

Tennessee Kids to Lawmakers: 'You Ban Books, You Ban Drag, Kids Are Still in Body Bags'



Young people demand action on gun control inside the state capitol rotunda in Nashville, TN.
PHOTO / JOHN PARTIPILO



Chicago's New Mayor

PHOTO / SARAH-JI,
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Cooking at Wood St. Camp, Oakland

PHOTO / DELPHINE



Grandmother, Granddaughter in Flooded Pajaro, CA.

PHOTO: KEVIN PAINCHAUD / LOOKOUT SANTA CRUZ

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'We want everything for everybody'



Dear Readers,

A vibrant spirit of caring, of helping one another, of solidarity and community — regardless of race, gender, age, or political outlook — is arising in our country, particularly among those who have the least. Read about it in the People's Tribune. You'll see that spirit of caring in the encampments of the unhoused. Abandoned by government, people are banding together, setting up self-governing communities with free food, clothing, blankets and sleeping bags. You'll see it in a story from a San Diego nurse who cares for immigrants who suffer life-threatening injuries when they fall trying to cross the dangerous border wall. We see it, too, in the voices of the youth. As the first Gen Z member elected to Congress, Maxwell Frost, (D-FL) said, "Uplifting everyone is how we create a sustainable economy in which all people can thrive....We want *everything* for *everybody*." Maxwell's words aren't pie in the sky. There's so much wealth, resources, technology out here, but it's in the hands of the few. The nature of humanity is to band together.

Let's go for it!

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PHOTOS (ABOVE AND LEFT) / POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

Should the People Own the Banks?

The recent bank failures — and the government bank bailouts — raise serious questions. Where is the bailout for the people? And why do we keep perpetuating a failing bank system?

In the 2008 financial crisis, the government bailed out the banks and essentially guaranteed their profits. Now we're seeing a repeat performance. At Silicon Valley Bank, the average account had \$4 million in it and the bank's depositors included people like billionaire Peter Thiel. These rich folk are getting ALL their money back, more than the up to \$250,000 that government promises each account owner through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

In fact, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has already admitted that if you're just the average depositor (not rich) and your bank fails, you won't necessarily get all *your* money back. And you can bet the cost of bank bailouts will be passed on to consumers and taxpayers.

What bailouts do the rest of us get when we have trouble? As millions face hunger, the government ends the food assistance provided under Covid. Cities leave unhoused people outside in 80-mile-per hour winds and soaking rain in California. Coupled with the layoffs in the tech industry, which includes lower wage workers too, if there is a major banking collapse, the numbers of people living outside, from any walk of life, could be huge. And yet there's no plan to help anybody.

Two things seem clear: We can, and should, guarantee food and housing as a human right. And since the people are already paying for the losses and guaranteeing the profits of the banks, the government should take over at least the major banks and run them as public utilities in the interest of the people.



CARTOON / JOHN DARKOW

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 voice of millions of everyday people who are fighting to survive in an America in crisis. It helps build connections among these fighters and the awareness that together, we can create a whole new society and world.

Today, technology is permanently eliminating jobs. Our needs can only be met by building a cooperative society where we the people, not the corporations, own the technology and the abundance it produces. Then, everyone's needs will be provided for.

We welcome articles and artwork from those who are engaged in the struggle to build a new society that is of, by and for the people. We rely on readers and contributors to fund and distribute this paper.

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Contributions of articles and art: Send photographs, art and articles to peopletribune@gmail.com or go to peopletribune.org/contact/. Poems and articles should be as short as possible, no longer than 500 words for articles. We reserve the right to edit articles to conform to space limitations.

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Homeless in Santa Cruz: 'The Solution is Housing'

By Bob Lee

The People's Tribune recently interviewed Alicia Kuhl. She and her three children are formerly homeless, and she is the president of the Santa Cruz Union of the Homeless, part of the California chapter of the National Union of the Homeless. Below are excerpts from the full interview, which is at <http://bit.ly/3LVQAEr>

On how Alicia became homeless: About five years ago I was renting a house in the Santa Cruz mountains and [one day we were told that the landlord's] units were not permitted and were not legal units for him to be charging rent for. We asked for our deposit money back and our latest amount of rent back so we could move. He refused. We had just gotten a little insurance settlement from a car accident, and so I decided to use that money to buy us an RV, because I started looking for places to move to and without the money being refunded from the landlord, we were just in a bind – the rents had considerably gone up. And so I figured an RV would be the best solution for us. We originally started to park on the west side, and that's when the police harassment [and harassment by neighbors] started. And so from then on I started getting involved in local organizations and just became an activist to change the narrative and to talk about people in my situation, how



Alicia Kuhl, President, Santa Cruz, California Homeless Union

we're being treated, and what we need.

On the unhoused in the Santa Cruz area: I'm pretty sure the latest Point in Time (PIT) count was a little over 2000 countywide and then like 700 or 800 within the city limits. Not sure how many are women and children or how many are disabled. A large amount of our homeless population is elderly and disabled. I never have completely trusted the PIT count,

because it's an estimate. It doesn't give the full scope of what we're dealing with. We have a lot of homeless college students. . . . there's people living in cars [I've read that] 40% of the homeless were formerly in foster care as youths.

On the houseless and local governments: There's unfortunately a narrative surrounding homelessness that is stigmatizing – you know, that people deserve the situation they've gotten into. I've heard that even from some of our leaders. I think that mentality stops the services and the assistance, because people feel like the homeless don't deserve it. And unfortunately, I haven't seen the city and county leaders try to get us to that place. I feel they're constantly looking at forms of criminalization instead of assistance and services.

On changing the narrative about the

homeless: I think when people are in their houses, they're doing their jobs every day and taking care of their families, they oftentimes don't know this is even going on. You can't be compassionate if you're not even aware that it's going on. [So] just constantly changing the narrative, talking about the root causes of homelessness, and steering away from blaming people. And calling out facts [about homelessness].

On the solution: The solution to homelessness is housing. Studies say it's the cheapest solution as well. And we might have to look at different forms of housing. . . . other cities have chosen to purchase hotels and so people were able to be at least permanently housed. Everyone should be sheltered. Nobody should be dying on the streets.

A Special Kind of Cruelty: Unhoused in Storms

By Keith McHenry,
Food Not Bombs Co-founder

Editor's note: Below are excerpts from a longer story at bit.ly/3MEWXfE

The City of Santa Cruz, CA, is forcing hundreds of people who are homeless to stand out in the brutal atmospheric river storm. Just imagine standing day after day in torrents of rain with no way to change into dry clothes. The one emergency shelter in town is only open for 25 people from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., leaving.... people to spend their days huddled against the rain in the doorways of failed businesses. ...

On March 9, 2023, the city threatened to arrest Food Not Bombs (FNB) if we shared our meal next to [downtown] Parking Garage 10, forcing people to stand in the downpour to get the only daily hot meal provided to the homeless during three years of the pandemic lockdown. ...

FNB has been providing food and sleeping bags to those who lost their housing during these storms. Adding to the crisis is that hundreds of families have already had their food stamps reduced and additional cuts are set for April.

Silergate Bank, Silicon Valley Bank, and Signature Bank collapsed and a bank run on First Republic also started. ... Over 150,000 tech workers were let go in 2022, many employed in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Another 68,500 tech workers were sacked in January 2023. ... Along with a



Man holds a "Hungry" sign in Santa Cruz in rain storm.

failing economy, we face the real possibility of a global war between nuclear armed nations.

The pandemic was the first major event that showed we are on our own. The government has no intention of supporting anyone but themselves. ... So at the third anniversary of Santa Cruz Food Not Bombs' sharing of hot meals and survival gear, it is clear that we can't depend on the city to provide life-saving services. ...The violence of those at city hall is horrific and criminal. A very special kind of cruelty.

Keith McHenry update: The cities of Santa Cruz, Houston, TX, and West Palm Beach, FL, are trying to drive Food Not Bombs out of public view, using their "permit" process to silence us. You never need permission to help the hungry and protest war. Sharing food is always an unregulated gift of compassion and is protected by the U.S. Constitution.

An Open Letter to Tennessee Governor Bill Lee

Editor's note: After the Nashville school shooting, students gathered in the Tennessee State Capitol rotunda to demand gun control, chanting "You ban books, you ban drag, kids are still in body bags." The state House on April 6 expelled two of three legislators who led chants by protesters in the House gallery. Below we reprint an open letter to Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee by Julie Sheats Tracy, a concerned voter.



The "Tennessee Three": (Left to Right): Rep. Gloria Johnson, and the two expelled legislators, Rep. Justin Jones and Rep. Justin Pearson.

Dear Mr. Lee,

While I'm speaking only for myself, I'm sure these sentiments are echoed by many others, people who were deeply saddened by the loss of six precious lives, three of them nine-year-old children. You got on TV, offering the obligatory thoughts and prayers. And when numerous individuals asked you and our elected officials to take action you decided that more guns were the answer? By your own admission, two adults were friends of yours and our First Lady. In fact, you said Maria was scheduled to have dinner with one of the deceased in the coming days. Did you think we forgot about your daughter who almost ended her life from a self-inflicted gunshot wound having used one of your guns?

You're a hypocrite Mr. Lee. The only reason you refuse to enact any meaningful changes to the gun laws is because you are afraid Smith and Wesson may pull their business from this state. How much money do you receive from the NRA? I'm sure the Republicans in the State House also have deep pockets. Mr. Lee, I for one am tired of you selling our state

out to special interest groups that many of us don't want in our state. I'm tired of you not caring about every individual you govern. We have homeless people that could benefit from increasing State Medicaid so everyone has a chance at good health. Our state has had a plan to end homelessness since 2016. Nothing has been done. You cannot help homeless people get into housing unless you deal with their physical and mental health first. Without increased Medicaid these people cannot get off the streets.

And then, when we have representatives who want to make changes for the betterment of everyone, they get kicked out of the House and stripped of their status. Memphis is trying to reinstate Rep. Justin Pearson, and the speaker of our House has made threats about pulling funding to the city of Memphis. You cry about the Constitution, yet the First Amendment gets trounced on daily. So much illegality. We see this and we will vote accordingly. We have a whole generation becoming eligible to vote and they will remember this. I'm not sure how you sleep at night Mr. Lee.

Wood Street Unhoused Seek Solidarity

Creating Community Helps Solve Homelessness

By Wood Street Encampment

Editor's note: The City of Oakland demolished the Wood Street Commons community on April 10. Traumatized residents watched their homes, belongings and vehicles get destroyed. The story below, written prior to the evictions, shows the caring community the unhoused residents had built.

OAKLAND, CA — The remaining unhoused residents of Wood Street Commons are calling on allies, neighbors, partner organizations, and concerned citizens to join their campaign to stop the destruction of this community by signing the Solidarity Letter calling on Oakland's Mayor Sheng Thao to halt this eviction until a permanent housing solution that retains the integrity of the community can be found.

The unhoused residents of the Wood Street Commons seek to amplify how grossly mismanaged homelessness services are in the City of Oakland — all while housed residents face imminent eviction themselves. The

Wood Street community, threatened by “eviction,” wants to reclaim the words used about their lives and relatives. As residents face a forced relocation, a displacement, and further trauma, this humble group continues to provide mutual aid services extending beyond their own encampment to the surrounding neighborhoods as well.

The Wood Street Commons has provided what the City of Oakland and its contractor-run sites have not been able to: no deaths, a higher level of safety, communal hot meals and food to go, regular clothing and hygiene donations, a feeling of community and self-empowerment, the freedom to organize, a focal point for harm reduction and reversing patterns of trauma with radical acceptance, and support of life. This all is accomplished without funding or resources from the city.

By taking action to improve their lives, the residents have shown that a better way of life is possible. Wood Street residents want to expose that the non-profit industrial complex

only offers detention-based programs with lack of oversight on their funding and no promises of any broad success, or true understanding that homelessness is caused by an issue with the system, not individuals. Wood Street residents have continuously presented alternative solutions to the City of Oakland in order to improve program agreements with temporary shelter contractors, so they feel less like carceral housing.

Wood Street residents want to reaffirm that creating community is a key factor in solving homelessness, and community is exactly what the Wood Street Commons has created. The Wood Street Community should be funded, not broken up.



Wood Street Commons, Oakland, CA.

PHOTO / GARBRIEL SUDER-RANDAL

L.A. Skid Row Organizer: 'We're Educating about Unconstitutional Laws'

By General Dogon

Editor's Note: General Dogon of LA CAN (Los Angeles Community Action Network) is a fight-back organizer from the large Skid Row community, where many of Los Angeles' estimated 40,000 to 60,000 unhoused residents live. He speaks below about the criminalization of homeless people and the city-wide ordinance 41.18 which restricts where homeless people can exist, making 20 percent of the city off-limits to them or anything they do. His comments are from a verbal report he made on the situation in Los Angeles and the homeless-led resistance there.

We're working to abolish 41.18 right now, fighting to stop all criminalizing laws. They have criminalization zones where you can't be and you can't sleep, by saying who can be here and who can't. It's gentrification and it's not stopping. They are sweeping up people's property and throwing it away daily, even at night.

They just did a sweep yesterday at a place called the 'white house' where people come to, where things are given away free, like free phones and free food and other things. Fifteen carloads of cops and nine trucks swept it all up, chewed up the property in the trucks' claws, and threw it away. They do it with LA Sanitation, with trucks and cops. It is a multi-million-

dollar operation, and it is unconstitutional. The police want more funding so they can be out there following behind the trucks.

LA and Skid Row have always been test-tube grounds. We have the largest population of unhoused people in the country, and some of the highest rents. The Safer City Initiative has always been a 'broken windows' law. Whatever tests they try on Skid Row they try on other cities. That's why we say this is criminalization.

We are educating people and have made a petition to abolish 41.18, and we are passing out educational flyers. We are organizing against this unconstitutional law.



(Left:) Pepper, General TC and General Dogon at L.A. Homeless Memorial Day, 2022. Five homeless people a day die on the streets of L.A.

SEE VIDEO AT YOUTUBE.COM/SHORTS/ELFMJXUPWZG/

'We Are People, We Are Human, We Have Rights'

By Roy Sterling Trout

Editor's Note: Roy Sterling Trout of Tucson, AZ, has been homeless for 29 years, most of his adult life. He advocates for the homeless and produces podcasts that give people a voice. Hear his podcasts at: bit.ly/3M1mE9K. Below are excerpts from his longer story at bit.ly/3Gxui6

I have stories. Lots of them would bring most to their knees. Back in 2001, I had an apartment. The police raided it eight times, no warrant, never finding anything, nor did they arrest anyone. They closed off a city block for 3 1/2 hours with the SWAT team. They said they were looking for people. They managed to get me evicted for police activity.

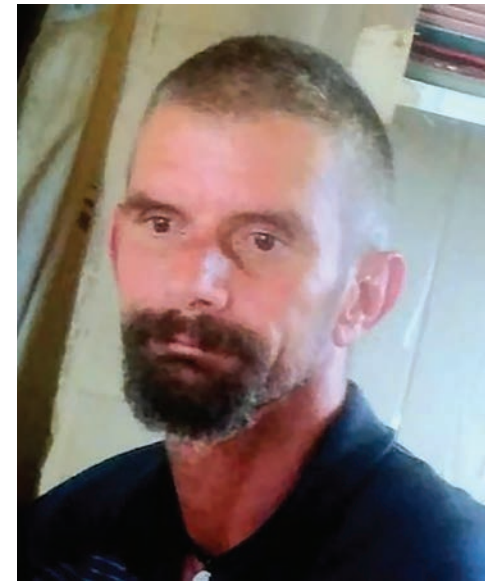
The police bulldozed 22 camps — brand new tents, Coleman stoves, etc. They never compensated me for the property of mine they destroyed.

The ministry I started has helped hundreds of people get into housing. Every time I got someone housing, I was left on the streets, pushed around by the police, and lost everything.

I spent Christmas of 2019 in the cold and rain handing out shots of coffee to help people stay warm who had no blankets, no dry clothes, because the police just finished bulldozing another camp. I'm 29 years homeless.

In November of 2020, 18 homeless people were chased out of their camps late at night by police, savagely jumped and beaten.

My dad was a veteran. He is buried by the public fiduciary in a dirt lot next to a guy named Jon Doe. I can't believe he bought the



Roy Sterling Trout

PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Constitution bullshit. If you don't believe me, become homeless. We talk about other countries committing acts of genocide; we go to war over it while we own the genocide in the millions of Native Americans we slaughtered taking this land.

I believe preservation of life is key. Any coward can kill, it takes true courage to run in after the coward strikes to save lives. I have saved six, and I am still getting ran over and stomped on by people who claim to believe in God and Jesus, who said love one another and blessed are the poor.

We Are People, We Are Human, We Have Rights.

Victory In Chicago Mayor's Race: A Gateway to a New Future

Editor's note: The election of Brandon Johnson as mayor of Chicago on April 4, 2023, was a tremendous victory for people at the grassroots, and a huge defeat for the corporate interests that backed a notorious enemy of public education, his opponent, Paul Vallas. The Johnson campaign, comprising united Chicagoans from different ethnicities, generations, unions, community groups, and artists, mobilized voters in new ways.

Television pundits declared that Johnson supposedly did not have a mandate and insisted that he "reach out" to the powerful. Chicagoans who worked so hard to secure this triumph rejected disinformation and mobilized to deepen the unity that produced this victory. Corporate media began expressing dismay as results came in.

The people of Chicago took a gigantic step forward on April 4, and rejected any steps back. The most difficult phase begins – the fight to create a Chicago in the interests of its diverse population, not the corporations. As Alder Jeanette Taylor has said, the fight does not end with the election. The people must continue to engage with the democratic process and not abandon their elected leaders.

Below we print excerpts from Brandon Johnson's speech at the victory celebration on April 4, 2023, the 55th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Tonight is a gateway to a new future for our city. A city where you can thrive regardless of who you love or how much money you have. A city that's truly safer for everyone by investing in what actually works to prevent crime. A city that respects the workers who keep it running and supports the entrepreneurs that keep it growing. A city where no one is too poor to live in one of the richest cities in one of the wealthiest nations at the richest time in the history of the world.

"Tonight is the beginning of a Chicago that truly invests in all its people because there's more than enough for everybody.

"Chicago is a world-class city with [an] incredible tapestry of taste, culture, people from all over the world. We are a city with this natural beauty and history like no other.

A city that has been the conscience of the nation, time and time again. It is here that Harold Washington and Jesus "Chuy" Garcia and Rudy Lozano built a Black and brown coalition to make room for us today. It was here that legendary figures like Jane Addams taught us to educate the whole child. Marion Stamps, the mother of Cabrini Green, fought to organize for housing justice here. Margaret Burroughs left her incredible mark on art and culture. It is here that a reverend by the name of Jesse Jackson Sr. – whose support and counsel I still rely upon – told us we can "Keep Hope Alive!" It was here that Martin Luther King Jr. organized for justice, dreaming that one day the civil rights movement and the labor rights movement will come together. Well, Rev. Martin Luther King



Brandon Johnson was elected mayor of Chicago on April 4, 2023. PHOTO / SARAH-JI OF LOVEANDSTRUGGLEPHOTOS.COM



Part of the crowd at a pre-election candidates night. PHOTO / SARAH-JI OF LOVEANDSTRUGGLEPHOTOS.COM

Jr., the civil rights movement and the labor rights movement have finally collided.

"But in the years to come, we have more work to do. We will not allow the politics of old to turn us around. We don't have to choose between Black, brown, white, young, old, poor, rich. We don't have to choose between toughness and compassion. By building a multi-cultural, multi-generational movement, we can bring together everyone.

"Today, we did not just acknowledge the assassination of a dreamer. Today, the dream is alive. Today we celebrate the revival and the resurrection of the City of Chicago. My name is Brandon Johnson, and I can't wait to be sworn in as the next mayor of the greatest city in the world!"

The Fight is Breaking Out Everywhere

Across the world, mass protest is breaking out as the demands of the people for democracy and government policies that serve human needs confront corporate-backed governments that are authoritarian or are becoming so. The photos are just recent examples.

In France, millions have come out to protest the Macron administration's decision to cut pension benefits by raising the retirement age. In Germany, people are in the streets demanding wage increases to keep pace with the skyrocketing cost of living. And in Israel, protesters have forced a temporary

halt to the Netanyahu regime's plan to impose a right-wing dictatorship by emasculating the judiciary. Hopefully a majority of Israelis will one day understand they cannot have a democracy without guaranteeing democracy for the Palestinians.



France. PHOTO / TVYE, STILL FROM VIDEO ON TWITTER



Germany. PHOTO / FIRSTPOST, STILL FROM YOUTUBE VIDEO



Jackson, MS: Mississippi Senate Bill passes that will allow the state to control Jackson's water system (which is being privatized). "It is absurd, it is racist ...it is a colonial power taking over our city, plantation politics," said Jackson, MS Mayor Chokwe Lumumba



UAW: "We won a historic victory to put members of the UAW back in the driver's seat," said Shawn Fain, UAW President-Elect



AMAZON UNION DRIVE: An Amazon Union spokesperson speaks on organizing drive: "We're Amazon workers that want to unionize the KCVG Air Hub. Our main demands are \$30/hr, 180 hrs PTO, and union representation at disciplinary meetings."

It's More Dangerous than Ever to Get Pregnant in Texas

By Karel Riley

After the Dobbs decision by the Supreme Court, maternal health care is under attack. Under the banner of “pro-life,” anti-abortion, undemocratic forces are passing laws that threaten lives. When miscarriages occur, as in approximately one-fourth of pregnancies, medical intervention is required, but new laws restrict standard medical treatments. ProPublica found at least 70 examples across 12 states of women with pregnancy complications who were denied abortion care or had their treatment delayed after Roe was overturned. Doctors say the true number is much higher.



On April 7, Texas Judge Kacsmaryk ordered a hold on federal approval of a pill commonly used and safe for ending pregnancies. The ruling is delayed while the Justice Department appeals. Meanwhile, a Federal judge in Washington State ruled to retain the approval of the pill. It is unclear how the issue will be resolved. If the drug becomes outlawed, no abortions anywhere in the country could be performed using it. It doesn't stop there. Bills introduced in several states include homicide charges for abortion, and homicide is punishable by death in those states! Kimberley Harris, who teaches constitutional law at Texas Tech University School of Law, warns, “If the fetus is [ruled] a person you could potentially be guilty of manslaughter or murder if you had a miscarriage and weren't taking proper precautions.”

Those with the fewest resources to manage the roadblocks to their health care will be hardest hit. Since 2005, Texas has diverted millions of dollars from the federal Temporary Aid to Needy Families, leaving Texas welfare recipients with the lowest financial aid in the country. The funds went instead to anti-abortion “crisis pregnancy centers” that masquerade as real clinics, a huge handout to the anti-abortion lobby.

Maternal death rates rose 40% during the Pandemic, with the increase more than twice as high for Black women, who have always had the worst maternal death rates. Rural women, with clinics and hospitals hours away, will suffer greatly. Families will be pushed further into poverty when forced to have more children than they can afford. Cancer patients could be denied care if the treatment threatens the

health or life of the fetus.

A Growing Movement for Everyone's Rights

Tens of thousands of families are affected by these laws and people are fighting back in a myriad of ways. A group of Texas women and their doctors are suing the state to make it clear that the law allows intervention to save women's lives. “It's not just for me. It's for every pregnant person and for everyone who knows and loves a pregnant person. It is with and for all Texans who like me are scared and outraged at the thought of being pregnant in this state that I stand and fight,” said Amanda Zurawski, one of the plaintiffs.

Dr. Marta Crispens says, “We took an oath — we have to be able to take care of these women.” Dr. Jamila Perritt, an obstetrician-gynecologist and president of Physicians for Reproductive Health, said the surge of new legislation should be “a rallying call for doctors not engaged.” Doctors at major hospitals are prevented from telling their patients' stories of harm, even in states that allow abortions, if the hospital is identified. “I feel muzzled, completely restrained, and I'm outraged . . . I want ... to get our voices out there,” said a doctor.

Urgent discussions are going on among medical professionals and women's organizations about law and morality, i.e. whether to treat women where it appears to be illegal, when there is a serious threat either to their life or health. A bioethicist and surgeon at Harvard discussed “covert disobedience,” which is privately resisting the law.

In Texas, health care rights organizations joined forces to push legislation called Rosie's Law. Under the bill, contraceptives, prenatal



PHOTOS / SARAH-JI, LOVEANDSTRUGGLEPHOTOS.COM

care, and legal abortions performed for miscarriage care, would be covered for Texans enrolled in the state's Medicaid program for low-income people. The bill would also repeal a 2017 ban on private insurance coverage of abortion. “No one should be denied coverage for any reproductive services just because they're poor,” said Sheryl Cole, one of the bill's sponsors.

In February, U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman ruled that the Texas Attorney General and specific local prosecutors cannot target people or funds supporting people traveling out of state for abortion care. This ruling opens the door for the Texas Equal Access Fund, Fund Texas Choice and similar organizations to resume support for Texans needing to travel to obtain abortions. “We're going to fund abortions until we're forced to stop,” said Denise Rodriguez of Texas Equal Access Fund. “We won't be bullied by legislators who are trying to pass these illegitimate and frankly unconstitutional laws.”

What Does it All Mean?

If you think this is just about abortion, or that it only affects people who are pregnant, it is much bigger than

that. People all over the country are horrified and outraged that our rights are being stripped in a coordinated way that feels like we are under siege. Very powerful, well-funded organizations are helped by some of the largest corporations, such as Google, Meta, AT&T and CVS, to get willing politicians and judges to enact laws that take away our rights and our democracy. What we are witnessing is extreme intervention on the part of government and corporations into people's lives. The only way to effectively counter these attacks is to mount a large and broad movement for freedom and democracy, and that is under way!

Karel Riley is a *People's Tribune* correspondent from Texas.

Chance Meeting

I heard my name called on noisy Market St
it was a woman I know from Occupy days
who used to play drums
in a lot of the protest marches
with a brass band called
'Liberation Orchestra'

I hardly recognized her!
though there were those long red dreads
and the gold nose ring I remembered
she's still a tall pale beauty but oh!

as we started talking
tears flowed from her eyes
she had been evicted over and over
on both sides of the Bay

and is now in San Francisco
living in a fleabag hotel
with no bathroom or kitchen

her daughter grown and on her own
but both traumatized
by what they've been through
and her fourteen year-old little dog
sick from the cockroach dander
and the shit and fentanyl on the streets

and she has to go into ER
and be mistreated there
to get the meds she needs
and that's what I heard about today
now that International Women's Day is over

— Sarah Menefee

Stop ‘Cop City’



Photo / Tortuguita, the forest defender killed by police in Atlanta, GA, January 28, 2023.

PHOTO / GABE ELSEN

By People's Tribune

‘Cop City’ is the name people have given to the largest police training facility in the U.S., which is to be built in the Weelaunee Forest, outside Atlanta, GA, adjacent to a largely Black working class community. The police foundation and corporations backing the project will destroy the largest urban green space in the country to build it. Arrests with charges of “domestic terrorism” began in December 2022 of unarmed young forest protectors who lived in the forest to defend it.

On January 18, 2023, police killed one protester, 26-year-old Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, called “Tortuguita.” Police said the officer’s fatal shots were a response to Tortuguita’s alleged gunfire injuring an officer, but others say police body cameras strongly indicate the officer was hit by friendly fire from another officer – not Tortuguita.

Excerpts below are from a press conference by Atlanta’s faith community, one of many protests over the last two years. Clergy brought a letter from 200 faith leaders calling on city officials to stop the forest destruction, cancel leases, drop terrorism charges and hold an independent investigation into the killing, during the “Week of Action” to Stop Cop City which drew national and international solidarity.

Clergy: “Ignoring the cries of the residents, the City of Atlanta moves to destroy the nation’s largest urban forest and replace it with the largest militarized police training facility in North America. We are troubled by leadership that stops acting on the will of the people and aligns itself instead with corporate money as a dominant power structure,” said Rev. Leo Seyij Allen at the press conference. Mekko Chebon Kernell, a Muskogee Creek chief and a clergyperson with the United Methodist

Church said, “Our people lived on this land for over 13,000 years before we were forced to walk the ‘Trail of Tears.’ The Muskogees respected Mother Earth, unlike the Europeans, who treat Mother Earth like an ATM.” Michael Johnson, executive director of the Beloved Community Ministries, said he witnessed a police officer tackle an Indigenous man, put him in a headlock, and taser him. “The man said he could not breathe. The man’s crime was running from the officer. The police want us to believe that crime will disappear if they have more weapons. The police are creating violence to justify their presence and increased militarization.” (Excerpted from *Streets of Atlanta Blog* by Gloria Tatum, March 10.)

Attorney Jeff Filipovits: “We have filed a lawsuit concerning the refusal of the city to provide records... The family is here yet again seeking answers... The police went to the forest planning for violence. ... firing squads, multiple officers with weapons drawn. It was a powder keg ... No one had injured [or attacked] a law enforcement officer... and yet [police] went to clear the forest of sit-in protesters at gunpoint... [Twenty-one] people are sitting in the Dekalb County jail who have no factual basis for the charges ... denied bond ... they were charged with domestic terrorism ... This is intimidation by the state against dissent... [we’re] watching the state use all of its power, watching local, state, federal, county, and city governments in lockstep. It’s a terrifying alignment of power... Is this what Cop City is going to bring to our city? Is this the type of policing that they will be training for – for raids, to serve arrest warrants at gun point?” (Excerpts are from the press conference, see <https://youtu.be/vYkcnlCrWDk/>)

Also see interview with Atlanta resident who lives by the forest at: bit.ly/3LY4OEM.

San Diego Nurse: Border Wall is Killing and Injuring People

By People's Tribune

Editor’s note: The following is excerpted from the transcript of a Tik Tok video posted by a nurse who works at a San Diego hospital. It has been edited slightly for length and clarity. Her online handle is @travelingnurse

I just got home from work and I want to talk about the border wall. If you work in health-care in a border town, you probably know a lot of what I’m about to say, but I just had a shift that kicked my ass. And I am not going to cry on camera, but the shit that people are going through at the US border is insane. It’s inhumane. I don’t even want to talk about Border Patrol and the fact that there have been like 600 cases of sexual assault on minors in the last six years alone by Border Patrol in the San Diego area.

But if we’re just going to talk about the border wall and the public health threat that it creates in border towns, I have had many border wall cases since moving to San Diego. But last night took the cake. The majority of my assignment had jumped the border wall. I had a minor. I had people who were fleeing war-torn countries... And it is absolutely heartbreaking the types of injuries that they sustain if they survive. It’s estimated that anywhere from one in seven to one in 10 people die trying to jump the wall. There’s actually two walls specifically here in San Diego. One is 20 feet, one is 30 fucking feet – a 30-foot drop. And it doesn’t stop people from coming. It lit-

rally just permanently disables and disfigures people while they’re trying to get here to make a better life. But there is something so particularly fucked up about having children [suffer] and taking care of children that go through this. And I know I’m not the only one.

The types of injuries that they sustain are awful. Crushing spinal injuries. I’ve had multiple that were quadriplegic and paraplegic after coming to us. I’ve had people with brain bleeds who fall and then smack their head on the back of the wall. Femur fractures, tibia-fibula fractures, and people who were jumping with family members who died. The sheer trauma of what we put migrants through is inexcusable. It is inhumane. And then like Border Patrol will literally come sit in the fucking hospital and I’m like, “Sorry, get the fuck out of my patient’s room. I’m doing an assessment and you’re not welcome in here.” And I’m not nice.

It is so difficult to take care of these patients. It is so hard. I just feel like this is a part of the border wall conversation that we are not having enough. And I feel like if we spoke up more about the human rights and medical crisis that this wall creates, maybe we could do something about it. Because it’s not the coyotes jumping the wall. It’s not the traffickers. It’s not the criminals. They have their ways around it. The wall is literally not stopping anyone, one, and two, it is permanently disfiguring and killing the innocent people coming here to try and seek asylum. Kids, kids. It’s really frustrating.



An example of one of the 30-foot walls along the border at San Diego.

PHOTO / FRIENDS OF FRIENDSHIP PARK

Climate Crisis: Urgency of Transitioning to Clean Energy

Many people are now calling for government takeover of the energy industries and demanding the transition away from fossil fuel to clean energy jobs and a new energy infrastructure. It's an important step.

The UN's 2023 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report confirms that the relentless increase in global greenhouse gas emissions has resulted in more frequent and more intense extreme weather events with severe impacts on nature and people in every region of the world. And a new climate study being ignored by corporate media warns that the deep ocean circulation system could collapse this century, impacting marine ecosystems and the ocean's capacity to absorb carbon dioxide, accelerating climate change.

In 2022, floods in Pakistan, including farmland the size of the state of Virginia, impacted 33 million people. According to the New York Times, the floods were caused by heavier-than-usual monsoon rains and glacial melt.

The U.S. isn't immune from global warming. Already this year, the U.S. has seen climate disasters across the country destroying entire communities, forcing thousands to evacuate, homeless people to die outside and agricultural workers to become climate migrants. And as is so often the case, here and globally, the poorest people are among those the hardest hit and least compensated for their losses.

"If governments are serious about the climate crisis, there can be no new investments in oil, gas, and coal from here on," Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, emphasized in 2021. The IPCC



Powerful waves destroyed a large section of the wharf in Capitola, California during the atmospheric river storms.

PHOTO / KEVIN PAINCHAUD/LOOKOUT SANTA CRUZ

report also states there is more than enough global capital to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions if existing barriers are removed. Big Oil, however, made record profits in 2022 (around \$190 billion). These conglomerates won't stop plundering the Earth, endangering all life, until the people call a halt to fossil fuel production. Plenty of renewable sources exist. If humanity is to survive climate change, we all need to join the climate protests around the country and hold every elected and non-elected official's feet to the fire.



Chanting "Pajaro Feeds America" and "Where is FEMA?," close to 200 people marched in the farming town of Pajaro, CA on March 11, voicing frustrations at a slow government response after torrential rains caused a levee failure, flooding the town, leaving thick mud in houses, contaminated water, and many without income, food or housing. In California, the 5th largest economy in the world, the state may give \$600 checks to residents, hardly enough to even cover a family's monthly groceries. People want undocumented workers included in any assistance, and action on the recovery.

PHOTO / KEVIN PAINCHAUD/LOOKOUT SANTA CRUZ

The Ohio Black Cloud: Working Together for Systemic Justice

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from the full article by Georgia de la Garza, published by the People's Tribune at <https://bit.ly/3KvCvMI>

No one in the country wants toxins dumped in their backyard from the Norfolk Southern train derailment in early February that hit the small town of East Palestine, Ohio, exposing a local population of 5,000 and many more living in proximity.

Residents are experiencing headaches, rashes and diarrhea, and in a copper plant downstream from the derailment site, employees complain of trouble breathing and skin falling off their hands. In the nearby community of Negley, people experience trouble chewing and swollen fingers. Animals show signs of chemical exposure.

East Palestine, sitting along the Ohio River, has had the Heritage Thermal Services incinerator for 30 years. One of the first dumping sites of wastewater from the derailment cleanup, this hazardous waste facility was cited by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for exposing the community to cancer causing toxins that also caused miscarriages. The facility continued to operate, denying the EPA's report.

Data shows soil in East Palestine from the chemical spill now has dioxin levels hundreds of times greater than the exposure threshold above which EPA scientists in 2010 found dioxin poses cancer risks.

This small, marginalized Ohio village is like so many cities in our country, where people are smothered in Environmental Racism and Povertyism like Flint, East St. Louis, Appalachia, Louisiana, and more. Government agencies like the EPA are no longer transparent. Industries pay big bucks for their lobbyists to pressure and pay off legislators who are becoming millionaires and billionaires. The same legislators put pressure on our governmental agencies to turn their heads and our marginalized communities become the Ponzi.

How do we fight these destructionists? Communities like East Palestine are collaborating, heavily networking, organizing, and taking action. By working with other communities who have been in the long fight, like our Flint family, people learn shorter steps to reach the goal. Industries worry when we come together. They know it shortens their time of destruction in your community or possibly, hopefully stops it before it begins.



'Don't lie to us:' Frustrations aired in East Palestine, Ohio public meeting in March. The EPA and Norfolk Southern were on the stage. Residents have been taking to the streets, holding not just Norfolk Southern accountable for the derailment and toxicity, but also the EPA, the Ohio governor and area lawmakers.

VIDEO STILL / WKBN.COM/NEWS