

ELECTIONS 2018: **OUR LIVES AND THE PLANET ARE IN THE BALANCE**



Brooke Anderson | Survival Media Agency

The “Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice” march of 30,000 in San Francisco on September 8. Marchers called for an end to the use of fossil fuels and for elected officials to take responsibility. These marchers joined the hundreds of thousands of protesters across more than 90 countries demanding action on climate change. PHOTO/BROOKE ANDERSON



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Socialism: Not just a good idea, but a necessity

EDITORIAL

According to an old story from the mid-20th century, Henry Ford II and UAW President Walter Reuther toured a newly built automated Ford motors plant in Cleveland, Ohio together. As they gazed upon the labor replacing machines, Reuther was asked, “How are you going to collect union dues from these guys?” His reply was, “How are you going to get them to buy your cars?” In later versions of the tale the union man adds, “You know you can make automobiles, but consumers are still made the good old-fashioned way.”

Now, whether this actually happened, or is merely an apocryphal urban legend, it still confronts us with a sobering truth. Robots, while profitable for capitalists in the short-term, eventually make capitalism impossible. Robots put far more goods on the market than human labor and are cheaper. Yet, neither capitalists, their robots, nor the permanently unemployed workers they produce go shopping for those extra goods. In an effort to move goods and unplug the markets, credit is being offered to almost anyone regardless of ability to pay it back. But this has only created an expanding debt bubble that is ready to burst at anytime.

As a matter of course, we are witnessing the economic polarization of our society into superabundance on one side and super poverty on the other with the middle disappearing. This couldn't continue without a growing number of workers beginning to realize they suffer from want in a land of near absolute plenty. This situ-

ation has given rise to a renewed interest in socialism. Socialism has now become not simply a good idea but a necessity and the next step in the evolutionary process of human society.

A 2016 Gallup poll showed that 58% of Democrats and Democrat leaners, as well as 55% of young people between the ages of 18 and 29, had a positive view of socialism. This year a record number of them are showing up to the polls not just as voters but as candidates running on socialist platforms such as healthcare for all, free public education, housing as a human right, Federal Guaranteed jobs, clean water, etc. Socialism is summed up as the fight for the realization of these demands through the public ownership of the robots.

It's not like we have a choice. Just as the threat of being put out of business by competitors compels each capitalist to continue to introduce and perfect ever more robots, we have no choice but to fight for our very lives by fighting for public ownership of the robotic means of production. The alternative for a growing number of us is death by malnutrition, death from homelessness, death from pollution, death from denial of healthcare—in short, death by capitalism.

Not only does the ruling class have the political power to prevent public ownership, but they're also expanding that political power to privatize all things public and making them the property of this or that corporation. If they can rob the public while the people starve, to enhance their wealth, then “we the people” must have political power so all may eat.



Young people are leaders in the fight for a society that protects the Earth and humanity from corporate destruction. This protest in Milwaukee, WI was part of the national and international Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice Marches. PHOTO/JOE BRUSKY

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.

Reach us at info@peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888.

— The Editors

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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Our lives and the planet are in the balance

"We're suffering. We're dying. Our kids aren't being properly educated. Our water is poisoned. Our air is sickening. You deserve better."

This cry from the heart was uttered by Kerri Evelyn Harris while she was a candidate for the U.S. Senate during a primary debate in Wilmington, Delaware. Although Harris ultimately did not win the nomination she sought, the fervent plea of this 38-year-old Air Force veteran and community activist brilliantly summarized what's at stake in the mid-term elections.

With Election Day approaching fast, the lesson of the primary season is clear: Voters are NOT inspired by candidates who are millionaire milquetoast moderates!

In recent months, there has been a change in public opinion—a dramatic increase in support for universal health care, free public education, and a \$15 minimum wage. Many of the candidates who champion those proposals are gaining support. The voters want candidates they feel will stand up for them.

This can be seen in cities like Detroit where former state legislator Rashida Tlaib won a congressional nomination. She is now poised to enter the U.S. House of Representatives after fighting for years to clean up environmental dangers in her district. (She fought to remove mounds of petroleum processing waste

piled up along the Detroit River by a company owned by the billionaire Koch brothers.) It can be seen in the stunning victory of Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum in the Democratic primary for governor in Florida. (Gillum, a vocal critic of the Trump EPA, has called climate change a "crisis" facing Florida and is committed to fighting for health care for all.)

The mid-term election is shaping up to be a referendum on what kind of country people want America to be—and what kind of planet we'll leave to our descendants. On one side will be candidates who support universal health care and want to protect the environment. On the other side will be those who want to give free rein to corporate polluters and health industry profiteers—so they can gouge the sick and scar the earth.

The defenders of the one percent have shown that they will do anything to win—including using the worst kind of racialized scare-mongering and hatred of women for having the audacity to take leadership. This year, we have a chance to stand up to all that ugly fascist demagoguery. We are in the midst of a tremendous upsurge manifesting itself at the ballot box. Today, those taking the fight for justice into the voting booth are part of a growing social movement to demand that the government be our government and provide for people's



On the first anniversary of the Women's March in Washington, D.C., January 2018, women and families marched in cities across the country encouraging people to vote for alternatives in the 2018 mid-term elections. Cindy Garcia, whose husband Jorge Garcia had just been deported to Mexico after living in the U.S. for nearly 30 years, spoke to the Lansing, MI rally, with her children by her side. Cindy Garcia is a member of United Auto Workers Local 600. PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

basic needs. The battle underway is ultimately a fight to take this country away from the billionaire class and reorganize society, cre-

ating an entirely new system. It is class warfare—a fight for power.

This Election Day—and beyond—let's continue to build

the power to end corporate rule, the rule of the billionaires who are destroying our health, our lives, and our planet!

Supreme Court: Kavanaugh a giant step toward outright fascism

By Chris Mahin for the People's Tribune Editorial Board

"Clear the room or start caning them when they open their yaps!"

Those chilling words were tweeted by former presidential candidate Mike Huckabee while denouncing protesters who interrupted confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh.

Huckabee's sick statement was a backhanded reference to the 1856 surprise attack in the U.S. Capitol on anti-slavery Senator Charles Sumner. Sumner was beaten bloody and almost killed by a pro-slavery Congressman wielding a cane, a man who struck blow after blow, stopping only when his weapon finally broke.

As we go to press it now appears almost certain that Kava-



Protests opposing the appointment of Judge Brett Kavanaugh for US Supreme Court took place across the country because of his rulings against minorities, women, and labor. This protest is in Atlanta. PHOTO/JOHN RAMSPOTT

naugh will be elevated to the U.S. Supreme Court. No one should have any illusions about what this means. The brutal assault on Charles Sumner forced many Northerners to finally realize that this country could no lon-

ger exist half slave and half free. Today, we too have to face a bitter truth: The ruling class no longer needs democracy and is moving to eliminate it. In his 12 years on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of

Columbia Circuit, Judge Kavanaugh has written more than 300 opinions. There is no doubt about where he stands. His elevation to the Supreme Court will mark a giant step toward open, outright fascism in this country.

The situation today is grim. In Charles Sumner's time, the situation was also dire. Back then, our ancestors refused to accept the slaveocracy's attacks on freedom of speech and the press. They defended what democracy existed at that time, as limited as it was. Today we too have to defend every democratic right that still exists. We will never accept a return to the days of the caning of a Congressman or the back-alley abortion or the total lack of any affordable health care whatsoever (however limited) or the trade union forced to meet in secret because it's been declared illegal. If the Supreme Court issues rulings on our rights which are the equivalent of the infamous pro-slavery Dred Scott decision, we'll simply have to do what our brave ancestors did: *Defy them.*



Renters crowd the halls of the State Capitol in Sacramento in June to demand repeal of the anti-rent control Costa Hawkins law. In California, corporate landlords make billions by avoiding rent control, charging massive rent increases, and evicting tenants when they cannot pay. Voters will have a chance to repeal Costa Hawkins if they approve Proposition 10 on the November ballot. PHOTO/SANDY PERRY

Yes on Prop 10: California's fight for rent control

By David Silva

LOS ANGELES, CA — Throughout California people are struggling to stay in their homes. Developers, landlords and powerful Wall Street speculators have free reign over our affordable housing stock, as homes and apartments are transformed into high-priced market rate dwellings in working class communities. So-called “affordable rents” average between \$800-1,000 plus per month, even for old worn-out buildings landlords refuse to repair. Such prices easily take some 40% to 50% of family incomes. Yet, landlords are demanding twice that amount, forcing families to look for cheaper housing, live in cars and RV's or somehow exist on the streets.

The housing/homeless crisis was accelerated in 1995 when the California state legislature passed the Costa-Hawkins Rental Act, pushed by landlord lobbyists. This legislation prohibits cities from implementing rent control for any single-family home, condominium, or apartment built after 1995. And landlords can raise the rent to any amount following vacancy.

Costa-Hawkins places tremendous obstacles on working class communities. Landlords, especially corporate landlords, are increasing their efforts

to convert “low-income housing” to market rate by more and more evictions from demands for higher rents. California residents are resisting this trend as families are made homeless, while the only solution offered by city and state representatives is more shelters!

Proposition 10, known as the Affordable Housing Act, would repeal the anti-rent-control Costa-Hawkins Act.

Since the passage of Costa-Hawkins, the state legislature has not passed a single significant housing bill! This in a state dominated by the Democratic Party. While the Democratic Party convention last February voted to endorse Proposition 10, its front-running candidate for governor, Gavin Newsom, opposes it! Newsom has received much of his campaign contributions (you guessed it) from landlord associations, corporate landlords and Wall Street financiers.

The passage of Proposition 10 will help reverse this trend significantly in California. We must of course not place all our hopes and efforts for achieving solutions for permanent housing and to end homelessness on this proposition, yet it is an important step forward toward working class unity and against landlord and corporate greed.

“I am and will be Other, until I write you into my heart and make you see my home as what it is. Just another extension of your own home. For there is no them; there is only us.”

— Luis Alberto Urrea

Law to improve L.A. for business hurts the homeless

By Wendy Brown

LOS ANGELES, CA — In the 1960's the federal government began passing laws to help struggling urban areas across the country. The Property and Business Improvement District Law passed in California in 1994 authorizes cities to form property and business improvement districts for the purpose of levying assessments within a business improvement area. Meant to improve business areas and increase revenues, it currently is a detriment to the homeless in areas that are experiencing a homeless crisis.

In the mid 1990's Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were formed in downtown Los Angeles. The BIDs hired private security guards known by the color of their shirts. These security guards carried handguns and removed homeless people from private property known as “move-alongs.” Members of Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) filed a lawsuit to address the civil rights violations committed by the BIDs' security guards and removed their ability to carry handguns or conduct “move-alongs.”

A recent study was done by University of California Berkeley Law to determine the impact of the BID on the unhoused titled Homeless Exclusion Districts. Their key findings were that BIDS exclude homeless people from public spaces in their districts through policy advocacy and policing practices. The California BIDs organize collectively through the California Downtown Association to oppose state level civil rights legislation designed to decriminalize homelessness. Their involvement in social services has resulted in the homeless experiencing additional forms of policing, surveillance and harassment.

The Berkeley study states three major findings: 1) BIDs fre-



Business Improvement District authorities in Venice, California look on as personal belongings are taken from the homeless.

PHOTO/WENDY BROWN

quently engage in local and state advocacy to enact, maintain and strengthen anti-homeless laws. 2) BIDs spend property assessment revenue on anti-homeless policy advocacy. 3) The growing number of BIDs established after 1994 correlates with a sharp rise in the number of anti-homeless laws.

The study concludes with these recommendations:

The state legislature should amend state laws that grant BIDs excessive authority by prohibiting them from spending property assessment revenue on policy advocacy, repeal their authority to spend revenue on security and restrict them from collecting revenue from publicly owned properties.

It also recommends that cities regulate and scrutinize BIDs, rejecting those that participate in policy advocacy or policing prac-

tices. Cities should also refuse to collaborate with BIDs that violate the rights of homeless people.

In recent years BIDs in Los Angeles have faced scrutiny and have been faced with a number of lawsuits from property owners who were added to the BID without their consent and maintained their claims to improve the area were exaggerated according to the Los Angeles Times.

The people of Los Angeles would be better served by not participating in Business Improvement Districts meant to harm the homeless. With the current homeless crisis that is occurring in the city, residents both housed and unhoused need to work collectively on solutions that will help those that are unhoused obtain the services and housing they need, thereby improving the neighborhood.

The *People's Tribune* covers the voices of the homeless, and their supporters, extensively. Send your stories to info@peopletribune.org.

Oakland, CA: Standing against the housing crisis and homelessness

By Rev. Monica Joy Cross, Pastor, First Christian Church of Oakland, and member of the Laney Teach-in Committee/Poor People's Campaign

OAKLAND, CA — It was high noon on September 11, 2018, a day on which people remembered the sudden violence of airliner attacks on the U.S. It was also a day when Mr. Nino Parker organized a gathering of 100 people to address the creeping violence caused by the crisis of housing insecurity and homelessness. Mr. Parker spoke of the misery and compassion that he and many others have experienced. He had several proposals to make life better for those experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness.

Mr. Parker is a homeless leader in the fight against Housing Insecurity and Homelessness in Oakland and founder of the Green Team of homeless people who maintain the cleanliness of homeless encampments. In this era of gentrification many held signs letting people know the agony

of homelessness and housing insecurity in Oakland. Speakers included Oakland City Council member Rebecca Kaplan, Ethel Long-Scott, Executive Director of the Women's Economic Agenda Project (WEAP) and a represen-

tative of the Poor Peoples Campaign, Cat Brooks, candidate for mayor of Oakland, and Nikki Fortunatao Bas, candidate for Oakland's City Council.

This was an important gathering to address housing issues and

the moral deficit which plagues Oakland as it does other cities throughout the country. Each day new luxury high-rise apartments and condominiums go up while the number of homeless and those experiencing housing insecurity increases. When the housing crisis began in the era of gentrification, Oakland officials sought to ignore or neglect the growing housing crisis and when the tent encampments began to arise, the City did the minimum regarding infrastructure to support more and more people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. According to a KQED California Report in May, 2017, Alameda County's Homeless Population Climbed Dramatically Over Two Years, www.kqed.org/news/11477036/alameda-countys-homeless-population-climbs-dramatically-over-two-years, a majority living in Oakland.

Nino Parker said the homeless need access to housing, "Need to make more housing. A lot of housing sitting unused."

City Council member Rebecca Kaplan said there are "5000 abandoned buildings which have been identified to house the homeless."

"Housing Insecurity is at an all time high, it is at the top of the list," said Ethel Long-Scott. "Gentrification & displacement in Oakland like other major cities is spreading a cloud of doom over once stable communities. Small homeowners can't afford the ever-increasing taxes, and renters are driven out by impossible to pay rent increases. There is a cry across the state of California that RENTS are too damn high. Public housing is simply disappearing. Nationally, is it any wonder that homelessness is now estimated to be in the millions?"

The lack of response to the housing crisis is an example of Oakland's neglect and a moral deficit regarding the housing of its citizens. Mr. Parker's Gathering was a necessary response by those impacted by the housing crisis in Oakland.



Homeless encampment in Oakland, CA. PHOTO/AUSTIN-LONG SCOTT

How to house the homeless tomorrow A cooperative solution is key to re-creating community

Oakland Homeless Green Team Program:

- ◆ In Oakland by last count, 150 people were housed in Tuff Sheds with no running water, while 1,000 new homeless people set up camp on the streets. This is immoral, uncivilized, inhumane, and unacceptable in this wealthy nation's wealthiest state.
- ◆ Government has a responsibility to intervene on behalf of the homeless and the housing insecure. Politicians and elected officials are responsible to make this happen.
- ◆ Recognize the homeless camps as a contributing part of the Oakland community. Local government should support, protect and fund these camps, just as they fund other community resources across the city.
- ◆ The City should use Eminent Domain to seize chronically tax delinquent and vacant properties, those that have been abandoned or avoiding taxes for years, and make them available for the homeless. By some official estimates Oakland has 5,000 or more such properties.
- ◆ The City should employ the homeless to fix such properties, and employ this population in creating stable housing and stable communities. In addition, the City is responsible to build housing for the homeless.
- ◆ Establish a moratorium on homeless programs run by non-profits. These should be reconfigured and audited with total transparency. These programs should be led and run by the homeless

themselves. All too often non-profits use the bulk of funding for salaries and management with little left over to help the homeless. Providing a health kit and a bag lunch is simply not acceptable. Use all this money for the homeless!

- ◆ End programs that are designed simply to "manage the poor" segregate and criminalize the homeless.
- ◆ Local Government should prioritize programs that allow groups of homeless people to earn enough collectively for first and last month rents.
- ◆ City programs should pay wages in cash and not simply in gift cards. Landlords do not accept gift cards.
- ◆ The City should allow people to get business licenses without an address. Many homeless people have good skills they can't use because of hiring discrimination.

The Homeless Green Team cleans up the garbage in homeless camps that the city refuses to touch. This Program is only a beginning. We intend for our tent communities to be recognized as stable and vital parts of our city. We offer this program to all those who throw up their hands and say "There just isn't any way to solve the problem of homelessness and housing insecurity." The homeless can all be housed tomorrow! This program speaks only to alleviating the housing crisis for the most vulnerable, the homeless. We plan more proposals to address the plight of the housing insecure.

On Community

By Rev. Bruce Wright

ST. PETERSBURG, FL — Community ... a unity, harmony of sights and sounds that resounds and echoes as it flows all our pain and woes, it knows one another as Sister, and Brother ... it speaks as it seeks to unite our plight sown and grown in the ground of all that's around, a seamless garment that's meant to flow from all we know and don't know as we grow and hoe the soil and don't recoil from our intersection but rather experience resurrection of life ending the strife that's rife, the feeling of a death dealing society with much anxiety and impropriety we move to an insurrection that is a reflection, a glimmer, a taste to end any waste of time, but a sublime move to a different grove of sharing and caring, bearing all burden and weight, joined in fate, unseparated by what's berated so much of our conception and perception of how things are whether near or far, we no longer mar or distort all voices we report, we no longer resort to hide in our fort we design to consign and limit our self, put on a shelf, but now alive as we strive to create a new fate, rising to a plateau that friend and foe join in relation as a nation, a humanity, a return to sanity, an end to the profanity of vanity, we now emerge as we surge to converge, to join and rejoin the body, the organism, with no schism or any ism, we achieve and conceive a new existence of Community, of Community with no impunity but only love, from above, and down below this we will now sow ... Community, Community, Community.

FLINT: 1600 days and counting without clean water



Residents brace to hear the decision to charge DHHS chief. Many were moved to tears upon hearing that he would face trial. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

By People's Tribune
Flint contributor

FLINT, MI — After bullying the city into a long-term 30-year contract with the Great Lakes Water Authority, Federal and especially State authorities resorted to its old Playbook: deny, diminish, and even declare the Flint Water Crisis never really happened. The state (particularly the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality) has shut down water distribution sites, and spent millions and millions of dollars of taxpayer's

money in court to dispose of claims to compensate for damages to the people of Flint. The state even tried to take their case to the U.S. Supreme Court. So-called "experts" have declared the children of Flint were not poisoned.

This outrageous assertion was even published in an op-ed article in the New York Times. Meanwhile the people of Flint got some encouraging news when Michigan Department of Health and Human Services chief Nick Lyon was bound over to trial for involuntary man-

slaughter related to the Legionella deaths in Flint. He allegedly quipped in a meeting about the Legionella that "everybody got to die of something."

We gasped, we hollered, and we cried after District Court Judge Goggins gave a full 2 and 1/2 hour presentation binding him over. Lyon will face additional charges in connection with one of the largest outbreaks of Legionella in recorded history related to the Flint water crisis. Incredibly he is still on his job.

Victory in Bayou pipeline fight, but activists aren't stopping



Water protectors are arrested at the site where Energy Transfer Partners is illegally constructing the Bayou Bridge Pipeline which threatens land, water and humanity.

PHOTO/L'EAU EST LA VIE CAMP #NOBAYOUBRIDGE

By Cathy Talbott

Since the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline protests, dozens of bills and executive orders have been introduced in at least 31 states to clamp down on protests. Water protectors say the bills are part of a concerted campaign by energy companies and government to suppress these protests by increasing criminal penalties for minor violations, and in some cases, trying to use anti-terrorism laws against activists.

Last month activist kayakers on navigable waters near the Bayou Bridge Pipeline route in Louisiana were hemmed in by pipeline workers on fan boats, then arrested by off-duty officers with the state Department of Public Safety and Corrections who were armed and in uniform, but at the time were working for a private security firm hired by the pipeline developer. These arrests test a new law that went into effect in Louisiana August 1, creating a felony charge with up to five years in prison for anyone who trespasses on a pipeline easement.

However, there is good news. On September 10, a Louisiana court granted an injunction against Energy Transfer Partners

(ETP), shutting down illegal construction of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline in part of the Atchafalaya Basin.

The following is a statement posted to the Facebook page L'eau Est La Vie Camp-No Bayou Bridge:

"We have been tased, pepper sprayed, put into choke holds and beaten with batons to stop this illegal construction that ETP was carrying out despite not having an easement for the land. Now a court has validated our claims and has banned all ETP employees and workers from the site and banned any form of construction activities. While this is a major victory, construction of the Bayou Bridge Pipeline continues in other parts of the Atchafalaya Basin. We won't stop until the Bayou Bridge Pipeline is completely shut down.

"DONATE to support our resistance: [gofundme.com/nobbp](https://www.gofundme.com/nobbp)

"JOIN US on the frontlines. Email resist@nobbp.org with your name, phone number, why you want to come to camp, when you will be arriving and how long you plan on staying. We will respond with the directions to camp and what to bring.

"#NoBayouBridge #StopETP #Resist"



Chuck Nelson.

PHOTO/BRANDON LAVOIE

'I've seen first hand what is happening to people living around coal mining'

By Chuck Nelson

WEST VIRGINIA — I hope you know the health impacts from living in an area surrounded by mountaintop removal operations, and how coal mining has destroyed our water, air, and our beautiful communities. I know in our area, a man doesn't have much opportunity as to what he does for a living and supporting a family. And that's not our fault, but that's exactly how this industry intended it to be. We live in a sacrificial area.

Sure I worked in the mines, and was born and raised in Sylvester, West Virginia. That's until I spoke up about how this criminal enterprise was destroying the community I loved. I saw neighbors, family, and friends getting sick and dying with cancer, kidney disease, heart problems, respiratory problems. Then they took my job and I was forced to relocate. Since forced into retirement, I've worked with scientists, biologists, professors, doctors, US Geological Survey, and I've seen first hand what is happening to people living in and

around coal mining communities, especially with Mountain Top Removal. The public is denied the information that we have a right to know.

If you think these companies have our best interests in mind, that's just not true. And, it's a criminal act what they are doing and allowed to do. I think the world of coal miners, but they are fed misinformation. History has always told us that the coal company has never been a friend of the coal miner, and today, it's even gone way further, and it's wrong.

There was and still is a depopulation plan in effect to uproot families, bulldoze over communities, and make people relocate, because they are standing in the way of "progress." Coal mining has been nothing but a curse upon the land.

Churches should take a stand, and condemn the actions of these criminal enterprises, for destroying God's creation. But most are reluctant to do so because a lot of their congregations have ties to the industry. What an excuse. What a shame. What a sin!



In a passionate showing of will to save humanity and save the Earth from corporate destruction, on September 8 in San Francisco, 30,000 people joined hundreds of thousands of protesters worldwide in more than 90 countries to demand action on climate change. In the largest climate march ever on the West Coast, marchers from all walks of life called for an end to the use of fossil fuels and declared support for California SB 100, just passed, which mandates 100% renewable energy in California by 2045. Although passage of the bill is significant—California is the 5th largest economy in the world—it will not stem the corporations' drive for growth and profits which fuels the climate crisis. It will take millions of people uniting around a vision of a totally new society where we can reclaim and stabilize the Earth, and humanity. Read more on the march and related civil disobedience in the next issue of the *People's Tribune*. PHOTO/PEGGY ELWELL

Tree is planted in the name of the People's Tribune

The *People's Tribune* has received a gift of a tree, to be planted in the paper's name in one of the National Forests in desperate need of replanting because of the unprecedented fires. "I encourage folks to subscribe and financially support the *People's Tribune* project and important mission," says the contributor who made the donation. Thank you! We share this honor with our contributors who fight daily to insure the *People's Tribune* continues to be a beacon of light for the growing movement.



— The Editors

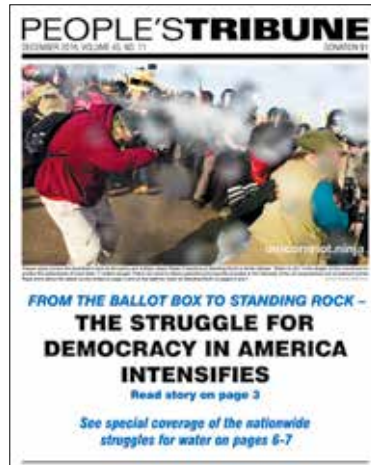
Visit [Arbor Day Foundation.org](http://ArborDayFoundation.org) for information on tree replanting gifts.

In Focus: Thank you to our photographers!

The *People's Tribune* thanks the many photojournalists and cartoonists who share their work. Without these contributions, the paper could not promote the face of the movement. Below are some of the current contributors.

Valerie Jean, Daymon J. Hartley, Charles E. Miller, John Ramspott, Adrian Garcia, Jim West, Harvey Finkle, Julie Dermansky, Sarah Menefee, Brett Jelinek, Joe Brusky, Erik McGreggor, and cartoonist Andy Willis, and many more.

Donate and subscribe to the People's Tribune – a voice of and for the movement



The *People's Tribune* is a voice of and for the growing movement for a new America. The stories in the pages of the *People's Tribune* connect everyone's struggles; all are part of the fight to build a powerful movement to save humanity and the Earth from corporate destruction.

The *People's Tribune* helps to build this movement by opening its pages to the front line fighters who share their experiences and visions of the kind of new society we need.

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Grannies put spotlight on gov't terror against migrants

Editor's note: Grannies Respond/ Abuelas Responden is a grass-roots organization which seeks to end the inhumane treatment of refugees entering the U.S., seeking asylum. Members made national and international headlines in August when they traveled by caravan from cities and towns across the United States to McAllen, Texas, near the Mexico border, where they protested the current administration's immigration policies.

On their six-day journey, they heard stories of unimaginable sadness from those who have escaped political and gang violence, poverty and deprivation, only to find themselves faced with another kind of terror as U.S. immigration officials at the border separated and detained family members, including young children.

Sandy Reid, for the People's Tribune, interviewed a member of Grannies Respond who made the trip to McAllen, Beth Bernstein. Below are excerpts from the interview.

I am an occupational therapist who has worked with students in Massachusetts for more than two decades, including many immigrants and children of immigrants.

I find this administration's policies of separating children from families and incarcerating parents who have come to our country to seek refuge unacceptable. I don't understand how the administration, and those doing their bidding, can live with themselves, and my heart aches for these children and their families.

I am angry and embarrassed that our government is doing this in our name. We need to stop this torture and inhumane treatment. We need to hold the government accountable and persist until all of the children are returned to their families.

Every place we went on our journey we were greeted with incredible enthusiasm and generosity. People wished they could ride with us, and promised they'd be with us in spirit.

We tried to visit the South

Texas Detention Center after the news broke that a child died soon after their release. We hoped to speak with the families. However, we were threatened with arrest if we did not leave the property immediately.

In McAllen, TX we walked the Refugee Path and interacted with families staying at the Catholic Charities Respite center after their release from detention. As we sang in English and Spanish, there were smiles and tears as we connected. It was a powerful experience that left an impression on all of us.

The next day we filled backpacks that were then delivered to families waiting for permission to cross the Brownsville-Matamoros bridge to enter the country, and to others leaving on buses to stay with sponsors across the country. We saw the wall, visited La Posada Providencia, and border patrol processing centers. The day ended with the grannies convening for a panel discussion with local aid groups about ways we could continue to support their work.



The Grannies paused along the refugee walk to sing, just before meeting the refugees at the respite center (Catholic Charities).

PHOTO/GRANNIES RESPOND

Since then we have been developing strategies for our own communities. We are holding meetings to raise awareness, writing letters and planning actions to keep pressure on local and national politicians to work for change.

It is difficult to understand how we got to this place, socially

and morally; we're targeting the most vulnerable who deserve our compassion. My vision of a moral society is one where no human being is considered illegal, where we are open to learning from and about others and able to appreciate and value our similarities and differences ... the beautiful tapestry of humanity.

'Don't distort Mollie's death to advance racist views' says father

Editor's note: Mollie Tibbetts, age 20, of Brooklyn, Iowa, was murdered in July. In August, Cristian Bahena Rivera, a Latino immigrant, was arrested and charged in her death. On Sept. 1, the Des Moines Register published a guest editorial from Mollie's father, Ron, in which he criticized politicians and pundits who used Mollie's death as a basis to attack immigrants. He urged those who are attacking immigrants to "not appropriate Mollie's soul in advancing views she believed were profoundly racist." Below are excerpts from Ron Tibbetts' statement.



Mollie Tibbetts. PHOTO/FACEBOOK

nephews and my grandchildren—are Latino. That means I am Hispanic. I am African. I am Asian. I am European. My blood runs from every corner of the earth because I am American.

"Knowing that, to knowingly foment discord among races is a disgrace to our flag. It incites fear in innocent communities and lends legitimacy to the darkest, most hate-filled corners of the American soul. It is the opposite of leadership. It is the opposite of humanity. It is heartless. It is despicable. It is shameful."

"To the Hispanic community, my family stands with you and offers its heartfelt apology. That you've been beset by the circumstances of Mollie's death is wrong. We treasure the contribution you bring to the American tapestry in all its color and melody.

"My stepdaughter, whom Mollie loved so dearly, is Latina. Her sons—Mollie's cherished

Will we have fascism or democracy?

From the Editors

The assault on immigrants gets worse by the day. In recent months we have seen government rule changes that allow more immigrants to be detained and denied their due process rights. We are seeing immigrant children separated from their parents and detained in shameful conditions. Government immigration raids are disrupting whole communities. The Trump administration is revoking or refusing to renew the U.S. passports of some Hispanics in the U.S.-Mexico border region, claiming they were not really born in the U.S. and have "fraudulent" birth certificates. And now major banks have locked some customers out of their accounts after the banks questioned their legal status in the U.S.

What are we becoming? Nazi Germany?

We have seen this pattern repeated in this country and throughout the world—a country falls into economic crisis, the people demand change, and the ruling elite has to find a scapegoat to blame for the crisis. Keeping the people divided keeps them from challenging the rule of those in power. Eliminating the democratic rights of the immigrants here and globally helps set the stage for fas-



Protest in defense of immigrants.

PHOTO/PATRICIA HAUSER

cism and eliminating everyone's rights.

This is not the fascism of the 1930s. Today, with more and more jobs eliminated by automation, fewer and fewer workers are needed to produce things. Millions of us are forced to fight for a whole new society where we the people, not the corporations, have the power. The U.S. billionaire class is moving to suppress our struggle by destroying democracy and replacing it with a corporate dictatorship (fascism). If we are going to survive, we are going to have

to take this country away from the corporations and run it in our own interest.

We cannot do this if we are fighting each other. The articles on this page show our progress. We are beginning to see ourselves as one people, one humanity, with interests completely opposed to those of the billionaire class. Let's join hands across all the lines that divide us so we can stop fascism, take this country away from the corporations, and build a just, democratic society run by and for the people.

Aretha Franklin: 'Think... let your mind go, let yourself be free'

By Danny Alexander

In a CNN interview three years before her death, Aretha Franklin corrected anchor Don Lemon when he suggested she was on the frontlines of the Civil Rights Movement. She stated, "I was behind Dr. King, and I was a very young girl." Beyond the humility, the precision in her statement shows the scientific mind that gave Franklin unparalleled influence in the struggle for human rights for over 50 years. She knew that her work built on over a century of struggle because she saw it as an extension of her father's ministry. As Reverend Jesse Jackson said at her father's funeral, "C.L. Franklin was born in 1915, 50 years after slavery, and 50 years before we had the right to vote."

Because of her father's fight for liberation, Aretha grew up surrounded by many of the greatest political and cultural leaders of the 20th Century. She famously defied her father when she offered to post bail for Angela Davis in

1970, but the decision sprang from her integrity as a thinker—"I've been locked up (for disturbing the peace in Detroit) and I know you got to disturb the peace when you can't get no peace."

She contractually arranged to never perform for a segregated audience, and at the height of the controversy over King's stance against Vietnam, Jackson recalls, "she helped us make payroll." Her money bought gas for the movement at that time, and at the height of her own career, she played a series of movement fundraisers. She long supported Detroit food banks and women's shelters and public schools. She also donated hotel rooms, food and water to folks being poisoned by the water in Flint, Michigan.

Still, it was really Franklin's music that put her on the frontlines. She sang the yearnings of the human heart, and we sang along with her. From "Bridge over Troubled Water" to "Natural Woman" to "Say A Little Prayer" to "Chain of Fools," she could be soothing and joyful and

playful and threatening. Most of all she demanded respect, and she came to know just what her cover of Otis Redding's "Respect" meant to the world. In her memoir, she wrote, "It was the need of a nation, the need of the average man and woman in the street, the businessman, the mother, the fireman, the teacher—everyone wanted respect. It was also one of the battle cries of the civil rights movement." And she recognized it as an agreement with her fans: "Three decades later I am unable to give a concert without my fans demanding that same 'Respect' from me."

Though this is the kind of lover's confrontation Franklin would inspire throughout the world of women making music, it's important to see why it resonates so strongly in so many different directions. The word "respect" literally means to take another look at others in need. Her self-penned sequel a year later, "Think," pushes that observation to the level of science. Fifty years later, the lyrical truth



Aretha Franklin.

PHOTO/INSTAGRAM, @ARETHASINGS

never rung clearer—"People walking around every day/Playing games, taking scores/Trying to make other people lose their minds/Ah, be careful you don't

lose yours." And her prescription for change—"Think...let your mind go, let yourself be free"—never spoke a truth more necessary to our very survival.

The Murder of Dylan Hartsfeld

Album Review

By Bill Glahn

SPRINGFIELD, MO — When Bob Frank and John Murry released their critically acclaimed album, *World Without End*, in 2006, Frank told me "These are murder ballads based on true stories. They're just songs. There are no political intentions." Listeners would have to formulate their own conclusions.

The common thread that ran through that album (all songs written by Frank and Murry) was one of extreme violence within the borders of the United States from the 18th through the 20th century. Lynchings, workplace shootings, domestic violence, revenge, revenge on revenge—it's all there.

Within a year after *World Without End* was released, Frank wrote the words to a new song at the request of Bill Hartsfeld, the father of a slain vet who had served a tour of duty in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Frank, like Bill Hartsfeld, was a Vietnam vet. Dylan Hartsfeld was not killed on foreign ground. He was shot by a cop in his own back yard. Frank put the story to words. Murry put the words to music.

For years, "The Murder of Dylan Hartsfeld" remained a download, which you could download for free if you knew where to look. It received an official release in 2014 as a "bonus" track on Murry's *Califolornia* CD.

The song begins with a minute and a half of actual 911 recordings and police dispatches. Then Murry sings the story. No detail is left out of the tale. The original injury (a fall down a flight of steps.) The PTSD related behavior. The previous police visits to the home. The knowledge by police of assault weapons and knives on the property. When the police arrived at the home in response to an emergency call, they came with weapons drawn. Bill Hartsfeld was holding a set of keys. Dylan Hartsfeld's "deadly weapon" was a broken hockey stick. Dylan was shot through the heart.

But this is not a story about police overreaction. It goes much deeper than that. The songs final



verse?

If you're looking for a moral then go look at yourself! You killed Dylan sure as hell! When you wave that flag and act like it's swell! To send them young men straight off to hell! So your chicken shit ass can trade & sell! It was you—You killed Dylan Hartsfeld

And thus, the tradition of American violence continues into the 21st century.

See youtu.be/QE1WFi9grM

Bill Glahn is a retired warehouse laborer and an unretired writer from Springfield, MO.

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Congress – Hands off our Social Security

Editor's note: Social Security is under attack. Between 2010 and 2017 its operating budget fell 10%. There is fear that the increase in the federal budget deficit from the recent \$1.9 trillion tax cut for the wealthy will be used to reduce the program. Cuts will mean more seniors in poverty. The fight for Medicare for All is part of the fight to save Social Security.

By Rick Tingling-Clemmons

WASHINGTON, DC — Social Security was passed in 1935 to provide a form of economic security to address the need to support workers after the end of their work lives with resources provided in largest part by the work-

ers themselves. The backdrop for the creation of this program was the Great Depression, which created a level of fear to which this was a response.

The original Social Security Act created several programs that, even today, form the basis for the government's role in providing income security for older people, the unemployed, and needy families. The Medicare program was created 30 years later.

The original program covered workers in only about half the jobs in the country, those in commerce and industry. This meant that at its inception, this program codified the limitations of this exploitative economic system—capitalism—by defining social security in a way that

was racist and sexist, failing as it did to cover workers in fields of work populated primarily by people of color and women: agriculture, service, child care, home care, health care, education, and the social service industry. Some of those “errors” have since been corrected through the action of the workers and their unions.

This Social Security system, even in its initiation, was opposed by the corporations and Congress. During the 1980s, Social Security was taken completely away from the working class through Congress—which is made up principally of the rich. Capitalism only serves a few, the 1%, and has a dominant effect on all of our institutions, including Social Security.

Together we can create all the necessary goods and services—including Social Security—that we need, and a world where no one has to suffer the injustice of poverty, hunger, homelessness, sickness, unemployment, or disease. Let's build a better world together, with workers—whether unemployed, employed, semi-employed, laid off—at the helm. The problems that we as a class face (the 99%), will only and can only be resolved by us, the working class. To quote one of our local ancestors, the eminent publisher Calvin Rolark, “If it is to be, it is up to me!”

Rick Tingling-Clemmons is Business Manager, Gray Panthers of Metropolitan Washington



Protest for healthcare at House Speaker Paul Ryan's office in Racine, Wisconsin.

PHOTO/CHARLES E. MILLER

America's enslaved prisoners go on strike

By Joe Peery

On August 21, 2018, inmates in prisons and immigration facilities across America and Canada went on hunger strikes, sit-ins, boycotts and work stoppages to protest their exploitation and abusive conditions. The protests, which lasted 19 days, were sparked by the preventable deaths of seven inmates at a riot in the Lee Correction Institution in South Carolina in April. The strikers have 10 demands which call for humane conditions, an end to slavery (average wage is 93 cents per hour but can go as low as 16 cents), racial justice, an end to denial of rehabilitation, and rescinding of unjust laws and voting rights. Below is some further historical context.

The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution (ratified on December 6, 1865,) reads as follows:

“Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

“Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

While many of us have been taught that this law abolished slavery in the United States; the words in italics in Section 1 clearly show that Congress did not intend to abolish slavery; it merely shifted slavery from the plantation to the penitentiary and as a punishment for crime. Black codes and Jim Crow, specifically designed to criminalize and enslave newly freed Blacks, soon followed the passage of the Amendment.

Today, the slave masters of old have been replaced by corporations that exploit prison slave labor in pursuit of maximum profits. Some of the companies guilty of this are: Whole Foods, McDonald's, Target, IBM, Texas Instruments, Boeing, Nordstrom, Intel, Wal-Mart, Victoria's Secret, Aramark, AT&T, BP, Starbucks, Microsoft, Nike, Honda, Macy's and Sprint.

(Wikipedia, Penal Labor In The United States.)

Letter to the Editor: Medicare cuts

“Yes. HR 676 Medicare for All is THE solution! It is the only plan that will cover every person in the USA for 100% of the cost of every medical need for life. It will put an end to the substandard healthcare for poor people called Medicaid, which is now becoming even worse than it already was. HR 676 will cover EVERYONE EQUITABLY ... including Congress, the President, the disabled, the employed, the unemployed, and the homeless. We must all unite to demand its passage immediately!

— Lee Stanfield, responding to “Medicaid work requirements are a death sentence” found in the People's Tribune from June 2018

Black August: Prison activists speak

By Chris Venn

LOS ANGELES, CA — This is an interview following an event in Los Angeles, CA during the month of August, which is referred to as Black August, that commemorates the loss of many prison activists in the 1960s and 1970s and acknowledges historical events affecting the lives of African people during the month of August such as the arrival into the US of enslaved Africans; slave uprisings in the US South, and more. I'm joined by Ernest Shujaa Graham (Death Row Survivor) and Willie Sundiata Tate (San Quentin Six Member).

“My name is Ernest Shujaa Graham and I am a death row survivor. I went off to prison when I was 18; it was in prison that I joined the prison movement for social justice and human rights. After being a part of that movement for over three years, in 1973 an uprising happened in Tracy prison and I was accused of leading the uprising. A guard

was murdered during that uprising and I was charged with his killing. I had four trials; in my second trial they convicted me and sentenced me to die. The Supreme Court overturned my conviction and in my fourth trial I was acquitted.

“Black August is an organized entity that started in prison as the consequence of different prisoners being killed and we wanted to honor those who made the supreme sacrifice, in prison. Since most of their deaths occurred in August we decided to create a month-long commemoration called Black August and we are here today to continue to reflect on that and pay our tribute to those like George Jackson, Jeffrey Khatari Gauden and Hugo Pinell, a member of the San Quentin 6, and others who made the supreme sacrifice. And we just want to make sure today that



(Left to right) Chris Venn interviews prison activists Ernest Shujaa Graham and Willie Sundiata Tate about the meaning of Black August. PHOTO/JITU SADIKI

their names and their sacrifices won't be forgotten.”

Willie Sundiata Tate: “The formalization of Black August occurred after I had left prison. It developed primarily among younger prisoners who were involved in the struggle inside prison and they wanted to honor some of those in that struggle; and for me, you know, I think it is a good tradition. I think it is a wonderful thing to do.”

Nebraska is changing

By Ben Eicher

CHADRON, NE — The Chicago revolutionary poet/songwriter Adam Gottlieb stopped in at the northwest Nebraska Panhandle town of Chadron as part of his western states tour supporting the release of his EP, *Cicada Season*. On August 3, Gottlieb performed at the Bean Broker Coffee Shop to the delight of an appreciative audience.

During his show, Gottlieb spoke and sang of dreams: of the Promised Land, of the hope of We Shall Overcome, of the reality of This Land Is Your Land. He spoke and sang of love, fairness, justice, equality, economic deliverance for the poor, and to trumpet in a loud voice the plight of the disenfranchised. In other words, he passed along The People's Gospel.

And he passed out the *People's Tribune*.

And he didn't end up tarred and feathered. Or lynched.

Gottlieb perhaps didn't realize how risky an act he was perpetrating in Donald Trump/Posse Comitatus territory.

I know. I graduated from high school 25 miles west of Chadron. When I was an agitating high school senior, the local Posse Comitatus secretly built a file on me. From there I spent five years at Chadron State College, where I became editor of the school's student newspaper. When I editorialized for the guarantee of free college education for the underprivileged, I got attacked on a local radio call-in program as a "known Communist." When I editorialized against the college's president for trampling student rights, the administration threatened to shut down the newspaper and have me prosecuted. When actor Tom Berenger wanted to research dangerous hate groups for his role in the 1988 movie *Betrayed*, he came to the Chadron area.

You get the picture.

Adam Gottlieb either didn't know this history of Chadron or he wasn't intimidated by it.

From the stage at the Bean Broker, he talked about the *People's Tribune*. He invited folks to grab a free issue of the paper. And grab it they did.

Maybe times are chang-

ing. Maybe the "draining of the swamp" has drained away some hate, along with revealing that scummy creatures live at the bottom of the swamp, and that even scummier creatures have jumped into its muck.

Maybe the loud bullhorn possessed by Donald Trump and his minions is not as loud as the united voices of the growing number of the disenfranchised. Maybe hate, unfairness, injustice, inequality, economic strangulation for more than just the underprivileged, has combined to open eyes, ears, brains and hearts.

Editor's note: Adam Gottlieb & OneLove's debut EP, "Cicada Season," is available at adamgottlieb.bandcamp.com, at major digital music streaming sites and online stores. The band's debut full album, "All of You," will be dropping in the fall of 2018. Visit adamgottliebandonelove.com or follow the band on Facebook. Book the band for People's Tribune events. Contact info@speakersforanewamerica.com

Union workers strike Chicago hotels over healthcare

Union contracts covering some 6,000 workers at 30 Chicago hotels expired Aug. 31, and the unionized workers at at least 26 of those hotels had been on strike for four days as of Sept. 11. Thousands of housekeepers, doormen,

cooks and bartenders walked off the job. It is reportedly the broadest coordinated hotel worker strike the city has ever seen, and worker solidarity across industries is developing. A key demand of the union is for year-round health insurance for hotel employees who get laid off during the slow winter season. According to a union statement, "Striking hotel workers deserve year-round health insurance, sick days to see a doctor, workloads that keep them healthy, and wages that keep up with the cost of raising a family."



PHOTO/UNITE HERE!, LOCAL 1

The 'Tears of Hate' Arcane In Memory of Roddie Edmonds and Heather Heyer

1.

My tears last night seeing my brothers and sisters in *GI Jews* were not only theirs shed 73 years ago outside liberated nazi concentration camps,

—my uncles Boro, Meyer and Nathan, my cousins Sonny and Seymour among the liberators—, were tears of sorrow and of joy and, as the soldier

rabbi said, "tears of hate" as well, after beholding the pits of masses of bones, eye-socketless spaces, the ovens with still smoldering skeletons.

My brothers and sisters, 500,000 of Jewish origin who'd fought as *GI Joes*

finally (if they'd had any doubts before) understood what the war was all about, what they were fighting and...

2.

You'd be closing down the doors of your mind if you didn't recognize those nazis marching in Charlottesville, Virginia shouting, "Jews will not replace us", already are

envisioning those ovens and mass pits here in the U.S.A., and those "tears of hate" on my part contain the urgent warning that the arrogant thug President, like any nazi, has neither

doctrine nor principle, only lies, domination by division and violence and, if allowed to continue nourishing his bigoted base, what Sinclair

Lewis meant when he wrote *It Can't Happen Here*

not only will happen but has happened, so get off the numbskulls you've been warming your asses on, brothers and sisters. In this war, as Roddie Edmonds, Protestant from Oklahoma,

who captained *GI Joes* imprisoned in a nazi camp near the end of the war—when the nazi commander demanded that all the Jews in the company line up the next morning—had the whole

company line up and said, "We're all Jews!" Because in this war, if you think anything different, and that includes the color of your skin, you can be certain Nazism's winning.

—Jack Hirschman,
former San Francisco Poet Laureate

Benton Harbor, MI has higher lead levels than Flint

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Benton Harbor, the city of no return, is among 71 water districts in the state that have higher lead levels in the drinking water than Flint, says the Michigan Department of Environment Quality (MDEQ). Benton Harbor joins Detroit, Flint and Grand Rapids as the worst cities in Michigan for child lead poisoning, according to the Detroit Free Press.

According to MDEQ, a study in 2015 shows Benton Harbor had lead levels in its water in two locations of 38 parts per billion, and 12 parts per billion overall for the city. Some of the areas with high concentrations of children with high levels of lead in their blood are in poor Black areas. Some say it is a result of lead paint in older homes.

This is what happens when a city government pulls all resources out of a community. Water contamination and lead paint in homes is killing people. There has been no plan by the city to solve the problem or help people.

Let the truth be told that the greedy blood sucking Whirlpool Corporation, that rules Benton Harbor city government and the school system, is behind this. They are finding many ways to

destroy the city and get rid of the citizens. Whirlpool did a complete hostile takeover of the city of Benton Harbor's land as part of their "redevelopment" plan.

Now the people of Benton Harbor are being destroyed by lead poisoning, health problems created by poor medical service, and by economic problems resulting from jobs not paying employees a fair living wage. The unemployment rate in Benton Harbor could be as high as 70 percent (the federal and state government claim it is less). The poverty rate is over 80 percent and I see no relief coming soon.

They are evicting senior citizens left and right, putting seniors out of homes they have lived in for over 25 years, and not caring if they have a place to live. There isn't a more broke and outright dangerous place in the state of Michigan to live. The justice system is out of control, judges, prosecutors, and the sheriff department are attacking the poor and the homeless.

The city government works for Whirlpool. The city refuses to get rid of the city manager who works for Whirlpool, not the people of Benton Harbor. The city manager refuses to return even a

telephone call or an e-mail. He is an undercover agent for Whirlpool.

What has made matters worse is that they destroyed the school system over 20 years ago. The seed was planted by Whirlpool and they watched it grow. Whirlpool brought in a CEO to complete the takeover of the Benton Harbor school system. The CEO is just another name for an emergency manager under Public Act 436, which gives absolute power to destroy the school system and the school board. The school board no longer exists; it is now an advisory board.

The people of Benton Harbor have accepted this. When will the true loving people confront the enemy and take back the city of Benton Harbor?



Rev. Edward Pinkney.

Let me tell you what forced separation feels like

By Nicole Braun

The images of immigrant children in cages are incredibly painful to digest. Still, many people seem to forget that the U.S. has a long track record of forcibly separating families, whether it was African Americans during slavery, the Japanese during World War II, Native Americans during colonization, or poor children whose "unfit" single mothers have lost custody today.

Another common way families are forcibly separated? Juvenile detention. Tens of thousands of teens and pre-teens — most often the poor and people of color are locked up in substandard, often privatized penal facilities. Children who go through these forced family separations often wind up experiencing trauma, grief, shame, and dehumanization.

The sad reality is incarceration rates are on the rise alongside economic inequality, and children aren't exempt. Quite often, the only crime these children have committed is that they're from vulnerable families or suffering from mental health issues.

My son and I personally experienced this.

My son became severely depressed around the time he turned 13. I was a single mother teaching as an adjunct, making less than \$20,000 a year, so the treatment he needed wasn't available to us.



Nicole Braun.

My son got into the criminal "justice" system for the initial petty crime of stealing a pair of sneakers, and he remained there for most of his high school years. Like so many struggling kids, instead of getting the treatment he desperately needed, he was sent to subpar facilities that made his emotional pain worse. He received no real therapy, and they often refused to give him his required medication or messed it up. He began to see himself as a number, as a terrible person. I saw myself the same way, because I knew how the court system saw me—as a poor single mother with no husband and a "criminal" son.

From the time he was 14 until he was 18, he was transferred to at least 10 different facilities. I often didn't know where, because I wasn't notified. Despite his chronic depression, he was also put in isolation a number of times—a tactic

known to increase mental suffering among adult prisoners.

At one point, they put him into an adult jail in isolation for at least a month.

As a parent, this experience was devastating and terrorizing.

My son is older now, thankfully alive, and doing the hard work of putting his life back together. "Real therapy would have been so helpful," he told me. "So much pain could have been spared."

"It really desensitizes people all the way around," he said of his experience. "It makes you value yourself less and others less, too, since other people see you as a nonhuman."

No human should ever be treated this way. But while we are wounded, we are not broken.

Social movements are gaining momentum.

Separating families due to incarceration, immigration status, mental health, and/or race and class is wrong. If the families impacted by incarceration and other traumas join together with advocates for immigrants, we can create a sea of social change.

As one of my students recently wrote, "There are more of us than them." Join the debate on Facebook.

Editor's note: This article is excerpted from a longer version that can be read at otherwords.org/let-me-tell-you-what-forced-separation-feels-like

Hunger in America



According to the USDA, U.S. meat producers now have 2.5 billion pounds of surplus meat while U.S. dairy producers have 1.39 billion pounds of surplus cheese and they're running out of space to store it. Meanwhile, 49 million Americans struggle to put food on the table. One in six of us face hunger. One in five children is at risk of hunger. For African-Americans and Latinos it's one in three. Food corporations are in business not to feed people, but to make a profit. There is no profit in feeding those of us who are starving because we live in deep poverty and can't buy. We the people have to take food production away from the corporations.