

WHEN THE HOMELESS RESIST, THE SYSTEM TREMBLES



People who are homeless and formerly homeless rally to support a campaign to end homelessness and income inequality in New York. The homeless are the “tip of a spear” of the national movement for housing as a right.

PHOTO/ERIK MCGREGOR



**KEEP WATER
PUBLIC**

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ON PAGE 4**

**Special Pull-Out:
Poets United
To End
Homelessness**

PUERTO RICO
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Government busy helping the rich while the people suffer

EDITORIAL

In times of crisis and disasters, we, the people, want to help each other. But the disasters we are facing are so huge they require the government to mobilize society's resources to help, and we and the Earth are being abandoned by government. The corporate-controlled government is focused on taking care of the corporations and the billionaires.

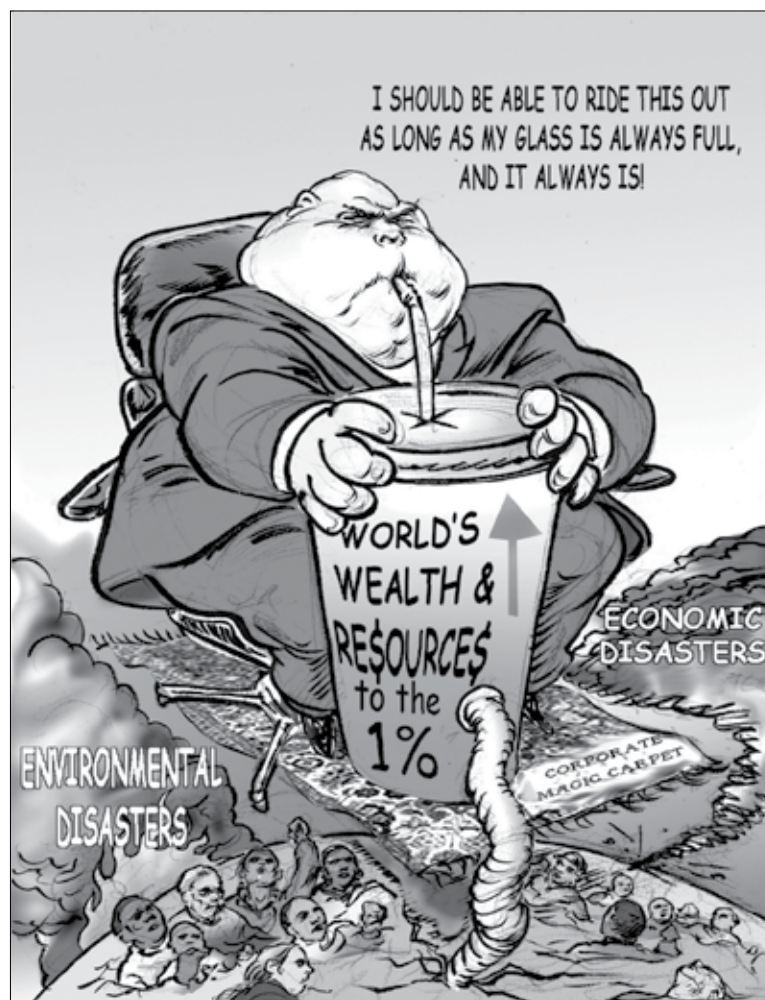
We've been hit by one disaster after another, both natural and man-made. The recent California wildfires (possibly caused by Pacific Gas and Electric Company's negligence) wiped out whole communities, leaving thousands displaced or homeless, and many others dead or missing. Massive smoke clouds will cause respiratory health issues and possible premature deaths far into the future. And a "public-private" partnership, led by business interests who stand to profit, has already been formed to develop a "recovery" plan.

The hurricanes that ripped Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico add to the misery. The situation in Puerto Rico is especially grave. People are dying for lack of electricity, food, clean water and healthcare. The destruction of homes, brid-

es, roads, dams, businesses and crops will result in more homelessness, unemployment, poverty and higher prices at the grocery store. These are problems only government can solve.

Yet while Puerto Ricans are dying, President Trump chided the Puerto Rican people for being in default to Wall Street, as if to excuse his slowness in responding, and he even kept Cuba from rendering help early on. Instead of mobilizing aid, he and Congress shifted their attention to tax cuts for the rich, defunding Obamacare, and stepping up the attack on immigrants. With regard to healthcare, rather than guaranteeing it for everyone, the government is focused on further privatizing healthcare to keep it a profit-making capitalist venture instead of actually healing the sick. Their plan will leave millions of the poorest Americans without coverage. Further, they divert more of the budget to the military and saber rattle for war around the world. To add insult to injury, the planned corporate tax cuts will mean that with each new disaster there will be less money for aid. And we can add to the list of catastrophes the economic disaster we are all facing, with rising poverty and homelessness, falling wages and disappearing jobs.

Trump is a serious problem, but he is just a symptom of the dis-



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

ease. The disease is an economic system that is dying because technology is replacing human labor. If we can't be employed to turn a profit for the corporations, they have no use for us. Our interests and the interests of the capitalist billionaires and their government are completely opposed. We can no longer coexist with a system where the means to produce what we need to live is privately owned, a system driven by profits, that

denies life-sustaining resources like water, homes and healthcare to us if we can't pay. The people must take over the corporations before they destroy the Earth and humanity, and the government must be our government. We are at a crucial moment in American history. Either we continue dying in an America of, for and by a tiny class of billionaires, or we build an America that is truly of, for and by the people.

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PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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

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

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

The *People's Tribune*, formerly published by the League of Revolutionaries for a New America, is now an independent newspaper with an editorial board based in Chicago.

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

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When the homeless resist, the system trembles

COVER STORY

Homeless people all across America are refusing to disappear. Cast off by the economy, vilified by the news media, and targeted by the police, they are still standing up to fight for their right to exist. In Chicago, residents of Uptown Tent City resisted their eviction from the Wilson Avenue viaduct. They blocked traffic on Lake Shore Drive and sang, “This land is your land, this land is my land” in the middle of the highway. Across the country, when police threaten to arrest people for sharing food, they share food anyway. In Los Angeles, Skid Row residents have embarked on a campaign to “disrupt the Mayor” every time he makes a public appearance. And in Florida, a Christian minister has said that the homeless are the “tip of the spear” of the national movement for housing.

Many people now know someone who has become homeless or is only one job loss or illness or eviction away from it. Abandoned by the government that should represent them, either visible in doorways, or increasingly in tent encampments, living

in vehicles, or invisible because couch-surfing or otherwise hidden, the homeless come from all walks of life, backgrounds, ages and nationalities. Many work part and even full-time. Thousands of elementary school children and college students are homeless. Elders and the disabled panhandle during the day and seek the shelter of doorways at night. Many die of exposure every year, victims of a dying system that counts human life as worthless. Without money they are not considered worthy to stay alive.

Homelessness has been seen in the streets of the United States for over 30 years, since the introduction of the microchip and automation into production replaced human labor and threw millions out of work forever, or into low-wage, part-time or contingent jobs that don’t put a roof over one’s head. We now have a society with astronomically high corporate profits on the one hand, and growing insecurity, misery, hunger and homelessness on the other. This is a shocking moral failure that could easily be solved by a political and economic system that takes care of people’s needs, instead of landlords’ and corporate profits. The basic demands of the homeless for homes and for all they need



A woman who herself faces homelessness, fights alongside people who live under a viaduct in Chicago’s upscale Uptown neighborhood, and who were recently driven out by the City of Chicago. Though scattered, the community remains strong and determined to make it clear that housing is a human right.

PHOTO/FRANK JAMES JOHNSON

to live safe and productive lives are a demand for a society that puts that as its absolute priority: a society that shares the abundance it creates and fulfills the basic needs of all.

When homeless people resist, the system trembles. That

is because a system that has no use for human beings must be and will be abolished. It is time to replace it with a cooperative

economy based on meeting the material, cultural, and spiritual needs of people, not the bottom line of corporations.

HUD is no longer in the housing business, but corporate billionaires are

Dr. Ben Carson! What a gem! Carson, Director of the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development came, saw, and “felt their pain,” in Cairo, IL, where 200 families in the intentionally neglected 400 unit public housing complexes have tried to get their demands heard for years. But Dr. Ben came to tell them there was nothing he could do. HUD, he exclaimed, is no longer in the housing business! HUD would not foot the bill to fix the problems so the families could stay in their community and the kids could stay in their school district. In a soft nearly inaudible voice Carson told them that the best he could do was to offer them vouchers to go elsewhere.

Isn’t that just fine and dandy! Trump and friends are cutting \$3 billion from the low-income housing and voucher systems. In a nation that doesn’t have enough “affordable” housing, the outwardly mean spirited Trump gang are adding insult to injury by shifting billions of dollars from

programs for low income workers, youth and seniors to the rich. In a budget of \$4 trillion there should be no one that must suffer homelessness or the threat of it. No one should live in substandard housing today in a nation of abundant housing.

The housing cuts should be seen in the context of the combination of Trump’s proposed tax cuts and the federal budget resolutions passed by the House and Senate, which will be deadly for all but the rich if they become law. The top 1% would get \$1.9 trillion in tax breaks. All non-Medicare health programs, especially Medicaid and Obamacare, would see a cut of \$1.3 trillion over 10 years, and Medicare would be cut by almost \$500 billion over 10 years. Income security programs would be cut by \$653 billion. This includes food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit for the poor, unemployment insurance, and both military and civilian federal employee pensions.

At the same time, military and intelligence spending, already at around \$1 trillion a year, will increase.

The billionaires know the system is dying. The more they turn to technology to do the work we once did, the more they turn to speculation to turn profits and the more they cut or privatize every social program we have known during the industrial era so they can pocket the money.

The fight right now is to force government to be OUR government, not the government of the wealthy corporate billionaires. In order for “We, the People” to prevail, we must demand that Carson and the politicians in Washington use their power now to spend the money needed to build the affordable housing capacity the people need in Cairo, IL and big cities alike. This is a life or death matter. And it’s a step on the path to getting rid of the corporations altogether and building a totally new society.

Society could provide for everyone. Why isn’t it?

Why can’t we house, feed, and provide healthcare for everyone in our country? The answer is we can. There are plenty of resources but they are owned and controlled by a handful of wealthy people and giant corporations. The rest of us have no say in how those resources are used. We go hungry, sleep in the streets, go without water, healthcare and education simply because we have no money to buy what we need. This is morally wrong! The private ownership of how we produce what we need to live is in the way of us doing the right thing and providing for everyone.

If the people owned and controlled society’s giant industries that produce our food, water, housing and healthcare, would we let people sleep in the street and eat out of garbage cans? Would we force people to do without clean water? Of course not! But with the advent of labor-replacing technology that creates more joblessness or starvation wage jobs, we, the people, either have to make that technology public property and run the economy ourselves, or we have to keep taking what the billionaires and corporations give us. And what they are giving us is permanent unemployment, poverty, war and repression.

Modern technology gives us the means to create unlimited abundance. That means an end to hunger, homelessness and doing without healthcare. It means everyone would have a place in society and the opportunity to contribute. But to have that abundance, the people have to own the means of producing what we need to live. And that means we have to unite all who can be united, and organize to get the power to take our country away from the billionaires and corporations. Then we can create a society where everyone gets what they need and everyone contributes what they can to help society move forward.

Great Lakes groups band together to challenge Nestlé and the water crises

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from an article about the recent Great Lakes Commons "Water is Life" conference in Flint, MI, by Emma Lui, campaigner for the Council of Canadians.

By Emma Lui

FLINT, MI – “My grandson, who is 12 years old, was to be an academic ambassador to go to Washington in 2014 and 2015. Well, he was an A-B student but by the time the lead began to corrode his brain, he was a D-E-F student,” said Bishop Bernadel Jefferson. A pastor for 27 years, she was one of the first signers of the emergency manager lawsuit against Michigan governor Rick Snyder in 2013. She said, “Tonight we make history. We did something they didn’t want us to do and that was to come together.”

Maude Barlow, world-renowned water activist, author

and chairwoman of Council of Canadians, gave an important keynote speech on water justice struggles around the world and her work with other water warriors to have the United Nations recognize the human right to water and sanitation.

Jim Olson from FLOW gave an impassioned talk about Nestlé in Michigan and the importance of the public trust.

Indigenous lawyer Holly Bird talked about the need for governments to honor the relationships that Indigenous people have with the water and how that can be done *without* someone controlling or owning water.

Lila Cabbil from the Detroit People’s Water Board talked about how the water fights are racialized in Michigan.

Sylvia Plain from Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Sarnia,

Ontario talked about how they have had methylmercury in the sediments in their river for a couple of decades and how the



Anishinaabe have cared for the waters and land for thousands of years.

Speaker Claire McClinton

from Flint Democracy Defense League described the water crisis in Flint. She pointed out, “In Flint Michigan, you can buy a gallon of lead-free gas, or a gallon of lead-free paint, but you can’t get a gallon of lead-free water from your own tap.”

Marian Kramer of Highland Park Human Rights Coalition and Michigan Welfare Rights Organization spoke about fighting the shutoffs in Highland Park, a city within Metro Detroit where at one point half of the homes had their water shut off.

Peggy Case explained, “The right to water is being challenged everywhere. The privatization of water is a key piece of what’s going on in Flint.”

In Evart, Michigan, Nestlé pumps more than 130 million gallons (492 million liters) of water a year to bottle and sell to

consumers. Nestlé pumps up to 1.2 million gallons (4.7 million liters) a day in southern Ontario despite the fact that both of its permits have expired.

Participants at the conference were outraged that governments allow Nestlé and other water companies to take, control and sell water for a profit while failing to secure clean water for residents in Flint, Detroit, and many Indigenous nations. They pledged to boycott Nestlé and single-use bottles of water and to take action to end Nestlé’s bottled water takings in the Great Lakes, to work to have the human right to water implemented and to bring water justice to all who live around the lakes.

Read the full article at rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/making-waves/2017/10/great-lakes-groups-band-together-challenge-nestle-and-water

Parkersburg, West Virginia is burning

By Lissa Lucas

PARKERSBURG WV — Parkersburg, WV is burning. And the plastics and chemical warehouse that’s been on fire for more than a week has a long history of environmental violations, violations that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) just let slide. Why? *Because this is West Virginia, so of course that’s how it works.* Our Department of Environmental Protection isn’t there to protect us; in fact, our current governor, a deadbeat coal baron himself, has directed the department to do just the opposite. He’s told them to “stop saying no to industry.”

You may expect the DEP to stand up for us... and certainly some employees are trying their hardest. But the DEP secretary serves at the governor’s pleasure. Essentially, the leadership of the department has been bought. And even if the current DEP Secretary, Austin Caperton, wasn’t himself a wealthy coal executive, WV governors can simply count on those serving to value their jobs more than they value our lives.

Welcome to our resource extraction colony, where people are less important than the wallets of wealthy CEOs. Welcome to our chemical fire. Welcome to WV, where that black plume of



Plastics and chemical warehouse on fire in Parkersburg, WV. The company has a long history of environmental violations that the DEP let slide.

PHOTO/JOSEPH HUSSELL, CRAFTSMANSHIP AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

chemical-smoke can drape across neighborhoods like a shroud, and the concern is more to make sure that the DEP seems like it’s doing something retroactively, rather than to make sure it protects us in real time.

For example, the warehouse that is burning doesn’t have the permit that the DEP directed it

to acquire six years ago. Can we expect our government to take action to shut down this company? Maybe, but I doubt it. And frankly, even if they were to be kicked out of WV, never to return, they’re not some special case that slipped through the cracks of DEP enforcement. This tragedy of errors IS DEP enforcement.

It’s working how it’s meant to work, because the DEP leadership is there to cover for industry, not to protect our citizens.

As to whether that cloud safe is to breathe... ummm. Well, we still don’t even have an inventory of what the warehouse contained. But about 60 people have gone to local emergency rooms so far

with symptoms considered related to the inhalation.

In fact, the company that owns the warehouse in question— Intercontinental Export Import Inc.—owns several other warehouses in the area, and we have detailed inventories for exactly none of them. It was difficult to even figure out how many other chemical warehouses they own.

However many there are, the DEP has ordered IEI Plastics to finally submit detailed inventories. One wonders why it should take a DEP order for the company to provide the inventory that should have been on hand already, especially since the contents were burning, but the history shows the DEP has time and time again forgiven fines for repeated violations because... why? Oh, yeah.

Because this is West Virginia, where members of our own government clearly value industry over lives. And—with pockets stuffed full of campaign donations—those same representatives then pretend to wonder why we keep losing population as young people flee the state.

Lissa is running for House of Delegates in WV, funded by small donations, because she wants to change things in her state. Find her at www.hollerfromthehollers.com.

Scientists need your help to defend climate change research

By Irving W. Wainer, Ph.D., DHC

WASHINGTON, DC — On October 23, two Environmental Protection Agency scientists were blocked from speaking at a scientific conference on the future of Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island. The scientists were prevented from presenting their work because it identified the danger of climate change to the health of New England's largest watershed. This was EPA Director Scott Pruitt's latest step in dismantling the EPA's science program. His overall goal is to create an atmosphere of intimidation and fear among EPA scientists by blocking publication and dissemination of valid research findings and by creating "politically correct" scientific review boards to ensure that good science is punished not rewarded.

What is happening at the EPA is not an isolated event.

While media attention has concentrated on Trump's buffoonery, his administration has steadily eroded the scientific capabilities of government and academic laboratories through budget and staff cuts and reduced grant funding. The affected programs include the Agriculture, Interior and Energy departments, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA and the Smithsonian Institution. Indeed, the new leadership of the EPA and of the Agriculture, Interior and Energy departments openly reject climate change.

Why such a broad attack? The primary goal of science is to increase our understanding of the world and to devise ways to improve the lives of all species that inhabit it. The world is a complex, interrelated system and scientists study one small area and then connect their findings with the larger understanding of

our planet. It is like discovering and describing one piece of a jigsaw puzzle and then fitting it into the evolving picture.

We know many of the pieces of the climate change puzzle because of the dedicated work of academic and governmental scientists conducted in and supported by grants from the multiple U.S. government agencies which are under attack. This attack is consistent with the government's open support for the corporate rape of the Earth. The goal is to tear up the pieces and destroy the understanding of the climate change picture, in order to disarm and blind us to the breadth and totality of the devastation carried out in the name of profit. The result will be a world ravished by catastrophic climate events, polluted, poisoned and uninhabitable.

This is not the future that we want. As scientists, we have ded-



Stop Pruitt rally to oppose his nomination to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). PHOTO/LAURIE SHAULL

icated our lives to understanding our complex and evolving world. In part, it is because we are people who like to put pieces together and solve puzzles, but mainly it is because we want our children to live in a world freed from exploitation and environmental destruction. We know that scientists are only a small part of a greater movement and that we

are being targeted for discovering and telling the truth. The EPA is the initial target of the attack on climate science and EPA's scientists need our help. Scott Pruitt must be removed as head of the EPA and control of the agency placed in the hands of its scientific workers.

Houston, we got a problem!

By Paul Garner

HOUSTON, TX — The water has subsided, and debris is still being removed from the worst hurricane in North American history. Through it all, volunteers flooded in to Houston from *everywhere*, but they cannot cover for the ugly and naked truth about the lack of preparedness of our government, even as people struggle to rebuild.

More than a few volunteers died from electrocution while trying to save neighbors from the raging floodwaters. At least one resident died from bacteria in the water and one has to wonder if more lives would have been saved if the mayor had told people to evacuate rather than telling the city to stay put. Had there been an evacuation, the mayor may not have needed to call for volunteers to help their neighbors escape rising waters.

With 13 Superfund sites and 800 water treatment facilities overcome with flood waters, the danger to the people of Houston was much greater than imagined, this alongside the alligators, snakes and fire ants made the entire episode highlight the need for a government prepared to protect its people.

The official record is 87 lives lost, \$180 billion in damage, almost a million trucks and cars destroyed, 12,700 homes

destroyed, and 203,000 homes damaged and 738,000 FEMA claims later, a different kind of alligator is beginning to show up.

All over Houston, in businesses there are signs, T-shirts, bumper stickers with the words, "HOUSTON STRONG!" We will rebuild! We will survive! We will grow even stronger! Calls are made all over the city, businesses are offering special finance deals to hurricane-affected customers. We are Houston strong and we care! Buy your furniture from me and I will give you special financing and free delivery! No money down if you lost your car in the hurricane, with special financing! Of course, city council is voting to raise property taxes \$4.03 per month! Mayor Sylvester Turner, while calling for city council to raise taxes, is asking Texas governor Rick Abbott for some of the state's \$10 billion rainy-day fund to help with the cleanup.

Brandon York from IU CRU, a faith based group from Indiana University, came to help remove mold, pass out supplies and food. He was quoted saying that at first, he was discouraged by what he saw when they first drove to Houston in October on a Friday morning. Stray dogs, piles of junk and debris were still all around more than five weeks after the flood. He said there are people who need help but simply



People fleeing their home with their neighbor's cat after Hurricane Harvey hit Texas.

PHOTO/JULIE DERMANSKY

don't know who to ask. There are resources, there's money, but they need bodies, York said. They need volunteers to come and help.

We all knew the hurricane was the worst, we knew it was going to linger and we knew there would be flooding. We need representatives who will help us, not save the resources that we have already paid for, fail to act, then call for volunteers after the damage is done. Then *still* raise the rent!



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

Chicago Tent City eviction

By Carol Aldape, Sean Brown, Keith Gini, Thomas Gordon, Mark Saulys, Adam Gottlieb, Jay Wilson, and Diana Zwinak

CHICAGO, IL — “This is a life-long fight,” said Carol Aldape, recently evicted resident of the Tent City under the viaducts in Chicago’s Uptown neighborhood. “This is something our children will be fighting, even our grandchildren. Maybe even their children.”

Chicago’s Mayor, Rahm Emanuel, and 46th Ward Alderman James Cappleman banded together with developers set on gentrifying Uptown. They turned their sights on forcibly evicting the homeless population, many of them former residents of Uptown who had already lost their housing due to higher rents and luxury condos, and living under the viaducts beneath Lake Shore Drive at Wilson and Lawrence Avenues. Though scattered, the community remains strong and still

determined to make it clear that housing is a human right.

After an earlier Federal court ruled on an injunction filed by Tent City residents that the Constitution does not require the government to provide housing for its citizens, residents of the encampment brought another suit before the Illinois State Court. They are represented by the Law Project of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the Uptown People’s Law Center, and a prominent, for-profit law firm: Butler, Rubin, Sartarelli and Boyd (helping pro-bono). The magistrate on this case seemed dismissive of claims of urgency for the encampment residents while making many shockingly obtuse statements and generally seeming uninterested in hearing the homeless people’s view of the matter.

Despite this, Jay Wilson, another displaced resident, urged homeless people throughout the country who face similar tactics to “keep on fighting

because promises are being made that aren’t being upheld, and we have to keep fighting to keep it upheld.”

These evicted encampment residents stress that homeless people must speak for themselves. “If you want to know what’s up with us, ask us. Don’t ask somebody else,” said Mark Saulys, a resident arrested in an earlier protest action while blocking Lake Shore Drive. He noted that the press and others want to talk to legal representatives, to more-or-less self-appointed spokespeople for the homeless from activist or advocacy groups, and to case-workers working with their population instead of speaking to the homeless themselves.

Wilson agreed, saying, “They don’t know what’s up with us: they can only *think* what’s up with us.”

As for future plans, Thomas Gordon, also evicted from the viaducts, is trying to hold the people together as best as possible with-



Former residents of the tent cities under the viaducts of Lakeshore Drive in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago drew attention to the city’s plan to evict them without providing adequate alternative shelter by temporarily blocking traffic on Lakeshore Drive during the morning commute. PHOTO/DIANA ZWINAK

out a stable encampment or even tents. (Chicago Police announced that any homeless people who try to put up a tent to shield themselves from the weather will be promptly arrested.) Gordon said it is important to maintain their adoptive family as well as stay potent to fight for the rights of the homeless. “A few of us are trying to keep people together to fight for the housing for these folks and by doing that for housing for all

homeless people,” he said.

Saulys is proud that Tent City has proven that the street homeless can be organized. He wants people to realize that among any population of people, housed or not, there are those who “won’t ever get off the couch” but there are also always those who, “come hell or high water, will always show up, will always work for it, always get it together and always fight.”

Californians struggle to find housing after fires

Governor’s anti-rent gouging law caps increases by 10 percent – for six months

By Dave Ransom

SANTA ROSA, CA — As if getting burned out of your house wasn’t enough, thousands of families in northern California are now faced with finding a place to live where the vacancy rate before the fires was just 1 percent.

Governor Jerry Brown activated a six-month rent control when he proclaimed states of emergency for the three northern California counties. The proclamation caps rent increases at 10 percent for all rentals statewide.

Brown’s action covers much more than the limited number of apartment houses where rent control is permitted under the state’s Costa-Hawkins Act, passed in 1995 at the behest of the real-estate lobby.

Tenants’ organizations have launched an initiative campaign to overturn Costa-Hawkins in 2018. Banding together as “California Renter Power,” they organized a Renters Week of Action in October and gathered in Sacramento, the state capital, after the fires.

While the governor’s proclamation is in effect, landlords who try to raise rents more than 10 percent will be guilty of “rent gouging,” a criminal offense with



Fires destroyed thousands of buildings and homes in Sonoma County’s largest city, Santa Rosa. Burned to the ground was the greater part of a large working-class neighborhood, a mobile-home park, and three expensive hillside developments. PHOTO/LIVIA FERGUSON, GREENPEACE

penalties of a year in jail and/or a \$10,000 fine.

But under current circumstances, even a 10-percent increase is rent gouging. California rents are twice as high as elsewhere in the country, driven up by speculators from at home and abroad. That is a major reason for California’s multitudes of homeless.

An hour’s drive north of San

Francisco in Sonoma County, the fires destroyed nearly 7,000 buildings, including 2,900 homes in its largest city, Santa Rosa. Rapidly burned to the ground in a night of terror was the greater part of a large working-class neighborhood, a mobile-home park, and three expensive hillside developments.

Rents in Santa Rosa had already gone up by 48 percent in

six years, and city voters narrowly failed to enact rent control, following a \$1-million opposition campaign launched by the state’s big real-estate interests.

Now, as they sift through the ashes of their former homes, families seeking a place to stay are well aware that, even before the fire, there was nothing available.

Their best hope is that the

out-of-town speculators who have bought investment properties to run as weekend rentals – or just leave vacant – will rent them out full time.

Those properties are not capped by the state of emergency, and the real-estate site Zillow reports that they are coming onto the market at exceptionally high rates (for example, \$13,000 a month for a four-bedroom house).

Housing advocates in Sonoma County are deriving a number of lessons from all this:

- If the governor can invoke rent control in a fire emergency, why not for the housing crisis that everybody agrees has gripped the state?
- Local governments must pass their own ordinances, blocking any increase in rents whatsoever.
- Costa-Hawkins must be repealed, and getting behind the initiative campaign is the best way to educate and organize for that.
- Leaving building, mortgaging, and renting housing up to “the market” has failed repeatedly in recent years, and control by We the People would be a better way.

First they came for the homeless: Resistance grows

By Mike Zint

BERKELEY, CA — Fruits of our labor? Surplus of yours can be traded for surplus of mine. Technology has advanced enough that no one needs to work as slaves. Or use money. There is plenty of land for all. 3D printing of houses is happening. Free energy exists.

We work because we are told that is how it is. That is the lie. We use money because everyone uses money. It equalizes skill sets, or so we are told. In reality, it is the chains of our slavery. It accumulates with a few, and is dangled in front of the rest of us. It promises happiness, but provides only misery.

I found happiness being able to survive without it for many years. I had the ability to do whatever I wanted every day. I survived by using what belongs to all of us.

It is our world, not just theirs. It's about time people start learning that, because the elite are destroying our home.

We at the Poor Tour, a project of 'First they came for the homeless', have shown how this can be done: by taking care of each other and showing the rest of society how cooperation and mutual support can be done with very little. Everything could work this way if people had the power to do it on a social and world level. This is a short history of a project in the real world

that illustrates the above words:

The Poor Tour started a year ago. A group of homeless were asked by city commissioners and social workers to bring attention to the lack of progress from the HUB (centralized homeless services). The homeless were not getting helped and the HUB budget was over a million dollars. So, we occupied, with our tent community, all over the City of Berkeley, including sites around City Hall. Over the next three months the homeless were raided and moved location 17 times, had multiple arrests, and suffered injury and hospitalizations at the hands of police. We did not quit.

In early January, the Poor Tour settled on a piece of property in South Berkeley. There it has remained. For nine months no police, no city harassment, and no real problems.

During those nine months the successes have been amazing. The Poor Tour is credited with the following: They saved a life and rescued a victim of a serial predator, they protected a senior with Alzheimer's who had been missing for weeks, they reunited a runaway with her mother, they protected a victim of domestic violence, they protected a mentally disabled girl from sexual predators, and they have helped maintain an environment of stability that has helped over thirty people get themselves housed.

Homeless demand their rights

From the Editors



Mike Zint of "First They Came for the Homeless" gives a radio interview at the Poor Tour tent community in Berkeley, CA, celebrating a temporary court-ordered restraining order to a threatened raid on the site. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

In Berkeley, CA, the city says it can't afford to supply homeless encampments with port-a-potties because they are using the money for hepatitis A vaccines. Hepatitis is breaking out everywhere because people are forced to live on the streets, with no way to relieve and clean themselves, and no city in the country is willing to solve this crisis by providing housing for all.

A concentration camp-like 'sanctioned' encampment planned for Berkeley will be the excuse to sweep the independent homeless camps out of sight and scatter the people who are building community there. Instead, homeless people are demanding that they be able to gather together and provide for themselves, and no harassment. The encampments where people who are homeless are gathering are bases of operations for the greater demand for housing as an absolute human right.

Any of us could become homeless. As another harsh winter looms, the demands of the organized homeless for what they need to survive and thrive point to the need for unity with the broader movement of people who want to see a decent society, under a government that houses and supports its people, instead of one that abandons and attacks us.

'The time is so ripe!' An interview with homeless movement activist Savina Martin

Editor's note: Savina Martin is a long-time activist for the poor, with such groups as the National Union of the Homeless and others. She currently lives in Boston, MA.

People's Tribune: It is very good talking to you and catching up! What activities are you involved in now?

Savina Martin: I am broadly involved in the poverty movement as well as the homeless movement. A couple of years ago, around Easter, a group of homeless men and women were let out of a shelter with no notice. Some were in recovery and working on getting stabilized. Four or five days later they showed up at a Homeless Solidarity Group meeting, about 15 guys, saying they wanted to start a Union of the Homeless. Also, we just had a Poor People's Campaign event in Boston with Reverend Barber; a thousand people attended.

PT: What is the situation with

homelessness there?

SM: There's opioid use going on, and there's no housing. The conditions have really deteriorated, sanitary-wise, but the workers are so stressed they can't provide even the basics like hygiene supplies. Funding has dried up, local and federal. People fill out an application for housing, but the housing list has a 20-year wait. This country can no longer provide the things that people need. People living in the shelters are working, but only making enough for their basic survival. You're in a cycle of poverty. If you don't have the survival skills on the streets you just die. You lose your children and families deteriorate. They are broken and the children go to foster care. The poverty, it's just a mess.

I've also been dealing with homeless women who are veterans. I'm a veteran myself. I worked in a veteran's tent in California, 150 veterans, and I worked for the VA here in Boston.

PT: What do you see as the next step for the homeless movement? What can be done tactically by the homeless themselves to put this on the national agenda?

SM: What we are doing is inviting homeless groups and organizations to 'get on the mule train': join together, join the Poor People's Campaign, have educationals. Education is the key. I believe in civil disobedience, taking over abandoned property. People who have nothing are so inundated and just trying to survive, and winter is coming. We get burned out. I tell people, come on, let's talk together, use the media we have in our hands. Through education, people become empowered. We need to stick together. Try to make it to a meeting. We'll pick you up. We need another National Union of the Homeless, share its history. We have to understand what we're up against. People are looking for something, and the time is so key and ripe.



People in Mountain View, CA, live in RVs parked on Crisanto Street for as far as the eye can see. PHOTO/JOHN BETTS

People living in vehicles in Silicon Valley

By John Betts

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA — The vans and RVs number about 45 now. The scene is mellow, everyone is very friendly, and low profile, except some loud mouth clowns who live in a camper near our van. They're up early blabbing and jiving around idly sitting around on the street. But they're not bad people just kind of inconsiderate of the neighbors.

We saw an article in the Palo Alto Daily Post a couple of days ago. The police in Palo Alto are starting to arbitrarily decide when some people haven't moved their rig after 72 hours. A woman who works full time and had received various citations, but had paid them off, came home to find her RV towed away, and a lot of her belongings spilled all over the street. She is demanding redress of her grievances. A police spokesperson was quoted trying to justify their arbitrary stealing of several people's vehicles.

Homeless and mentally ill: Healthcare teams could help

By Janny Castillo

OAKLAND, CA — Under a West Oakland underpass, volunteers were passing out toiletries to forty-plus camp dwellers. A youth stops in the middle of the street with his head down, wearing a dirty baseball hat and over-sized clothing that reeked of urine. The anxiety he felt was visibly disabling as he tried to gather the courage to walk to the table. I coaxed him gently to take the bag. I could tell that being this close to people was excruciating for him.

The National Alliance for Mental Illness reports that 26 percent of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46 percent live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders. “It’s very hard for a person who is homeless with a mental disorder to achieve stability,” says Shirley Cheney, St. Mary’s Center Director. “Homelessness is the definition of instability,” Cheney adds. “You have to take most medications two to three times a day. When you are roaming the streets all day with no way to tell time, it’s very dif-

ficult to take them as prescribed.”

Small prescription co-pays are still a barrier to homeless people; and getting enough bus fare to pick up prescriptions, then get to the pharmacy, is daunting. Frequently, unsheltered people are subject to losing their belongings and medications by theft or police confiscation. Replacing medications is not a priority when you are back to searching for blankets, food and a safe place to sleep.

Growing numbers of homeless people suffer from abuse, trauma, depression, and anxiety. Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services has a street medicine project that has doctors who go to people living in the encampments to provide urgent physical care but little psychiatric care.

For those who qualify, referrals can be made to the Trust Clinic in downtown Oakland where short-term help is available, but for the young person whose social anxiety is so extreme that it blocks them from entering public places, the Trust Clinic is not an option.

Professional outreach workers with expansive, comprehen-

sive skills are a solution worth looking into. What is needed are teams made up of psychiatrists, physicians, social workers, and housing and income specialists dedicated to working with unsheltered people for as long as it takes to develop trust and bridge people to resources.

Cheney has another good idea. “Right now we send people with substance abuse problems to one facility then send that same person to another facility for mental health issues. What we need is co-location of services. Facilities with easy access residential beds scattered across Alameda County that multi-layer services to address substance abuse and provide long-term mental health stabilization.”

Right now, if a homeless person is shouting in the middle of the street at the invisible voices in his head, he is likely to end up in jail where he is re-traumatized—and then sent back to the streets. We need to do better.



Boarded up mental health treatment center in Chicago.

PHOTO/KATHY POWERS

Let There Be Respite

Comes November rain.
HERE/THERE WITHER/WHERE? IN/OUT?
Streets. Doorways. Sidewalks.

Hepatitis A.
Danger there (and here). Allwhere.
Who serves and protects?

Death by exposure.
Where do all the homeless go?
Here? There? Over Where?

Human need unmet.
The homeless. No one speaks for.
Here, There, Anywhere.

Houses worth millions.
Pennies house homeless in tents.
Here, There, Everywhere.

There is a There, Here.
Is will here? Then way is There.
Let There Be Respite.

— JP Massar

What would a world with #NoMoneyNoBorders look like?

Editor’s Note: In August, Chicago correspondents from the People’s Tribune organized events for a new festival in Chicago called “Perform/Transform.” Originally inspired by a game that used the hashtag #nomoneynoborders to introduce ideas and questions about what a free world might look like into internet conversations, the festival was designed to bring these conversations to the public in real life. On the first day, groups hosted open mics with performances that offered a vision of a world where people’s basic needs are met. The second day focused on workshops of various kinds. People’s Tribune correspondent Michelle Saltouros interviewed the lead organizer of the events, local artist Plus Sign, about the festival.

Michelle Saltouros: What did you hope to accomplish with the festival/what were the outcomes?

Plus Sign: I hoped to save the world! I wasn’t sure what that looked like, but it ended up looking like lots of people getting together all around to tell their truth and help each other relax. It produced gorgeous online content of people getting along and making art. We decided together (and

individually) that utopia looks like being able to move around and work and play and communicate freely. So now we’re using our connections to build the structures of utopia that will allow us to do that.

MS: Could you describe some events that took place or that you visited?

PS: We did a ... parade from one Perform/Transform venue to the other. It was amazing! We got to know each other, shared music, inspiration, took pictures with flowers, and enjoyed the summer night air. The next morning, after a long night of dancing and partying, a few of us gathered in a garden on the South Side to meditate while in the North, the People’s Tribune team led a guerilla gardening workshop, and in Bridgeport, women talked about vaginal health. It was a large, wonderful multi-faceted thing.

MS: Could you tell us about the origins of #nomoneynoborders?

PS: #nomoneynoborders came from wanting to start a game that could save the world! We knew that money and borders were the problem, but wanted to find a way to make solving that prob-

lem fun and inclusive. My partner Sasha and I made it into a reality!

MS: How did #nomoneynoborders turn into the Perform/Transform festival?

PS: We played the game for a half year all around this city and continent. We hosted shows, artists did installations, videos, photo shoots, live feeds—as many ways we could connect people to the concept of no money and no borders while expressing themselves about what a free world looks like to them. The festival felt like the next logical progression, a massive event where we could save the world once and for all.

MS: How can people get/stay involved?

PS: Anyone can use the #nomoneynoborders hashtag to connect with others building utopia and/or talk about what it means to them. Throw a #nomoneynoborders-themed event! Come to someone else’s! Check out all the happenings that pop up when the tag is clicked across the internet! Also, we’re fundraising for another festival (and much much more)! Check it out at tinyurl.com/fundutopia.

Campaign for a healthy California grows stronger every day

By Katherine Bock

SAN JOSE, CA — Despite the delaying tactics of our corrupt state legislature, amplified by the corporate media, the people's Campaign for a Healthy California CA SB 562, grows stronger every day.

We, the people, are writing our own story in town halls, presentations, movie showings, fairs, farmers markets, multiple visits to our representatives, and knocking on doors in all 80 districts up and down California—talking one on one with people about our bill. Their reply? They just want healthcare, affordable, uncomplicated full and accessible healthcare for themselves, their families and communities!

Our campaign of over six million Californians representing over 350 government, community, business, faith, healthcare providers, and labor organizations is fighting to ensure healthcare is a human right. Thousands of people who have never before gotten involved in politics are becoming dedicated activists.

Antonio Mora: *"I have joined the fight because I can't stand it that my grown children cannot afford care because of*



The nurses are caring for the people by leading the fight for full and just healthcare in California and the nation. PHOTO/NATIONAL NURSES UNITED

high deductibles when they need it, or the burden of debt to pay bills incurred."

Terry Gascay: *"I want to make this country GREAT again, and to me that means healthy and thriving. Capitalism and free enterprise have made this nation greedy and sick, so I FIGHT for single-payer as a means to leave a positive legacy for the future of us all."*

Our bill would provide California residents with comprehensive coverage, including hospital, primary and preventive care, vision, dental, hearing, mental health, lab tests, rehab, long-term care. ... It would give us real patient choice of providers and get rid of narrow networks, insurance payments, deductibles, premiums, and co-pays!

Christine Fitzgerald, disability rights advocate: *"With CA SB*

562, one unified coverage would allow people like me with multiple needs to get services like testing and in-home support services in one place and time—with one doctor to oversee everything ensuring better care."

Although California fully implemented the ACA "Obamacare," what we have still is a wasteful, profit-driven, and unequal patchwork. Over two

million of us are not allowed to purchase from the exchanges or receive subsidies because we are undocumented immigrants. Eleven million of us are underinsured, or forced into restrictive, and bare-bones managed care plans. Fifteen million more of us are underinsured because we can't use the plans we are paying for because we have a deductible of \$2,000 or more.

There is no time to waste as the federal government relentlessly pushes to dismantle not only the ACA but Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and community clinics, and nonprofit hospitals which provide some safety for our most vulnerable, elderly, poor, unemployed and underpaid workers without benefits. We must fight back, but we must also fight forward to a vision of what we truly need—nationalized healthcare. Single payer is a start.

This growing campaign is part of the motion that is happening all over the country for our basic human needs—housing, health and healthcare, clean water and air, food, education. ... We are coming to believe that these are public property, not commodities to be bought and sold.

What single payer really means

By Retirees for Single Payer Health Care

DETROIT, MI — Our choice is publicly run "Expanded and Improved Medicare For All" or privately run "Public Health Insurance." **This choice is not just an academic discussion over which insurance option is better, but has huge implications for the availability of quality health care for millions of folks—health care vs. insurance.**

Are Democrats and Republicans trying to turn Medicare and Medicaid into privately run Public Health Insurance Plans? The Affordable Care Act (ACA), through the exchanges is trying to expand privately run "Public Health Insurance." Through the expansion of Medicaid, the ACA is providing a gold mine for the private insurance companies which control 69% of Medicaid dollars in the states.

The Affordable Care Act is just another name for an experiment called "Public Health Insurance."

S1804 (the Democratic bill in the Senate) will turn over another gold mine to private insurance companies

which now control 30% of Medicare dollars through so-called Medicare Advantage plans.

The struggle over HR676 has been going on since it was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2003. And that struggle is still going on. We must recognize that the struggle in the Senate is just another attempt to kill HR676 and establish a bigger pot of gold for the health insurance giants.

We are in a fight with the Federal government as well as the State governments. It may sound strange that after calling the expansion of Medicaid a gold mine for private insurance companies to say that we must fight to expand Medicaid in the 19 states that have not done so. And to protect and improve the expansion of Medicaid in 32 states that have done so.

Carmen Yulín Cruz, Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, has demonstrated for all of us that the immediate struggle is part of the longer struggle. Protecting the expansion of Medicaid is the immediate struggle and is part of the struggle for HR676—Expanded and Improved Medicare For All.

We can have healthcare for all

From the Editors

After the failure in July of the Trumpcare bills, which would have set up the destruction of Medicaid and Medicare as we know them, the battlefield has shifted. Trump has signed executive orders weakening the ACA (Obamacare), and the U.S. House and Senate have recently passed some disastrous fiscal 2018 budget resolutions. Over 10 years, the House resolution would cut \$1.5 trillion from Medicaid and \$487 billion from Medicare. The Senate resolution would make similar cuts. At the same time, Trump is proposing a tax cut plan that would give \$1.9 trillion in tax breaks to the top 1%. Our healthcare would be cut to line the pockets of billionaires and corporations.

While these budget resolutions are just plans and not actual spending bills, the resolutions, the executive orders, and the tax cut plan show where things are headed. The government will abandon us and leave us to die without a second thought.

It is estimated that 45,000 people die each year in America because they lack health insurance. About 40% of Americans are in debt over medical bills, and 45% say they would have a hard time paying an unexpected \$500 medical expense.

Since it is cheaper nowadays to produce things with robots and computers than with people, jobs keep disappearing and the corporations who control the government will not provide healthcare for labor they do not need.

This is not about Democrats versus Republicans. Both parties are tools of the corporations. We, the people, are the vast majority. The government should and must be our government and protect us, not the billionaires. We need expanded and improved Medicare for All, as a first step toward a national health service that guarantees universal health care. It will also be a step toward building a whole new society run by the people for the people.



Healthcare rally in Los Angeles, CA. PHOTO/MOLLY ADAMS



Protesters gather at the state capitol in Austin, Texas in June to protest the anti-immigrant Senate Bill 4.

PHOTO/RICARDO B. BRAZZIELL, AMERICAN-STATESMAN

By Jose Torres and Manuel Torres

WESLACO, TEXAS — Over 700 people gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Mission on August 12. They marched along the Rio Grande

River Texas/Mexico border to protest the continued efforts of the Trump administration to build a wall that will divide two countries and their people. It is a 28-mile wall mainly in Hidalgo County in Texas. It will affect not only the community but local farmers who

Texans march against the border wall and anti-immigrant law (SB-4)

live and work the land along the river. It will also impact the wild life areas in its path.

The protesters marched four miles from the church to the famous La Lomita Chapel founded by Obalate Missionaries in the 1800s. Present were representatives of the Native American people, Carrizo/Comecrudo Nation, Sierra Club, North American Butterfly Association, Center for Biological Diversity, UFW, Fuerza del Valle, South Texas Resistance Movement, plus others. At the head of the march was the local priest, Father Roy Snipes.

After the walk, marchers gathered at the La Lomita Chapel grounds where they listened to speakers who all spoke about the damaging effects of the wall. Another demonstration continued on Sunday at the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge on the political,

economic and human effects. There was agreement among all that the wall must not be built. And all committed themselves to continue the struggle against the building of the Wall and for repeal of Texas's anti-immigrant "show me your papers" law, SB-4, that tries to stop cities from providing sanctuary to immigrants.

Local and state police departments are implementing SB-4 by calling immigration/ICE, even though the law is still being challenged over whether it is constitutional. Therefore, the saying here in the valley is that there is no democracy in Texas. Everyone is subject to being interrogated by the police and ICE under this law.

In addition, the Trump administration has started filing charges for endangering the lives

of minors against parents who arranged for their children to be brought to the United States. All the parents wanted was for their children to get away from the violence, rape and drugs. Now they are prosecuted for wanting a better life for their families.

Clearly, we can see that our government does not represent the interests of the poor people. We are witnessing a growing fascist movement here in Texas. The need for cheap labor is coming to an end. Why? Because technology is slowly replacing human labor. The ruling class of this country has no need for us, and that's why they want us divided by color or race. The thing they are afraid of is the unity of the poor people. It's our only chance for the survival of the human race. The future is in our hands.

Child with cerebral palsy faces deportation after surgery

From the Editors

Armed federal agents waited outside the hospital room of a 10-year-old girl with cerebral palsy while she recovered from surgery. Then Rosamaría Hernández was taken to a shelter to await deportation. It mattered not that this frightened child had never been away from her mother.

Such inhumane treatment by the U.S. government is more and more considered acceptable. Why? Because Rosamaría lacks legal immigration status. Rosamaría lacks papers. In America, our value as a human being is being reduced to whether we have a piece of paper.

An immoral culture is being created that says that the lives of



Rosamaría Hernández, 10 years old. PHOTO/FAMILY HANDOUT

the working class and our children have no value. Underlying it is an economy that no longer needs much human labor. If we are not creating profits for the bil-

lionaire class, our lives have no value. But there is another morality also taking hold in America. "All I wanted was for her to get the surgery that she needed," said Rosamaría's mother to the New York Times. "When you're a mother, all you care about is your child."

Which morality do you choose?

As we go to press, due to the outrage over Rosamaría's arrest, she has been released from the shelter. She still faces deportation. Let us lock arms, build our movement, and let the country know: WE WANT AN AMERICA THAT CARES FOR US ALL. NO HUMAN BEING IS "ILLEGAL." DEFEND ROSAMARÍA!

'They are all my people,' says Texas law maker

Editor's note: Gene Wu is a Chinese-American state legislator in Texas. His tearful comments about the attack on immigrants in Texas were transcribed from AJ Video.

"This topic is painful for me. I'm an immigrant. My parents are immigrants. I represent a district filled with immigrants. Some are here as refugees. Some are here as citizens. Some are here without

papers—but they are all my people.

"In World War II, Japanese-Americans were rounded up and sent to concentration camps—do you know of any Germans or German-Americans who were rounded up? They weren't, because Japanese-Americans were obviously 'different.' They looked different, they sounded different, and were obviously 'alien' even though they were Americans."

Subscription Drive: The People's Tribune is your voice – help us shout louder

Where can you get the truth nowadays? The "mainstream" fake media propagate lies and cover things up. They won't say why homelessness is growing to epidemic proportions, or why millions are hungry. They won't give us the real reasons for the unemployment, the police violence, the lack of healthcare, the growing poverty and the attacks on immigrants. They won't give a voice to those who are struggling to survive. The millions who are being pushed out of the system are a threat to the billionaires, and so our voices are being silenced by corporate media, controlled by the billionaires who run this country.

That's why we need publications like the People's Tribune. We are an independent, reader-supported press with an all-volunteer staff. We seek to connect with activists, writers, bloggers, photographers and other independent media. We offer our pages to be the megaphone for the tens of millions who are fighting a system that can't feed, clothe and house the people, a system that spends trillions on war while condemning people to sleep in the streets and eat from garbage cans.

We need your help to continue being a voice of the people, and to expand our efforts so the people can shout even louder. We need to get out the message that as jobs are eliminated by automation, this system is dying. It must be replaced by a new society that guarantees our needs and the future of humanity.

Our annual subscription drive is under way. Please subscribe and also donate whatever you can in addition. And send us articles about your struggle, photographs, and links to things you've published online. Help make the People's Tribune the voice of the movement for a cooperative America free of poverty and injustice and controlled by the people.

Hurricane María has changed the face of Puerto Rico forever

By Juanita Irizarry

CHICAGO, IL — The physical infrastructure of the island will eventually be repaired. And much of it likely will be better than the decaying and outdated power grid that was already struggling before the hurricane.

But the big question is, who will the improvements be for? Significant numbers of Puerto Ricans were already moving to the States—particularly Florida—because of the declining quality of life and the severe lack of economic opportunity. And the gentrification of the island was already visible in the months and years before María triggered what is expected to be a new mass migration to the mainland.

With a fiscal crisis not unlike that of Illinois—exacerbated by an inability to independently make financial decisions in its own best interests—Puerto Rico filed for bankruptcy in the spring of 2017. Already overseen since last summer by the PROMESA fiscal control board, established under President Obama's administration, the island had already lost any independence it may have had to deal with its insolvency. The PROMESA law promised to ensure that vulture capitalists would benefit while Puerto Rico's schools, power grid, public health system, and social services were either forcibly dismantled to pay creditors or left to die. Meanwhile, the government of Puerto Rico was enacting measures to attract new residents—rich investors from the States—as a tactic to improve the economic outlook of the island.

Puerto Rico had never recovered from the Great Recession that rocked the entire United States nearly a decade ago. And it has lagged behind the U.S. economically for more than a century, since it was colonized in 1898 by this country when it won a war with Spain, Puerto Rico's first colonizer.

Granted U.S. citizenship in 1917, just in time to be drafted to serve in World War I, Puerto Ricans both on the island and across the diaspora have long been divided about whether statehood, the status quo, or independence would improve the island's situation. But regardless of where one stands on the status issue, evidence abounds of Puerto Rico's second-class citizenship in relation to the United States. From

its poverty level that has long been higher than the poorest U.S. state to the utilization of its people for drug experimentation, to military target bombing practices that would never be acceptable in white communities in the U.S.

U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico are not allowed to participate in the election of the president of the U.S. and do not have representation in Congress, but must endure policy decisions that may not be in their best interests. And the history of the U.S. relationship with Puerto Rico is replete with Washington D.C. driven decisions that have had significant negative economic impacts on Puerto Rico, not the least of which is the Jones Act. This act, which doesn't allow foreign ships to deliver goods to Puerto Rico, has not only added billions of dollars of cost over the years to Puerto Rican consumers whose goods must all be shipped in on vessels flying U.S. flags. The dollars sucked out of Puerto Rico's economy because of those U.S. imposed costs mirror the level of debt that now burdens Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's financial crisis potentially could have been avoided if not for the Jones Act regulations.

And now those regulations have hampered efforts by other countries to send aid in the aftermath of Hurricane María. Foreign countries could not send assistance directly to Puerto Rico until the Jones Act was lifted by the Trump administration. Though Trump lifted those restrictions immediately to assist in Texas and Florida after hurricanes Harvey and Irma, he delayed such help in Hurricane María. And then he lifted the Jones Act for Puerto Rico for a mere 10 days.

Meanwhile, the interior of the island remains in ruin, and reports run rampant that many towns and rural areas have not been reached with any Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance. Many families in the diaspora continue to share through social media that they have had little-to-no word from their loved ones on the island, especially those who live in small, isolated towns in the interior of the island. Media reports have highlighted some towns that are unreachable because of mudslides and washed-out roads. And they have shown other towns where the roads are clear but no federal help has arrived.

Three weeks after Hurricane María hit, the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans continue without electricity and running water, without access to telephone service or the internet. Those who have seen their power restored primarily live in the San Juan metropolitan region. Most residents are surviving on tiny rations of food and water and are waiting for hours in lines for gas to run generators and vehicles. Reports of an emerging public health crisis are on the rise as people die from diseases related to drinking river water polluted with feces, dead animals and the like.



Families wash their clothes in a stream in Puerto Rico.

PHOTO/MICHAEL BUCELLA

On his overdue and too-short visit to survey the hurricane damage, President Trump visited Guaynabo, one of Puerto Rico's wealthiest cities that already had its electricity back. He minimized the magnitude of the crisis while deridingly joking about how much restoration of Puerto Rico would cost the U.S. government.

It took more than two weeks for Trump to send to Congress a request for an aid package for Puerto Rico, and it has been reported that the aid consists of \$4 billion worth of loans rather than grants. This president just wants to load Puerto Rico with



(Above and below) Protesters in Washington, DC demand that the US government help Puerto Rico.

PHOTO/RENA SCHILD, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



drain of Puerto Rico is only made worse. As hundreds of thousands of migrants potentially leave behind the battered island, we must ask the question of who will rebuild Puerto Rico.

Puerto Ricans are extremely resilient people, and many are declaring their intent to rise up and overcome. But the vultures were already flying overhead, ready to devour the spoils in the midst of economic devastation. And those who seek to privatize many of the island's assets were already waiting in the wings, even before the storm.

As we grieve the losses, we must reclaim our beautiful Puerto Rico. Some have reported the hope that was stirred up in them upon already seeing new growth sprouting on tree branches that were completely stripped of leaves. Some things will never be quite the same, but let's make sure that our beautiful homeland rebounds as a place that will continue to nurture native Puerto Ricans for decades and centuries to come.

more debt.

After enduring more than a century of control by the United States and sending huge percentages of young people off to serve in the U.S. military, Puerto Rico is being treated like a stepchild.

Actually, Puerto Rico is treated much worse than a stepchild. I and my husband are in the process of lovingly making arrangements to evacuate my step-daughter out of Puerto Rico and to help her start a comfortable new life here with us.

As my college-student step-daughter leaves the disaster that is Puerto Rico, as will many others, the already-ongoing brain

Rev. Pinkney goes to the Michigan Supreme Court to enforce the Constitution

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — I, Rev. Edward Pinkney am going to the Michigan Supreme Court in Lansing, MI on November 7 to enforce the Constitution. The Michigan Supreme Court is taking up my case. I served 30 months in prison for a crime I didn't commit. The Court is looking at whether a law used to charge me with forgery of election documents is a crime or just a penalty. The Berrien County Court ruled that it was a crime **and** a penalty, but it cannot be both. It has to be one or the other. The issue is whether the courts will be able to use the power of the Constitution to their advantage and change the meaning of a law.

The statutory or contractual language in the law must be enforced according to its plain meaning and cannot be judicially revised or amended to harmonize with the prevailing policy of

the Berrien County courts. The constitution forbids this.

Any judicial revision or amendment of the plain language of a law involves a court impermissibly legislating from the bench and the law does not allow it. The judicial, the judges, must function within its constitutional responsibility to act in accordance with the constitution and its system of separate powers, by exercising only the judicial power. If the legislature wishes to provide that forgery of additional election code documents can be prosecuted, it must provide for this with the plain language in a statute. Doing otherwise is the role of the legislature and not the role of Berrien county Courts.

Let the truth be told. The structure of the election code must be read in a manner with each of these penalty provisions, applying only when some other section of the code proscribes forgery, perjury or other

crimes.

It is presumed that the legislature had knowledge of MCL 168.937, the law in which I was charged, when it added language proscribing forgery from another law, MCL 168.759. It is a well-established principle that the legislature is presumed to be aware of all existing statutes, when enacting new laws. If the legislature deemed another law, MCL 168.937, as providing for felony liability for forgery of any and all election code documents, there would have been no need to add the provision in MCL 168.759. Particularly important here is the rule out of the Black Law Dictionary that states that the legislature generally does not cover the same ground in separate statutes.

Any claim that MCL 168.937 creates substantive crimes, based on forgery of any and all election related documents by any person renders other sections of the election code that prohibit forgery as



Celebration of Rev. Edward Pinkney's release from prison (second from Left) after serving time for taking on the corporate dictatorship led by Whirlpool, in Benton Harbor MI. PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN

surplus, contrary to Michigan law. I have stated for many years that MCL 168.937 was a penalty not a crime.

The Supreme Court hearing is an opportunity to get this injustice right. The all-white hand picked jury of Gail Freehling, Jill Olsen, David Dill, Cath-

erine Roamer, (Judge Sterling Schrock's friend,) and Carolyn Davis, Carlia Witz, Allen Pryske, Scott Rose, and four others, all got it wrong. We must confront injustice with truth and speak truth to power. The judge, prosecutor, and jury should be tried for crimes against humanity.

Chicago hip-hop community organizes to aid Puerto Rico and Mexico victims

By Gabriel Carrasquillo, Jr.

CHICAGO, IL — My name is Gabriel Carrasquillo, Jr. I am also known in the graffiti world as Flash, a member of Artistic Bombing Crew, one of the oldest graffiti crews from Chicago. I am a member of Renegades of Funk, a group of elders now preserving Chicago Hip-Hop history. I was given the name Flash for my love of photography. I am also a member of the Classic Cruisers, a bike club from Humboldt Park which preserves the vintage cruiser bikes. With the devastation in Mexico and Puerto Rico, we needed to do something.

I curate a graffiti wall in Logan Square. Knowing that Chicago Graffiti runs four generations deep, I rotate certain sections monthly.

On September 23, working with the bike club and graffiti artists, we descended on Project Logan. The bike club and others decided to stage their bikes on Fullerton and Milwaukee and with the help of Breaker Ray; they created collection cans out of paint containers. We started at 12 p.m., setting up DJ Eddie



Hip hop community in Chicago is in solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Maria and the earthquakes in Mexico. PHOTO/FLASH, RENEGADES OF FUNK

Ponce with the music and having Old Skool Sneak spraying the 15-by-175-foot wall.

The artists made a great effort to finish the wall with people of many races painting Puerto Rican and Mexican images. After 10 hours the wall was done and we had raised \$1,200. The decision by Mos Def and Ray was to do something the following week in Humboldt Park.

On September 30, the bike

club again set up in the park next to the tennis court. This time, Mos Def was the DJ and they whipped out the vinyl and had a break dancing battle. The break-dancers who won gave back some of the money for a total of over \$3,000 dollars raised. I am very proud of what was accomplished. I have been involved but, sitting at work Monday morning, I felt I had done something for the people who had showed me how to be a man.



Humans Need Not Apply

Two horses in the early nineteenth centuries begin contemplating new technology. One worries that all these new mechanical horses may put them out of work. The other reminds him, "everything so far has made our lives easier..."

This is a scene from the Youtube video *Humans Need Not Apply*, made by CGP Grey who makes informational videos about topics including history, politics, and science. *Humans Need Not Apply* explains automation and how it will fundamentally change the economy and way of life for workers across the world. Not just physical laborers either, this video explains how professional and even creative workers will be replaced by artificial intelligence (AI).

"This is an economic revolution. You may think we have been here before, but we haven't," Grey states bluntly.

Watch the video, stay informed, and fight for a future where humanity can thrive! Search on Youtube: "Humans Need Not Apply CGP Grey," or go to peoplestrbune.org and click on Visions and Views.

— Contributed by David Williams