

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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DONATION \$1

AMERICA IN 2019: ROT AT THE TOP OF SOCIETY, LEADERS AT THE GRASSROOTS



Students and parents were among those marching in support of the recent Chicago teachers strike over the lack of basic resources for their students. See page 5.

PHOTO/SARAH-JI RHEE, LOVE+STRUGGLE PHOTOS



**THE
UNHOUSED
STRUGGLE
FOR
SURVIVAL**
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The late Deseire Quintero, homeless leader.



PHOTO/ERIK MCGREGOR

Fighting for Mother Earth
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Texas police killings: Are African Americans not safe anywhere?

EDITORIAL

“This is something that could happen to anybody. When does this stop? When are we able to just live, to be productive citizens like we were told to be?”

— Ashley Carr, referring to the police murder of her sister, Atatiana Jefferson

The police, especially the white supremacists among them, are escalating their campaign of terror against African Americans. Lately, the national attention has turned to North Texas.

In Dallas in 2018, white officer Amber Guyger murdered Botham Jean in his own apartment. In October 2019, in nearby Fort Worth, Atatiana “Tay” Jefferson, a young black woman, was at her mother’s home when a white cop, Aaron Dean, shot her to death through a window without ever identifying himself. Now, it seems, African Americans are not safe from the police anywhere, even in their own homes.

Police in America kill about 1,000 people a year, at least. While about half of those killed are white, people of color—especially African Americans—are killed in disproportionate numbers. Black men are 2.5 times as likely to be killed by police as white men.

In the early 1990s, an investigation revealed the existence of a violent white supremacist gang in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. And when the FBI warned in 2006 that state and local law enforcement agen-



Botham Jean, left, and Atatiana Jefferson, right, were both killed by police in their own homes in Texas. PHOTOS/RETRIEVED FROM THE INTERNET

cies were being infiltrated by white supremacist groups, nothing was done. Last April, members of known white supremacist groups took part in a protest organized by the Chicago police union against the county’s elected black state’s attorney, yet the union never denounced their participation. White supremacists have helped create a culture of hate inside police departments and outside of them.

This campaign of terror against African Americans is worsening in step with the economic crisis all over the country that drives the police brutality in poor communities of all colors. Earlier this year, a writer commented on the acquittal of a Pittsburgh cop who killed a black youth on his first day on the job.

“Few things signal that black people aren’t wanted in a local economy like police officers killing our children with impunity,” he said.

On his YouTube channel, comedian and commentator D.L. Hughley noted that both Jefferson and Jean were educated professionals who were “excellent human beings.” Now, he said, “You’re killing the best of us. You are killing the things that we were told to be to stop dying. ... They will kill you on sight because of the color of your skin and it is, whether people like this or not, viewed as a weapon.” He urged white Americans to stop looking away. “You are killing our tomorrows because you get to look away. You get to say, this is not my problem. It is. Because not only are you kill-

ing our tomorrows, you’re killing somebody that can contribute to yours. They can make your life better.”

What can we do? For one thing, we need more citizen coverage and exposure of the white supremacists who live behind badges and guns, and more exposure of police violence generally. Numerous police murders and acts of brutality have been publicly exposed due to the vigilance of ordinary people using their cell phone cameras. Recognizing the common interests and potential power of the millions who are united across lines of color and nationality by our common humanity is essential. The campaign to stop police terror and brutality is everyone’s fight.

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 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.

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Rot at the top of society, leadership at the grassroots

COVER STORY

As the year 2019 stumbles toward its end, one thing seems clear: This year brought to light the obscene wealth, rot and depravity at the top of society—and the courage and tenacity of those at the bottom who are barely surviving.

Consider the top of government. Our country has a president who came to office promising to “drain the swamp.” Instead, he has engineered gigantic tax breaks for the corporations and super-wealthy, put immigrant children in cages, and started a trade war which can only further upend an economy already teetering on the brink of a major recession. He has stoked racial hatred and called neo-Nazis “very fine people.”

Now his adversaries in the top corporate echelons of the Democratic Party caucus in Congress are moving to impeach him. He is being investigated not for any of his stunning acts of cruelty toward the poor but instead for intrigue he has carried on with leaders of other governments. As the year draws to a close, official Washington has become fixated on the Ukraine scandal and the battle over impeachment—all but ignoring the poverty, hunger, and homelessness reaching crisis proportions in so much of America.

Trump does not stand alone. The year 2019 will go down in history as the year that the billionaire Mark Zuckerberg brazenly defended his right to make mil-

lions by helping liars twist the truth on social media, and where Amazon’s Jeff Bezos became the wealthiest man in the world on the backs of low paid workers.

But at the same time, 2019 also produced something positive, a dramatic strike wave that swept the country. In September, students staged a massive climate strike. Just days before, almost 50,000 workers struck General Motors. One month after that, Chicago’s teachers walked off the job, continuing the teacher strike wave that erupted first in West Virginia in 2018. These strikers were not just demanding better wages for themselves; they were fighting for the common good.

Striker after striker explained that they were picketing not just for more money, but because they felt an obligation to aid others in a more vulnerable position than themselves. Chicago teachers demanded protections for immigrant and homeless students—and for more nurses, counselors, and psychologists in the schools. Auto workers insisted on an end to the divisive multi-tier wage set-up which forces some new hires to work as temps with limited benefits. Nurses in Chicago struck for changes that would help their hospital patients get better care. This was a spirit of solidarity with the most vulnerable in society. Fire was aimed at the billionaires and the fact that there is plenty of money to provide for the people. It set an example for the future and shows the way forward to a new America.

Exactly 200 years ago, a great



[Above] Rally and “die-in” in support of Medicare for All in San Francisco. Thousands of people in the U.S. die each year because they lack health insurance. PHOTO/LEON KUNSTENAAR
[Right] Young people in Chicago participate in the global Youth Climate Strike. PHOTO/MICHAEL VELTMAN

English writer condemned “Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know/but leech-like to their fainting country cling.” Percy Shelley wrote the poem “England in 1819” to denounce the parasites desperately holding on to power in his day, a time of great change as the Industrial Revolution transformed an agricultural society.

America in 2019 has its leeches too. And we also live in a time of great turmoil. Automation is changing our world even more profoundly than steam power transformed the agrarian world



of the 19th century. In the midst of today’s upheavals and decay, the spirit of solidarity shown in the strike wave of autumn 2019

should remind us of what’s possible. Sometimes, a Phoenix of unity can rise out of the ashes of corruption and cynicism.

‘Go back to work,’ says Amazon, after worker dies on the floor



Amazon workers protest working conditions such as computer tracking that requires them to work at high speeds that steadily increase. PHOTO/FIBANACCI BLUE

Outrage swept a Minnesota Amazon Fulfillment Center after the company discovered a man lying on the floor for 20 minutes in apparent cardiac arrest, and workers were told: “Get back to work.”

“No time to decompress. Basically watch a man pass away and then get told to go back to work, everyone, and act like it’s fine,” said an employee.

This is not the first death at Amazon. Six workers died on the job between November 2018 and April 2019. Amazon, owned by

the wealthiest man in the world, is on the Dirty Dozen list of the Council for Occupational Safety and Health, citing its high incidence of worker suicide attempts, overworked employees peeing in bottles to avoid punishment, and poor treatment of contract and temporary workers, which Amazon relies on for all operations.

Companies today are driven to get their products to a shrinking and competitive world market as fast as possible in order to clinch the sale and maximize profits. Any semblance of

morality is a thing of the past. If it means working people to death, so be it.

And, simultaneously, companies are installing machines that produce cheaper, without our labor.

Our bright light is the morality and solidarity expressed by the working class. That spirit is pointing us to a new kind of society that cares for us all. In such a society the machines, abundance they produce, and wealth will belong to the people and be shared by all.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Your feedback helps us stay on course as a paper that points the way forward to a new cooperative society. Reach us at info@peopletribune.org or call 800-691-6888.

– The Editors

No housing! No peace!

It is time to re-establish the National Union of the Homeless

By Food Not Bombs Co-founder Keith McHenry

SANTA CRUZ, CA — Robert Woodlief, John Thompson, Nick Marini, and Manuel Murillo lived in a vacant lot behind Ross Clothing in Santa Cruz in November 2018.

“We heard an explosion,” Woodlief told reporters, saying when he jumped the fence, one of nearly 20 vehicles in the crash was already on fire. “The flames started coming up getting really hot. I had to jump back out,” added John Thompson.

Woodlief “cut the seat belt and freed his legs and ripped that guy out of the car basically with 20 seconds to spare,” Nick Marini told reporters. He emptied a fire extinguisher on the blaze as Robert and John freed the driver. Manuel Murillo directed traffic and led a van-load of school children to safety.

They were among the first to find safety behind Ross Clothing. By April 2019, over 200 people called the camp home.

When Santa Cruz City officials announced the eviction of Hero’s Camp, Wes White, of the

Salinas Homeless Union introduced the camp council to Attorney Anthony Prince who suggested they file a federal lawsuit seeking to block the eviction.

Deseire Quintero, Alicia Kuhl and the rest of the council drafted a complaint and filed to stop the eviction in the Federal District Court in San Jose, temporarily halting the eviction to the shock of city officials.

It was during this struggle that the campers started the Santa Cruz Homeless Union, adding another local to the California Union of the Homeless, adding enthusiasm to re-establish the National Union of the Homeless.

The National Union of the Homeless started in 1985 in Philadelphia and at its height had 25 local union chapters in 25 states with an estimated membership of 30,000 homeless people of all races and genders. Locals organized protests, occupied foreclosed properties, and participated in the 1989 Housing Now! Rally in Washington, DC.

Homeless union organizers from across the country met during the June 2019 Poor People’s Congress in Washington DC and

voted to form the Committee to Re-Establish the National Union of the Homeless. Several original union activists, including Savina Martin, Willie Baptist and Anthony Prince were among the 30 who voted to reestablish the union.

This is our mission statement:

“The heart and soul of the National Union of the Homeless is to commit our lives to ending homelessness and all poverty and to work tirelessly for the human right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, for social and economic justice for all. We dedicate ourselves to raising the awareness of our sisters and brothers, to planning a sustained struggle and to building an organization that can obtain freedom through revolutionary perseverance. We pledge to deepen our personal commitment to end all forms of exploitation, racism, sexism, and abuse. True solidarity demands that we create not only the new society, but also the new human being.”

Kristin Colangelo, coordinator of the University of the Poor’s Homeless Union History Project, whose mother was a union member in the ‘80s and ‘90s, helped organize our first Officers Train-



The Santa Cruz Homeless Union distributes clothing outside the local Post Office. PHOTO/KEITH MCHENRY

ing School, named after homeless union pioneer Ron Casanova, at the People’s Forum in Manhattan which emphasized, “we are homeless, not helpless.”

After Federal Judge Davila ruled in favor of the City in Quintero v. City of Santa Cruz, Deseire Quintero was denied shelter and forced to join over 100 others in seeking a place to sleep in the forests of the Pogonip, along the freeways or in the doorways of Santa Cruz. City officials knew there would not be enough “Shelter Beds,” intentionally forcing people into dangerous conditions, yet told

the court under oath there would be shelter for all.

On October 27, the Diablo winds knocked a tree on Deseire and her neighbor’s campsite, killing her and injuring the friend she was checking on.

“This cause is a great cause and we’re tired of being treated like dirt. We’re not, we’re human beings. We bleed just like you and we’re good people. We need a safe place and this is a safe place right here,” said Deseire Quintero.

We are the people who build America. We are the heroes at Heroes Camp.

‘These tent communities provide safety and support!’

Editor’s note: On October 25, 2019, Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman, in a special report on the growing number of people made homeless in California and across the country, and the organized resistance springing up everywhere, focused on one independent tent community in East Oakland that is under attack and threat of removal by the city, interviewing several of its residents. Below are parts of two of the questions answered by well-known organizer Anita ‘Needa Bee’ De Asis:

Amy Goodman: Do these encampments provide community? Do they provide safety?

Anita ‘Needa Bee’ De Asis: Absolutely. They provide community. They provide support. Homeless folks are some of the most resilient people, most resourceful people, most creative people you’ll ever meet. And the little stability and support and security that people have been able to build for themselves when there is nothing is amazing. And so when the city comes in and knocks these encampments down, they’re literally knocking people who are on like one leg up, down on both knees. I think what’s also inter-

esting is with Trump just coming to California and making his big grandstanding about herding everyone and put them in government-run camps... but if you look at what they’re signing into law here, or actually doing, it’s the same exact thing that Trump is threatening to do!

Amy: Right now when it comes to San Francisco and Oakland, what do you think would be the most important thing to happen?

Anita: I think on an immediate level, releasing public lands where people can park their cars, or people can build homes—like safe homes, like those—to kind of weather this crisis and weather this storm, until, like I said, the permanent housing is actually built, which isn’t going to happen immediately.

This is a disaster. And if it was a fire, if it was an earthquake, the response would be so quick. But this is an economic disaster. This is a cultural disaster. This is a housing disaster. But they’re not treating it like all the other natural disasters, and they need to.



Anita ‘Needa Bee’ De Asis (center) speaks at a press conference at Oakland City Hall last year on the U.N. Special Raporteur’s report on housing and homelessness. PHOTO/SARAH MENEFFEE

below the window
where I sip espresso
a neat cardboard condo

– Sarah Menefee

High school teachers say what they are fighting for

Editor's note: Chicago Teachers Union members from a high school on the city's West Side gave interviews to People's Tribune correspondent Adam Gottlieb while on strike in October.

"Our kids need a voice. Somebody got to speak up for them. ... Our kids come in with a lot of issues. Growing up in the neighborhood, seeing a liquor store on each and every corner ... in these impoverished communities, drugs, killings, and crime. ... Before you can teach them you have to dive into the issues ... so we need counselors. We need [students] to be able to talk, to be able to express how they feel, in order to be comfortable in their own skin and able, then, to come to the classroom and be in a space to learn."

—Teacher, life-long West Side resident

"My job is to help kids get a plan that they can move con-

fidently into ... and it's just impossible for them to do that if they don't have social workers to help them deal with the immense amount of trauma that exists in this neighborhood; if their classes are too big; [if there's] no school nurse ... [or even] a library. ... Kids know when their teachers don't feel valued, and then they don't feel valued. ... I'm doing like eight million jobs all the time, and I have kids coming into my office who have seen a sibling get shot, a parent get shot and killed. ... I've had a lot of students who are homeless. There are like over 40% in these schools here who are homeless: in a shelter, or doubled-up. I pay for my kids' bus fare, I give kids money for food, all sorts of stuff. ...

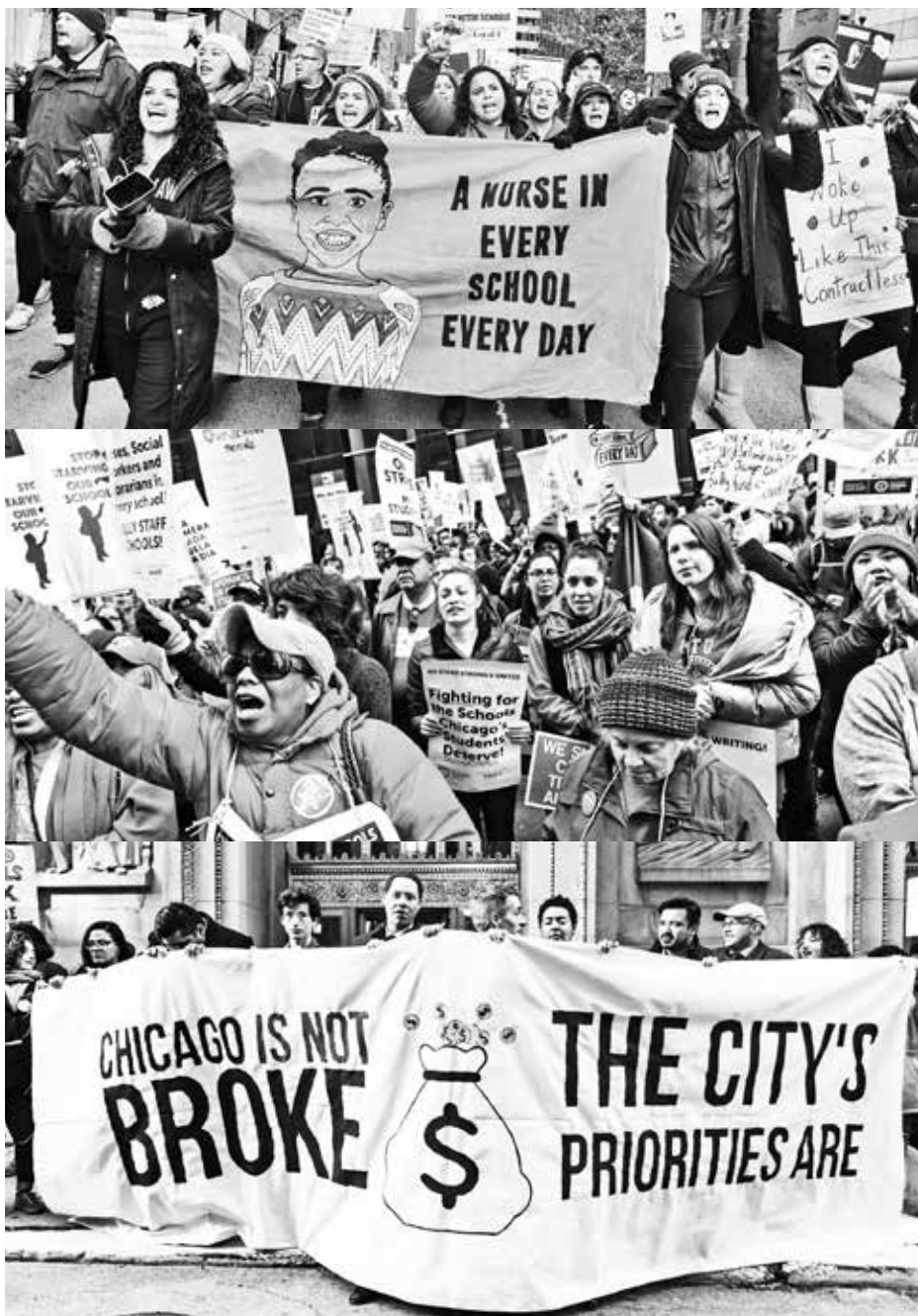
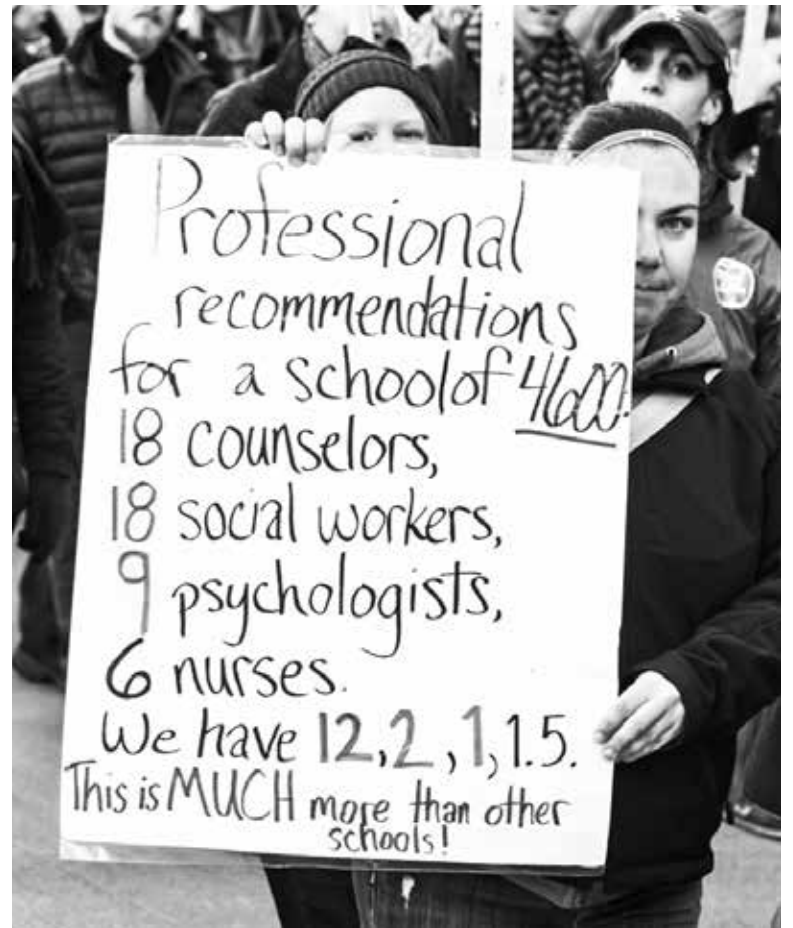
"It's said that we can only strike and bargain over working conditions, and historically that has only ever been teacher pay. And this is the first time that we're like, 'No. Not hav-

ing enough staff, having class sizes of 40+ kids, not having a social worker or a nurse, and all that, *does* affect our working conditions.' Because without a nurse, *you're* the one trying to administer a medication to a kid. ... So this was the first time we said, 'No, your bogus funding policies affect our working conditions and we *are* gonna strike.'

"So it's very historic, and unprecedented. And it's totally connected to where the city's priorities are: billions of dollars for these developers? It's sickening. ... If they can build fancy developments and fancy parks downtown, they can fund the frickin schools.

"It's just unbelievable that it's gotten to this point. And it's like, really upsetting that we have to stand out here in the snow and sleet to tell them, 'Fund your frickin schools.' When kids are not well prepared, we pay for it later."

—Post-Secondary Coach



Teachers, school staff, students, parents, and community members supporting the strike take to the streets in support of the Chicago Teachers Union strike.

ALL PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE/SARAH-JI RHEE, LOVE+STRUGGLE PHOTOS

Chicago teachers: A strike for our children

By Lew Rosenbaum

CHICAGO, IL — The 11 day Chicago teachers and support staff strike is over. From the outset, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) announced they struck over the lack of basic resources for their students.

For example: "Half of our building does not have heat," said a south side teacher. "I wish someone from the city would come and see a kid having a seizure on the floor, and the students having to deal with it themselves, because there's not a nurse," said a North side teacher.

The CTU struck against a government of vultures that attacked the needs of the teachers and children. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and real estate developers had robbed resources from the schools and the school communities.

Case in point: The last two days of the strike, teachers rallied at "Lincoln Yards" and "The 78," two luxury residential, technological, and commercial parks, that were given \$2 billion in tax increment financing from funds earmarked to go to schools, libraries and other public institutions.

In a contentious House of Delegates meeting, the CTU approved the tentative agreement by a 60% to 40% majority, and sent the agreement to the members for ratification. "Applause was loud on both sides. Many people wanted to keep fighting, but it seemed slightly more were ready to declare victory and accept the deal," said delegate Anthony Lawrence on Facebook.

The wins in the contract were substantive but modest. For example, it will take

the full five years of the contract to get one school nurse and social worker in every school. There is now a possible enforcement mechanism in place to guarantee CPS adheres to its own class size standards (but class size numbers remained the same). CPS agreed to hire staff for "supportive services" for 17,000 CPS children who are homeless. CPS also agreed to create a joint committee of Union and School Board representatives to determine how to spend \$35 million each year on the 120 schools which they determine are most in need of supplementary resources.

"The fight is not over for CTU," said Francie McGowan Conway. "The work of transforming public education is a long term struggle. We all risked a lot on this strike and many (myself included) were ready to risk more, but there's no telling what would have happened. We were facing losing our health care and having a suit filed against our union in which our leaders could have been jailed and our union fined into bankruptcy."

Just the nature of the strike—not just for the homeless students, but for teachers and support staff unable to meet the cost of housing—set this strike apart from others. The CTU went on the offensive, striking not just for wages, but for what the school community needs. This strike asked the question, what would a new America envision for its children? The thousands who rallied in the streets of Chicago over those 11 days are hungry to achieve that vision. That is a real victory today.

Lew Rosenbaum is a retired teacher who writes on education issues.

PG&E must go!

By Peggy Elwell

SAN JOSE, CA — During October, millions of people in the San Francisco Bay Area and northern California were without electricity for days as Pacific Gas & Electric shut down power to prevent loose power lines from starting deadly fires during a Red Flag warning—a period of high winds and very low humidity. Schools were canceled, small businesses lost spoiled food, and peoples' lives were endangered with the loss of power for medical equipment.

How did it get to this point? Was this simply a necessary evil, to keep everyone safe after hundreds were killed in wildfires over the last two years? Was it due to conditions resulting from climate change?

While undoubtedly climate change is a contributing factor to wildfires, PG&E has a long history of shortcuts in maintenance. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) determined that between 1987 and 1994 PG&E diverted \$495 million from its maintenance budget, like tree trimming, to boost corporate profits. It also diverted money from power line undergrounding projects.

In 2010 a horrific natural gas pipeline explosion in San Bruno California killed 8 people, due to

a bad welding seam. Pipelines with a history of failed seams are required to be checked with a method that can detect for that, but PG&E used a cheaper method that didn't catch it.

The state agency CalFire has determined that PG&E was partially responsible for multiple North Bay wildfires in 2017, which caused a total of 18 deaths and huge property losses. They could be looking at a total liability of \$30 billion, and face criminal penalties over the 2018 Camp Fire that incinerated 86 people, and burned 14,000 homes. PG&E has declared bankruptcy to get protection from lawsuits.

PG&E is seeking “cost of capital” rate hikes for maintenance projects that will undoubtedly go into shareholder profits. One of the biggest lobbyists in the state, they spent \$6 million last year to convince the legislature that it was broke and needed a bailout. Outgoing governor Jerry Brown signed a wildfire liability bill that helped PG&E.

Clearly PG&E is not fit to run an essential service that should ensure the well being of the people and the economy. After public outcry, the mayors of San Jose and San Francisco are talking about establishing city-owned utilities. At a CPUC meeting in November, 2018, the public cried

“Our rage as a nation has to burn as fiercely as every fire we witness—for the retiree who's lost their entire life savings, for the family forced to evacuate from a home they may never come back to, for the child suffocating in smoke miles away.”

– Varshini Prakash, Executive Director of the youth-led Sunrise Movement, on Twitter



PG&E admitted in federal court that its equipment probably caused 10 wildfires this year in California. People are calling for the utility to be publicly owned.

“democratize our energy, don't bail out PG&E” and held signs that read “Make PG&E Public.”

Municipal ownership of energy is not a new idea—there are already many public utilities in the U.S. Nebraska, a pioneer of the socialization of energy distribution, has a cost per kilowatt hour lower than all its neighboring states. The Providence chapter of the Democratic Socialists of

America has begun a #NationalizeGrid campaign, an effort aimed at ending utility shutoffs, limiting rate increases, and establishing democratic control over the primary gas and electricity provider in the state of Rhode Island.

There is a national upsurge of support for a Green New Deal to combat climate change by moving to renewable energy sources, which can only be accomplished

by having public control of the entire energy industry. Bernie Sanders is calling for a complete transition to “energy efficiency” and “sustainable energy”—much of which would be owned and administered by the federal government. Then the fight would be to insure the government actually runs it in the interest of the people!

Kentucky fights for water as a human right

Editor's note: Information in this story is from a video by NowThis News and from People's Tribune's interview with residents.

Kentucky's Martin County Concerned Citizens say 50% of county residents cannot afford their monthly water bill. People also say the water is often undrinkable, making them sick. “This is truly a water quality crisis, a water affordability crisis. These people deserve clean and reliable water,” said Ricki Draper, of Martin County Concerned Citizens.

According to BarbiAnn Maynard, a Martin County Water Warrior, “It started with the coal slurry spill October 11, 2000 when 307 million gallons of arsenic sludge and heavy metal was dumped into our river supply. We haven't had clean water in 20 years. On top of this, the system is outdated and dilapidated. So the water at the plant may be good, but through the cracks and ground

water infiltrating into our lines, by the time it makes it to most homes, it is not what it was at the intake. We have no idea what is really making it to our faucets.”

In 2018 a new crisis arose. The county is now seeking a for-profit manager of the outdated water system. Residents were told to privatize the water or get a rate hike. But some residents feel differently because of awareness that privatizing the water in our cities has not meant cleaner or cheaper water. As Nina McCoy, chairperson of Martin County Concerned Citizens said, “These are private for profit companies. There does not need to be a private corporation that is just trying to increase profits on Wall Street. The public needs to have charge of this type of system.”

Mary Cromer, a pro-bono attorney with the Appalachian Law Center, points out, “This is a nationwide problem. Flint was a watershed moment about the



Kentucky Water Warrior, BarbieAnn Maynard, stands in front of a polluted river, the source for Martin County's municipal water.

problems with our drinking water. As a result of Flint, there's a lot more public awareness and recognition of how important the issue is. Most of the country legally does not recognize a fundamental human right to water. There is a UN resolution that states that there is a right to clean water, but

it was not adopted by the U.S.”

Most agree that this is a societal problem that can only be solved by recognizing water as a basic human right and by having a government that guarantees that right to all.

“I'm the optimist,” says Nina, “I believe if you fight you

might win.”

Some communities today are fighting for their water to remain public and also for water affordability plans where people pay based on their income and shutoffs are prohibited. A next step in the fight?

‘We must be ready to resist and not fall for false solutions’

From Global Justice Ecology Project

Over 300 grassroots, frontline and Indigenous Peoples from North America attended the *The Resurgence: 2019 North American Forest & Climate Movement Convergence* held October 11-14 in the Shawnee National Forest.

This was not a conference but rather a convergence with self-organized strategic action sessions. The sessions were not dominated by talking heads or top down proposals. People discussed and made future plans for radical action in the age of the climate emergency and growing international fascism. Reform was not on the agenda.

The convergence included people working on the interconnected issues of forest destruction, climate change, Indigenous sovereignty, racial and gender oppression, corporate domination, fossil fuel extraction, and social and environmental injustice to help build a powerful movement—a movement to radically transform economic and political systems that drive planetary and human destruction.

Global Justice Ecology Project’s Orin Langelle said, “The Convergence was a tremendous success. People networked, talked, and listened to each other respectfully as plans and strategies emerged.”

Langelle added, “We must be



Youth activist Jayden Foytlin (left) and co-presenter Mike Africa, Jr., at the *Resurgence: Forests and Climate Movement Convergence*. PHOTO/GLOBAL JUSTICE ECOLOGY PROJECT

ready to resist and not fall for neoliberal false solutions that aid the elites. Resistance to all neoliberal policies, like the people are doing in Chile, is necessary on a global scale.”

Organizers wanted the convergence to be in the Shawnee National Forest to showcase a tremendous victory and to remember history. In 1990 Earth First! occupied a timber sale area for 79 days. The major daily newspaper in Springfield, IL, the state’s capital, called the occupation “a popular uprising.” This served as a catalyst leading to an almost twenty-year halt in logging.

Video and interviews from the event can be seen here: vimeo.com/channels/1509643convergence



After a two and a half year fight, in October, members of Earth Defense Coalition were vindicated when a St. Louis county Circuit Court granted motions to dismiss all charges for blockading entrance to the West Lake Landfill Superfund site. PHOTO/EARTH DEFENSE COALITION

Two wins for the people in defense of democracy

Thirty-two charges were dropped against eleven defendants including trespassing, peace disturbance and resisting arrest after they formed an all-day blockade in 2017 to the entrance of the Bridgeton and West Lake landfill complex, a radioactive Superfund site.

“It was a long 2½ years,” said Alex Cohen, charged in the incident and a co-founder of the Earth Defense Coalition which has called attention to the legacy of radioactive contamination at north St. Louis County sites. “We’re happy with the decision and are ready to continue to fight the radioactive waste issue in St. Louis,” Cohen added.

In another decision, the state of South Dakota agreed to never enforce the unconstitutional provisions of several state laws that threatened activists who encourage or organize protests, particularly protests of the Keystone XL pipeline, with fines and criminal penalties of up to 25 years in prison.

Corporations have written and financially backed bills criminalizing protest, deterring political participation and freedom of association in response to the effective tactics of those

speaking out today including water protectors challenging pipeline construction, the targets of police killings and incarceration, and others challenging the system.

This is not the time to rest. Red Fawn Fallis, the Oglala Lakota Sioux water protector, faced a life sentence after a gun in her possession went off as she was tackled to the ground by police. Ruby Montoya and Jessica Reznicek face up to 110 years in prison and huge fines for vandalizing the Dakota Access pipeline in efforts to halt construction. We must remain vigilant and steadfast fighting for unity in our struggles to gain power over a ruthless corporate system of ownership and political power.

“I wish the government would use the same resources to go after the oil companies and pipeline companies, but clearly they’re not interested in that,” said Bill Quigley, an attorney who previously represented Montoya and Reznicek. “They shouldn’t be prosecuted; they should be praised. They’re trying to stop the destruction of the human race.”

#NoKXL!



“On this day [Nov. 6] in 2015, I was combining corn. I got a call from a national media source wanting my reaction to President Obama’s rejection [of the XL pipeline]. After quickly shutting the combine down, jumping out of the seat and hitting my head on the roof inside the cab. Wow! Was I excited and relayed that excitement to the reporter. Today, in 2019, landowners are being taken to court to have their land stolen by a foreign corporation for greed and destruction of the planet. We all stand strong to continue to protect the land, the water, and the people. #NoKXL!”

– Art Tanderup, a farmer and a leader of the fight to stop construction of the Keystone XL pipeline in Nebraska

Residents mourn loss of fighter for Flint

By Flint Correspondent

FLINT, MI — Flint residents were heartbroken upon hearing about the recent death of Congressman Elijah Cummings. Representative Cummings was ranking member of the Oversight Committee during the hearings on the Flint Water crisis. He fought to see that the hearings be held, even though Democrats were not in charge at the time.

Those hearings, held in early 2016, helped to expose the cover-up perpetrated by the then Snyder administration, which included the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Flint’s Emergency Manager as well as the Governor himself. Several buses of Flint resi-

dents attended the proceedings, while others watched on TV back home.

Not only did the hearings show how a city of 100,000 residents and its children got poisoned, but how an American city was stripped of its democracy thru the notorious Emergency Manager law which set the basis for the disaster.

Congressman Cummings’ no holds barred grilling of the parties involved gave new meaning to speaking truth to power. It was so obvious that he’d done his homework. Governor Snyder, MDEQ head Creagh, and Emergency Manager Earley squirmed in their seats.

“Why would they be paying for water they cannot even



Congressman Elijah Cummings, 1951-2019.

use?” and further, “This is not a third world country! We are the last line of defense and if we don’t do it nobody is going to do it!”

Gone but not forgotten. Congressman Cummings Salute.

Save historic community center in Los Angeles

By Jitu Sadiki

LOS ANGELES, CA — Several months ago, I attended a meeting organized by Jabari Jumaane, Executive Director of the AFIBA Center in Los Angeles, CA. AFIBA is the acronym for African Firefighter In Benevolence Association. The term also has its origin in Africa, connecting and preserving African Culture. The purpose of the meeting was to address community concerns about “Destination Crenshaw,” a major construction project along a 1.3 mile stretch of Crenshaw Boulevard from 48th to 60th streets. By design, it will change the facade of that community and lead to further gen-

trification of the area, which has already begun to experience a demographic shift in the Leimert Park area a little further north on Crenshaw where Blacks are being priced out of the area and young whites are rapidly moving in.

Destination Crenshaw is the brainchild of Eighth District Councilman Marqueece Harris-Dawson, flanking the new underground Crenshaw/LAX Metro rail line, for the purpose of bringing African American art and culture to the area to highlight and celebrate the legacy of Black contributions in the city and across the nation. While ignoring the needs of the community related to homelessness, safety, economic stability, gentrification dis-

placing long time African American homeowners, renters and the at grade 1.3 mile stretch of metro line that will further disrupt businesses along that corridor (destinationcrenshaw.la).

After several attempts by Jabari Jumaane and key community members of local neighborhood councils to address many concerns, The AFIBA Center has now been threatened with eviction for very frivolous and false allegations indicating non-compliance with the month to month agreement with the city, owner of the ninety-five-year-old building.

The AFIBA Center, a landmark building located at 5730 Crenshaw Blvd., is one of the

oldest designated African American fire stations in L.A., that has been used as a cultural center for the past twenty years, and one of the last spaces in the city where African Americans can gather to host culturally related activities and preserve several African traditions.

Jabari Jumaane, community members and a coalition of organizations who utilize the space are fighting back. They attend city council meetings twice a week to make sure their voices are consistently heard and opposition to the attempts to silence their exposure of the failed components of Destination Crenshaw are known. Forums have been held regularly while the building is still under

their control to keep the community informed.

A forum was held recently to bring fighters together from different communities to discuss and compare the challenges they are up against with corrupt politicians, greedy developers and investors, inter alia. The speakers, Jabari Jumaane, Denise Francis Woods (8th District Council Candidate) and Maria Estrada (63rd Assembly District Candidate) all did a dynamic job of informing those in attendance of the challenges facing us and what we need to do to create sustainable positive changes within our communities.

National conference: *Fight for community control of police*

By Gabriel Montero

CHICAGO, IL — We can struggle to gain community control of the police so that Black and Brown communities in particular can decide who polices them and how they are policed. Chicago is a leader in this fight through its proposed legislation for an all-elected civilian police accountability council (CPAC) with the power to set department policy, approve the department’s budget, and discipline and fire officers. The legislation, introduced this year, already has 19 of the 26

votes it needs to become law.

Chicago will host a major conference November 22-24 to launch a nation-wide movement for community control of the police based on the experience of organizers from across the U.S. working to end racist police impunity. We will bring the fight for community control to cities across the country. In the end, either the people, united, control the police, or the police will continue to control and divide us.

See naarpr.org for more information.

INEXTRICABLY INTERWOVEN

We are inextricably interwoven
Like the yarn our grandmas used
To craft warm scarves

Each thread unique, bright
Colors tied tight, one knot at a time

A web of love connected
through the ages
Purl, Knit, Purl, Knit
Knit, Purl, Knit, Purl

Alone—Fragile

Strong
In delicate married tendrils
That will never be torn apart

— María J. Estrada

South Asians in CA fighting fascism

By S. Karthikeyan

SAN JOSE, CA — Around 120 people gathered at Ambedkar King Study Circle’s 2nd annual conference held on September 7 in Cupertino, California. Dr. Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd inaugurated the conference with a keynote address on “Ambedkar and Martin Luther King, Jr: the Giant Epoch Makers”. Dr. Ilaiah is Director of the Centre for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad, India.

Dr. Kancha Ilaiah has revolutionized the psyche of people in oppressed classes with his historical outlook. He said that non-Brahmins are the producer class who developed agriculture by working in fields and developed various technologies in ancient India to meet the needs of the common people, whereas the priestly class exploited the producers by chanting slogans. He appealed to de-politicized Indian Christians to learn from American Christians, especially the black Christians who combined spiritual and political emancipation through religion.

The conference was organized with three panel discussions followed by a question and answer section. One panelist, Mr. Kunal Shankar (Columbia University) delivered a speech on “Jobless Growth and the General Lack of Unionizing in the Age of Digital Monopolies”. He stated that just as the big tech industries freely move their capital and technology across borders, the IT workers too should organize on a global scale. He explained the ‘Platform Cooperative’ model in which the software is owned by a community. Fairbnb is a successful cooperative model against the corporate-owned Airbnb, and Green Taxi Cooperative, the largest taxi company in Denver, USA, is an alternative to Uber and Lyft.

Ms. Sabiha Basrai (Coordinator, Alliance of South Asians Taking Action) narrated her experience in working with ASATA on social issues, including important interventions such as the Lakireddy Bali Reddy case in which a restaurant owner was convicted of trafficking and sexual offenses



Dr. Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd addresses social issues at the conference. PHOTO/AMBEDKAR KING STUDY CIRCLE

for his exploitation of immigrant workers. Mr. S Karthikeyan of the Ambedkar King Study Circle called on the class conscious activists in social organizations to work with the socially conscious activists in class-based organizations, in order to develop a collective consciousness against both class and social exploitation.

Another panelist, Dr. Suraj Yengde (Harvard University) explained the religious sources of Brahminical supremacy as mentioned by Dr. Ambedkar. People who are fighting against social oppression should have social and political understanding. We need class and caste solidarity to defeat discrimination. He exposed the savarnas in the American diaspora who fight against racism in America under the umbrella of ‘people of color’ while remaining silent on existing caste oppression and discrimination both in the United States and back in India. He said that the Dalit question and African American question are basically human questions and need to be solved as human questions.

At the conclusion, fraternal organizations expressed their willingness to build a strong coalition against the casteist, racist, fascist and fascist religious forces.

Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC) was started in October 2016. Its aim is to challenge caste, class, race, gender and religious oppression and oppressors on ideological, political and social fronts. akscusa.org/. Contact us at iammsjkk@gmail.com.

Bernie asks ‘Are you willing to stand together and fight?’

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from a speech Bernie Sanders made at a rally in Queens, NY on Oct. 19.

Tonight in America, over 500,000 people find themselves homeless. Half of our population is struggling to pay their rent, mortgage, light bill, struggling to just stay alive and feed their families. Today in America, 87 million people are unable to go to the doctor when sick. Hundreds of thousands of bright young people are unable to fulfill their dreams because their families cannot afford the outrageous cost of higher education. Millions of senior citizens are unable to afford the prescription drugs they desperately need...

People on Wall Street live in ostentatious luxury while people work for starvation wages, worried about their children’s future. The top 1% have more wealth than ever. ... Today we say to Wall Street and the billionaire

class: you ain’t gonna get it all anymore. If Congress can give over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to large corporations [and] spend \$750 billion a year on the military, we can cancel all student debt and create up to 15 million good paying jobs rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure. It’s not a radical idea to say that in America you have a right to drink clean water. We will create up to 20 million new jobs as we transform our energy system away from fossil fuel to sustainable energy ... [and] have a Green New Deal.

American veterans and families with children are sleeping out on the streets [while] real estate developers gentrify. Our legislation will create a national rent control standard. We’re going to end private prisons and detention centers. Instead of spending \$80 billion a year on incarceration, we are going to invest in our young people, in jobs and education. We are going to end demonization of the undocumented, pass compre-

hensive immigration reform and provide a path toward citizenship for all. We will not be a government that snatches babies from the arms of their mothers or puts children in cages. We will end the disastrous raids of the ICE.

We will end the racial disparity within the overall disparity. Today, the average white family owns more than 10 times the wealth of the average Black family. Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy. As a result of a broken and racist criminal justice system, Black men are sentenced to 19% more jail time for committing the exact same crime as white men...

And today we say loudly that it is the women who have the right to control their own bodies, not the politicians.

We will pass a Medicare for All single payer program.

The wealthiest will pay their fair share of taxes. We will rescind Trump’s tax breaks for the billionaires and large corpo-



U.S. senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

rations... and subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. And we do not have to spend more than 10 countries’ economies combined on defense spending. Whether Republican or Democratic establishments, Wall Street, insurance, drug, fossil fuel industries, military or prison industrial complex—it’s the whole damn 1% [and] they’re not giving up their wealth and power without a fight.

We are at a moment in our great country’s history where all of us coming together can create the America true to the principles that are the foundation of our democracy.

Are you willing to stand together and fight—and fight for someone you don’t know? If you and millions are ... we will win this election and transform this country. Thank you all.

Potential Green Party nominee: Nationalize some industries

Editor’s note: Howie Hawkins seeks the Green Party nomination for President in 2020.

By Howie Hawkins

I’m running on the theme of an eco-socialist Green New Deal. I was the first candidate to use that theme in the New

York gubernatorial race against Andrew Cuomo who had an austerity program.

Cuomo wanted to lay off state workers, cut education spending, and refused to do a millionaire’s tax. His idea of getting out of a recession was to tighten working class belts, not the bankers’ on Wall Street who were bailed out.

Our program includes an Economic Bill of Rights and a Green Economy Reconstruction Program: A right to a job, a living wage or income above poverty for those who can’t or shouldn’t work. It includes a decent home for everybody, comprehensive healthcare, and a good education, from Pre-K to tuition-free public college.



Howie Hawkins, potential Green Party presidential nominee.

This plan supports a floor of economic security so we can make the necessary changes to deal with the climate crisis: shutting down fossil fuel industries and building a green industry system. But fossil fuel workers need a just transition so we’re calling for five years of guaranteed income and benefits.

The declining standards for working people is on both (major) parties. They don’t invest in productive assets; they invest in financial assets.

We need social ownership and democratic control. The Koch Brothers and Exxon aren’t going to reinvest their fossil fuel earnings in renewable energy. So we have to nationalize Big Oil. And, if we don’t want the arms industry fomenting wars, we need to nationalize the arms industry, and we need a bottom-up democratic planning system.

Visit howiehawkins.us for more on his program.

We need a society that puts ‘humanity first,’ says Yang

From the Editors

Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang has centered his campaign around the impact of workers losing jobs to technology. Yang has written that a wave of automation and the resulting job loss is “well under way” and has produced “a growing mass of the permanently displaced.” Yang says that “The marketplace is about to turn on us in epoch, catastrophic fashion,” and he poses the question: “Are we so far gone as a country that we are not even reckoning with the fundamentals that are devastating our communities?”

As a first step toward a solution, he has proposed a universal basic income (UBI), where the government would offer every adult in the country \$1,000 a month to help them cover basic needs while they relocate, train for new jobs, or do work such as raising children. The UBI would be funded by a tax on those companies that benefit the most from the new technology. Yang says he sees this UBI as a way of stabilizing the economy and people’s lives so that



Presidential candidate Andrew Yang.

our society can be reorganized around what he calls a “human-centered capitalism.” His campaign slogan is “Humanity First.”

While Yang wants to hang on to a system that is dominated by corporations, he has squarely confronted the central issue of our time, which is the impact of labor-replacing technology on people’s lives under the existing system. His message that we need to measure our society’s success not just by production and profits, but by the well-being and happiness of our people, is a powerful one, and it opens the door to provocative discussions and ideas for transforming society.

Introducing a universal basic income could help begin reversing the destruction of lives that we see going on today. And the discussion around Yang’s ideas could be a starting point for resolving the bigger problem, which is how do we wrestle our society away from the corporations so that we can use the abundance technology can produce to truly put humanity first?

Poor People's Campaign and climate emergency

Editor's note: *The following are excerpts from a presentation by Cathleen Williams at the Poor People's Campaign Forum at Sacramento State, October 16, 2019 sponsored by the Sacramento State's Center for Race, Immigration, and Social Justice.*

SACRAMENTO, CA — I am here on behalf of the Poor People's Campaign and the Sacramento Climate Coalition.

Just a year ago, fires devoured Paradise, California. The devastation demonstrates that climate change can only be treated as a climate emergency.

No government agency stepped forward to make the massive public investment in housing that was needed to protect tens of thousands of low-income people.

Instead, residents were scattered to the winds—some joining the homeless. So the fires turned into a housing crisis. At every level, government said, "You are on your own. Best of luck."

I'm here to say that we have the power—especially young people—to transform the structures and immoral policies fueling the climate crisis and the crisis of housing and poverty.

As stated by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, "We are witnessing a movement swearing that America will be born anew in this moment, right in the midst of the deferred dreams and hopes of the poor."

We understand that this system is destroying the planet as the price for private profit. PG&E triggered the Paradise fires through its criminal neglect—and it spent \$10 million in lobbying the state government last year to protect profit.

We can meet these crises with the vision of a green economy that will build millions of houses on a model of cooperation and environmental preservation. Paradise fire displaced just 55,000 people—but the numbers driven



Homeless protesters in Sacramento disrupted a "policy experts" workshop on homelessness because they weren't invited to the event and couldn't afford the \$100 registration fee. VIDEO STILL/KCRA-TV

from our coastlines will be in the millions.

We need you to vote, to run for political office, to join the action in whatever way you can to make the people's agenda a reality and save the planet.

Right now, we are joining the launch of a campaign to demand

that our own City Council sign on to a Declaration of Climate Emergency that has been prepared by the Sacramento Climate Coalition. Our declaration requires specific actions to address the impacts, including the fire in Paradise with its effects on the poor who became "climate refugees."

Please join us by signing our petition for the Climate Emergency Declaration and joining our work to bring the Poor People's Campaign to campus by establishing an on-campus chapter. Email Cathleen@markmerin.com for information.



Veteran deported

A Marine combat veteran who served in Iraq was deported to El Salvador in October. He is one of hundreds of other veterans who have suffered a similar fate. He lived in the U.S. since the age of 3. "I thought I was American from the heart and still feel that I am," he said. Jose Segovia Benitez, 38, told NBC News he barely speaks Spanish, and feels unsafe having read front page stories of brutal murders in El Salvador. "I love America. I would fight for it again," adding that it is turning its back on him. Benitez was ordered to be deported after serving time for drug and domestic violence-related convictions. "I feel remorse," he said. "My heart goes out to those families." He said the Department of Veterans Affairs had "failed him" for not giving him proper treatment and he had mental health issues. *Must this human being, who served his prison time, still be made to pay, possibly with his life? Doesn't this go against the morality of our country, especially with regard to our veterans?*

Speed rail to love

Editor's note: *These are excerpts from "Speed Rail to Love", by Terrie Best, published in OB Rag in Ocean Beach, California*

wherever the care is. ... It is a speed rail to home and to love, with care stops along the way.

And today I was just one stop ... on the journey of Lady 1 and Lady 2.

After watching my friends at the Minority Humanitarian Foundation (MHF) create a modern humanitarian speed rail—nightly trips getting asylum seekers off the side of the road where ICE dumps them and on to ... their sponsor families—I have been profoundly moved...

Using social media, several resourceful people have created a moving system of care that is changing everything.

The gaps to care are addressing a devastating humanitarian crisis... for example, the MHF raised \$6,000 in 5 hours on Facebook to pay for an acid burn victim's eye surgery. The surgery... allowed this victim of a terrorist act to close his eye for the first time in months.

What is being torn down is our country's moral fiber and what is being restored for many is a fast track to love and safety. That's the work of the MHF speed rail and its enemy is ICE. Jackbooted thugs as obstacles to love and safety? Yeah, I've wanted to help for a long time. Like Bernie Sanders said, I will fight for people I do not know.

MHF has a grant that gives them the ability to Lyft folks to

Both women had just been released from Otay Detention Facility ... with an unshackling and a gruff "welcome to America." ... Along with an ankle monitor and some papers, this is legal asylum-seeking in America. This is "doing it the right way."

As the ladies stepped onto my street ... the smaller one nearly collapsed ... she explained her dizziness while I tried to take her plastic webbed potato sack ... to ease her load ... this potato sack, issued by ICE, was all she owned in the world...

I tried to put myself in her place. I had been to jail, but never for simply seeking asylum and nothing like Otay Detention. I had been homeless but never homeless without a country. ... I always had my family. ... I knew nothing of real fear...

As horrified as I was at what they had endured ... it was a fast trip on the MHF rail. ... Later, pictures were sent of Ladies 1 and 2 snuggled in their individual beds at the hotel with plates of food ... they [would soon be] sent to their loved ones across the country. They said it was like a dream.

Remove law enforcement from youth services

By J. M. Valle

SAN JOSE, CA — In San Jose, there's a challenge to the role of law enforcement in youth services and a pushback against a further criminalization of Black and Raza youth.

The city has a nationally acclaimed Mayor's Gang Task Force. It provides resources for youth services through community organizations, and gang suppression in gang hotspots through law enforcement. The direction comes from law enforcement and the entanglement of the two "sides" leaves youth who deserve services exposed and targeted.

Youth are classified through "risk measures" based on where they live, their contact with law enforcement, and impact of being incarcerated. None are measures of how to lift the opportunity and equality of the communities the youth live in, nor do they measure decarceration. These risk measures are defined and driven by law enforcement and the juvenile justice system.

What do police captains,



ILLUSTRATION/SILICON VALLEY DEBUG

the District Attorney and the Gang Investigation Unit have to do with youth services when their sole purpose is prosecution, gang intelligence, monitoring and arresting suspected gang members and associates?

Between 1980 and 2016, the arrest rate dropped 84 percent for juveniles according to a recent Public Policy Institute of California report. Yet despite the decrease, some cities and counties have committed tremendous

amounts of resources to "lock 'em up" approaches.

Gang Hotspots are synonymous with our barrios that have historically been impacted by poverty and inequality. Crime is only a result of poverty and inequality. Gang Hotspots are also synonymous with gang locations. While youth in these impoverished areas need services, the conflict lies with the fact that the city's youth services are being driven by the same entities wait-

ing in line to prosecute and incarcerate them.

Police document youth and adults as suspected gang members and associates when they live in these gang locations, even when they are never arrested, simply for associating with other suspected gang members and associates. Cultural and regional identifiers such as fashion and tattoos are also documented. Remove "gang" from the picture and these police stops are synonymous with

racial profiling.

Santa Clara County prosecutors abuse gang "documentation" to convince juries to find our youth and adults guilty of gang enhancements even when gang documentation never resulted in an arrest or had anything to do with the alleged charges. Prosecutors often do this by abusing services that youth and adults may be receiving from the Task Force. For example, late-night gyms are intended to provide a safe space for gang-impacted youth to participate in recreational activities while receiving services from community organizations. But instead, the District Attorney's office uses participation in these centers to build their gang enhancement cases.

The city needs a model which can explore and invest in alternatives to incarceration directed by community organizations. True youth justice national leaders believe in rehabilitation, and we must remove law enforcement and prosecutors from youth services entirely.

Felony disenfranchisement: A crisis of democracy

By London Croudy

I am formerly incarcerated. During my prison sentence, not unlike others, I worked on myself, programmed, and eagerly awaited my move from my past. Yes, I made poor choices, but I'm not the sum total of my mistakes. Now that I'm back in society, I've been working hard to rebuild my life. A part of rebuilding my life is feeling like I belong ... belong in my community.

Felony disenfranchisement is a crisis of democracy. It is sad to see that even in 2019, remnants of Jim Crow and voter suppression are still present and affecting millions of Americans, most notably people of color.

Felony disenfranchisement laws are a strategic avenue supported by special interest groups to continue the political marginalization of black and brown communities across this country. For generations, felony disenfranchisement laws have weakened the political power and suppressed the voices of black and brown communities

When All of Us or None was created in 2003, we incorporated Voting Rights



London Croudy addresses "The Power of Your Vote" teach-in at Laney College in Oakland, CA in September. PHOTO/ SANDY PERRY

as a top three priority. This is not a new fight. The fight for re-enfranchisement has been ongoing for years. Most recently, we co-sponsored Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 6, which will restore

voting rights to roughly 50,000 people currently on parole by placing an initiative on the 2020 ballot allowing California voters to decide whether or not it is time to do away with voter suppression.

I talk and work with folks who are formerly incarcerated and share a lot of similarities with me. We share similarities with you all as well, like we have to pay taxes, and if we break any laws there will be repercussions, etc. But there is one big difference. I'm formerly incarcerated and I can Vote. A lot of folks that I meet in the state of California that are formerly incarcerated cannot Vote. Why? You may be wondering to yourself. It's because I've done Federal prison time and they've done state time. Prison is Prison. When I spoke to state legislatures and brought this to their attention, often they were not aware of this, and they were confused. Some have tried to make sense of this, but have been unsuccessful because it simply does not make any. It's another billboard picture of the unjust system

For various reasons, ACA 6 was not taken up in the California Senate by September 13, the last day to hear bills before the Senate adjourned. This means ACA 6 is now a two-year bill, and we will continue our fight to restore voting rights to people on parole in January 2020 when the legislature reconvenes.

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE DISCUSSION GROUPS!

Call or email us to find out if there is a *People's Tribune* discussion group in your area.
(800) 691-6888 | info@peopletribune.org

Adam Gottlieb uses music and poetry to unite people around the movement for a new, more just world.
Call 800-691-6888 or email info@speakersforanewamerica.com



The struggle for democracy in Benton Harbor and around the country

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — The Rev. Martin Luther King must be turning over in his grave over what is happening in Benton Harbor, Michigan and around the country. Today automation, computers, robots and production without our labor is rapidly eliminating the jobs left in our cities. Cities, school systems and other public services are being destroyed.

In Benton Harbor the school district is under attack. The goal is to destroy the city so the corporate power can turn the area into a playpen for the rich at the expense of the people.

We are at war.

It took a decade of struggle, beginning with the battles of the 1930s and 1940s that established industrial unions in America, and the deaths of martyrs to the cause of equality in the Civil Rights Movement before the Johnson administration and Congress enacted the landmark civil rights legislation.

I want everybody, young, old, Black, White, Brown, Red, Yellow to know that we are in a fight for democracy against a system that breeds war and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few elites. No section of this powerful ruling elite will defend our democratic rights. That task falls to the working class.

I always say if it is not one thing, it is everything. We are now under the power of the corporations, elites, and dictators. Their wealth is mind-boggling. Some corporations make \$70,000 per minute, \$4 million per hour, \$100 million per day. It's unbelievable. This is how quickly the fortune of the clan behind Walmart Inc., has grown since the last Bloomberg ranking of America's richest families. The Walton family's fortune has swelled from \$39 billion to \$191 billion according to the Sunday Times Rich List.

Let us use history to inspire us to push a city, state and country forward. All things are possible. We must demand that a country live up to its stated ideals.



PHOTO/CHRIS GOODWIN, DESROWVISUALS

People's Tribune needs you!

A *People's Tribune* reader who donated \$25 wrote to us: "I love your mission statement and I like everything about the paper."

As the country slips deeper into crisis and is inundated with the corporate media's lies and distractions, the *People's Tribune* is needed more than ever. This paper strives to be a voice of millions of everyday people who are struggling to survive and move the revolution forward. And it helps build connections among the fighters and awareness that together we can create a whole new society and world.

We have no paid staff, rely entirely on donations from our readers, and don't take corporate money. Our recent fundraising efforts have borne some fruit, but more needs to be done to help reach millions of fighters.

Your donations will help boost our circulation, both print and online, and help us more effectively challenge the corporate narrative by ensuring your voices are heard.

Donate online at peopletribune.org/pt-news/subscribe/ or mail checks to: *People's Tribune*, P.O. Box 3524, Chicago, IL 60654. Thank you!

In memory of Robert 'Bob' Brown

We at the *People's Tribune* are deeply saddened by the sudden death in early November of our long-time friend and colleague Bob Brown, passionate revolutionary thinker and organizer. Bob organized for social justice and social transformation for many years, in Philadelphia and Chicago, with his own special spirit, compassion, honesty, intelligence and sharp humor.

He was active in the UE, SEIU and a number of other unions, and was instrumental in founding the Labor Party in 1996. Ahead of its time, that party galvanized fighters and revolutionaries from inside and outside organized labor.

Bob was a former member of the *People's Tribune* Editorial Board, an active distributor, and a learned visionary thinker and writer. He was a founding member of the League of Revolutionaries for a New America and on the Editorial Board of its newspaper, *Rally, Comrades!*

What Bob contributed to the work of imagining, expressing and sharing the vision of a transformed future will live on in the movement he dedicated his life to. He will be missed and remembered with love for all he was and for his many contributions. Bob Brown, present! He changed the world with his fine heart and mind. We mourn his passing and celebrate his life.



Are you a designer? The People's Tribune needs your help

Are you a designer and want to contribute your talents to support the *People's Tribune's* mission? We are looking for designers to help us put together the monthly print edition of our newspaper, who have experience using Adobe InDesign for print layout design. Join our team! Please contact us at info@peopletribune.org.