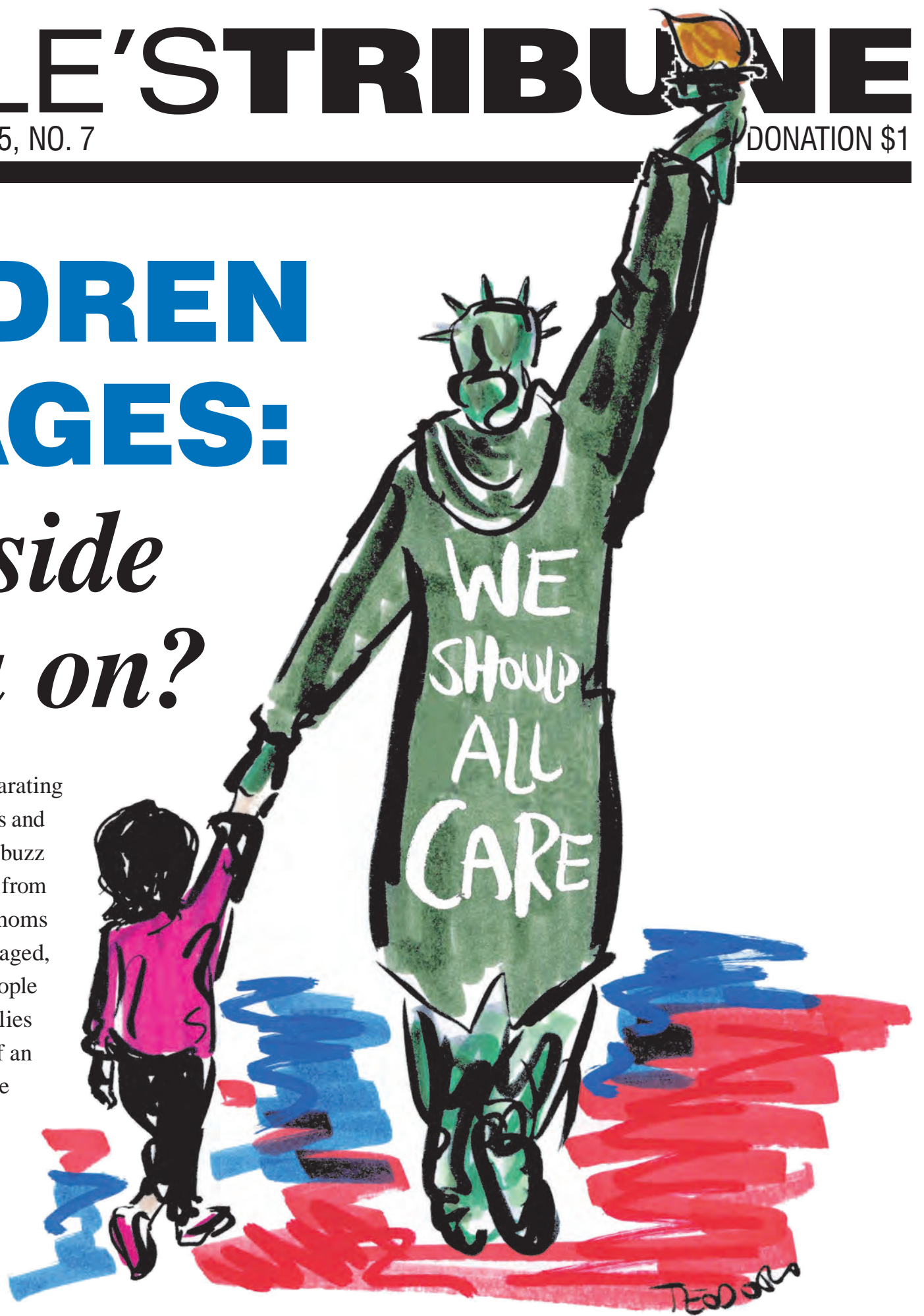


CHILDREN IN CAGES:

*Which side
are you on?*

Trump's barbaric policy of separating immigrant children from their parents and putting them in cages has run into a buzz saw recently. Millions of Americans, from urban young people to suburban moms to fathers in small towns, are outraged, and resistance keeps mounting. People see the assault on immigrant families as intolerable. Many see it as part of an effort to impose a dictatorship on the whole country.

*Read the stories
on pages 3 and 4*



***FIGHTING POVERTY IN AMERICA:
The Poor People's Campaign
and more***

See pages 2, 10, and 11

PHOTO/SHANNON FINNEY PHOTOGRAPHY



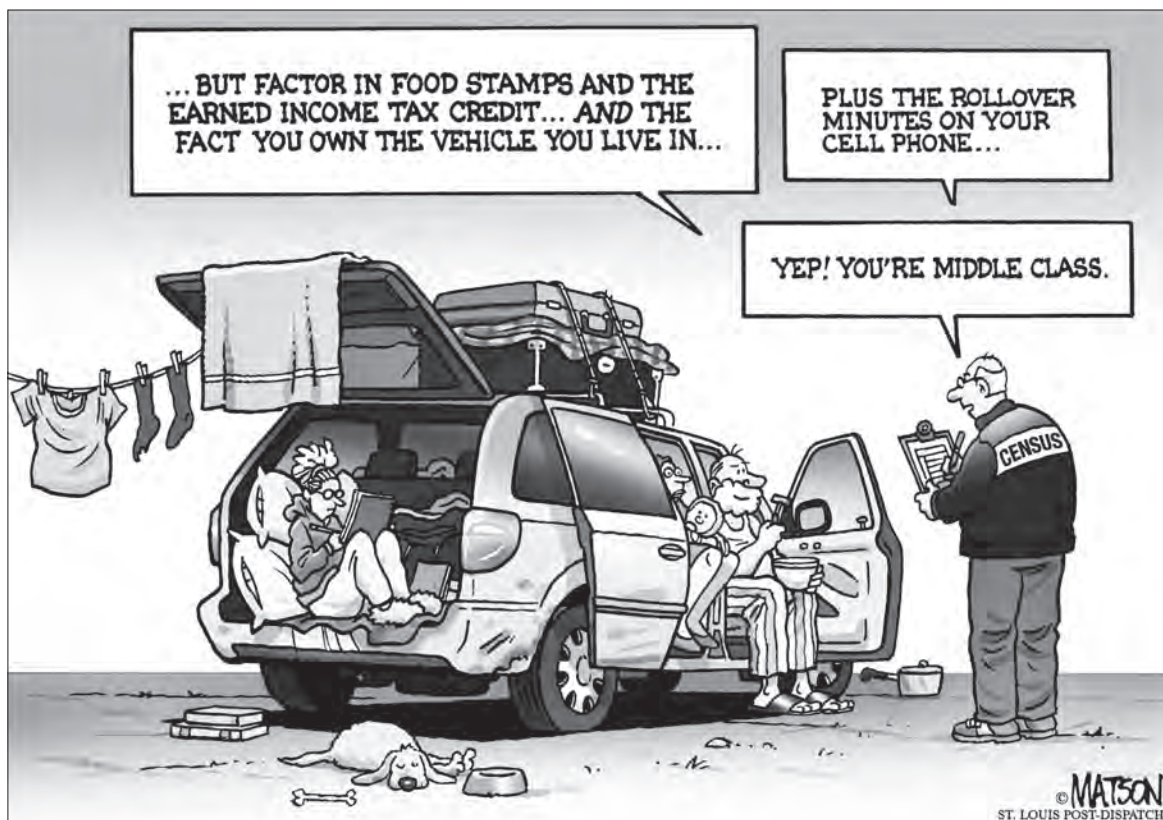
Explosive UN report: Extreme poverty in America

EDITORIAL

In May, Professor Philip Alston, special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights for the United Nations, was invited by the U.S. federal government to look at whether extreme poverty in America undermines the enjoyment of human rights by its citizens. Professor Alston's shocking report stated that 40 million Americans live in poverty and 18.5 million Americans live in extreme poverty.

At the end of his tour, he wrote, "I have seen and heard a lot over the past two weeks. I met with many people barely surviving on Skid Row in Los Angeles, I witnessed a San Francisco police officer telling a group of homeless people to move on but having no answer when asked where they could move to, I heard how thousands of poor people get minor infraction notices which seem to be intentionally designed to quickly explode into un-payable debt, incarceration, and the replenishment of municipal coffers, I saw sewage-filled yards in states where governments don't consider sanitation facilities to be their responsibility, I saw people who had lost all of their teeth because adult dental care is not covered by the vast majority of programs available to the very poor, I heard about soaring death rates and family and community destruction wrought by opioids, and I met with people in Puerto Rico living next to a mountain of completely unprotected coal ash which rains down upon them, bringing illness, disability and death."

"American exceptionalism was a constant theme in my conversations," said Alston. "But instead of realizing its founders' admirable commitments, today's



United States has proved itself to be exceptional in far more problematic ways that are shockingly at odds with its immense wealth and its founding commitment to human rights. As a result, contrasts between private wealth and public squalor abound."

Yes, the United States of North America is an exceptional nation. We are exceptionally wealthy, and exceptionally poor! Among wealthy nations, the United States stands out for its wealth inequality. The top 1 percent of households own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent combined. Nine million of us, in fact, have zero income and

receive no cash assistance at all.

This is a tale of two Americas: one in which an individual such as Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, has the right to privately own \$140 billion in socially produced wealth with the full backing of the government, and the other where millions of workers, including the so-called "middle class," are thrown to the curb in the new, increasingly automated, jobless economy, without a safety net to soften the blow.

The story doesn't end here.

No! We, the people are not standing still. We are waking up and finding our strengths, coming together in our common strug-

gle for survival. We are fighting forward with a vision of a better society—one where every life matters—one where we the people own the marvelous technologies that are producing such abundance, one where what we need is distributed to meet human need.

Our first step in creating this new society is to demand that government provide the necessities of life such as healthcare, food, housing, water and education to everyone. We deserve no less! Who is the government going to serve? The people or the billionaires?

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

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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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Children in cages: Which side are you on?

COVER STORY

Trump's policy of separating immigrant children from their parents and putting them in cages has run into a buzz saw recently. Millions of Americans, from urban young people to suburban moms to fathers in small towns, are outraged. On June 28, 600 women were arrested in Washington, DC, after staging a sit-in at a Senate office building against separating families. On June 30, hundreds of thousands demonstrated in some 750 cities across the country and in Puerto Rico. People carried signs with slogans such as "No one is free until we're all free," "Abolish ICE" and "What's next? Concentration Camps?"

Ten days earlier, the mounting resistance forced Trump to order that, going forward, parents arrested at the border would be confined along with their children, rather than be separated from them. (Of course, none of these families should be confined at all.) Then on June 26, a federal judge ordered that the more than 2,000 children who had already been separated be reunited with their parents within 30 days.

The Trump administration has encountered a snag to detaining minors indefinitely—the 1997 Flores court settlement limits their detention to 20 days. Attorney General Sessions has been tasked to look for ways to waive or modify this limit.

Hundreds of unaccompanied

immigrant children are still being held in tents in the brutal Texas heat. A closed-down WalMart in south Texas is another detention center, housing 1,500 boys ages 10 to 17. The Office of Refugee Resettlement is now overseeing an estimated 100 shelters in 17 states, housing more than 11,000 youths. Eighty percent of undocumented border crossers are unaccompanied teenagers from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras who are being held. Where are their families? What crime have they committed?

We are living in a morally corrupt system in which even elected officials are being denied entry to these detention facilities, where there are reports of unspeakable abuse and deficiencies in caring for these children. Parents report having no contact with their children, and not knowing where they are. Young children are suffering from this separation and will end up with life-long trauma. Some parents report that they have lost their children to others adopting them! With all the protests against these inhumane policies, those legislators who weren't already listening are being forced to listen.

Trump is now proposing using minors as a sort of "ransom," offering parents reunification with their loved ones only if they sign their voluntary departure from the U.S. He has also proposed suspending due process rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution and returning undocumented persons to their home



Dozens of parents and babies took over the offices of Thomas R. Decker, New York field office director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations on June 21, 2018 to protest the Trump administration's heartless separation of children from their families. PHOTO/ERIK MCGREGOR

countries as soon as they cross the border, without being able to apply for asylum. Some Congress members have instead proposed sending 200 additional immigration judges to the U.S.-Mexico border to expedite processing these cases, which normally take years to be heard.

Through the government's terrorizing of immigrants, an ugly fascism is being rolled out that is affecting more than just migrants. This is at the heart of what is going on. U.S. Customs and Border Protection has authority to operate within 100 miles of any U.S. land or coastal border, which includes and affects about 200 million peo-

ple in numerous states, not just the U.S.-Mexico border. Stripping migrants of their rights threatens everyone's rights.

Meanwhile "establishment" Democrats are trying to position themselves as leaders in the fight to keep families together. Things have certainly gotten worse with Trump, but we all remember that Obama became the "deporter in chief."

The finger-pointing of blame continues between the Republicans and Democrats that there has been no agreement on immigration legislation; nothing on Dreamers, DACA or comprehensive reform. Lawsuits are freezing many deci-

sions. The elections in November will no doubt be another distraction since the decision-makers are not prioritizing immigration solutions that stop deportations and separation of families.

The real question is: will we have fascism or democracy? In this regard, the stance of the American people against the immoral separation of the children and for immigrant rights is key to the resistance to a dictatorship. We the people must continue to make our voices heard. The future is up to us.

See photos from "Families belong together" protests on page 4.

What kind of America do we want?

From the Editors

Some Americans are asking: "Why are immigrants coming here?"

Some of us are unaware of the brutal role the U.S. government has played in forcing families to flee their countries and embark on the perilous journey to the U.S. Those fleeing are often victims of decades of U.S.-sponsored war, murder, torture, overthrow of their democratically elected governments and the U.S. backed drug trade.

Smedley Butler, the highest ranking U.S. Marine Corps major general at the time of his death in 1940, explained how the U.S. military guarantees profits for the corporations: "I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism."

"The people we are punishing are moms, kids, fathers, young teenagers, young men that are saying, 'No, I won't work with the cartels.' They're running for their lives," says human rights lawyer and author Jennifer Harbury. She discusses the refugee crisis as blowback from U.S. dirty wars in Central America.

Branding undocumented families as terrorists and thieves of American jobs and putting children in cages

is the attempt of our rulers to hide the true nature of a dying economic system. In fact, hundreds of thousands of families have been stripped of their jobs and homes. One fifth of American children live in poverty. Half a million kids suffer from lead poisoning each year. The billionaire class must direct the rising fear and anger at a scapegoat—lest it be directed at corporate America.

Underlying it all is the naked corporate takeover of America, many decades in the making.

It takes unity to stop a dictatorship. The powers that be are trying to pit the immigrants against the rest of the people. Significantly, Americans are beginning to stand up, about the children and about everything. People do not want a society that takes children away from their parents. Still, the threat of dictatorship remains real. Why? Our labor is no longer needed. The robot is doing more and more of the work. This is causing the huge growth of poverty. And it means those being discarded are a threat to the billionaires. If we are to have a whole new peaceful, prosperous and democratic society, our motto must be "all for each, and each for all." We the people must keep fighting together to stop deportations and separation of families—and for a new, just society for us all.

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Voices from the ‘Families Belong Together’ protests

Editors note: Below are thoughts from protesters at the “Families Belong Together” rallies in support of immigrant families June 30. Millions of Americans have voiced outrage. People want a society that does not separate families and jail children.

“I’m here because I don’t want children to be in cages.” (Young child)

“This is not right. Animals don’t even treat other animals like this.”

“We have to speak out now while we can, before we can’t.”

“I’m concerned. We’re losing our sense of compassion for anyone ‘different’ from ourselves.”

“Values, institutions, Supreme Court, all the issues, it’s so frightening; are we crying in the wilderness?”

“Any time a group in power is scared by minorities, there is a backlash. History has shown—the holocaust.

“ICE needs to be abolished. Everyone needs to vote. Get rid of this administration.”

“I’m a social worker so I know the trauma these children face.”

“They’re going after a lot of things today, unions, etc., not a good path.”

“We need to start by getting the families together. And then solve immigration.”

“Allow people to legally seek asylum. Allow the dreamers. Then, do the rest of the immigration issue. We have enough space for everybody.”

“We need to make sure they know we’re all here because we want change to happen. We have to get together for a change.”



PHOTOS/DAVID BACON, RICHMOND, CA



PHOTO/JOHN RAMSPOTT, ATLANTA



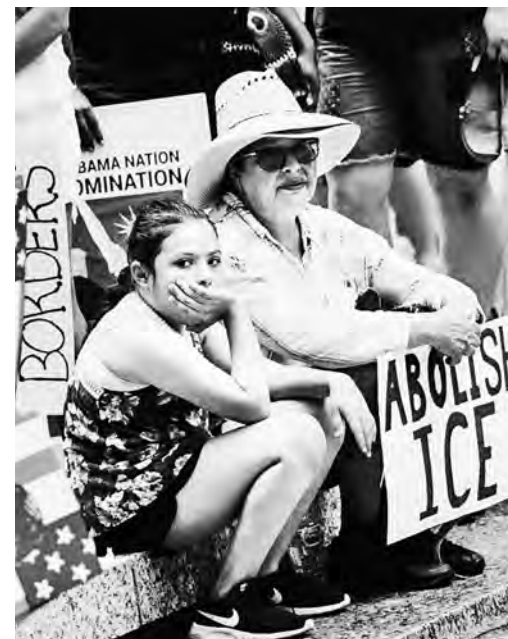
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PROTEST AT STATUE OF LIBERTY, NEW YORK CITY PHOTO/DEMOCRACY, NOW!



PHOTO/SANDY REID, CHICAGO



PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA, CHICAGO

Elections: Fighters for justice seize the moment

From the Editors

The upcoming midterm election is a tremendous opportunity. Ordinary people are running for office and using the campaign season to express the demands of the working class.

In June, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez won the Democratic nomination for Congress from New York City's 14th Congressional District. Her platform called for Medicare for all, a federal jobs guarantee, affordable housing, and the abolition of the immigration and customs enforcement agency. The voters rejected a 10-term incumbent to nominate her. "This is a victory for the movement for justice for the working class," said Ms. Ocasio-Cortez.

As economic inequality intensifies, fighters for justice are taking part in the debate over this country's future unfolding in the electoral arena. They are opposed by the powerful because their demand is for government to act in the people's interests. It poses the question of who will control the government—the corporations or the people?

Elections are an important battleground to educate the people in the fight for a new America. Wherever possible, utilize election campaigns to bring forward the real issues and to demand solutions. Then continue that fight long after Election Day!



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

June primaries show growing split between two Americas

By Chris Mahin

Political primaries were held in 17 states in June. The results highlighted an increasingly obvious fact: Today, there are two Americas: one is the America of the billionaires and the other is of people struggling to make ends meet. Both Americas are trying to use the electoral arena to defend their interests.

The most dramatic example of this was in California. The results there have set the stage for an epic battle over housing.

California has been transformed by the new technology. In the campaign around the June 5 primary, wealthy developers and real estate interests maneuvered to promote their favorite candidates. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Californians signed petitions to put a measure on the November ballot in favor of rent control.

On June 5, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, placed first in the balloting for the governor's race. Newsom received support—and funding—from unions. That support was outweighed by money

he received from financial, insurance, and real estate interests.

While claiming to be a progressive, Newsom's actual record is more problematic. Years ago, Newsom ran successfully for mayor of San Francisco while promoting a homeless-bashing ballot measure. It gutted General Assistance. One of Newsom's last acts as mayor was to promote another measure which made it a crime to sit or lie on the sidewalk from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Newsom was not the only California candidate heavily supported by real estate interests. London Breed, 43, narrowly won election as mayor of San Francisco on June 5. Her supporters have made much of the fact that she is an African-American woman raised in a housing project. Breed had the support of venture capitalists, developers, landlords and the real estate and tourism interests.

San Francisco, fueled by money from the technology industry, has become unaffordable to all but the very rich. Thousands are homeless. Breed has vowed to remove the encampments of the

Joann Mae Spotted Bear announces presidential campaign



Joann Mae Spotted Bear.

By Diana Zwinak

On June 6, 2018, Joann Mae Spotted Bear, seventh generation Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux, whose family fought in the Little Bighorn and were wounded and survived the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890, announced that she will be running for President of the United States in 2020.

Spotted Bear, who has appeared multiple times before the United Nations to testify about U.S. treaty violations, genocide of the Indigenous, and ecocide of the country's people and its resources, said, "If we're gonna make this land a great nation the way it's meant to be, then there has to be some kind of positive change. ... What I'm thinking about is: before we take a major dive into Hell to

Nowhere, we're gonna fight the best way we know how. So I was thinking about it, and I was like... maybe I *should* run for President of the United States."

"I don't know about you guys but I do know about me. I am sick and tired of people being sick and tired of seeing innocent people who have done no wrong being murdered whether it by bitumen, benzine, gatolene, Legionnaires, copper, lead, uranium, plutonium, nuclear atomic bombs or contaminated wastewater," Spotted Bear said.

She added that "It hurts to see babies who are born with uranium. And I hate the lies of 'Oh! We can solve these problems.' No! God Damn it! You *can* solve the problems, yes... but are you *willing* to solve the problems?"

What will it take for you to solve the problems?"

As she begins to fight her way back from homelessness after losing everything she had in the fight for clean water and the people, Spotted Bear has a vision for her campaign that involves the people coming together at the grassroots level. "This is what we're gonna have to do: I've never ran for President ever in my life. And I would need every single person's help. So if you have good ideas or can help me, we are gonna need everyone," She said adding that, "we have to come together because the United States Government, frankly, does not give a damn about Indigenous people worldwide, let alone the people in this country. All [the President] cares about is a small fraction which is probably less than the 5% rich. And the 5% rich would not be rich if it wasn't for a dead Indian."

"I would like people to come over and talk about this government. ... It's all a corporation, and so long as this corporation is using a de facto executive order to supercede our treaties, we will not have the backing."

She maintains that the road toward a great nation that watches out for and provides for its people and not for corporate interests begins with a Nation that honors its word. "We will be enforcing our treaties and moving the Corporation back into a Nation by using our Treaty and no executive orders," she said. "My goal is to help you live."

homeless. "Taking away someone's civil liberties is not something that I take lightly, but if we want to see a change on our streets we have got to do something different than what we're doing now," Breed said in a campaign speech in May at a Jewish community center.

However, at the same time that pro-developer politicians are being promoted by the wealthy, ordinary people are mobilizing. Hundreds of thousands of Californians signed a petition to put a measure on the November ballot that would repeal the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act of 1995. That law severely limits rent

control throughout the state.

The campaign to put the repeal measure on the ballot in California shows that as rents go higher and higher, people are standing up and demanding decent, affordable housing. They are using the electoral arena to express their demands for a decent life. As conditions worsen, we can expect to see more of this throughout the country. The repercussions of California's fight for affordable housing could be felt far and wide!

Renters protest the cruel eviction of a 92-year old World War II veteran in San Jose, CA in 2017.

PHOTO/NASSIM NOURI, GREEN PARTY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY



The fight for clean water in Martin County, Kentucky

Editor's note: The People's Tribune interviewed BarbiAnn Maynard from Martin County, Kentucky about her community's life or death struggle for clean water. Known as a voice of the people in her community, Maynard is active in the fight for water as a human right nationwide.

BarbiAnn Maynard: "I want to read you what's on the back of my water bill. It says if you are pregnant, have an infant, are elderly or have a severely compromised immune system, see a healthcare provider about drinking this water . . . people who drink the water over many years may experience problems with their liver, kidneys, or central nervous system, and may have increased risk of cancer."

"My mom had cancer twice. She died at 48. My mother grew up in Martin County and within five miles of our home, 23 people had cancer at the same time. Now my dad has dementia. I can go on my front porch and point out seven other houses with dementia. Dementia and cancer rates in this county are beyond crazy."

"The Martin County coal slurry spill was the largest manmade disaster east of the Mississippi. The chemicals cannot be cleaned naturally and take on different forms. They have been absorbed into the soil and continue to cause problems nearly two decades later. The state charged Massey Energy two cents per gallon, equaling \$5,200 for the 300 million of gallons

of sludge! The total numbers for chlorine, HAA and THM are mind blowing. All the contaminated filth and sand was sucked into the water. So now, after 18 years, they decided to take little steps [to make updates to the Crum Reservoir]. Our reservoir is so nasty, there's probably 50 propane tanks floating in the water, rubber gloves, batteries, hundred of packs of meat rotting. I have organized a community clean-up where we all get together on July 21. My family's spending my daughter's 17th birthday cleaning up the reservoir!"

"We had 29 boil advisories last year. Boiling water kills bacteria, but guess what, it only concentrates the chemicals causing liver damage, kidney damage, central nervous system damage and cancer. But if you don't boil water you get sick from bacteria. So you're damned if you do and damned if you don't."

"There's 14 houses on one side of the county where people go to the water department and pay \$50 for a token. Then they go to Johnson County an hour away to haul their own water and take it back to their homes. The only difference from a third world country and here is that we're not packing water baskets on our head."

"LBJ [President Johnson] signed the welfare act in Martin County. Today, we're still in the top 50 poorest counties in US. You used to be able to make \$20 an hour in the mines out of high school. You could work



BarbiAnn Maynard, who fights for clean water in her community [middle] and her daughters, [Right: Aleigha and Left: Ashleigh] stand in front of the Public Service Commission in Kentucky.

your way up to making \$50-60 hour as a boss. So, you were providing for your family pretty well. Then all of a sudden, you and your spouse are working at fast food just to put food on table. That's the only jobs left here. The coal severance tax of hundreds of thousands of dollars kept people afloat. Now it's a drastic difference. We've said for years, don't put all your eggs in one basket; we need a back

up plan. Ten million was spent on new government buildings, on top of mismanagement and corruption. Frankfort is now stepping up, saying the Martin County Water District has major problems. The Public Service Commission stated at an ongoing investigation that, "Martin County has by far the worst water in the state." We hope for answers and for those guilty of doing this to people are prosecuted."

"The people need to take the power back."

"People ask why I don't move. Well, my mommy had a flower garden in my front yard. We're 10 years out from losing her and we still have flowers from her again this year. You put a dollar amount on that as I sure can't."

Protester halts Mountain Valley pipeline construction

Editor's note: Below are excerpts from a press release by Appalachians Against Pipelines.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VA — On June 28, a pipeline protester locked herself to construction equipment on a Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) easement in Montgomery County, VA, bringing pipeline construction on Brush Mountain to a halt. The blockade by local resident Emily Satterwhite is the most recent action in an ongoing campaign to stop the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Banners at the site read "Water is Life - We Won't Back Down" and "VA Dems: Pipelines or Democracy - You Choose." Local residents and pipeline resisters gathered on Brush Mountain to support Emily and express their opposition to the MVP.

"Virginians have tried every way

we know how to tell our elected representatives that these fracked gas pipelines are a mistake," said Emily Satterwhite, a 46-year-old mother from Blacksburg, VA. "We may not have lobbyists outside your doors like Dominion [Energy, Inc.] does, but we can stop construction to tell you that southwest Virginia does not want the Mountain Valley Pipeline. MVP is bad for Virginia and bad for the planet. The State Water Control Board and DEQ can stop this pipeline. Governor Northam can stop this pipeline. Revoke water quality certification now and inspire a new generation of voters. Because if you don't act to protect our water and our mountains, we will."

The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 42-inch diameter fracked gas pipeline that is under construction at multiple

sites along its proposed route, which stretches over 300 miles from northern WV to southern VA. Impacted residents have been fighting to stop the pipeline for over four years. Emily and Appalachians Against Pipelines continue taking action to protect the land, water, and communities of this region from the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

Editor's update: After stopping work on the pipeline for 14 hours, Emily was charged and released from jail, telling politicians and regulatory agencies, "If you don't act to protect our water and our mountains, we will."

For more information, contact appalachiansagainstpipelines@protonmail.com;

facebook.com/appalachiansagainstpipelines; and donate at bit.ly/supportmvpresistance.



Protester in Virginia locks herself to equipment in an action to stop the Mountain Valley pipeline construction.

PHOTO/APPALACHIANS AGAINST PIPELINES



Michigan governor tells Flint mayor 'Get Over It'

By the People's Tribune Flint correspondent

FLINT, MI — Still reeling from the closing of the bottled water distribution sites by the state of Michigan, residents of Flint scramble to find donations of water trickling into the city. Since the closing of the water sites in mid-April there has been no less than five protests in Lansing (including the Poor People's campaign where some Flint residents were arrested), demanding restoration of bottled water and full recovery of the ongoing Water Crisis in Flint. Governor Snyder's

callous "let them eat cake" comments to Flint Mayor Karen Weaver has only emboldened the fight of Flint residents.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality whose negligence led to the crisis is now declaring that the water is safe while only 1/3 of pipe replacements have been done. Even the Genesee County Medical Society has urged Flint residents, especially infants, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems, to stay on bottled water!

The latest protest involves 60 Flint pastors of various denomina-

tions who stormed the capitol and issued a scathing letter to the governor. Meanwhile, after activists put eviction notices on the doors of ALL Lansing State Representatives, a message was sent from one of the Democratic Party offices stating in part: "I'd like to kindly remind you to remember your allies in Lansing. Placing eviction notices on the doors of legislators who are fighting for #Flint everyday is not only counterproductive and offensive, but also conveys willful ignorance..."

The struggle continues...

Was Milwaukee's health compromised over lead paint lawsuit?

By Robert Miranda

MILWAUKEE, WI — For three years, Mayor Barrett of Milwaukee has resisted any attempt by the Freshwater for Life Action Coalition (FLAC) to highlight lead in water playing a major role in the elevated blood lead levels of Milwaukee's children.

In 2015, during his Mayoral campaign, Barrett insisted that Milwaukee's water was completely safe. In 2016, he conceded to pressure and put out a call to the public to use filters. In 2017, the mayor's Health Department fought tooth and nail to prevent passage of the "Lead Transparency" resolution that was ultimately passed by the Common Council that year. In 2018, the Mayor and attorney Peter Earle are now trying to get the public to think that the lead paint industry has initiated a campaign to shift public concerns away from lead paint as the primary cause for elevated blood

lead levels in Milwaukee children. In fact, the former chief of staff for the Mayor, Patrick Curley, released a public statement casting aspersions against FLAC as working secretly with the paint industry to do this.

What is the real issue? The most intriguing aspect of the lead in water issue in Milwaukee is the city's long-standing decision to not test the water in homes with elevated blood lead levels. Why? By 2004, more studies were indicating that corrosion control treatment methods (for water pipes) were not adequate to stop the leaching of lead.

Dr. Marc Edwards of Virginia Tech said in 2016 that a 2006 Housing & Urban Development study indicated there was a problem in Milwaukee's water supply with lead. Could it be that Mayor Barrett and Attorney Peter Earle are concerned that if water from lead service lines is determined to be a considerable source of the lead poisoning of Milwaukee's children,

that it could compromise an already settled \$1.2 billion lawsuit payout by the paint manufacturers?

If water from lead service lines is scientifically tested, if elevated lead blood levels data are collected, and if lead in water is found to be a significant source of lead poisoning of children, then Barrett's and Earle's damages claim could be lowered significantly. This would not only reduce the amount of damages but would also impact Earle's legal fees. It would also shift the blame of knowingly exposing Milwaukee's children to lead poisoning on to their shoulders.

The actions by the Mayor and attorney Peter Earle may also explain why Earle recently filed a lawsuit against the lead paint manufacturers, charging them with attempting to create a "controversy" over contaminated water to avoid liability for lead paint, and casting more aspersions against FLAC as being a tool for the lead paint industry.

"Milwaukee historically has been a world leader in covering up water lead problems," said Dr. Marc Edwards in 2016.



Milwaukee groups rally at City Hall early this year demanding removal of lead water service lines (Laterals). Numerous grassroots groups became the "Get Out The Lead Coalition."

PHOTO/ROBERT MIRANDA



Stop Detroit's water shutoffs!

The Michigan Poor People's Campaign gathered in Detroit with a message for city officials. Sylvia Orduño (center) tells the crowd: "We are here for affordable water. We are here for our human rights. Gary Brown, Sue McCormick, Mayor Duggan, we are talking to you directly. This water is not yours. This water belongs to the people. For years, you have mocked poor people in this city. You will find us everywhere you go, across this city and across this state. We are here to demand our human right to water and we will not go quietly. Power to the people!"

PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN

Buzzing the Blues

Do bees know their own troubles?

Can they buzz the blues for our dying world?

I wish I could tell them we're sorry,

but too many think murder is all part of God's plan and we can just build robot bees to replace the golden ones.

—Eric Allen Yankee

How close am I to losing this roof over my head?



Benjamin Royer of the 'First they came for the homeless' Poor Tour tent community.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

By Benjamin Royer

BERKELEY, CA — I would like to dispel rumors about the homeless. The main things that have been said about the homeless is that they are one or more of the following: they are drug addicts, they are alcoholics, they are lazy, or they are degenerates. These are only true for a small population

of the homeless. And even then, these issues only arise as secondary to becoming homeless in most cases. The truth as to why people are homeless has more to do with issues that have arisen from government and social propaganda. Anyone who reads this should ask: "How close am I to losing this roof over my head?"

One of the biggest problems is that the cost of being housed is outstripping the incomes that people have. For instance, a person who has SSI can't afford housing, utilities and food all at once. The COL for Social Security is only around one-sixth of what is needed for housing. Minimum wage is also no longer a viable income as well. A person would need three jobs just to survive.

Then there's a mental health crisis in America. These people are treated like garbage. I have untreated bipolar disorder. I am only one in a whole group of people who have mental health issues and are homeless. Veterans aren't safe, either. They are in the same boat.

Then there's the worst crime.

Elderly people are becoming homeless at a grotesque rate. These people need to be taken care of, not thrown away.

Back to drugs and alcohol. Most people who become homeless aren't drug addicts or alcoholics at first. They only do this due to the harassment of the cities. They feel the need to escape the worst conditions that they have to live in. This is due to the harassment by cops and by the city's leadership.

Cities, the media and others have had multiple attack strategies. In cities, they pass laws that focus on enforcement over helping. The media attacks the character of the homeless. And there are so many other items to attack or demean the homeless that it would take days to describe them.

What I have said is only my opinion. What you as the reader need to ask is: "How can this happen? Why is it happening? How can I help?" Do a little digging and you may come to a similar conclusion.



PHOTO/INDYBAY, TWITTER

Shelters are not the solution to homeless crisis in L.A.



By Wendy Brown

LOS ANGELES, CA — Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti is proposing spending \$20 million dollars on building emergency shelters in each of the 15 districts in Los Angeles and providing the city with more police and sanitation workers for homeless sweeps in the

city's A Bridge Home program. This proposal is not viable as a solution to the homeless crisis in Los Angeles and will not work as a temporary fix.

The most important reason his solution will not work is that the numbers don't match. Garcetti's proposal to put a shelter in each district will not have enough beds to serve all of the homeless in those areas. For example, a proposed shelter in Korea Town would provide 65 beds to an area with 368 homeless. Where are the other 303 going to sleep? Providing a shelter with only 65 beds would put the other 303 people at risk for being arrested or given tickets which they would not be able to pay for sleeping on the sidewalk, and possibly ending in incar-

ceration for not paying a ticket. This creates a situation where housing and employment would be more difficult to find.

Shelters are not permanent housing, can be dangerous and have time limits for those staying in them. These time limits can be a couple of days, weeks or months. If at the end of their stay in the shelter a person has not found permanent housing they are sent back to live in the street. Many people staying at shelters experience violence from others staying in them or sometimes from staff. The large numbers of people staying in a confined area make it hard to properly insure personal safety. People down on their luck financially are mixed in with drug addicts and felons creating dan-

gerous conditions.

There is no follow up from staff to what happens to or where people end up living after leaving a shelter. Because of the time limitations, very few people leaving a shelter end up with permanent housing, as it is not available. I personally was in a shelter where I was asked to leave one week prior to my having a place to stay. The staff at the shelter knew I had a place to stay in one week and made me leave anyway. This left me with nowhere to stay for a week. This shelter and its staff failed to keep me safe, took 30% of the income I was making and intentionally made me homeless again.

I call this the circle of homelessness where one is

given shelter for a short period of time and sent back out on the street. Being homeless is a barrier to employment as employers require workers to have an address, making it hard to get housing, as most housing requires some type of income. This creates long periods of homelessness for many people.

The only solution to homelessness is permanent housing. The \$20 million that Mayor Garcetti wants to spend on temporary shelters and homeless sweeps by the police and sanitation workers would be better spent on permanent housing. The homeless do not need shampoo, backpacks or socks. The homeless need housing.



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Open letter to Google: 'Our city is not for sale'

Editor's note: The following letter was delivered to Google headquarters in Mountain View, CA at the end of a two-day march from San José, CA.

By Serve the People San José

SAN JOSÉ, CA —

Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google: We are Serve the People and we are here to demand that the proposed Google project be halted immediately, and that the 16 parcels of public land be used for public use here in San José, CA. We made this trek from East San José to Google to deliver our message personally that our city is not for sale.

Almost a year ago, your company entered into exclusive negotiations with the City of San José over 16 parcels of public land. You all applauded each other, agreeing that commercial and tech development are the great answer to the poverty and disinvestment here in San José. Yet you purposely excluded the very residents who live in the communities you love to just 'disrupt'.

That is the term you all use, right? Yes disrupt. Disrupting our lives by displacing our communities across the Bay Area with

your inability to pay your service workers a living wage. Disrupting education by displacing children and offering ridiculous Chromebooks as a solution instead of truly affordable housing. Disrupting the safety net of our community through temp employment contracts, wage theft, and privatization of public services. Disrupting our community safety by increased policing due to your racist assumptions about the unhoused, and low-income communities of color.

Whether you feel responsible or not, this is how you are impacting the communities from across the Bay Area to Berlin, Germany. Tech and commercial development is not the answer we need. The proposed Google project will only cause more displacement since it would ONLY allow hotels, retail, and office space once you change the zoning; instead of the affordable housing, emergency shelters, and public schools we desperately need.

From the start, your proposed Google project has undermined democracy in our city. For example, our Mayor and councilmembers signed Non-Disclosure Agreements on Google's request, before even bringing the item to the public. Almost a year later,



Marchers against displacement by Google pass by a street in Mountain View, California, where residents are forced to live in RVs that are parked for as far away as the eye can see.

PHOTO/NASSIM NOURI, GREEN PARTY OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

you and the Mayor have continued to lie and fail to engage to the community of San José. It is clear to us that you neither care nor intend to respect our City. We have built this city, it is our choice what we do with public land.

So today we come to make

it clear that **GOOGLE IS NOT WELCOME IN SAN JOSÉ!**

We are stepping up to you and demanding that you:

1. Stop negotiations with the City of San José and all other stakeholders by June 6th, 2018.
2. Make a public announcement of a definite termination of the

proposed project and land sale of 16 parcels of public land.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, but please know there will be no compromise on our behalf.

*Hasta La Victoria Siempre,
Serve the People San José*

Chicago fences homeless out of camps

By Mark Saulys

CHICAGO, IL — The "Triangle" of the Lower Wacker section of Chicago's Loop, the labyrinth of streets beneath streets where homeless people have found refuge at least since the 1920s, was a relatively rare place where the homeless were able to camp and not bother even the esthetic fussiness of neighboring non-homeless people. As with many homeless people's encampments, local, city government was not terribly concerned with the safety of its residents and utterly unconcerned about their "quality of life". Law enforcement was to protect the surrounding, housed neighbors, not residents of the encampment. As always happens with such policy toward the homeless, drug dealers, gang bangers, pleasure seekers and other opportunists were allowed to exploit and even terrorize the homeless there. Soon the encampment became a dysfunctional community that the homeless found hellish.

The homeless are usually not eager to call the police when something happens or when they are victimized. Not only are they completely vulnerable to retaliation from the thugs they call on but the police and local authorities, unconcerned about the safety and life quality of the homeless, only see the homeless and their communities as a gratuitous nuisance. The homeless thus know that ANY complaints to the police and authorities, whether from the surrounding neighborhood or from residents of the encampments themselves, will only be seen as an irritation to those authorities and further reason, in addition to pressure from intolerant, housed neighbors, to evict their encampment en masse.

Thus was the plight, typical of homeless communities, of the Lower Wacker Triangle. Drug dealers and gang bangers exploited and terrorized it until it became a place for the homeless as well as visitors, even from out of town, to find drugs and prostitution and for violence from the controlling, gang banger outsiders.

Last February, gunshots were fired between two vehicles traveling in opposite directions near the Triangle. Several days later, an investigative police detail headed by a local area commander tried to stop for questioning a well known drug dealer and gang banger, who was a great bully terrorizing the homeless of the area. He had different plans and ran away, leading the police commander on a long chase.

Just as River North Area Commander Paul Bauer caught up to and was about to apprehend him, the suspect drew a gun and shot Commander Bauer multiple times. Commander Bauer died later in the hospital.

In June, the city effected a sweeping eviction of the Triangle area encampment, closing it off with wrought iron fencing so homeless people could not find refuge there in the future, implementing the usual policy of sweeping a community of homeless people away like so many insect pests when they become too bothersome, in very apparent retaliation for the Bauer shooting.

The homeless of the encampment moved to another, less hospitable area of Lower Wacker where they are tolerated. Areas which, since evictions of encampments and fenced closure of their sites began there years ago, are ever shrinking while the homeless population keeps rising.

Homeless demand gov't house people

By Sarah Menefee

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — An independent motion is developing among the homeless to make demands on the government, especially in the homeless encampments. Homeless people brought a suit into the 9th Circuit Court in California saying, "You cannot destroy our community." Government is responding with new laws designed to break up the resistance of the homeless and scatter people.

But some of the new homeless leaders, those who are now dispossessed of what they once had and have fallen into homelessness, are master organizers. They are helping to build a homeless movement that is "of the homeless." The homeless are demanding that government take care of people's needs whether they have money or not. These are revolutionary demands for a whole new society and cannot be stopped.

Share your stories with the People's Tribune at peopletribune.org.

Poor People's March on Washington, DC

By Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign

WASHINGTON D.C. — On June 2 the Poor People's March on Washington, DC gathered in Kensington, Philadelphia—the poorest district in Philadelphia—to march to Washington, DC and setup Resurrection City II in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s original Poor People's March.

"We proud mamas are marching because poverty is violence against our babies, our elders, and our families, and if you stay silent you are part of the problem," said Tara Colon, Puerto Rican and Mexican mother of five, marcher, and Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) co-director.

Forty-five marchers arrived in DC on June 9, ranging in age from 2 to seniors. Marchers sought to highlight 'The Ugly Road' walked by the poor in the U.S. and abroad everyday, and to demand the rights of the poor be

observed, including economic human rights to housing, food, health, education, communication, and a living wage, guaranteed by Articles 23, 25, and 26 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In Resurrection City II in Dupont Circle, there were two demonstrations at HUD and the Chamber of Commerce, two citizens arrests served to the Chamber of Commerce, one benefit concert, one eviction of Resurrection City II, and one arrest—that of Cheri Honkala, PPEHRC co-director, poor single mother of two, including a son with disabilities, and the 2012 Green Party Vice President candidate. She was arrested while performing a sit-in at HUD and demanding a meeting with Secretary Ben Carson to order no cuts to be made to the Section 8 budget.

Along the road, the multicultural group of poor and homeless families and individuals, youth, veterans, returning citizens, people with disabilities, and people who receive SSI,

WIC, SNAP, Housing Vouchers, and other life-saving services, organized other poor and homeless people, engaging in dialogue, teach-ins, and sharing stories on social media. Poor and homeless marchers arrived safely home after the week-long, 125-mile march.

In addition to continuing to feed, house, and clothe poor and homeless people, including Hurricane Maria evacuees, next steps for the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign include the upcoming Poor People's Conference to build a Poor People's Party to eradicate poverty through both traditional and unconventional means, slated for November 2018.

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Young leaders in the Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign, taking a needed rest from the Poor Peoples March on DC.

PHOTO/PPEHRC

Janus decision: Another major setback for democracy

By Richard Monje

CHICAGO — The Supreme Court decision overturning mandatory union fees for government workers was a major blow to unions, organizations and movements supported by unions. It was a loss for the members of those unions.

In the historical context of democracy in the United States, this decision further consolidates the power of the corporations and their control over the working class.

It is part of a systematic deconstruction of institutions and laws that were designed to control (or at least limit) the capitalist system in the political and economic interests of the working class. For some in the country (and world), that place as part of the system was never achieved; whole communities and sectors of the working class never had access to the benefits of the system offered and delivered to some.

Elected governors and state legislators have been doing what the federal legislators have been unable to do with labor law. These battles have been going on for some time as we see with the beginning of and expansion of right to work laws.

The governors and state legislators were democratically elected by their state constituents. The unions won democratically run (National Labor Relations Board) elections. However, the Supreme Court determined that process unconstitutional.

The consequences of this decision along with many others such as Citizens United (that decision changed a historical practice of controlling the amount of money in elections) have altered the process in favor of the corporations, their representatives and individual rights over the collective needs of the country and its communities. The leadership of the capitalist class has become an oligarchy (which the dictionary says is a government in which a small group exercises control especially for corrupt and selfish purposes) regardless of what we thought the government was at different points or how we defined the principles of the United States.

Many are calling on the unions to become more militant, or for more "grassroots" organizing to replace needed monies to support "progressive" causes or candidates. Clearly, we must do everything we can and no form of defense should be ruled out. However, we must recognize at this time the game is rigged, as with "gerrymandering" in the electoral arena. Many say we need to think outside the box. Nice cliché, but not a strategy unless we think in terms of understanding the message. This class (oligarchy) is doing everything within their power to control all the forms of government and social institutions (and those they cannot they will destroy). We cannot simply call for fairness or even humanity, or to sympathize with the victims. We must fight for the reconstruction of



Striking teachers gather in February, 2018 at the West Virginia State Capitol to demand their legislators do the right thing.

PHOTO/DEDICATED TEACHERS/FACEBOOK

the United States beginning with control of the corporations and the democratic process. We cannot rely solely on gimmicks or accept the divisions historically imposed upon us, whether based on race, gender, age, rural or urban and all the others.

We need planning, organization and strategic orientation. This can only take place outside of the traditional institutional forms of struggle and in a class context. Otherwise these decisions and setbacks will allow the oligarchy to continue to shift the power toward a corporate set of values and morals in all of our institutions of democracy, and toward control by use of the police and a military state.

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Voices from the Poor People's Campaign

"Before you want to quit, go talk to the sister I met in Washington state who lived in a homeless camp who came to a mass meeting who said, 'I am the white trash that America threw out but forgot to burn.' ... Or meet Callie Greer from Alabama whose daughter died in her arms because the governor and legislature refused to expand Medicaid, and she's on the front lines fighting back. ... Or meet the mother in El Paso who hasn't seen her husband and children for 16 years and fought with border control to ask, 'Where is it that I can go and at least touch my husband without it being illegal?'"

— Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, co-chair, Poor People's Campaign

"Our work has only just begun, 'cause over the past 40 days people of all races, colors and creeds have joined together to engage in nonviolent moral fusion direct action to demand that we lift all families up, we lift all people up. We don't break them apart. It is unjust, immoral and unnecessary to have millions of poor people in this land. It is unjust, immoral and unnecessary that we have children warehoused across this country because of their immigration status, because of their homelessness, because their families had no access to water. We need a Poor People's Campaign. So we are building one."

— Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, co-chair, Poor People's Campaign

Becoming a new and unsettling force

By Ethel Long-Scott

The following is from a speech in Sacramento, Calif. June 18 at a Poor People's Campaign event prepared by Ethel Long-Scott of the Women's Economic Agenda Project in Oakland.

The American people are outraged at the ruling elites' insistence that workers must live with increasing austerity in the midst of record corporate profits and CEO salaries. And even worse, this pushing Main St. deeper into austerity comes as increasingly robotized production promises a society awash in enough cheap and plentiful goods and services to supply the human needs of all people. Instead we see suffering, deprivation, exploitation and anguish everywhere we turn. I want you to think about this from the standpoint of becoming a new and unsettling force. From Ferguson to Baltimore was part of an unsettling force; from Standing Rock to Flint was an unsettling force. When Parkland youth said "never again," that was an unsettling force. The challenge today is how do we unite these efforts to create one kind of vision. How do we begin to move as a common force to turn these priorities upside down.

Right now our government is separating families and terrorizing

children in our name. These are Jim Crow arguments. They are aimed at terrorizing immigrants and telling the lies that divide and conquer, that the poor that are immigrants are the reason we don't have jobs. That's a lie.

We are here on the eve of the Emancipation Proclamation. In the culture I come from it's called Juneteenth, when in 1862 we were preparing then to deal with the many fights we would have against the southernization of the nation. Then President Lincoln knew if he could unleash the slaves as a new and unsettling force against a system of inhumane treatment that started as slavery but later continued as a southern business model, that we as workers might have an opportunity. Attacks on workers, talking about that southern business model—it includes "right to work" laws, neglect of the people by government, and denial of voting rights. Today business and government, they have a dream about southernization of the country—that's their goal. We gotta stop that.

When three human beings have more wealth than the bottom 160 million people in our country, we have to flip that script. Here in this state we have more than 21 million people who are poor and low-income. Six million are children; 11 million



Poor People's Campaign Rally and March, June 23, 2018, on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

PHOTO/SHANNON FINNEY PHOTOGRAPHY

are women.

This is a dying capitalist system that's eating its children, and creating a new class of dispossessed. What do I mean by this dispossessed? We're contingency workers, we're overworkers, part-time workers, unemployed and low-wage workers. Often times in the tent cities of Oakland they've got jobs. But they can't afford

to live in the exorbitant housing that is there. The new social force has to change those priorities, we've got to build unity. I want to make sure you understand that this digital revolution ain't the problem; the problem is who's running it, who owns those tools, and how they're applied.

We the people have to take over these corporations and run them

in the benefit of society and the future. The goal of the Poor People's Campaign is to unite the poor as an essential step in pulling together the local struggles of working people for all of our basic needs. As the people who are being squeezed, we have the power to turn this thing upside down. We're the change we're looking for.



On June 18, supporters of the California Poor People's Campaign went into the state Capitol in Sacramento to serve the Senate, the Assembly and the governor a Civil Complaint regarding poverty in California. Fifty-one people were arrested.

PHOTO/CALIFORNIA POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

'Everybody has a right to decent, affordable housing'

Bobby Ramey-Clark, a veteran activist and a member of the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee, spoke at a Poor People's Campaign rally at the California State Capitol on June 11, 2018. This is an excerpt from her presentation.

Since childhood, I have lived from substandard to project housing in various cities. My homeless experiences started as a teen and a couple of times as an adult with children.

As James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Just last week, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a new proposal has been introduced by HUD Secretary Ben Carson that would raise rents by 20% on those receiving federal assistance. This will impact 4 million low income Americans; this increase is about six times greater than the growth in hourly earnings, putting the poorest workers at increased risk of homelessness.

Mr. Ben Carson says raising rents would help people create more "self-sufficiency" by PUSHING "them" to find work! Now you see why we like

those in time past MUST do like Sojourner Truth and Elizabeth Stanton as they stood together UNITED until suffrage was won! We TOO MUST challenge those who make moral claims about caring for the souls of people, but then pass policies and LAWS that DESTROY communities!!

EVERYBODY'S GOT A RIGHT TO LIVE AND TO LIVE IN DECENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING! Thank you, thank you, thank you, Peace Out!

Nine bodies floating in the St. Joseph River



By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Black people in the city of Benton Harbor are in serious trouble. I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, want to bring something to your attention. There have been suspicious deaths in the

city of Benton Harbor since 1992. It leads me to believe there may be several serial killers on the loose in the city of Benton Harbor. Nine bodies have been found in the St. Joseph River: Eric McGinnis, Willie Bran, Tim Bulldog Allen, Dwayne Flower, Troy Taylor, Devon Johnson, Toby

Stockstell, Alonda Brown and Michael Williams. There are several cases where law enforcement have been the last to see the deceased alive. We need the help of the people. If you see anything, call the FBI and demand a complete investigation. Call 1-313-965-2323.

‘I see mothers bury their sons’

Antwon Rose was just 17 when his life ended on June 19 in East Pittsburgh, PA. Officer Michael Rosfeld fatally shot him three times as he ran from a traffic stop. Antwon was unarmed, and the Allegheny County district attorney cleared him of any wrongdoing, saying he posed no threat. Officer Rosfeld was charged with criminal homicide. A judge freed

Rosfeld on an unsecured \$250,000 bond.

Southwestern Pennsylvania used to employ thousands of steelworkers and coal miners until globalization and labor-replacing electronics forever transformed the area into a trap for unneeded workers who have no rights

that cops like Rosfeld need to respect.

That is the background to Antwon’s murder and to the demonstrations in the Pittsburgh area since then. Protesters united in spirit with Antwon, reading out the following poem he wrote on May 16, 2016, when he was just 15:



Antwon Rose was killed by police.

I AM NOT WHAT YOU THINK
 I am confused and afraid
 I wonder what path I will take
 I hear there is only two ways out
 I see mothers bury their sons
 I want my mom to never feel that pain
 I am confused and afraid
 I pretend all is fine
 I feel like I am suffocating
 I touch nothing, so I believe all is fine
 I worry that it isn’t though
 I cry no more
 I am confused and afraid
 I understand people believe I am just a statistic
 I say to them I am different
 I dream of life getting easier
 I try my best to make my dream come true
 I hope that it does
 I am confused and afraid

Diary of a protest



Occupy The PGA demonstration “To Save Our Children.” Benton Harbor City Hall.

PHOTO/ LEONA MCELEVENE

By Philip Bassett

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Memorial Day weekend and it was hot in the city hall parking lot. I was here to join the protest of the Senior PGA tournament, which is played on what some say is stolen land. At 10:30 a.m., the air was already sticky.

Despite the temperature, it was a pleasure to meet Ralph Poynter, an activist from New York. At 84, he seemed to have the energy of a 30-year-old, as he regaled us with stories and seasoned advice. It was good seeing Marian Kramer from Detroit and Claire McClinton of Flint. Combined, these two have more than a century’s worth of pounding the streets for human rights. They and about 200 others came to support Rev. Edward Pinkney in this action, calling attention to the misbehavior of the Whirlpool Corporation.

Festivities included kite flying and folk music, speech making and trumpet playing. But there was another reason to feel good this year. Imprisoned for a crime existing only in the imagination of the Berrien County prosecutor, Rev. Pinkney was not able to attend this event last time. But here he was, smiling and passing out T-shirts. He told us of his victory in the Supreme Court, nullifying his conviction in Berrien County. As proudly noted on the T-shirts, the six-judge panel had voted unanimously in his favor.

The march itself was held in silence. How could it be otherwise, after Ladonna Walker spoke about her son being hanged in the jail under suspicious circumstances. Stand-

ing tensely, her voice quavering, she listed the irregularities.

She was followed by Ayanna Johnson who told about her son. He was nicknamed Karate because of his devotion to the sport, a martial arts instructor known to give free lessons in the park on weekends. Police claim he performed the incredible feat of shooting a gun with each hand while riding a bicycle. No powder burns were found on his hands. Ayanna was as calm as Ladonna was passionate, but both of their stories wrenched hearts and loosed tears.

The solemn procession made its way through town, past the gaping patrons outside the local pub, just skirting the edges of Senior PGA territory. The issue has always been about stolen land being used for a golf course. But this year, the silence seemed to highlight something else: a new frame of thought, perhaps, carried by a little voice saying, “No more.”

No more following politicians with honeyed tongues hiding hollow hearts. No more listening to black-robed charlatans, judicial and religious, whose shame will be their supper when the average person catches on to their sins. No more bowing to corporations—those clever tools devised by sociopaths—that have caused more harm to humanity than anything else. No more ignoring our own best interest and no more running from our consciences.

The silent march brought an unexpected gift: a brief glance at our truest selves, and a fighting chance to reclaim that self, one conscious action at a time.