

FAR RIGHT STILL A THREAT:

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY MUST CONTINUE

Assault on US Capitol, Jan. 6, 2021.
PHOTO / Video still, NYT



EARTHSHAKING VICTORY IN GEORGIA



Celebrating in Georgia,
FB Photos and Video Stills

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Thank you!

Georgia: A New South

Excerpts from talk by **Seth Rosen** of Sunrise Movement, Georgia:

"For many of us, this election was about a new growing vibrant diverse South . . . about learning from and working with the black organizers who have been doing this work here for decades . . . about young people taking back our future from absent and lying politicians who make profit off the backs of essential workers as over 10,000 Georgians died of COVID-19 . . . about the people we've brought into the movement, about politicians who we've elected, who work for us, and getting them to back the Green New Deal. We know the violence [at the Capitol] was a response to the successful organizing . . . contacting almost 800,000 voters . . . Our opponents are powerful, but we're the majority and we're more powerful. The South is shaping the politics of this country. . . And we're sure to fight for a livable future."



Standing up in Georgia
[Video still / Sunrise Movement](#)

[See P. 5 for more on Georgia victory.](#) ■

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. Ultimately, 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.

Designed by Mauricio Rivera / Rivera Design & Illustration

Far right still a threat: Fight for democracy must continue

From the Editors

The attack on democracy that took place Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington, D.C., was ominous in itself, and it has set the stage for more ominous things to come. The fight against dictatorship has entered a new stage.

The people's fight for democracy and survival scored tremendous victories in the national election and in the Georgia run-off, but democracy is still threatened. The 74 million who voted for Trump (up from the 2016 total), the coup attempt orchestrated by Trump, and the willingness of certain senators and House members to vote to overturn the election, among other things, show that Trumpism is far from dead. Indeed, Trump, in a video from the White House on Jan. 6, told his supporters "this is only the beginning of our movement."

Numerous armed far-right rallies took place in state capitols across the country Jan. 6, and there has been talk among some extremists online about mounting additional armed attacks in Washington, D.C. and in all 50 state capitols this month. And Trump and far-right politicians and media outlets are still egging on the violent right.

Meanwhile, our movement has been fighting back valiantly and pushing forward—marching, mobilizing, voting, organizing and educating at the grassroots, and making demands that the government do what is necessary to feed and house people and serve our health needs. From the defeat of Trump, with voters waiting up to 12 hours to cast their ballot, to the unprecedented mobilization led by Black women that produced election wins in Georgia that will undermine Republican control of Congress, the power and strength of a united people's movement for democracy and survival in America was seen here and around the world.

Underlying this struggle is the ongoing failure, seen especially over the past few years, of the economic system and the government to provide for the people. This has exposed the callousness and dysfunctionality of a corporate, for-profit system. Now the failure to protect us against the pandemic has exposed it even more. We are in a fight for our very lives. Democracy is key to winning the fight for all that we the people need to survive and thrive, including a healthy Earth. And there can be no real democracy without people having their basic needs met. That's exactly why democracy is under attack by the powerful 1%.

Assault on the US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

PHOTO / Video still from New York Times



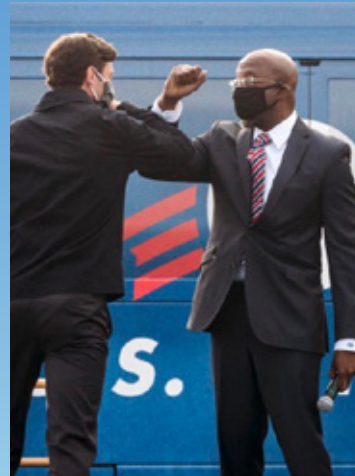
The attack has taken many forms: the promotion of white supremacy; police violence against people of color, especially Black Americans; voter suppression of all kinds; violence by police and vigilantes against protesters; destruction of civil liberties; attacks on immigrants; mass incarceration; criminalizing homelessness; little or no protection against evictions; no action on climate change, etc. The attack on democracy and on our fight for survival will continue, and will come in many ways. We cannot let our guard down.

Right now, we are looking at an ongoing armed assault by the far right on the legally elected government. Certain things must be done in response: Trump, having been impeached, should be convicted in the Senate, then convicted of treason and imprisoned for his role in inciting the insurrection; the eight senators and 139 House members who voted to overturn the election should be expelled from Congress; and the violent far right and its fascist movement must be crushed so it cannot rise again.

Our recent victories have shown the importance of organizing and educating people at the grassroots, and of relying on the movement to keep pressuring the government to do what the people need done. As the Detroit Will Breathe organization said in a statement about the Jan. 6 events, "We have to be our own heroes! We have to be the ones who keep us safe!" There is plenty of wealth in the hands of the giant corporations and billionaires to provide healthcare, housing, food and a decent life for everyone. We need a massive movement united around a simple program: that our society must be democratic, and that government is obligated to guarantee the people's needs are met.

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We can hear you Georgia!



Left and right photos: Georgia rallies for candidates. Center: Jon Ossoff, Georgia's first Jewish Senator and Rev. Raphael Warnock, Georgia's first Black Senator. The victory handed control of Senate to Democrats.

[Facebook Photos and Video Stills](#)

Below are voices from some of the many individuals and groups who helped make the Georgia victory possible.

"The victories of Senators-elect Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock would not have been possible without the strong investment of grassroots donors, labor organizations, and national partners, along with the determination of allied organizations, activists, and volunteers. Fair Fight is proud to have played a key role in sending two champions of democracy to the U.S. Senate who will fight for voting rights, Covid relief, jobs, health care access, and racial justice." — *Fair Fight*

"We weren't surprised that Georgia turned blue, because we've been working on it for over 15 years . . ." — *Deborah Scott, founder, Georgia Stand Up*

"It's been an uphill battle . . . because here, we're not just women, we're Southern women. And we're not just Southern women, we're Southern Black women." — *Felicia Davis, long-time organizer in Clayton County, Georgia*

"[M]ore than 4.4 million ballots were cast in Georgia's Senate runoff . . . That is a MASSIVE, record-setting number. You broke records in the dead of winter, in the 11th month of a global health crisis, in the face of aggressive voter suppression. You're just absolutely incredible." — *New Georgia Project*

"[T]here was always someone there to meet me who had been waiting for someone to come to help connect and help them build this network . . . whether it was finding Black voters in South Georgia, and working with Black immigrants in Gwinnett, or working with the Asian-Americans and the Pacific Islanders community, or going to North Georgia and meeting with more and more Latino voters." — *Stacey Abrams to the New York Times*

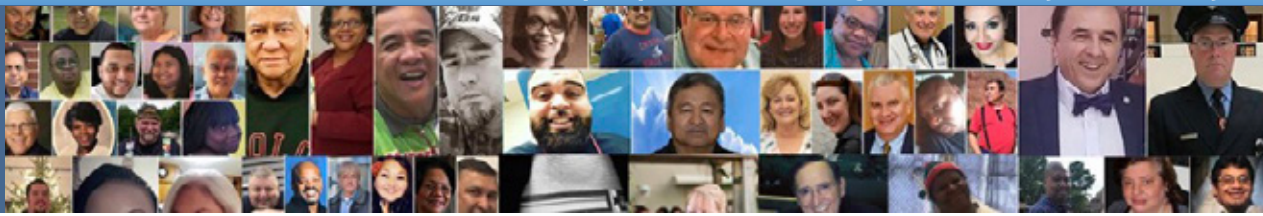
"Eso! Our efforts in the Georgia con Ganas campaign have been with the goal to improve the lives of people in our community and gain power. We gain power when we stand together . . . And while we're building power through the vote, our work continues on to the demands we make of elected officials to represent our communities. We won't stop until our communities are free from injustice." — *Mijente*

"We've been out here listening to neighbors and voters lift up a better vision for our futures . . . We've lifted up what it will take to fight for the South and win the things our communities deserve. Southerners are at a crossroads. Are you ready to make a choice and join with your neighbors to fight for what we deserve?" — *Southern Crossroads, #Fight4TheSouth*

"Regarding violent white male supremacists in America, an activist friend in Mississippi told to me years ago that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) would not do anything without the approval of the white elite. Then, the late Rev. Joseph Lowery mentioned to me that in our contemporary world the KKK leadership is now sitting in corporate board rooms. That being said, President Donald J. Trump fits this mold of providing leadership to these violent/aggressive white males who invaded the U.S. Capitol!" — *Heather Gray, journalist, Justice Initiative*

"Thank you to the Southwest Georgia Project, Mijente, GLAHR, WWA, Southern Crossroads, the New Georgia Project and Fair Fight and to the thousands of Georgians who have fought voter suppression for decades with Black Women leading so much of the fight for democracy! Georgia, the South, is the portal to transform the country. We slowed a fascist offensive but haven't won yet. Now we go on the offensive to win a Caring Society and divest from a carceral society!" — *Rita Valenti, RN, long-time health justice activist*

Material gathered from Facebook, NYT and individual submissions.



More than 2900 health care workers died in 2020. Gov't barely kept track.
Photo / KHN

The great divide: Our health care crisis

Cathy Talbott of the People's Tribune interviewed Trisha Springstead, R.N., Panacea, Florida, on her experiences working with Covid-19 patients in today's failing healthcare system. This is Part One.

"When I first started nursing in California, a lot of the hospitals were run by the state or state funded community hospitals. Now almost all nursing homes are run by corporations. Big corporations are buying up hospitals. And they're making more demands on less staffing.

"Legislatively, we're not in touch with what's going on. It used to be you could call a doctor and actually communicate with them. There was a lot of education and recruiting of nurses. Staffing was better; food was better, etc. Then regulations were required that you had to prove to insurance companies that any procedure was necessary instead of it being included in the diagnosis. Now we're waking up and realizing this system isn't working. A lot of this started under Reagan. When corporations took over, they demanded we do more with less. It used to be that the supplies needed for a patient's care were included in their diagnosis. Now, every pill has to be paid for, and that jacks up costs.

"They've thrown nurses to the wolves. Staffing is at a bare minimum. Nurses are burning out because the corporations

don't care what they're going through. They're trying to squash unions as nurses are trying to unionize.

"I've been at three nursing home facilities, one in Maryland, another in Massachusetts and now in Florida, since the pandemic hit. They were not ready for this. If a nurse is sick, they have no back-up. In Maryland, I walked into the facility for my day-shift and found one aide asleep at a desk. No nurses showed up for the night shift. Nobody had gotten their meds, no wound care, nothing. I walked into death. [There were deceased patients in their rooms.] And if you say something, you're the troublemaker. Since we've turned these into corporate owned facilities, it's all about "heads in the beds," the money!

"Nurses are telling me they weren't prepared. They didn't have the staff-no disaster plan. This was a huge corporate owned facility that makes billions a year but where was the Director of Nursing? They have a lot of ancillary staff but they let that unit sit without any staffing! So Covid spread like wildfire! They cut workers to the bare bones!

"What we need to do is shift to Medicare for All from Womb to Tomb so we can get appropriate care. Doctors might make less, say \$300,000/year (I think they can live on that), and nurses more, and we'll get more nursing staff. If we don't change this corporate structure of healthcare more will die needlessly." ■

Remembering Joliet nurses' Covid strike

By Allan Max Axelrod

Editor's note: On July 18, a 34-year-old healthcare worker named Pat Meade interviewed with Radio Free Labor about her ongoing strike as a member of the Illinois Nurses Association's 720-member local in Joliet, Illinois. What follows are notes from her interview.

One of the flashpoints of Joliet's Illinois Nurses Association July 4 strike was safe working conditions. Nurses are the only ones allowed to do some of the crucial tasks related to patient care such as moving a patient so they can breathe easier. Assistive workers could only do things such as IV's or retrieve medicines. For this reason, their workplace was unsafe for the patients and themselves when they had to tend to 3, 4, or 5 Covid patients instead of the one Covid per nurse the hospital had agreed to in writing.

The hospital spent more money in their attempt to union bust than to meet the demands, which showed that it was about control of the workers and not money. Only one of the hospitals

operated by Amita is unionized and on day one of the strike the nurses' union was locked out. Lockouts are a retaliatory measure used by employers to keep workers out of the workplace, but is simply a show of hostility when workers have already walked out of the workplace to strike.

Rather than meet the union's demands for safe working conditions, Amita hired agency nurses at a rate of \$65/hour plus hotel accommodations and a charter bus to the hospital. As Pat Meade noted, in her 34 years of nursing, she has never earned that much. This was a union busting effort, not a disagreement in working conditions.

In the end, staffing levels did not see a change when the nurses returned to work on July 22. The union made some gains such as bonuses to union members and 2 percent raises for 2021 and 2022. The union also kept a key benefit known as the Extended Illness Bank, which enables full coverage of healthcare costs experienced by union members. Amita had tried to replace that benefit with a 50% option. ■

‘You can’t lock up an entire movement!’ says Homeless Union leader

By [Crystal Sanchez](#)

SACRAMENTO, CA — 2020 has taught us many lessons. For years, people have been saying that most of us are one paycheck away, one medical bill away, one life emergency away, one natural disaster or crisis away from homelessness. What Covid-19 has also shown us is that, along with every other mistreatment of our homeless, we continue to be excluded, ignored, and unprotected, with criminalization and police sweeps of our unhoused who are trying to shelter in place. For years we have asked for infrastructure in our encampments. We have fought for housing. Project Room Key has shown that we could take hotels and house folks, that we could place porta potties in encampments and bring mutual aid to those who need it the most. Our government has the capacity to get everybody off of the streets if they truly wanted to.

Here in Sacramento we are seeing CDC violations and violations of a lawsuit we won to stop police sweeps. Our goal for 2021 is to put a stop to the cruel and unusual punishment of unhoused folks. Our goal is to stop sweeps and fight for housing now, for no more death on the streets. We are a national Union of the Homeless, made up of the unhoused, poor and advocates, and

those sick and tired of being sick and tired! You may be able to lock a few of us up, but you can’t lock up an entire movement. When we say ‘whose streets?’ and then respond ‘our streets!’ it is because it is our streets. Built by us, paid for by us, utilized by us. Many of us have died on those streets as well!

The time has come for another civil rights movement. There are more of us than them. Stand up, fighting back. Organize organize organize! Remember — we only get what we are organized to take! ■



Sacramento encampment.

Photo / Donated

Community members block ‘Holiday Evictions’ of homeless camp

By [Keith McHenry](#)

SANTA CRUZ, CA — The city named for the Holy Cross announced they would evict nearly 200 unhoused people into the doorways of struggling downtown businesses during the holiday to celebrate the birth of the homeless baby Jesus.

City Manager Martin Bernal issued his executive order on December 17, 2020, in a press statement. It includes a quote from Lee Butler, ‘homelessness response manager’ for the City — better known in our community as ‘the gentrifier’ who promotes construction of luxury condominiums. It mentions “the voluminous waste” created by ‘unmanaged camps’ that have not been provided with bins or trash pickup for months.

An ‘unmanaged camp’ is one that is self-managed, and threatens their narrative that those who live outside need to be ‘managed’.

Supporters’ efforts to blockade Phase One evictions failed, and the police secured the cleared area with rented fences, driving some people out of the park. As predicted, those people had to find a place in a shop doorway to sleep.

During the first evictions on December 21, Santa Cruz Police Chief Andy Mills claimed on camera that the city of Santa Cruz was aware of COVID-19 recommendations against sweeps of

homeless camps but decided to close the park for restoration anyway. He was asked, “Where will people go?” and replied that he didn’t know. “They can figure it out and go wherever, as long as they stay 12 feet apart.” The video went viral.

Phase Two of the Holiday Evictions was scheduled for December 28. The night before, campers and their allies moved the fences the city had erected to keep out the residents, building a barricade to stop the police. Over a hundred community members joined in the early morning action, many linking arms, successfully stopping the police from entering the camp.

On December 30, the Santa Cruz Homeless Union and Food Not Bombs filed for an emergency temporary restraining order in federal court against the city of Santa Cruz. It was granted that same day and effective through January 6, preventing it from shutting down San Lorenzo Park. ■



Heavily armed police are turned back by peaceful protesters and residents of the San Lorenzo Park encampment.

Photo / Chris Krohn

City locks out Chicago teachers for refusing to risk lives in pandemic

The information below is from a January 12 Chicago Teachers Union press conference, and other teacher voices, all of which are on the union's Facebook page.

Despite the raging pandemic, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) planned to re-open schools beginning January 4. Numerous Local School Councils in schools across the city opposed the school opening, and 33 of 50 aldermen petitioned Mayor Lightfoot and the School Board, indicating that opening schools under current conditions is unsafe. Many teachers have refused demands to return, opting to continue teaching remotely for safety reasons. The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) is fighting for a cooperative effort with the City, but has been stymied in bargaining for safe opening. The union is now opening rank and file voting, calling on its members to vote to refuse to do in-person teaching.

On January 11, the CPS blocked Google access and docked the pay of up to 100 teachers who refused to teach in-person. Teachers at Sadlowski on the far South side responded with a teach-in: teachers bringing their lap tops and sitting outdoors, outside the building on school property, while conducting classes. Music teacher Quentin Washington, speaking at a CTU press conference, said “. . . my heart is heavy because our school district chose to retaliate against educators for trying to be safe in their work environment.” He went on: “I fear for my health, and I've chosen to remain in a healthy place by working from home and still providing the same services that I would be required to provide remotely from the school building. Yet they have locked me out. They blocked my colleagues out all over this city who have chosen to stay safe. . .”

Meanwhile, on January 12, at McCutcheon on the North side, Jenny Delessio-Parson confirmed one teacher had tested positive for COVID-19 and four staff in contact with them are in quarantine. At the CTU press conference, Delessio-Parson noted: “CPS has built such a culture of intimidation recently with their staff members, . . . it's creating an even unsafe situation because there's no transparency and, there's this bullying being done by our bosses . . . Two of the classrooms set to receive students had not passed the ventilation assessment by CPS' standards, teachers found rooms that had not been fully cleaned since March and there was no all-staff meeting or clear instruction on how to receive the students.”

In Chicago's Little Village neighborhood, special education teacher Linda Perales at Corkery Elementary School objected to being blocked from her Google teaching platform: “I know returning to school is unsafe because we know that our cluster students cannot wear their masks all day. . . We have been told that we need to build their tolerance to wearing the mask, which implies that they cannot wear the mask and this is an airborne virus, and not wearing masks puts everyone at risk.”

CTU Vice President Stacy Davis Gates reiterated at a January 12 CTU press conference that: “In a pandemic where each day forward looks worse than the day we left with respect to infections and deaths, the cumulative impact requires collaboration . . . partnership . . . clarity of process, procedure. That is what the pandemic requires.” ■



Parents of locked out educators speak out for safety and in support of teachers and staff.

Video Still, [View video on CTU Facebook page](#)



Educators at Nathan Davis Elementary protest being forced back into buildings, despite a 16 percent positivity rate in their community.

Video Still, [View video on CTU Facebook page](#)

Martin Luther King Day 2021

Dr. King belongs to the people, not to the one percent!

By the Editors



Years ago, the U.S. Congress decided that the official federal holiday to commemorate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., would not be observed on his actual birthday (January 15). Instead, it would fall each year on the third Monday in January. That may have been a sign of the degree of accuracy about Dr. King that we could expect from America's rulers in their official pronouncements about the holiday in the years that followed.

Ever since President Ronald Reagan reversed course and signed the bill creating the federal holiday in November 1983, this country has witnessed a systematic campaign to distort Dr. King's beliefs and his role in history. (We should have known that when outright racists like U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina voted to create the holiday, something was up.)

Again and again, some political commentators have taken one paragraph from Dr. King's magnificent "I Have a Dream" speech at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom out of context. They have cited King's eloquent expression of hope that someday his children would be judged "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" to dishonestly portray King as an opponent of affirmative action and other programs which take race into account when grappling with systemic racism in this country.

Others have reduced Dr. King to a harmless plaster saint, distorting his ethical philosophy to claim that he would have condemned the social explosions that followed the murder of George Floyd last spring.

This year it is imperative that all of us who are fighting for justice speak up and reclaim the legacy of an important leader. We need to honor the memory of the *real* Martin Luther King Jr. The King who on more than one occasion said that "a riot is the language of the unheard." The Baptist preacher who challenged the very idea of "moderation" when fighting oppression. The man who denounced the U.S. war against Vietnam, proudly calling himself "a brother to the poor of Vietnam" and emphatically declaring "I speak for the poor in America who are paying double the price for smashed hopes and death and corruption in Vietnam."

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

What would the *real* Martin Luther King Jr. have to say about America in early 2021, as we grapple with the coronavirus?

On March 25, 1966, at a press conference in connection with the annual meeting of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, Dr. King famously declared: "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." Is there any doubt that Dr. King would have spoken out forcefully against America's current for-profit health care system? That he would have denounced the government's callous response to the coronavirus? That he would have pointed out how that callousness disproportionately harms poor people and people of color?

An insightful social critic of capitalism, Dr. King was also a practical organizer of mass protests in the streets. At the end of his life he was planning the Poor People's Campaign to bring tens of thousands of people of all ethnicities to the nation's capital for mass protests against poverty in America.

Murdered in Memphis many years ago, Dr. King's legacy lives on today — in the concrete efforts of all those who are continuing the fight he waged so valiantly against systemic racism, militarism, and economic inequality. This year, as we celebrate Martin Luther King Day on Monday, January 18, it's time to say: *Dr. King belongs to the people, not to the one percent!* ■

No Justice for Flint in \$600 million settlement

The following is an abridged version of a statement by the Flint Democracy Defense League.

FLINT, MI — The State of Michigan has dealt yet another blow to the residents of Flint with the recently announced \$600 million so-called compensatory “settlement” (before pre-attorney fees) for the poisoning. There has been a slew of abuse foisted upon the people here by the State of Michigan for over seven years. The Flint crisis has guaranteed crumbs for the people and a substantial payday for special interests.

Background: The state’s actions included allowing unelected “Emergency Managers” to use their powers to, in 2014, switch the city’s water source to the Flint River, from which lead and other toxins leached into our homes and our bodies. And denying the toxicity of the water, until voices of the people broke thru.

The City of Flint recently agreed to fork over \$20 million to join the State, even though Flint DID NOT poison itself. While this negotiated preliminary settlement with the State affords 80% of the money to children, the provisions of the settlement could leave hundreds if not thousands of Flint victims [including children] with NO compensation at all.

At the start of the water disaster in 2014, doctors refused to attribute any symptoms to the water, choosing to believe false information from the state. Though it was impossible to obtain documentation of illness caused by contaminated water at that time, the current settlement does not award any compensation

to adults [and many children] who lacked such documentation. One of the largest man-made environmental disasters in U.S. history happened to Flint. Cities and towns all over the country are looking to Flint as a model for restorative justice. The case is now in the hands of Federal Judge Judith Levy.

Undeterred, water Warriors groups and scores of individuals, along with groups such as Black Millennials for Flint, continue to empower residents through Facebook posts, online petitions, letters to the Judge, and more to sound the alarm. In this New Year, we look forward to securing justice for all Flint residents.

[Check out the voices of Flint here.](#) ■



Cynthia Haynes with her son Daniel at Flint press conference: “No, \$600 million is a start but not enough. My son is on 3 medications. . . he’s a black man in this world. How is he supposed to go through life? [And] it’s about all the residents. We need more money.”

Pursuing hope in mayoral campaign in rural southern town

Deanna Miller Berry, fighter, advocate, activist and people’s mayoral candidate in Denmark, SC tells the People’s Tribune why she is running.

I run because I realize the power of the people. And it’s the people who pay the price for the lack in leadership. So there has to be a change to take the city to the next level. And the leaders here, the mayor, the council, even on the county level, are just so comfortable with things being just as they are. With this evolving economy, we have to keep up with all the counties and rural towns surrounding us and throughout the country. The people need a representative, and that’s what made me decide to run.

The water crisis is number one on my platform. We have failed every single sanitation survey. They are not testing for



[Deanna Miller Berry, mayoral candidate in Denmark, SC.](#)

the chemical Halosan in the water [classified by the EPA as a pesticide]. Our experts from Virginia Tech are still prohibited from coming here to test the water. And in education, we have two historically black colleges that the city has not been utilizing. So we definitely want them and the education department to make sure our schools have what they need to educate our children. I’m working on a Universal Basic Income program for Denmark. Also, I want to focus on affordable housing. We want to build shipping container housing.

I go to the store and crowds of people are standing waiting on me to talk. They ask ‘what can we do to help?’ These folks have never done anything in politics. The whole mindset is that we’re on the pursuit of hope for Denmark! They’ve always been governed by individuals who have put private interests over public. And this will be the first administration where the public’s interests come first and where the people are truly, truly engaged.

The South is rising, as proven by the Georgia elections. We have to rebuild the hope in our country, but we got to start with these rural communities that were plagued and hurt for so long. Rural communities are the heartbeat of America. ■

ICE operations in San Diego countered by community organizing

SAN DIEGO, CA – In December, the American Friends Service Committee’s (AFSC) US-Mexico Border Program released “Countering ICE’s Abusive Practices with Community Resiliency: Testimonies from San Diego,” a report that profiles how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducts its operations in San Diego County, including tactics used during a work-site raid that affected migrant workers and their families. The report also presents how migrants and allies organize against ICE activity as a way to build community power and find healing from the violent trauma that ICE raids cause.

Vanessa Ceceña, human rights program associate with AFSC’s US-Mexico Border Program and lead researcher for this report stated, “ICE agents regularly use abusive tactics in their raids that have traumatic consequences for San Diego families. In spite of those abusive measures, affected individuals and their families continue to demonstrate resilience by organizing to defend their basic rights.”

The report offers recommendations that could help ameliorate the lives of working families in San Diego County. The report’s recommendations include:

- Defund the Department of Homeland Security, including decreasing funding for detention and removal operations, and border militarization that further criminalizes migrants.
- Shift away from an enforcement-only response to migration. Immigration processes should provide support to migrants to ensure that there is fair access to resources such as legal representation.
- Halt the arrest of migrants in communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. ICE and its facility contractors have grossly failed to protect migrants when in custody. Community members should not be arrested and put at risk of death.
- Free individuals from ICE custody by providing alternatives to detention, which includes releasing individuals without having to pay bond via an order of release on one’s own recognizance.
- Stop the transfer of migrants from and to jails, prisons, and immigration detention centers. Transfers between facilities places people at risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Abolish ICE. The punitive and racist approach to immigration enforcement must be eliminated.

“These recommendations are viable ideas for the incoming Biden administration to consider as it works with Congress to develop practical solutions at re-envisioning public policy on immigration that is inclusive and upholds basic human rights protections for all,” stated Pedro Rios, director of the American Friends Service Committee’s US-Mexico Border Program.

Download and view report: <http://bit.ly/ICereportAFSC> ■



Protesting President Trump’s immigration policies in Washington, DC in 2018.

PHOTO / Stephen Melkisetian

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GIVE TO A REVOLUTIONARY PRESS

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We’re living in tumultuous times:
Times of danger and opportunity.

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