



**Chomsky on an
October Surprise**

**M Adams on Community
Control of Policing**

**GENERATIONS
OF PAIN
MANIFESTING**

**Winslow on California's
Health Care Crisis**

September 2020

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The “Broken Windows” Approach to Teaching

By Victoria Theisen-Homer

In the fight for racial justice, teachers have a heavy job, for schools are both microcosms of, and preparation for, society. Because teachers serve as significant adult figures in children’s lives, their interactions with students can shape students’ sense of self and the world around them, as well as their engagement in school, personal efficacy, and academic achievement. Complex and difficult racial dynamics impact these rela-

tionships, and as calls for justice grow, it’s time to recognize this.

Systemic racism is sometimes blatant in our schools. For example, it is hard to deny that segregation persists, and that schools serving students of color receive less funding than mostly white schools. In my home state of Arizona, for example, schools serving mostly white students receive an average of \$7,600 more per pupil than schools serving students of color, a discrepancy that increases to nearly



\$11,000 when controlling for neighborhood income. Research also repeatedly reveals that Black students in particular are more likely to be subjected to disciplinary action, much of which removes them from classrooms and schools. Sometimes this even leads students directly into interactions with law enforcement, hence the moniker school-to-prison pipeline. But there is a subtler form of racism at play in many classrooms, one that expresses itself in the way teachers (82 percent of whom are white nationwide) form relationships with their students.

In my research on pre-service teacher education, I found that preparation around race and relationships is both uneven and inequitable—with disturbing implications for students of color.

A Tale of Two Schools

Let me set the scene for you. A tale of two schools, if you will, and the teacher education programs operating out of these schools.

The first teacher education program sits in a century-old progressive independent school on a pastoral hill in an affluent part of town. This place seems so disconnected from the realities of the world

beyond its walls that I give it the pseudonym Xanadu. But it offers a privileged reality for the mostly white and affluent students it serves. The teacher education program embedded in Xanadu draws upon its unique setting to prepare teachers who can form what I call reciprocal relationships with students, relationships that reinforce the humanistic standard set out by philosophers like Martin Buber.

At Xanadu, teacher candidates first engage in deep personal reflection about who they are and why they have chosen to teach. They then learn about students as whole people—with hopes, dreams, fears, and complex personal lives—and in turn design responsive lessons around these students. These relationships foster dialogue and critical thinking in response to both diverse texts and current events, such as the Black Lives Matter protests. In these reciprocal interactions, students have agency and become co-constructors of their learning experience. The teacher candidates immersed at Xanadu learn to conceive of classroom management as an extension of these relationships, unfolding in gentle conversations with students, who are never removed from the classroom for perceived behavioral infractions. In-

stead, there is more dialogue, in which students are seen and heard and learn that their belonging in school and society is unconditional. These students learn to become leaders.

Then there is the teacher education program that emerged out of a “no excuses” charter school that I call Excellence Preparatory High School. Located in the same metropolitan area, it is separated from Xanadu by a river and what seems like a world. Occupying a large industrial building in a gentrifying neighborhood, this school is grounded in the no excuses educational philosophy; this philosophy essentially suggests that to close the “achievement gap” (a term Ibram Kendi argues is inherently racist because it establishes a racial hierarchy based on measures white elites deem important), students of color from low-income backgrounds must be held to unrelenting academic and behavioral standards, without exceptions. In this program, teacher candidates learn to form relationships that are unapologetically instrumental: teachers employ discrete moves to cultivate “professional relationship capital” with students so students are more likely to work hard and behave in line with school norms.

As part of my research, I



embedded myself in both these schools to observe how different theories of teaching and relationships play out in the real world. In my new book, *Learning to Connect: Relationships, Race, and Teacher Education*, I recount what it was like to see these two divergent approaches in

action and what this means for students, teachers, and society as a whole.

Broken Windows Teaching

No excuses teaching borrows from the “broken windows” theory of policing, which has been enacted in U.S. cities since the mid-1980s. Simply stated, the theory holds that cracking down on minor infractions (e.g., vandalism, as in the case of broken windows) leads to less



overall crime and safer, more peaceful communities. However, research sheds doubt upon the efficacy of this approach, while the harms it has inflicted upon the communities where it was enacted are clear. Broken windows policing, which transitioned into “stop and frisk,” has led to the increased incarceration and criminalization of people of color in low-income neighborhoods.

In the “no excuses” program, it was easy to recognize the influence of the broken windows theory on their approach to classroom management. Early no excuses leaders were heavily influenced by this theory, believing that if teachers could “sweat the small stuff” by regulating everything from the color of a student’s socks to their posture and eye contact through classroom management “moves” and a series of punishments (e.g., demerits, send-outs, suspensions, expulsions), they could eliminate disorder and focus on instruction. This approach appeared to improve

students’ test scores, so no excuses education spread. But the problem with treating students like perpetrators looking to break windows is that it strains or severs their relationships with teachers, who are the enforcers of these rules. When applying behaviorism, punishment is more effective when paired with positive reinforcement.

This is why the no excuses teacher education program in my study created a whole course on relationships and student investment. In this course, teacher candidates were taught to intentionally emphasize “positive narration” to affirm students for desired behaviors, integrate a school’s espoused character traits into coursework with big and little celebrations when students demonstrate these, and acquire “little nuggets” about students to work into their conversations so that students feel seen by teachers. While disciplinary actions are clearly sticks, these relational “moves” serve as carrots—systematically dangling the promise of adult approval and

connection to induce student compliance. This program rarely asked their mostly white teacher candidates to engage in self-reflection or discuss controversial and potentially transformative events like politics and protests; but it did advocate for planned conversations with students about the need to adopt the “codes of the culture of power” so students could navigate school and society, without questioning it. Students were never really given a voice, but the illusion of one ensured that all the school windows remained intact.

Reckoning

The results of this research reveal a two-tiered system of education. Graduates from the program at Xanadu went on to work at independent or suburban public schools in affluent areas, carrying their tools for reciprocal relationship development to mostly white students (a problematic phenomenon



In the fight for racial justice, teachers have a heavy job, for schools are both microcosms of, and preparation for, society



I discuss more in the book). Meanwhile, the graduates of the no excuses program went to Title-1 schools serving mostly students of color. The result was that white

students had their innate value reinforced by reciprocal interactions with teachers, while students of color received instrumental interactions geared at conditioning

them to become obedient at all times, to navigate white supremacy without challenging it.

While these two different programs may be somewhat



idiosyncratic, vestiges of these educational and relational approaches permeate U.S. schools. Across and within schools, and even within classrooms, students

of color are still much more likely to be referred to behavioral discipline than white students; they are more likely to be seen as perpetrators planning to “break windows”

than beautiful multifaceted human beings who deserve the agency to co-construct their own educational experiences. This is an imbalance that is reflected in society at



PATRIOTISM

Supporting your country all
the time and your government
When it **DESERVES IT!!**

#Vets For BLM

—Mark Twain

large, as police officers buy someone like Dylann Roof Burger King after he murdered nine Black people, but kill Breonna Taylor during a no-knock drug search warrant at her apartment. The problem with the “broken windows” theory is that compliance means nothing when the structures themselves are so broken.

This is why education, too, is facing a reckoning. This reckoning has led KIPP schools, one of the most prominent no excuses charter networks, to abandon their motto “Work Hard. Be Nice,” because of its explicit emphasis on student compliance. But meaningful change will not happen within schools like this until they reconsider how they structure student-teacher interactions. Because test scores are not everything; in fact, some research suggests that no excuses schools improve students’ scores, but not their life outcomes. For a school system designed around a theory of policing to change, it will require a lot more than abandoning a simple motto. It will require what Jal Mehta calls significant “unlearning.” The same is likely true for our society at large.

We cannot continue to promote the same unjust and oppressive educational structures that have endured

for centuries. We need to re-imagine education and recruit a more racially diverse teaching force, such that all students have access to the kinds of meaningful, reciprocal, and empowering relationships with teachers that allow them the agency to create their own knowledge and use their voices. The kinds of relationships that can help students learn to build a society where both windows and people remain unbroken. **Z**

Victoria Theisen-Homer is an education scholar and author of *Learning to Connect: Relationships, Race, and Teacher Education*.

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The “Wall of Vets” Continue Long Legacy of Veteran Activism

By Brian Trautman

Military veterans have long been resisting war, promoting positive peace, and defending human and civil rights against state violence and other forms of oppression. They have made significant contributions to the antiwar and peace and justice movements over many decades.

Their participation in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is no different. Veterans have been highly visible in supporting the racial justice demands of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. The disturbing truth, which a great number of veterans recognize, is that white supremacy, systemic racism and police brutality at home is profoundly connected to and fueled by U.S. imperialist militarism/war abroad.

With this knowledge, veterans have taken on roles as nonviolent warriors to educate about those connections and help underrepresented and marginalized communities fight injustice. One of the most recent manifestations of this activism is the “Wall of Vets” in Portland, Oregon, a group of veterans that assembled in response to the deployment of federal paramilitary units to that city and the violent attacks they perpetrated against antiracism protestors.



Photo by Allison C Bailey/Shutterstock.com

Prior to the movement for Black Lives, veterans, including combat veterans, engaged in nonviolent social change initiatives in myriad ways and for various causes. For example, in 1967, Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) formed to oppose and demand an end to the illegal Vietnam War.

Their protest efforts continued during the early 1970s across multiple campaigns within the antiwar movement. One of the most signif-

icant was the 1971 Mayday protest, a large-scale civil disobedience action against the war that aimed to shut down government offices on Capitol Hill.

During the 1980s, activist veterans spoke out against U.S. interventionism.

On September 1, 1986, three veterans, including Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Charles Liteky (for courage under fire, personally rescuing 20 American soldiers pinned down under

heavy attack in Vietnam), undertook a water-only “Vets Fast for Life” on the Capitol steps, asking America to not allow an invasion of Nicaragua.

In 1987, a three-month vigil was held outside Congressional hearings to oppose the Reagan administration’s illegal and unconstitutional military intervention in Central America. Later that year in Concord, California, veterans undertook a hunger strike and peaceful blockade of muni-



tions trains carrying weapons bound for Nicaragua and El Salvador.

In the course of the protest, S. Brian Willson, a Vietnam veteran and one of the three who had done the Vets Fast for Life, had his legs amputated by a train that refused to stop.

During the 1990s, veterans were particularly focused on stopping the growth and expansion of U.S. imperialism, including the Persian Gulf War, the Cuban trade embar-

go, and economic sanctions against Iraq.

Veterans have been extremely active in the post-9/11 era as well, with direct action efforts focused primarily on opposing the so-called "War on Terror," especially the USA PATRIOT Act and U.S.-led wars and occupations in the Middle East. In 2002-03, a large number of veterans were involved in antiwar protests across the country, attempting to halt the proposed invasion of Iraq,

which many veterans knew to be unwise and based on lies.

In 2005, veterans joined Cindy Sheehan, mother of killed soldier Casey Sheehan, and other peace activists at "Camp Casey" in Texas to demand truth from President Bush about the illegal and disastrous Iraq War.

In 2010, veterans, including Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg, performed a civil disobedience action outside the White House to protest the U.S.

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

During the 2011 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement against economic inequality, veterans joined in demanding economic justice. They also protected protestors from police abuses and provided tactical advice to movement organizers.

Veterans contributed to the Native-led Standing Rock campaign in 2016-17. Thousands of veterans deployed to North Dakota to support Native American resistance to state and corporate violence on sacred treaty lands.

In response to Donald Trump's white nationalist, anti-immigrant rhetoric and his Muslim travel ban and other racist, xenophobic policies, veterans launched #VetsVsHate and Veterans Challenge Islamophobia (VCI) in 2016.

During recent BLM protests in Portland, which only intensified when the Trump administration sent federal agents to confront them, Mike Hastie, a Vietnam veteran and member of Veterans For Peace (VFP), attempted to warn the officers about the atrocities that are committed in war. For this effort, he was pepper-sprayed at close range and pushed away.

Inspired by Chris David, the Navy Veteran who was physically assaulted by federal police last month outside a Port-

land courthouse, the "Wall of Vets" grew as a nonviolent peace force who put up their bodies as shields in defense of the people's right to peacefully assemble and protest. The veterans assert that they are continuing to fulfill their oaths to the Constitution and to the people of the USA by protecting their First Amendment rights.

As with veterans who preceded them in earlier movements and campaigns against state violence, the 'Wall of Vets' are using the privilege of their status as veterans to amplify the voices of the oppressed. The 'Wall of Vets' is one of the latest examples of veterans coming together and using their platform to shine a light on the unjust treatment of our most under-resourced communities. They have united with other human 'walls' (e.g., the 'Wall of Moms') that have formed in response to Trump's tyrannical tactics.

The veterans are now actively forming chapters in other cities, which will allow for an expanded commitment to prevent and stop violent attacks against peaceful anti-racism protestors by Trump's militarized police units.

Deterring and suppressing political dissent and nonviolent civil disobedience is a favorite power and control tactic of governments. Veterans are mindful of the crimes that

an authoritarian government and occupying military force are capable of. They know that we have a civic duty to stand up to these existential threats to democracy, freedom and liberty.

Veterans join struggles for peace and justice for a variety of reasons. For some, it is a cathartic exercise for inner peace and healing. For others it is a calling to protect and serve vulnerable communities from an abusive corporation or government. For others still, it is about atoning for doing their government's bidding as a tool for empire-building and war profiteering. For some, it is a nonviolent continuation of their defense of the U.S. people and our Constitution.

For many veterans, it is some combination of these motivations as well as others. But whatever compels them to defend human and civil rights and fight for peace, they do so with moral strength and in genuine service to others. The 'Wall of Vets' have demonstrated that they are most certainly continuing that long and important legacy through their peace work. **Z**

Brian Trautman is an Army veteran, intersectional social justice activist, and educator based in Albany, New York. On Twitter and Instagram: @brianjtrautman.



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Why the Left Must Reject and Elect Biden at the Same Time

By Norman Solomon

In the next three months, a dozen states will determine whether Donald Trump wins another four years as

president. Those swing states should be central to the work of progressives who are determined to prevent that outcome.

With so much at stake, we can't afford the luxury of devoting time and energy to endless arguments about



Noam Chomsky: "Politics is activism, not taking five minutes to push a button. Look what's happening in the streets of the world, the greatest social movements that has ever developed, led by Black Lives Matter"

Photo by Sheila Fitzgerald/Shutterstock.com

whether progressives should vote for Joe Biden if they live in California or New York, or Alabama or Alaska, or other states where the electoral votes are sure to all go to Biden or Trump.

What will matter are the swing states, generally understood this time around to include Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin. (Also in play are “swing districts” in two states where the statewide winning candidate doesn’t automatically get all of the state’s electoral votes: Maine’s second congressional district and Nebraska’s second congressional district.)

There’s no point—or honesty—in pretending that Biden is a decent guy whose public service has overflowed with compassion. Whether provided by the *New York Times* days ago or *The Nation* last year, the grim evidence of Biden’s callous political career is profuse.

During the primary campaign, the organization where I’m national director, RootsAction.org, supported Bernie Sanders and widely distributed documentation of Biden’s decades-long record of serving corporate greed, racial injustice and the military-industrial complex. I’ve denounced Biden’s political

record in one article after another after another after another after another after another.

But the choice ahead, Trump or Biden, is painfully real. Magical thinking has its literary value, but in politics it’s delusional and dangerous to evade the realities of binary choices when they arise. All too often, discussion of voting can fall into a kind of self-absorption that focuses on a voter’s emotions about voting rather than on the impacts of election results on other people.

“It doesn’t matter whether you like Biden or not, that’s your personal feelings, irrelevant, nobody cares about that,” Noam Chomsky said in a recent video. “What they care about is what happens to the world. We have to get rid of Trump, keep pressure on Biden, just as Sanders and associates have been doing.”

Chomsky added: “Politics is activism, not taking five minutes to push a button. Look what’s happening in the streets of the country. One of the greatest social movements that has ever developed, led by Black Lives Matter. Take Sunrise Movement, managed to put the Green New Deal on the legislative agenda. This generation is going to decide whether organized human society can survive. And the crucial part of this decision is

to get rid of the major barrier to survival, which happens to be in the White House. Get rid of Trump, then we have opportunities.”

My colleague Jeff Cohen, who co-founded RootsAction, told *Common Dreams* that the “Vote Trump Out” initiative that RootsAction launched with the Chomsky video is “a two-step campaign: First, vote Trump out. Then challenge Biden from day one... It’s easier to persuade ‘swing voters on the left’ who live in swing states to vote for Biden despite their hesitancy if they know we’re serious about step two.”

Like it or not, the imperative of defeating Trump is directly in front of us. To make a progressive future possible, beating Trump is absolutely necessary while very far from sufficient. To organize against a government headed by Trump is to push against a thick stone wall. To organize against a government headed by Biden holds out the real potential of progressive breakthroughs. **Z**

Norman Solomon is co-founder and national director of RootsAction.org. He is a Bernie Sanders delegate from California to the 2020 Democratic National Convention. Solomon is the author of a dozen books including *War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death*.

SAVE
POST
OFFICE
DUMP
TRUMP



Congressional Candidates and Voters Sue to Stop Trump's Sabotage of USPS

By Marjorie Cohn

A lawsuit that promises to be one of many was filed recently to stop Donald Trump's sabotage of the mail leading up to the presidential election.

Mondaire Jones et al. v. U.S. Postal Service, Postmaster General, and Donald Trump was brought by Democratic candidates for national and state congressional seats, as well as voters who cast mail ballots to protect themselves against the COVID-19 pandemic. Several state attorneys general are expected to file litigation this week.

"The postmaster general and the members of USPS [United States Postal Service] board of governors can be sued for injunctive relief, or even for damages," Berkeley Law School Dean Erwin

Chemerinsky told *Truthout*. In addition, he said, "The USPS can be sued for an injunction."

In late June, nonpartisan nonprofit Protect Democracy filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain documents relating to the USPS's preparations for the anticipated surge in mail voting in the 2020 election. The USPS resisted the request and on August 12, Protect Democracy filed a lawsuit asking the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to order the USPS to provide the requested documents "on an expedited basis."

The complaint in *Jones* seeks an injunction requiring that the defendants ensure sufficient funding for the USPS so it can treat absentee and mail ballots equal to in-person ballots and "handle a record level of mail voting." The complaint also asks for a declaratory judgment that the defendants violated the plaintiffs' rights under the U.S. Constitution.

"President Donald J. Trump and his newly appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy have set about to ensure USPS cannot reliably deliver election mail," the complaint reads. "As a Trump deputy campaign manager put it, '[t]he President views vote by mail as a threat to his election.'"

Trump is weaponizing the Postal Service to help him win

On May 6, the USPS board of governors appointed DeJoy, who has multiple conflicts of interest, to be postmaster general. Since DeJoy was not an appointee vetted by the Senate, there was no ethics investigation before his appointment.

DeJoy instituted several changes that weaken the USPS's ability to deliver the mail in a timely manner. One new policy states, "If the plants run late, they will keep the mail for the next day." It forbids any overtime and "all other measures used to ameliorate staffing shortages." Extra trips are not permitted and carriers are required to return from their routes on time even if they haven't completed their deliveries for that day.

Since June, with no reason or explanation, the USPS has removed or destroyed at least 671 mail-sorting machines throughout the United States. The *Jones* complaint states that "some major cities have already had their ability to sort mail reduced by hundreds of thousands of pieces of mail per hour." As of August 14, the capacity of the USPS

to process mail has been reduced by over 21.4 million pieces of mail per hour.

The “burden of this diminished capacity” falls, at least partly, on locations in states where the election will likely be close, as well as major cities likely to go Democratic that will influence the national popular vote tally.

In addition, the USPS began to remove many mailboxes in several states, including New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Montana. That process apparently stopped after public blowback.

The USPS sent letters to 46 states and Washington, DC, saying it can’t guarantee that all votes cast by mail will arrive in time to be tallied for the November election. Even voters who comply with their state election laws cannot be sure their votes will be counted.

Trump made a bald-faced admission that, “[T]hey’re not going to get the \$3.5 billion [in election funding for the states]. Therefore, they can’t do the universal mail-in vote. It’s very simple. How are they going to do it if they don’t have the money to do it?”

An unprecedented 76 percent of Americans are eligible to vote by mail.

The complaint alleges two violations of 42 U.S.C. section 1983: First Amendment

Right to Vote, and Equal Protection and One-Person-One-Vote. It cited the Supreme Court’s decision in *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, which held that the right to vote is the “fundamental political right, because [it is] preservative of all rights.”

There are other legal grounds on which to seek an injunction as well. Chemerinsky cited section 702 of the Administrative Procedures Act: A person who has suffered a legal wrong or has been adversely affected because of an action by an agency, official or employee, can get an injunction to stop the practice.

Moreover, officials who delay or obstruct the mail can be charged in federal court with felonies or misdemeanors, respectively. Democratic Representatives Ted Lieu and Hakeem Jeffries wrote to FBI Director Christopher Wray, stating that the defendants have “retarded the passage of mail” (18 U.S.C. section 1701) and “if their intent in doing so was to affect mail-in balloting or was motivated by personal financial reasons, then they likely committed crimes.”

Meanwhile, on August 10, the “Delivering for America Act” was introduced in the House of Representatives. It would forbid the USPS from implementing or approving

any changes to the operations or level of service provided by the Postal Service from those in effect on January 1, 2020.

That includes any “change that would have the effect of delaying mail, allowing for the non-delivery of mail to a delivery route, or increasing the volume of undelivered mail.” Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has recalled House members from their recess to consider the legislation.

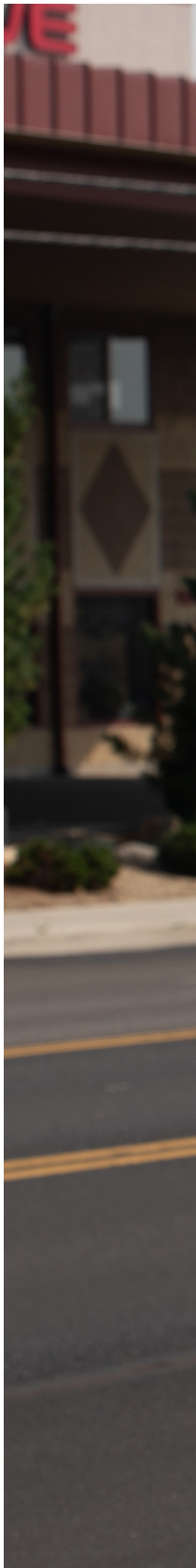
The postmaster general and the chair of the USPS board of governors will testify before the House Oversight and Reform Committee on August 24 about the “sweeping operational and organizational changes at the Postal Service.”

Trump’s attacks on the Postal Service are undermining public trust in the sanctity of the election. Victories in lawsuits challenging his administration’s sabotage of the mail could help to restore confidence that all mail ballots will be counted.

We must ensure that Trump’s attacks on the Postal Service end now. **Z**

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ident of the National Lawyers Guild, deputy secretary general of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and a

member of the advisory board of Veterans for Peace. Her most recent book is *Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and*

Geopolitical Issues.



Falling Behind: COVID, Climate Change, and Chaos

By Mel Gurtov

COVID-19 and the protests for racial justice have drawn attention away from the mostly bad news about the environment. Yes, the skies in most parts of the world are a lot clearer these days as people stay home and auto emissions decline. But as one study points out, even if

lockdown measures continue for the next several months, global carbon emissions will only drop by between 4 to 8 percent from last year. That drop would not be enough to make a dent in overall warming trends—and as the U.S. and other economies recover, it will be back to “normal.” “Normal” isn’t good, as in the following warning in Novem-



ber 2019: “we declare, with more than 11,000 scientist signatories from around the world, clearly and unequivocally that planet Earth is facing a climate emergency.”

As environmental security worsens, so does human security. The reason is simple: the intersection of worsening climate conditions and the pandemic. Floods, drought,

and other calamities compound the vulnerability of populations already hit by the virus, especially the poor, the elderly, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, and health care workers. Governments are put under intense pressure in terms of emergency preparedness, public health facilities, long-term unemployment, and internal security.

Food security is likely to be especially hard hit by the combination of climate change and COVID-19. Arif Husain, chief economist for the World Food Program, writes that “the pandemic could drive 130 million more people [beyond the tens of millions already facing ‘acute hunger’] into that state by December. More than a quar-



**Berlin
21/6/2020 --
Extinction
Rebellion** are lying on the ground as an act of nonviolent civil disobedience to make governments take action to address climate change

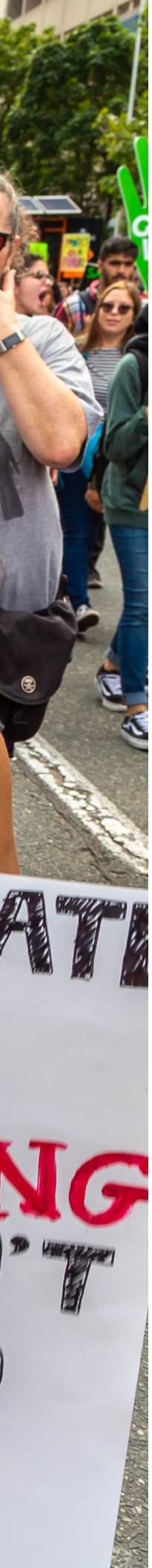
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OUR FUTURE
(and my potential)

IMMIGRANT
BIGOTRY
ENVIRONMENTAL
DISCRIMINATION
MASS
CONSUMPTION
INACTION

THE CLIMATE IS CHANGING WHY AREN'T WE?



ter of a billion people are likely to be acutely hungry in 2020.” People working in the informal economy and export industries; people dependent on remittances from relatives working abroad; people in the fossil fuel sector—these are among the groups whose access to food will be deeply affected by COVID-19. And if they also happen to live in conflict zones, or areas hard hit by climate change, they face insecurity that goes well beyond food.

Goals and Obstacles

Achieving ambitious human-security goals such as eradicating poverty and hunger, realizing gender equality, and promoting clean energy sources looks increasingly remote. When the UN in 2015 announced 17 Sustainable Development (SD) goals, the world looked tolerably better than it does now. The UN took a novel approach to meeting the goals, moreover, deciding not to embed them in a legal document and making the goals applicable to all states without distinction as to level of development. The process of creating the goals and identifying paths to achieving them was also different from previous attempts through interminable

discussion among governments. In 2013, a UN Open Working Group in which 70 countries participated was established to draft the SDGs. Developing countries, local governments, civil society, and the private sector provided significant input into the content.

Since states are not obligated to implement the goals, there has naturally been slippage. The UN itself says: “The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve them all by 2030.” (Goals: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-Being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequality; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace and Justice, Strong Institutions; Partnerships to Achieve the Goal). By 2017, however, the Sustainable Development Goals Report determined that progress was “slow” on achievement of most of the goals. Now, clearly, the timeline will have to be reconsidered again.

The More We Know

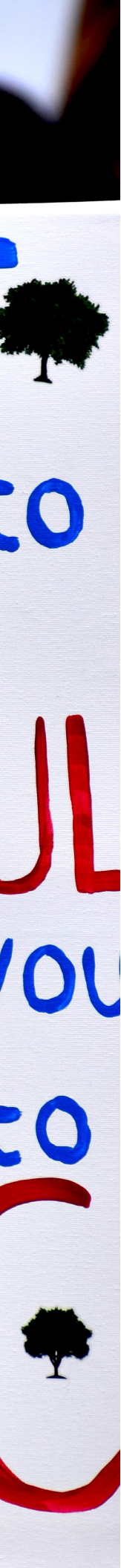
The process of scientific discovery seems unable to keep pace with the looming chaos. As the world scientific community reported last November: “Despite 40 years of global climate negotiations, with few exceptions, we have generally conducted business as usual and have largely failed to address [the climate crisis]. The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected. . . . It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity. . . . Especially worrisome are potential irreversible climate tipping points and nature’s reinforcing feedbacks (atmospheric, marine, and terrestrial) that could lead to a catastrophic “hothouse Earth,” well beyond the control of humans. . . . These climate chain reactions could cause significant disruptions to ecosystems, society, and economies, potentially making large areas of Earth uninhabitable.”

Scientists continue having their worst-case scenarios overtaken by new analyses. Three of the major greenhouse gas emissions—carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide—are increasing. Arc-

I DON'T
WANT you to
be
HOPEFUL
I WANT
PANIC



B



tic and Antarctic ice sheets are declining. (Recall that in February, the Antarctic hit a record 65 degrees; just this month, Russian towns north of the Arctic Circle recorded 100 degree temperatures, igniting wildfires that add still more greenhouse gases; and scientists report that the South Pole has been warming for many years at 3 times the global average.) Greenland's ice sheet loss is especially great. These losses translate to increasing floods, warmer oceans, and threats to marine life. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) report card on the Arctic shows that warming is having dramatic impacts now, with worse yet to come. Sea and land ice is disappearing at unprecedented rates as surface temperatures were the second-highest on record. This warming is "transforming Arctic ecosystems and presenting unique challenges for the region's Indigenous peoples." But not only those folks: "Through global sea-level rise, the release of permafrost carbon, and its role in regulating global weather patterns, the Arctic is vitally connected to people worldwide."

That picture also applies to the Amazon's forests, the "lungs of the world," where Brazil's far-right government is letting them burn, putting

the interests of timber companies and cattle ranchers ahead of the forest people. Carbon release from tropical forest destruction last year was "more than the emissions from all on-road vehicles in the United States in a typical year."

The Bill is Coming Due

Lastly, we should not forget that climate change costs real money, and the longer the federal government chooses to ignore the damage it causes, or understates it, the higher the costs will be. As two analysts from the Rocky Mountain Institute point out: "[NOAA] warned last year, 'The number and cost of disasters are increasing over time due to a combination of increased exposure, vulnerability, and the fact that climate change is increasing the frequency of some types of extremes that lead to billion-dollar disasters.'" Overall, according to the government's national climate estimate in 2018, continued warming "is expected to cause substantial net damage to the U.S. economy throughout this century, especially in the absence of increased adaptation efforts."

The federal bill for disasters was \$14 billion last year,

these writers report. Remember the California wildfires? Their cost was over \$25 billion, putting PG&E into bankruptcy.

Big business and banks are paying attention, with many of them making high-minded pledges to reduce their carbon footprint and investments in carbon-intensive firms. But when is the last time you read of a company that has actually substantially reduced its carbon emissions, or a bank that has removed its investments in, say, an oil or coal producer? They're thinking about it, while Rome burns.

Needless to say, there are no magical cures for what ails us. But surely one element of a strategy to avert climate disaster is putting a price tag on carbon emissions. The Trump administration has deliberately underestimated—by a factor of seven, according to the Government Accountability Office—the real "social cost of carbon" to the nation and the planet. That transparent attempt to justify government deregulation stands in contrast with what James Hansen, the former NASA researcher, urges: "If we are to phase down fossil fuel emissions rapidly, we must make fossil fuels pay their costs to society. A viable strategy to rapidly phase down fossil emissions is an across-the-board (oil, gas, coal) rising carbon



**WE ARE ANGRY
TRUMP &
HIS GOP ARE
KILLING US**

fee. These funds, collected from the fossil fuel companies, must be distributed, 100 per cent, to the public.”

As a car salesperson in California used to say in a long-running TV ad, “You can pay me now, or pay me later.” **Z**

Mel Gurtov, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Portland State University and blogs at *In the Human Interest*.

California's Health Care Crisis

By Cal Winslow

Patients and visitors to Sutter Health's shiny new hospital in Santa Rosa, California, are greeted with large banners, “Heroes Work Here.” This no doubt is true. At Kaiser Permanente's hospitals we learn much the same, the giant HMO has awarded itself five stars for service. And this of course is all about COVID-19.

California's new spike in

COVID cases is centered in Los Angeles, but it has moved throughout the state, including into the sprawl that follows U.S. 101 through Sonoma County's wine country. As I write, California, leading the country, has recorded half a million cases, with 10,000 deaths so far. Sonoma County, largely spared until now, reports 400 new cases in just the last 2 weeks.

Inside Sutter's new facilities, the doctor's offices are quiet; much of the work is now done on video. But the hospital is another story. The confusion begins at the doorway, crowded with nursing assistants, “security” and often frantic patients, waiting to be screened. It's chaotic. And it's not just at Sutter. Just down the freeway in Santa Rosa center, these “heroes” have been on strike at Memorial, part of the Washington state-based Providence Health chain. Memorial workers are demanding proper safety on the job and protection of their own health benefits. They have worked without a contract for more than a year.

Why? “We don't have enough PPE to keep us safe, but management wants us to pay twice as much to insure our families,” says Shannon Signer, a radiology technician at Memorial. At the same time, doctors in the OR are

reported to have N-95 masks, but nurses and others only have surgical masks. These conditions are statewide, as are furloughs, short time cuts in pay and benefits.

The strikers at Memorial report that while the chain lavishes its executives with six-figure bonuses, it demands that its “heroes” accept insufficient PPE, unsafe staffing levels, cuts to paid-time-off, including sick leave, and sharp increases in health care costs, including more than doubling the cost of annual premiums over four years for the most popular family plan from \$1,817 to \$4,609.

“Our health has never been at greater risk. We need our hospital to support us, not to squeeze us for every last dime during this pandemic,” says Signer. It might be added that these same workers bore the brunt of two disastrous wildfires. In the deadly Tubbs fire of 2017, in the neighborhoods in Santa Rosa set ablaze, workers were called to work, some even as their own homes burned.

Everyone has heard of plastic garbage bags in place of PPE and the alarming number of healthcare workers infected, some dying, across the county. California liked to think it was different, that it had flattened the curve early on and that it was safe to open up. But few believed this in

the hospitals where most patients are not tested when admitted, not unless they are known to have COVID. Staffing shortages are commonplace and access to PPE problematic—workers are often anxious, highly stressed and scared.

California's hospitals are barely regulated and then the regulations that do exist are unlikely to be enforced, resulting in this self-inflicted catastrophe. And this in an

industry much of which remains awash with cash. Memorial netted \$201 million in operating profits over the last three years. Providence operates 51 hospitals and 1,100 clinics, mostly in the western states. A *New York Times* feature suggested the health care giant “resembled a Silicon Valley powerhouse as much as a health care company.” It reported \$12 billion in cash reserves in 2019, yet it still received half a billion in

government COVID stimulus funds. It's CEO, Rod Hochman receives a salary of more than \$10 million annually, typical of profit-maximizing executives who can't be trusted to do anything else. Nevertheless, it began furloughs in July, and notified workers to expect pay cuts. Its workers, despite all this, fight to keep themselves and their patients safe, while trying to keep from drowning in debt, victims of a failed healthcare

Photo by
Kyle Oster/
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system in a failing state.

The story is much the same in Southern California. The Fountain Valley, a hospital in the Tenet chain in Orange County neglects to test all newly admitted patients for COVID. It requires workers to care for both COVID positive and non-COVID patients on the same shift, while wearing the same protective face coverings. And it refuses to test workers who have been potentially exposed to

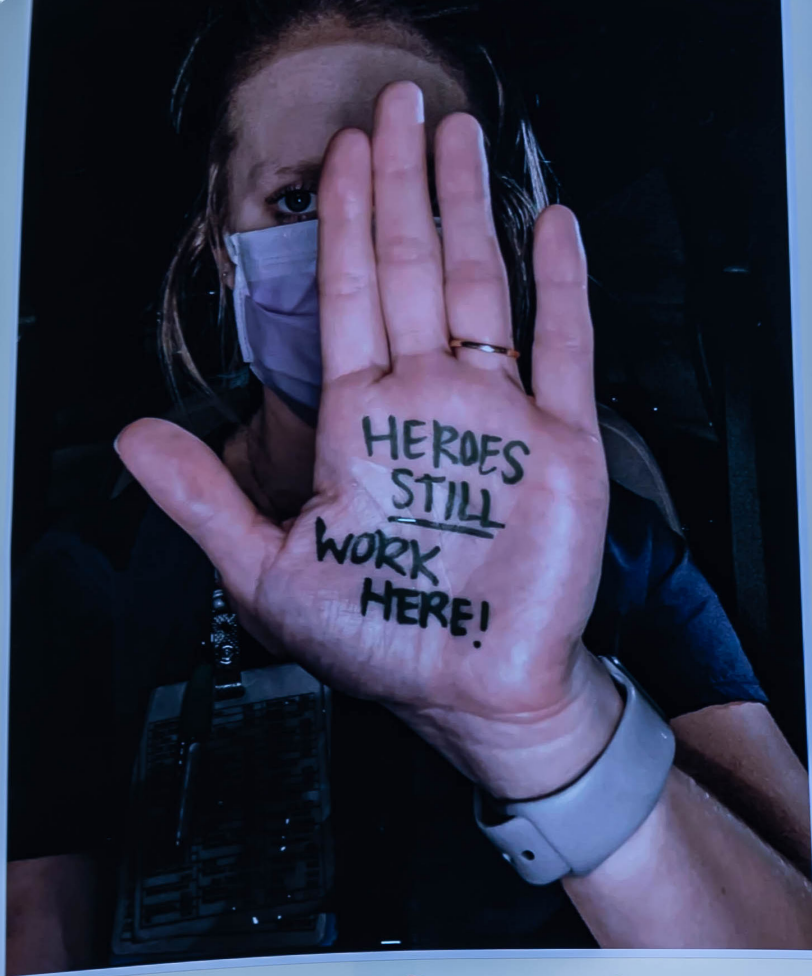
COVID, while forcing many to continue working in the hospital, whatever the risk.

"It's completely unsafe," says Christina Rodriguez, a respiratory therapist at Fountain Valley. She suffers from asthma and must social distance from her husband who is a cancer patient. "They only care about their bottom line. Cases are going up. Incidents of exposure are going up. We're at war with something we cannot see and

we're expendable." In early July at least four Fountain Valley nursing assistants tested positive for COVID.

Not every worker wants their name in print, not in an industry that routinely imposes gag rules on its employees and when unsuccessful responds with bullying and retaliation. In Southern California, a year ago an EVS (cleaner) worker could be fired for not immediately disposing of an N95 mask





We Need Optimal PPE



VEGAS
STRONG





on leaving the room of a TB patient. This summer, one worker, a janitor as well, had to clean rooms with no PPE at all. In a COVID patient's room, he was infected; he then took the virus home and infected his family and children. Today, few hospitals allow for one mask per patient. Some allow for only one for an entire shift, others one for a week, still others only when they are shown to be contaminated with blood or bodily fluids.

The system, says Sal Rosselli, president of the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), is "in crisis." There is "chaos everywhere." Rosselli attributes this in large part to the industrial practice of "lean and mean"—now decades in evolution, with "just in time" inventories, minimal preparation for emergencies and short staffing.

NUHW, to its credit, saw this crisis coming. It settled most of its contracts with one year agreements (except at Memorial and Kaiser), put bargaining on the back burner, and has focused on COVID and health and safety, both for patients and for its members. It shifted early on to distance work for its staff and stewards, to Zoom with members whenever possible. Importantly, it produced a "Bill of Rights" for its members and the public; and this

"Bill" is not just an abstract statement, rather is a program to fight for.

Jessica Early, a nurse practitioner, heads up patient advocacy for NUHW. She found that on key issues the Center for Disease Control (CDC) was failing and that OSHA (Occupational Health and Safety Administration) regulations were minimal at best. "We couldn't rely on these. We went to our executive board, to the stewards and the members to learn what they were seeing. They reported chronic understaffing, supply shortages everywhere and the ethos 'do more with less.'" They found a system that couldn't pivot, couldn't respond and government agencies that were just listening from the hospitals. Early helped produce the Bill of Rights:

- 1. Personal Protective Equipment,
- 2. Testing for COVID,
- 3. Safe Work environment,
- 4. Safe Staffing,
- 5. Proper Training,
- 6. Mental Health Care,
- 7. Temporary Housing,
- 8, Work from Home,
- 9. Input and Accountability.
- 10. Time to Care for Our Families.

(More information can be found here: <https://nuhw.org/members-promote->

[nuhws-covid-19-health-care-workers-bill-of-rights/](https://nuhw.org/members-promote-nuhws-covid-19-health-care-workers-bill-of-rights/)

NUHW's contract with Memorial remains open. It has settled with Kaiser, though with less than most members wanted and only after a long fight, including two strikes and staving off Kaiser's last minute demand for a gag clause. Kaiser wanted the union to take down its mental health websites and agree not to publicize executive salaries. Short staffing remains for Kaiser's therapists and counselors—patients wait for a month, sometimes even longer, to see a therapist. And this when suicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults, when an average of 20 veterans die from suicide every day, when an estimated 17.3 million adults have at least one major depressive episode each year and anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S. affecting 40 million adults every year. Only a third of these receive treatment. And now COVID brings increasing desperation.

Kristin Quinn Siegel (LMFT), a therapist for Kaiser in Richmond, California, and a member of NUHW's executive board, reports cases "skyrocketing" with a flood of new (COVID time) patients: uncertainties, more de-

pression, fear of death, of losing homes, of leaving loved ones behind. And stress that becomes physical pain, headaches, hypertension, back pain, and domestic abuse.

NUHW members have long been on California's front lines in the fight for decent health care and above all in the mental health care movement. This includes the streets. When COVID cases started to rise in Orange County, NUHW members called on county supervisors to reinstate orders requiring people to wear masks in public spaces. The order had been rescinded when anti-mask protestors threatened the safety of the county's public health officer, leading her to resign. Many of the same protestors interrupted a rally of labor and community groups demanding that the board of supervisors restore the mask policy. Connie Montesano, a lab technician and NUHW member at Fountain Valley, was among the speakers who were attacked as "communists" by hecklers who called COVID "a hoax." The whole thing was "insane," says Sophia Mendoza, NUHW's secretary treasurer, "thirty people yelling, interrupting, pushing their signs in people's faces." (On another front, the union has joined in support of the Black Lives Matter movement: <https://nuhw.org/>).

The elevation of front line healthcare workers into "heroes," however hypocritically, is gratifying and certainly well-deserved. And this includes not just the doctors and nurses but the whole array of service workers who keep the country's home care system of hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes running. Surely a moment's thought tells anyone paying attention that these workers, even in the best of times, work hard, are poorly compensated and carry out the mostly thankless tasks behind the scenes.

It is also inspiring to see healthcare workers standing up for themselves and their patients in scores of worker-led actions—walkouts, wildcat strikes and vigils (including the brave reply of Lansing nurses to the car caravan of (fascist) Trump supporters).

It is a shame their employers don't see it this way. Health care corporations spend millions promoting themselves, most often by parading the quality of the care they provide and dedication of their workers, yet almost universally they fight union drives and resist the demands of union members when they exist. Alas, they also happily promote divide and conquer schemes whenever they can, for example at Kaiser where more than a dozen unions,

divided into two factions, compete, making a mockery of the union mantra, solidarity forever. NUHW is now widely seen as in the vanguard of the fight in California for safe working conditions in this age of COVID, for parity for mental health care at Kaiser and for justice for health care workers of color. This is the United States, however, so it is not surprising to find others in the workers' movement nipping at their heels—in this case United Healthcare Workers (UHW-SEIU), typically, in San Francisco, and United Nurses Association of California (UNAC-AFSCME) in Southern California. Neither, with little better to do it seems, has succeeded in attempts to decertify NUHW, each in collusion with respective managements.

The fight then is a tough one and we have a long way to go. Never, however, has it been more clear that our health system is broken—and never, says Rosselli, has it been more important to demand a fundamental transformation—Medicare for All. NUHW is a union in the trenches where unions belong and where words have meaning—in the "war" against COVID, for mental health parity, for Black Lives Matter, for Bernie.



VEG
STRO



Respect
N for
urses **=** **R**espect
P for
atients



National
Nurses
United

More power to them. They are heroes.

Z

Cal Winslow is author of *Labor's Civil War in California* (PM). His latest book is *Radical Seattle, the General Strike of 1919* (Monthly Review).

Respecting the Dignity of Every Human Being: Reflections on John Lewis

By Jack Payden-Travers

“You’re an embarrassment!” he shouted as he came across the street. “To your race” is the part of the phrase he implied but didn’t



add.

My wife and I have been vigiling each afternoon on a busy street corner one-and-a-half blocks from our home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for the past two months. It is our attempt to “get in the way” and to “find some good trouble,” in the words of the

late John Lewis.

After the death of George Floyd, we attended two Black Lives Matter protests in our city, yet quickly realized that social distancing and protesting in large groups don’t work for those of us in the category of folks considered “at risk” during the COVID-19 epi-

demic.

I don’t know the name of the man who was so infuriated at me for holding a “Black Lives Matter” placard and my wife for bearing one which reads “Dismantle Racism: Work for Justice & Peace, Respect the Dignity of Every Human Being.” He ranted



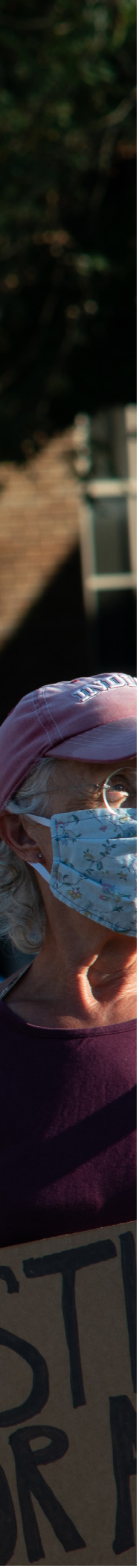
GET
IN
GOOD
TROUBLE
JOHN LEWIS



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COMMENTARY



at us as we tried to talk with him, but he kept shouting and was just returning to his car when another car driven by a young African American man pulled in between in an effort to protect us.

The situation could have escalated but we asked the young man not to get involved, so he just sat in his car, a visible barrier between the two philosophies. The upset white man drove away after a few more rants. Our daily vigils continue and the support of our fellow Winston-Salemites is apparent in the large number of honks and the waves we receive each day. Not that all the fingers are a thumbs up, but the obscene gestures are few and far between.

Does it matter? Are we making any difference? We occasionally have white drivers shout at us “All lives matter.” We agree with them, by the way, as would Congressperson Lewis. I have a bookmark inscribed with the words of Gene Testimony Hall: “Let’s be clear, We said Black Lives Matter. We never said Only Black Lives Matter. That was the Media, Not us. In truth, we know that All Lives Matter. We’ve supported your lives throughout history. Now we need your help with Black Lives Matter, for Black lives are in danger.”

I know the truth of that

statement each day when I read our local paper. Last week two 14-year-olds died outside on a lawn, victims of a drive-by shooting. I have a litany I pray on the vigil line that goes “Say their names: Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor...”

“The news is replete with tributes to Rep. Lewis these days, as well it should be. But I have found many of the stories missing a vital component: his forthrightness in addressing the connections between racism, excessive materialism, and militarism in American society. Lewis believed heart and soul in nonviolence to confront these “triple evils” named by Dr. King. He believed that love was the answer. In the words from my wife’s protest sign and the Baptismal Covenant of the Episcopal liturgy: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? John Lewis certainly replied: I will, with God’s help.”

I can’t help but think of the interconnectedness of events of late. Is it coincidence that the Federal Building around which protests in Portland, Oregon, are taking place each evening is named in honor of the late Senator Mark Hatfield, and that he and Congressperson Lewis were the sponsors in their respective

chambers of the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Act? That is how I met John Lewis. I was the director and federal lobbyist of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, and John Lewis, Representative of the Fifth Congressional District of Georgia, was the Congressional sponsor of our bill. Each session of Congress he would re-introduce the Peace Tax Fund Act.

Ironically this bill, first introduced on “Tax Day,” April 15, 1972, is as old as my 1972 marriage to Christine, my vigil partner, which took place at the headquarters of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), an organization of religious pacifists. This legislation was originally sponsored by Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA, 1971-1998), who worked with FOR on legislation opposing the war in Vietnam.

This bill would establish a Peace Tax Fund into which those of us who are conscientiously opposed to war and the militarism of our society would pay our taxes each year. The money in the Fund could not be allocated for military purposes. Thus, the Peace Tax Fund could not be used to pay for nuclear weapons, wars in other nations, the militarization of our police forces, the military recruiting of our youth, etc. American





taxpayers who oppose war as foreign policy could legally redirect our tax dollars to education, health care, social needs, infrastructure projects, etc. Christine and I have also, since 1972, resisted through protest, tax resistance, and the courts, the right of our government to use our tax dollars as weapons of war.

At times the Peace Tax Fund bill has had upwards of 50 representatives and senators as co-sponsors. But for the last decade Rep. Lewis was the sole sponsor. Just this year Rep. James P. McGovern (D-MA) joined Congressperson Lewis and became a co-sponsor of H.R. 4169.

There hasn't been a Senate sponsor since Mark Hatfield retired in 1997.

Due to funding issues and compassion fatigue there came a time, a few years back, when the National Campaign's board of directors was considering dissolution of the organization. They were tired after decades of lobbying and discouraged by decreasing sponsorship of the bill. It was John Lewis who convinced the directors that this bill was such a significant piece of legislation that the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund needed to be revitalized, especially during an era when few Americans considered the right of conscientious objection to war.

The Congressperson's website had a banner headline that emphasized our bill and spoke of the right of conscientious objection to war.

Lewis was known as the "Conscience of the Congress" because he spoke out, sat-in, and stood up for the rights of all regardless of race, gender preference, or philosophy. His office door was open to all and Georgia peanuts and ice-cold water were there for the taking.

Like John Lewis I believe in nonviolent direct action as a way of speaking truth to power. My arrests number in the double digits, yet that still represents less than half of the 40 times Rep. Lewis was handcuffed and carted off to jail. I have never suffered the beatings he underwent during the civil rights era.

Lewis called on us, if we really wanted to change society, to adopt love as a way of life. "This sense of love, this sense of peace, the capacity for compassion, is something you carry inside yourself every waking minute of the day. It shapes your response to a curt cashier or a driver cutting you off in traffic."

Of his beatings he wrote: "It can be nothing more than a sad and sorry thing without the presence on the part of the sufferer of a graceful heart, a heart that holds no malice toward the inflictors of his or

her suffering."

One of his last acts of civil disobedience was a 2016 sit-in on the floor of Congress seeking the right to vote on gun control legislation. We know of him largely because of his civil rights activism but his commitment to liberation and social justice was broad and intersectional; he demonstrated against the Iraq War, was arrested with the Dreamers in 2013, and demonstrated at the Sudanese Embassy leading to two arrests for speaking against the genocide in Darfur. He stood in solidarity with the tired, the poor, the immigrant, those yearning to be free. On his last day in Washington, DC, before being hospitalized, he went to Black Lives Matter Plaza and spoke with the demonstrators to let them know they did not walk alone, he was with them.

May we live like John Lewis as advised in a tweet in 2018: "Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." **Z**

Jack Payden-Travers was the director and federal lobbyist of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund.

"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime."



Trump Is Quite Capable of an “October Surprise”

C.J. Polychroniou interviews Noam Chomsky



C.J. Polychroniou: Since coming to power, Trump has taken various steps to rule like an autocrat. His latest tactic is to send federal agents into cities to crush protests. Can you talk about the political aims behind Trump's abuse of his law enforcement powers, and whether these actions have a precedent in modern U.S. history?

NOAM CHOMSKY: The renowned economist James Buchanan, one of the leading figures of U.S.-style "libertarianism," observed in his major work *The Limits of Liberty* that the ideal society should accord with fundamental human nature, which makes good sense. Then comes the next question: What is fundamental human nature? He had a very simple answer: "In a strictly personalized sense, any person's ideal situation is one that allows him full freedom of action and inhibits the behavior of others so as to force adherence to his own desires. That is to say, each person seeks mastery over a world of slaves."

It is not easy to find real human beings who suffer from this pathology, but Trump seems to be a good candidate.... When inspectors general begin to fulfill their duty of inquiring into the swamp of corruption he's created, he fired them. The U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York was summarily dismissed when he made the same error, replaced by a flack for private equity.

Next in turn is the military: "The White

House is intensifying an effort to hire Pentagon personnel with an undisputed allegiance to President Trump ... current and former officials said." When the Senate did not quickly confirm his choice, retired General Anthony Tata, to fill "the Pentagon's top policy job," Trump simply appointed him without the required Senate approval. This has been standard procedure under Trump. Why bother with the legal formality of Senate confirmation?

Practices are much the same when the population dares to raise its head. They are then threatened with "ominous weapons" and "vicious dogs," the latter a reference to the attack on civil rights protesters that aroused horror and contempt when they were used in the deep South 60 years ago. Overruling state and local officials [Trump] sent paramilitaries to assault protesters in Portland, Oregon, including the elite Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC), trained to use violence with little oversight against miserable refugees dying in the harsh Arizona desert not far from where I live.

Confronting Portland's "Wall of Moms" with brute force does not go over too well with the general public, even arousing protests that it can't happen here: We're not Italy under Mussolini.

BORTAC was therefore withdrawn from Portland and returned to its mission of demonstrating that it can and does happen here, even if we choose not to look. A few days after leaving Portland, heavily armed BORTAC units raided a humanitarian aid station for fleeing refugees in the Arizona desert, "detaining over thirty people who were receiving

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Photo by bgrocker/Shutterstock.com





HEY LOUIS,
DON'T MESS
WITH MY
MAIL!

The modern Republican party has a visceral hatred of the [U.S.] Postal Service, for good reasons. It is a highly efficient government institution, a fact that can give voters the subversive idea that government might be of, by and for the people

medical care, food, water, and shelter from the 100+ degree heat. In a massive show of force, Border Patrol, along with BORTAC, descended on the camp with an armored vehicle, 3 ATVS, 2 helicopters, and dozens of marked and unmarked vehicles,” a No More Deaths news update reports.

There’s plenty more.

One reaction is that, “The Western-led world order is in crisis. If the U.S. reelects Donald Trump, this will be terminal.”

A few years ago, you might hear these sentiments from someone on a street corner holding a sign reading “The end is nigh.” Today, you read them in the world’s leading business journal, the *London Financial Times*, expressed by the sober and highly respected economic-political analyst Martin Wolf.

Much of the world has had more than enough of the Western-led world order in the past centuries, but would hardly favor what is likely to come if Trump were to administer a terminal blow.

Are there precedents in American history? One has to search pretty hard to find any. One possible candidate is Trump’s hero Andrew Jackson, who is alleged to have declared that Supreme Court Chief Justice “John Marshall has made his decision now let him enforce it” when Jackson defied the Court’s orders to stop his campaign of brutal Indian removal.

We should also not overlook the fact that popular support for autocracy runs disturbingly high. Few signs are clearer than attitudes toward the media. Almost one-fourth of Republicans agree that “President Trump should close down mainstream news outlets, like CNN, The Washington Post and The New York Times.” Twice that number of Republicans, almost half, agree that “the president should have the authority to close news outlets engaged in bad behavior” and that “the news media is the enemy of the American people,” engaged in bad behavior. Democrats

are not that extreme, but the numbers are not overly reassuring.

What about his suggestion that the November general election be delayed, from which he refuses to back down? Given that he is not constitutionally empowered to enforce such an extraordinary proposal, how can he be stopped from doing so?

He could be stopped by mass popular protests, perhaps a general strike, inducing the real masters to intervene to preserve the society they largely own. If it comes to a true show of force, Trump can be stopped by the military—if they decide to uphold the Constitution. These strange days it must surely have occurred to many that Trump’s attempted purge of the military command might be planning for such a contingency—something else that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

It might be worthwhile to pay attention to some analogies in today’s decaying global social order. Recently, Trump’s mimic in Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro, sought to fire investigators looking into his family’s sordid activities. He was blocked by the Supreme Court.

The world’s oldest parliamentary democracy is also tottering, under the regime of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who stands out in Europe for Trump-like failure to handle the pandemic. When Johnson wanted to ram through his version of Brexit, he simply suspended Parliament, an unprecedented act that was bitterly condemned by British legal authorities, and quashed by the Supreme Court.

The U.S. trails behind.

Trump’s attacks on the U.S. Postal Service are increasing in the year of the mail-in ballot. In fact, his new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, has already taken steps to slow down the delivery of mail, and there is even talk of

post offices shutting down across the country in an apparent effort to disenfranchise voters. What does Donald Trump's success in undermining democratic governance reveal about the state of the U.S. political system and U.S. democracy in the 21st century?

Several factors converge in the actions of Trump's choice to undermine the postal service. One is the narrow concern with the elections. Republicans know that they have a problem. They're a party of a shrinking minority. They cannot approach voters with their actual policies of unstinting service to extreme wealth and corporate power, and therefore have to mobilize voters on so-called

"cultural issues," not a very secure stand. To hold onto office, they have to resort to such devices as massive purging of voters to ensure that the "wrong people" don't contaminate the elections, a remarkable story exposed by investigative journalist Greg Palast. Slowing mail service might open the door to challenges to the election if they can't steal it by other means.

But there are deeper reasons that we've discussed before. The modern Republican party has a visceral hatred of the [U.S.] Postal Service, for good reasons. It is a highly efficient government institution, a fact that can give voters the subversive idea that government might be of, by and for the people. It offers



no opportunities for private profit and performs major services to the population, and could do a great deal more if it were freed of congressional malevolence. These are lessons that have to be kept from the eyes of the dangerous masses. Even worse, the worshipers of the so-called founding fathers might not be able to continue to suppress the fact that they conceived of the postal service as a subsidy to a free, independent press; anathema.

The implications for what remains of democratic governance after 40 years of the neoliberal assault, enhanced by Trump's wrecking ball, need hardly be elaborated.

Trump has tried to use the coronavirus pan-

dem in a way that serves his reelection purposes, rather than the interest of the American public. With coronavirus cases hitting new records almost daily, isn't it possible that he may use COVID as a means to bolster his suggestion for postponing the November election?

He is desperate enough to try almost anything. And he'll have plenty of support. Business leaders may cringe at Trump's antics. That's especially true for those who like to present themselves as humane and cultivated managers of "soulful corporations" in 1950s rhetoric, regularly recycled when needed to overcome "reputational risks." But as long as

The implications for what remains of democratic governance after 40 years of the neoliberal assault, enhanced by Trump's wrecking ball, need hardly be elaborated



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**OIL
WARS**

**GLOBAL
WARMING**

**CLIMATE
WARS**

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TRANSPORTATION POLICY...

BEGETS FOREIGN POLICY

BROOKLYN FOR PEACE

Trump recognizes where real power lies and follows the rules, they prefer him to uncertain alternatives that might be subject to pressures from people who care about the common good.

As Joe Biden bends to activist pressures and rises in the polls, the true Masters of the Universe are becoming increasingly alarmed. Front-page headlines tell us that “Investors Start to Ask: What if Biden Becomes President?” The stories report that investors are concerned that the gravy train may be slowed down if their champion is kicked out.

Fossil fuel industries are particularly worried. A headline in the Texas press reads “Oil donors flock to Trump as Biden hardens climate stance.” It reports that they “are writing checks to President Donald Trump with greater zeal than they did four years ago, as Biden campaigns on a climate plan that seeks to eliminate carbon emissions by mid-century,” possibly earlier, along with his \$2 trillion program to address some of the many problems that have to be dealt with—not enough, but a substantial step forward.

Many polls indicate that Trump is trailing Biden by double digits. What could possibly happen between now and November that could turn the race around?

It’s anything but a sure thing. Election tam-

pering is a huge industry. Massive campaign funding in the last days can have a major effect, as seems to have happened in 2016. The leading specialist on campaign funding, Tom Ferguson, found that a “dual wave of money” for both president and Senate had a substantial and probably decisive impact in the final days of the ‘16 campaign. We’ve already discussed the possibility that Republican interference with mail balloting might muddy the waters. Apart from all of these devices to undermine the limited integrity of elections, Trump is quite capable of an “October surprise.” It’s not hard to conjure up a variety of options. This is no time for letting one’s guard down, beguiled by dubious hopes. **Z**

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On Community Control of Police

Raghav Kaushik interviews M Adams



Forward from Ferguson and a paper on Black community control over the police, and she is the author of intersectionality theory in *Why Killing Unarmed Black folks is a Queer issue*.

Let's begin by asking you to describe the role of the police as a colonial force.

M Adams: We think it's extremely important to be scientific in our assessment about what's causing police brutality. In our assessment, it is because the Black community exists and functions as a colony within the United States. When you use the word "colony," most people think about one group of people colonizing another group of people in a far away place, and that is indeed one way of setting up a colony.

What we're saying is that Black people are an internal colony, not necessarily a different country or nation state. What defines colonialism is a power dynamic, and as it relates to Black people there are three features.

(1) There is extraction of wealth and labor, and we can document this from the chattel slavery system to the current day mass incarceration. We can see the under-employment of Black folks, the precariousness, the displacement. Black people are a hyper-exploited class in the way wealth is extracted from us, our bodies are labor.

(2) The colony acts as a dumping site for runoff goods; not only do they use our labor to produce or create wealth, but then they also consume the things they think are good and dump the bad ones back on us. We've seen that in the recession of 2008, where banks' exploitative practices like redlining and predatory lending—gendered racial capitalism—put us in a precarious situation where we don't control anything, land is commodified altogether, and Black people as a class don't have the ability to house ourselves. Then the banks get the bailouts, get all the money and then



The nationwide uprising against police brutality has completely changed the conversation around policing and safety. The demand to defund police which would have been deemed unthinkable in the mainstream not long ago, but are now being taken up as official policy in towns and cities across the country. At this moment, it is crucial to expand the conversation to include the idea of community control over policing.

In order to do so, I caught up with activist M Adams, who describes community control as "essential coupling" to the demand to defund the police. Although we did touch upon some of the details of how community control would work, the goal of the interview was more to illustrate the importance of the idea. M. Adams is a community organizer and co-executive director of Freedom Inc. and a leader in the Movement for Black Lives. As a queer Black person, Adams has developed and advocated for a strong intersectional approach in numerous important venues. Adams is a leading figure in the Take Back the Land Movement, she presented before the United Nations for the Convention on Eliminating Racial Discrimination, she is a co-author of

they can charge us again, exploiting us another layer.

(3) In the context of the U.S., the colonial relationship tends to placate poor white people. Racial capitalism in the U.S. has been a benefactor for poor white folk, as a way to keep poor white folk from turning on capitalists. For instance, the project of neoliberalism was not only a set of policies for capital to gain more power, but was accompanied by punitive policies, by discourses of Black criminality, anti Black and anti woman, anti queer, trans, intersex personal responsibility narratives, of Black people being responsible for the situation we were in. We see it in the current presidency. Trump is able to continuously have white people bought into the project of whiteness whether or not capitalism is actually serving the interests of poor white folk.

If we can demonstrate that Black people are in a colonial relationship with the U.S. government—Black people as a class, not individuals where individuals like Oprah Winfrey are rich—then we understand what the role of policing inside of that is. It is to be an occupying force that maintains the status of capitalism. Hence, Black people are being murdered by the police because we are under occupation. If we want to end the murders, then we must end the occupation. We see this when our military occupies other countries; we know that those occupations only end if we withdraw the military. It won't end if the military are nice, or militant forces that speak the language, or play basketball, or give somebody a ride-along in a tank. That all sounds ridiculous doesn't it? Because we understand that military force is an occupying force.

Similarly, we realize that to end the colonial control of the police, we have to fight for community control, which is ultimately about ending the colonial domination that Black people face.

There is a famous quote by Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael): "If a white man wants to lynch me, that's his problem. If he's got the power to lynch me, that's my problem. Racism is not a question of attitude; it's a question of power. Racism gets its power from capitalism. Thus, if you're anti-racist, whether you know it or not, you must be anti-capitalist. The power for racism, the power for sexism, comes from capitalism, not an attitude." Talk about the systemic aspect of racism and its connection with capitalism.

That quote that you offered is so important. It is illogical to think that we can solve the issues of Black oppression by trying to change the individual mindset of white people. We need to be thinking systemically. Racism at its core is a system of power.

Focusing on police murders, Black people doing anything get murdered. Aiyana Jones and Breonna Taylor were asleep when they were murdered. We get killed when asleep. We can't go and get skittles from the store like Trayvon Martin. We can't be like Sandra Bland and ask the police officer what are you pulling me over for, whereas white people can even fight the police. Being murdered by the police is not about the details or facts of an individual incident, but about the system of policing. Things like anti-bias training are completely inadequate. The system aspect is so crucial.

In terms of attitudes, it is probably true that a lot of Black people don't like white people. I know Black people who do not want to deal with white folk. What is different is that they have no systemic power to enact any harm. We cannot name any historical period where Black people as a class were able to deny white people the right to house themselves, to educate themselves,



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to use enslavement, extreme violence and exploitation. We can name individual Black people who have resisted, but the same structural power has not been there.

Secondly, focusing on individual attitudes makes little strategic sense. For one, how do you measure that somebody gets it enough that inside of their socio-political standing, they will be pro-Black. Is hundreds of hours of counseling enough, or thousands? I'm not saying that because I don't think people should love Black people. I am Black, and I think everyone should love Black people. But measuring that and depending on that for the path forward is lacking a strong analysis of how we got here. The other consequence of taking the above path is that the organizing among the Black community needs to stop, and instead we should be focusing on organizing the white people to like and love us. That does not put us in a position of power and is instead asking us to pander.

In terms of linkages, capitalism and racism are inextricable. It is impossible to solve one without a reckoning of the other. Take the concept of policing. We may be able to deal with a specific policing institution and transform or convert it inside of capitalism, but we will not be able to defeat policing as an entity unless we defeat capitalism because capitalists will find a way to defend their property.

Similarly, class struggle cannot succeed without a defeat of policing, which is a force that facilitates capitalism. Class struggle cannot succeed without directly confronting capitalists' ability to dominate. Nobody is choosing to get exploited, instead it is a system forced upon us, and when you go against the system, there is violence imposed upon us.

Other forms of oppression are intimately connected too. Lot of people don't know that I answer the question of policing not only as a Black person, but also as a survivor of violence, and spend lot of my time thinking

about how we end patriarchal violence, how do we end rape, stop sexual assault, intimate partner violence, etc. Our movement, i.e. of people who are feminist, who work at the intersection of gender-based violence, or poor, trans, intersex people, is often used as the reason why we can't abolish or get rid of policing. People often say what are you going to do for the rapist, for molestation of children, for the person who is abusing their partner. These are all very important questions that I deal with every day. Survivors of violence don't have power over the system. Police are not accountable to survivors. Police violence is not just beating people up, but also sexual violence through strip searches and also the domestic violence they do in their homes and families. It is reported that the institution of policing has a higher rate of domestic violence than civilian society. Policing violence is the choking of people like Eric Garner, but it is also the violence they commit at home. Having a feminist analysis of policing helps us to do multiple things. First, it helps us hold or better uncover all the victims of police violence who don't get spoken about. There is a large number of survivors who call the police and then are assaulted by police officers, which is why many of the sex workers don't even call the police. Not only does it help us better center all these victims of police violence, but it also helps us to understand the whole swathe of what the violence is.

Policing violence is racial capitalism, but it is also patriarchal. It is gendered racial capitalism. It has also maintained the domination over women's bodies, over queer, trans, intersex bodies. It is also forcing women, queer, trans and intersex folks to carry out reproductive labor.

We have various proposals out there to fight police brutality as part of the uprising. We have 8 can't wait, then there is 8 to abolition,



Photo by Steve Sanchez Photos/Shutterstock.com

Community control approaches the policing question not so much from a money aspect but one that directly asks who has the political power to terminate safety apparatuses inside of our communities

and then Defund and Community Control. Can you lay them out?

I won't spend time on 8 can't wait, because it's not serious. It's probably proposed by people who are well meaning, but we don't need to dwell on it.

8 to abolition is abolitionist in its pivot, not seeking to save the police or make them nicer, it is calling us to address harm and accountability without prisons or police. It also seeks to decriminalize a whole set of things that are criminalized today: skipping schools can be a criminal act, teachers report students for disorderly conduct for minor disobedience, which gets them a police citation, a whole array of age-appropriate behaviors by teenagers—such as smoking weed—are criminalized. It's a smart intervention and an important intervention.

There are two other distinct sets of ideas right now. One is Defund. The Movement For Black Lives has been pushing Defund. Defund is also abolitionist in nature. It recognizes that the crisis of policing has become big because of heavy investment. Police funding wasn't organic; it was intentionally developed and heavily resourced, not only with money but with culture. Defund as a strategy seeks to take those resources back. We are still amidst a pandemic; many people are unemployed. In this moment, Defund is saying instead of austerity, take the money from police. Here's a \$100 billion; just take it. Instead fund things like education, housing, health care, preventative measures around domestic violence, on-the-ground community responses to violence, and so on. I think it's an important effort that demonstrates how grossly over-funded policing is. It's also helping ask what we want to invest in that creates safety.

Community control approaches the policing question not so much from the money aspect but one that directly asks who has the politi-

cal power to determine safety apparatuses inside of our communities. Community control is saying to the state: turn over your power to the community, so that we may determine how to keep our community safe. Community control is a necessary coupling to Defund. We cannot be fighting to just take money without wrestling power, because then it will be privatized and then we'll find ourselves in a fight to take it back from private into public just to get back to where we are today.

What we have been naming as community control has to do with Black people in particular being able to determine policies, practice, procedures, as well as hiring and firing of police. And that would happen by creating hyper-democratic structures inside of communities, where actual community members, not elected, randomly chosen as a way to avoid money in politics will have power over determining what safety looks like in those localities.

You brought up random drawings. Talk about this idea of "sortition" and how in your proposal it is used to constitute the community control board (that will oversee policing).

We envision communities to be defined hyper-locally. Suppose we decide to district up our boards to be areas of 5,000 people at a time (maybe that's too big, I don't know; details like that will need to be worked out in the future). We want to ensure that regular people living there can be inside of these boards and take power. Elections can be easily bought off; people can be bribed. Furthermore, they are typically fought by career politicians. So, we rejected elections.

We went with random drawings of people living in those areas. You could wake up one morning and your name could be chosen. It's not a permanent position. You serve for a few years. The fact that next week someone

else could be the one who is part of the board changes the dynamics of the community. The board as constituted above would determine the practices and policies of the safety teams.

Some say that the above sounds like I'm not against policing. I do think the current iter-

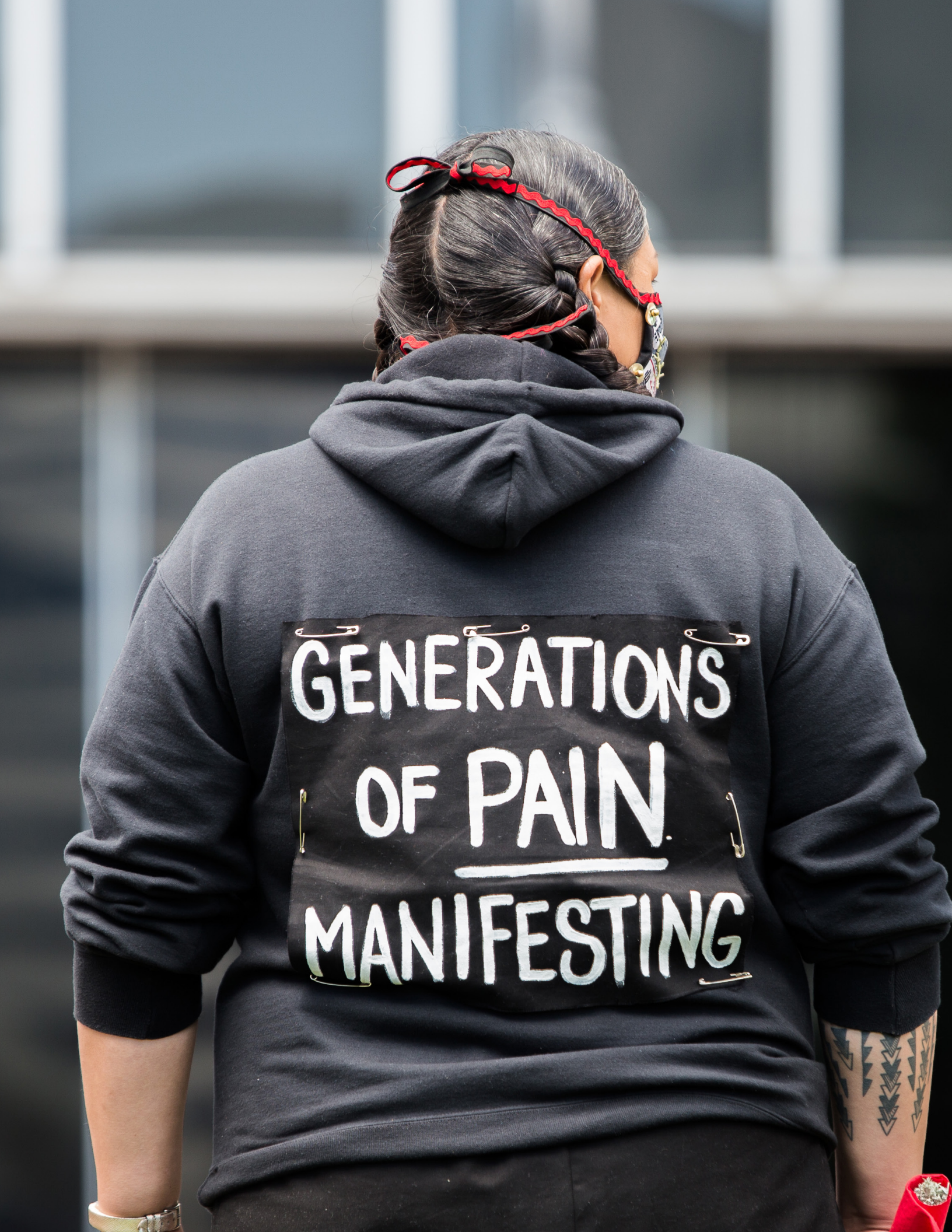
ation of policing has to go. But I also know that as a leftist, as a survivor of violence, as a queer person, as a female-assigned person, as a Black person, that many things that I value and affirm are not popular. I am serious when I say sexual violence has to end. But if put



to a vote, we might not win it. We still need some form of organized force to deal with those issues, with white nationalists who are mad. You need some form of organized force to deal with harm. But under community control, it would be radically different. **Z**

Raghav Kaushik is an activist based in Seattle. His recent engagements have been with the Tax Amazon campaign in Seattle, and the fight against the authoritarian Modi regime in India, specifically the recently passed Citizenship Amendment Act and National Registry of Citizens.



A person is shown from the back, wearing a black hooded sweatshirt. A black rectangular sign is pinned to the back of the hoodie with four silver safety pins. The sign has white text that reads "GENERATIONS OF PAIN" with "OF PAIN" underlined, and "MANIFESTING" below it. The person has dark hair in a braid with a red and black headband. A tattoo is visible on their left forearm, and a red object is at the bottom right.

GENERATIONS
OF PAIN
MANIFESTING

President Trump, Child-Trafficker-in-Chief

By Sonali Kolhatkar

Donald Trump thinks of himself as a champion against human trafficking. He addressed a White House Summit on the issue in January claiming there was a “humanitarian crisis” at the border fomented by criminal organizations and that “traffickers victimize countless women and children.” He signed an executive order and diverted \$400 million in funding to combat the issue, boasting in his usual manner that “we have

signed more legislation on human trafficking than any other administration has ever even thought about.” But in recent months, the administration has been found to be flouting the United States’ own anti-trafficking laws by deporting thousands of children and families seeking asylum, practically delivering them into the hands of traffickers across the border in Mexico.

Dr. Amy Cohen, executive director of Ev-

ery Last One, explained to me in an interview that under the Trump administration's so-called "Remain in Mexico" program, "the United States has been essentially feeding vulnerable migrant children and families to cartel traffickers in Mexico continuously." The program, officially known by the Orwellian-sounding title of "Migrant Protection Protocols" (MPP), sends immigrants seeking entry into the United States across the border to Mexico to await the adjudication of their cases. While the Department of Homeland Security claimed that MPP would "decrease the... ability of smugglers and traffickers to prey on vulnerable populations," in fact it does the opposite.

Cohen elaborated on this horrific phenomenon, saying, "migrants are dropped off with nothing on the other side of the border, with no shelter, with no protection, with no food, with no money. And within minutes, they are picked up by cartel gangs that are waiting." As a child and family psychiatrist who works closely with traumatized migrant children, she did not mince words, saying that families are, "kidnapped and used for extortion, which is a form of trafficking. Sometimes they are tortured. Sometimes they are raped. Children are compelled to watch. Sometimes children themselves are raped."

The only way to view the outcome of this policy is that the United States is actively participating in a trafficking operation. The Trump administration cannot claim ignorance of the outcome of MPP. According to Cohen, "This is happening in cities literally all along the border. This is not a secret; this is widespread." So extensive is the abuse that according to her, "The vast majority of asylum seekers who we've placed into the MPP program have at one time or another experienced at least one, sometimes multiple, episodes of what I would consider trafficking, of kidnapping, and some form of psychological

or physical torture."

Because of the extreme danger that the Trump administration has put families in, according to Cohen it has "forced many parents into a decision" about whether to keep their children with them or send them unaccompanied across the U.S. border.

But under cover of the coronavirus pandemic, the federal government has accelerated the expulsion of even unaccompanied children to Mexico and Central America—in violation of federal law. The Associated Press explained that "More than 2,000 unaccompanied children have been expelled since March under an emergency declaration enacted by the Trump administration, which has cited the coronavirus in refusing to provide them protections under federal anti-trafficking and asylum laws."

Now reports have emerged of the government hiring a private security and transportation firm to move immigrant families and children into hotels in the United States before expelling them. According to the New York Times, which broke the story, the Trump administration has created "a largely unregulated shadow system of detention and swift expulsions without the safeguards that are intended to protect the most vulnerable migrants." Children, some as young as one year old, are being cared for in hotels like Best Western and Hampton Inn by private security personnel who have no childcare training.

Cohen says advocates like her believe that "this has been a way for the United States to try to hide a number of these children who they are deporting." Those children held in government facilities have to be registered as having entered the United States, which then triggers legal protections for them. But by holding children in hotels, effectively off the books and out of public view, "government attorneys are denying that they are actually in the custody" of the Immigration and





INVEST IN
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Customs Enforcement agency, says Cohen. Bizarrely, they are claiming that the children are in the custody of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over concerns of COVID-19, and thereby flouting the legal mandate known as the Flores Settlement to maintain the safety, care, and oversight of the children.

Where the children end up once they are removed from the U.S. is not known, and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency will not say. According to Reuters, “Between April and June, U.S. officials arrested more than 3,300 unaccompanied children on the southwest border, but CBP has declined to say how many have been expelled under the new process or give a breakdown of arrests by nationality for that time period.” During that same time frame, out of the thousands of children apprehended, only about 160 remain in U.S. custody.

It is ironic, to say the least, that some of Trump’s most loyal followers are conspiracy theorists who label themselves QAnon claiming that the president is facing off against a “cabal of Democratic pedophiles.” So mainstream is this movement that one of its followers just won a GOP congressional primary in Georgia. QAnon is now appropriating the social media hashtag #SaveTheChildren and promoting fantastical claims of a widespread child sex trafficking ring. Its followers have even joined the anti-trafficking movement in the United States. But they have entirely ignored the very real trafficking and exploitation of children at the U.S. border that their president has unleashed.

More than two years ago, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions claimed that the government cared about children when he officially announced Trump’s “zero tolerance” policy, saying, “If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you as required by law.” It



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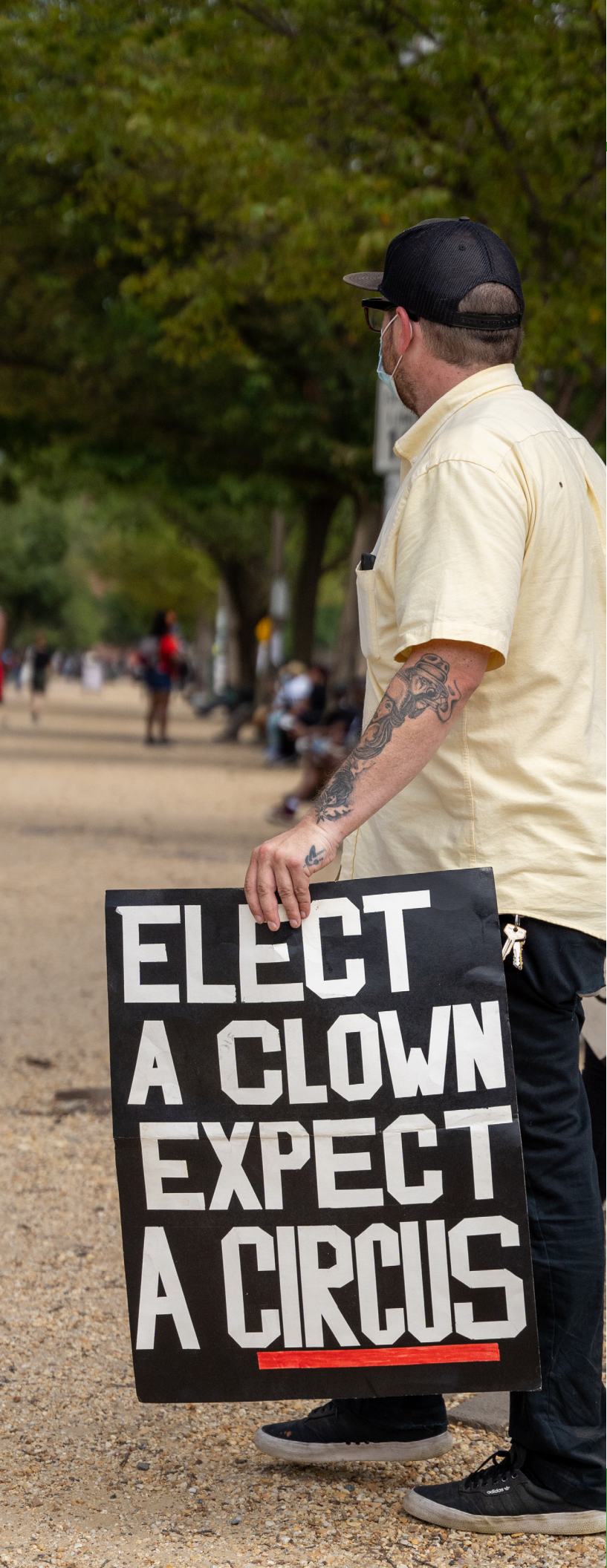
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was a thinly veiled attempt to punish those fleeing poverty and violence for a better life in America. And while mass public outrage forced Trump to back off (he signed an executive order in June 2018 to end what his own discretionary policy initiated), in truth the torture and trauma facing immigrant families did not end. It was simply moved out of our view across the border into even more dangerous conditions.

As America hurtles toward November 3 with a desperation unlike any we've felt for previous presidential elections, the issue of how President Trump has treated immigrant families and children has been largely off the radar. But if we care about children and about protecting them from horrific torture and abuse, Trump's role as Child-Trafficker-in-Chief ought to be central to our election discourse. **Z**

This article was produced by Economy for All, a project of the Independent Media Institute.

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A man wearing a yellow short-sleeved shirt, a black baseball cap, and a face mask is standing outdoors. He has a large tattoo on his left arm. He is holding a black protest sign with white text that reads "ELECT A CLOWN EXPECT A CIRCUS". The sign has a red horizontal line at the bottom. The background shows a dirt path and trees.

**ELECT
A CLOWN
EXPECT
A CIRCUS**

Photo by Julian Leshay/Shutterstock.com

