

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

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Across
America,
millions say:
Black Lives
Matter!
NO to a
police state!



Lansing, Michigan

PHOTO: daymonjhartley.com



Atlanta

PHOTO: John Ramspott

Chicago BLM protest, June, 2020.

PHOTO: Sarah-Ji of loveandstrugglephotos.com

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Welcome to the People's Tribune Digital Edition

We are doing a number of issues in digital form because of the pandemic crisis, for financial reasons, and to facilitate the digital distribution of the People's Tribune. Please remember that we are supported entirely by donations, and we do still need your continued financial support. And please circulate this digital edition to your email lists and through social media.

As always, we welcome your feedback at www.peopletribune.org or info@peopletribune.org. Thank you!

Designed by Mauricio Rivera / Rivera Design & Illustration

About the 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 a 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.

Articles that are unsigned, such as the cover story and editorials, reflect the views of the editorial board. Bylined articles reflect the views of the authors, and may or may not reflect the views of the editorial board.

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773-486-3551

The life of homeless people

I have to steal to get by
I have to panhandle to get by
Where's my house
Where's my food
I get tired of sandwiches and fruit
I like mashed potatoes, greens & steak
and something besides chicken
I try to keep warm with blankets and
clothes but we're still dying because
that's not enough / I hate seeing
people living in hallways and
doorsteps and in tents
where is their housing / give us all housing
how many homeless have to die before
somebody step in / to me this is modern
day genocide and who's gonna pay
the elderly and homeless
help save us

— **Noreen "Lil Bit" Morehead**



**Noreen Morehead,
Chicago**

Photo:
Adam Gottlieb

*For more
poems,
see
Pgs. 7
and 15*

Across America, millions say: Black Lives Matter! NO to a police state!

From the **People's Tribune Editorial Board**

Derek Chauvin's cold stare said everything. His nine minutes of relentless cruelty crystallized centuries of wrong. America exploded in righteous anger and will never be the same.

The extraordinarily broad response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 by Officer Chauvin and three other cops shows that something has changed in America. The horrifying video evidence showing four cops working methodically to choke a black man to death – and coming in the wake of many years of police killings of black Americans – has forced millions of Americans to face some hard truths about race, the police, and what kind of America we want to have.

Tens of thousands of people of all ethnic backgrounds have flooded into the streets. Millions more have spoken up in other ways. In New York City and Minneapolis, union bus drivers refused to drive buses taking protesters to jail. White women in Louisville, Kentucky formed a line to defend black protesters from the police.

As this movement became a tidal wave, the government pounced. Seizing on the actions of small groups of people carried out after massive peaceful protests of millions, the rulers of this country and their media outlets have unleashed a shrill hue-and-cry about “violence and looting.” This has been used as a pretext for states to mobilize National Guard troops and for cities to impose curfews. The president has talked ominously about shooting looters and warned of “vicious dogs” awaiting protesters who get out of line, and has essentially called for martial law.

If the public can be persuaded to support the emergency measures, those steps can serve as a precedent for further undermining democratic rights. The movement is refusing to let this go unchallenged and is refusing to be put on the defensive.

On June 3, Minnesota's attorney general upgraded Chauvin's charge from third to second-degree murder and charged the three other officers who assisted Chauvin with aiding and abetting second-degree murder. All the cops who worked together as a team to kill George Floyd should be tried for first-degree murder.

The protests against the murder of George Floyd have been extraordinary not just because they have involved such a large number of people but also because they have included so many people who have never spoken out before — people of all ages, ethnicities, and walks of life. Today, millions sense that something is fundamentally wrong in America.

Since George Floyd's death, a powerful movement has come together of people determined to stop the drive toward an outright police state in America. As a young organizer from a Midwestern city that is among the most segregated in the country said, “It's a new reality ... it doesn't matter if you're white, black, Asian, whatever you are, we've got to organize and unite as a people, all of us at the bottom, because we are all in the same boat and the government doesn't care nothing about you. Their biggest fear is seeing us do stuff together.”

This movement for democracy and equality deserves



Protest for justice for George Floyd.

PHOTO:
John Ramspott,
Atlanta, GA

everyone's support. It will continue until we have put an end not only to murders by cops, but to the rule of the billionaires who the police serve.

The heinous murder of George Floyd opened the eyes of millions. Those eyes will never close again, and they will see justice done.

Note: We welcome comments from readers and statements from organizations. E-mail: info@peopletribune.org or go to: www.peopletribune.org ■

Freedom or dictatorship

The way the police in many cities across the country have attacked the protests shows that the police are out of anyone's control. We are seeing the rise of a police state in America. The situation is made all the more ominous by President Trump's recent threat to deploy the active military against the people. If we don't keep standing up to defend our freedom, we will soon be living under a dictatorship.

– **From the Editors**

Solidarity in the fight for **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Here are some voices of the millions who are fighting for Black Lives Matter, an end to police terror and for a just world. Send your comment to info@peopletribune.org — *The Editors*

“Daddy changed the world,” said Gianna, George Floyd’s 6-year-old daughter. Gianna’s mother, Roxie Washington, said, “He will never see her grow up, graduate, walk down the aisle [and] if she needs her Daddy, she does not have that anymore . . . Gianna wants to know how he died, and the only thing I could tell her is he couldn’t breathe.” (ET Video)

Sarah-Ji of LoveandStrugglephotos.com: “Making #BlackLivesMatter means building a world in which police and prisons and surveillance are not necessary, where we have the resources to care for one another and meet all our needs. And to do that we need to take a step back from the cops, the military, the corporations, the rich (and abolish them).”

The Movement for Black Lives: “We demand community control. The most impacted in our communities need to control the laws, institutions and policies that are meant to serve us – from our schools to our local budgets, to our economies and police departments. . . . #DefundPolice #DefendBlackLife” (Facebook)

Tristan Taylor, Detroit Black Lives Matter: “We say this is America’s problem, right? . . . If this is America’s problem, it’s actually the obligation and duty of America to stand with Black and brown bodies.” (Facebook)

Minneapolis Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU 1005): “More than ever we need a new Civil Rights Movement . . . that is joined with the labor movement and independent of the corporate establishment’s political parties...” (Left Voice)

Paula Jean Swarengin, WV candidate for U.S. Senate: “I was in Morgantown attending a #blm march. I am so proud to see folks in this state standing up on the side of justice. We must take stock of our accountability . . . be intentional, anti-racist, and stand up for African Americans. To those that chose to disrupt this non-violent protest: Your actions put college students who are standing up for African American lives at risk. It is completely unacceptable!”

Ice-T in The Ice Opinion: “Rage ignites the fire, but once the flames get going, poverty takes over. The bottom line was people were broke.”

Kimberly L. Jones, author: “Let’s ask ourselves why in this country in 2020, the financial gap between poor blacks and the rest of the world is at such a distance that people feel like their only hope and only opportunity to get some of the things that we flaunt and flash in front of them is to walk through a broken glass window and get it . . . Why are people that broke? Why are people that food insecure, that clothing insecure . . . ?”

High school senior: “The city of Chicago should be investing that money . . . in our communities . . . in after-school programs and mental health resources . . . we don’t need more cops . . . we are just being set up for the school-to-prison pipeline.” (Chicago Tribune)

Labor Notes: “All told, the United States spends \$100 billion on policing each year, and then another \$80 billion jailing people.”



Sarah-Ji of loveandstrugglephotos.com

TOP —
Protesting in Chicago.



MIDDLE —
“El activismo runs in our blood! Black and Brown Unity March in Chicago Latino community in Pilsen, #BlackLivesMatter,” says photographer Krystal Robledo.



PHOTO: Tim Druck

BOTTOM —
White protesters form barrier between police and black protesters at Louisville, KY rally for Breonna Taylor, killed by Louisville police. Say her name: Breonna Taylor.

Journalists condemn police attacks on press and protests

By People's Tribune

Editor's note: The police violence against the press covering the protests has spurred responses from leading journalism organizations, who reminded law enforcement: "These cities belong to all of us."



Minneapolis police arrested journalists and fired rubber bullets at the media.

Photo/Video Still, Washington Post video

Excerpt from press release by groups including the Society of Professional Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the National Press Club: “[Police] have opened fire with rubber bullets, tear gas, pepper spray, pepper balls and have used nightsticks and shields to attack the working press as never before in this nation. This must stop. ... When you silence the press with rubber bullets, you silence the voice of the public. Do not abandon our Constitution and its First Amendment. And, above all, do not abandon your training . . . You have been trained in how best to work with journalists in the most trying circumstances. That is not happening here . . . Be leaders. Do not fire upon members of the working press . . .”

Excerpts from members of the News Guild of New York:

“The stakes are too high, the issues too fundamental, for us as a union to remain silent. Not speaking out about the human rights violations perpetrated during these protests, and their context in American history, would be an abdication of our responsibilities to each other as colleagues, as citizens, and as fellow human beings. This includes the deliberate police assaults on and arrests of journalists that have been widely documented – and our concern about those incidents extends to all protesters, many of whom are doing their own journalist work of recording and questioning authority. A free press requires us to be vigilant and take a clear stand against the abuse of power. The use of violence to silence the necessary work of questioning those who maintain and enforce the status quo is a direct attack on our democracy.” ■

Covid-19 kills people in prisons

By Rev. Edward Pinkney

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Paris Thomas was a vibrant teenager, but at the age of 14 he started dropping his pencil, comb, and food. He started to struggle in school with his studies. Paris told his parents he knew something was not right. Paris was diagnosed with a rare neurodegenerative form of epilepsy that strikes at an early age. Paris was sent to prison for assault and given 18 months. Paris Thomas contracted Covid-19 and died on May 1, 2020 from Covid-19 in the prison system. He was only 20 years old.



Chicago protest.

PHOTO: Sarah-Ji of loveandstrugglephotos.com

Mary Beth Hill was serving 36 months for possession with the intent to distribute drugs at Michigan's Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility. Mary called asking for my help as Covid-19 is now inside the prison walls. “The first weeks was chaotic,” she said, “We have been on lockdown since April 1. Tension is running high. There is a lot of uncertainty, especially being incarcerated and not knowing if your loved ones are safe from this coronavirus and constantly not knowing from day to day whether or not the virus is going to kill everybody in prison.” Mary Beth Hill died on April 22 in prison from Covid-19. She was only 25 years old.

Efren, in prison, stated in a stunning new development that on April 16, a 23-year-old man from Muskegon, Michigan, tested positive for Covid-19 at Lakeland Correctional Facility. Two food service supervisors and a wave of dining hall workers contracted Covid-19 and were quarantined for having close contact with them. One supervisor quit his job. More than 790 prisoners have now tested positive and more than 25 prisoners, including the young man from Muskegon, have died in Michigan prisons. Let the truth be told, more and more people in prisons will be dying from Covid-19.

We must survive the pandemic—it is real and the damage left in the wake of Covid19 is realized mostly in our prisons and communities. In a prison population that is largely black and brown, the bad policies and institutional neglect place black folks and brown folks disproportionately in arm's reach of this deadly virus. The coronavirus exposes the deadly impact of poverty and racial disparities all across the country. We must confront this system and take over. None of us are safe until we all are safe.

Editor's note: Rev. Edward Pinkney was falsely imprisoned in Michigan for 30 months. He has since been exonerated of all charges. ■

All lives can't matter until black lives matter

From the Editors

We are living in a history-changing moment. The brutal, heartless public lynching of George Floyd touched a nerve worldwide. Hundreds of thousands of people of all colors, ethnicities and genders have hit the streets of US cities day after day, demanding that America confront the institutionalized racism that American capitalism has been built upon. Millions more are demonstrating across the world.

The central demand of the demonstrations is that America recognize that black lives matter. This includes that killer cops be tried for murder; that the campaign of police terror against black Americans be stopped; and that money be shifted from policing and mass incarceration to financing economic development in communities of color to help bridge the staggering racial wealth gap. Others call for disbanding the police.

The broad-based demand for real change sparked by George Floyd's murder is profound. A huge number of the protesters are white, especially white youth. Protests are occurring in every state, and from small towns to big cities. In many cases the demonstrators face vicious, unprovoked attacks by the police, but refuse to back down. All this is taking place in the context of a systemic economic crisis that has evolved over decades, and which is leaving hundreds of millions of Americans in poverty and young people with no future.

Today we see millions of Americans rejecting racism as immoral, and rejecting an economic system that offers them



Fifth of 7 days of protest organized by New Orleans Workers Group and Take 'Em Down NOLA.

PHOTO: Julie Dermansky. Follow at [juliedermansky.com](https://www.juliedermansky.com)

no future. This is of critical importance. Racism—particularly anti-black racism—has historically been used to get the American people, especially the whites, to support the policies of the billionaires, keeping the whole of America divided and under the heel of the powerful.

Thus, the multi-color character of the demonstrations and the repudiation of racism reflected in them is significant: It is a threat to the powers that be. A people united across lines of color and nationality can get control of this country and run it in the people's interest. Repudiating racism is key to the unity needed to create a new America. All lives can't matter until black lives matter. ■

Voices from the fight

'Y'all are the looters,' says activist Tamika Mallory

"The reason the buildings are ... burning [is] because the people here in Minnesota are saying to the people of New York, to the people of California, to the people of Memphis, to the people of the whole country, enough is enough. ... The U.S. has plundered blacks. The U.S. plundered the Native Americans when they first came here, looting is what they do. We learned it from you. We learned violence from you. If you want us to do better, damn it, you do better. *(Excerpts from Gerren Keith Gaynor's article on Mallory's speech at a Minneapolis demonstration protesting the death of George Floyd. Tamika Mallory was co-chair of the 2017 Women's March.)*

'We can't be quiet,' say protesters in small, mostly white towns

"You cannot leave here today and be quiet about what has happened to Black and Brown people. . . . Time to finally speak up and do something."
 "I believe racism's been here our whole lives, coming from a very small town, it's just gotta stop."
 "I don't want my grandchildren brought into this," spoken after tear gas flew.
 "All lives can't matter until Black lives matter. You understand that?" *(CNN video)*

Latinos find common ground with Black Lives Matter

El Paso demonstrators are in solidarity with the African American community, saying they share many of the same problems. Leaders called for an end to police abuse against minorities at El Paso City Hall. Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) connected the murders of George Floyd in Minnesota and Erik Salas Sanchez in 2015. "Hispanics are dying, too," said Fernando Garcia, BNHR's executive director. "This system criminalizes all people of color who are poor. That is why it's important to connect." *(KXAN.COM)*

Will we let more people become homeless?

Millions of renters are facing the possibility of becoming unhoused as the crisis has left them jobless and unable to pay rent. The limited federal, state and local moratoriums on eviction have either expired or are about to. It's imperative now that everyone rally to the demands of the movement: cancel the rent, no evictions, house the homeless, universal basic income.

Below are the thoughts and experiences of a few of the people who are facing the prospect of eviction. They told their stories to the New York Times in a story published May 27.



Protest calling for cancelling rents and mortgages, Sacramento.
PHOTO: Courtney Hanson

Sandy Naffah, in her 50s, Euclid, Ohio — She lost both her two part-time jobs, and fell behind on the \$800-a-month rent on her one-bedroom apartment. As of late May, she was still waiting for the one-time federal stimulus check and for her unemployment benefits. “It’s a ticking clock,” she said. “I can’t continue to go on this way, otherwise I will be out on the street.”

Christie Wilson, 37, Decatur, Georgia — She fled from a dangerous relationship, and spent several months sleeping in her car last year before a veterans program helped her pay for a two-bedroom apartment. She had recently gotten a job at a warehouse, and after working for two days was laid off in March as the virus outbreak got worse. A few weeks later she got an eviction notice. She worries about getting Covid-19 if she ends up in a homeless shelter.

Stephen Jenkins, 64, Springfield, Ohio — He lost his assembly job in January, making it difficult to pay his \$900 monthly rent. By March, his savings had run out, and he asked his landlord if he could pay the rent late, after his Social Security check came through. His landlord filed to evict him. Since then, his wife lost her job at a restaurant when the virus outbreak forced restaurants to shut down. “I haven’t slept through a night since March,” he said. “I wake up at three or four in the morning worried about what’s going to happen tomorrow.” ■

People demand govt. act to stop coming eviction wave

By Bob Lee

Without government action, a wave of evictions is coming. Millions were struggling to get housed or stay housed before the crisis, and the problem is now much worse with an additional 40 million-plus people suddenly unemployed in the last few months. Over 100 million people in 44 million households live in rental units, and in April, 2.3 million households did not pay any rent. That’s a 135% increase compared to April 2019. Things seemed to improve only slightly in May.

Meanwhile, nearly 4 million homeowners are not making mortgage payments, according to CBS News, and a recent study concluded that U.S. homelessness could increase by 45% because of coronavirus unemployment.

Federal legislation enacted in late March gave limited, temporary help to some homeowners and renters, and the homeless. For renters, the bill halted evictions for four months ending at the end of July, but it only covers about 28% of all rental units, and all the back rent has to be paid once the evictions moratorium ends. For homeowners, about 70% of mortgage holders were covered by a 60-day foreclosure moratorium, but that ended May 17. Homeowners can apply to have their mortgage payments delayed for up to a year, but the missed payments will be added back to the mortgage. A patchwork of local and state programs is likewise of not much help to those facing eviction or foreclosure, or who are already homeless.

People have been responding by organizing, engaging in rent strikes and making demands on legislators. The crisis makes clear that housing must be treated as a human right. As a start, this means cancelling rents and mortgages for the duration of the crisis, and housing the homeless permanently. It also means enacting a universal basic monthly income that is enough to live on. Let’s stop bailing out corporations, and start bailing out the people. ■

Whiskey and News

I poured myself a glass of whiskey
and set about the task
of reading the day’s news.
But soon I had to stop
because it made me
want to drink my whole bottle
and I need this one to last
for the next month at least.

— Eric Allen Yankee

2020 ELECTIONS AND THE FIGHT FOR OUR DEMANDS

As 2020 elections heat up, one of the most important in US history, Americans face a devastated economy, more hunger, joblessness, police killings and an abysmal for-profit health care system. But the crisis of Covid-19, and now the movement for Black Lives, has shown that there is power in people joining together to make their demands. Some killer cops have been indicted. Some homeless people have been housed, some unemployed people have received aid, some prisoners have been released from disease-infected jails and some sick patients have been treated regardless of their ability to pay. If we can do these minimal things in a crisis, why can't such reforms be made permanent and apply to everyone? They can be — and must be. Anyone running for office must stand up for our demands — or not get our vote. All this is part and parcel of a broad, ongoing effort to create a society organized around the needs and morality of the majority, not the billionaires. — *The editors*

Tulsa's racist rally: Trump must go!

By People's Tribune

A president who fails to lead during the pandemic ravaging the country. Who spreads harmful disinformation and whips up ugly, divisive hatred. Who refuses to protect the lives of people while driving them into economic insecurity.

And, now, when millions are in the street here and around the world in defense of Black lives, he intensifies his racist attacks. On June 19—Juneteenth—a day when the end of slavery is celebrated, Trump planned to hold a campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, site of one of the largest massacres of Blacks in US history. Trump changed the date to June 20, but that didn't alter the fact that holding the event in Tulsa and in June is a blasphemous and incendiary act that is an insult to Black Americans, and is part of an effort to arouse a racist backlash aimed at crushing the growing movement for justice and equality for all.

Defeating Trump in 2020 is a matter of life or death. His presidency has made the ongoing assault on Black Americans worse. A long list of lynch-like murders, such as the killings of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, can be traced in part to Trump's dog whistles. People of color, especially Blacks, along with immigrants, the homeless and all poor and working people—in fact the whole of society—are in grave danger under this regime.

The Trump administration has lifted 100 environmental regulations, revoked native reservation status, installed right-wing young judges, and put as heads of federal agencies corporate hacks and privatizers to destroy what few social and environmental protections we have. It represents the most blatantly brutal and destructive wing of the corporate government, hell-bent on stripping every right and civil and economic protection from the American people.

During this time of peril, people are demanding that their government prioritize human needs over further enrichment of the billionaires and war-makers—for universal health care, housing for the homeless and other basics of life, for an end to injustice and inequality. This will require unleashing a vast independent movement.

We build this movement in the interest of all humanity, and against the bipartisan rule that gives corporations trillions in public dollars while we get a deadly crumb. Most immediately, we must stop one of the most destructive, divisive and dangerous heads of government our country has ever seen. ■



Officials cleared peaceful protests in front of the White House with tear gas and horses so President Trump could walk onto the courtyard of St. John's church to stage a photo op. Lincoln visited the historic church daily to seek solace and to think. Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, the church's bishop (pictured below at right), said: "[President Trump] didn't come to church to pray. He didn't come to church to offer condolences to those who were grieving. He didn't come to commit to healing our nation, all the things that we would expect and long for from the highest leader in the land."



Covid-19 rent strike for universal right to housing

By the Laney College Chapter of Poor People's Campaign

OAKLAND, CA — As U.S. deaths from Covid-19 escalate past 107,000 and unemployment climbs above 43 million, people are asking why our government is not doing more to solve this life or death health and economic crisis.

Some low- and middle-income Californians say canceling rent is the only solution to prevent a tidal wave of evictions and homelessness and a corresponding explosion in the spread of the corona virus. They refuse to choose between food and rent!

Oakland housing advocates got our city government to pass an eviction moratorium through August 31, but what happens after that? The Oakland Rent Strike Committee is fighting for a Universal Right to Housing and Rent Forgiveness. Over 250 renters are withholding over \$251,000 a month from landlords.

On May 22, Oakland rent strikers and supporters held a car caravan to spotlight corporate landlords who contribute to huge rent hikes, and #CancelRent and #MakethemPay. Corporate landlords are sitting on over \$470 billion in government handouts, including COVID stimulus funds, and billions in profits while their tenants struggle to survive

A lively caravan of over 60 cars drove through Oakland, stopping at 10 of the 20 Mosser Capital corporate-owned apartments and Oaklanders cheered us on, thanked us, gave thumbs and fists up. "So many people have been thinking about this problem but haven't yet been able to organize to fight it," said Merika Reagan,

Participant at Oakland Rent Strike Car Caravan
PHOTO: Kari Napoli



rent striking since April and a member of Moms4Housing and Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE).

"It was like, 'Yes! We need something like this here!'" Merika noted "It was very powerful, supportive and loving." She noticed a different response in the wealthy San Francisco neighborhood where the CEO of Mosser Capital lives. People gave steely stares and one person even yelled "Go back to Oakland!" at Merika and her 8-year-old niece. When Merika's niece asked, "Why are they so mad?" Merika told her, "This is where the landlords live and they want all our money and don't care if it keeps us poor."

In this election year, it's crucial that we build our movements with a transformative vision that prioritizes people's needs over corporate profits. We have the technology to produce abundance. We need to work with our youth, who are disproportionately facing housing and food insecurity, debt burdens, and police violence. We reject proposals for misery based on lies about scarcity. The movement for basic needs is on a collision course with the entire capitalist system. ■

Fighter for climate justice joins Sanders-Biden panel, calls for continued grassroots pressure



In May, Varshini Prakash, the co-founder of the Sunrise Movement, was nominated by Sen. Bernie Sanders to serve on the Sanders-Biden Task Force on the Climate Crisis, one of six task forces that will help craft the 2020 agenda for the Biden campaign. In a statement released May 13, she explained her decision:

"When our movement voted to endorse Bernie Sanders, we said we'd keep fighting for a Green New Deal no matter what. We knew that work would include working to defeat Trump in November, then turning millions of people to the streets after that to disrupt business as usual to pressure the next President and Congress to begin legislating on the Green New Deal. Our mission was greater than any single candidate or moment. We would need a movement powerful enough to push whoever was the Democratic nominee to make the climate crisis a priority. ...

"Getting to this point was not an easy decision. ... [Biden] has been on the wrong side of history for some of the most defining moments of our generation: mass incarceration, NAFTA, the Iraq war, record deportations and taking on Wall Street and the credit

card companies. ...

"All that said, the stakes of this election are crystal clear to me. When we say we have 10 years to completely transform our society and economy to stop climate change, we mean it. We cannot afford another four years of Donald Trump.

"As if the fate of our planet wasn't enough, our democracy is also at stake. This election is about saying no to fascism and authoritarian rule. ...

"We must defeat Donald Trump, but our work neither begins or ends there – not by a long-shot. ...

"[M]y participation in this task force does not and should not change the work that our movement must do to continue to build support and pressure to make a Green New Deal our nation's top priority. The stronger and louder you are in continuing to call out for a Green New Deal, the more power I will have when I enter these negotiations. ... Keep speaking up, taking action, and calling for what we need. ...

"I can't wait to see you in the streets again." ■

HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT

As the Illinois Single-Payer Coalition says, “We know that the roots of the [Covid-19] emergency stem from a deeper and much longer-term crisis—that of poverty and inequality, and of a society that has long ignored the needs of 140 million people who are poor or one emergency away from being poor. Our for-profit health care system, with its financial barriers to access, contributes substantially to poverty and inequality.” Expansion of Medicaid in the states and enacting single payer universal health care for all would be a huge step toward achieving healthcare as a human right. — *The Editors*

Healthcare workers stand in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter

By Sandy Reid

Editor’s note: The People’s Tribune spoke with Dr. Kamini Doobay about the citywide demonstrations of healthcare workers at New York City hospitals in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Below is an excerpt from her remarks.

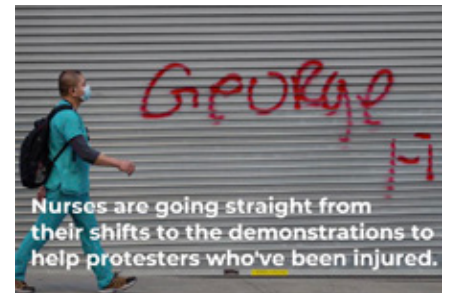
On June 4, 2020 healthcare workers at Bellevue, Kings County, Lincoln, Jacobi, and Montefiore Hospitals demonstrated across New York City in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. It was organized by a group of physicians and nurses citywide, and sponsored by the Committee for Interns and Residents, New York State Nurses Association, and the NYC Coalition to Dismantle Racism in the Health System. Primarily, we hope to name racism and police brutality as public health emergencies. And, as physicians, we realize that police officers are often tasked with addressing issues of public health, such as homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health disorders, however they are not equipped to do so. And so often that leads to the cycling of black and brown people within a flawed criminal justice system. So we must address this from a public health standpoint with public health solutions to public health problems, knowing we can no longer be silent as a medical community, and stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. We also shed light on segregated care in NYC where so often uninsured

TOP —
Dr. Kamini Doobay, M.D., speaks at the citywide demonstrations of healthcare workers at New York City hospitals.

Photo donated.

BOTTOM —
Photo/Video Still: *Shape*

and underinsured patients are left out of the hospital system altogether because of a for-profit insurance system. And in this city and country, race is linked to insurance, so often black and brown patients are bearing the weight of this burden. So we are also shedding light on segregated care in NYC. Our aim is to improve the health system and the public health system and dismantle racism. ■



Will Covid vaccine be free? Federal officials won't commit

During a Senate hearing on coronavirus measures May 12, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders put U.S. health officials on the spot about whether a Covid-19 vaccine would be available to all Americans, regardless of their ability to pay.

Trump administration officials appearing at the hearing included Dr. Stephen Hahn, commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Brett Giroir.

Sanders asked Hahn whether a Covid-19 vaccine, if it's developed, “would be distributed to all people free of charge, or make sure at least that everybody in America who needs that vaccine will get it regardless of their income. Is that a fair assumption?” Hahn would only say that “the payment

of vaccines is not a responsibility of FDA, but I'm glad to take this back to the task force.”

Sanders then put the same question to Giroir, who said that a vaccine should reach “all segments of society, regardless of their ability to pay.” Sanders stated, “So then you're telling the American people today that regardless of income, every American will be able to gain access to that vaccine when it comes?” Giroir said that he is “not in control” of that decision. Sanders pressed Giroir, saying, “Well, you represent an administration that makes that decision.” Giroir replied that he would “certainly advocate that everyone is able to receive the vaccine regardless of income or any other circumstance.” ■

COVID-19: ESSENTIAL WORKERS FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES

Fired Amazon worker organizes essential workers

Excerpted from the Benjamin Dixon Show

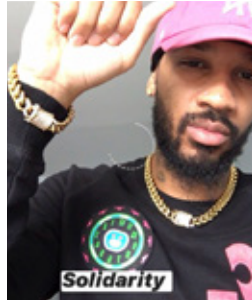
Chris Smalls, fired from Amazon for fighting for workers' health and safety during pandemic, comments below.

I had been with the company since 2015. I opened up three major buildings, with my last location at Staten Island. In early March I started to raise health and safety issues, going through proper channels . . .

after not getting the response I needed, I had to take further action [walkout] resulting in my termination. They said I was fired because I didn't observe social distance guidelines.

Jeff Bezos is going to profit \$30 billion during this time. He puts profits above people, not demands of employees or customers which are all at risk. We raised concerns. Some were retaliated against. Some were terminated. Now they claim they're spending \$4 billion, but what do you say to families [whose loved ones died]. There's no replacement on human life. They should be held accountable.

I'm now a full-blown employee with this activism . . . one of my many actions was May 1, a nationwide walkout, which included Whole Foods, Walmart, Instagram, Fed Ex. . . we plan to do it again on June Teenth, Freedom Day . . . And I'm launching my own organization, T.C.O.E.W., which stands for The Congress of Essential Workers, a nationwide organization . . . employee driven, with union-wide structure of workforces like Amazon. If we accomplish that, other major corporations will fall in line too.

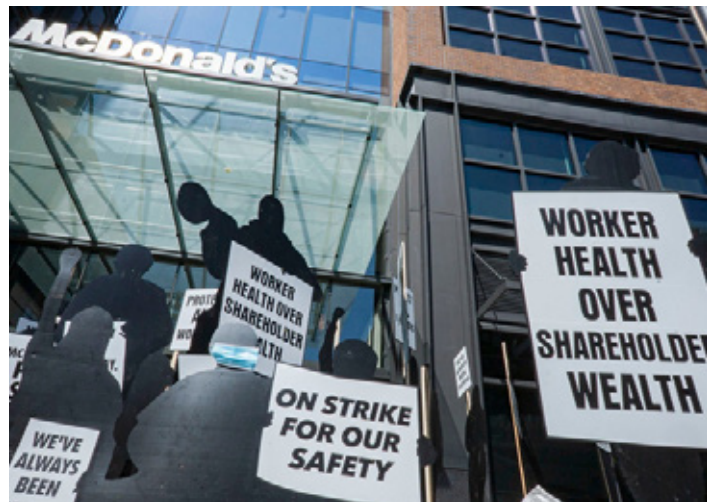


We are working class people, from the community. We are not the 1%, CEO's, billionaires, higher ups. They are home in their million-dollar mansions away from these communities getting sick, the urban areas where black and brown make up 80% of their workforce. Until they are protected, don't support these major corporations. Go to your mom and pop stores. Amazon is now on track to cancel hero pay. Sign the petition to extend unlimited PPE and help people keep the \$2 pay @Shut_downAmazon

Excerpted with permission from interview by The Benjamin Dixon Show. ■

Strikes in the food industry

McDonald's workers went on a one-day strike in 20 cities in May, over inadequate Covid-19 protections. Scores of McDonald's workers have Covid-19 and many reported being told not to wear masks and gloves by management. Workers came to work feeling sick, afraid they would be disciplined or penalized. (USA Today).



McDonald's strike.
PHOTO: Joe Brusky, MTEA

Almost 12,000 meatpacking and food plant workers have contracted Covid-19 and at least 48 died. Workers continue walkouts and protests against being forced to return to work. A Tyson plant in Iowa shut down after 555 of the plant's 2,517 employees tested positive. Four giant food companies now control 85% of the slaughter and packaging of beef. The Trump administration rolled back plant regulations, helping their profits and hurting the workers. (Politico) ■



Bell pepper harvest in Coachella Valley. Elizabeth Jaime of Lideres Campesinas delivers masks as part of an effort to protect farmworkers' health. PHOTO: Elvira Herrera.

Navajo Nation: fighting Covid-19 without water

Excerpted from an article in [High Country News](#)

Below are excerpts from a longer article in High Country News: "Covid-19 impacts every corner of the Navajo Nation," by Kalen Goodluck, May 19, 2020. — <https://bit.ly/covidimpnv>

The coronavirus's impact on the Navajo Nation has pushed the tribe's public health system to its limits. Decades of negligence and billions of dollars in unmet need from the federal government have left tribal nations without basic infrastructure like running water and sewage systems, along with sparse internet access and an underfunded Indian Health Service. All this compounds the life-threatening danger the virus poses. Front-line workers endure shortages of protective equipment. Relief efforts have sprouted to gather and deliver food, water, cleaning supplies and other goods – all jobs the federal government is treaty-obligated to do.

As of May 18, the tribe's infection rate has surpassed that of New York and New Jersey. On May 17, the Navajo Nation Department of Health documented 4,002 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and 140 deaths. As deputy commander for the Navajo Nation Incident Command Center, Lucinda Charleston is tasked with delivering aid, isolating the community and tracking the sick and vulnerable. "We know who our elders are, especially those who don't have family support or limited support, those who have fixed income," Martin said. Many of the families and elderly lack internet access, telephones and adequate cleaning supplies, as well as coal for heat or even enough food and water.

While tribes waited nearly six weeks for a limited, 60 percent distribution of the CARES Act \$8 billion relief package, online fundraising campaigns sprang up around Indian Country to



(L) Darlene Arviso, the "water lady" delivers water once a month to families on the reservation. It is a 100-mile round trip and many families have no transportation.



Nina Garcia washing her hair. She has never had running water.

address immediate needs. The Navajo and Hopi Families Covid-19 Relief Fund has raised over \$3.8 million to purchase bulk food and supplies – about \$10,000 per community. "It seems like a lot of money, but it's really not," said Cassandra Begay (Diné), a spokesperson for the Fund. Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) called the federal relief package "too little, too late" and demanded full release of funds to tribes in early May.

For decades, tribes, advocates and a handful of lawmakers have been calling attention to the drastic underfunding of the Indian Health Service and Indian Country's lack of infrastructure. In 2003 and in 2018, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found that tribal infrastructure was chronically underfunded by billions of dollars.

The Navajo Nation is currently facing scores of new coronavirus cases a day, but Charleston has not lost hope. "We can outlive this virus," she said. "But we have to look at each step to be more creative." ■

Celebrating a small water victory in Denmark, SC

By **Deanna Miller Berry**

DENMARK, SC — With Covid-19, access to safe affordable water when under quarantine is a hardship. Yet, recently, the City decided to start shutting off everyone's water without notice. We got it turned back on through funding and grants based on the overwhelming response from the community.

We let them know that we knew that at least 100 homes had been shut off. Some residents here have had water shut off for over a week. The City did this without having a plan of action to assist residents experiencing hardships with Covid-19. And, no one had a plan to help residents get back on their feet and not have to pay three months water bills at one time. Last year, no one wanted to do anything. Today I raised holy Hell with the governor's office, telling them that citizens have to have access to water. It's a health issue. Due to one of our state senators, they managed to get the governor to agree to turn it back on, even if we have no money.

Deanna Miller Berry, speaking for safe and affordable water for the people of Denmark, SC. (2019)

PHOTO:
Miracle Chatman



It was a small victory because the city is still not willing to implement a plan to help folks while we deal with covid-19. The stimulus package should have taken into account that we have rents of \$600 and above and water bills are more than your rent. The City's only concern is finances, not the health of the people. We're still fighting to bring back experts and get a water filter plant and address the health of the people affected by the toxins in the water.

But, for now, people are really happy. We're celebrating in Denmark! ■

Dare to fight! Dare to win! Fight, fail, fight again. Fight on to final victory!

When the corona virus hit, we were told, “Wash your hands often.” But for tens of thousands of Detroiters whose water has been shut off, this was not an option.

The people of SE Michigan have been fighting for decades to stop water shut-offs and to institute a Water Affordability Plan. They have drawn attention to the concept that water is a human right and to the fact that water shut-offs are a serious threat to public health.

In the face of the pandemic, grassroots organizations, faith communities, legal advocates and the Detroit City Council called for water service to be restored to all households. **In late February, Governor Whitmer and the city of Detroit actually tried to deny that there was a connection between water shut-offs and public health!** The grassroots continued to put the pressure on the state and local governments through phone calls, petitions, and social media and press conferences. They also rallied volunteers to gather data on those shut off and increased their water deliveries to community watering stations and to people living without water service.

The continuing efforts of grassroots organizations and growing media attention to the pandemic finally forced the governor and the mayor to acknowledge the crisis. On **March 9**, they announced a water restart plan that would only last until Covid-19 was “under control.”

However, activists quickly noted that very few people were actually having their service restored! Many didn't know they could get it turned on. The city was refusing to provide the human resources needed to respond to the crisis and were declaring many households “ineligible” for the program.

Cases of Covid-19 continued to increase, and Detroit became a “hotspot” for infections and deaths. Grassroots organizations continued to put pressure on the governor to force the city to make good on its promises to restore water service. On **March 28**, the governor issued an executive order requiring reconnection of all water service and allocating funds to help with the costs of restorations.

This is a wonderful victory for the grassroots! Although the restorations are still slow to occur and the program is temporary, we have forced the government to acknowledge that water service for everyone is vital to the health of all of us. Now we must make sure there is no return to business as usual. We have shown that when we come together to fight, we can win!

We must continue to come together and work to build a world in which the needs of poor and working-class people are at the center of our government's concern.

**Turn the water on and keep it on!
Enact a state-wide water affordability plan!
Fix our public infrastructure!**

**League of Revolutionaries for a New America
Water Committee**



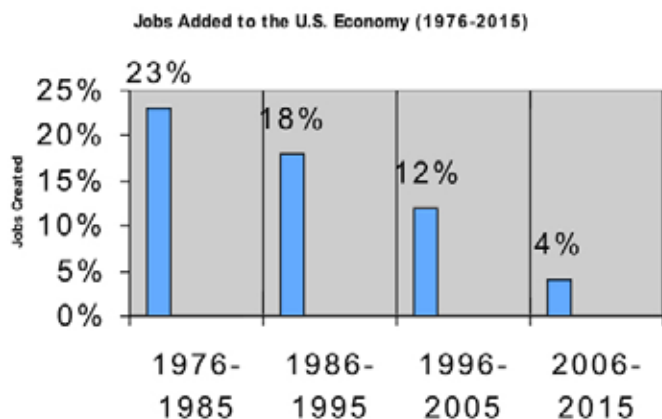
What do we do when the jobs vanish?

By People's Tribune

Momentum Machines, based in San Francisco, has a robot that serves 400 hamburgers per hour. The company's cofounder, Alexandros Vardakostas, stated, "Our device isn't meant to make employees more efficient, it's meant to completely obviate them."

While the above example applies to the fast-food industry, it could be applied to any industry. Millions of jobs have already been wiped out permanently because the computer and the robot can do them faster, cheaper and more efficiently than a human. Four million manufacturing jobs alone were automated in the U.S. since 2000. And millions more jobs are on the chopping block—including white-collar and skilled blue-collar jobs—as the computers and robots become more and more capable.

During his presidential campaign, Andrew Yang pointed out that technology is replacing labor, and suggested a universal basic income as part of the solution. As Yang notes in his book, *The War on Normal People*, the outsourcing and automation of millions of jobs has left far fewer jobs existing in the U.S. today, and most of the jobs that do exist pay meager wages. Yang wrote that "Companies can now prosper, grow, and mint record profits without hiring many people or increasing wages. Both job creation and wage growth have been weaker than the top-line economic growth would suggest since the 1970s. In each of the last several decades, the economy has created lower percentages of new jobs. . . ." The chart below, taken from Yang's book, shows the percentage of jobs that were net new jobs in each period.



The technology will only get more sophisticated over time, and eventually all jobs are at risk. Clearly we can't continue to have a society based on people having jobs. Having a universal basic income that people can actually live on is a start, but we ultimately have to take society away from the corporations and billionaires and run it in the interest of the people. Then the abundance the technology makes possible can be shared by all. ■

Moral March on Washington June 20: Digital Assembly

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is building a generationally transformative digital gathering called the Mass Poor People's Assembly and Moral March on Washington, on June 20, 2020. At the Assembly, we will demand that both major political parties address the interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism by implementing our Moral Agenda. This 2-hour program will be broadcast on Saturday, June 20 at 10am EST and 6pm EST and again on Sunday, June 21st at 6pm EST. Visit June2020.org to tune in.

Below is an interview by Cathleen Williams of Faye Wilson Kennedy, community organizer in Sacramento, and a Co-Chair of the California Campaign.

(L to R) Kevin Carter and Faye Wilson Kennedy. Poor People's Campaign.



How is the Poor People's Campaign organizing to meet the crisis as the country wakes up to systemic racism?

One of the reasons I wanted to get involved in the Poor People's Campaign at the national, state and local level, is that it's using intersectionality, so it's looking at systemic racism, systemic classism and sexism to address the issue of poverty and racism. So for example, one of the reasons why so many women are living in poverty is based on race and gender. It's just as simple as that.

People of all ethnicities are poor in this country, but because things are still based on how you look, whites still have an advantage. People don't want to talk about that, but that's the reality. The Campaign has to get really deep and have these difficult conversations to build unity.

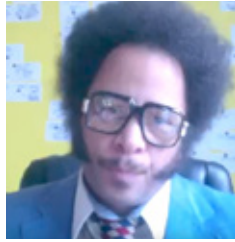
The Campaign is always encouraging local as well as state groups to be more diverse, not just diversity meaning cultural backgrounds but diversity meaning people with different religions, different sexual orientation, different social classes because we all learn from each other that way. That's one of the unique things the Campaign has brought America. More groups can use that model, both urban and rural, also. So I think it's just one way we can begin to solve our systemic problems.

What is the focus of the Mass Assembly on June 20, 2020?

Because of the virus, everything is going to be digital. There's going to be speakers, music, a day of not only celebration but also a way people can build their capacity at the national level and also to activate at the local level. It's going to prepare all of us to organize and get involved around the election – get out and vote! ■

'Change the world,' Boots Riley tells 2020 graduates

Editor's note: Screenwriter, director and rapper Boots Riley was among some famous alumni of Oakland's Skyline High School who gave video addresses to the school's class of 2020 during its recent graduation ceremony. Below we reprint excerpts from Riley's remarks.



Skyline High class of 2020, what's going on? Congratulations! . . . Check this out, tell you a couple of things that we all already know. We live in an economic system that thrives off of oppression and exploitation. And the more that we leave it alone, the more oppression and economic exploitation happens. We can't sit by and expect it to not be the way it is and worse. . . . Good thing for y'all is you're graduating at an exciting time in history. Right now, there are movements happening all over the world. For instance, there's an unprecedented strike wave . . . [and] in colleges and universities and high schools, people are shutting things down and taking control. And this is the way you're going to be part of history.

. . . you need to take responsibility for the way the whole world is; not just you, us. It's all of our responsibility to change the world, right? . . . whatever your career is, your job is to change the world. And that has to be the highest priority. . . . [and] you don't have to do it alone. You can't do it alone.

You must join organizations. . . . campaigns and movements, and be part of those things that have a direct goal of changing things. Look, the generation before you, 51% of them say they want a whole different economic system and they're willing to fight for it, even more so for your generation. So I'm really excited. I'm really hyped on y'all coming out into the world because I know that things are going to be changing. And I know that we're welcoming you to this fight and you are going to be important comrades in it. Look class of 2020. You're inspiring. You're going to inspire the world. Congratulations. Let's see what you're about. ■

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For the Little Ones

Don't let anyone tell you that you have your whole life to do something. Perhaps Trayvon, Mike & Tamir were told the same. They didn't have time to make mistakes. They didn't

have time to make love. They didn't have time to figure things out. Time wasn't afforded to them. Time ripped from them. Time leaked out of them.

From: Daniel Brooks

What makes the People's Tribune special?

A People's Tribune reader and contributor recently included this in a Facebook post: "I have been working with the People's Tribune / Tribuno Del Pueblo. What makes this news source special is that it contains perspectives from a very diverse group of revolutionaries from around the country—anyone can write for it. I find this diversity of experience very useful because not everyone thinks the same way as me. One of the biggest tools a mass movement has is our collective creativity and experience . . ."

We welcome articles, poems, photographs and artwork from those in struggle. And of course we welcome your financial contributions, as the paper is 100% volunteer-run and donor-funded. Thank you. ■

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