

STOP 55,000 IMMIGRANT KIDS FROM BECOMING HOMELESS

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Immigrant rights protest in Chicago.

PHOTO/ADRIAN GARCIA



Activists protest the planned Lincoln Yards luxury development in Chicago, Illinois, on April 10, 2019.

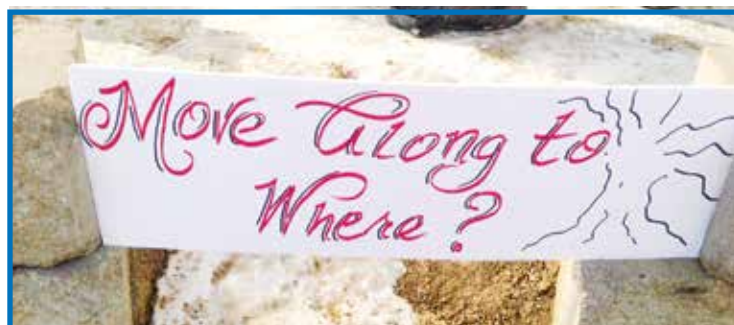
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PHOTO/
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Struggle for shelter

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PHOTO/MOLLY ADAMS

The foul smell of William Barr's contempt

The worst thing the Attorney General did this spring had nothing to do with the Mueller report

EDITORIAL

On May 1, U.S. Attorney General William Barr vigorously defended his handling of the Mueller investigation in a defiant appearance before the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. Senate. His refusal to cooperate with the committee sparked outrage. It even led to calls by some Congressional representatives to have Barr cited for contempt and arrested by the sergeant at arms of the U.S. Congress. (Such an arrest has not taken place since the 1930s.)

But—as journalist Catherine Rampell pointed out in a column in the Washington Post—the worst thing that Barr did that week had nothing to do with the Mueller investigation.

On the very same day that Barr testified to that Senate committee, the federal department which Barr heads went to court to try to destroy health care for tens of millions of people.

On May 1, the Department of Justice formally asked a federal appeals court to strike down the entire Affordable Care Act—“Obamacare.” The Department submitted a brief supporting a lawsuit challenging Obamacare by the attorneys general of 20 Republican-controlled states. The lawsuit claims that the ACA is unconstitutional.

If the Trump administration prevails in this case, everything in “Obamacare” would be wiped out: Protections for people with pre-existing conditions, Medicaid expansion, provisions allowing children to remain on their parents’ insurance until age 26, requirements that insurance cover

minimum essential benefits such as prescriptions and preventive care, etc.

If the ACA is ruled unconstitutional, such a decision would end health insurance for some 21 million Americans and affect many more. As partial and incomplete as the ACA is, the destruction of “Obamacare” would be a gigantic step backward.

Certainly we need more than the ACA. We need an improved and expanded Medicare for all. But while we’re fighting for Medicare for all, we should not allow the backward step of destroying the ACA. Doing this would also play into the hands of the corporations and politicians who want to squash the Medicare for All movement.

Barr’s refusal to grant Congressional representatives full access to the Mueller report showed contempt for Congress, but his department’s attempt to destroy the health care of millions of the most vulnerable is far worse.

If the sergeant of arms of the Congress is going to arrest William Barr for something, we have a suggestion. In the 1870s, there was a little room in the basement of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington where thieves arrested around the Capitol were held. Since William Barr and his colleagues are attempting to steal health care from millions, let’s have him arrested and confined in that very same room—H-159. Historical records indicate that there was very little sunlight in the room and that it was “a room that stinks, that smells like the den of some foul reptile.” Mr. Barr should feel right at home.



Attorney General William Barr showed his utter contempt for people like Ady Barkan (pictured above) when the Justice Department joined a lawsuit to have the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) declared unconstitutional. In the photo above, Barkan, who has a terminal illness, speaks with a synthetic voice before the House Rules Committee hearing in support of Medicare for All on April 30. Barkan’s family has insurance but faces \$9,000 a month in additional expenses for home care or he must go to a nursing home. He decries that in “the wealthiest [country] in the history of human civilization, healthcare is not treated as a human right.” Barkan said that there is a mass movement rising up insisting there is a better way to structure our society and that any insurance that maintains profit for health care will mean some people don’t get healthcare.

PHOTO/CSPAN VIDEO STILL

Did you know?

- 45,000 people die from a lack of health care every year. Under a publicly run, Medicare for All program, everyone will get healthcare without paying premiums or added costs. There’s plenty of corporate funds to tap to help fund it.

PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE

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 by 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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Stop 55,000 immigrant kids from becoming homeless

COVER STORY

As many as 108,000 people in 25,000 households, including 55,000 children, could become homeless as a result of the Trump administration's proposed rule changes governing public housing, published in the Federal Register on May 10, 2019.

The changes mandate the eviction of whole families from government housing if a member of the household is an undocumented immigrant. The new rule would wipe out an exception that currently allows families of mixed status to live in HUD housing under a prorated system where they pay more rent. The new rule would give families six months to comply, or face eviction as a family.

First of all, it's wrong to treat immigrants or any human being this way. Secondly, HUD Secretary Ben Carson said the new rule is necessary to "make certain our scarce public resources help those



Hundreds gather in Oakland, CA, to protest the sheriff's policies that lead to deportations in 2017. PHOTO/PEG HUNTER

who are legally entitled to it." Just in case there's anyone out there who believes that statement to be true, a real good indication that even Ben Carson doesn't believe it is the fact that he has requested \$9.6 billion less for the 2020 HUD budget.

Ask yourself—why does the

HUD budget include \$350 million less for Section 8 housing (a government housing subsidy for low-income people)? And why have the capital funds for repairs on units to make them occupancy compliant been slashed to zero? It's obvious that the "scarce public resources" are artificially cre-

ated by the Trump administration, and this makes clear the real reason for his newest escalation of attacks on immigrants. The Trump administration's steady stream of propaganda of hate would have us believe that the solution to every problem is to attack the immigrant.

Dehumanizing immigrants is part of the false narrative that put Trump into the White House, and he is still playing this card by blaming immigrants for the lack of and demise of public housing in this country. In fact, government policies have been eliminating public housing going back to the 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan cut the HUD budget a whopping 78% from \$32 billion to \$7 billion. Homelessness has grown ever since, bringing us to today's housing crisis where 4.4 million Americans are currently on HUD's waiting list for housing, while more than 453,000 out of 5,035,824 available units are unoccupied (HUD Office of Policy Development and Research 2018).

The solution to America's housing crisis is not to be found in evicting more people. It is to be found in providing affordable housing for everyone. Evicting 55,000 children—the vast majority of whom are American citizens—onto the streets homeless, under the guise of removing 'undeserving' immigrants, will be a harbinger of our future. We live in an economy where a growing number of things are produced and distributed by fewer people. Either we defend the immigrant today or tomorrow anyone's housing can be in jeopardy from a corporate dictatorship that cares little for housing as a human right because it refuses to house anyone it does not need.

Join the more than 30 and growing, pro-housing, homeless and immigrant rights advocate organizations nationwide in condemning these HUD rule changes. Submit your comments electronically by July 9, 2019 through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov.

Homeless say: 'Give us a home or leave us alone!'

As the ongoing crisis in the economy, the rising cost of rents and housing, and the lack of livable wages everywhere pushes people into the streets by the millions—men, women and children—cities are going on the attack against people simply for being in the streets without a home. Many children and college students are homeless and hungry, some colleges even running food banks on campus. Last year the UN Rapporteur for Housing, after visiting homeless encampments around the country and hearing people's testimonies, condemned as 'inhuman' the extreme poverty and brutal treatment of the victims of social inequality, and the buying-up of properties for massive profits from grossly inflated rents by financial consortiums such as Blackstone.

Homeless people across the country have been pushing in various forms for the right to sleep, camp or sit in public places and be left alone by the police, and to not have their possessions confiscated and destroyed. At the same time, there have been seemingly coordinated attacks on tent encampments, in California and all across the country. In Denver, a recent Right to Survive ballot initiative was defeated, after businesses poured millions of dollars into a campaign of lies and scaremongering against it.

Recently, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), Chairwoman of the House Financial Services Committee, introduced H.R. 1856, the Ending Homelessness Act of 2019. This act would allocate \$13.3 billion over a ten-year period for housing and supportive services for homeless people. She is one of the few in government speaking to the issue. She stated:

"In the richest country in the world, it is simply unacceptable that we have people living in the streets. Today, there are over a half million peo-



There is a growing nationwide movement for the rights of homeless people to survive and be housed, as seen here in Denver. PHOTO/DENVER HOMELESS OUT LOUD

ple experiencing homelessness nationwide. Nearly 160,000 of them are children and nearly 38,000 are veterans who we have failed to support after their service to our nation."

People are saying in various ways, through words and actions—often very organized actions—that they will not be passive victims of a system that attacks them, when there are enough resources to decently house every person in this country. In tent and vehicle-dwellers' communities, people stabilize their lives and create a movement for the right to shelter themselves, as well as for housing as a human right and a social priority. That could begin with the repair and repopulating of public housing affordable to low and no-income people, as well as protective rent control, and other social support. That is a society worth organizing for, from a tent on up to the halls of government.

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The *People's Tribune* and the bilingual *Tribuno del Pueblo* are sister publications that bring you essential news and views from fighters in the grass-roots struggle for a society that cares for and provides for everyone. By joining Friends of the PT/TP, you will support the developing unity of the movements surging not only across the country but across the hemisphere and the world.

The *People's Tribune* and the *Tribuno del Pueblo* can help advance your struggle by printing your own articles, poetry, photography, and art on our websites or in the print editions. Or you can suggest interviews you think we should conduct or news we should include by contacting the papers. Donations from Friends of the PT/TP will help to support these efforts financially. The papers receive no corporate funds and are totally dependent on our volunteers and supporters.

Periodic donations are welcome, but if you can provide an ongoing monthly donation of \$5, \$10 or \$15, or more, this will ensure a stable financial foundation for the PT and TP. You can set up a recurring donation by visiting either of our websites—peopletribune.org or tribunodelpueblo.org—and clicking on 'Donate.' Your credit card or checking account will be billed once a month, until you tell us to stop. And we'll send you a free subscription.

It's time to stand up. Together we can win a whole new world.

The right to housing vs profit

By Andy Willis

CHICAGO, IL — The Logan Square community in Chicago recently packed into a meeting just a quarter-mile from a homeless encampment. This public hearing to get 100 units of 100% affordable housing to the middle of one of the hottest real estate markets in the city was the result of tremendous public pressure. For years a large coalition of community groups, churches, and progressive Alderman organized just to get to this point.

Over 600 people jammed into the school gymnasium at Logandale Middle School. Supporters of the project outnumbered the opposition nearly 5 to 1. Many people there have been priced out of their housing two or three times by rising rents and property speculators. Some 20,000 Latino families have been driven out in the last ten years. This is

a neighborhood where some of those driven out of their homes have frozen to death on the same streets where they once lived. The stakes in this fight are high—it's the rights of human beings vs. the rights of private property developers.

The meeting was organized so that all could speak. Beautiful plans from the architects and community planners were presented, community members lined up to speak for or against the housing proposal. Green support and Red non-support cards were distributed so that the audience could express their opinions visually instead of with cheers or boos. That did not go according to plan. Every big property owner, real estate agent or landlord in opposition to this development was basically chased off the stage by a community that has suffered long enough!

The city of Chicago has hun-

dreds of millions of federal dollars allocated for public housing and maintenance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development hoarded by Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), that successive corrupt city administrations have kept unavailable for 20 years. That money, through political manipulations and trickery, is kept from those who need housing. Instead the money has been allocated via tax loopholes and other schemes and set-asides to big private property developers. Over \$2 billion in city taxpayer dollars was just approved a week before this meeting to be given to a company (Sterling Bay) that will build a gated community for upscale luxury apartments.

Chicago is changing. Its huge industrial base is gone forever. Relatively fewer high tech jobs replace tens of thousands of industrial jobs. Privatization and speculation in real estate drives



Logan Square community members wave green cards in support of a 100% affordable housing development that will help those facing the housing crisis in their neighborhood. PHOTO/LETICIA BARRERA

housing prices outside the reach for over half the city. Of course 100 units of affordable housing is only a drop in the bucket when 80,000 people in the city are homeless and thousands more are housing insecure.

Chicagoans recently went to the polls and mandated change from their politicians. Campaign promises were made to bring resources into the neighborhoods, to stop favoring the elite over the

needs of the people. Property speculation is one of the biggest profit making enterprises going these days. So how can we win the battle for housing? We the People can only win when over-taxed homeowners, threatened renters, and the homeless unite in common cause. Housing is a human right that all deserve and it must come first.

'I feel safer on the streets':

Sexual, physical, and mental abuse at three southern California shelters

By Igmarr Rodas

ORANGE COUNTY, CA — During the past year, Eve Garrow, policy analyst and advocate for the ACLU Foundation of Southern California did an investigation of three Southern California shelters in Orange County. The findings were disturbing as witnesses, volunteers, and staff members came forward with allegations of abuse (mental, physical, and sexual), unsanitary conditions, thefts, and discrimination.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) published a recent report by Ms. Garrow detailing the toxic conditions and abuse at these shelters—the Courtyard Transitional Center, SAFE Place in Santa Ana, Bridges at Kraemer Place in Anaheim—and made 10 recommendations for bringing them into compliance with the law and with standard living conditions.

The issues in question are sexual abuse toward female homeless women by male staff members, discriminatory practices based on nationality and race, American Disability Act (ADA) violations by staff and administrators of the shelters, theft or destruction of personal property, including vital documents like birth certificates among others, unsanitary condi-



Man sleeps near The Courtyard Transitional Shelter in Santa Ana, CA. PHOTO/IGMAR RODAS

tions, and retaliation by administration or staff if the residents complain or come forward with grievances. There have also been seven recorded deaths on the premises of these shelters and four in transit to local hospitals.

"Orange County's emergency shelters are dangerously unregulated and downright abusive," said Ms. Garrow. County officials received a copy of the report and are reviewing it before responding. This is not the first time county officials have been criticized because of the substandard treatment of the county's homeless population.

In addition to the inhumane living conditions, the report also found discrimination and abuse, suppression of freedom of expres-

sion and movement, deprivation of fundamental rights without due process, impunity and lack of accountability. As I myself have witnessed all of this as an advocate and reporter of homeless issues here in southern California, there's always one question I ask when I interview a homeless person who has been abused at the Courtyard Transitional Shelter:

"Why don't you stay at the Courtyard?" The answer is fearful as most respond:

"I feel safer on the streets."

Eve Garrow is the author of the ACLU report with collaboration of others including myself. The report can be found at: www.aclusocal.org/en/publications/thisplaceiskillingme

A poem to honor a man that used to come in Bezazian Library in late 90s.

While leaning against a urine-stained & crumbling wall,
Hard up against the El tracks,
His heart stopped.

Softly he sank down to the pavement
Clasping to his chest
A plastic bag that held
All his worldly goods.

His death was witnessed
By the velvet darkness
As his stubbled chin was brought to rest
On the broken glass
Of someone else's prayer.

Tell me how not one of us
Witnessed his passing
How did we miss that soul
Slipping away from its broken temple?

We wept no tears of joy
At his release,
We did not sorrow
At his absence from us.

How could it be
That not one of us witnessed his passing
Yet all of Heaven
Came out to greet him?

— Karen Harvey-Turner

'Give us a home or leave us alone!'

This has been the cry heard from organized homeless people. This movement is gathering force and strategizing from town to city across the country. As homeless numbers leap, and also homeless deaths, people are coming together to demand the real solution, housing as a human right. The *People's Tribune* brings you these stories from the movement's leaders and warriors. Send your stories to info@peopletribune.org and donate to help make these important voices heard. — *People's Tribune*

'This camp was a home!'

By Dani Drysdale

SANTA CRUZ, CA — So the Ross Camp was evicted today. A home to upwards of 200 people, an "unsanctioned encampment" in the words of the City. I was there for the large majority of the process.

I'm really angry and sad about this. People were responding to a crisis by creating a home for themselves and were kicked out of that home today, to the applause of much of our community.

It was an eviction of hundreds of people in a single day. It was a massive displacement of our most marginalized community members.

This camp was a home for people for six months. In one hectic day it is over. Sure, many people will get to go to the city-run River Street camp or one of the Salvation Army shelters. But many won't, for a lot of valid reasons. And those places aren't a home they built for themselves.

When I left the camp tonight, people were still right outside the fence placed there by the police, some of them with enough belongings to easily fill my bedroom. Just abandoned, sitting on the levee with nowhere to go. The stress of this ordeal surely created conflicts within the homeless community that will carry serious consequences for people moving forward, especially now that the communal space they built has been destroyed.

Towards the end, Rick Martinez, deputy chief of SCPD, came up to thank me for being there all day. I didn't even know what to say to him. Maybe I should have said "you're welcome, I'm actually elated that I got a chance to drag people's entire lives up a hill on pallets and makeshift carts because you and your bosses are here forcing them out of their homes permanently."

That place provided real benefits to the people there far beyond what I can speak to. What I can

speak to though is the direct public health benefits of having so many folks in one place. We were able to clear thousands of dirty needles from the community in less than an hour. Countless lives were saved by Narcan being in so many peoples' hands. The fire chief loved to complain about how many medical calls they got from the camp, but every single one of those calls were for crises that may not have been noticed and addressed if the victim was sleeping in a doorway or out in the woods.

I don't know what else to say. The slow violence of progressive liberalism is no better than the quick reactionary violence we see in other places. It displaces and harms people all the same, whether it's done in the span of an hour with riot gear or the span of a day with smiles and nods.

My heart goes out to every person sleeping outside tonight with no tent and no sense of security or community.



The city of Santa Cruz, CA, one of the most expensive cities in the U.S., evicted upwards of 200 people from their home, calling it an "unsanctioned encampment." PHOTO/FACEBOOK



"On May 1, 2019, 145 residents of Sacramento's Stockton Blvd Encampment, and advocates, were greeted with a raid carried out by approximately 150 militarized police in full tactical gear. One woman's arm was broken during the raid. We had requested trash and restrooms and viable resources for months, to no avail. Our friends on the streets are relentlessly tormented by constant removal at all hours, with nowhere to go but to another street, to be again criminalized within hours. This in direct violation of the 8th Amendment in the U.S. Constitution against cruel and unusual punishment. NO DISPLACEMENT WITHOUT PLACEMENT!" writes homeless movement activist Crystal Rose Sanchez.

PHOTO/ANAMARIA RAGLAND-MUNOZ

'There is a better way of doing things' says homeless leader

By Mike Zint

BERKELEY CA — My name is Mike Zint. I'm the cofounder of 'First They Came for The Homeless.' Recently, city officials and police came by our camp and threatened to enforce a newly-passed city ordinance, which states that its residents must break down their tents at 7 a.m. in the morning, and not set them up again till 10 at night, and are not allowed to cover more than 3 x 3 feet of sidewalk with themselves and their gear.

This camp was established after many months of being chased by the city. It has existed for over two years and has helped many of the city's most vulnerable get stable, and finally get housed. The mayor has referred to it as a model encampment.

The camp has many seriously disabled residents. The city is expecting those who are wheelchair-bound, Parkinson sufferers, terminal, etc., to break down their tents in the morning and put them back up late at night. The kitchen tent and storage tent will have to go, as well as the large community tent. The camp distributes extra materials to homeless all over the city, performing a huge community service at almost zero cost to the city.

I designed this camp to demonstrate that there is a better way of doing things than criminalization. If you're homeless in Berkeley, you get tortured. No sleep for RV owners. Dangerous levels of exertion



"So today I woke up to the news that this lovely stove and kettle, where delicious strong coffee was made for me yesterday, and many tents at the 'First they came for the homeless' community, are under threat of a removal by the city and the police," said Sarah Menefee, co-founder of First they came for the homeless.

PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

for the frail all over the city. Threat of confiscation if you leave your gear unattended to go to the bathroom or go eat. No homeless gear allowed at BART plaza.

There is not much hope if you're homeless. Criminalization of the poor is in every city. Rent is too high for a social security check to cover it in any city. There is nowhere near enough affordable housing being built. And everyone but the billionaires are getting poorer. Berkeley needs to do better. Cities need to make humane decisions for the most vulnerable, instead of representing the top.

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

— The Editors

Communities demand gov't restart MTR health impact study



Chuck Nelson talks at the 2012 memorial service for Larry Gibson, vowing to continue the fight to end mountaintop removal. Larry was a leader of this fight.

Editor's note: The People's Tribune interviews Chuck Nelson, retired West Virginia coalminer, United Mineworkers Union member and fighter for environmental health. Read the full interview at peopletribune.org.

By Chuck Nelson

WEST VIRGINIA — In 2017,

we testified on the health study by scientists on the impact of mountaintop removal (MTR) mining on Appalachian communities. Later, Trump suspended any study costing over \$100,000. The only one he suspended was this study. We're trying to get that restarted and want to know why it was suspended. The only reason is that industry got to government; they didn't want it done. In April 2019 the House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing about restarting the study. We're waiting to see if there will be a ruling to restart that study or not.

The industry claims there are only eight active true MTR mining sites in the U.S. We're tired of hearing lies. They put another name on it but it's the same thing. They're blowing mountaintops off and dumping debris into valleys. I can go to four or five sites within an hour's drive of my house. It seems like the health of the peo-

ple doesn't matter to Trump and a lot of people in D.C. Every time a study starts, it's shut down by politicians catering to industry. We are fed up.

This study would show the evidence that the community's health is impacted. They should put a moratorium on MTR until the study is done. I've already lost one kidney, and the other one's not good. I've been talking about the health impacts of this, long before I got sick. I've been in these communities and seen it. We're tired of giving body parts and lives to this industry. The politicians that cater to industry don't value people's lives, just like in Flint.

The community is not speaking out because the evidence has not been shown to them. It's censored. Manchin (U.S. Senator, WV) had one study censored. I've worked with air testing, water sampling, with the National Geological Survey (NGS) when they

did tests for the federal government and we discussed that it's not good what they're finding. I said, "Come back and let the community know." He said, "I will." Months went by. I called and Bill Orem said, "They stopped the funding on the project." That's what they do. People should start raising hell.

Nobody is getting awards for Black Lung either. It's always been a dirty deal. John Hopkins Hospital was caught scheming with the industry law firm, Jackson/Kelly, in Charleston, where thousands of claimants were denied benefits. The doctors and lawyers represent the coal companies. I have particles on my lung but not bad enough to get benefits. Massey Energy deliberately destroyed the ventilation out. It was so dusty you couldn't see. That's why Black Lung is increasing with younger miners. There aren't any union mines and no union representation of

miners to see that everything is done right.

They've been promising prosperity for 100 years and we're at the bottom of every category in the U.S. As much money as they've made off this state, you'd think people would have a better living. It's getting worse and worse. They would go back to slave labor like they did when they first did mining if they could, using kids, using any way to make money.

We need to hold all these people's feet to the fire. We need to unite the issues with the people here. You can't accomplish anything with just a handful, they can crush you. You need a big movement. This is affecting your future. The younger generation is more aware, and more motivated for change. People need to see the enthusiasm of young people, really.

Mountain Valley Pipeline – The scars of Appalachia

By Lisa King

WYTHEVILLE, VIRGINIA — I recently spent a lovely afternoon with a couple of lifetime Blacksburg, Virginia residents directly effected by the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP). I'm purposely vague, because I don't want to add to their concerns. What I witnessed was so shocking, I'm still processing the implications.

Minutes away from Virginia Tech and downtown Blacksburg we ventured into a realm of waste, devastation, and heartbreak amidst the unique beauty of the mountains of southwest Virginia. My guide and the typically wise and amazing elderly adult who took me on the tour were gracious enough to show me their beautiful patch of Appalachia and share their story. I saw a majestic stand of full grown Poplar, several springs and small creeks, an old home place complete with a root cellar dug into a nearby bank, and a view unlike any other in the world.

I also saw a huge gash cut through the steep hills and valleys with piles of timber and debris tossed over each side of the pipeline's boundary. After seeing the conglomerate underwriting the pipeline's idea of "restored," it became clear why the company has already accumulated over 300 erosion control and water-

way violations.

But, what shocked me most was the fact that these two had yet to be compensated in any way. The fifth amendment of our constitution is very clear on the necessary steps to exercise "eminent domain." Any individual must be compensated prior to surrendering their land. This insanity is common in Appalachia.

Their sizeable home place of more than fifty acres lies within the "blast zone," so it will be deemed useless once the pipeline starts up. A blast zone is the area adjacent to the pipeline deemed ground zero in the event of an explosion.

The blast zone for this type and size of pipeline is 4,174 feet, almost a mile in every direction.

Advocates of the pipeline tout jobs, access to the gas, and increased revenue for the localities impacted by the pipeline. The reality is the MVP will create only 34 jobs in Virginia.

Cheaper and plentiful natural gas certainly has its allure, but the vast majority of the MVP product is targeted for export. Southwest Virginia, and Roanoke County specifically, will have access to 1% of it, with the remaining 14% of domestic use destined for the northeast.

Once again, Appalachia will wear the scars of prosperity with nothing to show for it's



An example of the blatant disregard for forests and wetlands by corporations building the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

PHOTO/LISA KING

sacrifice. When will our legacy be more than dealing with the extraction of natural resources, and then left with the consequences, and without the funds to repair what's been done to our priceless beauty?

See Mother Jones Community Foundation for information on our fight.

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Flint braces for a long hot summer

By Flint, MI correspondent

FLINT, MI — In 2018, the Michigan Department of Human Services reported 28 known cases of Legionella disease in Flint. So far this year there are eight cases, but as Frontline PBS recently reported, scores of cases in the past may have been misdiagnosed. See Frontline’s “Five Years In, The Flint Water Crisis Continues Its Deadly Toll.”

Nevertheless, health officials do agree that as warmer weather of Summer approaches, the risk of Legionella and other bacterial diseases will increase. The elderly, those with compromised immune systems, and infants, are especially vulnerable. Consequently, as local Dr. Lawrence Reynolds cautioned at the five-year commemoration event held recently, residents should continue to use PURIFIED bottled water.

State officials under the newly elected Democratic governor have so far not delivered on her promise to restore state-sponsored bottled water to Flint residents. Bottled water was discontinued last year under the previous governor.

Meanwhile, an underreported part of the Flint water disaster is the fact that water rates here are among the highest in the nation! Scores of Flint water customers experience water shut offs.

Residents still need water filtered for showering, washing



A symbolic coffin commemorating those who died as a result of the Flint water disaster.

PHOTO/H20JUSTICE FACEBOOK

clothes, etc. Right now we rely on woefully inadequate charitable donations resulting in blocks and blocks of cars lined up for 2-3 hour long waits. This is unacceptable. This is something the government should be doing. Now campaign season is here for Flint’s Mayoral election. Residents demand a path to tap ready and affordable clean water free from corporate and Wall Street control.

View Frontline’s reporting at youtu.be/lekYRPRZEJQ

Proposed law forces fossil fuel companies to pay fee

By Rose Gomez

CHICAGO, IL — Congress has introduced H.R. 763 known as the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019 energyinnovationact.org/how-it-works/ in which fossil fuel companies would pay a carbon emissions fee at the point of entry for their products. It’s expected that companies would gradually increase fossil fuel product prices, decreasing our use of polluting fuels and shift toward safer, cleaner energy sources like wind and solar.

This fee would go into a “Carbon Fees Trust Fund” and 100% of the money in this fund would be divided up and sent out to all American households in equal “dividend” shares per adult every month (children receive a half-share). Any resident with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number would qualify. A social security number would not be mandatory.

Families would have a strong incentive to make cleaner and cheaper purchases while pocketing the extra dividend money each month. By returning the fee’s revenue to households, most families come out ahead. In fact 78% of Latino households are predicted to earn more in the dividend payments than they would pay in increased costs. The average household benefiting would earn an extra \$363 in one year alone. Of the 22% of Latino households not benefiting, the average cost would be about \$145 in the first year. No policy is perfect, but this would be

a first good step for healthier communities for future generations to come.

Three years and still fighting: Standing Rock

Editor’s Note: In honor of the third anniversary of the Water Protectors movement at Standing Rock, below are excerpts from an interview by Tracy L. Barnett of the Esperanza Project and Lakota spiritual activist Cheryl Angel, an occupant and prior spokesperson of Sacred Stone Camp. As the pipeline construction industry is booming across the U.S. and Canada, and Donald Trump seeks to bulldoze the cancelled Keystone XL Pipeline through more than 800 miles of unceded Lakota treaty territory, at least nine state governments are working to criminalize protest movements like at Standing Rock. Please read the entire interview at esperanzaproject.com/2019/native-american-culture/many-standing-rocks



Silent women’s march at Standing Rock in 2016. LaDonna Allard, center, and right, Cheryl Angel. PHOTO/CHERYL ANGEL, FACEBOOK

Cheryl Angel, interviewed by Tracy L Barnett

Once you stand up in resistance to the destruction of our Earth, our mother, there is no way you can sit back down... I’ll be standing in solidarity aligned with all those who understand the threat to our water until the end...there are just too many multinational extractivist corporations to ignore. And with the current leaders in many countries... writing legislation to criminalize individuals and fast-track pipelines, now is the time for more people to stand up and fight for our next seven generations.

In my opinion, mainstream media failed the people of the country, not just the water protectors... They could have prevented all of the abuses of law enforcement, the unnecessary jailing of hundreds, and no one would even have had to end up with trumped up criminal charges [at Standing Rock] ... Mainstream media has [never] accurately reported the facts of what pipelines actually do to the environment, nor the truth about the governmental figures lending their political weight to approve illegal pipeline permits and how the banking system was funding the pipelines...

After Standing Rock, my own life isn’t my life anymore, because once you stand up and you see

the injustice and you see the lack of concern for the environment from a corporate and legal standpoint, it doesn’t end that easily. Another thing, while you’re standing there you get to talk to the person standing next to you, and you get to hear their stories.

And they all came with stories—devastating stories about what happened because nobody stood up—or when they did stand up they were either killed or massacred or forced off the land. But at Standing Rock people weren’t going to lay down, because we knew we were right. The judge said we were right, even after the pipeline was built.

Now it makes perfect sense to protect water everywhere. I have a deep relationship with water. I know it’s alive. I know it can hear our pleas, and our songs and all the prayers said along its riverbanks and shores.

As Indigenous people with sovereign economies, we don’t have the need for a huge capitalistic society to come onto our lands and we certainly don’t need these pipelines destroying the water we need to drink.

So water is in danger, globally. Right now Indigenous communities are still at risk, and they are standing up, because they have to stand up. When you finally realize—WATER IS LIFE—you understand why you can’t sit back down.

People challenge new anti-protest laws

From the Editors

Since the protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016, the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, among others, have funded model legislation that was then introduced into several state legislatures, criminalizing these protesters (who prefer to be called water and land protectors.) Not only are these bills an assault on free speech but also freedom of movement. Persons who unknowingly “trespass” on pipeline easements can be arrested, charged with felonies, fined tens of thousands of dollars and imprisoned up to 10 years.

Organizations and individuals opposing these bills point out that because of the way they are worded, referring to “critical infrastructure,” even teachers, for example, and others protesting education cutbacks or police brutality could possibly be jailed and fined under these laws. Citizens are challenging these fascist laws in court in Louisiana and South Dakota. A Texas bill passed in May amid vocal opposition, but thanks to the Coalition to Stop HB1633 in Illinois, which got over 6000 witness slips signed, plus all the calls and letters, emails and tweets to legislators, the bill is dead for now. Warning: Stay vigilant. It’ll be back.

is NOW. Write or call your congressman to let them know that air pollution and climate change are important issues for you. The Hispanic population is one of the fastest growing demographics in

the country. Let’s make our voices heard!

Rose Gomez is a Citizens Climate Lobby volunteer.

facebook.com/peopletrib | www.peopletribune.org JUNE 2019 | PEOPLE’S TRIBUNE 7

Chicago mental health clinics crushed under corporate heel

By Kathy Powers

CHICAGO, IL — A political will has been there a long time: the will to reward private industry with public money meant for public resources, in this case the Chicago mental health clinics. Thirty years ago, in 1989, there were 19 City of Chicago Community Mental Health Centers. Before 2011, I recall testifying in front of Richard M. Daley to keep our clinics open. He held multiple hearings all over the city about the neighborhood and he did not close the clinics. The political will is to close the city public mental health clinics. This is a mistake.

Then the new kid on the block, Rahm Emanuel, blew in town from DC and closed six clinics perfunctorily. There were no community hearings. The mayor turned his back on the clinics, never spoke about them, never physically maintained them, never promoted them, and, most visibly, never changed the name of the mayor on the signs. Several clinics still bear Daley's name.

I was a patient in one of them and I benefited from the services that I received. I've been a member of the Community Mental Health Board for over ten years. My goal has always been to make sure that the PUBLIC mental health clinics are available and thriving in the communities they serve.

Presently, that is impossible because the political will is to sell off these clinics to the private sector. Commissioner of Public Health Julie Morita refuses to listen to the community voice about the clinics. In fact, she does not show up for City Council meetings. She sends her deputy. She schmoozed with Cook County to serve the Roseland clinic. Not only

did that leave us with five City clinics, it also spelled doom for the underserved Roseland area. Clients were required to go to Stroger (Cook County) Hospital and the Roseland footprint was lost under a heap of bureaucratic skullduggery.

Now the private sector chimes in with an argument that it can do it better, that it can offer wrap-around services for the indigent clients that the City serves.

Where have they been for the last ten years? Oh, yes, the State of Illinois did not pay these agencies, so they didn't have a morsel for the poor, homeless, undocumented, uninsured people. Theoretically, this could happen again. The responsibility of a PUBLIC entity is absolute. (chicago.suntimes.com/well/mental-healthclinic-chicago-closures-lori-lightfoot)

Mayor-Elect Lightfoot has a golden opportunity to be a leader for public mental health services for Chicago. First, she can hold a hearing with the Task Force of stakeholders to ascertain the feasibility of public mental health Clinics. That will be an easy finding (sammyersfoundation.com/mental-health-statistics). Then, she might delegate physical improvements to make the five remaining clinics accessible. Thirdly, she could order the Department of Public Health do its job, by educating the public about mental health, recovery, and hope for the future: make flyers about mental health symptoms and hold town halls in communities.

Fourthly, open more clinics in unserved areas. Lastly, The Community Mental Health Board or some other consumer body, must always participate in changes through all these efforts, for we are the public that the City serves.

The fight for universal healthcare in Utah

Editor's note: Voters in three "red" states, Utah, Idaho, and Nebraska, passed ballot initiatives last November to expand Medicaid. Below, Utah activist Paul Gibbs speaks to the People's Tribune.

"We have an incredible community of activists in Utah who like me, have either been greatly impacted by healthcare issues in the past, or who just care about helping others. Through our effort over the past six years, we have made a real difference in Utah despite very strong opposition from one of the most conservative legislatures in the country. Groups are also working to fund ballot initiatives in multiple states. We all care about what is happening in the other states as well as in our own community.

"Last November Utah voters passed Proposition 3 to expand Medicaid under the ACA (Afford-

able Care Act). Then in February, the legislature replaced it with a version of Medicaid expansion that expands it only up to those at 100% of the poverty level instead of 138%. The State is applying for federal waivers for things like work requirements and a per capita cap that is very damaging to the program. Now we are trying to get the public educated. We have about 70,000 people eligible now that weren't covered before, and we want to get every one of them covered.

"Because the president and the Republican Congress failed to repeal the ACA, Congress is trying to do it now through the legal branch. The efforts would be catastrophic if it goes through. Well, we all know that the ACA is not perfect. If repealed, 130 million Americans with preexisting conditions will lose that protection immediately. I'm one of

those. I have a kidney transplant. I never would have gotten private insurance before the ACA. The uninsured rate will go up by 65%, Medicaid expansion for 17 million people will be lost, and 2.3 million adult children won't be able to stay on their parents' insurance anymore. Protections that stop us from having lifetime maximums on insurance coverage will be gone. All this and there's no replacement plan. This is not a repeal and replace. It's just the repeal now.

"The President and Republicans in Congress are hyping that they're working on a new plan, but they've had nine years to work on replacement of the ACA. That they can pass something new with a majority in both houses of Congress that will have all the benefits of the ACA without any of the flaws, and that it will fit both conservative and liberal ide-



Over 1,000 youths gathered on Capitol Hill to garner Congressional support for a Green New Deal in December, 2018.

PHOTO/SUNRISE MOVEMENT

'We're going to #ChangeTheDebate' — Sunrise Movement

Editor's note: The Sunrise movement is "building an army of young people to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process" (sunrisemovement.org) Below is their call for participation in the democratic presidential debates in July.

Last November, we challenged Democratic leadership with a simple question: What is your plan? That question shook the world.

Since then, presidential candidates have been racing to back the Green New Deal, the first plan to treat climate change like the emergency it is. But others have doubled down on the same corporate-driven policies that have failed for decades. This approach is a death sentence for our generation.

On July 30-31, 20 candidates will walk onstage in Detroit. They'll ask for our votes. We'll ask them to give a damn about our lives.

Join us in Detroit to turn the tide of history together. For our future. For justice. For humanity. Let's #ChangeTheDebate.



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/PROP 3: UTAH DECIDES

ology, is utterly absurd and at best just a lie.

"A lot of people support Medicare for All, it's a popular proposition. There's a lot of discussion of that, and a public option, and all sorts of different ways of looking at this. What I think is the goal for most people

is universal coverage. I'm not set on only one way to do that at this point. But universal coverage, making sure everybody has access to healthcare, is absolutely essential. That's what we're fighting for as most of us can't afford health care."

'My biggest fear was that my children would get cancer'

Interview with Paula Swearengin, candidate featured in 'Knock Down the House'

The People's Tribune spoke with Paula Swearengin about the new documentary "Knock Down The House" by Rachael Lear. It showcases the grassroots campaigns of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, NY, Amy Vilela, NV, Cori Bush, MO, and Swearengin, WV, challenging Democratic Party incumbents for House of Representative seats in the 2018 midterm elections. The film is currently on Netflix.

By Paula Swearengin

For the premiere in Charleston, WV, one couple drove 17 hours. Others drove 5 ½ hours. There was a lot of unity in the room, very inspiring.

It was exciting to watch everyone work from the ground up. We were 100% grassroots. We didn't do it for political careers. It was a matter of survival. I was glad Rachael got into the film the

stuff about Cori and Ferguson and Amy on the need for Medicare-for-All, and the story about losing her daughter.

I was a single mom, a coal miner's daughter, unaware of what was going on around me until my neighbor's daughter got cancer. I learned about mountain top removal. As a kid, I drank acid mine drainage water. We were really sick as kids.

My biggest fear was that my children would get cancer. We fought for years against mountain top removal, mechanization taking jobs, the destruction of our communities, water pollution and slurry impoundments like the Brushy Fork impoundment, a very unstable structure. If that breaks, thousands will die.

In the Massey Coal era, the media wasn't talking about the poverty. We were divided between clean water and jobs. WV is one

of the poorest states. It's hard to think about your lungs when you're working in the mines to feed your family.

But the market declined again and there's no alternatives. Coal isn't coming back. The addiction epidemic is getting worse. People are beginning to realize a lot has changed here but our government didn't change.

So Governor Jim Justice is why I decided to run for office. He is one of the biggest coal barons in West Virginia. Senator Joe Manchin recruited him (for office). Manchin pretty much owns the Democratic Party here.

Some organizations reached out to me after seeing videos of me with Bernie (Sanders) and another of me chewing out Joe Manchin at a Town Hall meeting. I hopped in my car and got an IOU for the tolls to give him a piece of my mind again. I'd had enough!



Knock Down the House is a documentary by Rachael Lear. Paula Swearengin is third from the left.

I wanted to make sure people knew we were desperate here. We're labeled as "hillbillies" with no teeth, no shoes, or brains but we have more regular Democrats and Independents than we have Republicans. Bernie won in all 55 counties but the super delegates, including Manchin, voted against the will of the people. So I thought, "who better to challenge

Manchin than a poor coal miner's daughter?"

Alexandria won! But our campaign was inspiring. Manchin is very powerful but we showed he could be challenged. [I] got more votes against an incumbent than anyone in 75 years. More votes than any Republican, and I was an unknown candidate in West Virginia!



Denmark, S.C., clean water activist Deanna M. Berry joins Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders on a panel. VIDEO STILL FROM BERNIE SANDERS' YOUTUBE

Denmark, SC holds safe water town hall

From the Editors

DENMARK, SC — Residents of Denmark, South Carolina, joined presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in a Justice Town Hall in May on their fight for safe water.

"High levels of lead, gasoline, manganese, iron, and other contaminants ... [and] MCBE which causes formaldehyde in the human body, were in our water for 10 years," said Deanna Miller Berry. "We don't trust DHEC, EPA, or the city of Denmark because they all protect each other. Who protects the citizens?"

Paula Ray Brown said, "I had sores on my body. I can't sleep because I'm scratching. ... If I wash my hair with the Denmark water, I won't have any hair on my head. ... I've been threatened [for] going on radio. ... They said they are going to put me in a car and drag me through the street. ... The mayor doesn't care about us. I have evidence that this town got close to \$30 million—what have they done [with it?]"

Deanna said the community is not going to take it anymore.

"The water crisis is all over the country," said Bernie. "We must rebuild our infrastructure ... rebuild our water systems. ... That's what the Green New Deal is about. ... If you can give \$1.5 trillion in tax breaks to the top 1% and profitable corporations, we can invest in saving the planet and investing in clean water ... clean water is a right for us all," he said.

Learn more from this video: fb.com/605926073220163

Death Alley marchers demand: Stop poisoning the people



Bobby Taylor and Sharon Lavigne.

PHOTO/TED QUANT

Editor's note: The following is excerpted from a statement by the Coalition Against Death Alley, which is fighting chemical pollution in Louisiana. CADA members and supporters marched from Reserve, LA, to the State Capitol at Baton Rouge from May 30 to June 3. Louisiana officials got a judge to use a law enacted in the 1960s to restrict civil rights activists to prevent the marchers from walking across two bridges over the Mississippi. Invoking the law threatened the marchers with up to 15 years in prison on felony charges. They were forced to cross the bridges on buses.

The Coalition Against Death Alley (CADA) in a joint statement of its two leaders, Ms. Sharon Lavigne and Bobby Taylor, said the following about the impending confrontation with Gov. John Bel Edwards: "We live in a 24-hour-a-day gas chamber empowered by the EPA, the DEQ and laws of man. But the laws of God say we have a right to clean air, clean water, and clean land."

Ms. Lavigne and Mr. Taylor say that their march is bigger than just the poisoning of St. John and St. James Parishes. "Our march of people of all races and ages ... is symbolic of our society moving from the backward days of white supremacy, and the indiscriminate poisoning and genocide of Black communities, to a Beloved society where every life is protected and enriched. From Africa, Asia, South and Central America, Europe and the United States there is a growing Movement to stop white supremacy and environmental destruction, the hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. We are leaders in that Movement," the two leaders say.

They added: "The Governor and his industry hunters constantly bring more and more poisoning companies to gas our air, poison our lands, waterways and the Mississippi River. THIS MUST STOP NOW. ... Our fragile Earth is about 12 years, scientists say, from not supporting human life. We have to change our ways. The disrespect and rape of the Earth comes from disrespecting the Earth's people. We must do better."



Lakeesha Harris (above) speaks at a pro Choice rally in New Orleans on May, 22, 2019.

PHOTOS/JULIE DERMANISKY



Outpouring of resistance over attack on women's right to choose

From People's Tribune correspondents

"It's not the moment to be quiet. It's not the moment to go home and fix your dinner and watch TV. This is the moment for you to march. It is a moment for you to be angry. It is a moment to let them know that we do care," said Lakeesha Harris to the crowd at a pro-choice rally in New Orleans.

Men and women are condemning the recent moves by some state governments to severely restrict or even ban abortion in their states. Women

all over America are saying "my body, my life, my choice." Women have been fighting for centuries for the right to control their own lives and be treated equally in every aspect of life. Now the limited gains that women have made in America are under assault. Women are saying, "We Won't Go Back," "Stop the Ban," and "Forced Gestation is Torture."

Across the country, outrage is growing at the moral hypocrisy of this orchestrated, campaign to set back the movement for women's rights and equality.

"To say you are pro-life

because you block a woman's right to choose and then block health care for pregnant women, children, persons with pre-existing conditions is the height of hypocrisy and looks nothing like the love of Jesus," tweeted Rev. Dr. William Barber, a leader of the Poor People's Campaign.

LaShawn Erby, a co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Lansing chapter, told a crowd protesting the attack on women's rights in Lansing that women don't need anyone policing their bodies and urged the people to become active in the upcoming election to enact progressive change.

"It's like a war on poor people," said a woman from Texas who described the restrictions on abortion in an interview with a branch of the Reuters news agency. Single and broke, she could not afford the \$600 cost of a surgical abortion at a clinic. She had a self-induced abortion. "It sucked," she said. "It was like we were back in the days of the Wild West, like we have to figure this out by ourselves and just grit our teeth and get through it."

To deny millions of women safe, affordable reproductive health services and the right to choose is not only an outright

attack on health care itself. It is a part of an overall assault on the growing women's movement. For the past several years, women and their families have been in the streets demanding women's equality and that government provide for the people, not corporate America. This movement has not gone unnoticed by the powerful, so it is being attacked.

"We need a society that cherishes and cares for every child, and a society that respects the rights of the women," said Ethel Long Scott, Executive Director, Women's Economic Agenda Project.

Juneteenth 2019: Freedom Day!



Coalition Against Death Alley march to stop the onslaught of genocidal chemical companies Louisiana.

PHOTO/TED QUANT

By Joseph Peery

On June 19, 1862, Congress outlawed chattel slavery in all territories of the U.S. (not yet states). On that same day, three years later, June 19, 1865, Union troops that just arrived the day before in Galveston, Texas, announced they were there to enforce the emancipation of the last slaves held by the confederacy stating, "All slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights

of property between former masters and slaves."

The immediate celebrations that were repeated each following year became known as Juneteenth Freedom or Emancipation Day.

The Great Migration brought on by increased lynchings and the mechanization of agricultural work, forced African Americans out of the fields into the urban industrial workforce, spreading Juneteenth to other parts of the country and other parts of the working class. After the 1968 Poor Peoples March on Washington, Juneteenth spread to Minnesota, Milwaukee, WI and eventually to 45 of the 50 United States gaining status as an official state holiday in many.

Part of the tradition of Juneteenth that developed wasn't just food, sports and cultural activities, but speeches and stories by elders assessing how far we advanced from slavery as well as the struggles that lay ahead.

After 154 years of constant resistance to Jim Crow, old and new, African-Americans still find equality as

elusive as ever. Black unemployment is more than double that of whites accompanied by a widening wealth gap. Blacks are almost three times more likely to be killed by police than whites and almost six times more likely to be incarcerated.

The divisive racial rhetoric of the Trump administration, especially against Mexicans, would have us forget that in the same year, 1857, that the Dred Scott decision attempted to turn all Americans into slave catchers; it was Mexico that passed a law granting freedom to any slave that made it across their border from the U.S. Trump's MAGA banner is correctly interpreted as a dog whistle meant to bring us back to the days of slave and master.

The slave masters of old have been replaced by the corporations. As we celebrate Juneteenth 2019, let us contemplate what will be required to rid ourselves of corporate masters and build a New World where slavery, exploitation and oppression are a thing of the past.

Police have killed nearly 400 so far in 2019, database shows

By Allen Harris

Police have killed nearly 400 so far in 2019, database shows.

At the end of May 2019, police in the United States fatally shot 372 people, according to information gathered by the Washington Post.

Some 204 people this year were "not fleeing the scene" when the police killed them, according to the Post. Males made up 348 of the fatalities, 22 were female and two were unknown.

By race in 2019, there have been 81 white fatalities, 48 black, 43 Hispanic, 8 from other groups and 192 whose race is unknown.

By state in 2019, California leads with 50 fatalities, followed by Texas with 43 and by Florida and Arizona with 21 each.

In all of 2018, police fatally shot 992 people, six more than in 2017. California led the nation in 2018 with 115 killings, followed by Texas with 85, Florida with 64 and Arizona with 62.

The Post's database contains records of every fatal shooting in the United States by a police officer "in the line of duty" since January 1, 2015. It does not track the deaths of people in police custody, fatal shootings by off-duty officers or non-shooting deaths.



Deported moms fight for justice and human rights.

PHOTO/MAGDALENO LENO ROSE-AVILA

It's Mother's Day at the border

By Magdaleno Leno Rose-Avila

It was a sunny day on the Playas of Tijuana side of the border wall where it meets the ocean. Members of DREAMer's Mom's gather next to the wall under a tent that has pictures of their children and members celebrating a bitter-sweet day. The back of their pink shirts cry out, "HAVE YOU SEEN MY CHILDREN?"

In 2010, Yolanda Varona, now 50, was deported to Mexico leaving behind a son who is a U.S.A. citizen and a daughter who is a DACA/DREAMER. This was the most difficult moment of her life and it tore her heart into pieces.

After months of searching for an exit to all the pain and disappointment, she decided she needed to unite other mothers and fight for a bit of justice. Thus in 2014, DREAMer's Mom's was created to have a place for all these mothers to gather and work to build this movement for human rights.

It is clear that the American government has a policy of separating families by deporting par-

ents, taking children away from their parents at the border, punishing the most vulnerable.

For some of these women, there is a path to have their legal status restored and groups like ACLU and others have been successful in getting this for three women, and another six have their legal appeals in process.

The organization has had about 200 women come through their office including some from Europe. Every time they get publicity, more women find out about them. They reach out to Yolanda who invites you to join them in this historic struggle for a bit of justice during a most difficult historic time. Yolanda Varona: vol.var@hotmail.com, 664-130-6144, Skype yoli2014.

These mothers have suffered the racism of a U.S.A. Policy, some have been assaulted sexually and physically, and some have lived on the streets as homeless persons. ... PTSD does not just reside for soldiers but also for these women who have endured so much.

DREAMer's Mom's unifies these women and together they provide the love and security that opens the door to healing.

On this day they sang and prayed at the wall that has metal mesh added to the steel barriers. Before the mesh was installed, family members could hold hands and put their faces close, but now with the mesh in place, they can only push through their fingertips. And these women do just that. They put their fingertips touching family friends on the U.S.A. side. I too touch one of these fingertips with mine and feel an emotional shock.

Yolanda travels throughout Latin America, speaking about the organization and U.S.A. policies and also does workshops and connects families through Skype.

Surrounded by these incredible women warriors on this Mother's Day is a most humbling experience.

These women have not given up hope, keep that candle burning and will one day turn it into a raging bonfire of justice.

The Etowah Visitation Project: Supporting ICE detainees

By Katherine Weathers, Etowah Visitation Project, and Hy Thurman, Young Patriot Organization

Etowah County Alabama is under contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to house up to 350 male immigrants at the Etowah County Detention Center in Gadsden, AL. The facility also serves as the county jail for over 500 inmates. The two populations are housed separately.

The Etowah Visitation Project is a member group of Freedom for Immigrants, formerly known as Community Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement, a national network which visits and monitors approximately 55 immigrant prisons in 23 states. Through visits and/or letters, we connect with immigrants who are being detained in the Etowah County Detention Center while they await immigration hearings or deportations. Our objective is to be there as friends and listeners, open to people of all religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We bear witness to the suffering and to the enormous strength and resilience of character that many of the men possess.



Members of Shutdown Etowah County Detention Center in Gadsden, Alabama, and the Etowah Visitation Project, 2015.

PHOTO/ADELANTE WORKERS CENTER, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

The EVP also provides Christmas packages with food, hygiene items and other supplies each December to all men in immigrant detention. EVP meets individual requests on occasion.

The immigrant men being held are under ICE administration. They are NOT being held for criminal acts, but for immigration violations (some for the "crime" of seeking asylum). Some have been held for many months or years.

Conditions at ECDC are difficult for all prisoners, both

county and those in ICE custody. There is no outdoor recreation and prisoners can go for months or years without exposure to the sun. The food is poor, and it includes donated and expired food. Inmates have reported food poisoning, weight loss, and severe hunger. Families suffer the burden of putting money into commissary accounts to supplement their loved one's diet. Immigrant men often lack resources to purchase supplementary food.

Alabama sheriffs have been able to profit from pocketing

Voices from the border



Speakers who traveled to the border to bring back the voices of the refugees discuss a society where we are no longer divided by borders, gender, race, religion, or age.



Speakers include Maria Martinez (above left), Laura Garcia (below left), Margarito Diaz, and Gloria Sandoval.

Contact Speakers for a New America at 800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com

"unused" food money allocated to feed prisoners. This practice was codified in state law in 1939, and it has been the subject of intense investigation in recent years by Alabama journalists and human and legal rights organizations.

One of the most egregious examples of this practice was Sheriff Todd Entekin of Etowah County, who left office in January 2019. Over a three-year period he took over \$750,000 from the food money account for his personal use. Other Alabama sheriffs have engaged in this practice, and many sheriffs have refused to comply with public records requests concerning their use of food funds.

SB228, a bill sponsored by state Sen. Arthur Orr (R-Decatur), would change the law which allows sheriffs to personally ben-

efit from jail food funds. It passed the state Senate in April. If it passes the House and is signed by the governor, among other things it would require that food funds be used for feeding prisoners, with unspent balances carried forward to the next year.

For more information, please see the Etowah Visitation Project Facebook page or contact Katherine Weathers, katw002@aol.com. See www.freedomforimmigrants.org for more information about our parent organization and how you can volunteer to support men, women, and families in detention in your own communities. Donations can be made at the Interfaith Mission Service, www.interfaithmissionservice.org; select PayPay or credit card.

'Good time' saves money and reduces the prison population

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Eddie Treadwell, a prisoner at Coldwater Prison Facility, said Michigan's increased use of habitual offender sentences, the elimination of "Good Time," and increased consecutive sentences causes prison time to increase. I strongly agree with Mr. Treadwell.

The Michigan Department of Corrections reported that the prison system grew increasingly crowded from 1985 to 1992. Michigan built 23 prisons. The population rose to 38,628. Another wave of prison building occurred from 1993 to 2000. Eleven more prisons

were built. The population peaked at 51,515 in 2006 and then began to decline from 2007 to 2012. Nine camps were closed. In 2018, the Department reported that the state has almost 40,000 prisoners.

Many reports have analyzed Michigan's prison numbers and made suggestions to reduce it. I suggest for starters that the citizens be informed of all relevant data so that they are aware of the facts that brought on mass incarceration here in Michigan. I want everybody to remember that long-term incarceration increases the prison population and Michigan is one of the only states that require prisoners to serve 100% of their prison

time. Most states in the U.S. have some form of Good Time credit, which helps reduce the population and provides incentives for good behavior.

In 2009 the Michigan Department of Corrections estimated that Good Time could reduce the prison population by 7,550 within four to six months after enactment. This was based in part on assumptions that the average time served to date of parole eligibility would be about 85% of the minimum sentence and that about 70% of those eligible would be approved for parole. The Department also estimated that the net cost savings under Good Time could be about

\$107 million annually. Actual cost savings in the first fiscal year of implementation would depend on when Good Time is enacted and on how many prisoners could be processed and how quickly and at what cost community placements and supervision could be established. These figures came from the last time Good Time was proposed. Mr. Eddie Treadwell and I did not come up with these figures out of the air.

Let the truth be told. "Good Time" is one of the best solutions to not only saving money, but to reducing the prison population. We need your help. Please contact me at 1-269-925-0001.



Rev. Edward Pinkney, Benton Harbor, MI. ILLUSTRATION/BYRON

Victory: All charges dropped in Michigan environmental action

Editor's note: Information for this story is drawn from various press releases. Quotes are from www.michiganppc.org.

From the Editors

"We blocked all the doors (and eventually the parking lot) of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) headquarters, plus surrounded the building with crime scene tape because of environmental concerns," said Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellermann, one of some 30 people arrested. Concerns included the role of the MDEQ in the Flint water poisoning, oil spill threat of Enbridge's Line 5, and permitting the expansion by US Ecology and Nestlé's in the Great Lakes.

The action was part of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. "This contributed to the largest focused and coordinated campaign of civil disobedience in U.S. history. ... The MDEQ needs to make public health the priority, not corporate profit," said Wylie-Kellermann.

"Some of those arrested took a 'diversion program' offer. Others pled 'no contest' to a misdemeanor. Thirteen prepared for a trial;" Rabbi Alana Alpert; Carolyn Baker; Claire McClinton; Justin Sledge; Carlos Santacruz; Baxter Jones; Rev. Liz Theoharris; Rev. Deb Hansen; Rev. Ed Rowe; Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellermann; Richard Levey; Sylvia Ordonio; and Leah Wiste.

Chief Judge Louise Alderson postponed the trial to June to allow sufficient time to consider the applicability of allowing



[Above] Defendants express victory after prosecutor dismisses all charges in the DEQ action.

PHOTO/FACEBOOK

[Right] The event that triggered the arrests in front of the MDEQ in Lansing, MI, that blocked the doors to the building. (L-R) Kim Redigan, Jay Cummings, Pastor Emeritus, Claire McClinton and Rev. Liz Theoharis.

PHOTO/VALERIE JEAN



a defense of 'Justification/Necessity'. Two days later, the prosecution dismissed all charges against all defendants—rather than face the likelihood of acquittal based on 'necessity'.

"Poor people don't have but a couple of avenues to fight in. We got the legislature, the court, and the streets. We hope for the days where we can organize ourselves, where we got a contingent of people that control the legislature, a contingent of people that control the courts, and a contingent of people that control the streets! 'Cause that's all we got!" said Carolyn Baker, quoting her father, the late General Baker, Jr.

"I'm honored to have had the opportunity to practice this kind of moral leadership with such an amazing group of spiritual war-

riors," said Rabbi Alana Alpert.

"To enable a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac, a massive investment in a dirty energy past, is perverse. The solution is clear: #shutdownline5 #cleanenergyNOW!" said Reverend Deb Hansen.

"The long suffering residents of Flint are thankful for the opportunity to be a presence in the actions that took place in June of 2018. While we savor in the victory of charges dropped, we still have a toxic water problem. We still have a community wide Health crisis problem. We still have a Democracy problem. Last but not least, we still have a relentless drive by bondholders and other corporate interests to steal our *water rights*. The struggle continues," said Claire McClinton.

Testament

Now they're caging our babies and quoting the Bible
The same scriptures that slave-owners used to claim justifiable
Chaining and shipping human beings by the millions
In the bottoms of boats, ripping parents from children,

Familiar? Now our demons come back with a vengeance
Slavery never left / Check that 13th amendment /
While they preach about freedom and defeating the terrorists
Cops line up in riot gear to bulldoze grandparents

And they're still sayin "We can reform it," while nowadays
Oil execs say "If we kill you, no foul play"
And Michigan imprisons Reverends who expose it
While more bodies wash up in the river, like Moses,

Now they're caging our babies and quoting the Bible
To our faces, while their agents terrorize kids with rifles,
As if Jesus would do that, as if we can't see through that,
As if Love Thy Neighbor really means Act Genocidal

As if there were no decency left in the world
As if words have no meaning, as if They were eternal,
As if our faith's as hollow as their broken treaties
As if we aren't out marching, shouting our needs concretely:

"From Palestine to Mexico / Border Walls have got to go"
As if their walls can't fall just like old Jericho,
As if God was their property, and the Kingdom of Heaven
Was a world at war and not a world of brethren.

— Adam Gottlieb

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