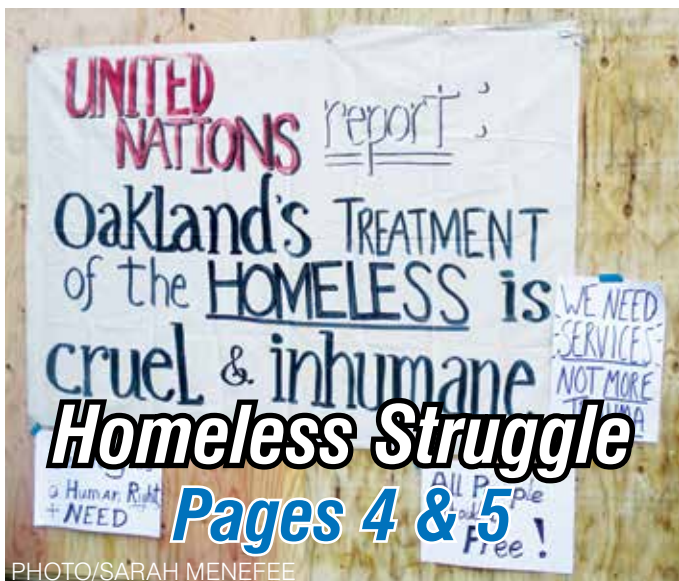




Unionized federal workers demand an end to the government shutdown at a protest in Detroit, MI on January 10.

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

## ***SHUTDOWN:* GOVERNMENT MAKES WAR ON WORKERS**



PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

***Justice  
for Laquan  
McDonald  
Pages 8 & 9***

PHOTO/BOB SIMPSON



# Homeless demand housing, not death on the streets!

## EDITORIAL

A homeless encampment in Seattle is raided and razed with nothing offered to the people who lived there. The Village, an Oakland, CA, tent community for women and children, organized by its residents, is also broken up and people scattered. Women and children are now the fastest growing section of the homeless population. This is an epic social fail.

As the economic and political crisis in this country deepens, millions of Americans find themselves threatened with homelessness, if not already there. Whole families, formerly secure, are now living in a car or RV, under threat of having that towed away. Many more have been homeless for years and decades, subjected to abuse wherever they go.

There are by one estimate six houses standing empty for every homeless person in the U.S. Homeless-led organizations all over the country are using their tent communities as bases of a growing movement. They are petitioning their government to provide housing and other basic needs, whether people have money or not. The government only seems willing to go on the attack, or promise a few sheds or prison-like shelters. One proposed shelter is actually a closed-down prison!

According to the Congressional Research Service, half the American population is near, at or below the poverty level, with two out of three living paycheck to paycheck. This in the wealthiest, most powerful nation the world has ever seen, groaning with the overproduction of everything anyone could need, while millions go hungry and without



CARTOON/ANDY WILLIS

a home. And not a single national politician has mentioned the crisis of homelessness or proposed a remedy.

In the 1970s the introduction of the computer and microchip into production began to replace human workers. At the same time people were beginning to show up homeless in the streets of America. Forty years down the road, as innovations in robotic production take enormous leaps, the social destruction caused by the elimination of jobs is seen and felt everywhere, with homelessness its most obvious sign—a harbinger of what's in store for many more.

What is the reason—and

excuse—for such utter poverty and insecurity, in a nation where a growing number of destitute people fill the streets, walled off from what they need, while the class that owns the corporations that produce what we need grow ever more obscenely wealthy? This billionaire corporate class has now almost entirely “bought” the politicians, who instead of serving the people guarantee that the owning class gets richer and the poor get poorer, to freeze in the streets or rot in jail. This is far from the “life liberty and the pursuit of happiness” we were taught was the American dream, but the economic terrorism at the heart of corporate rule.

People have to have shelter and food whether they have money or not—or they will die. A house can be built overnight now, or made with a process similar to 3D printing. We have the material abundance to shelter everyone, as well as distribute all the necessities of life “according to need.” This is the only way compatible with the evolution of technology. The demand for homes, and everything else we need to lead full productive lives, is a clarion call for a cooperative system, one that shares today’s abundance with everyone.

See pages 4 and 5 for articles on homelessness.

The *People's Tribune* is devoted to the understanding that an economic system that doesn't feed, clothe, house, or care for its people must be and will be replaced with a system that meets the needs of the people. To that end, this paper is a tribune of the people. It is the voice of millions of everyday people who are fighting to survive in an America in crisis. It helps build connections among these fighters and the awareness that together, we can create a whole new society and world.

Today, technology is permanently eliminating jobs. Our needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where we the people, not the corporations, own the technology and the abundance it produces. Then, everyone's needs will be provided for.

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. By-lined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

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

**People's Tribune Editor:** Bob Lee

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

**National Office:**  
Phone: 773-486-3551  
Toll Free: 800-691-6888  
People's Tribune, P.O. Box 3524  
Chicago, Illinois, 60654  
E-mail: info@peopletribune.org  
Web: www.peopletribune.org  
Facebook: fb.com/peopletrib

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

**Reach us locally at:**  
**Ann Arbor, MI:** zettlir@gmail.com  
**Atlanta, GA:** atlanta@peopletribune.org  
**Carbondale, IL:** carbondale@peopletribune.org  
**Chicago, IL:** 773-486-3551  
peopletribunechicago@gmail.com  
**Denver, CO:** info@peopletribune.org  
**Detroit, MI:** 248-629-0897  
**Houston, TX:**  
P O Box 231281, Houston, TX 77223-1281  
**Los Angeles, CA:** 310-548-6491  
**Merced, CA:** TPPT2017SJV.CA@gmail.com  
**Oakland, CA:**  
oakland@peopletribune.org  
**Washington, D.C.:**  
pt\_in\_dmv@yahoo.com

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE! ORDER BUNDLES

- Please send me a one-year individual subscription [ \$20 ] or a three-month trial subscription [ \$5 ]
- Please send me a one-year institutional subscription [ \$25 ]
- Please send me a bundle of \_\_\_\_\_ PTs [ at 50 cents per paper ]

**Enclosed is my donation of:**

- \$20  \$50  \$75  \$100  \$Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*My check or money order made payable to "People's Tribune" is enclosed. Mail this coupon to: People's Tribune, P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654-3524. You can also order your subscription online at peopletribune.org.*

# Shutdown: Government makes war on workers

## COVER STORY

*The truth of this shutdown is that it's actually not about a wall. ... The truth is, this shutdown is about the erosion of American democracy and the subversion of our most basic governmental norms.*

— Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, in her first speech in the U.S. House of Representatives

As we go to press, the government shutdown is at least temporarily halted. In no small part, this resulted from protests across the country demanding that the shutdown end. Non-federal workers joined in. There was talk of a general strike.

More than 800,000 federal workers went without a paycheck. Many were forced to work without pay. Many went without needed medication. Some risked becoming homeless. Contract workers get no back pay. Millions of people who urgently need food assistance and medical care worried if they would lose their benefits. Why?

From the beginning, Trump tied the shutdown to the government's ongoing attack on immigrants. But the shutdown is an ominous escalation of an ongo-



January 19, 2019, San Francisco, CA, participants at the Women's March hold a sign criticizing the government shutdown while marching on Market Street downtown.

PHOTO/SUNDRY PHOTOGRAPHY, SHUTTERSTOCK

ing narrative. The separating of immigrant families, the caging of children, the Muslim ban, the fear-mongering about MS13, the supposed need for "border security"—all of it has been designed to dehumanize a section of our people and divide us. That division, that stripping people of

their human rights, is setting the stage for all of us to lose our rights. Trump was so determined to carry out this divide and conquer strategy that he was willing to shut the government down over it. Trump's message to federal employees: the women and children seeking a better life who

are jailed at the border have no rights, and neither do you.

The dehumanizing of immigrants began before Trump, but it escalated with Trump, and he has made it the centerpiece of an effort to replace democracy with a corporate dictatorship. For millions of people across this coun-

try, the shutdown is a rude awakening. It is transmitting a sharp, clear message from the billionaire ruling class of the United States to the working class, especially those who are more and more relying on scanty government programs for their survival. That message screams: "We care nothing about you, whether you're an immigrant worker or a federal employee. We will do whatever we must do to preserve our profits and power in a changing world. If we have to suspend the constitution or impose a police state, so be it." Democracy is being eliminated to contain dissent.

As we go to press, it's not known what will be the outcome. We must strenuously reject any "compromise" which undermines democratic rights, including the rights of immigrants. We cannot allow the corporate leaders of the Democratic Party to buckle and fund a wall—even a partial wall. We cannot give Trump permission to continue dehumanizing immigrants. If we are to prevent our country from becoming a full-blown dictatorship, we must see the immigrant workers as what they are: part of our people, united with the rest of us in a fight to build a new society that serves the people, not the billionaires.

## Workers speak out about the shutdown



Low-wage federal contract workers such as janitors, security guards, and cafeteria workers tell U.S. senators how the government shutdown has affected their lives. Contract workers don't get backpay.

PHOTOS/NOW THIS POLITICS

On Jan. 16, a panel of U.S. senators heard testimony from some low-wage federal contract workers such as janitors, security guards and cafeteria workers about how the government shutdown has affected their lives. The following are excerpts from the testimony of some of those workers:

"I'm the head of the household. I have two children on asthma machines that need a machine every four hours. I have an electric bill that's due and is about to be disconnected, a car note that's two months past due, they're about to take my vehicle. I have blood pressure medicine I need to take. I just brought my mother to live with me, because she's losing her eyesight. I don't know why Trump is holding us hostage. I don't care about no wall. He didn't ask me did I want a wall built up. He's a

billionaire. Why shut down the government and take our money to build a wall? All we want to do is work and provide for our family."

"Today I don't have health insurance. I don't have much money to send to my mother, who is in Africa sick in bed. I don't know why Trump or whoever signed with him this shut down; we have to be open right now. I don't want to be homeless, and I'm working 20 years in America."

"We don't want it to get worse than what it is. Anything can happen. You don't mess with people's money and people's family. A lot of people live paycheck to paycheck and no one is helping them."

## Donate to prisoner subscription fund

The *People's Tribune* mails complimentary subscriptions to prisoners. The paper is a bright light for those who are behind bars.

Won't you donate \$20 or more to fund a prisoner's subscription?

This note from a prisoner says it all:

"Season's greetings. Thank you for allowing me to read your newspaper. I gain insight and education from your articles. Please keep me on your mailing list. Thank you. God bless you all."

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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](mailto:info@peopletribune.org) or call 800-691-6888.

— The Editors

# Homeless protesters occupy People's Park

By Sarah Menefee

BERKELEY, CA — In defense of the trees and people's lives, a group of people from 'First they came for the indigenous' and 'First they came for the homeless' and other supporters, mostly homeless, set up a tent occupation at Berkeley CA's People's Park. The Park has been sheltering people for decades, since an historic battle 50 years ago to defend it from development by its owner, the University of California (UC), and keep the green space for people's use. Dozens of people also call it home, a haven from the streets.

Recently, UC announced a plan to build student housing in the park, and began to cut down trees and harass people who lived there. Dozens of trees have been slaughtered so far. One of the protectors, Tanis Higgs, moved onto a platform in one of the trees to protect it from destruction. At 5 a.m. on January 15, 100 to 150 UC and other campus police brutally raided the occupation and arrested six protesters, taking all their survival gear. They were let out of jail at 1 a.m., with no transportation and all their possessions and gear—tents, packs, bedding and life-sustaining medicines—'held for evidence' and not returned to them. This is how homeless people are routinely treated when arrested, but with

extra vengeance.

This was an interview I did with several residents of the protest camp a few days before the raid. A passerby had given the people yellow vests: they are truly part of an international resistance against a destructive system that needs to be resisted and overturned. The struggle continues!

"I left home because of abuse at home and at school, and ended up in People's Park at the age of 14, and have lived here or in the area, on the streets, ever since. I was considered borderline autistic but I have a higher IQ than Tesla. What could I have become if I'd had the right care? When I got to the Park I met Hate Man, and he made me what I am today, able to talk and organize. We were active when they tried to pass Measure S here in Berkeley [a measure that criminalized homeless people for survival activities. David led a march to City Hall in protest]. UC has several other properties they could put the housing on but they want to attack and clear out the Park."

— David Joshua Teague  
(Ninja Cat)

"I haven't gotten any sleep because they are constantly waking us. They come at 10 at



James Cartmill, Michelle Lot and Tanis Higgs are three of the defenders of the historic People's Park in Berkeley, CA, where trees are being felled so it can be built on. Before the protest was raided, Tanis tree-sat one of the trees slated to be destroyed. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

night to say the park is closed, then at midnight again just to harass us, then again in the morning, just for their own sport. We came here to defend the trees, stop the destruction of trees and protect this park that belongs to the people."

— Michelle Lot

"I helped build this park back in the day when I was a street kid. I've lived all around here, and now I'm back in the Park to help protect it for others."

— Christopher Kohler

"What we're being told is that there are several other properties they [UC] have they could build on. But they want to do this one to eliminate the place where we live. It looks like people are going to go to jail on this thing. They took our protest sign this morning. I've been coming here for years, when I'm not traveling with my jewelry business I hang out here. I would hate to see this park go, it is my safe place when I'm in the Bay Area. What's going on is really bad, they are going to be ripping up people's home. Tupac Shakur

says 'I'd rather die like a man than live like a coward.' That's how I feel about this."

— "Spange"

down a wet alley  
from a bright ATM

someone curled-up sleeps  
with nothing over him

— Sarah Menefee

## National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

### Homeless deaths memorialized on the longest night of the year

By Igmarr Rodas

COUNTY OF ORANGE, CA— The year 2018 has been hard for the homeless community in Orange County, CA. A federal lawsuit over a homeless encampment is in the center of controversy because of The Orange County Board of Supervisors' vote to evict the homeless from The Riverbed, city officials in Santa Ana evicting the homeless from the Civic Center Business District, the opening of shelters and forcing the homeless into shelters or coerced with threats of arrest by police departments, including a Santa Ana Police Department and Anaheim Police Department, among others. Also for evicting homeless people from parks like Maxwell Park in the City of Anaheim and transporting them by bus to a new shelter. All this was remembered at a memorial held at Anaheim Cemetery to remember the 244 official homeless deaths, not including the uncounted

homeless deaths.

One of the deaths was Betty Jane Willis, a 60s soul singer admired by Bill Medley of The Righteous Brothers. A co-founder of the grassroots group, "The Civic Center Roundtable," Robert Jr. Wanamaker pressured The County of Orange Supervisors to open the doors to The Courtyard Transitional Shelter in Santa Ana. A homeless family of four, including children, who were found dead in a van, were among the deaths in 2018.

The memorial was organized by Tim Houchen (Civic Center Roundtable former member) and founder of Hope4Restoration. Among those remembering the ones that have passed were family members, friends and county officials represented at the memorial.

While shelters are short-term solutions for the homeless, the lack of affordable housing, adequate long-term housing, and mismanagement of funds by nonprofits as



Homeless person's Memorial Day altar, Orange County, CA. Remembered were the 244 official homeless deaths, not including the uncounted homeless deaths. PHOTO/OC STREETSHEETS PHOTOGRAPHY

well as by the local government, has put more people living on the streets. Some of them have jobs but can't afford a basic living.

Orange County officials need to disabuse their constituents of the myth that homeless people are intruders who can

simply be ordered away. The hard reality is that homelessness is a homegrown problem, and putting a dent in it is a long, slow, expensive process—and everyone in Orange County needs to realize that.

## 'A dangerous trajectory'

By Suzanne McDonald

Othring, verbal and physical assaults, laughing at victims of economic displacement, wanting to strip people of their possessions and their dignity, describing people as latent threats, the reduction of a group of people to encroachers and criminals, using language such as "bum" and "street person" and "the homeless problem"... and the increasing approval and enforcement of these views by those in power... normalizing living without housing, normalizing dying from exposure and untreated illness, not recognizing assaults as hate crimes, the use of ordinances that criminalize feeding people, criminalizing resting in public view, using the police to force them to "move along" from public spaces, shops and restaurants, using state violence to "sweep" them from the area and destroy their personal possessions, the use of prisons and other massive facilities as shelters, normalizing these specialized shelters that dictate and enforce "rules" and separate their families, while using zoning restrictions to keep people from choosing or providing other options for shelter...

You tell me what that looks like.

Genocide and crimes against humanity never emerge overnight. They're the product of years of Othring and socially acceptable hatred/mistrust until it comes to a point where violence is seen as a logical next step to "solving the problem" of people whose humanity has been taken away from them.

We are on a dangerous trajectory.

## 'We can all fight together in this struggle' says homeless mother

These powerful words on women and homelessness were sounded from the stage at this year's Women's March in San Francisco:

"As the rain pours, I think about the homeless pregnant woman who sleeps outside our office. How in the city if you are pregnant and homeless you still can't get into the family shelter till your third trimester. No matter how badly we want to get her into housing, it will be years. She holds her belly and waits, I think about how she will still be sleeping on our doorstep tonight. When I am asked, 'How can we end homelessness?' I say, 'Ask homeless women.' Homelessness is a women's issue!"

— Sam Lew, Coalition of Homelessness

"I'm a San Francisco native, right up by the Fillmore, and I'm pregnant, homeless in the city. Real talk: I never thought I'd be homeless with my daughter, let alone work on Pro C [which taxes large corporations for homeless services], but I helped on that and that is empowering. I did this with my daughter, passing out flyers, 'cause I wanted her to see what true activism is. Around this city it's hard when there are no real resources offered for homeless mothers and families. There's no shame in being homeless, the only shame is in the city not doing enough for people. This is my city, I was born and raised here, and I don't plan on leaving here. I am in this struggle every single day, I'm trying to make it better for not just my daughter but for everybody in this city. We can all fight together in this struggle!"

— Tracey Mixon, a Peer Organizer with the Coalition of Homelessness



Speakers and members of The Village, an independent women and children's tent community, gather for a MLK Jr. Day celebration and speak-out at Oscar Grant Plaza in downtown Oakland, CA. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

## Resisting corporate displacement in Silicon Valley

By Daniel Gonzalez and Liz Gonzalez

SAN JOSE, CA — December 4, 2018 was a preview of what politics may look like under Google corporate domination. To the local community, it confirmed where the city government's loyalties lie, and just how far it will go to exclude residents and repress dissent. After entering an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement in June 2017, and signing Non-Disclosure Agreements with Google, the San José City Council was about to vote unanimously to sell precious downtown public lands to the company for a new 20,000-employee tech campus.

The year leading up to the vote featured a public process designed to mislead residents and keep us detached from those driving the proposal. The Council handpicked a public engagement committee that included business associations, non-profits and even Google, but lacked representation from residents, especially those at greatest risk like renters and unhoused people. City-sponsored community meetings were held, but were poorly advertised and designed to mislead attendees and poach consent. Google actively worked behind the scenes to cre-



Police officers remove audience members and stifle dissent against Google's plan to displace low-income community members in San Jose, CA in December, 2018. PHOTO/SERVE THE PEOPLE SAN JOSE

ate fractures between community organizations and residents, using donations and even volunteer work. It was no surprise that on the day of the vote, recipients of Google gifts were virtually the only in-favor speakers during public comment.

The views of hundreds of thousands of residents who would be displaced by a Google campus were channeled through the many

speakers who shared stories, fears and frustrations directed at a City Council that has prioritized pro-corporate policy and development for years. The meeting featured a heavy police presence, and several rows of seating in the center of the chamber were sealed off with police tape for no apparent reason. A new no-backpack policy in Council Chambers was instituted without warn-

ing, effectively excluding many unhoused and public-transit-riding residents.

Mayor Sam Liccardo enforced a code of conduct, removing from the chamber anyone who clapped, booed, or cheered. As the night wore on, tensions boiled over, with anger manifesting in chanting, clapping and cursing at Council members. The outrage reached its peak

when the Mayor evacuated the chamber and adjourned the meeting after eight community members chained themselves to their chairs. After police removed and arrested the protesters, the City Council resumed the meeting after banning the public from reentering. This decision inspired spontaneous protests around the outside of the chamber that lasted into the next morning. In the end, the only way the San José City Council could sell public lands to Google was in an empty chamber surrounded by police, and the local media was finally there to see it firsthand.

Many people around us feel overwhelmed by the crushing pressure of the present economic situation, but actions like this one inspire them to push back. Our strengths have always been our humanity and our numbers, and together we can stifle the rising tide of inequality and greed. Google was recently defeated in Kreuzberg, Berlin, where residents forced an abandonment of plans for a campus on properties already owned by the company. The battle against this sale of San Jose's public land was lost, but the war for San José's soul is far from over.

# Congress, fund the Black Lung Disability Fund!

*Editor's note: The People's Tribune spoke with Michael Whitten, a former coal miner who, in December, helped organize a protest in West Virginia to pressure Congressional leaders to fund the Black Lung Disability Fund. The fund covers medical costs for miners with Black Lung who worked for bankrupt companies. But the industry is balking at the small tax they must pay.*

## Interview with Michael Whitten

Every time I've been to D.C. and I see coal miners trying to get healthcare and pensions, and they say they got it, they didn't. It was only a temporary fix. No one is doing anything. The Democrats' bill wanted to expand and not let the cuts happen but the bill didn't go anywhere. As far as I know the Republicans didn't have anything in their bill. There's two bills in our state right now, but I'm not sure what either will take care of. Our State Senator Stollens admitted Black Lung is an epidemic. He said West Virginia should learn from



Coalminers, including Michael Whitten (second from left), protest to demand that Congress provide monies for the Black Lung fund. PHOTO/CHAD CARPENTER

the Hawks Nest Tunnel disaster where people died from an industrial job where they had no ventilation. They'd shoot into that tunnel, which was solid rock, and then go back in there. They had no fans. Guess a couple hundred people died. There's a graveyard up there. This was in the late 30s or 40s.

They just started a Black Lung Association near me in Madison, WV. Guys talk about how they had Black Lung benefits and then get a letter saying,

"You won't be receiving it anymore; state funds ran out, but you can reapply later." It's confusing. Most of them had all the tests and were told, "You have some Black Lung." But most are not receiving anything. Many are getting older, their health getting worse.

Black Lung is affecting younger miners. I think 20% have it. I can tell you one story of a guy that got Black Lung. I'm real good friends with his dad, a retired coal miner. The dad said the doctor told

my son he had to quit working in the mines. Later his lungs completely quit, collapsed. He was in the hospital for about a month. He went back to work, had three episodes, and his doctor told him if he didn't quit the mines, he wouldn't be able to work in three years. He's 39 years old.

When non-union mines came in here in the late 70s and 80s, mainly Massey, lowered the standards. Now the UMWA just signs a contract for whatever the compa-

nies want. Ninety percent of these mines don't even have bathhouses now; guys drive home with filthy clothes with black faces. They give ½ hour pay to compensate. They don't care about their employees.

Workers were putting up a fight, making a stand against the nonunion plants, and then a judge gave an injunction that they couldn't picket any more. Just like how the attorney general threatened our teachers.

I worked with guys at a company that went bankrupt. These guys worked 1½ months and never got paid, but the company gave their foreman and white-collar people big bonuses right before filing for bankruptcy. Terrible.

Now I've heard hard numbers that to mine one ton of coal, if it took six people it would only take one at a mountain top removal job. And look at what they do with the mountain top removal. Go to [coalrivermountainwatch.org](http://coalrivermountainwatch.org) for pictures.

Part 2 of this interview will appear in the next edition of the People's Tribune.

# A poisoned southern town fights for clean water

*Editor's note: Deanna Miller Berry of Denmark Citizens for Safe Water speaks with the People's Tribune about the fight for safe water in Denmark, SC. The article was written prior to the city's highly successful "Water for Humanity" protest on January 26. The People's Tribune was there to support and report on the effort, and will have more about it in upcoming issues.*

## By Sandy Reid

"Never would I have dreamed we would be the only city that has poisoned our citizens with non-EPA approved chemicals in the water," says Deanna Miller Berry. "We rank in the top two in South Carolina for kidney disease, cancer, and dermatitis issues. We rank as one of three poorest cities in the state, and number one for having the heaviest population of African Americans and minorities who live within the city limits."

Complaints about the water in Denmark have been going on for years. Dr. Marc Edwards of Virginia Tech, who has made numerous trips to Denmark testing water in people's homes, has offered to test the town's wells, but the city's mayor refuses. In addition to findings of lead and other toxins, reports from the University of South Carolina say that residents have been drinking water

that contains HaloSan, a chemical used in pools and spas to disinfect and kill bacteria in water, and that it has been used for ten years. HaloSan is classified by the EPA as a pesticide. It has never been tested on humans or animals. After its discovery last summer, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the EPA did a cease and desist order to force the city to stop using the chemical.

"Now the city is blaming DHEC and DHEC is blaming the city," says Deanna. "No one wants to own up and accept responsibility. Ours is the first time that public officials have used this poison—and that's what it is—to treat and sanitize its water system. The key thing is that neither the city of Denmark nor DHEC informed the citizens that we've been using a chemical that we should not have used. Our right to be informed was violated. In addition, no one has been able to tell us how much of the chemical was injected into the water."

"Prior to 2013, the city was failing miserably with EPA fines. DHEC said that as long as you pay your fines, we're not going to take this to the next level. Suddenly, in 2013, after the mayor was re-elected, the city started paying their fines. Then they started passing tests and got

awards from DHEC for fixing their water infrastructure issues. But neither DHEC nor the city could provide us with proof that they did fix it. They're getting these awards, but the citizens are still sick. They're still experiencing the brown water, and the price gouging on water bills as high as \$1,000. When you challenge the bills you are basically told to shut up. Now we found out that HaloSan eats up lead, E-coli, arsenic, bacteria, iron, manganese, any kind of contaminate. So on record, there's no proof. But our infrastructure has endured 10 years of sitting in this bleach chemical, and is completely corroded. As soon as water hits our infrastructure, we're contaminated. The only way to get rid of it is to get rid of the pipes.

"We're a city of maybe 3,200 people. The only thing we know to do is unite, stand up and fight the legal way and get as many people as we can to join our fight. So on January 26 we're sounding the alarm! We're having a big protest and rally — Water for Humanity, Justice for Denmark. We're fighting for safe drinking water; for those who are responsible to face criminal charges for the cluster of deaths and illnesses from the water; and we're fighting for those who have died. We're fighting for justice. We're the mighty 3,000!"



"Water for Humanity" protest in Denmark, SC, on January 26 organized by Denmark Citizens for Safe Water (DCFSW); the group also distributes donated water to the poisoned town. Top: Crowd marching. PHOTO/BOB LEE Middle: Deanna Miller Berry of DCFSW addresses the crowd. PHOTO/MIRACLE CHATMAN, HOUSE OF HARLEY RADIO Bottom: Unloading donated water. PHOTO/BOB LEE

# If It Was Your Child... 60 children get cancer



**If It Was Your Child** co-founders, Kari Rhinehart and Stacie Davidson, took demands for TCE regulation to D.C. in August. PHOTO/DONATED

By Marilyn Hunter

JOHNSON CO., IN — “We are done begging,” said Kari Rhinehart, mother of a 13-year-old who died of brain cancer in 2014 and a member of the 6000-member

group, *If It Was Your Child*. “We are demanding the EPA finish what it started and place these restrictions on TCE and other dangerous toxins.”

After almost 60 children developed cancer in the small Indianapolis suburb of Franklin, families started to ask what was killing their children. Tests showed the carcinogen trichloroethylene (TCE) from an industrial site was releasing vapors into homes. TCE is a cleaning and industrial degreaser. Levels were more than 250 times the state limit around a Franklin sewer, with a plume of contamination stretching outward.

The EPA ordered TCE cleaned up decades ago, but one federal administration after another failed to follow through. The previous administration proposed a “review” of TCE limits—a slow process that is almost always derailed by corporate opposition. So parents watched their children die without knowing why.

Families are now calling for an EPA inves-

tigation like the one that looked into the government’s slow response to Flint’s water crisis. As inadequate as *that* process has been, Franklin families now face *increased* opposition from the administration that many county voters supported in the 2016 election, hoping for some kind of change. However, the group resists being divided by party politics, noting that both parties have let the cleanup fall by the wayside.

Across party lines, families oppose the corporate agenda and demand real and effective health and environmental regulations. The government has to protect people from TCE contamination! Accusing the EPA of “serious mismanagement” and “significant delays,” many traveled to Washington several times after the dangers became clear last summer to prevent even weaker limits on TCE.

EPA confirmed the danger and began preparation for air-cleaning devices for homes. That action has now been indefinitely postponed. TCE levels still expose hundreds of thousands of workers, and now home exposures like in Franklin are excluded from review.

Some in the county talk about getting the federal government out of people’s lives. At the same time, there are calls to get the EPA to step in and end the contamination. Franklin’s Republican Mayor summed it up, saying, “When it comes to public health, we can go against party lines. And I don’t agree with trying to roll back the EPA’s role.” He added, “Back in the day, there weren’t any rules. That’s why there was so much contamination.”

## Save the Earth – Save Humanity

On these pages are stories of the peoples’ fight to save the Earth and humanity from corporate destruction. Please send your stories to [info@peopletribune.org](mailto:info@peopletribune.org) or contact us at 800-691-6888.

## Water and environmental protesters head for trial



As part of Poor Peoples Campaign 40 Days of Action on June 4, 2018, activists from around the state joined the protest at Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in Lansing, MI. The agency was the primary culprit in the ongoing Flint water disaster. Dozens were arrested and 13 will stand trial on March 5 of this year. PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN



On January 18, workers in Detroit rallied to demand Mayor Duggan and Detroit City Council, and Mayor Majewski and Hamtramck City Council take control of the Poletown plant in Hamtramck and convert it to public use to create thousands of green union jobs. Thirty-seven years ago, the City of Detroit invoked eminent domain to gift the entire historic Poletown neighborhood in Hamtramck to GM, wiping out an entire community so the company could build the factory it intends to shutter. GM is ending production of the Volt and other smaller-sized sedans while reinvesting in gas-guzzling pickup trucks and SUVs. GM has abdicated even the most basic of commitments to the well-being of our society and the planet. It is time that we stand up to these reckless, corporate bullies and demand our elected leaders take the bold and decisive action we need in order to [avert climate catastrophe] and survive as a species. We could start that green revolution in the Rust Belt, by making Detroit the engine of a Green New Deal! – Green New Deal Coalition

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

## Don’t bail out PG&E, make it public!

By Cathy Talbott

With cries from the public of “shut it down” and “democratize our energy, don’t bail out PG&E” and signs that read “Justice for Paradise” and “Make PG&E Public,” 100 individuals were given a minute each to voice their opinions at a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) meeting in November, 2018 about the fate of the near bankrupt private utility company. The company supplies natural gas and electricity to 16 million Californians. Notorious for not putting adequate money into its energy infrastructure, PG&E was found negligent for a gas explosion that killed eight people in 2010, faces billions in liabilities in the 2017 fires, and may face criminal penalties over last year’s Camp Fire that incinerated 86 people, burned 14,000 homes, left 200 missing, and scorched 153,000 acres. The CPUC is thinking of breaking up the utility, but keeping it privately owned. The public is demanding a publicly owned and community-operated utility.

Below are some of the com-

ments and suggestions from the people directly affected by the recent Camp Fire who were present at the CPUC meeting.

“We will not be silenced as long as people are continually poisoned and killed. PG&E and YOU are guilty!”

“This is the second straight year we’ve had to choke on the carbonized remains of our neighbors! It’s evil but not illogical because if you’re going to continue to bail out PG&E to provide public money to socialize their losses, what is their incentive to act safely? There is none. Hold them responsible by not bailing them out for killing our neighbors and destroying our homes!”

“Why do we have to pay for millions of dollars of PG&E ads on TV? They’re a monopoly. You (CPUC) are enablers of PG&E and all these corporations to make as much profit as they can regardless of our health or even our lives.”

(Young mom holding her 20-month-old son): “He’s already had to breathe in toxic smoke from two fires caused by PG&E. I also work at two schools in my neighborhood in Fruitvale and Oakland

serving low-income kids. They’re running around on the playground with no masks; going back into schools with no air filters; then going to homes with no filters! I’m terrified for his future and all of their futures. Then I found out the CEO of PG&E got over \$8 million last year that could have gone to protecting kids in my neighborhood from the smoke. It could have gone to switch to renewables faster so their futures wouldn’t go up in smoke. Then I found out we families have to pay for that negligence instead of that CEO; that’s crazy to me! Our kids need a safer, cleaner future protected from climate change. The state needs to take over the utilities and make them public!”

“Electricity is a human right. It needs to be run for people, not for profit.”

“We want the utility to be taken over entirely as a public power agency with the community controlling its infrastructure. Public power already exists in other areas and rates are much lower. Sixty percent of electric utilities in this country are publicly run. Why not PG&E?”

# Refugee and migrant caravan: *Report from the Border*

By Rabbi Brant Rosen

CHICAGO, IL — In December I traveled to the San Diego-Tijuana border where I had the honor of participating in “Love Knows No Borders”—an interfaith action sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and co-sponsored by a myriad of faith organizations from across the country. More than 400 people gathered to take a moral stand against our nation’s immigration system.

The action set three demands before the U.S. government: to respect people’s human right to migrate, to end the militarization of border communities, and to end the detention and deportation of immigrants.

As we approached, we could see a tangle of barbed concertina wire laid out in front of the fence. Behind the wire stood a phalanx of heavily armed border patrol. When we reached the edge of the wire, some of the clergy formed a semi-circle and offered blessings for the migrants. As prayers were spoken aloud, border patrol officers used a megaphone to inform us that we were trespassing on federal property and that we needed to move to the back of the wire. I recited the Priestly



**Demonstrators in solidarity with migrants and refugees at the border in December.** PHOTO/MARGARITO DIAZ

Benediction in Hebrew and English (“May God bless you and keep you ...”), doing my best to articulate the prayer between the voices of border patrol barking out orders (a ceremonial first for me).

When our blessings were over, we went back to the other

side of the barbed wire and those of us in front formed a line directly facing the guards. A border patrol officer repeatedly told us to leave, adding that he did not want any violence—an ironic statement considering that he and the rest of the riot-gear clad border patrol officers wielded auto-

matic weapons in front of our faces. We began to chant freedom chants and held the line, even as the border patrol officers inched forward and started to push us back.

Eventually, protesters who did not yield were grabbed, pulled to the border patrol’s side of the line and arrested. Most men were thrown to the ground and held down with their faces in the sand while their hands were bound together with plastic ties... Eventually I dropped to my knees and was grabbed and pinned down by two border patrol officers. They allowed me to stand of my own accord and led me to the line of arrested protesters who were arrayed along a fence, waiting to be placed into vans.

Many noted the ferocity of the border guard’s response to our prayerful, nonviolent demonstration. Many of us—in particular the white, privileged members of our delegation—agreed that we had gained a deeper sense of empathy and solidarity with our migrant neighbors, a stronger understanding of the toxic effects of militarization on our border communities, and a more profound conviction than ever that we must all fight for a nation that receives immigrants with open

hearts and open doors.

We are, needless to say, far from such a moment at present. True, the immigrant justice crisis in this country began well before the election of Donald Trump—but it is no less true that in Trump’s America, the challenge facing the immigrant justice movement is no longer political immigration reform, but literal triage. In my work supervising immigrant justice programs at the AFSC throughout the Midwest, I can attest that the threats facing undocumented immigrants in our country have reached emergency levels.

During our action, I was honored to be able to help shine even a small light on the injustices of a system that rips families apart, allows children to die in ICE custody, and knowingly sends human beings back to countries to their deaths. Given such a reality, each and every one of us who enjoy the privileges granted to us by this system would do well to ask ourselves, “What sacrifices am I ready to make to dismantle this unjust system once and for all?”

*Read a longer version of this piece at [www.peoplestribune.org](http://www.peoplestribune.org)*

## The fight for justice for Laquan continues

By Frank Chapman

*Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from a Facebook post by Frank Chapman after the sentencing of the Chicago cop who murdered Laquan McDonald in 2014, shooting him 16 times. Please send your thoughts and stories about the fight for justice and an end to police violence to [info@peoplestribune.org](mailto:info@peoplestribune.org).*

What happened in the Jason Van Dyke sentencing (sentencing him to just six years and nine months) was a clear and blatant expression of the fact that the powers that be here in Chicago are not intending on ever conceding to our demands for justice. That fascist minded judge, the openly racist defense counsel and the total caving in of the prosecution to the demands of the Van Dyke family and the FOP (Fraternal Order of Police) demonstrate the necessity of intensifying the struggle for community control of the police.

There is no middle ground here. Either we get community control of these trained killers and inveterate violators of our human rights or they will continue to murder and torture us with impunity. And we can see things getting worse in the wake of this travesty of justice if we do not act



**One of many protests for justice in the Chicago police murder of 17 year-old Laquan McDonald in 2014.** PHOTO/BOB SIMPSON

out in protest... We must take this moment to organize our rage into a re-dedication to our struggle to empower the people to hold the police accountable.

We must not just protest in the streets but protest at the polls. We must intensify our efforts to turn these elections into a serious and viable struggle for empowering our people to start controlling those

institutions in our communities which are vital to our health and safety. We must get rid of this racist and corrupt City Council, the judges that protect police criminals and the police who only serve and protect the status quo.

Your voice and vote are needed now more than ever.

Call or text me: (312) 513-3795.

## Voices from the border Donate & Book speakers

Won’t you donate today for a special edition of the *People’s Tribune* and *Tribuno del Pueblo*? The edition will carry the voices of the migrants and also those who recently visited the border to express their solidarity with the people who have been so cruelly displaced by U.S. politics.

To book a speaker who will discuss why this immoral situation exists and what we can do to push our government to respect and uphold the human rights of the migrants, call 800-691-6888 or email [info@speakersforanewamerica.com](mailto:info@speakersforanewamerica.com).

Send donations to:  
People’s Tribune/Tribuno del Pueblo  
PO Box 3524  
Chicago, IL 60654-3524



# Voices of Chicago's candidates

Compiled by Allen Harris

*"My first priority is that the status quo of housing is unbridled development, which is not meeting the needs of most residents. In a community like the 49th Ward, diversity of housing serves a variety of racial, cultural and ethnic groups, it's built on the fact that many people can find a home here and afford to live here. I want to maintain that and manage it so the people who live here now can continue to live here."*

— **Maria Hadden is running for City Council from the 49th Ward**



*"We don't agree with the judge's ruling at all. We feel that what Jason Van Dyke did was to shoot Laquan 16 times. He deserves to spend the rest of his life behind bars. ... Today we didn't get that ruling. Today we got something that we didn't expect to see. Eighty-one months in the Illinois Department of Corrections—that's a slap in the face to us and a slap on the wrist to him."*

— **Activist William Calloway, speaking after Van Dyke's sentencing. Calloway is running for City Council from the 5th Ward**

*"I see a Chicago where it's a city that puts people before profits."*

— **Alderman Susan Sadlowski Garza is running for re-election to the City Council from the 10th Ward**



*"We know a better Chicago is possible. ... [But the city is] ruled by a powerful elite which is really only interested in one thing and that's keeping Chicago open for business. [...] We really need an elected official who understands ... that the resources are there. Right now, they're for the rich, but we need somebody who's going to stand up and make them for us. We need somebody who's going to tell the mayor that segregation is evil. That housing and health care are a human right and that everyone deserves a world-class education."*

— **Colin Bird-Martinez, running for the City Council from the 31st Ward**

*"Housing is a human right. I will make sure development is ethical, equitable, and puts the needs of our neighbors above the interests of big developers and corporations. As a teacher, I have to meet the needs of every child in my classroom. As alderman, I will work to ensure that every resident in the ward has a safe place to live, and every neighborhood in the ward receives services equitably."*

— **Erika Wozniak Francis, running for the City Council from the 46th Ward**



Tamar Manasseh, Chicago mayoral candidate.

## Mayoral candidate seeks peace in Chicago

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — Tamar Manasseh is a mother who has had enough. She has entered the Chicago mayor's race as a write-in candidate. Tamar understands nothing can change in the city until the people wake up and see that they alone have the power to change it. Recently in the Englewood neighborhood where Tamar organizes to bring peace, a young man was shot 17 times. His brother of 14 was killed earlier. Not a single mayoral candidate addressed this horror. Tamar confronts it every day. Through the community efforts of MASK (Mothers and Men Against Senseless Killing) an organization she founded—real progress has been made. By sitting with the youth and sharing food and conversation, a violent South Side Chicago corner changed into one oriented toward peace. MASK under Tamar's leadership has done this through dedication over 3 years

and despite the hostility of the politicians and police of the city.

As poverty deepens in Chicago, development destroys poor communities. The candidates running for mayor are ambitious and/or corrupt. Unlike Tamar, they don't stand in the hurting places making the change. They claim to serve two masters at once.

Tamar's campaign will put the responsibility for saving the city right on us. She will champion that cause. She has stood up to the corrupt politicians repeatedly. They hate her.

We will win with Tamar because after the election We the People of Chicago will have a strong organization across the city with a program for what is needed.

We will create a historic campaign in order to make this happen. Don't throw away your vote. Write in Tamar Manasseh for Mayor of Chicago. If you want change, she's your last best choice!

## Something new struggles to be born in Chicago

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — A pall hangs over the Chicago elections scheduled for February 26. It is the ghost of Laquan McDonald, murdered by former officer Jason Van Dyke, covered up by his fellow officers, elected officials Mayor Rahm Emanuel and ousted State's Attorney Anita Alvarez, and nearly all the members of the City Council. The January 17 exoneration of three other officers who cooked their reports to cover for Van Dyke was followed the next day by Van Dyke being sentenced to fewer

than seven years for the murder.

Police murders, massive school closings, shutting down half the city's mental health facilities, and a housing and homelessness crisis are issues fighting their way into this election cycle. The people, abandoned by their elected leaders, are calling on new forces to answer their demands. The established incumbents, nearly all Democrats, have shown their inability to respond to their constituents. A thousand strings and ropes tie them to the corporations who buy them. On this page you will see some of the new voices who are fight-

ing that old machine. But it's not just about candidates. What's important is that the old political apparatus cannot contain the anger of the people they have discarded. Harold Washington said it best, when he declared about his own candidacy, "It's not the man, it's the movement."

This election, much like the trials associated with Laquan McDonald's murder, is a school for visionaries who want a new society. In those trials, we celebrate that activists fought for and got the release of the murder video as well as drove out of office the police superintendent, the Cook

County state's attorney, and even the mayor of Chicago. We got the first police officer in 50 years convicted of a killing while on duty. But because power does not reside in the grasp of we-the-people, those victories were undermined in the courts. This setback won't stop us. We are now being summoned to answer how we can come together across the city and make our demands the center of what those in the halls of power are debating. Out of the wreckage of the old machine something new is struggling to be born. Working in this election cycle can let us be the midwives of a new day.

# The absolute truth about GM plant closings (Part 1)

By Al Gladtyck

DETROIT, MI — “In 1937, 45,000 people worked for GM in Flint. That number grew to 80,000 in 1978. By 2010, only 8,000 people had a job with GM in Flint.

“In 1979, about 1 million members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) worked in the auto-industry in this country. Today around 140,000 UAW members work in the auto-industry in the United States.

“Since 1979, 267 (60%) auto plants have closed in this country. Of those plant closings, 173 occurred in Michigan and 19 of those closed plants were in Flint.” (“From Sit-Down Strike to Lead Poisoning”)

On Monday November 26, 2018, GM announced that it was not scheduling any future production at five of its factories beginning in 2019. The current UAW contract with GM, Ford and Chrysler expires in 2019 and the current CAW contract expires in 2020.

Three of the factories make cars and two of the factories make transmissions. The car factories are in Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario. The transmission factories are in Michigan and Maryland.

Plant closings are not a new phenomenon. Flint, as pointed out above, is in ruins today as a result of plant closings.

The Detroit-Hamtramck plant

was opened in 1985 and straddles both Detroit and Hamtramck. As a result of the Detroit-Hamtramck opening, the Fleetwood and Cadillac plants in Detroit were closed in 1987.

The Detroit-Hamtramck plant was the result of Chrysler closing its Dodge Main plant in 1979 as a result of the “oil crisis” in the mid-1970s. The 69-year-old plant occupied 67 acres and was located at the fringes of the eastern and southern borders of Hamtramck with Detroit. The “Dodge Main” plant was to be demolished along with the destruction of the Detroit neighborhood north of I-94 and south of Hamtramck and resulting in 532 acres of land dedicated to the GM plan for their new plant.

“It was a simple enough plan, the City announced it would essentially clear-cut 465 acres of land in the center of the city—some 1,500 homes, 144 businesses, 16 churches, a school and a hospital—some 3,500 people were forced out—and turn it over to GM who would build a new Cadillac factory that would employ 6,500 workers.” (Poletown Revisited)

In 2004 the Michigan Supreme ruled that the use of Eminent Domain in “Poletown” was illegal!!!

“The Hathcock Court’s decision to overrule Poletown vindicates an important legal principle to protect people from what the founding fathers called “the



[Above] Protest outside the North American International Auto Show in January about GM’s plans to close five Michigan plants.

[Right] Rally at the GM Poletown plant in Hamtramck. GM used eminent domain to seize the land to build the plant in the 1980s. Fifteen hundred homes, 144 businesses, 16 churches, were bulldozed. GM just announced the plant is scheduled to be closed.

PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM



mischief of faction.” It sends a clear message to other courts that the abuse of eminent domain must be stopped, and that the government’s power to seize property must be limited by effective constitutional restraints. This article discusses the background

and importance of Hathcock, and some of the important matters that must be addressed to further rein in the extreme government power of eminent domain.” (A Gleeful Obituary for Poletown Neighborhood Council v. Detroit, by Timothy Sandefur)

In other words, GM is one of the factions that control the government. We must take control back. If all else fails, use eminent domain to take those acres given to GM back and do something with them for the public good.

## GM should respect workers, says autoworker

Editor’s note: GM autoworker Sean Crawford speaks to media at a protest about GM plant closures outside the Auto Show in Detroit. Crawford has been working at the GM Hamtramck plant, which is among those slated to be closed.

I think the protest is beautiful. The energy level is beautiful. The amount of community support that we’re getting from Canada, from union brothers and sisters from Oshawa, from our union brothers and sisters in Brazil. The community members from all over Detroit are here. It’s a beautiful thing.

Well, it really shows the juxtaposition between the opulence and wealth of certain classes of society with folks like myself and others who are getting laid off and will be affected from these layoffs. And we’re not against charity, we want charity, we want to be helped, but we also don’t want GM employees to become a charity case. We want good jobs here in Detroit.

We’ve been incredibly stressed out. A lot of us are pulling up roots and moving

to other cities, different states. This is my home. I’ve lived here for three years. I love Detroit but now that I have to go to Flint and I don’t want to go and drive two hours every day with all of the traffic.

You need to respect American workers. And not only American workers but workers all over the world that create the products that allow you [GM CEO Mary Barra] to make \$22 million a year. You’re making so much.

You say you come from a working class background and your father was trades. Well, go back to those roots and think about what it was like. Go to a city like Flint or go to a city like Detroit or Hamtramck. See how people are suffering. See the horrible mental disease that



Sean Crawford, GM autoworker facing Hamtramck plant closures, speaks with media at the protest outside the Auto Show in Detroit.

people get from drug abuse that happens when people are denied the opportunity to make a good living and provide for their families. And the crime rates. All that is a direct result from these corporate decisions.

We’re not just numbers. We’re human beings and we deserve to be treated like human beings.

### SPEAKERS FOR A NEW AMERICA

Our speakers bring a message of hope and the possibility of creating a new society whose wealth benefits all.

#### Speakers discuss:

- Fighting Criminalization of the Homeless
- Defense of the Immigrants
- Water Belongs to the People
- Women and the fight for a new society
- Ending Poverty
- Keeping Education Public
- Healthcare for all
- The Rising Police State
- And more

info@speakersforanewamerica.com  
www.speakersforanewamerica.com  
(800) 691-6888



Scenes from the L.A. Teachers strike.

LEFT PHOTO/ROSEMARY LEE. CENTER AND RIGHT PHOTOS/JOE BRUSKY, MTEA

# From WV to LA: Teachers oppose destruction of public schools

*Editor's note: As we go to press, the L.A. teachers strike has been settled. We will have more details in the next issue.*

**By Steven Miller**

The Los Angeles teacher's strike rises to counter the aggressive national campaign for privatization of public schools to make education exclusively serve corporate interests.

This battle to save public schools in the United States is hugely important. Across the country attempts are being made to reorganize public schools into "portfolio schools," charter schools on steroids. These will become a market for vouchers where children are commoditized

as "revenue-producers." Portfolio schools commercialize students and financialize public schools, turning both into commodities to be bought, sold and traded.

Los Angeles is the second largest school district after New York City. It has the greatest number of undocumented students in the U.S. The city has more residents from Mexico than any city in Mexico, except for Mexico City. Los Angeles is part of a unified economic region tied to a globalized border zone. Schools often have 40 students per class and little classroom support.

On both sides of the border, in California, Arizona, and Texas, private corporations make vast profits by jailing or exploiting undocumented children. These

corporations refer to these prisoners as their "inventory." When corporations profit from jailing undocumented students, can we expect that they will adequately educate the same students—or any other child? The result of the invasion of corporate private property into the public realm is disastrous.

A major question is why is this happening in California, where the state's economy is the 5th largest in the world? The ever-increasing expansion of robots in production means less demand for educated workers. Hence capitalism intends to transform public education.

The portfolio plan is to replace the authority of school boards with private educational

management companies. Corporate profit expects to thrive on what is in effect a national system of two-tiered education. Privilege for the rich: small classes, advanced curricula subsidized by the public. Subjugation for the rest: large classes, narrow curricula, and for-profit online programs.

Privatization is the real problem and the LAUSD (Los Angeles Unified School District) is a goldmine for these hedge fund managers. Austin Beutner (superintendent of the LAUSD) has hired Mercury Public Affairs, the same company that helped Flint, Michigan spin the story of poisoning the entire community. Beutner threatens to bankrupt the entire school district by 2020 and sell

it off piece-by-piece. There is no middle ground between corporate interests and human needs. One or the other will win.

We need to challenge the right of corporations to profit from education, and their right to have any say at all in public education. Education is an act of sharing between human beings. It is not for sale. Any attempt to break-up LA schools must be opposed. This issue impinges on and defines the strike and its goals. Every contract issue, every community issue, is affected by this assault of privatization.

The battle against portfolio schools affects every school district and will continue nationally after the UTLA strike is over.

## Louisiana Jim Crow law overturned



**Belinda Parker Brown.**

*Joseph Peery: You just had an election in Louisiana for unanimous juries. Tell us about that.*

**Belinda Parker Brown:** We knocked on doors. We drove people to the polls. We had "get out the vote" rallies. The people came out like never before to vote so we would have the right to a fair trial by a jury of our peers and have a 12-person jury panel.

If you don't know what a 10/2 is, it means you could go to trial and be convicted and sentenced to life in prison with just 10 out of 12 people making that decision. It was crafted so they could lock up especially African American men and throw the key away.

*Joseph: How many prisoners are convicted by 10/2?*

**Belinda:** We have over 2,000 people sitting in these godforsaken hellholes. We won that vote by 64%. The majority of the public did not want this law on the books. So we were successful in getting it changed, but now we have to make it right. And we are going to fight until they get it right. We want the law to

become retroactive so that we can help those people who didn't get a fair trial.

*Joseph: How are prisoners challenging this law?*

**Belinda:** Errol Victor, Sr. was given life for a crime he did not commit. And his case is taking the lead to help the others. And the reason why his case is so significant is because they're going to hear why he should be freed immediately, or given another trial to prove his innocence. On March 18, 2019 there is a hearing to determine this.

*Joseph: What can the public do to help out?*

**Belinda:** We want them to come to 1020 Cambridge Dr., Laplace, LA 70068. We want to pack the courtroom. We want national news. We want social media to come out and support this cause.

*For more info, contact Belinda Parker at 985-503-0626 or e-mail belindabrownlld@yahoo.com. Read the full interview at peopletribune.org.*

## Why is helping people a crime?

Now we face prison for caring for one another... while government abandons us.

An Indiana school superintendent faces felony charges for using her son's insurance to obtain \$233 in medical care for a sick student who couldn't afford it... In another case, volunteers face felony charges for placing food and water in a desert so immigrant families don't die on their long, hot trek to the United States. In St. Louis, people are ticketed for feeding bologna sandwiches to the hungry (they are suing).

A Chicago suburban man was ordered to stop having "slumber parties" for the homeless in his basement on freezing nights because it's a "public safety issue."

Now an Oroville, CA woman is told she is violating an ordinance by allowing folks who lost everything from the Camp Fire to park their trailers on her property. (She plans to fight back.)

We help each other because the government is failing us, and because our morality demands it. What we need is a government that is controlled by the people and reflects our morality, not the immorality of the rich.

# The 'new lead,' PFAS contamination, in Benton Harbor

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — I want to wrestle with you. I want to cry in public. I want to maybe cry out loud. I want to holler out loud. I want to shout out loud and even suggest that America needs a revolution. That is right. A real revolution. A real movement. A national call for a revolution. Where the people take control. Where the people will be housed, fed, clothed and have clean water, without toxins, without lead and without PFAS.

In 2015, lead and copper compliance was tested in Benton Harbor by the city. It was not an honest test. It looked good because the Whirlpool Corporation was trying to sell homes around the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course. The City wanted to please Whirlpool. Not so in 2018 when my testing results (from the University of Michigan Biological Laboratory) found water in multiple

homes above the federal compliance standard of 15ppb of lead, even as high as 120 ppb in several homes. The Black Autonomy Network Community Organization gave out water filters to over 50 homes. One school tested as high as 640 ppb, over 40 times above the federal regulation.

In addition, Jill Ryan of Fresh Water Future and I have had several conversations about the 'new lead' (PFAS). If you followed the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan and elsewhere, this story will certainly ring a bell. But this time the toxin in question from the testing results of Benton Harbor water is not only lead, but a group of chemicals known as PFAS (poly- and perfluorinated alkyl substances.) PFAS are plentiful in our homes and workplaces. They are used to make non-stick cookware, stain-resistant carpeting, food packaging, fire retardants and more. These chemicals are ubiquitous in the environment.

There are three main ways



Rev. Edward Pinkney speaks at a protest in Detroit over water shutoffs in 2016. Rev. Pinkney is available to speak. Call Speakers for a New America at 800-691-6888. PHOTO/DAYMONJHARTLEY.COM

people are exposed to PFAS: 1) by food: chemicals used in food packaging and cookware getting in food we eat. 2) by air: chemicals applied to furniture and clothing getting into the dust and air we breathe. 3) by water: chemicals used in fire-fighting or by industries getting toxins into the water we drink.

The corporations that produce these chemicals are poisoning the water.

The struggle over the water crisis holds lessons for Benton Harbor and the people of America. The fight is a war over whether people will have clean non-toxic water or live under the

heel of open corporate rule. We must confront the corporations and continue to speak truth to power. Never worry about who will be offended; that should be the last thing on your mind if you are speaking truth. Worry about who will be misled or destroyed if you do not speak truth to power.

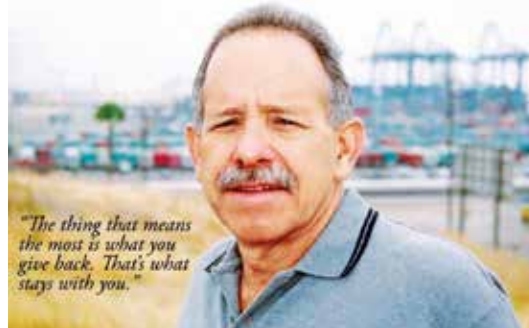
## In Memoriam: Dave Arian 1946-2019

By Richard Monje

It is with a deep sense of loss that we report that longtime union leader and revolutionary Dave Arian passed this last January 2. There is much that can be said about Dave. He was appointed to the Los Angeles Harbor Commission and held various positions with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), including local union and international president. The individual role Dave played in the union is very important to the ILWU and his beloved community of San Pedro, California.

Dave was an activist in the social struggles over many years, gravitating to the civil rights struggles, opposition to the Vietnam War, and support for the United Farm Workers' organizing efforts. Dave played a role in the anti-concessions movement of the 1980s and supported efforts at forming a Labor Party.

Dave played a role in the struggle to form class conscious workers, reflecting a generation of leaders that came out of the union movement and the period of industrialization that shaped two generations of leaders of the working class—Edward Sadlowski, General Baker, and Tony Mazzochi, to name a few. Dave also represented an effort by workers and union leaders to go far beyond the union movement, recognizing that a decent union contract or treading water in defense of union contracts was not enough. Dave's father, Lou, was a longshoreman, and his mother, Rose, was an activist in her own right. They helped Dave reach a level of social understanding to help shape the work-



ing class movement.

Dave was a revolutionary and contributed to the intellectual and practical effort to redistribute the wealth in this country, along with all of the necessary components of social and civil justice for the entire working class. He participated in the struggle of ideas to elevate the working class and its leaders to thinkers and not just fighters. Dave Arian contributed to the People's Tribune.

Dave's contributions in these efforts were indispensable in the struggle to form a revolutionary movement in this country and to advance the debate of defining what fundamental changes are needed in the economic system. Without such contributions, many of us would not be here or the debate not as rich and profound as it is.

Thank you, Dave. We will miss you personally and miss you in the trenches and in the struggle for revolutionary change in this country and world.

Dave Arian is survived by his son Sean, daughter Justine, sister Laraine, five grandchildren and his ex-wife and friend Roxanne.

## Benton Harbor children's garden 'a learning tool'



*Editor's note: Emma Kinnard, a longtime community activist in Benton Harbor, MI, the impoverished city run by the Whirlpool Corp., spoke at a Martin Luther King Day luncheon in Detroit in January. She described her efforts to help young people in Benton Harbor*

*through the Fresh Start Children's Garden that she was instrumental in founding some 12 years ago. Below is an excerpt from her talk.*

"We know the problems we have today. It's time to start working towards making things better for people and for our children for the next generation. With the funding we received [from the Michigan Roundtable] we were able to start this Fresh Start Children's Garden. We are going into our 12<sup>th</sup> season. The impact on the children is to show them we can work together to make something positive happen. For the next phase we want a greenhouse, and we need your support to build the structure. This is a learning tool. This I want you to do for the children."

*Please send donations to Fresh Start Children's Garden, 270 East May Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022.*