

FLINT PROTESTERS DEMAND:

WATER FOR FLINT, NOT FOR NESTLÉ



Flint residents march in Lansing, MI at the capitol about the governor's decision to shut down water distribution in Flint before the toxic pipes are fixed. While Nestlé gets an all-you-can-drink buffet of Michigan water for a mere \$200 annual fee, Flint residents still can't trust that their water is safe. PHOTO/DAVE OLDS, MICHIGAN SENATE DEMOCRATS



Elections: The people light a fire under the corporate government

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Teachers and others demand government serve the people

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Oklahoma teachers' strike. PHOTO/JASON STEPHENSON, TWITTER

May Day 2018

Teachers say education fight is a 'turning point'

EDITORIAL

A striking Oklahoma teacher called the mushrooming struggle around public education “a turning point.” She is right.

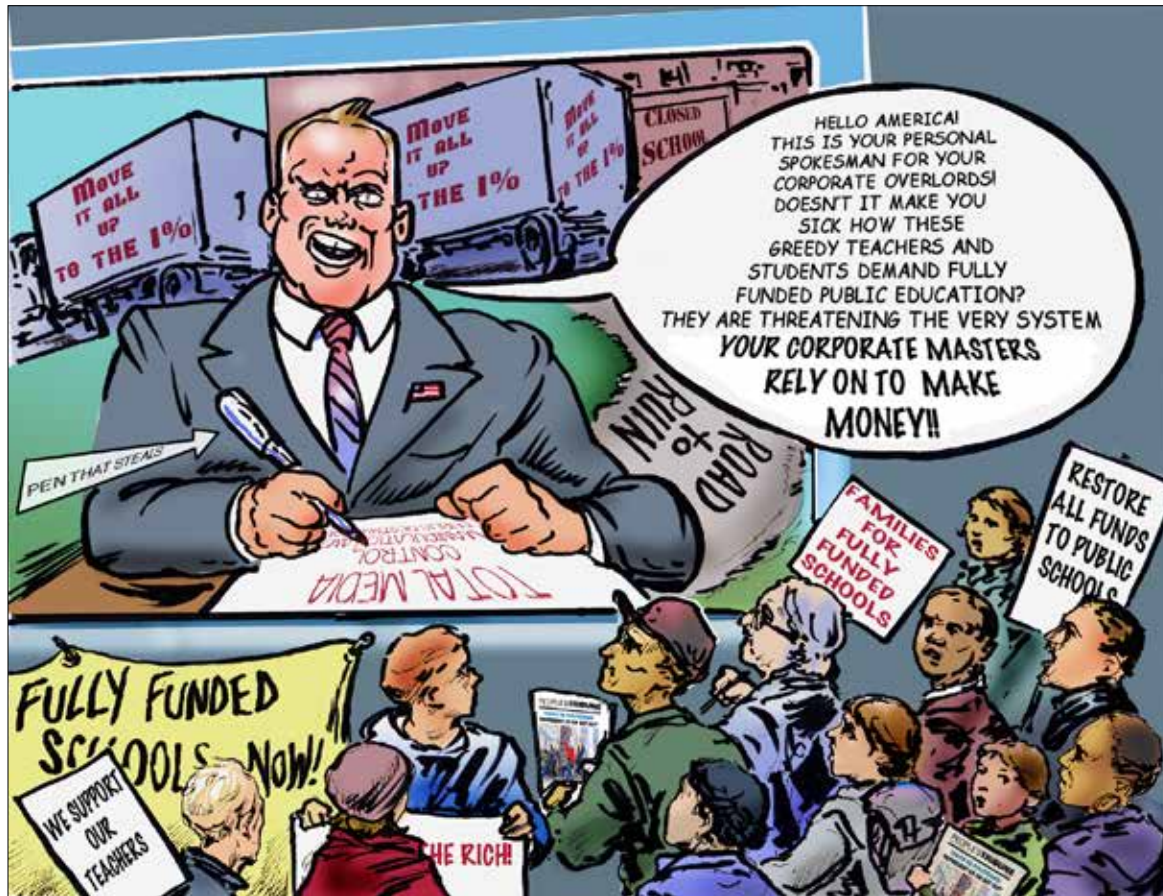
This year we have seen sweeping, rolling statewide strikes by teachers that began in West Virginia and spread to Oklahoma, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Arizona, with stirrings in other states (as we go to press a strike has begun by teachers in Colorado). At its simplest level, the strikes are about teacher salaries and benefits. However, as many pundits and experts are forced to acknowledge, it is about education and a system of funding which has brought everyone to examine the entire system and how it is connected to capitalism.

The entire concept of public education has been redesigned and corporatized through privatization, introducing voucher systems, charter schools and defunding at the local and state levels. These constant cuts affect not just salaries of teachers, but the conditions of classrooms and availability of materials, especially books.

The unity expressed in this fight is not just by teachers, but students, parents and the community over the demand for quality education.

Since the strike by the Chicago teachers in 2012, and their plan to strike again in 2016, the fight over public education has been elevated to a new level.

Today that fight is surging at a time when people all over the country are struggling over issues ranging from pipelines that destroy the environment and communities, to immigration reform, to healthcare, to water, to police violence, to gun violence, and



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

more. There have also been women's marches, student marches, and thousands of local fights in every small town and city breaking out.

The one consistent factor is the role of corporations in the financial, social and political insecurity that our people face. There is a plan to control and continue to redistribute more wealth to a shrinking corporate class by any means necessary, and to Hell with the consequences for families and communities. The political spokespersons and representatives of the corporations at the local, county, state and federal level steer the economy and legislation to protect their interests and implement their plan. Since the corporations need less and less labor in an increasingly automated economy, they will not provide

services like public education to workers they no longer need.

There is a growing resistance. This upsurge and tendency toward unity by various forces against the design of these corporations is an essential stage of the struggle toward building a movement with a plan of controlling the economy in the interests of the people. A step in the direction of a planned economy that serves the people is nationalization. In the case of education, properly funding education starts with nationalizing that funding—making it the federal government's responsibility to properly fund a public education for every child. There is no shortage of anything today. The illusion that we cannot “afford” to do what is right is a blatant distortion of the reality of the abundance of wealth and resources that

exists today.

Indeed, it is a “turning point” that began some time ago. Education, like Medicare, Social Security, healthcare and the salaries of public employees with a pension system etc., are all increasingly on the table. This stage of the turning point requires a vision that recognizes it is possible to have a new world based on the needs of the people, not corporations.

May Day is when we celebrate the historical struggles of the working class and demonstrate our solidarity. This May Day it is urgent to recognize the contribution the teachers are making to the political education of our class—the working class—and our communities and to the struggle for a new world that is already playing out across the country and the world.

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.

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Elections:

The people light a fire under the corporate government

COVER STORY

The American people are standing up. Teachers are striking. Students are mobilizing. The homeless are organizing. Whether the issue is water, homelessness, environmental destruction, low wages, lack of jobs, poverty, police violence and other violence, healthcare, immigrant rights, education, the shredding of the safety net or other issues, people are confronting the billionaires and the corporate political parties. The people are demanding that the government be their government.

“Until recently, a lot of people have been very quiet, they’ve taken on the opinions of those in power,” one striking Oklahoma teacher told a reporter. “They’ve trusted their elected representatives. But now people have been woken up to what’s really going on.”

A woman running for office against a corporate Democrat in West Virginia said, “We’re seeing an uprising in West Virginia. ... We want clean and safe jobs, a livable wage, we want clean water, we want clean air and opportunities for our children, and we want healthcare. It doesn’t matter what walk of life you’re from, everybody is saying we want the same things. We don’t want these corporate politicians.”

And a California activist spoke about the developing split in the Democratic Party there as she lambasted Democrats in the legislature for refusing to pass a universal single-payer healthcare bill. “We want to hold the establishment Democrats accountable. They have never questioned how to fund a war, yet they are baffled about the funding of healthcare for all,” she said.

For far too long, the people have been sold the idea that the Democrats represent the working class and the Republicans repre-



School protests in Detroit, MI, 2016. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

sent business. The crisis in our country is making it more and more clear that this is a fairy tale. Both parties represent the billionaires and corporations. The Democrats and Republicans in Congress, for example, have cooperated for years to pass cuts in health, welfare, environmental and safety programs that the workers need, while handing tax breaks to billionaires and adding hundreds of billions to the already bloated bottom lines of the military contractors. A similar pattern is repeated in every state legislature—tax breaks and subsidies for the rich, cuts for the rest of us.

As the economic system continues to fail, we, the people, are going hungry, living in tents and shelters and doorways, living in our cars, trying to get by on low wages or no wages, dying for lack of healthcare, seeing our children denied an education and a future, and on and on—and we’re through putting up with it. We have the abundance as a society to solve these problems. We are demanding that the govern-

ment stop being a willing pawn in the hands of the corporations and start using that abundance to solve the problems that confront us.

Running for office is one way we are fighting. More people are running for office who have never done so before. Some of these candidates are trying to take the government away from the corporations. They run on various party tickets (including Democrat) or as independents.

How do we tell who is really trying to represent the people and who is just saying what they think we want to hear? Ask them where they stand on this program: “We, the people, have a right to food, water, housing, healthcare and all the other necessities of life, and government is obligated to guarantee us these rights.”

The government is supposed to be the people’s instrument. The fight to take it away from the corporations and billionaires will mark a step forward on the road to a whole new America.



On the 19th anniversary of the Columbine shootings, students across the country walked out to protest the lack of gun legislation. In Des Moines, Iowa, these students protest at the capitol.

PHOTO/MIKE HIATT



Striking teachers in Oklahoma.

PHOTO/FACEBOOK



Chicago Teachers Union Day of Action Strike, 2016.

PHOTO/CHARLES E. MILLER

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The *People's Tribune* welcomes your comments. Your feedback helps us stay on course as a paper that points the way forward to a new cooperative society. Email info@peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888.

— The Editors

The aftermath of winter in Chicago

An interview with a homeless survivor



Martin Cygan

Editor's note: Andy Willis interviewed Martin Cygan for the People's Tribune.

Andy Willis: Martin, I haven't seen you all winter and you tell me that some people you know either froze to death or got their legs amputated.

Martin Cygan: One of my friends about 60 years old died in the alley where he stayed. Another guy got both his legs amputated at the knees when the frostbite got him.

Another guy died in a nursing home. One toe got frostbite. They gave him antibiotics

and an I-V. Another guy, he died over there across the street. He had a heart attack and an asthma attack.

They were homeless the same as I've been, about seven or eight years. The City or aldermen do nothing to help. They've got deep pockets. That's the way the city is run now.

I was born and raised in Chicago. I was born at Cook County Hospital. I used to have an apartment and I was working until my daughter got sick. She had a brain tumor operation. She died at 5 years old. I was going to the hospital and home. Then I lost my job when they said they couldn't afford to keep me.

AW: Have any of the agencies that are supposed to help done anything for you?

MC: They ain't done nothing for me. They say "give it time—give it time." Give them time for what? Till I die in the street too? Hey, help the homeless person out. It's just not right.

AW: Do you see heated properties around?

MC: I see properties with lights

on and everything. But what are they doing with this property? Just letting it sit there? Drawing interest? What are they doing?

People say, "We can't help you." They don't want you in Chicago. They want you out. The property is going higher. We can't afford these high rents.

AW: How do you think people feel about the People's Tribune?

MC: People like it. They think it's interesting—some of the reporting. People working at the gas station think it has important issues about people. They think you guys make an impact.

AW: In Hawaii there's huge homelessness. Living in a warm climate is one thing but living in Chicago in the winter on the street is impossible.

MC: I don't know how I made it this long on the street, but by God's grace I'm still alive. I go to a motel once a month for three days when I get my check. That's nothing. Then back on the streets again.

AW: The United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights said every-



Caring for one another

Momma Crystal comforts Alex, ahead of a threatened raid of their Dare to Care tent community in Berkeley, CA. After the raid, members are even more determined to fight for their—and all of our—rights.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

body was entitled to a house and decent place to live. Whether or not you had a job. Now many of us are not employable.

MC: I'm 56 and judged totally disabled—not employable. My ankle is bad. My knees are bad. My shoulder and lower back is bad.

AW: We are using the paper to

show housing is available and those who need it should have it now.

MC: Housing is available. You're right. But all the aldermen want to do is drive property taxes up in their wards. They're putting money in their pockets.

Letter to the editor: Homeless mother tells her story

Editor's note: Below is a letter from a reader about a February, 2014, People's Tribune article entitled, "Maine wants homeless people to go away."

I am also homeless, a mother of an 11 year-old girl and a 23 year-old son.

My son was in a car accident when he was 9, suffered severe head trauma that today prevents him from working, and been turned down for disability. He says, "Mom, I wish I could work so I could help you and my sister."

We are living in a tent in the country. I don't drive, which makes everything difficult, getting to a grocery store, taking showers, seeking help.

I'm currently on disability. I crushed both my feet a few years ago, and now they're taking my check away because they feel I can work. And I probably could find a sit-down job, but not without transportation.

I've been in two shelters that did nothing for me, not even point me in the right direction, just threw my daughter back out on the streets. And that's another story I promise myself I'm going to address, to hopefully help other single mothers that are discarded like trash at these places for stupid reasons.

For whomever reads this, if there's something I can do to help myself, please let me know.

God Bless.

An awakening experience

By Amy F. Marshall

OAKLAND, CA — The fear of becoming homeless crept up on me slowly. Housing security had never been an issue as I moved between nine states and two countries over the last thirty years. Relocating was as natural as breathing, or so I thought. I wasn't working, my health wasn't good, my mother was having major health challenges, my partner and I had broken up.

My mother was hospitalized and lost the ability to walk and make personal decisions. I lived with her friend for three months as I alternated being my Mom's caregiver, and packing to relocate her to the Bay Area. Sleeping on someone's sofa in their home was new to me yet cheaper than a hotel.

Within nine months after returning to the Bay Area with my Mom, I was homeless. Where would I go? Consumed with fear I confided my predicament to someone I recently met. She made it possible for me to get an

interview with a women's shelter. For one night I had to sleep in my car. I parked near a Safeway gas station where I reasoned I would be safe in a well-lit place with people milling about. I didn't sleep well and worried about bringing attention to myself.

My temporary residence consisted of one room, a shared restroom and dayroom facilities. After moving in I looked out the window, surveyed my surroundings and cried. The move from Dublin to inner city Oakland was a dramatic change.

For two years I lived in a shelter for women. Homeless men and women congregated on the corner. I spoke to the familiar ones daily and corrected the ones who mistook me for someone who worked in human services. I live here and I'm your neighbor was my phrase to set the matter straight. When the litter became too much for me to bear and I protested, and one man said "We'll take care of it Miss Lady" and they did. While I lived there, every morning the area was

swept up and a bag hung from the street sign to collect garbage. I gave out small gifts of sweets during the holidays and they treated me like I mattered, always. I was grateful for my mother's care, my shelter, and having a sense of community. Leaving was bittersweet. Relaxing without being concerned about another's comfort was liberating. Yet, receiving care and concern from those whose living situation was worse than mine was an awakening experience.

Today, I see past the clutter of makeshift shanty housing and tents. I see individuals in fellowship and community, claiming, organizing, and sweeping the entry around their space. I've slept on someone's couch for months, rented a room, slept in my car overnight, and lived in a shelter for two years. I have my private space again and no longer take having a place to live for granted. My concern is that rising rents may put me at risk of homelessness. The fear of "where will I go?" is ever-present.

‘We’re taking our state back, from the bottom up’ says West Virginia candidate



Some of the Bernie Sanders delegates at the 2016 Democratic National Convention (DNC), are pictured here demonstrating their dissatisfaction with how Sanders was treated.

PHOTO/FACEBOOK

By Caressa Stoller

MORGANTOWN, WV — I officially began my real political activism in 2015. I was inspired by none other than Bernie Sanders. Bernie spoke to me like no other politician ever had. He lit the flame that will forever “Bern” in my heart. I helped Bernie win ALL 55 Counties in WV. I helped many Bernie National Delegates get funded so they could make it to Philly. I am a firm believer in Democracy.

I am running to make sure that what happened at

the DNC in Philadelphia NEVER happens again. I was absolutely heart broken to watch WV be called for Hillary when Bernie had won EVERY county in our State. I was so frustrated I pretty much ran out to the corridor. I was looking for other Bernie delegates. That wasn’t hard to find! They said we are going to occupy the media tent. So I followed. That time in the media tent with the other hundreds of Bernie delegates was the most amazing experience. We sat there in complete

silence holding each other’s hands trying not to lose it. We ALL were absolutely devastated. However, not surprised. I think our hearts broke because we knew then that Democracy and Freedom were just an illusion.

Since the DNC, I have not stopped. I consider myself a human rights activist. I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

There are still so many West Virginians that have no idea how the WV Democratic Party screwed them over. I am running for re-election to the County seat and running for the State Democratic Executive Committee against the WV Democratic Party Chair who was also one of the Superdelegates that chose Clinton. She is a root of the WV Democratic Party Corruption.

WV is having a huge Progressive movement. I am only one of OVER 50 Progressives running for office in WV for the first time. I am so proud and excited to be a part of this movement. We are taking our state back, starting from the bottom up. I personally helped get many of those Progressives to step up and run. Let’s move WV forward together! I will NEVER stop fighting for our Almost Heaven and our wonderful people in West Virginia.

Elections: Government must serve the people

From the Editors

More grassroots candidates than ever before are running for office. Many put forth a program that “we the people” have a right to food, water, housing, healthcare and all the other necessities of life, and government is obligated to guarantee us these rights.

These electoral campaigns are battlegrounds of ideas. Should the government exist to serve human needs, or should it serve the private interests of billionaires and corporations?

Participating in these elections is an opportunity to educate people and build a powerful movement around the people’s demands. It is an indispensable step on the road to the cooperative society that will stop the destruction of the earth and meet the needs of everyone.

Message to Democrats: Take responsibility for poverty and injustice



Desiree Rojas.

Editor’s note: Below is an interview by Cathleen Williams with Desiree Rojas.

Cathleen Williams: Desiree, you were elected as an Assembly Delegate to the Democratic Party for District 4 (Yolo/Solano County in Northern California). As a committed progressive organizer and outspoken Latina/Chicana, what issues do you bring to your Party work?

Desiree Rojas: Let me give you an example. A group of Democratic legislators in California introduced SB 562, the Healthy California Act, which would provide comprehensive universal single-payer

health care coverage and a health care cost control system for the benefit of all residents of the state, including the undocumented.

This bill has been frozen even though Democrats control both the governorship and the legislature in California. With the California Nurses Union and others, we are fighting the establishment Democrats who are refusing to let SB 562 proceed through the legislative process. We want to hold the establishment Democrats accountable. They have never questioned how to fund a war, yet they are baffled about the funding of health care for all.

CW: You also brought to the local Democratic Party Convention a resolution supporting the Driscoll’s Berry Boycott. The boycott campaign exposes and protests the slave-labor working conditions and wages of Driscoll’s berry workers in Baja California, Mexico. How did the Democrats react?

DR: Look, we have to really remember and never forget that it was the Democrats who passed NAFTA, which was written by corporations. NAFTA created a lot of poverty in Mexico. It resulted in the devastation of small farmers. Seventy thousand were forced to migrate to Baja California to pick berries for Driscoll’s, desperate for any work, no matter the wages and conditions.

The resolution in support of the boycott was designed to bring the message to the Democrats that we have to change our foreign policy and take responsibility for the poverty and injustice that this Party has created. The resolution passed, but there was resistance from agribusiness interests in the Party.

CW: Are progressive delegates like yourself discussing the need to break away from the Democratic Party and create a new Party?

DR: I want to say yes. Absolutely. There is a split in the Party. Many establishment elected representatives are pretty much paid by corporations, including Big Pharma. That money trickles down to the delegates they appoint. The party functions as an “old boys club” of powerful white businessmen who are determined to maintain control. The grassroots elected delegates are one fourth of the total. We are fighting for democracy in the party and for the interests of the community.

What I’m finding is that there are many organizers and people who really understand how much this party is in trouble. They are fighting back inside the party. Also, a lot of people are proposing a “Demexit” and the need for a party that focuses on labor and the needs of the people.

Michigan Greens to hold nominating convention in Flint

From the Green Party of Michigan

The fourth anniversary of the Flint Water Crisis looms large as the Green Party of Michigan prepares to nominate candidates for public office at the organization’s 2018 Nominating Convention. The Snyder Administration recently ended the free bottled water supply, leaving thousands of Flint residents in a desperate situation. “The people of Flint have suffered needlessly because of poor decisions by political leaders at both the state and local levels,” states Erin Fox for the local group, Vehicle City Greens. “It’s time for us to build an effective political alternative to challenge the status quo in local politics. The status quo simply isn’t acceptable.”

The convention will be held on Saturday, May 5, at the University of Michigan-Flint Harding-Mott University Center, 400 Mill St. in Flint. Green Party leaders, candidates and members will pick the party’s 2018 slate. For more information, contact info@vehiclecitygreens.org or visit the Green Party of Michigan at www.migreenparty.org.



Bayou Bridge pipeline protests and dangerous new anti-protest law

Protesters, as in the photo above, put on crawfish costumes to emphasize the threat of the Bayou Bridge oil pipeline through a wild crawfish habitat in the Atchafalaya Basin, a National Heritage area. The pipeline spans south Louisiana from Lake Charles, near the Texas border, to St. James, along the Mississippi River. The pipeline is the tail end of Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access pipeline network, which begins in North Dakota.

Protests against the Dakota Access pipeline have been widespread, and are cited as the inspiration for new anti-protest laws in some states which liken the actions of pipeline protesters to "terrorist activities." The bills were drafted by the oil and gas industry to protect its interest by taking away our first amendment right to protest, and legislators support it. The Louisiana bill before their legislature now parallels the Oklahoma bill which passed in 2017. It increases the penalties for any damage to or interference with pipeline and other critical infrastructure sites. Sentences range from one to 15 years in prison with a \$10,000 fine or six to 20 years plus a \$25,000 fine if the damage could threaten human life or disrupt site operations. In addition, Louisiana's bill criminalizes "conspiracy to commit trespass." Anyone involved with organizing a protest like the one on April 5 in Louisiana could face long prison sentences and fines if a judge rules they are part of a conspiracy that threatens life or the operation of critical infrastructure.

Organizers felt the Louisiana action was a success. One of the goals of the action was to get the word out that climate change is a huge issue and that there is real opposition in Louisiana.

The photo and information above is from an article by Julie Dermansky. See www.desmogblog.com/2018/04/06/bayou-bridge-protesters-arrested-louisiana-advances-bill-toughening-penalties-pipeline-protests/

Resistance to Mountain Valley pipeline in Appalachia is ongoing

Editor's note: The Appalachian pipeline project threatens landscape, water and the economy.

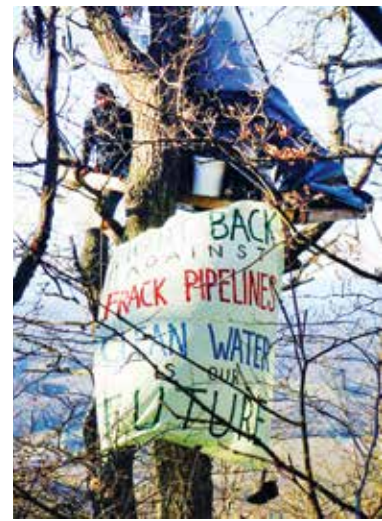
By Appalachians Against Pipelines

On February 26, 2018, two tree sits were erected on Peters Mountain in Monroe County, WV in the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline. These tree sits [intended to prevent companies from destroying forests] are located just about where the Mountain Valley Pipeline is proposed to cross the Appalachian Trail. (The company intends to bore through the fragile karst terrain of the mountain, under the Appalachian Trail).

In mid-March, on Day 14 of the tree sits, Mountain Valley Pipeline sent crews to clear-cut the West Virginia side of the mountain despite heavy snows. The Peters Mountain tree sits prevented crews from finishing their task, leaving many trees on the pipeline easement standing.

Below is a statement from one of the tree sitters, written that evening:

"It's evening now, and we're still here, monitoring the climb lines that anchor our platforms and connect the trees, and trying to keep the snow from blowing into the tree sits. This morning we could look down the mountain into unbroken snow-covered forest, where now we see an expanse of felled trunks.



Tree sits are intended to prevent companies from destroying forests. PHOTO/APPALACHIANS AGAINST PIPELINES

"The clearing crew cut up the easement, through private land on the WV side of Peters Mountain and into the National Forest, working in the area around the sits from the morning into early afternoon. Thankfully, friends on the ground helped make sure workers understood how the rigging is anchored to the trees and platforms, so no one cut trees attached to our lines or trees that would have hit those lines as they fell. This has left a significant piece of the easement in the National Forest with trees still standing, including where Mountain Valley Pipeline plans to bore under the Appalachian Trail.

"We intend to stay here as long as the trees do.

"The progress Mountain Valley Pipeline has already made is

painful to see, and the roars of the chainsaws still ring in our ears. Yet that the company would do this—send out a chainsaw crew in a snowstorm to cut a gash up this beautiful, wild mountain; plan to drill through fragile karst terrain without regard for water or life; continue to ignore and attempt to trample on everyone in Virginia and West Virginia who live on land they do not want this pipeline to destroy—only strengthens our resolve.

"We've received so much support from the start of this action, from people sharing what's happening here across social media to the folks who live nearby who braved the winter weather to bring hand warmers, food, and reading material to us.

"We will continue, against the pipeline, against the forces of the state that support the pipeline companies and continue to uphold the colonization and exploitation that Mountain Valley Pipeline, Atlantic Coast Pipeline, and all pipelines are a part of, alongside the myriad struggles against pipelines and extraction everywhere, in defense of the land and waters we love."

For updates on the Peters Mountain tree sits and this ongoing campaign, follow Appalachians Against Pipelines and Farmlands Fighting Pipelines on Facebook. To donate, visit bit.ly/supportmvpresistance



Protesters gather at the Michigan state capitol in Lansing, MI to express their outrage over the state's decision to shut down state-funded water centers while poisonous water still flows from their taps.

PHOTOS/MEGAN KREGER (LEFT) AND DAVE OLDS, MICHIGAN SENATE DEMOCRATS (ABOVE)

Water for Flint, not for Nestlé

By Flint correspondent for the People's Tribune

FLINT, MI — Claiming that the water is now safe, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has launched a surprise attack on the long-suffering residents of Flint, Michi-

gan. When they announced that the state-funded water centers (a.k.a. PODS) where bottled water is distributed would close. Panic and desperation set in across the city as lines upon lines of cars waited and waited, sometimes up to an hour, to get bottled water. Within days, the water was gone

and the PODS were completely closed. Over two busloads gathered at the Capitol the following day disrupting the legislature to protest the action.

When Flint Mayor Karen Weaver met with Governor Snyder days later to keep the PODS open, the governor said, among

other things, "Get Over It."

Just days before the announcement to shut off Flint's bottled water source, the same MDEQ announced that the Nestlé company would be allowed to increase withdrawals of groundwater—400 gallons per minute for \$200 a year in Osceola County.

The state of Michigan giveth to the corporations (Nestlé) and taketh from the people (Flint). The water crisis is alive and well in Flint, Michigan, but so is the resistance. The struggle continues...

Water - 'Be aware of what's happening in rural towns'

By Deanna Miller Berry

DEMARK, SC — We have a mayor who is refusing to allow Dr. Edwards and his Virginia Tech team to come in and sample and test our wells. Dr. Edwards found contamination in our water, high levels of iron and high levels of lead in some parts of the city (300 parts per billion). The EPA isn't listening to us. They allow homes to have a certain number of these contaminants in their water, high levels of manganese, e-coli. We found illegal dumping sites where they are dumping raw sewage illegally into a river. It is a big huge concern. And, because our local mayor and city council has a 65% tax rate on our water, we are paying 65% more on our water that we can't drink or use.

We have an out of touch politician running our city who is more concerned about protecting DHEC (South Carolina's Dept. of Health and Environmental Control) than he is about his own citizens. We have citizens who travel 7-10 miles to haul water as if we were in Africa, with jugs in their cars to an area we call Healing Springs. Over 80% of our citizens do not drink the water. They either go to Healing Springs, or for those that cannot afford it, buy bottled water. Unfortunately, that huge group of people who cannot afford to do either are reduced to drinking this water. They and our children are getting sick. People are dying. People have skin and rash issues. We just learned that DHEC is not required to test for lead in our schools. We need to do something about this.

We are not going to stop until this is resolved. Test our wells by Dr. Edwards and his Tech team! We want people to be aware of what's happening in small rural towns. We are standing up for our rights and will not back down.

Reach me on Facebook if you need more information at [Deanna Miller Berry](https://www.facebook.com/DeannaMillerBerry).

City of Detroit to shut off water to 17,000 more homes

Editor's note: The comments below are from Detroit water warriors about the massive, ongoing water shutoffs in their city. They say in a few years, a third of our country will not be able to afford their water bills.



On Martin Luther King Day, Detroit Jews for Justice protests the water shutoffs in Detroit to tens of thousands of low income people.

PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN

I'm Maureen Taylor with the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization (MWRO). The city of Detroit has announced the next round of water shutoffs. Seventeen thousand separate addresses are slated to have water shut off at their homes, and we have one word for that: Scandalous!

I'm Tijuana Morris, also with the MWRO. The charge or fees that administrators for the water department make are six digits, far above the average poor person. It's just not justified.

I'm Marian Kramer and I'm part of the MWRO and the Poor People's Campaign. This is exactly what the poor people are out there doing. That is, to organize to eliminate poverty. And water is part of it. Water is gold. Water should not be privatized. It

should be for the public

I'm Sylvia Orduno, with the MWRO and the People's Water Board. The things we are talking about today, even though very drastic for Detroit residents, is happening at the state and national level, we just don't hear much about it. In Detroit, we've been experiencing these types of water shutoffs for at least the past 20 years. We've been trying to stop

it with demands that there be a Water Affordability Plan based on low income, but we're not getting the traction we need. But we know this is a growing national problem. Forecasts are that in the next few years, a third of the country will not be able to afford their water bills.

WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT!

Why Chicago must replace lead water service lines now

By Howard Ehrman MD, MPH

CHICAGO, IL — According to the City of Chicago Finance Department, water cost per 1,000 gallons has gone up 323% from 2002 to 2017. Almost 16,000 Chicago children tested under six years old had lead poisoning in 2016. A 2015 Chicago Tribune article reported more than a fifth of the city's census tracts, almost all African American and Latino, had lead poisoning rates higher in 2013 than it was five years earlier and twice the national average. A 2015 research article stated 13% of reading failure and 14.8% of

math failure in Chicago school children can be attributed to exposure to elevated blood lead levels.

Yet, Chicago's Mayor Rahm Emanuel stands alone in the U.S. in refusing to replace any water lead service lines while the city replaces hundreds of miles of water mains. Madison, WI became the first major city to replace all lead service lines, followed by Lansing, MI. Now most major cities are replacing lead service lines, requiring it when new water mains are replaced. New York just gave \$20 million in grants to replace lead service

pipes. Philadelphia, Denver, Pittsburgh, St. Paul and other cities all pay for the city's part of the lead service line that runs from the water main in the street to the homeowner's property. They have grants, interest free and low interest loans to pay for the property owner's part of the lead service line. Only Chicago requires the homeowner pay the entire cost: both under the city street, from the water main and on our property to our homes.

Chicago was the last city in the U.S. to stop the use of water lead service lines, only because the Federal government required

it in 1986. It's more than 300,000 lead service lines are more than any other U.S. city. New York, Boston and other cities stopped using lead service lines decades before.

We know that replacing the water mains disturbs the lead and increases lead in water at that tap in our kitchens or bathroom. The phosphate compounds cities use to bind the lead in the service line cannot stop the disturbed line from increasing lead in the water that enters our homes. Lead is an absolute neurotoxin: there is no safe level and even tiny amounts affect the brain, nervous system

and other organs. It can kill both children and adults. It hurts our children's ability to learn and by the time they get to school they are often behind. Most cases of childhood lead poisoning are caused by lead paint, but lead in water is a factor and sometimes, the main cause.

When Amazon visited Chicago three weeks ago, Mayor Emanuel touted Chicago as a global city. It's time for us to Unite and Demand that Mayor 1% move into the 21st century and use corporate taxes and our water money to replace all lead service lines now.

Appalachian addicts: Creating addicts and ‘treating,’ reviving, and securing the next generation of addicts



By **Tinia Creamer**

WEST VIRGINIA — Pharmaceutical companies are sure winning in the epidemic of addiction in America. We trust them since most Americans live on multiple medications. They have our interests at heart. Sure.

Yet, these Pharmaceutical companies manufactured drugs they knew created addicts. Now they are poised to make as much money on the drugs that “treat” or “revive” the addict.

This clearly isn’t profit driven, is it? This isn’t creating and then capitalizing on addiction and death and treatment. Sure.

In 1996, when OxyContin came out, it produced \$45 million in sales. By 2000, it was up to \$1.1 billion. By 2010, it was at \$3.1 billion. In the end, one family made \$35 billion from this pill. Too often, it happened in Appalachia. Few jobs, No Hope, plenty of Pain Pills.

Purdue Pharma settled in 2015 with Kentucky on a suit concerning their misleading marketing of OxyContin. They admitted to creating their own fake scientific charts and more. Of course, we’d have seen far more lawsuits if more politicians were not in Big Pharma’s pockets. The Sackler family, which owns Pur-

due Pharma, is the 16th richest family in the country. They claim much of the increase in wealth came on the heels of the success of Oxycontin.

Sure. It was a success. A deadly one, but who cares? These are only junkies’ lives. Except some used to be something else, if lucky enough to escape being born addicted. The odds are more bleak these days. Bleak to the tune of 25% of babies born in West Virginia addicted at birth. In my area, at least 50% are born to addicts ... their bodies programmed from the womb to need a high to feel “normal.”

Choices. Like when our Politicians accept huge contributions from Big Pharma companies.

Choices ... folks mainly talk about the addict’s choice. They never talk about the lack of choice of the teenager who was born addicted. They never talk about the injured combat veteran who came back from a war told to take this “non-addictive” medication. Where was his choice?

They don’t talk about the cancer patients given these drugs who beat cancer to be addicts. Do you know the story behind the Junkie you point at?

Far too few are angry about the “eyes open” choices made by Pharmaceutical companies who created, lied and pushed powerful drugs they knew people, for the most part, could never let go of once hooked.

And we sure refuse to talk about the fact that our government created this mess, and we keep letting this same government continue flopping around in the vomit and muck we all collectively had a hand in because we were quiet through it all.

It is so much easier, you know, to blame the dirty, disheveled addict on the corner of the gas station. The billionaire executives are so clean and pretty and fancy. Surely they aren’t to blame. Neither are those sweet talking political friends of ours. Rich and Fabulous and Never Accountable. That is the Ameri-

can Dream.

So we continue on. We keep creating addicts by government funded “addiction clinics” where we buy more “drugs” from companies that help create the addiction problem. Drugs all bought from Big Pharmaceutical companies.

At which point the masses dance in the streets and sing, “Ding Dong, Ding Dong, the Wicked Addict is Dead!”

BUT WAIT! Not before he created two or three babies who are also born into addiction, assuring the survival of the cash cow more affectionately known as “A Junkie.”

And the cycle of profit is secured, the seats elected are secure, and all of America is at rest.

You can read the full version of this article at thevegetarianhomesteader.com/2016/09/appalachian-addicts-creating-addicts.html.

The best of times or the worst of times – it’s our choice

By **Dave Ransom**

“It will soon be obvious that half our tasks can be done better at almost no cost by AI [artificial intelligence] and robots,” wrote venture capitalist Kai-Fu Lee to the technology community recently.

“This will be the fastest transition humankind has experienced,” he said, “and we’re not ready for it ... not ready for the massive societal upheavals on the way.”

The transition from production by human labor to production by robots is entirely new; and yet,

to understand how to deal with it, we, the workers of the world, can learn from the past.

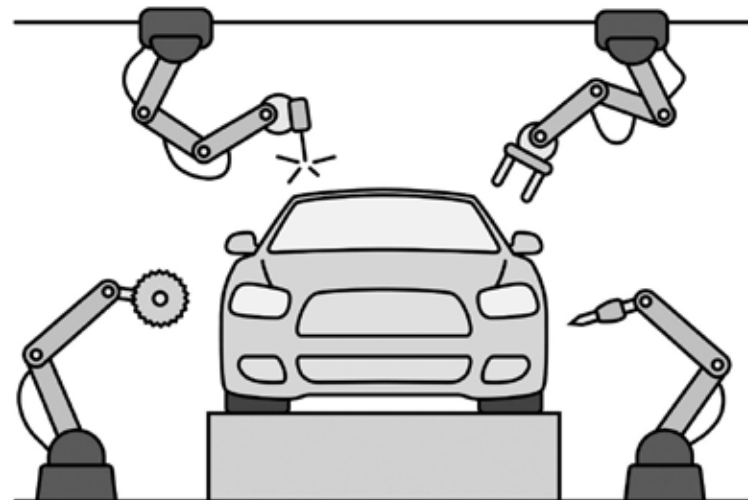
Dr. Lee criticized his colleagues who aren’t trying to solve the problem. “What’s worse ... is that they actually refuse to acknowledge the problem exists in the first place.”

“These changes are coming,” Lee said, “and we need to tell the truth and the whole truth. ... These will be the best of times and the worst of times. If we act rationally and quickly, we can bask in what’s best rather than wallow in what’s worst.”

So true. We face a choice. On one hand, we can live equally and happily in the society of abundance that robotics makes possible.

On the other, we can live doubled up in small apartments, sleeping on the streets, or struggling back home on failing farms—if the powers that be let us live at all.

That’s what we face—and what our children and grandchildren face—if we don’t take hold of our society and reorganize it so the way to get fed, clothed, and housed is no longer only by



The robots are replacing us! Is that a bad thing? The problem is that under capitalism, corporations own and sell the abundance the robots produce and for a profit. Meanwhile, we the increasingly jobless, impoverished and hungry workers, end up in the streets, too poor to buy what we need. Imagine the world we could create if the public, not corporate billionaires, owned these robots? We could put them to work for us. We could provide the abundance of food, housing, water and other things robots produce to all in a socialized economy.

IMAGE/SHUTTERSTOCK

working at jobs that no longer exist.

And while we have ever faced this choice before, our ancestors have taken control of their lives and made major changes, from organizing and

striking for living wages in the U.S. textile industry or dividing up the fincas of the latifundistas and returning the land to the indigenous villages in the Mexican Revolution.

NOW, THE RESISTANCE

In the most powerful nation
on earth, a flame
of fascistic fervor is taking hold,

fueled by privileges, corruption
and greed.
We the people must not let it grow.

If we just sit and mope,
paralyzed by fear,
our ending’s sure to be near.

So let’s unite and fight,
it’s our right, our survival
and, for generations to come,

comrades, let’s come together
and we’ll win because the
“morality within” always prevails.

— *Diego De Leo*



Immigrant rights group in Wisconsin stands up for their beliefs, and face arrests.

PHOTO/CHARLES E. MILLER

Outpouring of support for immigrants is on the rise

From the Editors

In April, ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) conducted the largest workplace raid in the last ten years, arresting 97 workers, leaving families in a rural Tennessee town terrorized and heartbroken. More than 550 students didn't show up for school the next day out of fear that ICE may still be in the town or come back. A teacher, outraged at ICE storming into a workplace and arresting people told the media: "They are parents just like other parents, they care for their children and want the best

for the kids. These parents and the other students are part of our family. We have to work together to create the best environment for their kids." Commenting on the outpouring of support for the families in their town another teacher said, "What scares us is what more are they [ICE] capable of and what more can they get away with. I hope they are watching this. If they thought they could come into this little town and rip 97 people away from their families and no one care, they are wrong." (Now This News)

Also in April, an immigrant rights activist, held in detention,

was reunited with his family. He had been picked up and detained with no warning. The next day, a mother was released from detention, at least temporarily. That same day a man was released after a year in detention and after multiple hunger strikes to call attention to the conditions, while facing months of solitary confinement. Organizers at the Northwest Detention Center Resistance say these victories in Washington State highlight how community leadership and support can win fights against the detention and deportation machine.

Immigrant youth launch walk from New York to D.C. to stay home

By Eli Gips

NEW YORK, NY — Eleven undocumented youth and allies began a "Walk to Stay Home," a 15-day walk from Battery Park in New York to the Martin Luther King memorial in Washington in February.

The 250-mile journey was organized by the Seed Project with the support of the Our Dream Campaign to draw attention to the need for a clean Dream Act that not only grants permanent protection for undocumented youth, but does not harm 11 million undocumented people living and working in the United States.

"It is time for us undocumented youth to once again step out of the shadows and make a simple demand: Let us stay home," said Héctor Jairo Martínez, a DACA recipient from Brooklyn

The "Walk to Stay Home" is undocumented youths' response to politicians who use "Dreamers" as talking points on the campaign trail, but back down when it is time to demonstrate real support. Democrats showed no sign of using their power to



Immigrant youth march for right to stay home.

PHOTO/SEED PROJECT

protect the undocumented youth while Republicans drafted legislation to drive the immigrant community deeper into the shadows.

The walkers' sacrifice to stand for their right to stay home underscores their dedication to loved ones who have not been offered the same protection under DACA.



Veteran, Hector Barajas, U.S. Marine Corps, deported to Mexico. IMAGE FROM VIDEO, "THE DEPORTED VETERANS OF AMERICA"

U.S. veterans deported. What?

The shocking story of United States veterans deported across the border to Tijuana, Mexico, is told in the video, "The Deported Veterans of America." The video says this has been going on since the 1980s. Most of the deported veterans are Mexican but some are from Canada and as far away as Africa. They served in the military and somehow got caught up in the U.S. legal system, and some were deported. The deported veterans are having a hard time. One who served in Korea went back for medication and got four years. The deported veterans' goal is to make Americans aware so they will act. When people find out, they don't believe it. They say "these veterans put on a uniform and they are Americans and deserve to stay here."

Excerpts from veterans' stories in the film, "The Deported Veterans Of America":

"When I got drafted, I got out of high school, got my physical and went straight to Fort Ord. That's where I did my training. When I got out, I went to look for a job and didn't have my Green Card. The lady in the unemployment office said, 'go to immigration, they got your papers.' I thought they had my citizenship. When I got there, they put the cuffs on me. I said look, I just got out of the military, why am I getting deported? They said you have no records. I said my parents brought me when I was a little kid..."

"I served in the U.S. Navy in Phoenix, AZ, from 1996-2000, Operation Desert Storm, and was honorably discharged. Since the military, I had a history with alcohol and drug abuse. I never got any help. I got in trouble. The judge recommended a drug program. I was supposed to do a year and a half and get out and be with my family. I never got to see my family. I am deported on perjury. After I pleaded guilty, the judge said, 'do you understand what you're pleading guilty to? Perjury is lying to a jury court, and you never had a jury. You're being charged with something you didn't do.' The judge said on the record, 'based on all the letters I see, you are pretty much a good guy but you got in trouble this one time. Sorry, thank you for your service, but I have to deport you.'"

"Since I was little, I was told, our strength as Americans was our diversity, that we're a nation born of immigrants. The Italians, Jewish, Irish came over; slowly but surely they all became the fabric of America, and it's the same thing for us. Don't destroy what makes America great. We need to come together and unite and make America what it is supposed to be, and that is all-inclusive. What is more American than a U.S. soldier?"

"The military trained us well. We're going to fight till we get back home."

Laws have to change. Laws without morals are useless. This is inhumane.

Watch the film at youtu.be/E07ylagwJLY



Disabled activists huddle together for warmth on a cold day in Washington, D.C. They came to educate Congress members about why it is important to stop shock treatment of disabled youth and adults. A police officer tells them to vacate the park due to an oncoming storm.

PHOTO/ADAPT, FACEBOOK

Disability group fights electric shock treatment of autistic youth

By Shark Barros,
Poor People's Economic
Human Rights Campaign

Coming into D.C. in March, 2018, to support National ADAPT, a national grassroots disability rights organization which works to secure rights and liberties for disabled Americans. There we protested the inhumane torture and shock treatment of autistic youth at the Judge Rotenberg Center run by Dr. Scott Gottlieb.

Shame on America, shame on this corrupt system that still allows this kind of treatment to anybody!

Witnessing the abuse by the state of Washington, D.C., to the National ADAPT contingent was sad. Turning the cheek to the pain

and suffering of the ADAPT protesters, showed the evilness of today's society.

Going to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) building, I watch as the pretend cops belittle the protesters by saying they will scream and holler and then go away: they will out-wait us!

No response from the FDA so we shut down the freeway in Maryland! Shutting down the freeway in both directions brought out police from Maryland and Washington, D.C.—talking down to us from both sides of their mouths and threatening us with arrest—which they did.

ADAPT warriors holding down until rush hour—all night until 5 a.m.

Wet, cold, freezing sick and

tired—ADAPT are put on buses to be thrown off a bus in D.C., with no power for the wheelchair and sick, painful, tired, but no matter what their spirits are stronger today!

To fight your battles under these conditions will tell the world we are moving forward—come rain or shine, police-abuse, or death. The struggle continues. We call upon the world to see that we will no longer sit idle no more. Stop the shock, stop the torture. This is unacceptable. A better world is possible if we struggle together! No more shock, no more torture! ADAPT will be back!

Contact ADAPT at
www.adapt.org.

Illinois illegally ignores needs of the people

By Kathy Powers

CHICAGO, IL — The Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) cannot serve its constituents with their new, broken computer system (IES). Documents are lost, people are cut off unjustly from the food stamp program (SNAP), from Medicaid health care, from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and people do not have an assigned case worker to follow through with their cases. There are insufficient, trained workers to serve DHS and DRS, and the IES system crashes daily, which causes backlogs, waiting times, and public health issues at the service offices.

In November 2017, the IES system terminated SNAP benefits for more than 40,000 households. Initially, the state blamed the people for not filing on time, however, the system's insufficient bandwidth caused the delay in handling all the beneficiaries' filings.

In March, 2018, Blocks Together and The Alliance for Community Services held a "Community Speak Out! Stop cuts to SNAP and Medicaid" at the YMCA in Humboldt Park, Chicago. Legislators invited were State Senator Patricia Van Pelt, State Representative Melissa Conyears-



Community demands Illinois provide for their needs.

PHOTO/FRAN TOBIN

Ervin, State Senator Omar Aquino, and State Senator Julie Morrison who promised to send representatives to the town hall. Their table remained empty.

We were there, though, and filled the room: persons with disabilities, persons who are hungry, persons who are poor, persons with mental illness symptoms, persons who are on kidney dialysis, persons who are home-care personal assistants, single-payer health care advocates, and equally, were the workers themselves who testified about the nightmare that the IES imposes upon them every day.

All participants agreed that this system illegally removes benefits, services without assigned case workers are unmanageable, waiting times can sometimes last up to eight hours because of system crashes, and some state workers desire to deliver services and cannot because of the broken IES system and an insufficient number of staff.

The cry of Mother Earth

By David Schwartzman

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The First Ecosocialist International Convocation was held from October 31 to November 3, 2017 in the state of Yaracuy, Venezuela, where mainly people of African descent live. The Convocation sought to undertake the collective construction of a program for the salvation of Mother Earth.

Of the roughly 100 delegates to this Convocation, the indigenous community of the Amazon was strongly represented, joined by a representative of the Lakota tribe of North Dakota. Other participants included a representative of the Kurdish people, along with delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Tanzania, Kenya, Indonesia, and Switzerland.

The Convocation recognized that this Convocation was only a first step, looking forward to bringing in strong representation from Africa, China, India, Japan, Vietnam, other countries of Asia, and Europe. U.S. groups represented included Cooperation Jackson, the Labor Community Strategy Center (LCSC), and a new black arts movement in Brooklyn. Organizers of this Convocation included Quincy Saul of Ecosocialist Horizons.

Participants joined five working groups to consider goals focused on the short-term (the time of struggle), medium-term (the time of construction) and long-term (the time of utopia).

I joined our FIRE group, working along with delegates from indigenous communities as well as Manuel Criollo, the Director of Organizing of LCSC, and Kali Akuno, Co-Director of Cooperation Jackson, joined by Professor Julio Escalona, an elected member of the Constituent Assembly. Our group focused on strategies and actions to reclaim our economies of mutual aid, our ecologically and social appropriate and appropriable technologies, and our sources of renewable energy.

The other groups considered strategies and actions "to reclaim control of our cultures, models of civilization, and ancestral cosmov-

isions" (AETHER), "to reclaim the management of our liberating education and communication, for the defense of peace, rights, and living the good life (AIR), "to reclaim the management of our water and other common goods" (WATER), and "to reclaim management of our food and health" (EARTH).

As an example of short-term actions, the Convocation committed to launching campaigns of information and concrete action all over the world against fracking and nuclear war, as they endanger Mother Earth, the human species and all life.

Mid-term, the objectives included expanding solidarity exchanges/cooperatives promoting a transition to an ecosocialist economy. The Convocation made a commitment to advance an international solar energy project, focused on collectively raising funds to finance three to four solar farms every year, between the organizations and communities who form part of the First Ecosocialist International.

Further, this Convocation proposed to the people and the revolutionary government of Venezuela that she should lead a transition to 100% renewable energy in Latin America, using its oil as a source of energy to create this alternative.

On November 4 in Caracas, Blanca Eekhout, minister of women and gender equality, welcomed the creation of this International, as a step forward in fulfilling Venezuela's Plan of the Homeland, by taking it to the necessary next level: a Plan for the Planet.

You can find out more at Ecosocialist Horizons, (ecosocialisthorizons.com/) as well as from Quincy Saul's article, (telesurtv.net/english/opinion/From-the-Plan-of-the-Homeland-to-a-Plan-for-the-Planet-20171208-0010.html).

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Students going hungry at colleges in California



Students choose fresh produce at the Laney College Food Bank. Hunger is widespread among college students in California, a state that leads the world in agricultural production. PHOTO/KEITH WELCH

By Keith Welch

OAKLAND, CA — Why is there food insecurity on the Laney College campus, when we have one of the largest Culinary Arts Departments in the Bay Area? Why is food insecurity a problem in the great state of California while it leads the world in agriculture production? What are student leaders and faculty doing about food insecurity on campus? No more excuses, no more talk, and no more denial. The problem has to be dealt with.

I've attended Laney College for four years and am President of Associated Students of Laney College (ASLC). I'm a Culinary student, and was homeless for a time.

I asked Chefs Lorianne Raji and Laurence Jackson, both veteran Culinary professors at Laney College, if they knew about food insecurity on campus. Both said housing cost is a big problem facing students because it leads to food insecurity, and it leads to shrinking enrollment and high drop-out rates.

High rents are driving students

further and further from Oakland and Laney College. Many students have to travel up to three hours a day to and from Laney. When you were paying \$1,200 and your landlord raises your rent \$600, you've got to move. Over 10% of students are homeless; they sleep where they can, couch surfing with family members and friends, or sleep in cars, public transit, or outside.

And there's no shortage, with 5,000 empty housing units in Oakland, and 3,600 new units being built just in 2018. But these average \$2,226 or more a month. They're very profitable for giant corporations, but no one in poverty can afford them.

Scott Strong, Laney Food Service Manager, spoke with colleague Peter Brown about the problems facing food service for students who need to nourish their brains for effective study. Laney Food Service is not subsidized, it's required to break even. Shrinking enrollment means fewer customers, but the cost of running a kitchen and cafeteria doesn't shrink, so prices rise. Fewer students can afford the more expen-

sive food, and reduced hours serve less people. It was once supported by public education funds.

Laney College is tackling the food insecurity problem short-term with food banks and a weekly food pantry on campus, but there is more work to be done. As president, I'm proud to say that ASLC is leading the way; it provides funds to all student clubs, and all student events on campus. Since I demanded it in 2016, all food for ASLC events is provided free by the Culinary Arts club, and has fed over 12,000 students. I plan a Housing Summit at Laney College in May.

But housing and food are more than a problem, they're a catastrophe; something has to be done to end hunger and homelessness forever in a world of plenty.

Housing and food are human rights, and it's our government's responsibility to provide every human being food in their belly and a safe place of their own to call home. Sleeping in your own bed, cooking food in your own kitchen and taking a bath in your own tub is a wonderful feeling.

Stop the war, help the people

From the Editors

With each passing day lately, humanity moves closer to another world war, and the threat of a nuclear war that could destroy the world is becoming all too real.

The people of the world don't have anything to gain from world war, and we have everything to lose. This war is about the global elites fighting over markets, resources and territory. The rich are fighting over money, while billions of us are without regular access to food, clean water, housing, healthcare and other necessities.

The American corporate class is driving the world toward war. Capitalism is dying and they hope to save their wealth through war. The U.S. spends nearly \$1 trillion a year on the military. Its military budget is larger than that of the next nine countries combined. There are nearly 200,000 American troops in about 1,000 bases outside the U.S., spread across 177 countries. We have spent some \$4.5 trillion on wars since 2001.

We are being bankrupted by military spending. Our military budget accounts for more than half of the discretionary spending in the federal budget. U.S. billionaires and corporations, in pursuit of their mad dreams of global domination, are starving the American people to feed the military budget, and threatening to destroy the world in the process.

And then we are told that spending on things like food stamps, education, Medicaid and Medicare must be cut because the government spends too much. About \$5 trillion in cuts in social spending are planned over the next 10 years.

This is insane. It's estimated that it would cost only about one-fourth of the U.S. military budget to eliminate poverty in the U.S., and to eliminate poverty and hunger worldwide would cost only about 10 percent of world military spending.

The drive toward war not only threatens to destroy us all, but is taking food out of our mouths. We, the people, have a



Homeless encampment in the San Francisco Bay Area, July 2017. Meanwhile, U.S. billionaires, corporations and their politicians feed the military budget and arms industry, and threaten to destroy humanity in the process. PHOTO/THOMAS HAWK

right to food, water, housing and other necessities, and we and the rest of humanity have a right to be free of the threat of war. We must demand the U.S. government pull back from the brink of war and cut the military budget to pay for human needs.

We, the people of the U.S., have a particular responsibility to impose peace on the war makers.



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

Occupy the PGA:

Mass demonstration in Benton Harbor on May 26

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — On Saturday May 26, 2018, Occupy the PGA—a coalition of Benton Harbor residents, community groups, and allies from across the region—will hold a mass demonstration to save our children! We will rally and march in protest of the 2018 Senior PGA golf tournament. The rally will begin at 11 a.m. at Benton Harbor City Hall, 200 East Wall St.

This year's tournament will be the fourth since the construction of the controversial Harbor Shores golf course and luxury condominium development, backed by the Whirlpool Corporation. It also marks

the fourth Occupy the PGA protest.

The coalition has demanded that the Senior PGA transfer 25% of its profit to Benton Harbor, where more than half of the residents live in poverty, where over 90% are Black. Occupy the PGA also indicts Whirlpool, Harbor Shores and the Senior PGA for its unfulfilled promises of significant jobs and tax revenue for Benton Harbor residents.

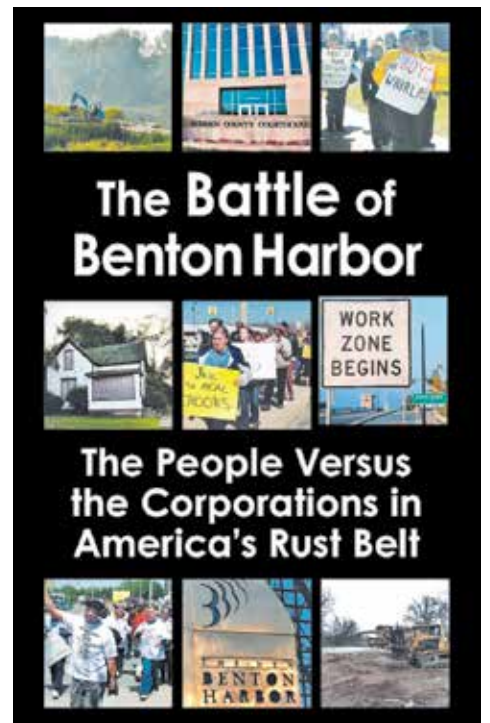
The group also continues to demand a public acknowledgement at the tournament of the theft of public park land for profit, referring to the leased 22 acres of dunes on Jean Klock Park for transformation into three holes of

the Harbor Shores golf course. The group attributes the transfer to the complete undermining of democratic structures via former Democratic Governor Granholm's installment of an Emergency Financial Manager in Benton Harbor in December 2010. Benton Harbor was the first predominately Black Michigan city in recent years to be subjected to an Emergency Financial Manager, and then Emergency Manager, with absolute power.

Occupy the PGA organizers see the Harbor Shores development as a prime example of racist genocide by gentrification, designed to force out Black community members who have lived in Benton

Harbor for generations, instead of bringing jobs and opportunities. Such luxury developments at best bring only a few low-wages service jobs for locals.

I, the Rev. Edward Pinkney of the local community group BANCO (Black Autonomy Network Community Organization) say Benton Harbor continues to be a city under siege. The mishandling of public trust could not be more massive, unjust, inhumane, and unconstitutional. The Senior PGA needs to hear our voice. It's time to stand up and fight for what's right. We must confront Whirlpool, Harbor Shores, and the Senior PGA.



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Why police terror?

An interview with Kevin 'Brother' Carter

Cathleen Williams: Kevin 'Brother' Carter, you are a leader in keeping alive the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign in Sacramento, California, where Stephon Clark, a young, unarmed African American man, was recently killed by the police. How would you describe your goals in the movement?

Kevin 'Brother' Carter: We need to change the power dynamics between the "haves" and the "have-nots" as we struggle to survive in the new jobless economy. There's no replacement for displacement. It's class warfare against the poor. My goal is to foster conscious awareness that we are not fighting for one culture or for one nationality. This is about the human race. As the poor, we are all suffering, we all have the same problems and the same challenges. Currently, I am active in the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, to build a movement against poverty, militarism and the war economy, environmental devastation, and systemic racism.

CW: Stephon Clark was recently killed by the police in his grandmother's backyard in Sacramento. He was unarmed and holding a cell phone. Why did this happen, in your view?

KBC: First, we live in a nation that is under the gun. We have

police with guns, we have ordinary people with guns. Corporations like the NRA have put everybody in the mindset of fear.

Stephon Clark lived in Meadowview, a diverse, impoverished, urban community, where many people of color live, as well as poor whites. The police classify such neighborhoods as dangerous and "high risk." When they go into a "high risk" neighborhood, they have a tactical, military mindset, driven by fear of danger and crime. They see you more as a target than a resident, especially if you are a person of color. Many assume that if you are Black or Brown, you are associated with crime.

When the police pursued Stephon Clark, they felt they had to "eliminate" the threat regardless of whether he had a gun or cell phone. This is simulated in their training. Their mindset prevails over our human rights, our civil rights, and our constitutional

rights.

The justice system is designed to protect the police. The "haves" make the laws for the "have-nots." That's where the problem lies. It operates as a fascist system within itself, with the police acting as judge, jury and executioner.

CW: What do you see as the solution?

KBC: We must stop the oligarchs of this country who want to divide and conquer us and keep us apart so they can continue to do what they are doing to us, keeping us in this confusion about hate, race and prejudice. We need to keep our eyes on the prize, and come together for the common goal, understanding what's holding all of us down. We can make new policies to control the police and to protect our families and our future. You have to continue to keep the vision of unity, that's the most important thing.



Stevante, the brother of Stephon Clark who was killed by Sacramento, CA police, holds his baby nephew, son of his deceased brother. This photo was taken on the first day of protests at the Golden One Arena after a freeway shutdown. Stevante made a surprise presence, acting independently from any group, and announced he was the brother. He said "This is all me now," meaning he is now responsible for his brother's children.

PHOTO/IRENE DE BARRAICUA

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