

THE LONG HOT SUMMER

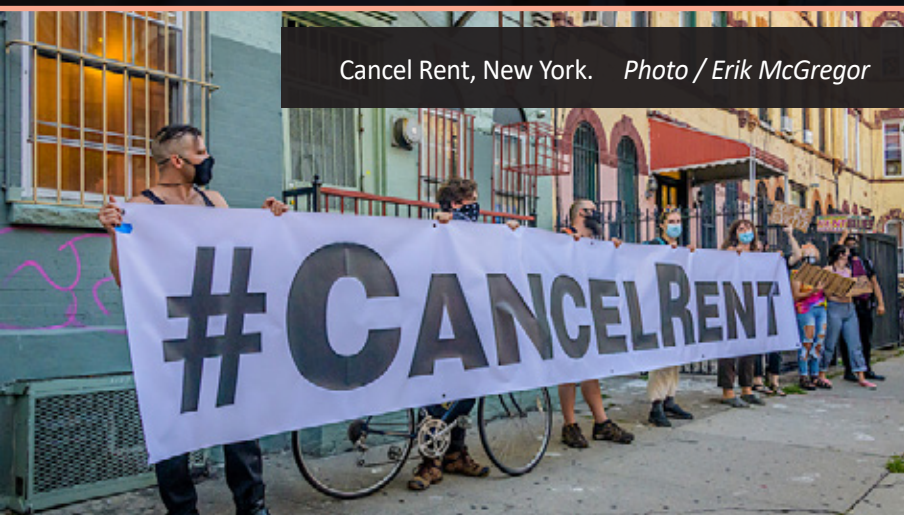
of 2020

"Trump Resign"
"Defund the Police"
was written on this
protester's scarf
and mask at NYC
rally to defund police
and invest in
communities.

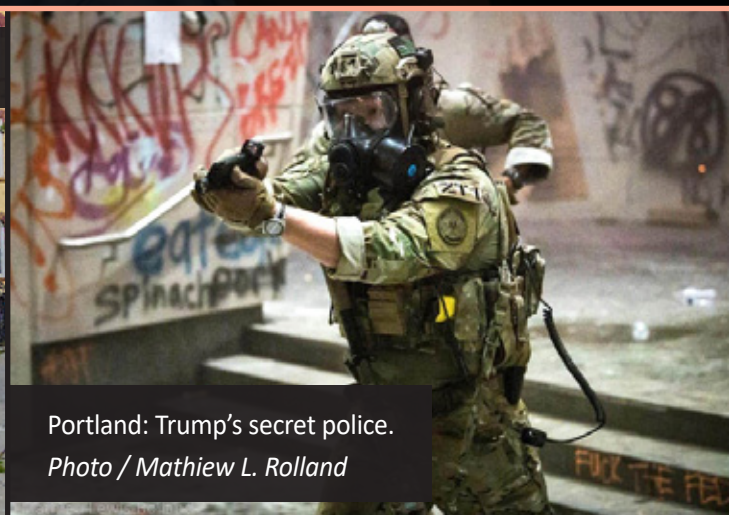
Photo / Erik McGregor



Growing movement for justice gears up to oust Trump



Cancel Rent, New York. Photo / Erik McGregor



Portland: Trump's secret police.
Photo / Mathiew L. Rolland

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CONTENT

AUGUST 2020

- 3 **America in crisis — Growing movement for justice gears up to: DEFEAT TRUMP!**
- 4 **After Kentucky: Will the will of the people be done in November?**
- 5 **Progressives running for Congress from Missouri, West Virginia**
- 6-7 **Renters fight for their rights as millions face eviction; The post-pandemic economy**
- 8 **Defund, demilitarize, abolish the police; Federal cops in cities: people fight a creeping dictatorship**
- 9 **Be wary of Border Patrol's presence at protests; Coronavirus threatens the innocent in Louisiana jail**
- 10 **Teachers are standing up: Safe schools or no school**
- 11 **We need Medicare for all now!**
- 12 **Stop the government's assault on immigrants**
- 13 **Until black Americans are free, none of us are free**
- 14 **Fighting for clean water in Michigan, Mississippi and West Virginia**
- 15 **In memory of John Lewis and C.T. Vivian; Poor People's Army to march in Philadelphia in August**

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.

www.peopletribune.org | info@peopletribune.org

773-486-3551

Vet beaten for challenging federal cops on constitutional violations



"I saw on TV men wearing combat fatigues. ... abducting people from the streets of Portland, putting them in unmarked vans. ... I wanted to speak to these officers. [At the protest] I yelled why are you violating your oath to the constitution? ... One pointed a semi-automatic weapon at me.

One hit my hand and broke it. ... They pepper sprayed me. ... I was engulfed in a giant cloud of tear gas. ... [the] protests were escalated by the federal government. ... I believe. ... it was about optics. ... Portland is a test case. This is. ... gas-lighting because none of us are talking about BLM anymore. We're talking about an old white dude that got beat up. ... we need to bring that conversation back to BLM. Our city has been turned into a war zone intentionally." (NBC News)

Christopher David served 8 years as a Naval officer. ■

ELECTIONS

America in crisis — Growing movement for justice gears up to DEFEAT TRUMP!

By the **People's Tribune**

We stand on the brink.

Democracy in America is in danger of being destroyed.

President Trump has dispatched federal agents to several cities where they have brutally assaulted and kidnapped dedicated activists taking part in Black Lives Matter protests. If protesters can be abducted and thrown into unmarked vans by what amounts to a secret police force, how can the United States even pretend to be a democracy?

Trump has become the banner of a dangerous white supremacist, and increasingly militarized, movement, which serves the interests of the most ideologically right-wing of the owners of major corporations.

Four more years of Trump would mean his administration could destroy the last remnants of democracy in this country.

Trump must be stopped. The only certain way to beat him is to vote for the Democratic presidential nominee this fall — and Trump's defeat has to be certain. The next step in the long fight to change this country is to crush Trump at the polls.

We need a massive turnout of voters in November. The right to vote is under attack. From attempts to thwart absentee voting to mandatory ID laws to the closing of polling places to the refusal of some states to restore the voting rights of ex-felons to many other kinds of trickery, this country is witnessing a systematic and relentless campaign of voter suppression. This campaign is designed especially to suppress the African American vote. This year, it's imperative that we protect the right to vote by using it — *en masse*.

We have to use the vote to oust Trump, but we also need to wield that weapon skillfully in other electoral contests this fall. In addition to the presidential contest, there are many local, state, and national races which are important.

The 2018 mid-term election sent several outstanding young progressive leaders to the U.S. Congress and to state legislatures. This year, a number of important working-class leaders are running for state and national offices from places like West Virginia, New York, Missouri, Illinois and elsewhere. These candidates deserve our support and our votes. We need a tidal wave of ballots for these candidates in November.

And November is just the first step. The tsunami of protest must roll on long after the 2020 election. The ongoing heroic protests in Portland, Oregon and other cities show the



Photo / John Ramspott, Atlanta

way forward. We have to continue marching in the streets right through the election; vote at the polls; and then march in the streets again as soon as the polls close.

Let's stay in the streets.

Let's get out the vote.

Let's defeat Trump and everything he represents.

Let's strengthen the powerful movement now underway to transform America.

Your thoughts? E-mail: info@peopletribune.org ■

We cannot allow our gov't to let us die

As Congress debates how much to cut from the Heroes Act going to workers suffering the effects of the coronavirus and the economy, as moratoriums on evictions and utility shut-offs expire, corporations are getting trillions in taxpayer dollars. Businesses are filing bankruptcy and layoffs are putting the unofficial unemployment rate at over 30%. Without major government intervention in the economy on behalf of workers and their families, millions more will become homeless and hungry, and deaths from COVID-19 will rise. It's becoming clear that Trump and the billionaires who control Congress and the country are ready to let us die. In a for-profit, increasingly automated economy, workers are expendable. Without a fight, money will go for corporate profits, with little or nothing for workers. We cannot allow our government to let us die. This year we must not only keep up the pressure in the streets, but vote as if our lives depend on it, because they do! — **The Editors**

ELECTIONS

After Kentucky: Will the will of the people be done in November?

By **Tim Druck**

LOUISVILLE, KY — Among concerns about the growing pandemic, tensions between the U.S., and its international allies and domestic unrest, the upcoming election has taken on additional importance to voters who are frustrated with ineffective and self-interested leadership.

This electoral climate is exemplified in the Senate race in Kentucky. Six-term incumbent Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the Senate, remains deeply unpopular. Despite this, he is favored to win a seventh term, facing only token opposition in his primary.

Surprisingly, the Democratic primary contest between moderate Amy McGrath, a former Marine fighter pilot, and Louisville progressive Charles Booker caught the nation's attention. McGrath was endorsed by the national Democratic Party and had a massive edge in funding and name recognition compared to Booker, but he had a late surge in popularity due to his participation in protests against the police murder of Breonna Taylor, a Louisville woman shot during a no-knock raid.

This primary race was complicated by the pandemic, leading to concerns about voter suppression and vote tampering. The number of polling locations were reduced to 170, spread among 120 counties, with many having only one polling place. Jefferson County (which includes Louisville) had only one polling place for more than 600,000 voters, including nearly half of Kentucky's African American voters. The huge cut in polling locations led to complaints of voter suppression, but the numbers do not tell the entire story.

The Louisville area's one polling place was the Kentucky Exposition Center where large numbers of voters could socially distance. In the late afternoon on election day, road closures and a traffic incident blocked routes into the center, keeping a significant number of voters from reaching the center before the doors locked at 6 p.m. Images on social media showed voters banging on the windows. Fortunately, doors reopened, allowing voters to cast ballots.

But questions remain. McGrath beat Booker by a narrow margin in the Democratic primary. Did discouraged voters leave before the doors reopened? How many voters were disenfranchised by a lack of transportation to the Expo Center? Were votes thrown out because of an unnecessarily complex absentee ballot process? If so, would those votes have made a difference in the final tally? Why did KDOT close roads on three sides of the Expo Center on Election Day?



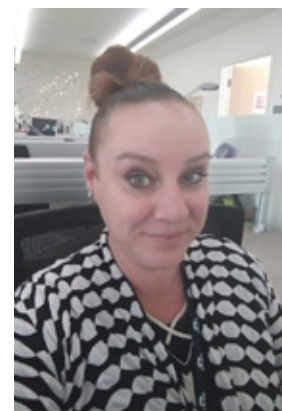
Voters banged on windows, demanding that doors reopen at one polling place for more than 600,000 voters in the Louisville area where half of the state's Black voters reside.

Voter suppression takes on many forms from many sources. How can Americans know if the will of the people will be done in November? We need policies that ensure that all votes are counted, with more polling hours and physical access. We demand the reopening of neighborhood polling places and a clear absentee ballot process. Voters who do not or cannot drive must have access to transportation options. These issues must be addressed before Americans go to the polls in the fall to choose the future of our nation.

Tim Druck is an independent photojournalist and musician from Kentucky. ■

Santa Cruz, CA: homeless union pres. runs for City Council

"As your City Councilperson I will put people over profits. We need to defund the police department and put that money back into our community. We need mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, and low income and affordable housing options. Let's make Santa Cruz healthier." Alicia is President of the Santa Cruz Homeless Union. She lives in her RV with her three children and works full time. **#VoteForAlicia**



ELECTIONS

Get out and vote for progressives in down ballot races!

An unprecedented number of progressive candidates are fighting for a just America and for the survival of the people of their states in 2020. Medicare for All, racial justice, climate, clean water, and no corporate money in politics, are among the issues. Hotly contested races include Paula Swearengin, WV; Cori Bush, MO; Rashida Talib, MI; Jamal Bowman and Ritchie Torres, NY; and many more.

Missouri: Cori Bush running for US Congress

Cori Bush is a nurse, community activist, a mother and pastor who has dedicated her life to advocate for progress. She is running for US Congress in Missouri's First District. She is challenging Democrat Rep. William Lacy Clay in the August 4 primary for the second time. Her campaign has raised over \$500,000 from the grassroots and has been endorsed by the youth-led Sunshine movement, Bernie and other progressive candidates.



Cori Bush

As a nurse, she was in Ferguson after the police murder of Michael Brown to aid the community. "I never thought I would see the kind of state-sanctioned violence and hatred I'd learned about growing up with my own eyes. Yet, overnight, it had become my daily reality," she said. "More than 50 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, I saw regular, everyday people brutalized on the streets of Ferguson. I saw people arrested for what felt like no reason at all. I saw people beaten unconscious for the mere act of raising their voices in the name of justice for Black folks." (*Elle Magazine*) She is lobbying on a platform of Medicare for All, police demilitarization and reform, and the Green New Deal. She states, "This is a time in our history when complacency cannot be the standard. Americans today must decide between medication and rent. Our justice system over-incarcerates and our education system under-educates, while millions of children live in poverty and thousands live in cages."

Information found at [Facebook.com/VoteCoriBush](https://www.facebook.com/VoteCoriBush) ■

People's needs first, says WV US Senate candidate

People's Tribune Interview by Sandy Reid

"We deserve representatives that are beholden to the people instead of the corporations and lobbyists," says Paula Jean Swearengin, a coal miner's daughter from WV who is running for US Senate for the second time. "Let's send a message to Shelley Moore Capito [Paula's opponent], Mitch McConnell and every other corporate puppet in Washington D.C., and let them know that the needs of the people come first," she says.

"My issues haven't changed since 2018. They include economic diversity, long term solutions to the addiction epidemic, Medicare for all, and living wage, and we're getting incredible support. I'm really proud that in West Virginia, a state stigmatized and labeled a 'red state', we have a 100% people funded campaign. This week our amazing team is kicking off phone banking in the coal fields again. In the age of Covid, we have to be inventive to insure the campaign reaches voters in our hills and hollers, and my campaign has done really well with digital marketing."

"The whole narrative in West Virginia has changed since 2018. We have a movement of 93 candidates, mostly Democrats and independents, even some Republicans, who do not take corporate PAC dollars, and 43 of those candidates won their races and the primaries. And this is the first time in West Virginia's history — its been 100 years since women have been voting — that every Democratic nominee for Congress in the first, second and third congressional districts in WV are all women — and we're all progressive women. And every campaign is people funded. So not a single one of the Democratic nominees is taking corporate PAC dollars. So that's really, really nice. We've made history. It would be amazing to have four strong Appalachian women in Congress. We're coordinating with each other and we're also coordinating with the down ballot candidates that got through the primary. It really solidifies that ordinary people can do extraordinary things. I'm incredibly proud of my state."

Donate to the Paula Jean Swearengin campaign on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/paulajeans2020) and on [twitter](https://twitter.com/paulajeans2020) at @paulajeans2020. ■



Photo / Paula Jean Swearengin, a coal miner's daughter, is running for US Senate, WV.

EVICIONS

We're Calling it a "Rent Strike"

By **Kari Napoli**

OAKLAND, CA — We're calling it a rent strike, but let's be clear on our slogan: Can't Pay, Won't Pay. Twenty million people are facing eviction due to COVID19, and they're not paying rent for one simple reason - they don't have the money.

An Oakland resident by the name of Ryan rents from Mosser Capital Investments. He is an active member of the Oakland Rent Strike.

"My wife owned a dog walking business," said Ryan. "Within hours of shelter in place, her business collapsed. We lost more than half of our household income. And most of her customers were tech workers who will now work from home for the foreseeable future."

Mosser Capital is a billion-dollar investment company which also received between two to five million dollars from the Payment Protection Program.

"We've never missed a rent payment. The decision to not pay



Two photos on this page: Oakland protest caravan against Mosser Investment Capital.

Photos / Kari Napoli

wasn't easy. We paid our rent in April because we felt the pressure. But we couldn't pay it in May."

Ryan is aware of twenty other households [units] on strike in Mosser buildings.

"Next month it will only get worse because the extra \$600 in unemployment is being dropped."

If evicted, Ryan's credit will be marred by the eviction for at least seven years. "I'm not a renter because I choose to be. Ownership has never been an option for me. I graduated school in 2008 with school debt. I work in a library; my

wife was a small business owner. I don't have a family sitting on down payment money. Everyone I know who rents is doing it because they have to, not because they like the flexibility of renting."

Currently, cities propose saddling these renters with the debt of back rent in addition to the eviction on their records.

Mosser Capital remains a billion-dollar company. ■

Cancel the rents! Evictions could make 28 million homeless

By the **People's Tribune**

"They have trillions of dollars to take out from our taxes, from our money, to bail out Wall Street. They need to bring that money to us. Working people need rent cancellation today!" These were the words of a young woman taking part last May in a 40-city car caravan calling for rent cancellation as long as needed. Rent strikes are going on around the country.

A tsunami of evictions — by one estimate 28 million — threatens to heap homelessness and misery on top of the already widespread death and suffering. This would be a social catastrophe unparalleled in this country's history. How many families will end up in the streets to join those already living *and dying* there?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when an estimated 40 percent of the U.S. workforce is jobless, a movement to cancel rent is growing. The demand is for a suspension of rents until



workplaces can safely open and people get back to work and back on their feet; and for continued support, in the form of a universal basic income, for those whose jobs have disappeared, as companies take advantage of the pandemic to further automate, and others go out of business.

Though some cities passed a patchwork of moratoriums on payment of rent, the national moratorium ended July 24. Those whose rent has only been delayed

may face eviction and homelessness if they cannot pay it.

If the government can give trillions of our tax dollars to huge corporations, which then use much of the money for stock buy-backs and fat bonuses for their CEOs, it can find the money to provide for the people. Housing must be a right and a social priority, with people protected from foreclosure and eviction, and those already homeless given housing, now and permanently. A massive movement is forming to demand just that. ■

EVICIONS

People facing evictions fight for their rights

By **Ana Naranjo**

MILPITAS, CA — The situation of my family is critical. The company where my husband worked went out of business due to the pandemic. My mom is too old to work, my sister has cancer, and I have a broken foot. We have not been able to pay rent for four months and we owe the owner over \$10,000.

The County has an eviction moratorium, so we are still in our home. But the moratorium expires on August 31, and we have no idea where we will get money to pay the back rent. The landlady comes by every other week to pressure us to give her money. But if we don't have any, there is nothing we can do about it. My husband has not been able to find work during the pandemic. His unemployment benefit goes for food, clothing, and bills.

We are still lucky compared to many other families in the neighborhood. I have information about our rights and about resources that are available. Many families have no money and do not understand their rights regarding immigration or landlord reprisals. Some have already left the area. I saw one family evicted by a landlord who just threw their furniture in a dumpster.

The situation is so stressful. The children are traumatized. Some live with their whole family in just one room. They don't know if they will have a roof over their heads. Milpitas is next to San Jose, but many of the San Jose agencies do not help people from Milpitas because they say we are a different city. We are all human beings. We all need housing, food, and jobs.

We are organizing tenants to testify at public hearings about canceling the rent. The most important thing is to explain to people that they have rights. Housing is a human right, not a privilege. A lot of government leaders make a lot of promises, but so far we have not seen the action we need. What will happen to us? We don't know, but we will continue to fight for our rights. ■



Ana Naranjo (center) has led the fight for rent control in Milpitas, CA.

Photo / Sandy Perry

What will the post-pandemic economy look like?

By **Peggy Elwell**

At breakneck speed, the COVID-19 pandemic is accelerating decades-long economic consolidation, job loss, and inequality. In the 1980's, half of all retail in the United States was in smaller independent stores. By 2020, that percentage was less than one fourth. With the predicted recovery from the pandemic economy coming in the second half of 2022, we can expect that number to plummet. Currently, 18 percent of small businesses expect to never reopen. Giant corporate chains like WalMart and Target may be the only ones left.

Defining unemployment is unmistakably political, but there is one mega-statistic that is above the fray – the percentage of the labor force (defined as all people ages 20 to 64) that is employed. In 2000, that number reached a post-World War II high of 65 percent.

In January 2020, it stood at 61.2 percent; at the end of May it was 52.8 percent.

While joblessness may recover somewhat, many people who lose their jobs during recessions suffer permanently reduced income – 20 percent less on average. Companies historically learn to make do with fewer workers after downturns.

Robotization and other labor-eliminating technology will accelerate, with more online shopping, warehouse robots, self-checkout, entertainment streaming, and the like.

Without jobs – well-paying jobs – fewer people will be able to buy. This will widen the gap between rich and poor. Any post-coronavirus prosperity will be accessible only to the fortunate and their children. We were already heading this way. The virus is bringing us there even faster.

(Information for this article came from [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com) and [nbc.com](https://www.nbc.com)) ■

Chicago's Autonomous Tenants Union

[See the story online, on People's Tribune Latest News](#)

Check out the People's Tribune Latest News page for an interview with Antonio Gutierrez, a co-founder of the Autonomous Tenants Union in Chicago. Gutierrez talks about the work of the ATU and the situation of tenants facing eviction in Chicago. ■

Defund, demilitarize, abolish the police

This movement in response to the abhorrent in-your-face videos of cops killing unarmed black people has changed the discourse from reform to abolition, a society without imprisonment and policing, on the back of a decades-long movement. The following are quotes from some activists in the struggles to defund, demilitarize and abolish the police today.

"What have the police been good for? ...Crime rose, crime fell. ...the prison population massively expanded." — *Samantha Master, organizer, BLM*

"If people keep seeing these images of their babies, their relatives, of black people being killed; if they keep dealing with financial inequality and inequity, and it reaches a point of frustration, people will lash out. ... most 'crimes' are committed because people are desperately poor. We need to look at crime as a public health crisis." — *Hawk Newsome, BLM, greater New York, Fox News interview.*

"Police officers do not protect and serve people, they protect and serve the status quo, 'polite society,' and private property. Using the incremental mechanisms of the status quo will never reform the police because the status quo relies on police violence to exist. Capitalism requires a permanent underclass to exploit for cheap labor and it requires the cops to bring that underclass to heel." — *Officer A. Cab, Confessions of a Former Bastard Cop, (Medium.com)*

Madison schools recently voted to sever ties with the police, as have other cities. Minneapolis passed a resolution to disband their police department and create a new model of public safety. Chicago activists have advocated for defunding and abolishing



GoodKids MadCity Love March to combat gun violence in Chicago's Woodlawn community. Marchers say reinvesting two percent of the police budget into community services could help stop the bloodshed. Recently, Miracle Boyd, (right), was filming an arrest at a Chicago protest, and a police officer came up and slapped her with such force that her front teeth were knocked out. She is filing a civil rights suit.

Photo: Colin Boyle / Block Club Chicago

police and to divert funding to schools and community health for years. Mahnker Dahnweigh of Freedom-Inc.org in Madison, WI, in an interview with Real News Network, said, "Putting people in cages doesn't help; permission to use deadly force against children or adding more guns to the equation doesn't help. Invest in food, transportation, housing, and healthcare for black people. Not cages. All of us will have to come together and use our collective imaginations to rethink what community safety is." ■

Federal cops in cities: signs of a creeping dictatorship

Since July 1, the Department of Homeland Security and the Justice Department have been dispatching federal police, including the Border Patrol, U.S. Marshalls, FBI, the Coast Guard and other agencies, to cities around the country, supposedly to help "fight crime" or rein in "anarchists."

In Portland, Ore., federal agents began targeting Black Lives Matter supporters July 1. Lilith Sinclair, a Portland organizer, told Democracy, Now!: "It's hard to encompass the depth of what we've experienced. This movement started with a single Black mom . . . to demand change. And has swelled into a movement, thousands and thousands strong that has proven to unite so many of our people here. . . . We've been facing severe police brutality . . . from our local police force for . . . decades. . . . [but this] is a solid escalation, flashbangs . . . CS gas and other munitions, tear gas. . . pepper spray bullets . . . unmarked cars . . . men in uniforms, no badges, no IDs . . . what's happening in Portland is happening all across the country. The people . . . truly see the failures of this capitalist, white supremacist system. . . and so the movement is only swelling."

Federal cops have also been sent to Kansas City, Mo.; Washington, D.C.; Gettysburg, Pa.; and Seattle, and more are headed to Chicago and Albuquerque as of July 24. Portland's own police force is coordinating closely with federal police in attacking protests, and Chicago police reportedly asked for the feds to come in.

"We need . . . [to be] fighting for the abolition of the police department, the militarized police . . . the demilitarization and defunding of the entire U.S. military budget . . . abolition of the prison system . . ." said Sinclair.

These federal provocations are partly related to Trump's desperate effort to get re-elected. But they are also part of a much bigger crackdown on protest at a time when millions are marching against a system that produces racism, poverty, injustice and violence. The people's answer is: We will not tolerate continued tyranny in our country, under any government. We will keep marching, protesting, and fighting for freedom until we are all free. ■

Be wary of the Border Patrol's presence at protests

By **Pedro Rios**

*Editor's note: This article, published in the July issue of our sister bilingual publication, *Tribuno del Pueblo*, discusses the danger of the Border Patrol emerging as a national police force, and we are seeing this very thing happen in places like Portland, Oregon.*



Photo / ice.gov

SAN DIEGO, CA — In response to protests demanding justice for George Floyd's murder throughout the United States, the large demonstrations have become an opportunity for the Border Patrol to attempt to bill itself as a police force capable of handling the duties of a municipal police department, and we should be wary of this development.

The Trump administration deployed an unknown number of militarized police forces from different federal agencies. It included about 400 Border Patrol agents, seen marching through Washington, D.C. This is troubling because it would suggest that the Border Patrol is engaging in law enforcement duties typically outside of its jurisdiction.

In San Diego, Border Patrol agents dressed in camouflage outfits flanked San Diego sheriff's deputies as they guarded a Home

Depot in suburban Santee during a protest where more than 2,000 people participated. Other Border Patrol agents were redirecting traffic, an odd task usually undertaken by local municipal police or by sheriff's deputies.

For Border Patrol, this really is not about traffic control, but about normalizing their presence for bigger national aspirations. These aspirations seem to be about reconfiguring the largest law enforcement body in the Western Hemisphere as a national police force, expanding its jurisdiction from the border into the interior. This is dangerous because the Border Patrol has a history of being unaccountable, opaque, and operating with impunity.

We know that their SWAT unit, BORTAC, already supports ICE during raids targeting sanctuary cities. We also learned that Border Patrol's parent agency, Customs and Border Protection, flew its drone over the protests in Minneapolis. High-ranking Border Patrol officials have posted images of their agents protecting police from "lawless rioting and other criminal activities." This is what was conveyed in a now-deleted tweet by the San Diego Border Patrol Sector Chief Aaron M. Heitke, in which agents posed with their weapons around an altar for George Floyd.

As protests continue, we need to be attentive to opportunistic movements the administration will try to make, especially considering how a dangerous law enforcement agency such as the Border Patrol might position itself as a viable policing solution. To accept this would be a serious mistake that would endanger our civil liberties and place more lives at risk. ■

Coronavirus threatens the innocent in Louisiana jail

By **Joseph Peery**

Pastor Errol Victor was railroaded to jail under the Louisiana Jim Crow 10/2 Law, which made it possible to convict with 10 out of 12 jurors in criminal felony cases. That law was voted out of Louisiana's state constitution by two thirds of the voters in a 2018 referendum and has been ruled unconstitutional. On June 19, 2020, Louisiana's 5th District Court of Appeals overturned Pastor Victor's murder conviction, after he served six years. He was ordered removed from Angola Penitentiary on July 1, 2020 by trial Judge Vaughn, and transferred to St. John the Baptist Parish jail.



Reverend Errol Victor

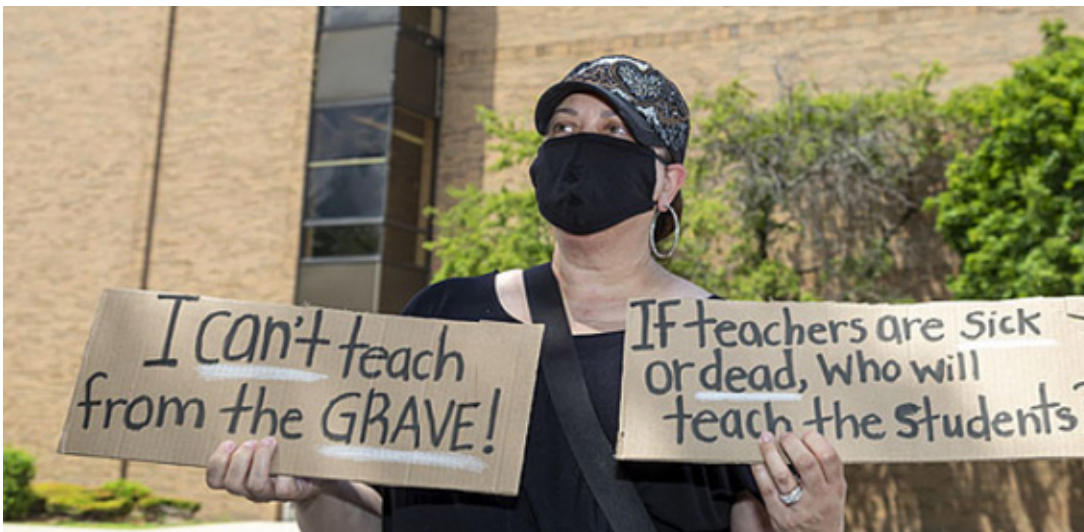
Soon afterward, he was transferred to St. Charles Parish jail and brought before Judge Snowdy, who set bail at \$1.5 million. Before supporters could raise the money to get him out, Louisiana's Attorney General, Jeff Landry, stepped in and nullified bail. Because of an outbreak of Covid 19 at the jail, Pastor Victor tried to social distance and quit eating food out of fear of contamination. There are no PPE or masks in the jail for inmates and they're literally within two feet of each other, making social distancing impossible. It is an enclosed environment and is effectively a petri-dish for infection.

Belinda Parker Brown of Louisiana United International, spoke to Pastor Victor by phone on July 23. "Inmates are suffering from fever, chills, body aches and dizziness, including Pastor Victor," she said. The People's Tribune will keep readers apprised of future events.

For information contact: Belinda Parker Brown, Louisiana United International, P.O. Box 2181, Sidell, LA 70459.

E-mail belindalld@yahoo.com or call (985)503-0626. ■

Teachers are standing up: *Safe Schools or No School*



Teachers protest outside a Detroit high school in July to demand "safe schools or no school."

Photo / Jimwestphoto.com

An Ode to Dawn

If I live today may
It be with hope
With dignity
If I live today may
It be without shame
Without repression

If I live today may
It be with integrity
With freedom
If I live today may
It be without doubt
Without resentment

— Daniel Brooks

A WOMAN

About 50
with a kerchief
and her left-fist full
of handkerchief she's pushing
into her weeping eyes and shattered face
as her right arm's stretched upward in a Heil
Trump\$hitler.
She's standing on a sidewalk in Chicago,
in Seattle, New York City, looking at shoppers,
at kids yipping along after school,
one of whom with a camera shoots her a nice shot.
You can see her on americantragedy@yahoo.com

—Jack Hirschman

As Trump and his minion, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, call for reopening schools, claiming the science should not stand in the way and threatening to withdraw federal funds to states that refuse, teachers are organizing resistance and speaking out in defense of their students, families, and coworkers. One in four teachers is at a higher risk of serious illness if they're infected with the coronavirus, according to

the Kaiser Family Foundation. And, Jason Patton, a math teacher says, "African Americans are more susceptible to losing their lives from COVID. ... We want to be back with our children, but we're not willing to be put at risk for someone's political agenda. Our children are not your guinea pigs." Below are comments from some teachers' organizations:

Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President Jesse Sharkey: "We stand for a safe and equitable reopening of the schools, but today COVID-19 cases are soaring instead of dissipating. ... There is simply no way to guarantee safety for in-school learning during an out-of-control pandemic, and that means we must revert to remote learning until the spread of this virus is contained."

New York State United Teachers President Andy Pallotta: "Health and safety of students, families, educators and other school staff, and equitable access to a high-quality education must be the top priorities in reopening schools. The federal government's demands that schools reopen without concern for health, safety and equity are simply out of touch. Thankfully here in New York, we know the governor, the regents and fellow education stakeholders are taking this seriously. Our work with them continues."

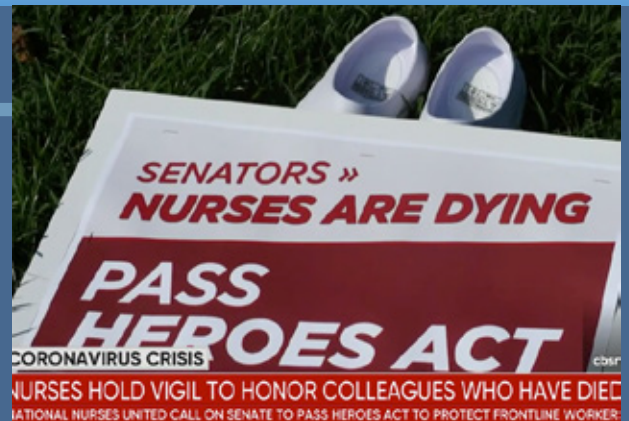
United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA): "[Our] educators are eager to get back to classrooms where they can care for, laugh with, and most importantly, teach our students. But even more than teaching, our job in a pandemic is to keep students and communities safe. The eventual restarting of schools should be primarily about learning, not merely about the economy. Unlike other countries that recognize protecting lives is the key to protecting livelihoods, the United States has chosen to prioritize profits over people. The Trump administration's attempt to force people to return to work on a large scale depends on restarting schools so parents have childcare." ■

HEALTHCARE

We need Medicare for All NOW!

Employer health care doesn't work. If you lose your job, you lose your right to health care. Everyone knows someone who has lost health care or has outrageous bills. Why still have this debate? This is the time to say healthcare is a human right: Healthcare to cover every person in this country! (NNU)

Video still, NBC News



Jean Ross, NNU President

Nurses say: 'We are not expendable. Pass the Heroes Act'

Nurses across the country came together on Capitol Hill recently to hold a vigil for the 164 nurses who have died from the Coronavirus so far. Shoes were placed on the lawn for each nurse to honor them. Nurses also called on Congress to pass the Heroes Act. "We want it passed because of the economic assistance that's so badly needed. But for us, two things are absolutely critical. One, that they fully start the Defense Production Act to make sure we have enough equipment . . . in a steady supply, and that there's a provision for a medical supplies coordinator. That person needs to give us transparency in where the equipment is, how it's coming along, being produced, and where it's delivered. The other, essential part would insure a mandate for OSHA. That they promulgate an emergency temporary standard that insures that all workers under this pandemic get the equipment they need, that they understand clearly how it is to be used, and that employers [are prevented] from locking it up and keeping it from us . . . We're not expendable . . . We are dying along with other healthcare workers. There are things our government can do. We need everybody telling their legislators to get this thing through . . ."

— National Nurses United President Jean Ross (on CBSNews)



Dr. Rhea Boyd

Racial inequities in health care

"I think government regulation is one of the hallmarks of anti-discrimination advances throughout society. You need the government to say that certain things are allowed and certain things aren't, that certain things are rights and other things are privileges. And in this country, we need to say really firmly that we need our government to say . . . that health care is a right; that everyone should have access to it, and that our government will invest in ensuring that that is a possibility . . . [and] then, create incentives, financial and moral . . . to ensure that everybody has access to that right."

— Dr. Rhea Boyd (on PBS)

An Economy of Care

"If we actually pull resources out of the police and prison budgets, and put those resources into places we need them . . . to healthcare, housing, education, jobs, we are shifting the paradigm. And I believe that in this current historical moment, we have so much at stake. And when we hear the cry to defund the police and the sheriff and incarceration and probation and parole and the D.A.'s office, we're actually talking about defunding the criminalization of human beings. We're challenging this idea that we have to keep funding an economy of punishment. We need to be funding an economy of care. And so, we are not going to let up. We are going to be in the streets, but also plan. . . . this is the opportunity to fight for as much as we can. . . . this is the time that we transform the entire system, and it's possible if we collectively push to change that entire system. And so we're shouting 'defund the police' and on the other side of that is 'healthcare for all.'"

— Patrisse Cullors, co-founder, BLM, (Nurses United Medicare for All conference.)



Patrisse Cullors, co-founder, BLM

Stop the government's assault on immigrants

By **Bob Lee**

The assault on the immigrants' human rights began before Trump, but Trump's policies have made it far worse.

In early July, the Department of Homeland Security released a report on conditions in migrant detention centers. Time magazine said DHS reported that "Adults and children have been held for days, weeks, or even months in cramped cells, sometimes with no access to soap, toothpaste, or places to wash their hands or shower. Some reports have emerged of children sleeping on concrete floors; others of adults having to stand for days due to lack of space. . . . At an Arizona facility, a 15-year-old girl from Honduras reported that an officer groped her during a patdown in front of other migrants and officers." There have been outbreaks of flu, lice, chicken pox and scabies.

In July, Yazmin Juárez, an asylum seeker from Guatemala whose 19-month-old daughter Mariee became ill in ICE detention and later died, told Congress, "I noticed immediately how many sick children there were in detention, that no effort was being made to separate the sick from the healthy."

The Center for American Progress in mid-June reported on Covid-19 in ICE facilities, saying that the virus "has spread quickly and dramatically within detention facilities and throughout the network of facilities around the country" and

that ICE "has ignored commonsense measures to halt its spread."

Another aspect is the government's "Remain in Mexico" program, which allows US border officers "to return non-Mexican asylum seekers to dangerous locations in Mexico as their claims are adjudicated in US immigration courts," according to Human Rights Watch. The thousands sent back to wait in Mexico face "kidnapping, sexual assault, exploitation, lack of basic necessities, abuse and other dangers in Mexico, with no meaningful access to due process in the United States."

Finally, as Alexis Goldstein reported recently in Truthout, Trump has "manufactured a [funding] crisis" at the federal agency responsible for green cards, citizenship, and asylum. The agency may have to furlough two-thirds of its workers in August. This would further suppress immigration and could deny the vote to hundreds of thousands of potential new voters.

No one should be imprisoned for seeking life and freedom, and no one should be imprisoned in dangerous conditions. There is plenty to go around. The people get little from our government while the rich get trillions. The real criminals are in high places. They need to be removed so we can get the resources we need to take care of all of us. ■

Who are the refugee children?

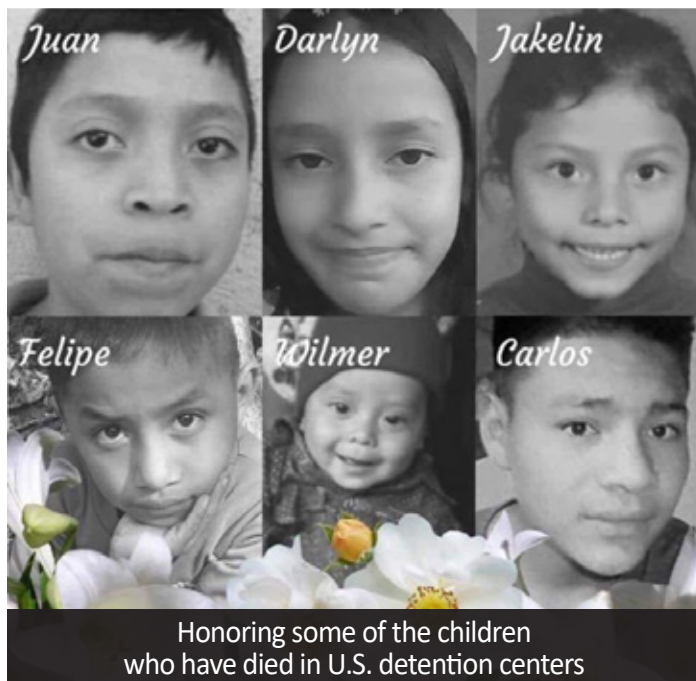
Editor's note: Excerpts below are from the full story at www.tribunodelpueblo.org

This is a cultural project on refugee children organized by Chicago artists, where people read the stories of the children in banners and reflect on how they would feel if their sons or daughters went through the same experiences. It is a project to take action, whether hosting an event, having a meeting at your home, calling your senator, governor, and / or president. For information contact: antoniomartinez@gmail.com.

Children below describe what four or more weeks of walking, paying coyotes for rides in vans, riding on top of trains is like. They are all trauma victims. They are not yet trauma survivors; their lives have been traumatic, the journey and arrival at the border is traumatic. And separation is traumatic. The majority of these children tell this exact same story:

"We don't ever know if it is day or night. The bright lights are always on. There are no windows. It is freezing cold and they give us these paper blankets that don't keep us warm. We don't have beds, we sleep on a cold, concrete floor. They only give us juice and crackers to eat, for the whole time we are there ... sometimes a small sandwich . . ."

"The burrito they sometimes give us is just a wet, soggy tortilla



and beans that we could not eat. When the guards weren't looking, we threw them in the garbage."

"I had to sleep sitting up on the cold floor. I didn't get any food for five days; I was so skinny. I couldn't shower or use the bathroom for three days." ■

Until black Americans are free, none of us are free

By the **People's Tribune**

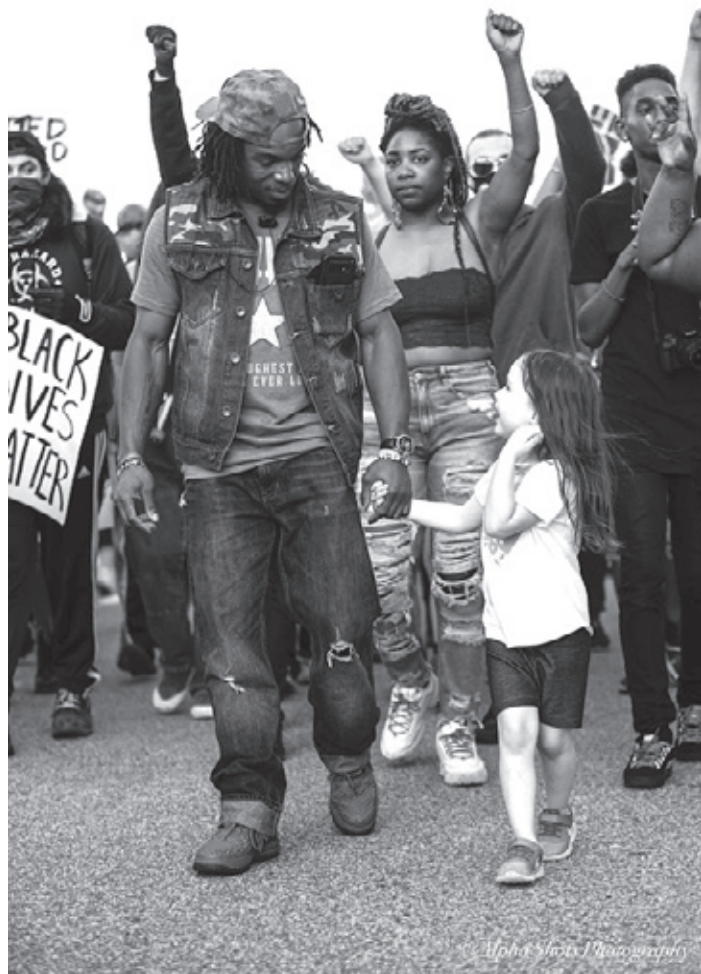
At the heart of America's story has always been the contradiction between the democratic ideals stated by the founders, and the fact that the founders owned slaves and relied on an ideology of white supremacy to justify slavery. The centuries-long fight to make the country a real democracy continues to revolve around the struggle of black Americans in particular to have their lives and their human and civil rights respected.

For example, out of the Civil War came the 13th Amendment of 1865 ending slavery (though it continued slavery for prisoners), as well as the 14th Amendment of 1868, guaranteeing citizenship to anyone born in this country, along with equal protection under the law for all. The 15th Amendment, passed in 1870, guaranteed the right to vote to all men regardless of "race, color or previous condition of servitude."

In the period of Reconstruction, from 1865 to 1877, additional gains further democratized the country for everyone. Under the protection of federal troops, black Southerners elected hundreds of former slaves to local, state and federal offices. As Nikole Hannah-Jones has written in the *New York Times*, "These black officials joined with white Republicans...to write the most egalitarian state constitutions the South had ever seen....Perhaps their biggest achievement was the establishment of that most democratic of American institutions: the public school. Public education effectively did not exist in the South before Reconstruction. The white elite sent their children to private schools, while poor white children went without an education.....Just five years into Reconstruction, every Southern state had enshrined the right to a public education for all children into its constitution."

But the Northern bankers who controlled the South after the Civil War needed a new form of slavery there to ensure their profits. Some white Southerners carried on a campaign of voter suppression, electoral fraud and terror that undermined Reconstruction. Finally, federal troops were withdrawn in 1877 and Reconstruction was overthrown. Hannah-Jones writes, "white Southerners quickly went about eradicating the gains of Reconstruction.... The systemic white suppression of black life was so severe that this period between the 1880s and the 1920 and '30s became known as the Great Nadir, or the second slavery." The result was the South as a whole had widespread poverty that persists to this day. Racism got poor whites to vote against their own interests. And as blacks began migrating North in large numbers in the early 20th century, segregation and racial terrorism followed them there.

Advances during the civil rights movement (1946 to 1968) have followed a similar pattern—a democratizing effect



Black Lives Matter protest, Greensboro, NC.

Photo/ Alpha Shots Photography

for everyone, and then a reversal of the reforms when the powerful decided they needed to turn back the clock. The reversal developed over decades and continues today—Nixon's call for "law and order," Reagan's attack on welfare programs and his "war on drugs," Clinton's welfare "reform" and crime bills, the mass incarceration, the routine murders of blacks by police, the loss of protections against search and seizure, the voter suppression—all of it began with an assault on black Americans and it set back democracy for everyone.

As Hannah-Jones writes, "centuries of black resistance and protest...have helped the country live up to its founding ideals. And not only for ourselves..." Anti-black racism has been the foundation for other forms of discrimination in our country, and it has been the basis for preventing the creation of a real democracy—a society of, by and for the people—in America. Breaking with the ideology of white supremacy is not a moral abstraction, but the key to the unity that will liberate all of us. ■

West Virginia: Our health is still affected by toxic water

By **Tonya Schuler**

PADEN CITY, WV — The local water authority tested the water at our taps. It detected no contamination from PCE [perchloroethylene] but we expect to be on the EPA's Superfund list or federal National Priorities list. This is the worst of the worst lists. On a good note, being on these lists makes our city eligible for funding that we all will use to get our houses tested by the EPA for tap water contamination or vapor intrusions. (See our online meeting with the EPA on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com))

We as citizens of Padon City are looking at the possibility of being exposed through water and from vapor in our homes and businesses. The EPA is starting the second phase of this investigation and will hopefully have results shortly after. I just don't want anyone to have a false security that we are *safe!*



Tonya Schuler, Padon City Water Crisis organizer, maps illnesses possibly connected to PCE's in water. Of 150 households surveyed, there are 78 cancers, including 11 brain cancers.

Clean water is a human right

By **Rev. Edward Pinkney**

BENTON HARBOR, MI — Water quality is important to all, and to Benton Harbor, the city of no return. We made it a high priority in the city's continued effort to test for lead and copper levels.

I, Rev. Edward Pinkney, have a team of committed community members from a newly created grassroots citizen advisory group: the Benton Harbor Community Water Council (BHCWC). It is working to help the city of Benton Harbor's water testing program and helping residents with water issues. I am the water council chairman. The water council is pleased to help the city as it continues working to upgrade its water system and testing capability.

High levels of copper and lead have been found in Benton Harbor's water. Left untreated, this can result in serious long-term health problems. Infants and children who drink water containing lead may experience delayed mental and physical development, including deficits in learning abilities and attention span. Adults who drink this water over a long period of time may develop kidney or liver problems.

Clean water is a human right. We must protect our water at all cost. You cannot eat or drink oil, but we worship oil. We cannot eat gold, but we worship gold. You need clean water that you can drink. Let's make sure everyone has clean drinking water. ■

We are showing non detect in our water systems but we are sitting on top of serious PCE contamination. EPA said we are looking at an estimate of 63 acres of a plume of PCE under our town. That's a big plume. Remember these are just guidelines. It is never safe to be exposed to this chemical.

I'm doing our health surveys and they are proving some serious health concerns. We're seeing clusters of extremely rare diseases in this town. Many cases of cancer and serious neurological disorders here are totally ignored. We know we've been exposed to PCE, per EPA's own records.

I'm hoping this health survey will prove that no amount of PCE exposure is OK. I'm not trying to scare anyone, but am asking residents to please do their homework and call the EPA with all questions and concerns. They want to hear from us! Being looked at for a Superfund site is a very serious problem!

Stay safe and let's keep working together to make our wonderful town safe. We will not know the answer for sure until the EPA's investigation is complete. They will have another meeting to update us on their findings. ■

Mississippian says: I believe I became sick from my water supply!

Editor's note: The following correspondence is from a contributor who wishes to remain anonymous.

MADISON COUNTY — This is Mississippi's deadliest dirtiest secret ever. These cancer numbers are from the National Health Statistics. Madison County is No. 1 for breast and prostate cancer death in the U.S. The county has the second biggest cancer cluster in the nation: brain tumors, autoimmune illnesses, lung disease, and cats, dogs and horses are dying with tumors.

It's all environmental: over 60 years of landfills. Three other states are shipping their landfill trash into the Little Dixie landfill. There are signs that say they dispose of asbestos. Little Dixie has broken the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. There are six types of landfills here and not all on the books.

There are chemical factories here, including Monsanto, which makes Roundup. There is an industrial area in Gluckstadt, a Superfund site on Bachelor/Bear Creek with Creosote in it. That site had the Canton Landfill leach into the water supply. There are dirt mines. Mississippi built their richest towns on a wasteland. It is profit over people. Mississippi is making a killing off of Madison County. We are being sacrificed.

You're more likely to die young in Mississippi than any other U.S. state. Mississippi hospitals are doing millions of dollars of expansions. So Mississippi is not only making money off their richest town and toxic landfills. They're profiting off of the medical treatment for the sickness they caused. ■

In memory of John Lewis and C.T. Vivian

By Ted Quant



John Lewis and C.T. Vivian were giants of the civil rights movement and the battle for the ballot. Both men were arrested and beaten many times but never bowed down. They occupied a moment in history that some called the second battle of Reconstruction when we fought for the right to vote that was supposed to be guaranteed by the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, but that was denied in practice by repressive racist laws and violent voter suppression.

They lived to see the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, but they also lived long enough to see that victory gutted by the Supreme Court decision ending federal preclearance of changes to voting laws in states that denied blacks the right to vote.

Immediately after that massive voter suppression laws were passed and are now in effect to steal elections, as has already been seen in the 2018 Georgia and Florida governors' races. These laws could be used to steal the elections in 2020.

Pat Bryant, a civil rights leader who was in many of the demonstrations with John Lewis and with C.T. Vivian, said: "When I think of John Lewis, I think of courage. John could leave the hospital still bandaged from the last beating and get in the front line for the next demonstration."

"When I think of C.T.," Bryant said, "I think brilliant intellect and humor. He was courageous, brilliant and had a wonderful sense of humor and kept you laughing."

Now, we need their courage, intellect and humor, to carry on where they left off. All that they gained is now under attack. It is up to us to pick up the banner and carry on.

Rest in peace John Lewis and C.T. Vivian. We will carry on.

Ted Quant is a long-time civil rights activist in New Orleans.

What makes the People's Tribune special?

A People's Tribune reader and contributor recently included this in a Facebook post: "The regular mass media refuses to tell our story. It is in the People's Tribune where the voices of the voiceless are heard. If it wasn't for news outlets like yours, we would not be heard."

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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Poor People's Army to March in Philadelphia during DNC



JOIN THE POOR PEOPLE'S ARMY

in marching from the Liberty Bell (526 Market st.) to Biden's Campaign headquarters (1500 Market st.) during the DNC 4am August 17th 2020.



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