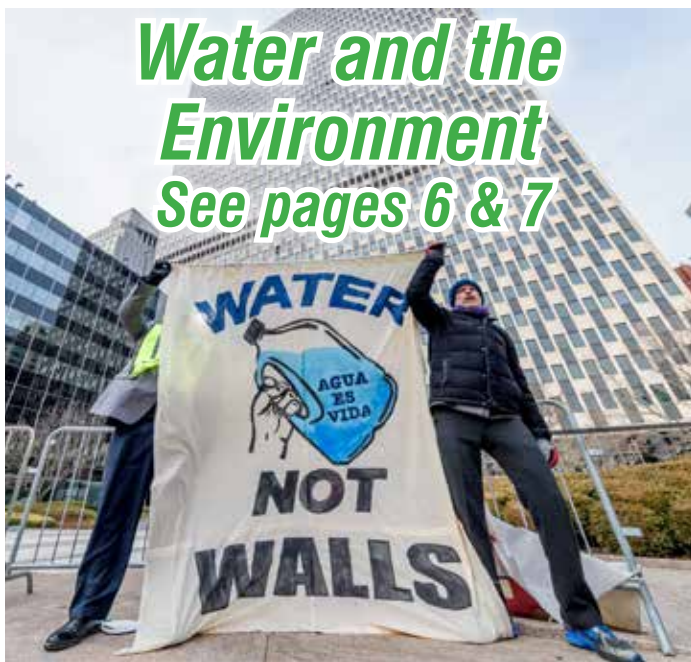




Demonstrators fill Utah's Capitol rotunda to protect Prop 3, the voter approved Medicaid expansion law. Lawmakers defied the voters' will, passing a new bill that restricts coverage. PHOTO/FRANCISCO KJOLSETH, THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

HEALTHCARE NATIONAL EMERGENCY: **THE FIGHT IS ON**



Water and the Environment
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'Where is my tax refund?'
See page 11



Women's Day
See pages 8 & 9

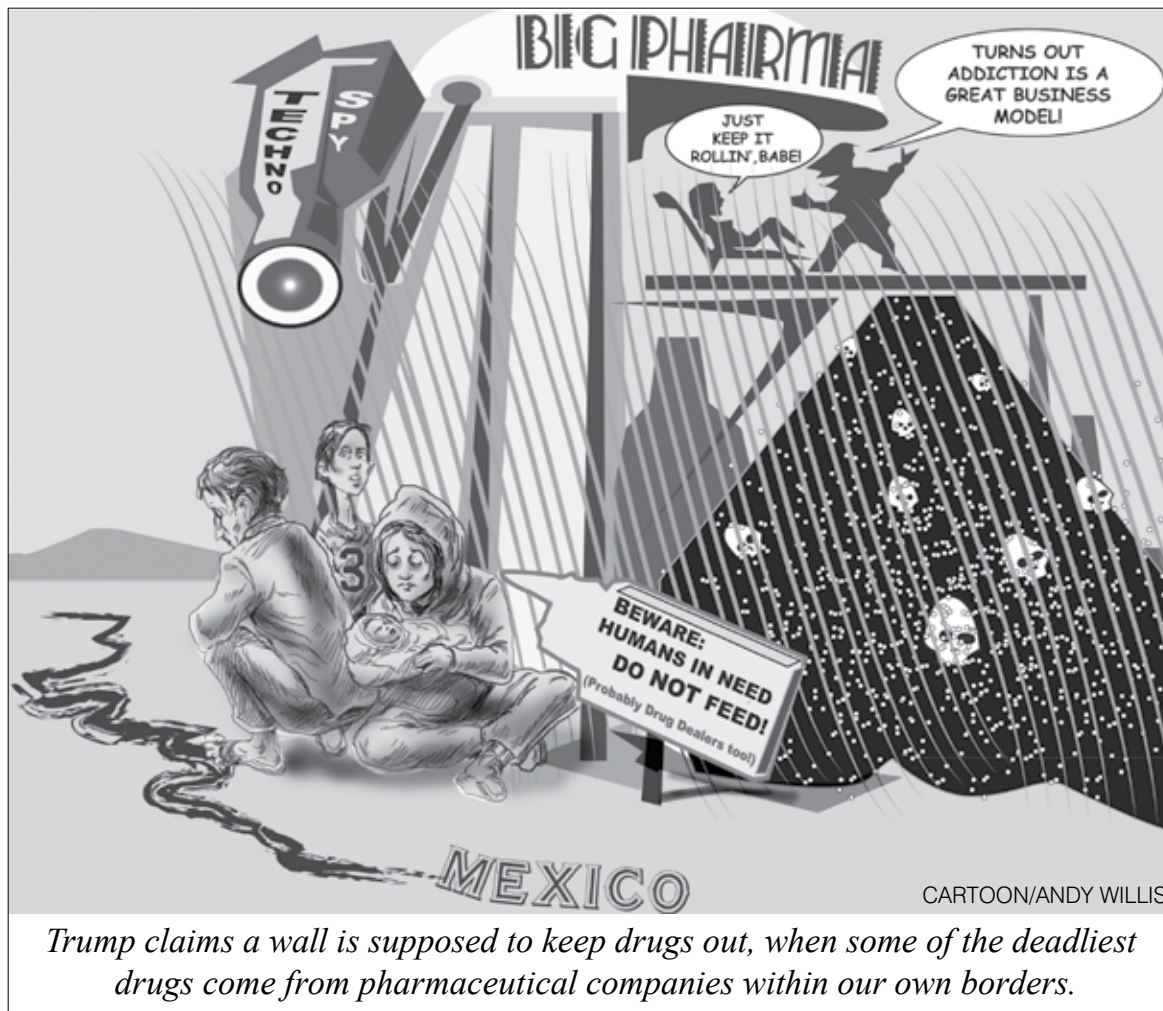
Billionaires, not immigrants, are the real threat

EDITORIAL

Listening to the words coming out of the White House, we have a real emergency on our hands. Rapists, drug lords, and criminal masterminds are threatening the livelihoods of America's working class. But the offenders who most threaten Americans are not crossing the border as refugees and economic migrants—they are the billionaires who run giant corporations, control governments, and dominate the global economy.

The billionaire Trump is pushing fascist propaganda, the dangerous lie that everything bad in America is because of immigrants, in order to declare a national emergency. This is a flat-out fascist power grab, flaunting the democratic process and endangering the lives of immigrants, marking another step toward the billionaires imposing a full-blown dictatorship on the whole country.

The threat of the boogeyman “criminal immigrant” is created to distract us. We are supposed to believe Trump cares about keeping out rapists, when he himself has been accused of sexual assault over a dozen times and still has not been held accountable. And a wall supposed to keep drugs out, when some of the deadliest drugs come from pharmaceutical companies within our own borders; the Sackler family makes billions of dollars off oxycontin sales and the opioid epidemic, which claims tens of thousands of lives every year. Of course, most people with real power are able to keep out of the criminal justice system, but even still it's alarming the number of corporate, financial, and political elites that cycle from public office then through criminal courts with a slap on the wrist,



Trump claims a wall is supposed to keep drugs out, when some of the deadliest drugs come from pharmaceutical companies within our own borders.

then on to private enterprise, then back into office; a revolving door of corruption.

How is it that the ruling elites are able to so effectively monger anti-immigrant fears, when clearly they are the ones we need to truly fear? Study after study shows that immigrant communities are safer and experience less crime, on average, than communities with few immigrants. CEOs automating their workforce as well as moving their operations overseas have robbed people of more jobs in the U.S. than a fictional “invasion” (immigration rates are down in recent years). If there is a national emergency that our country faces, it is that billionaires are actively destroying our society and the environ-

ment. They are scapegoating immigrants to impose fascism upon us all.

The billionaires ignore the real dangers people face—they don't value our lives, and they don't want us to value our own lives either. They promote and enable violence in our country, and they ignore the widespread hunger, lack of healthcare, and homelessness. This is a culture of fascism, born and bred in this country.

The existential threat we face is not caused by anyone from outside of this country. It's those at the top, the billionaires and the politicians they control, who sow division among the working class and watch as we kill ourselves with the guns they sell us,

poison ourselves with the drugs they push on us, and freeze to death while millions of homes stand empty.

There is a moral outrage building, based on the goodness of people who simply want to live and let live, who can't stand to see the way their fellow human beings are treated in a system run by billionaires. We unite with and defend immigrants as a way of defending us all. It's the right thing to do. As the great poet June Jordan wrote, “We are the one's we've been waiting for.” We are the ones who can, and will, remake this mess into the world we need and deserve. We are in motion, and as we build momentum, no billionaire will be able to stop us.

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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.

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

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Healthcare national emergency: *The fight is on*

COVER STORY

It is no surprise that health care was the No.1 issue in the midterm elections and promises to remain the most important issue in the 2020 campaigns as the fight for health care heats up.

In the midterms, 60% of voters in Idaho and 53% in Utah passed ballot measures to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Now, political “leaders” are assaulting democracy and defiantly rolling back expansion in Utah with the blessings of the Trump administration as they seek to please the health industry rather than the people. But people aren’t taking it.

Americans pay more for health care than anywhere in the developed world and get the worst care. Our for-profit system leaves millions of us literally begging for our lives. Millions more lose their lives as the care they desperately need is denied. Yet there is plenty of health care that could be distributed to all through a single-payer Improved Medicare For All system (without the private insurance companies), and mil-



Demonstrators at the Utah capitol fight to protect the health care law that voters passed in the midterm elections to expand Medicaid to those in need. Lawmakers defied the voters’ will, passing a new bill that restricts coverage for tens of thousands.
PHOTO/PROP 3: UTAH DECIDES

lions of Americans are determined to fight for it.

The following statements are from a few of the thousands of Americans involved in the fight for a life saving health care system:

“I know of people with diabetes literally dying because they cannot afford their insulin. Profiting off sick people is sick. ... The

money is there, we just don’t have our priorities straight.

“Insurance companies’ requirements are evil. ... They make money by denying coverage. Doctors have to fight with them for the procedures that they think are best for the patients. I can’t stand on the sidelines any more even though I have insurance. Everybody needs it. It is the moral thing to do.”

“Medicare and Medicaid are the most popular health plans in the country. You’re already paying. Why not pay just a tiny bit more and have it now instead of waiting until you’re 65? And why not do it for everybody?”

In spite of the stated intent of the ACA, two thirds of bankruptcies are due to high medical

ills and related costs. And medical expense is a common cause of homelessness.

While the Trump administration and Republicans in several states are cutting Medicaid, threatening to gut protections for the more than 61 million Americans with pre-existing conditions, and allowing insurers to peddle stripped-down policies that offer no real protection, Congress is debating a new Medicare For All bill.

However, this vision of a health care system that can truly meet the needs of all the people is up against the powerful Medical-Industrial Complex which encompasses nearly one fifth of the U.S. economy and their power brokers in the Democratic Party establishment as well as in the Republican Party.

These forces will attempt to divide us, to throw dust in our eyes, in order to undermine our efforts to forge unity around this most basic human right to health care. We cannot lose sight of the goal. We must gather our forces, keep our eyes on the prize: a government-funded health care system based on human need, not corporate profit. And we must demand everybody in, nobody out!

Will of the people violated in Utah health care fight

Editor’s note: Utah voters, morally opposed to people in need going without healthcare, passed Prop 3 to expand Medicaid. Lawmakers overturned the legislation, voting for a new bill that eliminates coverage for tens of thousands.

“This vote is a shocking display of disrespect for Utah voters. This bill eliminates coverage for tens-of-thousands of Utahns in need and leaves billions of our tax dollars in Washington. This is not what we voted for.”

— Andrew Roberts, spokesperson for Utah Decides Healthcare

“The Utah legislature’s disregard of the decision of Utah voters is an affront to the principles of American democracy. Fifty-three per-

cent of Utah voters chose to implement Prop 3, full Medicaid expansion. That’s 59% of legislative districts, with an amazing 75% voter turnout. When legislators suggest voters didn’t understand what they were choosing they insult their constituents’ intelligence and moral courage. I hope voters will remember in 2020 who represented them and who didn’t.”

— Paul Gibbs said he would have died had it not been for Medicaid and Medicare. He became an activist because he wanted everyone to be entitled to life.

“Our rulers don’t want any upstarts thinking they can vote and get away with it. They all have elections coming up. ... Vote them out!”

— Facebook discussion

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 or call 800-691-6888.

— The Editors

An open letter to President Trump about freedom

Mr. Trump, you recently declared that America “will never be a socialist country.” You said, “We are born free, and we will stay free.”

But how “free” are the common people of America? Fifty percent of Americans live in poverty or near-poverty. One in six Americans faces hunger each day. Nearly one third of our people either have no health insurance or inadequate insurance.

Each year, 3.5 million Americans experience homelessness, including more than a million children. Over 7 million are at imminent risk of being homeless. Jobs have been disappearing, wages have stagnated for years, and the cost of living continues to rise. Meanwhile the value of public assistance has dropped, and it’s harder for people to get.

But public assistance is easy for big business to get. Many employees at corporations such as Amazon, Walmart, Burger King, McDonald’s and American Airlines are paid so little, they rely on public assistance programs to get by. Walmart gets a \$6.2 billion-a-year subsidy from government in the form of public assistance for Walmart employees. And 52% of all fast-food workers rely on public assistance. It’s great that these workers can get this help, but clearly the people are subsidizing the profits of big business.

Countless other government subsidies go to corporations and billionaires. Look at your 2017 tax cuts—65% of it will go to the richest fifth of Americans. And incidentally, Mr. Trump, what about the \$885 million in tax breaks, grants and other subsidies that you received for your luxury apartments, hotels and office buildings in New York?

While these public subsidies are not real socialism, it certainly looks like you and your billionaire buddies enjoy at least a form of socialism, and it doesn’t seem to have restricted your freedom any. What we, the people, need is a government that will kick the wealthy out of the public trough and instead guarantee the people’s freedom and well-being at least as well as government has done for you and your rich friends.

Sincerely,
The American People

‘What do we do?’ ask people made homeless by monster fires

By Ben Schlotthauer

CHICO, CA — Four months — yet it feels like it’s been forever since the Camp Fire ravaged the tight-knit community of Paradise, CA. The fire, which started on November 8 of 2018, practically wiped out the small town in a matter of hours. The citizens of this once bustling little town are still dealing with the aftermath. Many have had no choice but to move down the hill to the city of Chico, or pack up their belongings and move away from the North State. However, there are some who haven’t been so lucky and have been displaced indefinitely by this horrific event. In the days and weeks after the fire, tent camps popped up around Chico, one even taking place next to the Walmart parking lot. In an NPR article from February 9, 2019, the author Kirk Siegler addresses the looming issue of when residents can move back in. According to FEMA, the area is still unlivable and the debris from over 19,000 structures will take at least a year

to clean up.

Currently, FEMA is investing \$1.7 billion to aid in the cleanup process. Many residents of the town were told by local officials that they could return and camp; however, health officials have recently declared the area a public health emergency. This understandably has caused some confusion amongst residents, where many have nowhere else to go. As of January, it seems that the Red Cross and Butte County officials had also closed down one of the remaining evacuation shelters at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds in Chico, CA. They are working with the Torres Community Shelter in Chico to try and find a place for many of those displaced, according to an article by Alyssa Hodenfield of the Sacramento Bee.

As for my own experiences around Chico, I’ve seen and felt the influx of people within Chico. Many of the evacuees not only from Paradise but from neighboring communities of Magalia and Concow have moved down the

hill in hopes of finding food, shelter, and other basic needs. From my perspective it seems as though many had family in the area, which they’re staying with. For those who don’t, living in cars, motorhomes, or on the streets is their only option. Many in these mountain communities were retired, so this fire has hit them harder than most. Many want to return but as of now that isn’t possible, and no one knows when it will be an option. So here’s the somewhat unanswerable question: What do we do?

Well, as I stated in my previous article (peopletribune.org/pt-news/2019/01/help-those-affected-by-the-california-fires), PG&E must be held accountable in some way. They are currently filing bankruptcy, and are looking to raise rates on ratepayers. Investing in solar is one way we can cripple the stranglehold that PG&E holds, but that is only a small way. Most of all, let your voice be heard and make it known that we need to put human back in humanitarian.

‘This is life and death’ Fire victims still out in the cold



Raelynn Butcher and others from the Marysville Homeless Union, a chapter of the California Homeless Union, and part of the Poor People’s Campaign, visit a homeless encampment in Chico, California to provide for those made homeless by the devastating Camp Fire. A local Poor People’s Campaign organizer says, “We didn’t have enough places for people to stay before the fire happened. So now we have this huge influx of elderly, poor sick folks who need a place to stay ... people could die. This is about life and death.”

— Excerpts are from the video, “From These Ashes a New Movement is Rising” at freespeech.org/stories/from-these-ashes-a-new-movement-is-rising



Park in Miami. Homeless people are pushing carts. Miami doesn’t allow tents. PHOTO/SUZANNE MCDONALD

Life in a minivan: Mother, student, and worker tells her story



Danielle Williams.

By Sarah Menefee

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA — Danielle Williams, 46, takes care of her teenage daughter and two dogs in the parking lot where she lives in her minivan. She downsized from an apartment to a car five years ago, after she was laid off from her accounting job in Santa Barbara CA. She looked for other work but encountered age discrimination. She picks up temporary work, but not enough to afford housing. In Los Angeles, 16,000 people now live in their vehicles, 32% up in the last year. There is no profit in building affordable housing for the poorest people. The government must step in to do so.

Recently, Danielle got accepted into college, so

has moved to North Hollywood, where she is living in another lot. Following are her words, from an HBO interview video:

“Every day is different. I usually get up between 5:30 and 6:30. The days I have to work I drop my daughter off and then I head off to work and I work a full day. On the days I go to school we’re there the entire day. A lot of times we go to a restaurant where there’s WIFI so we can study while we’re eating.

“My car is a Chrysler Town and Country. My seat will go forward and back easily, though the space is not quite enough for my knees. This is a bed here, if you look in the back. This is a dirty-clothes hamper and this is my daughter’s bag of clothes; the rest is storage. We have a 7x10 storage space that is pretty much full. We had a life before this. I just couldn’t pay the rent any more, and we ended up sleeping in the car, thinking it was only going to be temporary.

“I do consider myself homeless. The world considers me homeless. When you think about homeless people you think about someone who is maybe on drugs, or with lots of mental health issues, or is lazy. But many are people like me, who are actually working, going to school, trying to get out of the life that they’re in but just can’t. We did one night at the rescue mission, that was terrifying for my daughter, and I felt like I would rather sleep in my car because I feel safer in my car than in one of those places.

“This is hard, but I know in the long run going back to school is the right thing to do.”

Did you know?

Does the Walton family earn more in one minute than Walmart workers do in a year?

The Washington Post says: YES.

The Walton family makes: \$25,149 a minute.

Imagine being homeless during the Polar Vortex

While the president chased after his wall, the real national emergency was people dying in extreme weather

By Nicole Braun

It was noon one recent Saturday in Northern Michigan, and temperatures were 30 degrees below zero.

Winter storm warnings were blaring about the necessity of staying indoors, with dire reminders of the lethal consequences for being outside. People had 10 minutes at best before frostbite set in, they warned.

I logged onto Facebook and saw many posts reminding folks to bring pets inside—“If you’re cold, they’re cold.” I love animals, but I couldn’t help remembering that an awful lot of humans needed shelter too.

I decided to conduct an informal study to see what it would be like to find shelter in Traverse City, Michigan, a largely white and affluent town near my own.

I’ve known what it’s like to be without a home of my own, and I’ve seen others I love struggle with chronic homelessness. Several years ago, a woman I loved died alone in her Traverse City storage locker.

With her on my mind, I called the permanent homeless shelter

there and was informed that there were no openings. They had a “very, very long waiting list,” the receptionist told me. She didn’t take my contact information.

When I asked for other options, she told me there was a warming shelter that opened at 6:00 pm. Was the shelter going to make people stand outside before they opened, like they usually do? She didn’t know.

A warming shelter is where folks go to get away from extreme weather. Sometimes folks can stay the night, depending upon the situation and shelter. I tried to call the warming shelter multiple times, but no one answered.

I shared my story on Facebook, which caused others to look into it, too. One friend found a link online about a 211 emergency number which gave referrals to local resources.

I called 211. The operator referred me back to the same options that I’d already tried. After putting me on hold, she asked if “my person”—the one I said I was seeking help for—attended church. If so, perhaps their church would help?

“He is not a church goer,” I

replied. Were there other options? She said no—and added that she “was not surprised.”

Some local friends then referred me to two churches that “help the homeless.” After a lengthy internet search for their phone numbers, I called the churches. No one answered.

My experiment was a flop. It became very easy to see how people freeze to death in these storms. Since then, there have been at least 21 storm-related deaths across the Midwest due to these record low temperatures, conditions most likely due to climate change.

In the meantime, the government shutdown reminded us how precarious housing can be for people at risk of losing their jobs, income, or housing vouchers.

Homelessness is difficult to measure—the official calculation is skewed toward a very limited definition—but activists report seeing record high rates of homelessness, especially in certain parts of the country. As one example, according to some estimates one out of four community college students in California are without stable housing.



Government wants billions for a wall while people are freezing in the streets. PHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK

The current administration is obsessed with building a wall to “protect” Americans from immigrants. But what’s really killing many of us is homelessness, opioid addiction, poverty, and a lack of healthcare. That’s our real national emergency.

It’s time for all of this to change. There’s no reason why anyone should die in the United States because it’s too hard to find shelter—especially from extreme weather conditions accelerated by

climate change. Kimberly Brown, retired educator from Flint, Michigan, had this to say: “The poor do not deserve to be marginalized...the mass extinctions and our own peril as a species are connected.”

If we don’t do more to help each other, and the earth, we are indeed at peril.

Super Bowl Rally for Justice



Rally during the Super Bowl in Atlanta, GA protests the violation of the rights of the homeless who were moved out of the area for the Super Bowl; the money spent on the Falcon’s Mercedes Benz Stadium; the forced relocation of Black churches; and the massive \$5 Billion Gulch gentrification project which the city gave a \$1.9 billion subsidy package to. People fear the city of Atlanta will become unaffordable. PHOTOS/JOHN RAMSPOTT



We need our rights back

By Serve the People San Jose

SAN JOSE, CA — On February 4, 2019, San Jose community members marched bright and early as support for the Google 8 court hearing.

The Google 8 were arrested for dissent at the December 4 City Council Google Project vote, but people every day are arrested simply for being unhoused and dealing with the circumstances that the city is neglecting. The eight were not charged; however, charges may be brought up within the year.

Sixty-four percent of unhoused folks in San Jose have been on the streets for more than a year; 61% have lived in the city for 10+ years. But Mayor after Mayor, Council after Council, the City has done NOTHING for our community.

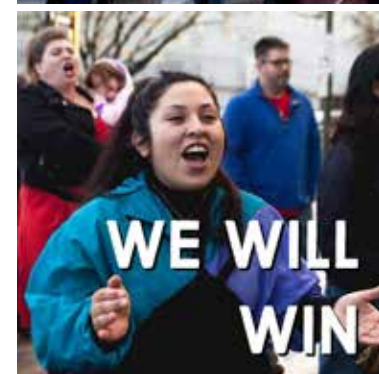
The people of San José stand against gentrification, against displacement, and against Google. We demand that Google drop its plans to turn our San José into a ghost city.

We don’t need Google to thrive. We need agency and our rights back. We want a San José that works for all of us.

... our value is more than the profits we create for corporations

... our communities should determine their own futures

... gentrifiers and their schemes have no future here. But we do. Join the fight at <https://buff.ly/2PJ0o3D>



Community members march in support of the “Google 8” arrested at a San Jose City Council meeting for protesting Google’s land grab. PHOTO/SERVE THE PEOPLE SAN JOSE

Denmark, SC demands justice for poisoning of their water

From the Editors

DENMARK, SC—Many residents of Denmark, SC, rallied near their city hall Jan. 26 to demand a solution to the poisoning of the town's water. It came out last year that the city had added HaloSan, a pool disinfectant, to the water some 10 years ago. At the rally, other contaminants were revealed. Denmark supporters from other cities and states came or sent letters of support.

This page contains excerpts from some who spoke at the rally or were interviewed by the *People's Tribune's* Bob Lee, who attended the rally. Go to www.peoplestribune.org for longer excerpts.

"You have been drinking water that has impacted your health, according to the [water sampling] records that I've looked at, going back 20 years. We're talking about Halo-



Dr. Kenneth Rudo.

San, [but] you also have been drinking water for probably four or five or six years or more with chlorinated solvents like trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene. These chemicals ... can cause kidney cancer. You also had gasoline in your water for two to three years at least, [and] MTBE, which in your body is changed into formaldehyde [which causes cancer]. You also had manganese in your water for many years, at least until 2017. Now let's turn to HaloSan ... it shouldn't be used for any human consumption, because there are no human studies on HaloSan. You need to [all be] under a medical monitoring program to protect your health."

— **Dr. Kenneth Rudo**, public health toxicologist for the state of North Carolina

"Denmark is my birthplace and I could not believe it when my skin started breaking out. I have bumps on my scalp; eye irritation, stomach pains that were unbearable. The doctor diagnosed me with kidney stones, which I never had in my life. I wash my clothes, I scratch. I shower, I scratch. It is the water. Our local and state officials would not get facts about what could or could not be added to our water to purify it. It is time for those who are responsible for their tragic act to be held accountable for their actions."

— **Remella Duncan**, Denmark resident

"I went up for city council three times, and no I did not win. But I knew in my last election many citizens here voted for me because I was trying to get something done about the



Johnnie Rosa.

water. I knew they were adding what they called 'the powder' [to the water]. ... We now have found the poison that has been 'the powder,' that has been in that water and has caused me to have rashes, my husband to have rashes in his head and his body; my toilet, my tub, my sinks ruined; my clothes ruined. ... So now let's stand and arise and keep on keeping on. Justice for Denmark!"

— **Johnnie Rosa**, Denmark resident



Lois Roberts.

"When I had my car wreck, I couldn't even use the water to clean my wounds. Ms. Berry brought me Healing Springs water and that's how I washed my wounds and took care of myself. The water's

brown, rusty colored. It smells, and messes up your clothes. It was so unfair. So we are here today and we're gonna make a stand as a community. It's time for the community to fight. That city hall needs to be cleaned out from the mayor to the administrator."

— **Lois Roberts**, Denmark resident

"I contacted Dr. Marc Edwards in 2017. First he sent containers so we can test the water and we give them out to like 12 different people. And then he came to Denmark and we started testing water all over. They found magnesium, E. Coli, and lead. We had a 400 lead reading in my home; that was very high. ... They got money to [replace the pipes], but they ain't do the job. People dying around here from the water [from kidney problems]. People are suffering because they dealing with the money. They need to stop it."

— **Pauline Ray Brown**, Denmark resident who helped document the contamination

"I got the lead [blood] test, and then it was on. Then I find out that my kidneys was failing me, I had high blood pressure, all kinds of problems. And [Pauline and I] decided, it's time to stand up and let people know what's going on. So we started, back from 2009 up to now, speaking about the water. ... [We told city and state officials about the water] but they were saying that the water was good to drink. ... We are still [documenting water samples] right now, and the stuff we see in the water is unbelievable. Something needs to be done now; we need some way to get water here."

— **Eugene Smith**, Denmark resident who helped document the contamination



Pauline Ray Brown and Eugene Smith.

"My son was begging me for his life. His face was peeling off; all his flesh was being eaten away. ... Your political system failed you, government failed you. ... Water belongs to God. We the people, you gonna take it back. We are not going to let them contaminate our water anymore. We're talking about a totally corrupt, disaster, dirty capitalism. Your water is a commodity. ... It's the responsibility of the government and the people that poisoned your water to rebuild trust. Get up and vote. Get them out!"

— **Joyce Ellis McNeal**, Flint, Michigan, resident whose son died as a result of the water poisoning in Flint



Joyce Ellis McNeal.

"The biggest thing that we need in the US is water has to quit being the new gold; it needs to quit being something to profit off of. And it is going to take Flint, Denmark,

and all the other cities across the US that are having these problems to stand together, to work together to where we can make water a human right. Everybody deserves clean, affordable water."

— **LeeAnne Walters**, Flint, Michigan, resident who helped expose the water crisis there



LeeAnne Walters.



Deanna Miller Berry.

"They can no longer silence us. We the people of the United States. And that's why I invited Flint out. That's why I invited Detroit. That's why I invited New Jersey. That's

why I invited all these cities because you heard her say they're still fighting five years later [in Flint]. America has a severe water crisis, and we have to attack this on a national level. And we, the people are going to do that."

— **Deanna Miller Berry**, Denmark resident and founding organizer of Denmark Citizens for Safe Water

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ANITY FROM CORPORATE DESTRUCTION

Green New Deal: Bringing hope to the climate change debate

By Allie Lindstrom, Organizer at Fossil Free WashU, Hub Coordinator at Sunrise Movement Ann Arbor

ANN ARBOR, MI — I grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where climate change was never up for debate in my school system. Instead, I learned about the greenhouse gas effect, biodiversity loss, and that I should put up a solar panel. I remember being terrified in the classroom. The next steps were simply to study. At Washington University in St. Louis, it's the same in more detail: issue focused; solutions, an afterthought. The doom is looming, but the urgency is lacking. Why?

I didn't consider whether my home would be there when I returned, or if it'd weather any storms, until this past semester when I joined the Sunrise Movement in D.C. with a thousand others to demand a Green New Deal (GND), a package of policies including 100% renewable energy by 2030, a federal jobs guarantee, and investment in communities on the frontlines of poverty and pollution. Led by unapologetic youth, I took an arrest with 142 others and hoped it would sway

Democratic leadership.

When we stood in the halls of Congress, telling our stories and singing, I thought this could actually work. Not, "This protest could get some media. That'll help." The GND could actually solve climate change. It doesn't start from an assumption of what's politically possible, it springs from identifying what's needed.

While I sat in zip-ties, the ways in which Michigan will face the climate crisis washed over me. It might not be as dramatic as a hurricane, but our access to clean water (already threatened by oil spills, lead, dioxane, and PFAS), our crumbling infrastructure, agriculture, and industry are all facing uncertain futures. I began to see the changes in my home state for what they are. The climate crisis requires us to give everything we've got. The Sunrise Movement gives me real hope.

The GND is a powerful proposal, not only because of its scope (we'll have to transform our economy to stop the climate crisis) but because of all the people it folds into the movement. I'm bringing the fight back to



Allie Lindstrom [far left] was arrested in December, 2018 with 142 members of the Sunrise Movement where 1,000 youths gathered on Capitol Hill to garner Congressional support for a Green New Deal.

PHOTO/SUNRISE MOVEMENT

Ann Arbor because I can see how a GND could impact my home. By taking concrete issues Americans face (crumbling roads, heat waves, high electricity bills) and directly connecting them to changes such as guaranteed green jobs, the risks of climate change and the benefits of acting become tangible. The GND engages more voters than other

proposals because there's room for everyone.

That's why I, and hundreds of others, are starting Sunrise hubs in our communities. It's time to fill our politics with daring hope, even if we're called young and naïve. As we stood in the hallways of Congress, we sang: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." I

showed up to D.C. nearly burned out, and left full of determination.

If we don't have skin in the game, and we don't have hope, how can we make change? It's time to expose the climate crisis for what it is, so we can rebuild a world that works for all of us. We must tell our stories, even if they seem small, to begin to take transformative action.

West Virginia: Public dollars finance water privatization

By Lissa Lucas

Let's look at an illustrative story of corporate theft: the "Sharple Water Line Extension Project" in Logan County, West Virginia. That project used public money to help finance a switch from well water and the local public system to a water supply owned by a privately-owned company. They used that taxpayer money to "help satisfy mine permitting requirements for Arch Coal's proposed Mountain Laurel mine."

Let's go over it carefully. It's so unbelievably, blatantly, a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich that I want to make sure you don't just skim by. This actually happened. This is what it means to live in a sacrifice zone. West Virginians were forced to use block grants—tax money in other words—to help a big coal company meet its permitting requirements for mining operations.

Those mining operations took water resources away from our citizens. Our government

took our money and paid corporate execs to steal from us. On top of that, each taxpaying municipal water customer, for the rest of their lives, pays money to a private water company. Former well owners are paying execs for water that was once free, a part of their property.

That tax money was used to subsidize the destruction of that community's clean water so coal execs could further enrich themselves. Then the people who live in that community pay water bills from now unto eternity.

That resource is gone, not just for them... but for their kids, and grandkids, and greats, and great-greats. Forever. And this situation happens again and again in WV.

Editor's note: This article is excerpted from a longer article by Lissa Lucas, a life-long resident of West Virginia. View the entire article at lissalucas.com/2017/12/22/rural-sacrifice-zones-you-have-to-crack-a-few-eggs/

The people of Flint must come together to take action

By Regina Pitts Shelton

FLINT, MI — So many people in Flint are being diagnosed with cancer, especially kidney cancer. Lead has an affinity to the kidneys. Just how many people in Flint have died of kidney and other types of cancers since April 2014? Who knows, and why aren't these patterns discussed by the medical profession?

I believe the water contributed also to my brother Leslie's death in December 2017, as he became ill after 2014 with kidney, stomach and lung cancer. He had pneumonia twice and was a patient at McLaren Flint Hospital in 2015 and 2016.

Not only was there lead in the water, but so many other toxins like Legionnaires which presented itself as pneumonia yet supposedly took the lives of only 13 people. Who believes that count? I most certainly don't. There still are many other toxins in the stagnant water that officials have never tested for but we're being

told again that the water is safe to drink. I think not.

Not a single pipe has been replaced at the source of the problem — the water plant — so how can this problem be considered "fixed?"

There is currently a health crisis in the city of Flint. Strokes, respiratory, stomach and liver illnesses, epilepsy, cancer and other major health issues have been experienced by many since 2014, but where's the data? How many people know of someone in Flint who has experienced a health issue since April 2014, when greedy [Gov. Rick] Snyder and his Emergency Manager decided to save \$100 a day and not have corrosion control added to the water resulting in the poisoning of more than 100,000 people? This number is actually higher as many of us who travel to Flint regularly were also poisoned. In fact, many people passing through Flint after April 2014 were poisoned, but officials won't even bring attention to this subject.

It's heartbreaking that Snyder, the man who poisoned more than 100,000 people, had all the water pods closed claiming the water is now safe to drink. Really? This is an environmental genocide. How many years will pass before the real truth is known?

Please know that the water issue in Flint is not over and people still need bottled water. Not many can afford to pick up and move to another city nor can they afford whole house filters. An individual filter on a kitchen or bathroom faucet only works for so long and will not filter out toxins unrelated to lead.

So, what can be done about it and who will lead? Certainly not politicians. The people of Flint must come together as one collective group if any changes are to be made.

Once that happens, results will follow.

Editor's note: See comment section at [facebook.com/champ.rs/posts/2147228131982187](https://www.facebook.com/champ.rs/posts/2147228131982187)



Women's March, 2018, in Oakland, CA.

PHOTO/MICHELLE DIONE SNIDER

A Tenacious Faith

By Rev. Monica Joy Cross, Poor Peoples Campaign Teach In Committee

John 15:4-5 “Remain in me, as I remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I’m the true vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

There are many who say they follow Jesus of Nazareth but few who are disciples. This may sound strange but the words of John 15:4-5 are clear. The disciple is intimately connected with Jesus of Nazareth and therefore bears much fruit. The disciple just doesn’t know Jesus as dictated by the institutions of church and state. As an image manufactured to support the norms of society, they know Jesus for them-

selves. It is because they know Jesus of Nazareth for themselves, the one who broke the norms of society, that the soul of the disciple is nourished.

Many of the disciples of Jesus were women such as Mary Magdalene, Martha, and the Samaritan Woman at the well, who, in their time broke societal norms. Women were in ministry with Jesus of Nazareth. They were the disciples who met Jesus after he had risen from the dead. They were that disciple who bore much good fruit. They were the disciples even the leaders who were at his state execution.

As we celebrate International Women’s Day we remember today’s women disciples, who, like Mary, Martha and the Samaritan Women at the Well, have a tenacious faith, who continue to stand up, break norms and celebrate women from all walks of life.

Voices for a new future

“I’m a veteran of the United States Navy for 22 years. The biggest thing we had was healthcare. A lot of vets and a lot of civilians don’t have Healthcare because it’s too expensive, even Obama Care is too expensive. Another thing ... a lot of vets, a lot of students don’t have housing. 14 percent of Laney College students going to school are couch-surfing or living in their cars, striving for a better life. It’s just not right.

“So I spent 22 years fighting for the military and what for? For folks to be in poverty? For folks to be homeless?”

“It’s just not right!!!!”

– Rev. Monica Joy Cross

“I’m a Laney student. I spent the first 60 years of my life just going along in my lane. I voted in elections and did my part. ... When Trump got elected I said, ‘what could I do differently?’

“There’s so much I didn’t know ... how to connect the dots. When I went to Laney College teach-ins and found out about the Poor People’s Campaign, I began to dissect the situation. ... We take the People’s



Women's March, 2018, in Oakland, CA. PHOTO/EDGAR ABREU LOBEL

Tribune, look at the articles that represent a lot of things that are happening across the United States. I even wrote an article about my experience as a homeless person caring for my parents. Come join us!!!!”

– Amy Marshall

“This is about all the knowledge that we are missing, especially in (regular) media. It’s not just about what’s going on in your community, but our experiences, people coming together. ... People of different races ages and religions, all poor or working class...”

“The system is trying to divide us, so we are teaching each other. We are coming together and we will hold the politicians accountable. We’re not just talking. We’re about action. We’re thinking forward for our future, for everyone.”

– Michelle Dione Snider

These quotes are excerpted from a video produced by the Poor Peoples Campaign, Laney College Teach In Committee, recorded at the Oakland Women’s March. View at youtu.be/r4BS7bh2K9o

From moments of resistance to a movement for freedom

By Michelle Dione Snider and Ethel Long-Scott

OAKLAND, CA — Hosting a teach-in for the first time can be intimidating. How can we remember our talking points? How can we attract people’s attention and keep their attention in an environment that is highly distracting and filled with others who are grabbing for attention?

The Poor People’s Campaign at Laney came to a few important points that made our teach-in at the Oakland Women’s March on Jan. 21, 2019 a success. We engaged people by projecting our voices while speaking on topics that we understand and hold dear. We made sure to simplify complicated topics into a short description that would draw in people who wanted to know more. And oftentimes, without even asking, people eagerly donated money while providing their contact information.

The topics we chose were ones we handpicked collectively as subjects that affected locals. Being that we are in a city that has some of the highest rents and rates of gentrification, housing insecurities were at the top of our list. In a climate that is ripe with teacher strikes, education piqued interest.

What surprised many people was our talk about local environmental issues that many did not know about. Like referencing San Francisco Bayview-Hunters Points’ long history of a radioactive landscape that has concerned residents for decades. People want to

know what is going on locally but in days where media companies merge into larger mainstream entities devouring small news publications, it can be very difficult to stay informed and know what can be fought for on a local level.

Taking turns belting out our own understanding of the world around us, we were able to express many diverse experiences and knowledge that intertwined as the fabric of our social problems tend to do. And, finally, it starts to all make sense.

Women and female-headed families are the fastest growing sections of the U.S. homeless. As recent “Say-her-name” protests have documented, poor women increasingly face police violence alongside domestic violence and are jailed for the same crimes against property as men. This is a social struggle that can only be resolved by a political battle—a struggle over class power. Who is going to rule society?

The majority of women today are at the center of a global new class of workers, forced out of the economy by labor replacing electronic production. Today women make up more than half of the paid workforce and more than half of this new class. Uplifting women would not only benefit women; it benefits their entire family. On the day of the Women’s March members of this new class took to the streets once again, thirsty to understand what is next in their quest to change the country and world.

Women are leading a movement for freedom

“Women are leading the fight in the interests of all society. In the age of A.I. and robotic production, marginalized and dispossessed women are leading a growing movement of people who cannot live in this economic system. They are demanding the government provide the basic necessities of life.

“Poor People’s Campaigns are prioritizing the needs of humanity, the Earth, justice and ending racism. Empowering the marginalized as a force to reconstruct society means political education that moves us from moments of resistance to a movement for freedom from neglect, violence and economic insecurity.”

– Ethel Long-Scott,
Women’s Economic Agenda Project, Oakland, CA

International Women's Day, March 8, 2019

On these pages, in honor of International Women's Day, when people all over the world rally for women's rights, the *People's Tribune* highlights women who are at the forefront of the fight for justice, freedom from poverty, and for a government and society that protects and enriches all of us, not the one percent. Women are leading the fight for such a society. — *People's Tribune*

Indigenous People's March calls to end the genocide

By **SISTR Chi**

Friday, January 18, 2019, marked the First Indigenous Peoples March in Washington D.C. Beginning in prayer and ending in a traditional round dance, the marchers sang "We are still here." The mission of the march was to connect deeply in tradition and call for the elimination of the social, economic and political borders, injustices, and continuing genocide that unite the struggles of Indigenous People around the planet.

"We are uniting the Indigenous peoples across the World to stand together to bring awareness to the injustices affecting Indigenous men, women and children," reads the description on the official Facebook event for the march. "Indigenous people from North, Central and South America, Oceania, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean are a target of genocide. Currently, many Indigenous people are victims of voter suppression, divided families by walls and borders, an environmental holocaust, sex and human trafficking, and police/military brutality with few or no resources and little awareness of this injustice. We Must Unite and Help!"

Connecting in celebration,



Marchers from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Movement lifting up the names of loved ones lost to violence.

PHOTO/DIANA BEREK

while also affirming continued advocacy of basic human rights, the Indigenous Peoples Movement (IPM) demands respect for

treaty rights and for the return of honor for the earth. The celebrations that were a part of this historic action are testament to

the resilience and strength of the marchers and the nations they represented.

On January 23rd, the IPM released a statement which is excerpted here (The full statement as well as additional statements, media releases, and photos can be found at indigenouspeoplesmovement.com):

"The unity and celebration of our indigeness captivated onlookers. The questions being asked showed the lack of education the general population has about indigenous peoples. Still, there were questions being asked; and answers were given. Answers in languages that were supposed to be long forgotten.

"Our collective thought, kinship and desire to bring peace through our traditional ways was profoundly demonstrated that day to thousands of people in D.C. and millions of people globally.

"One of the displays of our strength and culture has ended up capturing the attention of the world.

"Elder Nathan Phillips alongside Quese IMC were seen interjecting into a hostile situation. Nathan Phillips used the drum, and the gift of prayer song to

defuse the situation—the same way indigenous people always have.

"The misunderstanding of our practices, respective cultures, alongside the fetishization, lumping and misrepresentation have escalated this out of context. We wanted to have the ability to set the platform. To give ourselves space to pass on education, in a way that gives us the room to show where we have come from, and where we presently are.

"On Sunday, January 20th, 2019 we honored Nathan Phillips and Quese IMC, not only for showing their resilience, but their strength and attachment to their sacred practices.

"Nathan Phillips was given gifts, within traditions and ceremony that have existed in indigenous communities for lifetimes before us, and will continue to exist for the next generations.

"We are reclaiming our place, our practices and our rights. We are on a long road to our liberation, but we will continue to support ALL indigenous peoples as they fight to create space."

SISTR Chi is a Chicago collective Supporting Indigenous Sovereignty and Treaty Rights.

Everyone deserves access to the Bill of Rights – AOC

Editor's note: Below are comments to the media by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez following Trump's State of the Union address last February 5.

By **Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**

Earlier this week, we heard the State of the Union address inside the capitol building. We heard the president say that he likes quote-unquote "legal immigration." But that is a lie. The president does not like any form of immigration. He has been cutting down and imposing restrictions on legal forms, on the Diversity Visa lottery, on family reunification, and so on. He's ending Temporary Protected Status. He's ending DACA protections for Dream-



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

ers. And in doing so he's taking away the documented status for thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Americans. In doing so, he's criminalizing a whole population of people in the U.S.

And now he's asking for \$5 billion to continue to militarize and weaponize a force that has zero accountability. And whose [Homeland Security] secretary has no idea how many children

are dying in her own care, dying on her watch. And who has the audacity to ask for more money to fund that. I don't think so. I don't think so. Not only will we not agree to fund that, but we are here to say that an agency like ICE, which repeatedly and systematically violates human rights, does not deserve a dime. Until they can prove that they are honoring human rights. Until they can make a good faith effort to expand and embrace immigrants.

Immigrants have always been a part and a core element of American democracy. Until [ICE] can prove good faith to this American ideal, they do not deserve any resources for their radical agenda. We have to have respect for children. We have to have respect for

families, respect for human rights and respect for the right of human mobility. Because it is a right. It is a right. Because we are standing on Native land and Latino people are descendants of Native people. And we cannot be criminalized simply for our identity or our status—period.



Jakelin Amei Rosmery Caal Maquin, who died in ICE custody.

I will not commit one dollar—not one dollar—to an agency [Homeland Security] who allowed

a [7-year-old] child to die, when they were entrusted to take care of Jakelin Caal. I will not give one dollar to a secretary who does not care about her detention facilities, that thinks some people in this country are deserving of constitutional protections and others are not.

We are a nation and a land of laws. Not just some people are subject to laws and others are not. And being a land of laws means that every person that steps foot on this soil deserves the consideration of due process. They deserve the protections. They deserve access to our Bill of Rights. That is what makes this country special. That is what makes America special. Not who is here but who we are.

The absolute truth about GM plant closings (Part 2)

Editor's note: Read the first part of this article in the February 2019 issue of the People's Tribune, or online at peopletribune.org.

By Al Gladysck

In the short run, it is obvious that the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) are not causing this situation. Neither is the \$4 an hour GM autoworker in Mexico or the UAW GM autoworker in those five plants.

The call for the unity of American and Canadian autoworkers made by Jerry Dias, the president of the CAW, is a beginning. That Rich Rankine, the director of the UAW Region 2b, made the call for the unity of not only the UAW but also the unions across the United States and Canada and the communities in both countries is a beginning.

2019 contract negotiations in the United States and 2020 contract negotiations in Canada are part of the battle against these plant closings. Will the leadership of both unions win? Will

they keep these plants open? We do not know yet.

But should they fail, and should any or all those plants close, what is the next step?

In the case of the Detroit-Hamtramck plant, the first thing that should happen is Eminent Domain (*the power of a government to take private property for public use without the owner's consent, provided just compensation is given*) should be employed to take the factory and the acreage it sits on away from GM.

Once the plant and the acreage are the public property of the government then it can be developed for public use. For instance, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development can turn the factory into housing for those in need or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services can turn the factory into a public hospital, or the U.S. Department of Education can turn the factory into a campus for the Wayne County Community College.

The result is that the factory and acreage it sits on will be the public property of the citizens to



Detroit protesters call on government to make GM land where plants are scheduled for closure useful for everyone. PHOTO/JIMWESTPHOTO.COM

fulfill their social needs. Right now, it is the private property of GM and GM has no use for it.

The unions and in fact all the

people of United States and Canada must come together because five empty factories and the land that they sit on are useless. We

need to take them away from GM and make those factories and the land socially useful for all of us.

The schools Oakland deserves

Editor's note: Below are excerpts from a speech by Professor Kimberly King that was given at a forum on Oakland public schools at Laney College.

By Prof. Kimberly King

OAKLAND, CA – Oakland's regular public schools lose \$57 million a year to charter schools. If this money was kept in the district, it could be used to reduce class size and end the current threat of bankruptcy.

At the same time, the Oakland School Board members, whose electoral campaigns were largely funded by the charter school industry and billionaires, stated they may close 24 public schools to deal with their financial crisis. Imagine if you were a child or parent and your school was suddenly closed. How disruptive and unstable that is! How bad for child development and for education!

The School Board says it is closing schools to save money. But an extensive study of public school closures, conducted by the National Education Policy Center, found that closing schools in urban communities does NOT save money and causes the greatest harm to the lowest income students.

A 2012 audit of Washington, D.C.'s closure of 23 schools found that the cost of the closures was \$39 million, four times what the district was expected to save. When Oakland schools close, the school district estimates they will lose about 20% of those children to another district and with them their per-pupil funding. In Oakland, my sources tell me that the School District did a study finding that more money would actually be lost than would be saved by the



Oakland teachers are on strike for smaller class size, greater student supports and livable wages. They're also fighting the possible closures of 24 public schools. School closures go hand in hand with the efforts of billionaires to take over public schools for profit. PHOTO/JOE BRUSKY, MTEA

proposed closure of 24 schools, so they decided not to publish that study.

California law permits any charter school to claim empty school property. They will be re-opened as charters. Oakland currently has 16,000 housing units under construction or in the pipeline. Most are market rate, and only a tiny fraction is so-called "affordable." All this housing is being built in the flatlands where the schools are being closed.

This is not about what the kids and families in the flatlands of Oakland need. This is a real estate deal that will benefit developers who want to restructure Oakland's schools to make their new condos more desirable so they can make a nice profit. This is what school privatization will always do.

The "charter school movement" once

used low-income Black and Brown families to get charter schools into our cities; now charter schools are used to clear out low-income Black and Brown families so the real estate developers can make more profits off of the high-income newcomers.

The "charter school movement" is a movement of billionaires to take over public schools for profit. We need a movement of people to take the schools back and make them serve the public. "Public education for the public good!" California is the world's fifth largest economy. Its wealth can be used for its people and the housing and schools they need!

Government is responsible to protect the public. We the People must hold them accountable!

Read Professor Kimberly King's full speech at peopletribune.org.

Did you think that tax cut was for you?

A trending hash tag on Twitter is #GOPTaxScamStories. It is flooded with acid comments from outraged middle class taxpayers who have recently filed their returns and are getting screwed by Trump's "middle class tax cut." Many who had been getting several thousand dollars in tax refunds are now having to pay taxes. They are finding out the hard way the tax cut was really for the 1%.

In fact, from 2001 through 2018, changes to the federal tax code have reduced revenue by \$5.1 trillion, and 65% of the savings went to the richest fifth of Americans, with 22% of the savings going exclusively to the top 1%.

Here's a selection of outraged comments from Twitter:

"I am a Republican voter. I just did our taxes. The @GOP tax bill cost my family THOUSANDS of dollars this year on our return due to changes, thereby hitting us with the LARGEST tax increase of our lives."

"I trusted and voted for you, now, screwed by you. I fall JUST above a tax bracket, I don't get the \$5000 return I've gotten the last 3 years. Money my family depends on to start us over. I served my country honorably. I will not make the same mistake twice."

"My husband and I both work full-time jobs, and I another part-time job. We both elected for the highest deduction of taxes. Tell me, how is it we suddenly owe over \$300 in federal taxes when we generally get a refund?"

Rap musician Savage targeted by ICE

By Danny Alexander

On February 1, Atlanta rapper 21 Savage released a video for his hit single “A Lot” on YouTube, the most popular platform for new music. It featured new lyrics:

*Been through some things
But I couldn't imagine my kids
stuck at the border
Flint still need water
People was innocent
Couldn't get lawyers.*

Two days later, on February 3, ICE arrested him. As the rapper recalled on Good Morning America, he heard officers on the radio declaring, “We got Savage.”

This was the beginning of 10 days of isolation in Atlanta’s notorious Irwin County Detention Center, before a groundswell of support from rappers and fans led to his release on bond. He missed a performance on the Grammys, and the case isn’t over. He may yet be deported to England, the country his mother left

when he was 7, but the chilling effect of this decision could be heard in a Valentine’s Day interview published in the *New York Times*.

When asked, “Do you feel an urge to put some of this experience into music?” Savage answered, “Not right now, ’cause I feel like me putting it into music got me into this situation.”

What’s happening to 21 Savage calls to mind the way the U.S. government has attempted to curb free speech in popular music for decades. From the attempted deportation of an increasingly political John Lennon to the FBI’s official statement denouncing N.W.A., the U.S. government has long targeted artists who challenge its authority. In the 1980s, when all-star musicians aligned to tackle hunger, poverty, the U.S.-sponsored wars in Central America and U.S. support for apartheid, the United States Senate held its infamous record-labeling hearings.

Artists ranging from John Legend to Nicki Minaj, Willie

Nelson, Bruce Springsteen, Common and Ricky Martin have spoken out against U.S. border policy, but these musicians are not the voice of a new generation speaking from the streets in the way that 21 Savage is. Their position also doesn’t parallel the Dreamers in the way Savage’s does. It’s telling that ICE declared, “His whole public persona is false,” in an attempt to undermine his image.

Savage quickly responded to lies perpetuated by ICE, such as the idea that he first came to the U.S. at 14. Before his career, he did in fact run the streets of Atlanta with a gang. However, he has used his meteoric rise as a rap star to launch campaigns to stop gun violence and bullying and to help kids in his community find economic stability and afford everyday necessities and school supplies.

And, as it turns out, he doesn’t seem deterred by the government’s action against him. On February 15, two days after his release, he renewed his vow



21 Savage.

PHOTO/FACEBOOK

to fight the system. When Savage appeared on Good Morning America, he was asked: “There are a lot of people who don’t get a bond, who you left still back in the detention center, what’s your

message to them?”

He answered, “I feel your pain. And I’m going to do everything in my power to try and bring awareness to your pain.”

The beginning of the end

By Bill Glahn

There is no period in country music that resonates today as much as it did in 1956-1972. But you’d have to dig beyond just the hits—into the B-sides and deep album cuts to get to the real meat. These were the “glory days” of day-to-day living in the United States. There were great advances toward a legitimate middle class, with movement toward racial equality, unionism, and anti-war sentiment. But in reality, the ruling class never really took their boots off the necks off the working class. The “war on poverty” would be the least successful of the progressive movement.

The myth went that even the unskilled and uneducated had access to great paying union jobs, a stable family environment, an education, and the latest greatest Chevy V-8 in the driveway. There was rock ‘n’ roll on the radio. Happy days were here again. Peace and love would triumph over war, hot and cold. But despite the historical summary, this never applied to the poor. And the ruling class has been working ever since to roll back the clock—to the 19th century.

On Record Store Day this year, the folks at The Omni Recording Corporation (Iron Mountain Analogue Research Facility) released a 16-track version of *The Beginning of the End*. That it would be an Australian outfit to release such a collection should surprise no one. While major American entertainment companies focus on perpetuating the myth (i.e. Garth Brooks TV concert specials), it

often seems that for a deeper understanding of classic American music, one must often look overseas. Tracking down master tapes of such recordings, years of research, and a 21st century re-mastering comes from a labor of love, not a love of money.

With only 500 copies of the vinyl pressed, there was a need to hear more—thus a much-welcomed expanded version (30 tracks) on CD. The extra 14 tracks add to, not detract from, the original concept.

So how were the working (lower) class faring in those years? Well, it seems they weren’t faring too well, subjected to the same worldly fears, financial woes, and personal angst that we experience today. The song from which this album takes its name, Jimmy Griggs’ “The Beginning of the End,” captures that in it’s opening line. “People say they believe in love/ But the hate goes on.” And what rings more truer today than David Price’s “National Everybody Hate Me Week,” especially in the battlegrounds of social media? Mell Tillis’ “Survival of the Fittest?” It’s an early exploration into environmental concerns. And a questioning of faith.

Opening and closing with two different versions of “Searching,” *The Beginning of the End* shows exactly how much thought went into this project. As long as we search (and act), victory for the ruling class is not a guarantee.

Rating: A (best compilation of 2018)

Read more of Bill Glahn’s commentary at itsahighwaysong.blogspot.com

The Second Cooler: Why immigrants come



Why have millions of immigrants left their homes and families to make an expensive, dangerous and sometimes deadly journey? The Second Cooler is a documentary that addresses this. It brings basic immigration issues into focus: the impact of free trade agreements on migration, the lack of a legal way for poor Latin Americans to come to the US, the abuses of the guest worker program, anti-immigrant politics, and the thousands of migrant deaths at the border. Migrants and their children are interviewed in the film. The Second Cooler is written and directed by Ellen Jimmerson and narrated by Martin Sheen. Purchase at thesecondcooler.com

“Magical Realism Nopales”

May 11, 2018

Don’t eat with steel fork
Eat with fingers & timeless maize
Your soul weaved into saliva

Don’t drink Coke
Drink yerbabuena & café con leche
Your tongue soaked in justice

Don’t dream of tomorrow
Dream of los Aztecas & el ranchito
Your eyes seeped in a better world

Don’t cry tristeza
Over los fascistsa y puta migra—
when they come
Your heart torn from your chest

You are the nopal dream
They fear so much
Let them tremble.

— Maria Jesu Estrada



Reverend Pinkney leads a protest against the PGA on a private golf course built on public land in Benton Harbor, MI.

PHOTO/BRETT JELINEK, OLAFIMAGES.COM

The future of Benton Harbor schools is in trouble under new CEO

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

The new CEO of the Benton Harbor Area Schools told a local TV news program that his installation at the helm of the school district is in effect a state takeover.

CEO Robert Herrera said he had been approached by the Michigan Department of Education School Reform Officer to take control of Benton Harbor Public Schools as part of their partnership agreement with the Michigan Department of Education.

This is a hostile takeover of the Benton Harbor School system.

The Benton Harbor public school system is the first public school system with a CEO. It is now a business. When schools become a business, the public no longer

has control over them. The CEO will take all the power away from the elected school board members. The board can make no decisions that the CEO will honor. He is what is known as an emergency manager with absolute power to do as he wishes.

Benton Harbor School Board members were not all pleased when Herrera took over last July. School Board member Lisa Gulley said during a meeting, "The state came to us and told us that we didn't meet our testing goals and it was a 'do or die' situation. Either we bring in the CEO that they want us to have, or they dissolve our district in November if we stay under the consent agreement." (ABC57News)

In other words, bring in the CEO the state wants or dissolve the whole district. It looks like this is a first step toward even-

tually privatizing the school system. They are trying to dissolve the school system so they can gentrify that area along Lake Michigan around the lakefront which will include new private schools. They will continue to drive the people of Benton Harbor out into surrounding areas and make children attend inferior schools.

Legal questions remain. When I was at a state meeting in Lansing, I warned that it is illegal to put a CEO over any public-school system in the state of Michigan. What happens now is in the hands of the Michigan Attorney General's office.

We, the people, must stand up to corruption and corrupt government and challenge everything that is not in the best interest of our children. It is for our children's future.

Youth Climate Strike



PHOTO/US YOUTH CLIMATE STRIKE

U.S. Youth Climate Strike, a movement of youth fighting for the conservation of our planet will have a global day of climate action and first ever nationwide strike for climate in the US on Friday, March 15.

"We, the youth of America, are striking because decades of inaction has left us with just 11 years (or less) to solve the climate crisis. We are striking because the necessary action to achieve the common-sense and vital goal of fighting climate change is not being prioritized. We are striking because marginalized communities across our nation—specially indigenous, black, and low income communities—are already disproportionately impacted by climate change, yet, few people in positions of power have acknowledged this reality, and even fewer have begun to confront it appropriately. We are at a turning point in history.

Our futures are at stake. We call for radical legislative action to combat climate change and its countless detrimental effects on the American people. We are striking for the Green New Deal, a fair and just transition to decarbonize the US economy, and other legislative action that combats the effects of climate change. And we are determined to do something about it."

Excerpted from youthclimastrikeus.org. Contact the group at 2019climastrikeusa@gmail.com
Instagram: @usclimastrike Twitter: @climastrikeUS

Two Years of Solidarity in Saint Joseph, MI



One of the weekly protests outside Congressman Fred Upton's office in St. Joseph, MI. Protesters address issues such as water, healthcare, and housing.

PHOTO/R. DIBBLE

By Ran Dibble

When demonstrations occurred across the country before the inauguration of the new president in January 2017, demonstrators continued weekly actions every Tuesday at 12 Noon in front of Congressman Fred

Upton's Michigan 6th District Representative Office in Saint Joseph, MI.

Now, for over two years straight these continuous weekly demonstrations are attracting 1-2 dozen citizens with evolving concerns over local issues, events in Washington and nationwide politics. These

people have a wide range of different points of view but agree to work together in solidarity with each other on pocket book and moral issues, such as water, healthcare, housing, immigration, education and voting rights. They demand that Congressman Upton hear their collective voice and represent their concerns.

Fred Upton has for over 30 years been representing large industry, energy sector and worldwide appliance producer Whirlpool in Congress.

These demonstrators are reluctant to be identified with any particular organization and encourage anybody and everybody who has concerns of which they want the Congressman to respond to join them every Tuesday at noon at Congressman Fred Upton's 6th District Office, at 720 Main Street, St. Joseph, MI, 49085.

Everyone nation wide with common interests are encouraged to put aside their differences and work together and not wait for someone else to organize events like this.

STAND WITH US: Louisiana United International 'Unanimous is not enough' campaign

Last November 65% of Louisiana's voters passed Amendment 2, which now requires a unanimous vote of a 12-member jury to convict a defendant of a felony instead of only 10 votes. While the new law went into effect on January 1, 2019, anyone arrested and charged prior to that date is still subject to the old law even though their trial may be in 2019.

The old Jim Crow 10/12 jury law was just as wrong on January first as it was before that. Free those who were wrongfully convicted or give them new trials. Help fight for justice by spreading the word. Rally and pack the court room.

Rally on Saturday March 16, 2019 at a time and place to be determined.

Rally and Court Hearing at 9 a.m. on Monday March 18, 2019 at Louisiana 40th District Court, 2393 Highway 18 in Edgard, Louisiana.

For more information, contact: Belinda Parker Brown at (269) 369-4751 or Joseph Peery at (312) 788-0380.