payer Health Care, Detroit, MI

DETROIT, MI — “A long strip of deep and fertile soil pinched by sharply rising mountains, the valley has more than doubled its output of produce in recent decades and now grows well over half of America’s leaf lettuce.

“Yet one place the valley’s bounty of antioxidants does not often appear is on the tables of the migrant workers who harvest it.” (theurbanfarmers.org)

The new government that takes power on January 20, 2017 is bound and determined to destroy the “safety net,” particularly access to healthcare through Medicare and Medicaid. Those two programs alone give 131 million working class people in this country some access to healthcare. They are determined to lock us out of access to that healthcare.

In states like Vermont, Massachusetts, and Alabama, so-called Affordable Care Organizations (ACOs) are forming to restrict Medicare and Medicaid recipients access to healthcare. They are per capita medical organizations made up of hospitals, clinics, and physician practices. Each organization is paid a fixed amount per patient. That payment determines what medical treatments are covered and what are not. In other words, when the patients exceed the total per capita amount either the ACO eats the cost of the medical treatment or the patients do.

Another scheme that the new government is proposing is to turn the Medicare system into a voucher system in which each recipient would receive a fixed amount of money to spend on purchasing access to healthcare in Medicare Advantage exchanges. Better coverage comes out of the recipients’ pocket.

Medicaid would be funded by a combination of a block grant from the new government to the states and state taxes to fund the rest. That means either the states cut Medicaid recipients or raise state taxes.

Workers with a job will be offered high co-pay, high co-insurance, and high deductible insurance from their employers. Twenty-nine percent of workers with jobs are now in that situation and the new government will try to force the other 71% into the same situation through so-called tax credits. The result is that their employers are cutting their wages and pocketing the money.

The new government is not on our side.

Our country is that long strip of deep and fertile soil. We are being locked out of healthcare access just as our brothers and sisters’ tables are being stripped of the food they grow.

Our response must be to unite on the nationalization of healthcare access (meaning the government guarantees that the people get healthcare). The national, state, and local healthcare movement must unite on H.R.676—Expanded and Improved Medicare For All Act, as the first step.



# ‘We stand together’ People to rally to save democracy on Inauguration Day

From the Editors of the *People’s Tribune*

Trump’s selection of a cabinet nominees are made up almost entirely of corporate people and military generals. All are committed to stealing all that remains public for the corporate class while assaulting the standard of life of the people. The process confirms the textbook definition of fascism—the naked merger of the corporations and the government. In response, Americans, whose intentions are to save democracy and fight for their rights, are gathering on Inauguration Day, January 20, 2017. Below our excerpts from statements of just a few of the groups who will be participating in these rallies.

“Across the country, educators, school staff, parents, students, political leaders and community allies will stand together to show President-elect Trump that we are committed to protecting ALL our students, our schools and our communities, and to demonstrate our opposition to Betsy DeVos as secretary of education... Support public education, call on the Senate to reject Betsy DeVos as secretary of education, and demand no school closings or charter/voucher expansion.”

— *The Chicago Teacher’s Union*

“We reject the domination of Wall Street and the billionaire class over our society, and oppose this rigged political and economic system. We stand against both the fear that Trump represents and the corruption that backed Clinton. Neither party represents the interests of the 99%... The goal of this action is to build a new independent coalition movement for the 99% that stands outside the stranglehold duopoly of the GOP and DNC. We believe the 99% needs its own representation that rejects all corporate cash and influence, and puts people and planet over profits.”

— *Occupy Inauguration*



Some of the thousands who marched following the election of Trump. Millions more will demonstrate their anger and fears for the country on Inauguration Day. PHOTO/JOE FENSTERMAKER

“The Women’s March on Washington will send a bold message to our new administration on their first day in office, and to the world that women’s rights are human rights. We stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us.”

— *Women’s March on Washington, womensmarch.com/partners*

“In Washington and hundreds of cities across the U.S., Inauguration Day, January 20, will mark the first day of united mobilizations to resist and stop Trump’s war on the people. New Orleans should be counted on by bringing out thousands to say, ‘We Will Not Go Back.’ We have to unite all of our work with a mighty voice and together we can move mountains.”

— *Counter Inauguration Mass Rally and March, New Orleans, January 20th*

## Electoral College subverts the will of the people

By John Williams

DETROIT, MI — The 2016 Presidential election has angered many American voters about the electoral college. The illusion that the public elects the president via popular voting for their candidate has been destroyed. Electors are chosen mainly at Democratic and Republican party conventions with the public having no voice in the matter. Both parties are influenced and controlled by the corporate class.

In addition, 24 states are not bound to honor the public vote. And, if no candidate receives the 270 majority, the House of Representatives and the Senate chooses the President and Vice President.

Voters feel that all this allows the 1% to determine elections.

The Electoral College was established in 1787 by the rulers in order to subvert the will of the people. The facade of democracy was instituted through voting. However, Native Americans, African Americans, women and all whites who did not own taxed property were excluded. African American votes were counted as 3/5ths for the southern Slavocracy. Therefore the voting crowd was safely in the hands of the Southern Slavocracy and the rising banking/industrialist



In an unprecedented effort, protests occurred throughout the country to lobby electoral college voters to change their vote. PHOTOS/WASHINGTON STATE ARCHIVES

North. After the Civil War, the victorious North instituted the right to vote for African American males as a means to exert economic and political control over the former slaves.

As the robotic/computer technology spread in the 1970s, eliminating jobs for millions, voting of an increasingly impoverished and propertyless mass became a hazard for the ruling class. The ruling class needs to contain the struggle of the dispossessed for democracy by using a fascist agenda. Increasingly, restrictions on voting have

been instituted. In Michigan, Emergency Management, a new form of ruling class power that throws out elected officials and ignores the public wishes in favor of the corporate quest for profits was put into place.

In the recent election, the growing disaffection of the people was apparent. About 132 million voted and some 100 million did not vote. Within this context, the election of Trump by the Rust Belt and Appalachia (areas voting for Obama in 2008 and 2012) showed the hurt and need in the country.



Fortunately, many of the dispossessed are not buying the lies of either party and this is the segment we must win to the vision of cooperative society. In such a society, the massive technology will be owned and run for the benefit

of the people. We must get united and not let the ruling class divide us along race or gender with their hysterical propaganda.

What we do in America will affect the struggle of the dispossessed throughout the globe.

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# Cabinet pick for education would destroy public education



Chicago teachers, parents, and kids are leading the nation in the struggle to get corporate profit out of education and save public education for our children. Trump's education nominee will lead the fight for destroying it. PHOTO/SARAH JANE RHEE

By Steven Miller

OAKLAND, CA — Donald Trump's nominee to head the Department of Education is billionaire Betsy DeVos. DeVos has always held that public education should be destroyed and that schools should be totally run by corporations for-profit. She will aim to defund, privatize and implement the destruction of public schools and teacher unions.

DeVos is a big proponent of dark money, or unlimited corporate funding of politicians. In Ohio, her "All Children Matter Political Action Committee" refuses to pay \$5.3 million in fines for violating state campaign finance laws. So DeVos, a person who refuses to pay her debts, will supervise the Department of Education, which oversees \$1.3 trillion in student loans. Care to guess whether she will implement forgiveness of these predatory loans?

Betsy DeVos has long advocated for corporate for-profit charter schools that have diverted billions

from public education. While public school systems cannot even adequately feed their students a decent meal, charter corporations divert public money into private profit and huge CEO salaries.

DeVos also supports and funds school voucher programs, which now exist in some form in about 30 states. The idea is that government grants a family funds that they can transfer to a private or a religious school. This money is diverted from public schools.

The DeVos family of billionaires comes from Michigan, where they helped convert the state into a Right to Work State and impose Emergency Financial Managers, the new face of corporate dictatorship. The results have been horrific for public education.

One Emergency Manager (EM) came to Detroit from Flint after he poisoned 100,000 people with toxic water pollution. When EMs took over Detroit Public Schools (DPS) in 1999, the schools had a \$93 million surplus. Today they are \$525 million in

the red. Gov. Snyder's plan is to immediately reduce funding by \$1100 per year per student to pay off the EM-obligated debt to the banks. The long-term goal is to abolish the DPS.

With DeVos, this kind of attack on public education will be extended across the country. The system is Broke on Purpose! A national attack demands a national movement for national control!

This political revolution begins by holding government accountable at every level, to advance the interests of all people together, not corporations. Government is responsible to guarantee all aspects of human life, not corporate profit. Corporate power cannot be broken without terminating the legal status of public education as a commodity. Education should not be a privately owned commodity sold for profit. Getting corporations out of public education requires nationalizing public education at the federal level.

## Letters to the Editor

The spirit and humanity of the people of this [homeless] camp is what has held them together in spite of every effort to tear them apart. What are we asking for in this protest? To be left alone so we can survive. The answer on five occasions has been to come out and take everything needed for that survival: sleeping bags, tents, tarps, blankets... What kind of person gets up at 3am to go out and take the blanket and covering off a disabled elder in the rain? My only hope for humanity is that there are people who join me in getting up to go out and stop such cruelty.

—Dan McMullan

Many thanks for publishing my words! I feel like it is important for people to realize that we are in the time of change... that we are living the prophecy. The 8th fire is our hope in saving the next 7 generations...

—Kylo Prince

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## The defense of immigrant rights is the defense of humanity



From the Editors of the *People's Tribune*

PHOTO/ERIC MCGREGOR

Millions are protesting in defence of our immigrant brothers and sisters and their children who are living in fear of what will happen once Trump takes office. Trump has said he will cut off federal funding to sanctuary cities. He has talked of deporting two or three million immigrants, of having a religious litmus test for immigrants trying to enter the US, and of creating a government national registry based on religion or ethnicity. Attacks on immigrants have gone on under both Democratic and Republican administrations, but now we are seeing a dangerous escalation.

The attack on immigrants, like the attacks on the homeless and on workers of color and others, is an attack on all of us. We have to cement our bond as workers and not allow any section of us to be isolated. The attempt to divide us is calculated to pave the way for the open dictatorship of the billionaires, for a society where no one has rights and no one is cared for. The defense of the immigrant worker is the defense of democracy and our humanity.



# Homeless in Oakland: 'The Ghost Ship' has sailed



An altar on the street where fire destroyed the artist live/work space known as "The Ghost Ship" in East Oakland, claiming the lives of 36 people. The young man in the photo is from Portland, in Oakland for the funeral of his friend.  
PHOTO/PETER BROWN

By Chris Brown and Peter Brown

OAKLAND, CA — On December 2, a raging fire destroyed the artist live/work space known as "The Ghost Ship" in East Oakland, claiming the precious lives of 36 people.

Many have pointed fingers at individuals they believe responsible for this tragedy. What hasn't been discussed are the systemic conditions that led to these art-

ists, here and across America, being forced to live and work in similar spaces under similar conditions.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, housing has always been one of the most profitable commodities. If the corporate ruling class can keep the people distracted from the real cause of problems such as housing, they can effectively frame the discussion and blame the victim. The ruling class has tasked the politicians

and media to focus on blaming the artists for their own suffering just as they did—and still do—with African Americans, Latinos, women, and members of the LGBT community.

Corporate developers, backed by government, can then clear out those who are not profitable to them and transform these spaces into high-priced living spaces that neither artist nor average working class person can afford. This is why there has been a surge in homeless encampments. This is why, when politicians and other officials speak about this horrific tragedy, they don't address the reasons behind the housing shortage in the Bay Area, the rapid increase in homeless encampments, or why these encampments and the people living in them can disappear in the middle of the night and no one asks questions.

We the people must unite as the class we are and demand that our government protect our interests, not the interests of the corporate ruling class. Government could:

Refuse to allow developers to buy or develop properties

unless current residents living in that area could afford to live there without spending more than 30% of their income on housing.

Use Eminent Domain to seize empty or mismanaged buildings; give them to those without homes.

Insist that existing residents be trained, and employed by any businesses wishing to locate in Oakland.

Provide artists with tools and resources to do their work, as well as livable stipends, as during the 1930s WPA Arts Project.

The people of America can no longer afford to deny that, at the same time that many groupings are oppressed, we are one class of people who must work

for a living, and we are under attack. No longer can we afford to be silent and let the corporate media claim the narrative of the Ghost Ship tragedy. The working class people of America must present the question, "Why are people being forced to live in conditions hazardous to their lives?"

We as a class must claim the narrative and present the answer: Corporate greed and its source, the capitalist system, is forcing people to live in intolerable conditions. We must unite as a class and collectively seek the power to force change. Corporations must become publicly owned; it's the only way to protect us from them.

## We are our brother's keeper



This famous painting depicts the impact of industrialization; the hardship of third class railway travelers in mid-19th century France.  
PAINTING/HONORÉ DAUMIER, METMUSEUM.ORG

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — I often think about this image when riding the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). It's not nightmarish, but a kind of comfortable place, having inspired contemplation and songs.

That being said, tonight was really horribly different.

I got on the bus at Kimball and Diversey. Everyone had their face covered. There was a bad rotten smell. "What the Hell is that?" I asked. "It's him!" a young woman coughed out from her covered face. I went as far back as I could. People were cussing and convulsing to the exits. There sat a hooded figure in a bright orange parka nearly motionless. "It's gangrene," one guy in the back said.

"Open sores all infected"

"Won't go to the hospital."

They knew him.

"That white guy?"

"Yeah—got one of those infections that don't get better with antibiotics."

"Need to amputate."

"Flesh eating thing."

"Hey-fuck that!"

I realized I was seeing a 30-year-old dying in front of me. People choking, continued to board.

I got off and urged the bus driver to clear the bus and call an emergency situation in.

I looked in at him. He was tranquil and impassive to the anger toward his being. A neat beard and mustache. A barely alive indictment. No more or less insane that the system that allows for its citizens to sink to this state.

We are our brother and sisters' keeper after all. We intervene to save it all. All roads lead to revolution.

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Our readers appreciate the *People's Tribune* because it speaks the truth. It is a paper truly of, by and for the people. This is so because the *People's Tribune* prints the voices of the leaders of the key battles in the country today. First and foremost is the fight to get control over the corporations before they take over all of society.

And, the *People's Tribune* is in the thick of this fight—from the struggle for democracy in Michigan, the testing ground for corporate fascism, to the fight against the poisoning, shutoffs and privatizing of our water, to the struggle for the vacant homes for the homeless the government owns and gives to the developers, to the fight for the ecology and humanity.

Within these battles, the *People's Tribune* voices the people's demand for the government to be our government and provide for the needs of the people, not the corporations.

These battles are key to the fight for a new cooperative America that ends forever the immoral reign of corporate private property.

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## A Student Deferred

After "Harlem" by Langston Hughes

What happens to a student deferred?

does she give up  
like there's nothing left?  
or does she keep going —  
cuz its fun?  
does she try her hardest  
to pass?  
or does she slide along —  
never attending class?

maybe she just cracks  
like a sunflower seed

or does she succeed?

— Sandra S  
12th grade, Harlan Academy Community High School.  
See more poems like this at [projectode.org](http://projectode.org)  
STUDENTS: Submit writing on education to: [revolutionarypoetsbrigadechi@gmail.com](mailto:revolutionarypoetsbrigadechi@gmail.com)



# 'This is too dangerous to let go,' says Rev. Pinkney



Billboard in Benton Harbor, MI.

PHOTO/MARY KAY YARAK

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BROOKES/FREMONT PRISON, MI — I was given a potential death penalty—30 months inside the prison system. This with absolutely no evidence, no confession, no witnesses,

no crime scene, convicted by an all white jury that was not subject to the truth. It is bigger than the all white jury—it is the establishment, the whole damn system.

The attack on democracy in Benton Harbor, MI shows that

all levels of the corporate power structure are determined to crush anyone who stands in its way, including me and you. I have already served 25 months as a result of the Jim Crow trial. The trial claimed I had altered dates on a recall petition against then Benton Harbor Mayor James Hightower.

The prosecutor and judge both instructed the jury they could convict me with little or no evidence. The prosecution's case rested on the idea that since I was an outspoken organizer on political and social issues, I must have been motivated to alter the dates on the recall petition.

The prosecution offered no witnesses, no proof, nothing that could convict me. The Court of Appeals decision set a dangerous precedent for the people of Michigan and the country. The deci-

sion indicated there is sufficient evidence to convict even when there is absolutely no evidence. The Court of Appeals Judges, Kelly, O'Brien and Fort Hood, all state Rev. Pinkney must have told somebody to alter the dates on the recall petitions with absolutely no evidence to support this false claim.

The hypocrisy of this system has no limits when judges and prosecutors are dishonest. You better be aware because you could be next, convicted with no evidence.

America is beginning to look more and more like Nazi Germany. There are 2-3 million people inside U.S. prisons; 820,000 on parole, and three million on probation. The U.S. has 25% of the world's prison population and only 5% of the world's population.

The scales of justice are unbalanced, especially against the poor and people of color. We must continue to fight against this grave imbalance to insure a humane and just future for everyone. We must confront the establishment, the system, at all cost.

This case was an effort to isolate and silence me against the criminal enterprise of Whirlpool Corporation that has its headquarters in Benton Harbor. We must challenge the rule of the corporations. Let's make this struggle a victory.

*Editor's note: Write to Pinkney: Rev. Edward Pinkney #294671, Brooks/Fremont C.F., 2500 S. Sheridan Dr., Muskegon Heights, MI 49444*

## Voices of the people in Michigan

*Elena Herrada, former Detroit school board member, stripped of power by Michigan's Emergency Manager law, speaks about the destruction of democracy:*

"Reverend Edward Pinkney sits in prison tonight for recalling the mayor of Benton Harbor. The people of Michigan voted to repeal the Emergency Manager law and were punished with an unrepealable version of the law. During the elections, Flint, Grand Rapids and other cities ran out of ballots before the polls closed, as if we have never had elections before. [Gov.] Snyder is so corrupt, yet he is at large. Poisoned water, corrupt laws, back room secret deals, legal representation for Snyder's misdeeds at taxpayer expense. Michigan is suffering deeply. Two signs of this: Trump wins in Michigan and Bernie Sanders wins in Michigan. Do not ignore the cries of the poor."

*A man was found dead in the snow in Benton Harbor. That people are living and dying in the street shows the level of poverty engulfing Benton Harbor and the rest of the country. Pati Heinz of Benton Harbor decries the immorality the system breeds when she says,*

"I would like to know how a person can be so cold-hearted, to just leave another human being in the snow, like they are nothing! I pray God brings justice to this family and the person(s) responsible for this are found. This is not what ANY family should be dealing with at Christmas time! PLEASE! If you know anything about this, contact the Benton Harbor Public Safety Department."

*More than 500 prisons and jails across 43 states are eliminating visits of family and friends with inmates. Prisons are using video systems for visitation. Dorothy Pinkney says,*

"This is so unreal... but it paints a real picture of how fascism is controlling and destroying the majority of humanity even more. Corporate and government greed for money, lust for power and control of society by any means necessary results in injustice and the creation of inhumane laws to justify their evil actions. But the rising up of society will cause their greater fall..."



(Left) Michiganders rally in Benton Harbor against the city's Emergency Financial Manager law in 2013. Rev. Pinkney was among the first to warn about the dangers of the state's corporate dictator law. PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK

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## Infected Souls

For plenty of years we've been oppressed  
With violence

Day and night all i seem to hear is sirens  
Knocking on my drums as i walk and stomp the slums

Breathing the rhythm as i kick and rock the funk  
As a youth, wicked fiends with mad loot

I recognized the struggles yet no disputes  
Developed my skills to chastise and reach to the weak

Uplifting one another with knowledge  
so we can see and speak

—David Tojin aka Astrow