

THE NEW PEOPLE

PITTSBURGH'S PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWSPAPER OF THE THOMAS MERTON CENTER



VOL. 49 No. 5
June 2019

PUTTING THE NEW BACK IN THE NEW PERSON

BY SYMONE SAUL



WASI MOHAMED RECEIVES THE MERTON CENTER'S NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD JUNE 25TH. PHOTO BY HEATHER MULL/UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH.

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Ok, ok, maybe Wasi Mohamed isn't exactly new. He's been helping out in all the important spaces for years now and is well-known across the interfaith communities, progressive political circles, and any social justice realm you can think of in Pittsburgh and beyond. In fact, if you haven't seen Wasi around, where have you been?

Don't worry, we'll all have the opportunity to bask in the glow of the diverse, young, and powerful community that Wasi's developed at this year's New Person Award Dinner!

On June 25th from 6-9pm, we'll pack the Letter Carriers Hall in the North Side with members, old and new, plus anyone who knows what incredible impacts Wasi has made and the Merton Center is creating 365 days a year.

What else is new, you ask? The fresh, beautiful voices of Celeste Smith and Monica Ruiz, last year's awardee,

SERVICE WORKERS: ANOTHER GROUP SHAFTED BY UPMC

BY NEIL COSGROVE
PHOTOS FROM THE HOSPITAL WORKERS RISING FACEBOOK PAGE AND SEIU

Amidst all the recent outrage and hand-wringing we must not forget how UPMC was also built by the hard labor of their service staff—the “medical tech assistants,” janitors and housekeepers, cafeteria workers, research and administrative assistants—who for years has received poverty-level wages, inadequate benefits, and often arbitrary, punitive supervision.

UPMC has been consistent and steadfast in one way over those same years, in its opposition to those service workers forming a union. Since 2013, UPMC has been cited numerous times by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for threatening, intimidating and surveilling workers lawfully engaged in union organizing in break rooms and on their own time.

Just this past August, *Trib Live* reports, the NLRB ordered UPMC to rehire three hospital workers it had illegally fired, “pay them for lost time, stop anti-union practices and inform employees of their rights to form a union.” Meanwhile, UPMC’s rival, Allegheny Health Network, recognizes hospital service workers organized by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and has

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As June 30 approaches, the doomsday when the consent decree between the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and Allegheny Health Network/Highmark expires, much justifiable sympathy is being directed towards those seniors enrolled in Highmark Medicare Advantage plans. From July 1, patients who have long used UPMC doctors and facilities will have to make upfront payments to continue such services, while Highmark attempts to cover exorbitant out-of-network charges and reimburse those same patients. Also frustrating are UPMC’s vague, ambiguous reassurances that Highmark-covered children will still have in-network access to Pittsburgh’s Children’s Hospital once the next key date of the consent decree arrives in June, 2022.

How can an alleged non-profit like UPMC behave, we wonder, in such a rapacious, competitive manner, especially after it is grown into a \$19 billion behemoth that never experiences an operating deficit? “We built it with our patronage,” fumes Karen Kane of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, “as well as a tower of dollar bills amassed from cans at grocery store checkouts, philanthropic organizations, tax dollars uncollected, national grants in the billions and state capital credits.”

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Fight for Latinx Rights

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Dear Sen. Casey

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Repair the Peace road

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May Day March

SHUTDOWN BERKS NOW!

THE SHUTDOWN BERKS CAMPAIGN

The Berks County Residential Center (BCRC) is a prison for immigrant families, where children as young as two-weeks-old have been incarcerated. By incarcerating and mistreating immigrant families, the BCRC has, for the last five years, committed human rights abuses and due process violations while disregarding Pennsylvania state and Federal laws. The callous and inhumane treatment of our fellow human beings must end now, with the state issuing an Emergency Removal Order and converting the prison into a drug treatment facility.

The mere act of incarcerating children and families is abusive. Not only is the incarceration of families immoral, but the American Pediatric Society, the Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the International Detention Coalition, have determined through extensive research that for a child, even a short period in detention has long-lasting detrimental mental and physical health effects. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that the detainment of children “puts them at greater risk for physical and mental health problems and unnecessarily exposes [them] to additional psychological trauma.”

In addition to the inherent trauma caused by detention, there has been case after case of abuse. Examples include:

- In 2014, a young Honduran mother was repeatedly sexually assaulted by a staff member at the prison. The guard pleaded guilty to institutional sexual assault and served 16 months in prison, less time than the woman and her son were detained by Immigration.
- In 2015, one mother reported that her daughter suffered from fevers and vomited; she said she watched helplessly as her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter threw up blood for three days.
- A formerly detained mother described children with the flu and respiratory illnesses, and how the on-site medical professionals would take their temperatures but never give out medicine. When her own daughter had fever, she had to go to the hospital just to get Tylenol.
- Another mother detained at Berks wrote to ICE in late 2015 that though her son’s skin disease had spread to his genitals and bled when scratched, the clinical team had not provided him with medication.

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THRIFTY

The East End Community Thrift (Thrifty) is an all volunteer-run thrift shop which provides quality, low-cost, used clothing and household goods to the surrounding community. Thrifty needs volunteers and shoppers! Please contact us at (412) 361-6010 and ask for Shirley or Shawna, or stop in at 5123 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. Email ShawnaPGH@aol.com.

We are mission driven volunteers who look to build love and community by serving others in times of need.
Follow @GetThriftyPGH on Instagram

PUBLISH IN THE NEW PEOPLE

The NewPeople distributes over 2,200 copies each month to diverse people, organizations, businesses, and groups.

Submit events to ThomasMertonCenter.org/calendar.
Submit Articles, Photos, and Poems to
ThomasMertonCenter.org/submit.

Advertising prices range from \$15 for a business card size to \$250 for a full page. There is a 10% discount when purchasing 6 months of ad space at a time, and a 20% discount when purchasing a year of ad space at a time. An additional 10% discount is available for non-profit organizations and faith-based groups.

Deadline to submit is the 13th of every month.

For information or to help distribute the paper, Call 412-361-3022 or email newPeople@ThomasMertonCenter.org.

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TMC PROJECTS

Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens Group
724-837-0540
lfpochet@verizon.net

Economic Justice

Harambee Ujima/Diversity Footprint
Twitter @HomewoodNation

Anti-War/Anti-Imperialism

Anti-War Committee
awc@thomasmertoncenter.org

Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition
jumphook@gmail.com; www.pittsburghdarfur.org

Environmental Justice

350 Pittsburgh
350pittsburgh@gmail.com
World.350.org/Pittsburgh

TMC PARTNERS

Partners are independent organizations who support the nonviolent peace and justice mission of TMC. Articles may not necessarily represent the views of Partners

Abolitionist Law Center
412-654-9070
AbolitionistLawCenter.org

Amnesty International
Info@AmnestyPGH.org
AmnestyPGH.org

Association of Pittsburgh Priests
Sr. Barbara Finch 412-716-9750
AssociationOfPittsburghPriests.com

Battle of Homestead Foundation
412-848-3079

The Big Idea Bookstore
412-OUR-HEAD
TheBigIdeaPGH.org

The Black Political Empowerment Project
Tim Stevens 412-758-7898

CeaseFire PA
CeaseFirePA.org
Info@ceaseFirePA.org

Citizens for Social Responsibility of Greater Johnstown
Larry Blalock, Evolve@Atlanticbb.net

The Global Switchboard Pittsburgh
412-471-7852
Admin@GlobalSwitchboard.org
TheGlobalSwitchboard.org

North Hills Anti-Racism Coalition
412-369-3961
Info@arc.northpgh.org
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PA United for Single-Payer Health Care
Healthcare4allPA.org
PUSH-HC4allPa.blogspot.com
412-421-4242

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412-761-4319

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BDSPittsburgh@gmail.com

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Pnpp.northPGH.org

Pittsburgh Palestine Solidarity Committee
Info@pittsburgh-psc.org
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Raging Grannies
412-963-7163
Eva.havlicsek@gmail.com
PittsburghRagingGrannies.homestead.com

Religion and Labor Coalition
412-361-4793 ojomal@aol.com

SW PA Bread for the World
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United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)
412-471-8919 Ueunion.org

Veterans for Peace of Western Pennsylvania
vfpwpa47@gmail.com

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
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GranBell412@gmail.com

TMC is a Member of
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Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
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Osterdm@earthlink.net

TMC supports these organizations' missions.

NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD 2019

SAVE THE DATE



Wasi Mohamed, Pittsburgh Director of Community Entrepreneurship for Forward Cities

Wasi Mohamed is the former Executive Director of the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh and the current Pittsburgh Director of Community Entrepreneurship for Forward Cities. He works tirelessly to expand civil rights and bridge gaps between communities. Wasi will be awarded TMC's 2019 New Person of the Year Award on June 25th. We hope to see you at the National Association of Letter Carriers Hall to celebrate the important work Wasi has done in the community!

WHEN
Tuesday, June 25th, 2019 6PM - 9PM

WHERE
National Association of Letter Carriers Hall
841 California Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Ticket Information at (Case Sensitive) [Bit.ly/NPOYA](https://bit.ly/NPOYA)

STAFF NOTES

Thanks to all the TMC members and friends we've worked alongside during this busy first half of 2019. We're grateful to the many communities around the Thomas Merton Center, and connections growing everywhere, from Pittonkatonk music festival to the Potluck for Palestine to the May Day march for immigrant and worker rights.

Sheryland Neal joined the TMC staff in January 2019, and we're excited to work together continuing TMC's legacy of work towards peace and justice. Special shout out to Vera Hannah-Wildfang, who came to volunteer with the TMC for a few months after graduating from high school in Berlin, Germany. Did you see her rallying the crowd at Pittsburgh's youth climate strike?

We helped turn out TMC members for actions in solidarity with union workers at the *Post-Gazette*, where the Newspaper Guild is still negotiating with the right-wing extremist owner of the paper, and Wabtec manufacturing, where members of UE locals 506 and 618 defended hard-earned benefits with one of the largest strikes the region has seen in decades.

With the Our Water campaign, we supported residents lobbying local and state officials about the need to keep our water safe, affordable, and publicly owned. Mayor Peduto and several other elected officials signed a pledge to keep our water public and prevent privatization, public-private partnerships, and other dangerous deals. TMC also joined other local groups meeting with Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority to call for expanding affordability programs.

For the second year, TMC members witnessed against nuclear weapons at the Stop Banking



KRYSTLE M. KNIGHT OF TMC AND DAN GALVIN OF VETERANS FOR PEACE OF WESTERN PA DISCUSSING VENEZUELA WITH US REP. MIKE DOYLE. HR 1004 PREVENTS US MILITARY INTERVENTION IN VENEZUELA WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL AND REP. DOYLE CO-SPONSORED AFTER A PUBLIC PETITION FROM TMC, VFP-WPA, AND PGH DSA.



TMC'S KRYSTLE M. KNIGHT AND VERA HANNA-WILDFANG AT SWOP PITTSBURGH'S PROTEST AGAINST PITT'S HACKATHON FOR HUMANITY, WHERE TEAMS COMPETED TO PROTOTYPE HIGH TECH SURVEILLANCE TO CRIMINALIZE SEX WORKERS.



MEMBERS OF THE OUR WATER, OUR RIVERS CAMPAIGN – A PROJECT LED BY PITTSBURGH UNITED – WITH MAYOR PEDUTO AFTER HE PLEDGED TO PROTECT PITTSBURGH'S PUBLIC WATER FROM PRIVATIZATION, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, AND OTHER CORPORATE TAKEOVERS. PHOTO BY CHRISTINA CASTILLO

the Bomb protest outside of PNC Bank's annual shareholder meeting. Molly Rush and several others spoke out inside the meeting itself, and we passed out hundreds of informational flyers outside.

We supported the Students for a Democratic Society chapter on the Carnegie Mellon campus in their successful effort to cancel the visit of US General Selva, part of their larger effort to demilitarize the campus. TMC has supported student led efforts to demilitarize CMU for years, while military grade technology becomes even more integrated into domestic policing and surveillance.

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NEW PERSON AWARD EVENT

SPONSOR THE 2019 NEW PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

BY GABRIEL MCMORLAND

Greetings Thomas Merton Center Family,

The Thomas Merton Center is proud to present the 2019 New Person of the Year Award to Wasi Mohamed – an activist working to expand civil rights and bridge gaps between communities. You are warmly invited to attend the ceremony on Tuesday, June 25, from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM. Please consider purchasing tickets to the event, becoming an event sponsor, or purchasing program book ads. As always, we will accept donations towards scholarships to provide free tickets to guests positively impacted by Wasi's work. Friday, June 7 is the deadline for submitting ads and sponsorship information to be included in the program book.

We thank you for any level of support you can offer. Your sponsorship makes this evening possible, gives Wasi a bigger platform, and supports our year-round work for social justice. Click the link for detailed sponsorship benefits.

Wasi serves as the Pittsburgh Director of Community Entrepreneurship for Forward Cities. Forward Cities is a national capacity-building and learning network working within and between large and small cities to create more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem

development. Wasi dedicates himself to the health of Pittsburgh and its many communities. He builds leadership in the people around him and brings a compassionate spirit of understanding to every space he is in. Wasi is honored to receive the New Person Award the year after his fellow organizer,



WASI MOHAMED SPEAKING AT THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS NATIONAL CONVENTION.

Monica Ruiz, received the 2018 New Person award.

We can't wait to see you there!

In solidarity, Gabriel McMorland, Executive Director

WHEN: Tuesday, June 25, 6PM - 9PM

WHERE: National Association of Letter Carriers Hall, 841 California Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Sponsorship & Program Ad Deadline: Friday, June 7

For more information and to purchase tickets, contact us at Sponsorship@ThomasMertonCenter.org or visit: www.ThomasMertonCenter.org/2019-new-person-of-the-year.

HISTORICAL MEANING OF THE THOMAS MERTON CENTER'S "NEW PERSON" AWARD

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

The Merton Center was founded in 1972 by faith-based people seeking to follow and live out the teachings of Jesus Christ and joining with others to build a more peaceful and just world. Thomas Merton was chosen as a fitting namesake for the center because he was a twentieth century monk and writer who inspired his contemporaries and readers to combine contemplation with social justice activism. Very early on, it was decided that annual awards would be given to a person and/or group of people on the local level (the New Person Award) and a person and/or organization on the national and international level (the Thomas Merton Award) to recognize social justice advocates who dedicate their lives to peace and justice.

What does it mean to be recognized with the New Person Award? The name of the award: "New Person" comes from St. Paul's Letter in the New Testament, Ephesians 4: 24: "...put on the new person that has been created in God's likeness, in the justice and holiness of the truth." The New Person Awards honor those local activists who work in our community as leaders of our peace and justice mission. Together they have helped transform Pittsburgh's social justice presence on the local, and sometimes national, scene.

Past recipients of the New Person Award include: Robert R. Lavelle, Anne Feeney, Willard Meade, Tim Stevens, Tom and Jean Kerr, Elizabeth Carroll, RSM, Gail Austin, Dan and Anita Fine, Carl Redwood, Dr. Lincoln Wolfenstein, John Townsend, Robin Alexander, Joni Rabinowitz, Jules Lobel, Shirley Gleditsch, and many more.

As you can see, these social activist leaders come from a breadth of experience and issues facing our region. Many have been life long witnesses for peace and social justice in the Pittsburgh area. This year, the tradition continues with the honoring of Wasi Mohamed. Please join us on June 25th!

Joyce Rothermel is a long time member of the Thomas Merton Center.

PUTTING THE NEW BACK IN THE NEW PERSON

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will make appearances! Live music and a live auction featuring local artwork and donations from local businesses! And our yet-to-be-announced emcee will surely roll out a few more surprises to make it a TMC-worthy party.

Throughout the year, the Thomas Merton Center provides the endless labor of love and peace in the form of events, actions, and strategies to create a more just society. By building coalitions here and abroad, holding our elected officials accountable and publishing the free, monthly paper that now lies at your fingertips, TMC works non-stop on so many different fronts, even board members can't list all of their projects!

The New Person Award not only gives supporters a chance to honor Pittsburgh's most passionate leaders, but also serves to sustain the organization all year round. A huge shout out to the many generous event sponsors who are making it all come together for this 2019 Award Dinner! Deadline for ads and sponsorship is June 7th.

Everyone's invited to join us on June 25th. Anyone who does anything and wants to know everyone who's doing everything, please come so we can all get more done!

Child-friendly, 100% Halal, Alcohol-free,

Symone Saul is on the New Person Award Event Planning Committee.

STAFF NOTES

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We also supported the Sex Worker Outreach Project (SWOP Pittsburgh) as they publicly opposed the "Hacking for Humanity" contest, where teams competed to create high-tech automated surveillance tools to track, target, and criminalize sex workers. Not only does this immediately endanger real people, it fuels the growing industry of private companies using facial recognition and artificial intelligence to create products guiding the violence of military and police activities. You can find the SWOP Pittsburgh full statement on our TMC facebook page, or contact info@ThomasMertonCenter.org for a copy.

Like you, we're following US intervention in Venezuela with familiar feelings of outrage and urgency. After hundreds of constituents signed a petition launched by TMC, Veterans for Peace of Western PA, and the Pittsburgh Democratic Socialists of America, Mike Doyle recently co-sponsored HR 1004, which prevents US military intervention in Venezuela without congressional approval. We will continue to work towards lifting the sanctions and ending the already ongoing interventions by the US government.

We'll make sure to include more regular staff updates in upcoming issues of the NewPeople. As always, contact Krystle@thomasmertoncenter.org to find out about how to get involved.

BECOMING SUSTAINABLE

ASSAULT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

No surprise. Former and current anti-EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Administrators Scott Pruitt and Andrew Wheeler sure did their boss's bidding. From day one the strategic plan was to undermine its mission of protecting the earth, its wildlife and humanity.

From March 20, 2017 to December 18, 2018 the President proposed to end or weaken enforcement of a total of 78 key regulations and laws, including:

- 11 on coal mining and use in power plants;
- 11 on nationally protected lands and national parks;
- 9 on endangered species, including bees;
- 6 on clean water plus those affected by other activities; and so on.

(December 18, 2018 *New York Times* lists them all.)

He ended enforcement of super polluting greenhouse gases, one-thousand times more potent than carbon dioxide. He ended the ban on chlorpyrifos, that causes brain damage in children. Toxic emissions: including bans on at least 14 with mercury, and 11 with methane, as well as rules on auto emissions. States and regions were stopped from tracking tailpipe emissions.

There has been wide coverage of approval of offshore drilling, and oil and gas pipelines, as well as major cuts in budget and staffing, including

scientists. 1600 staffers have quit; half are due to retire, but only 400 replacements have been hired.

The 2019 Clean Power Plan was scrapped. Climate Change was dropped from the list of security threats. EPA dropped Obama's

catastrophe. Even half a degree will worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty. In May the UN warned that a million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction.

Fortunately, there are dozens of active local environmental groups. Mike



PHOTO BY PIXABAY FROM PEXELS.COM

calculations of the social cost of carbon emissions. Also FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has nixed a climate change strategic plan.

In October the United Nations warned that we have twelve years to limit a climate warming to 1.5C. or we risk

Stout of the Isaak Walton League has been meeting with a number of them to encourage them to band together to form a united front for urgent action, outreach and education to build a more powerful movement. Get involved. Contact miststout629@gmail.com.

BY MOLLY RUSH

Much can be done at the state, county and city level. It's happening around the U.S. It can happen here. Environmentalist Mark Dixon is on the TMC Board. Go to his Facebook page to watch a dynamic panel sponsored by the League.

One speaker gave a chilling talk on the cracker plant under construction in Beaver County. The state has helped underwrite this environmental disaster so we can have more plastics!?

On May 10 the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* ran a report on The League's April 30th program. It featured Dianne Peterson, who provided many practical ideas on how to cut back on our use of many everyday plastics. Just picture the whales and other sea life choking on plastic straws. Trillions of plastics and contaminants are being dumped in our oceans and inland waterways.

Volunteer Wanda Guthrie, full time TMC Environmental Volunteer, is a great source of information about the many groups and individuals involved with this growing movement. High school students get it. So must we! Contact Wanda: wanda.guthrie@gmail.com.

Let's do it!

Molly Rush is the co-founder of the Thomas Merton Center.

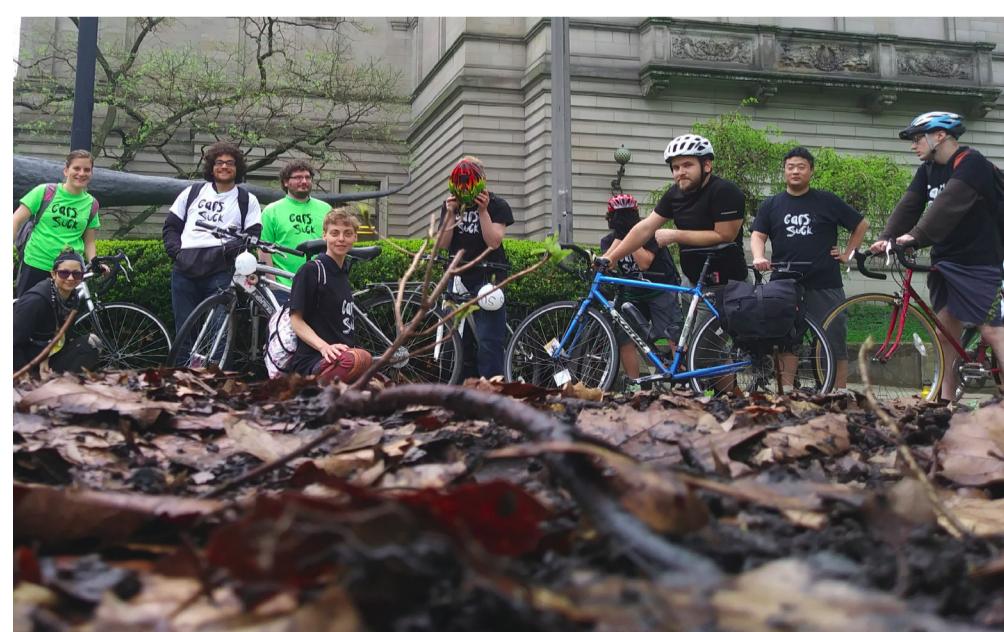
CARS SUCK!!!

On Thursday April 25th ten crazed cyclists took to Oakland's streets to cause traffic problems and annoy the Pittsburgh police department in a cartoonish way. The cyclists threw caution to the wind and banded together to brave the streets of Oakland, no longer as isolated, vulnerable bikers, but instead as a force to be reckoned with. They cut off cars, forced them to drive slow, and took up traffic lanes during rush hour traffic. Their protest, called Cars Suck!!!, is an effort aimed at causing people to reject the current system of consumptive transportation that revolves around individualism, fossil fuels, and dangerous roads for pedestrians and cyclists. While motorists may find this annoying, it may be the only way to get people to stop relying so heavily on cars as their primary form of transportation.

At the moment, Pittsburgh's transportation system is built around large volumes of cars pouring into the city and leaving every afternoon. While some effort is made to provide public transportation, many motorists avoid the options of biking, walking, busing, or taking the train in favor of

using individual cars. For some, cars in Pittsburgh are viewed as a status symbol that distinguish the affluent from the lower classes, who depend on public transportation to survive. For others, cars are a necessary evil to survive in a capitalist economy that forces people to live outside of the cities where their jobs are

located. But for cyclists, cars represent a hostile force that complicates an already strenuous day. Cars aren't just automobiles; they are death machines that pollute, threaten, consume, and at times maim or kill the unfortunate people (or other cars) that get in their path.



Riders in Repose. Cars Suck! activists pose near Dippy the Dino in Oakland. Photo provided by the author.

BY JACK COLLINS

The goal of Cars Suck!!! is to disrupt this system and get people talking about another way of getting from A to B. Yes, some people need cars to mitigate a disability or to make their commute affordable/ livable, but are you that person? Do you really need a car to get from Shadyside to Oakland every morning? Are there any other options that could make your day easier while keeping the air cleaner and the roads safer? How could Pittsburgh function without having so many cars on the road? These are questions we need people to start asking if we are to ever make a world without cars that is safe and accessible for everyone.

Cars Suck!!! is an ongoing protest organized by the Pittsburgh based anarchist group Unity Division. To join the next ride against motorist aggression and ecological collapse, and for more information, contact us at udpgh@riseup.net

Jack Collins is a member of Unity Division.

ARTFUL PROTEST

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

BY D. J. AURELIUS

ELECTRIC POOLS OF DISTRACTION
EATING PEOPLE
GHOSTS ON WHEELS

MODERN SERVANTS OF SUM ZERO
SELF-PROCLAIMED VICTORIOUS
THE ENEMY BUILDERS
NEVERMINDING THEIR WAY
THRU

HANGING FUGITIVE BABIES
FROM A GOLDEN GALLows
THE HORRID ROT OF OLD GLORY
SWINGS WITHOUT ANGELS

GUNS OF GLASS
DOLLARS OF SAND
SUPPORT A HOLLOW FIGHT
WITH HOLLOW HEROES
WHO FOLLOW IN THE SAME
SPONTANEOUS FLESH OF SAINTS
THEIR LETHAL LEGACY
AN ORDINARY DEATH.

DEAR HATRED
MUMPSIMUS OF AGES
AND MERE AGGRESSION
SURROUND WHILE
CINEMATIC FEAR HERDS THE
OVER-PROUD

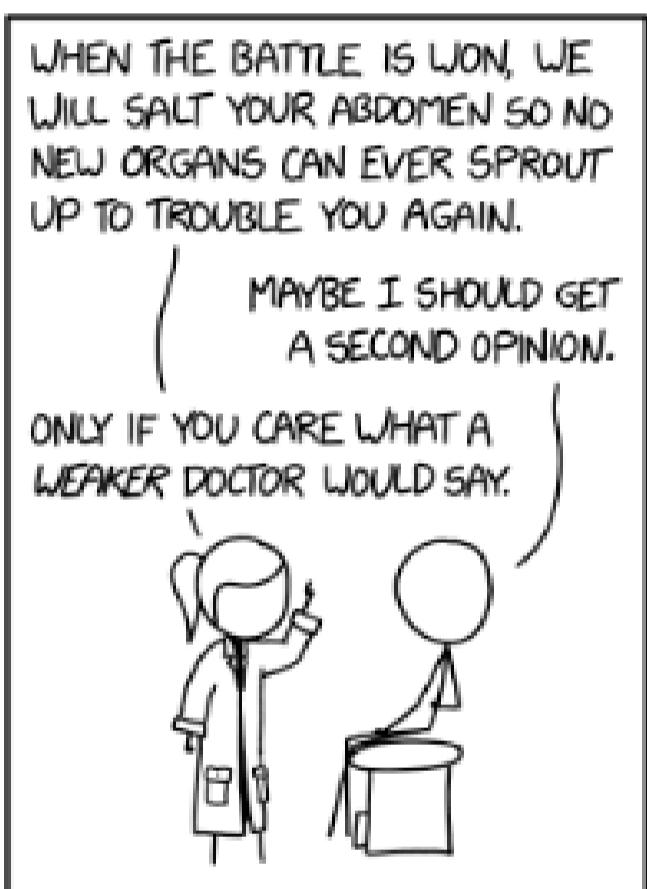
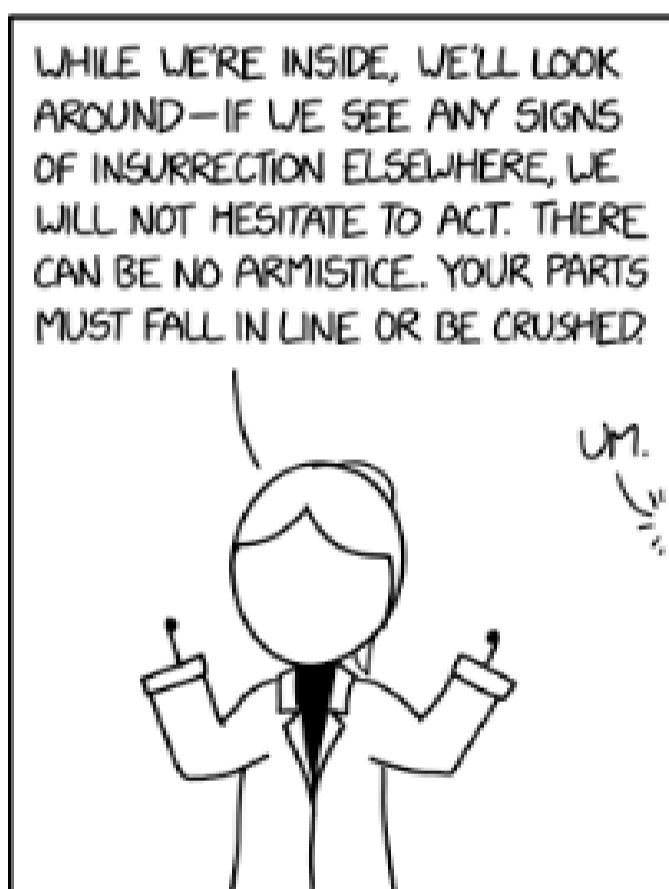
WHO MUST BREAK
ON THE INVOLUBLE PHYSICS OF LANGUAGE ON
THE IN-WRIT RULES OF COMMUNICATION

AND ON THE LAWS OF SHARED MEANING
TRUTH
THEIR LIES AND OTHERWISE
INELEGANT IDEAS
TRY, REVISE, ARE FORGIVEN, AND
UNBEGOTTEN
WILL DIE AND DIE SURELY
WITHOUT ANGELS.

D. J. Aurelius is an ex-reporter and a writer living in the Pittsburgh area, still searching like Diogenes, for an honest publisher.

APPENDICITIS

BY XKCD.COM WITH PERMISSION



VOTE *Information provided by VoteAllegeny*

2019 Elections Calendar

June: Monday 6/10/19—Board of Elections certifies primary election results

August: Wednesday 8/1/19—Last day to circulate and file nomination papers nominating independent candidates or Minor Political Party candidates

VoteAllegeny is a group of volunteers committed to ensuring that citizens of Allegheny County have safe, reliable, accessible, recountable, voter-verifiable elections. Join us at our weekly meetings on Sundays at 4pm, or visit us online at VoteAllegeny.org

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CARTOONS BY RUSSELL FEDORKA WILL RETURN SOON! ARE YOU A CARTOONIST? SUBMIT YOUR ORIGINAL ART FOR CONSIDERATION!



FIGHTING FOR LATINX RIGHTS

LCLAA - LEADING THE FIGHT FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS RIGHTS

The Trump administration's escalating anti-immigrant rhetoric and attacks on migrants' and refugees' rights have led not only to inhumane treatment of immigrants, particularly Latinx and other immigrants/refugees of color and Muslims, but to a police state for undocumented workers and families being targeted by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement arm of the Department of Homeland Security). That was the powerful message delivered by Guillermo Perez, founder of the Pittsburgh Chapter of the national Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), and Monica Ruiz, Executive Director of Casa San Jose, at a Battle of Homestead Foundation (BHF) forum May 4th on "Family Separation at the Border: Its Impact on Pittsburgh, a 'Welcoming City'."

The national LCLAA was formed in 1972 to "educate, organize and mobilize Latino(a)s in the labor movement. It represents the interests of more than 2 million Latino(a) workers in the AFL-CIO and independent unions throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico." (LCLAA website)

The BHF May 4th forum followed a showing earlier in the week of the PBS Frontline documentary, "Separated: Children at the Border," as part of BHF's 2019 series, "1919: Bridges from History," exploring issues facing workers 100 years ago and today. There are striking parallels between the post-WWI "Red Scare" attacks on immigrant workers and labor organizers and today's trumped-up "national emergency" on the southern border and attacks on undocumented workers and families. BHF will be posting a video recording and powerpoint from the forum on its web site in the near future. For this and information on BHF and its 2019 program series go to: www.battleofhomestead.org.

Immigrants Role in Labor Organizing and the Building of this Country

Some of the key points Perez made were:

"For much of its history, the U.S. operated a de-facto open border policy...The concept of 'citizenship' was first restricted to "free white persons, so the distinction of being native versus foreign born was less important to one's status than one's race. The plight of indigenous Americans illustrates this perfectly: it wasn't until the passage of the Snyder Act in 1924 that all native Americans were granted citizenship."

"At no time in our history has the percentage of foreign born been more than 15% of the U.S. population...our country has been built by working people, most of them native born, many of them immigrants and the children of immigrants, and a significant number of them enslaved. In 1800 more than a fifth of the U.S. labor force was slave labor." (Power Point)

Every wave of mass immigration has faced a nativist, anti-immigrant backlash, like the recent wave of mostly Central Americans seeking asylum and refuge in the U.S.

Every wave of immigrants has contributed to the labor movement, organizing strikes and pushing demands for better working conditions and union rights.

However, it wasn't until the year 2000 that the AFL-CIO took a pro-immigrant workers stance, due to pressure from service workers unions that were in the forefront of immigrant workers organizing.

Perez educates labor, community and faith-based groups to build solidarity with immigrant workers and to support Latinx workers' organizing efforts. Perez also has organized undocumented workers who have suffered "wage theft" to win back promised

BY CRAIG STEVENS

wages. However, with the threat of ICE detentions and raids, undocumented workers have not been contacting him for assistance as much as in the past.

Perez has also played a central role in mobilizing Latino/as for Pittsburgh's May Day march and celebration here. (See May Day photos in page 15 of this *NewPeople*.)

Fondo Solidario - Bail Bond Fund

The Pittsburgh LCLAA chapter holds an annual celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 - October 15) to celebrate the contributions of Latinos to our communities and culture. Since 2014, the event has raised \$70,000 to benefit local immigrant rights and labor work in the region, including Casa San Jose.

This year \$12,000 of funds raised were given to the new Fondo Solidario (Solidarity Fund), a bail bond fund which provides 0% interest loans to people detained by ICE. Perez said that ICE detainees' bail can run as high as \$25,000, a prohibitive amount which leads to long detentions, greatly increasing the likelihood they will be deported without receiving adequate legal assistance and support from their families or community.

Contributions to Fondo Solidario can be made out to Casa San Jose and designated for the "Bail Bond Fund" and mailed to: Casa San Jose, 2116 Broadway Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216.

Guillermo Perez can be reached at: gperez@usw.org; (518) 253-9120; and Pittsburgh LCLAA's Facebook is: [@lclaa.pittsburgh](https://www.facebook.com/lclaa.pittsburgh)

Craig Stevens is a retired Community Social Worker and long-time Thomas Merton Center member.

CASA SAN JOSE - STRENGTHENING THE LATINX COMMUNITY, BUILDING ALLIANCES TO RESIST ATTACKS

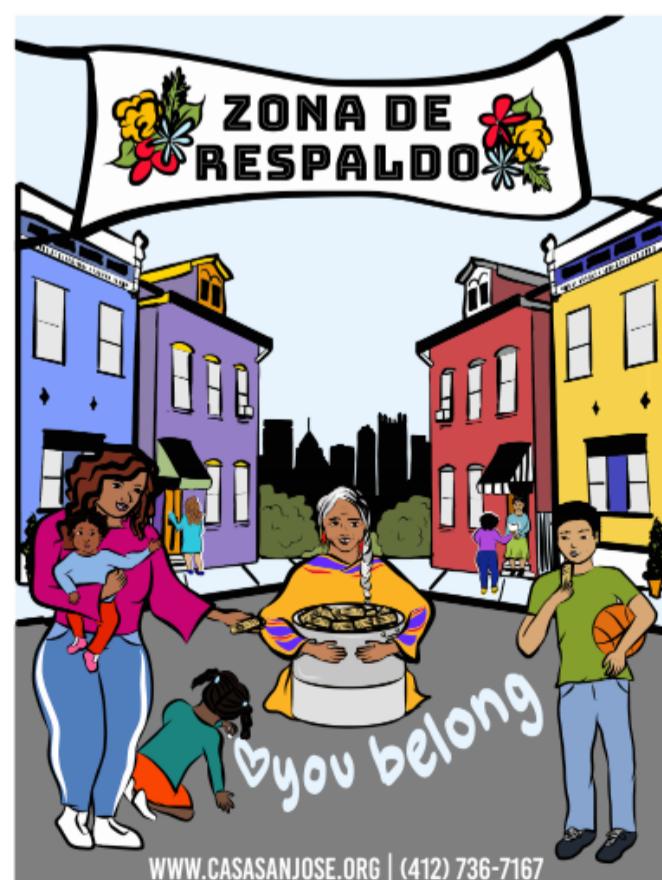
Monica Ruiz, Executive Director of Casa San Jose, is well known as an inspiring advocate and community builder and the 2018 Merton Center New Person awardee. In her presentation with Guillermo Perez at the Battle of Homestead Foundation's May 4th forum, "Child Separation at the Border: Its Impact on Pittsburgh, the 'Welcoming City,'" Ruiz pointed out that 'family separation' occurs not only at the border but is happening daily in Pittsburgh and communities across the U.S. due to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, detentions, and possible deportations.

Ruiz's presentation and comments included:

People are migrating here from Central America due to extreme poverty and violence: average wages in this region run from \$1.90 a day in Honduras to \$8.08 in El Salvador.

Although Pittsburgh touts itself as a "welcoming city," elected officials are not doing enough to support the immigrant community. While Pittsburgh continues to lose population, the immigrant population is expanding, creating new businesses and filling unmet labor needs. There are 58.6 million Latinos in the U.S. making up 17.6% of the population. "We are here to stay! Immigrants and their families continue to face numerous attacks on their legal status, ability to work and go to school, reunite with their families, and possible detention and deportation due to Trump's travel ban. They face suspension of all new applications or renewals of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). There are threats to

end Temporary Protected Status protections for hundreds of thousands of refugees who contribute \$1 billion to our economy. They face the proposed



POSTER ART BY CHRISTINA ACUNA CASTILLO AND CHRIS PILEWSKI

BY CRAIG STEVENS

amplification of the federal "public charge" rule, which would deny green cards and visas to lower-income non-citizens as well as federal food, housing and other assistance programs. Children continue to be separated from their families and detention camps continue to be built for people coming to the border seeking asylum and a better life in the U.S."

Ruiz said the solutions to the current "family separation" crisis are to process people's requests for asylum at the border and provide them assistance in settling in the U.S. with family members or sponsors until their cases can be heard, and to stop criminalizing immigrants.

Casa San Jose offers a wide range of services and programs to the growing Latinx community in Pittsburgh, including:

- Public speaking on immigrant rights and ways people can be allies
- Bi-weekly email updates on Casa's organizing, advocacy and community services
- Providing family support and youth empowerment programs, legal and housing assistance, and ESL classes and assisting new arrivals in settling in Pittsburgh and handling their immigration cases
- Advocating for policy and systems changes such as the campaign to close the Berks County Family Detention Center (see www.paimmigrant.org/campaign-to-shut-down-berks)

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ORGANIZING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

US HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TO CONSIDER NEW STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL ORGANIZING

In late April, community activists from around Georgia and from as far as Seattle and New York gathered in Atlanta to learn about the growing global "human rights cities" movement. Declining economic conditions in cities and communities around the world have fueled a trend where more and more people are organizing locally to defend and promote our "right to the city." The United States has come late to this party, but a national movement is growing.

As market logic has come to dominate most local policy decisions, activists are finding that human rights-based organizing can be a powerful tool for defending people's basic needs and building residents' commitments to place and community.

Human rights advocate Malcolm X, pointed to an often overlooked international dimension to the U.S. "Civil Rights" movement: "When you expand the civil rights struggle to the level of human rights, you can then take the case of the Black man in this country before the nations in the UN. You can take it before the General Assembly. You can take Uncle Sam before a world court. But the only level you can do it on is the level of human rights. Civil rights keeps you under his restrictions, under his jurisdiction. Civil rights keeps you in his pocket."

The national human rights cities convening, hosted by the American Friends Service Committee and the US Human Rights Cities Alliance, focused on strategies for organizing "human rights cities and communities," and provided participants with examples from other cities and tools for organizing. A major focus was the UPR Cities Project, which aims to mobilize local groups to document local human rights conditions as part of a United Nations Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United States' human rights record.

Testimony and analyses from cities and communities will be collected into a national civil society "shadow report" for international experts reviewing human rights practices. Officials will draw from such

documentation in making recommendations to US officials to improve their compliance with international legal obligations.

But bringing international attention to the US human rights record is not the only aim of the UPR Cities project. The real goal is to build a human rights constituency—people who know their rights and are organized to defend these rights.

A UPR Cities organizing toolkit supports efforts to mobilize local residents and equip them with resources to shape local human rights practices. While national governments ratify treaties and participate in UN processes, it is ultimately local officials who make and enforce decisions that relate most directly to international human rights laws and standards.

Yet, many local officials are uninformed about international law. It's up to organized communities, then, to be what National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) organizer Rob Robinson calls "human rights enforcers."

There are three main steps to participating in the UPR Cities project, called the "3 Cs." First, residents need to collect testimonies and documentation about local human rights conditions. These can be both affirmations of what cities are doing well and as illustrations of where improvements are needed.

Next, activists compile these stories into reports aimed at both the national shadow report that will go to the United Nations and become part of the official UPR review of the United States, and local reports that will inform local organizing and city/community officials.

Finally, the UPR Cities project calls for local efforts to "clamor" for human rights. It's not enough to merely document what's happening, it's up to residents to demand that officials use human rights principles to guide local policy decisions.

BY JACKIE SMITH

Knowing there is international attention on local rights conditions may not move the Trump administration to act, but local mayors and other community leaders are more accountable to the people whose lives their decisions impact.

When we remind their leaders that "the whole world is watching" we can help keep human rights on the public agenda and work to shift the discourse locally away from an uncritical acceptance of market logics toward the recognition that our leaders must ensure that all residents—especially the most vulnerable—have what they need to live to their full human potential.

Pittsburgh's Human Rights City Alliance is calling on groups around the region to participate in our own local human rights review process. Throughout the coming year, we'll help support and host events to allow residents to voice concerns and to hold public officials accountable.

We'll also help residents learn more about the Universal Periodic Review of the United States and how we can use international reports to facilitate local policy changes. A planning committee is being formed to identify priorities and organize spaces where residents can provide testimony for our local and national reports.

If your organization wants to help shape our local report, please contact pghrights@riseup.net or via Facebook message (PGHRights). Or attend our next meeting, Saturday June 29 at the East Liberty public Library (10:15AM-12:00 noon). For more information and to keep informed, see: www.pghrights.org.

Jackie Smith is Professor of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh and co-coordinator of the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance. She serves on the national steering committee of the US Human Rights Cities.

CASA SAN JOSE - STRENGTHENING THE LATINX COMMUNITY, BUILDING ALLIANCES TO RESIST ATTACKS

- Emergency Response Program - Building a Zona de Respaldo

This Spring, Casa launched a campaign to build Community Support Zones – or Zonas de Respaldo – in Beechview and East Liberty, where Casa recently opened a satellite office to support the growing number of Latino/as living and working in Pittsburgh's East End.

In two days of door-knocking, Casa staff and 100 trained volunteers knocked on over 1800 doors to inform people how to respond to raids and detentions by ICE. Community members were asked to place colorful posters in a front window announcing that the home is a Zona de Respaldo or a safe place for immigrants in need of assistance. The back of the poster has a list of people's rights if ICE or the police come to their home or they see ICE in the area, with the phone number of Casa's Emergency Response Coordinator, Laura Perkins, on the front.

Perkins said that 210 households have already committed to putting up the poster and being involved in the Zona de Respaldo campaign. As a next step, Casa will be holding one more door-knocking session in Beechview on Saturday, June 22nd, 9:30am to 3:30pm. People interested in this

important outreach should contact her at Laura@CasaSanJose.org.

Perkins said that, often, clients who are detained tell her that many more people were detained that same day. "Our goal is to get this emergency number to as many people as possible and comprehensively document ICE's local activity and assist more families...Allies can use their privilege to denounce and document detentions and educate both allies



MONICA RUIZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CASA SAN JOSE

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and immigrants on their rights."

In addition, Perkins coordinates Casa's "court accompaniment" program where "staff and trained volunteers accompany undocumented people to court to protect them from being detained by ICE and gain their release from detention where possible...We are in constant need of people who can accompany clients to ICE appointments." Perkins urged people to call her Emergency Response number to learn more about how they can help with these efforts, 412-736-7167.

To learn more about what Casa San Jose is doing and how you can help, see: <https://casasanjose.org> or go on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter @CasaSanJosePGH Or Call:

Main Office (Beechview): 2116 Broadway Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15216 - Open Mon-Fri 9 am - 5 pm (412) 343-3111

Satellite office (East Liberty Presbyterian Church): 116 South Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 - Call for days/hours (412) 339-6666

Craig Stevens is a retired Community Social Worker and long-time Thomas Merton Center member.

SHUTDOWN BERKS NOW!

- In May 2016, a three-year-old boy who had been suffering from fevers and loss of appetite for months was finally diagnosed with an intestinal parasite after his mother found a worm in his diaper.
- In February 2018, the prison held at least two families in medical isolation without substantial evidence to do so. In one instance, a Haitian father and his 3-year-old son were quarantined for two weeks. In another case, a Haitian mother and her 3-year-old son were isolated for more than five days.
- In April 2018, a 15-year-old girl was detained at Berks alongside her father for 32 days. While there, Astrid said she was the only female in what was an all-male section of the center.

The continued operation of the Berks County Residential Center not only violates state regulations but also operates in violation of Federal law. Moreover, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PA DHS) has publicly recognized that the center is in violation of its license. As we continue to fight to close all immigrant detention centers across the country, we call for the immediate closure of the Berks County Residential Center. Children do not belong in prison; people deserve care and safety. We must stand up for our fellow people and call out injustice wherever it may be.

Pennsylvania needs human services, not human rights violations. The prison serves no meaningful purpose in the Berks community. Berks County residents have shared with the state that they do not want a family prison in their county. In a survey done in June of 2018, Berks County residents overwhelmingly stated they

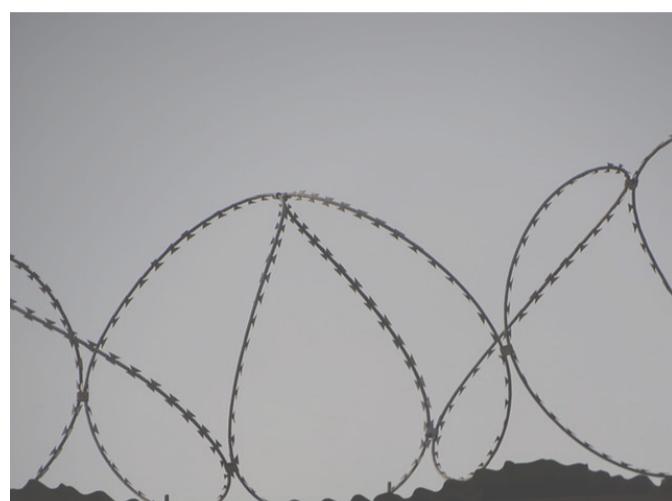


PHOTO BY IZHAR KHAN FROM PEXELS.COM

preferred that the facility be used as a drug treatment center, since Berks County is in the midst of an opioid epidemic. Fortunately, Governor Wolf's administration has prioritized the elimination of opioid abuse in Pennsylvania. In December of 2018, he accepted a \$10 million grant from Michael Bloomberg to fight the

FROM PAGE 1

opioid addiction epidemic and in January of 2019 the state received \$55.9 million in new federal grants for the crisis.

By issuing an Expedited Removal Order (ERO) to shut down the facility as a prison for immigrant families, the Governor could use these funds to convert this prison into a drug treatment facility that provides accessible and quality care. Lt. Governor Fetterman campaigned to shut down Berks and Governor Wolf's top priorities for the next four years are the opioid epidemic, criminal justice reform, and the welfare of children. Shutting down Berks would prove to his constituents that he is serious about his priorities.

Therefore, we call upon Governor Wolf as well as Teresa Miller, Secretary of the PA Department of Human Services, to take immediate action in issuing an Emergency Removal Order and take the steps necessary to convert the prison into a drug treatment facility.

If you have any questions about the Berks County Detention Center or this campaign you can contact shutdownberks@gmail.com.

SERVICE WORKERS: ANOTHER GROUP SHAFTED BY UPMC

quietly negotiated a three-year contract with those workers.

Why are UPMC's service workers so desperately in need of a union? We can look to the common trinity of wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Wages: Late in 2015, a Wage Review Committee organized by City Council Member Ricky Burgess found that hospital

service workers in Pittsburgh made an average of around \$12.94 an hour. According to *Jacobin Magazine*, a 2014 *Post-Gazette* report found that UPMC "paid ordinary workers between 8 and 30 percent less than what they needed for basic expenses like rent and groceries." In March, 2016 UPMC announced all of their workers would receive a minimum of \$15 an hour by 2021, most likely worth less by then than the average \$13 an hour they were getting in 2015.

In contrast, 10 UPMC executives received salaries of \$2 million or more in 2016, with CEO Jeffrey Romoff earning over \$8.5 million. Moreover, raises for service workers can come at a painfully slow pace. A patient care technician at UPMC Presbyterian for 11 years said she was lucky to get a 3% raise some years, "which is really nothing when your hourly wage is so low." An administrative assistant in Presbyterian's pathology department began in 2006 at \$10.06 per hour and earned around \$16 an hour 12 years later, mainly, *Trib Live* reports, "thanks to a one-time merit raise" after a change in job title.

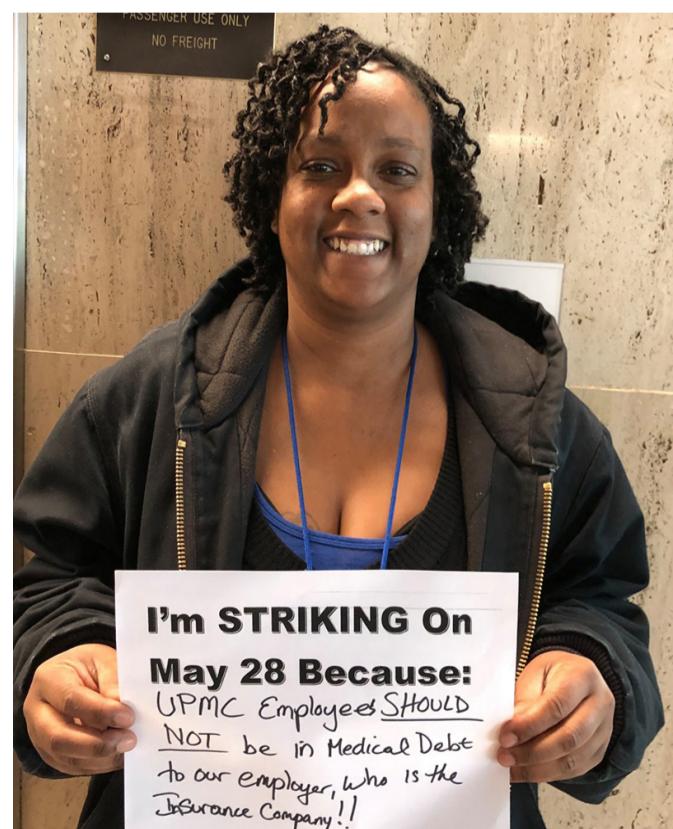
Benefits: For UPMC workers, UPMC health insurance is their only option and, just like the old coal company stores, a possible road to long-term debt for some employees. "UPMC decides what to charge us for physician visits, sets the costs of our visits to its hospitals and bills our health plan, which in turn bills employees for premiums, copays, deductibles and uncovered services," Nicholas Theis, a research principal at UPMC Western Psychiatric, wrote recently. Employees, he added, can be left "with bills they can't possibly pay with a single full-time job at UPMC."

"We work in this system and provide health care," Ellie Lalonde, also at Western Psychiatric, told *Trib Live* last fall, "and yet we can't afford to access it for ourselves—not without bills that are so outrageous that we avoid seeking out health care."

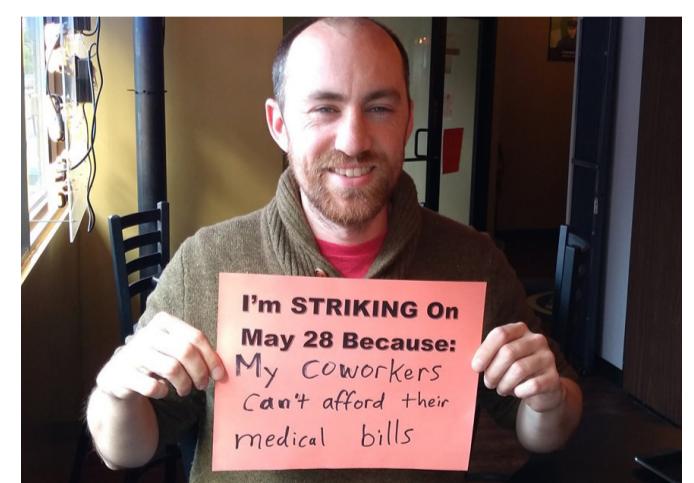
Working Conditions: Apart from the documented instances of harassment and punishment of workers seeking to unionize, understaffing has been another

FROM PAGE 1

complaint of service workers in recent years. "When I started in 2005 it was a nice place to work. Floor was fully staffed," recalls one patient care tech. But then chronic understaffing took its toll and this employee quit in December 2016. "You're trying to do your vitals, call bells are ringing. You're assisting a patient to the bathroom. Being understaffed all the time, patients are not getting the attention they need. They sense the stress that the



"I'M STRIKING BECAUSE UPMC EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT BE IN MEDICAL DEBT TO OUR EMPLOYER, WHO IS ALSO THE INSURER!" - NILA PAYTON, UPMC PRESBYTERIAN



MATT IS GOING OUT ON STRIKE FOR BETTER HEALTHCARE. HOSPITAL WORKERS SHOULDN'T BE IN DEBT OR AVOID GOING TO THE DOCTOR.

staff is going through."

Service workers are part of the community that enabled UPMC's warp-speed growth over the years, and are fully deserving of the respect and consideration UPMC only reserves for its executives.

Neil Cosgrove is a member of the NewPeople editorial collective and the Merton Center board.

OPEN LETTERS

OPEN LETTER TO SENATOR BOB CASEY

Dear Senator Casey:

We have read with interest your recent message regarding your support for S.1, the Strengthening America's Security in the Middle East Act of 2019, noting especially your comments regarding the Combating BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) Act portion of the bill. We believe your position on this issue is deeply misguided.

You discount the "First Amendment concerns" of opponents of the Combating BDS Act. But among your 22 Democratic colleagues who voted against S.1, Senators Bernie Sanders, Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Sherrod Brown, and Cory Booker all did so precisely because of First Amendment concerns. Both the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Coalition Against Censorship have opposed the act because of its threat to free speech. And in Kansas, Arizona, and Texas federal courts have blocked on First Amendment grounds the implementation of exactly the kind of laws that the

Combating BDS Act encourages.

You claim that the "Combating BDS provisions in this legislation would have no effect on the First Amendment rights of those seeking to participate," but would only "allow states to divest" from entities that support BDS. Similarly, your colleague Marco Rubio has tweeted that this bill just "allows local & state govt's to boycott the boycotters." But as the ACLU has noted, "That, by definition, is state-sponsored punishment for a constitutionally protected activity, and it's what the First Amendment seeks to protect people from." The argument you and Senator Rubio advance is based on the alleged free speech "rights" of state and local governments. But you, as a "strong supporter of the First Amendment," must understand the entire purpose of the First Amendment is to protect the rights of the people, not the government.

Unfortunately, a similar lack of regard for First Amendment concerns is evident in

your co-sponsorship of S.852, the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act of 2019. This bill utilizes a vague and overbroad definition of anti-Semitism to equate constitutionally protected criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. Its foreseeable effect would be to chill free speech on college campuses. For that reason, it has been opposed by the ACLU, the Alliance for Academic Freedom, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee and Defending Dissent Foundation, the Center for Constitutional Rights, Defending Rights & Dissent, and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. It has also been opposed by Kenneth Stern, who authored the very definition of anti-Semitism employed in the bill.

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement that you would "combat" by both pieces of legislation is a non-violent movement, initiated and led by Palestinians and modeled after the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, to bring about a just peace. It demands simply an end to occupation and the dismantling

of the Wall, full equality for all Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and a respect for the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN Resolution 194. As Christians moved by the message of peace and justice contained in the teachings of Christ and the Hebrew scriptures, we join Friends of Sabeel North America (<https://www.fosna.org/>) and communities of faith in support of this movement. We pray you will reconsider your position and join us.

Sincerely,

Fr. Paul Abernathy	Mary Alice Lightle
Rev. Chad Collins	Leila Richards
Peter Gilmore	Dr. Steven Tuell
Nancy Lapp	Tom Twiss
Jane Larson	Tina Whitehead
John and Eileen Olmsted	

WORLD HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIALS CALL OUT NATIONAL POLICIES FUELING GLOBAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS

BY JACKIE SMITH
INTRO BY CHERYL BAUER

The US Human Rights Cities Alliance and national human rights organizers are encouraging local organizers around the country to share with local and state officials the text of a letter written by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Housing, Leilani Farha, to the United States and other governments earlier this year. In this letter, Farha explains how government policies, particularly those following the 2008 financial crisis, contributed to mass displacement of low-income urban residents and fueled a global housing crisis.

Below is the text of a letter the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance has been directing to local, county and state officials whose work impacts the availability of affordable housing in our region.

We encourage NewPeople readers to help us make sure our public officials hear this message. To get involved in local housing justice work, attend our next meeting, Saturday June 29 at the East Liberty public Library (10:15AM-12:00 noon).

May, 2019

Dear [various public officials, including elected representatives at City, County and State levels and Planning Commission members]:

As you consider upcoming legislation and policy related to economic development and affordable housing, I write on behalf of residents who are working to promote human rights in our region to remind you that the affordable housing challenges in our region reflect an unprecedented global housing crisis that has direct links to the 2008 financial crisis.

This point is made very clearly in the text of a letter written by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Housing, Leilani Farha, to the United States and other governments earlier this year. An important conclusion in Farha's message is that the affordable housing crisis results from a particular set of policy decisions that have privileged elite interests while neglecting the basic needs of other constituencies.

In her letter, she warns national leaders that many of their regulatory, taxation, and housing policies contradict national obligations under international human rights treaties and standards.

We provide Farha's letter here, and we hope you will consider this carefully in your policy planning and deliberation. As you know, state, county, and municipal leaders have an obligation to enforce U.S. international obligations and to protect internationally recognized human rights, including the right to housing.

Ms. Farha cites the following specific

violations in her letter to the United States, and each of these relates directly to many state and local policy decisions:

- Financial supports and tax breaks that encourage the institutional investment in housing undermine government's responsibility under international law to ensure access to adequate housing for the most vulnerable populations.

- Failure to enact legislation to ensure adequate supplies of affordable housing, such as rent control and policies linking housing prices with minimum wage regulations.

- Disproportionately impacting African American households and other minority groups, contrary to the U.S. government's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Her letter goes on to conclude:

To address the issue of financialization and its impact on the enjoyment of the right to housing, your Government must develop policies and laws that include a full range of taxation, regulatory and planning measures in order to re-establish housing as a human right, promote an inclusive housing system, prevent speculation and limit the extraction of profits at the expense of tenants.

This will require a transformation of the relationship between your Government

and the financial sector, whereby human rights implementation becomes the overriding goal.

We are eager to work with you to try to find approaches to development and planning so that we can better achieve these goals. We note too that we are working with policy makers and activists across the country to encourage similar responses to Farha's message.

We want our region to help lead the way to the development of urban policies that make our communities "most livable" for every resident. We should aspire to the challenge posed by international leaders to make human rights the overriding goal of our policies, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full human potential.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance

Jackie Smith is professor of sociology at the University of Pittsburgh and co-coordinator of the Pittsburgh Human Rights City Alliance. She serves on the steering committee of the US Human Rights Cities Alliance.

SAVING ALL OF PALESTINE

REPAIRING THE ROAD TO PEACE IN PALESTINE AND PITTSBURGH

BY MORIAH ELLA MASON

Editor's Note: The author has recently returned from spending ten days in Israel-based All That's Left: an Anti-Occupation Collective to spend the day breaking apart boulders and filling holes with loose pebbles and sand. With such a large group of Israelis and internationals, we knew settlers were unlikely to interfere.

The military, however, was another matter. Throughout the first hour, jeeps of IDF soldiers and border police gathered at the road. Thirty minutes

later, a soldier with a bullhorn walked down the road, declaring without explanation that the area was a "closed military zone" and that we had to leave. A few Israelis with us spoke to the soldiers, hoping to negotiate a compromise, while the rest of us continued working. Refusing to talk, the soldiers began making violent arrests - pushing people to the ground, dragging them over rocks, punching and choking, throwing sound grenades. I saw a soldier choking one of my Palestinian friends - his knee digging into his neck. I saw another

soldier punch an American Jew in the head. Three days later he continued to struggle with post-concussion symptoms.

Within minutes that felt like hours, 17 people had been arrested, including two journalists with press credentials hanging around their necks. The soldiers then threw a barrage of sound grenades closer and closer to the feet of the remaining people at the work site, forcing us to back up and run away.

It was the most violent intervention by police or soldiers I've ever witnessed, and though I was luckily uninjured I spent the rest of the day struggling with a reawakening of my PTSD symptoms. Sitting in a patch of sunlight, trying to slow my breathing, I couldn't stop thinking of the last time I felt so unsafe, the last time I felt so triggered - the Tree of Life shooting in Pittsburgh.

On Friday May 3rd, I experienced my first sound grenade. A loud bang, a flash of light, and then a moment of disorientation in which linear time was suspended. Sound grenades, or flash bangs, are a crowd dispersal technique. They are designed to activate the fight or flight reflex; to make you panic and run away. One of the less-lethal strategies of crowd dispersal, they can still cause serious burns and puncture wounds if they explode too close.

Why the flash bangs? Why the fear and panic? I had gathered that day with 125 diaspora Jews, Israelis, and Palestinians to participate in a joint work project: smoothing out a rocky dirt road that leads to five Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills. For these villages this road is the key to everything. It's how water, electricity, and food are brought to homes. It's how people access education and healthcare. It's how families visit relatives in other villages. But the road is full of potholes and large boulders. Water has to be brought in by tractor, which means families pay 10 times the cost of water in Jerusalem.

Because it passes near an illegal Israeli settlement, Palestinians cannot work on it without risking violent harassment. So a broad coalition of Palestinian organizations throughout the region came together and invited the Center

Nonviolence and the Israel-based All That's Left: an Anti-Occupation Collective to spend the day breaking apart boulders and filling holes with loose pebbles and sand. With such a large group of Israelis and internationals, we knew settlers were unlikely to interfere.

I grew up in a small town near Pittsburgh and live close to Tree of Life. Like the rest of my community I was deeply shaken by the shooting and struggled with grief, panic, and deep sadness afterwards. But I was also unsurprised. I was the only Jewish child in my small town school and I experienced pervasive anti-Semitism, from ignorant comments to death threats. My Jewish community held one bright spot of hope amidst the bullying: Israel was a safe place to be a Jew.

In the communities I grew up in the strategies for Jewish safety were limited to two options: assimilation to whiteness or unquestioning support of Israel. The Tree of Life shooting and the rising tide of anti-Semitism across the U.S. demonstrates that clinging to whiteness is an illusory form of safety. To truly assimilate to whiteness and its ideals requires the erasure of Jews of color and the erection of artificial barriers between white Jews and other marginalized groups within the U.S.

Over the past six months of healing I have been bolstered by beautiful acts of solidarity among communities targeted by white supremacy. The Muslim community raised \$200,000 for the victims of the Tree of Life shooting. Immigrant justice and Black Lives Matter activists turned out for our protests of Trump's post-shooting visit. This past Purim, the Pittsburgh IfNotNow chapter canceled our spiel and fundraiser so we could spend the night marching in protest when the cop who shot Antwon Rose Jr. (an unarmed black teenager) was declared not guilty.

Today I am wrestling with the reality that Israel is only safe for Jews who support the Occupation, or at least agree to remain silent and complicit with the status quo. The soldiers who arrested my friends did not hesitate to use pain points, flash bangs, and physical

violence on other Jews and Israelis who were nonviolently working to improve a road that serves as a lifeline for Palestinians in the region. For the Israeli military, Jewish safety is contingent on your politics.

Additionally it serves the Israeli state's interest when Jews in the diaspora feel afraid. I see this in rhetoric that paints every Palestinian as a terrorist. I see it in the intentional triggering of Holocaust trauma to justify repressive policies. I see it in the racism leveraged against Mizrahi Jews and the pressure to distance themselves from non-Jewish Arabs.

It's chilling to realize that the level of violence that we experienced that day was certainly softened by the presence of Israelis, diaspora Jews, and journalists. The soldiers were even rougher with our Palestinian friends and I feel afraid of the kind of repression they face when we cannot be there to stand beside them.

Despite this, when my breathing deepens, my heartbeat slows, and I am surrounded by my friends from all communities that oppose occupation and white supremacy, I am filled with joy and courage. I know we are creating the world we want to live in, a world that does not require Jews to be afraid or Palestinians to be broken. Both pathways held out as the key to Jewish safety - whiteness and Israel - are illusory. I know that real safety comes from solidarity, relationship, and co-resistance to the forces that keep us divided

Moriah Ella Mason is an active member of the Pittsburgh hive of IfNotNow and Jewish Voice for Peace-Pittsburgh. Ella is a dancer, an interdisciplinary artist and massage therapist.

TIME TO ADDRESS ANTI-PALESTINEAN RACISM

BY LEILA RICHARDS

"If you're racist, the world should know." So reads the headline on the website of the Canary Mission, the secretive organization that blacklists campus activists who support the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement directed at the Israeli government. Canary Mission claims the BDS movement promotes "hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews." Accompanying their profiles on the website are head shots of smiling college students and dozens of professors, including well-known Muslim, Jewish and Israeli academics—more than 2000 in all. Rachel Cohen of *Jewish Currents* reports that in many cases these blacklists have succeeded in their aim of preventing recent graduates from finding employment. They're also shared with the Israeli government, which has barred those on the list from entry into Israel. The BDS movement is modeled on civil rights struggles in this country and South Africa, with goals rooted in

international law and UN resolutions: an end to the Israeli occupation; equal rights for Palestinians and Jews; and the right of return of Palestinian refugees

from the wars of 1948 and 1967. The desired outcome is not the end of Israel, as has been claimed, but the beginning of a new democratic state shared by

Jews, Palestinians, and other non-Jews.

Universities have become the epicenter of the BDS movement, and the Canary Mission is one of several similar organizations operating on campuses. (Another organization, Campus Watch, predates the anti-BDS movement. Founded by neoconservative Daniel Pipes, it compiles dossiers on college professors regarded as biased against Israel, based on information gathered by students). In a *Jewish Currents* article entitled "Who's Trying to Kill BDS on Campus?" Josh Nathan-Kazis mentions several pro-Israel campus organizations, including The Maccabee Task Force, The David Project, Stand with Us, AIPAC (The American Israel Public Affairs Committee), the Zionist Organization



PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR

Continued on page 12

FUELING HONDURAN VIOLENCE

U.S. ARMS SALES DRIVE HONDURAN MIGRATION

BY TOM WEBB

In my report for the May issue of *The NewPeople*, I wrote of the multiple problems created by conflicts over land ownership, the role multinational businesses play in Honduras contributing to the material and ecological impoverishment of their people, and the crisis created for women living in a profoundly patriarchal culture.

Our recent delegations to Honduras found that factors there were not limited to their nation alone. Far more insidious was our discovery that the U.S. export of arms and weapons supplies is a major factor in the violence plaguing Honduras. But to understand the role our government and arms dealers play requires understanding the broader context of the international arms trade. First, according to the most recent release of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Fact Sheet from March 2019, entitled "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018", the U.S. was the top arms exporter in the world from 2009-2018. Our share of global arms exports increased from 30 percent to 36 percent. Russia, France, Germany and China lag far behind as the next four largest exporters of weapons.

We are the major arms exporter for Central American and Caribbean nations. While the US exported 17% of the arms to South American countries, we exported a stunning 47% of weapons and military supplies to Central American and Caribbean states. The second largest supplier of weapons to Central American countries was the Netherlands, which provided 16%.

Another important fact to consider: according to the Honduran constitution (Article 292) "the manufacture, import, distribution and sale of arms, ammunition and similar articles is reserved as an exclusive right of the armed forces." A journalist from the

Jesuit-owned Radio Progreso, in Yoro, flee from their own country.

Honduras explained that the military operates stores throughout Honduras where arms are sold to anyone, provided the weapons themselves are registered. When I asked if "anyone" included gang members, she responded with a nod. Since my return this story has been confirmed by several sources, including a retired Maryknoll missioner who served in Honduras, John Lindsay-Poland. Lindsay-Poland is a specialist in tracking the U.S. arms trade with Mexico and Central American countries, who works for the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco, California, and is a recently-arrived Honduran to the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Radio Progresso journalist further informed me that, according to Honduran law, an individual may own as many as 30 registered weapons. Furthermore, mandatory weapons training was required of all public high school students. She noted this was also a means of attracting young men to national military or police service following high school graduation.

With this in mind, the obvious question is: what may be the relationship between U.S. arms exports and the distribution of arms in Honduras? First, that weapons are sold or can be owned by gang members, explains in part the influence they wield in the poorer Honduran colonias in which they live. Multiple media sources have reported the threats gangs pose to small business owners, residents of poor communities and the general Honduran population. Throughout our six day root causes investigation we saw repeated signs of the threats gangs posed, like the concertina wire woven along the cement walls guarding small and often modest homes in the various colonias we visited. It is often the threats and/or the violence they display which has driven Hondurans to

On the other hand, since the military itself is the principle distributor of weapons, it is free to use weapons to maintain the public order. Unfortunately, as we discovered during an emergency delegation in January 2018 to protect the life of Ismael Soto

(also known as Padre Melo, the Jesuit director of Radio Progreso), weapons and U.S. military supplies are also used to squelch dissent, including the national outrage following the widely-viewed as fraudulent presidential election of November 2017. Radio Progreso had plastic bags filled with empty tear-gas canisters taken from scenes of military conflicts with civilians, which were manufactured in Homer City, PA. Colt Manufacturing has exported machine guns to Honduras that were used by military police on protestors during the uprisings following the 2017 elections, according to the *Miami Herald* of November 23, 2018.

The Trump Administration has recently threatened to cut aid to Honduras, which would affect military and police assistance, but rarely does this include firearms. Nor does it affect weapons sales from U.S. companies. Other U.S. companies based in Florida (handguns and long guns), Wyoming (explosives and some military weapons) and Illinois (ammunition) have also contributed to the mayhem which is today's Honduras. To make matters worse, an initiative that began during the waning years of the Obama Administration (but has since accelerated under President Trump) would transfer licensing and export oversight from the State Department to the Department of Commerce. If successful, this would remove virtually any congressional oversight of the weapons trade. There are currently bills pending in the House (HR 1134) and

the Senate to prohibit this transition. Senator Menendez (D-NJ), the highest ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, has placed a temporary hold on this decision. Trump's decision is no accident. He received \$30 million in donations from the arms production industry for his 2016 campaign.

Presently, a small group of delegation members working closely with John Lindsay-Poland are exploring a number of options to address U.S. complicity in Honduran migration. Efforts will be made to research the Berta Caceres Human Rights in Honduras Act (HR 1945) which was reintroduced on March 28th by Rep. Henry "Hank" Johnson (D-GA-4) to see if further amendments can be added to control U.S. arms exports to Honduras. Similarly, in public presentations made by returning delegation participants across the U.S., notice will be given of the necessity of supporting HR 1134 and the Melendez Act.

All are invited to One Smithfield st, downtown on Thursday, June 13 from 7:00 - 9:00 PM to receive Tom Webb's first hand report from his recent trip to Honduras earlier this spring. He will share his slide presentation of their delegation's visit there. There will be time for discussion and suggestions on what can be done. The event is being co-sponsored by Casa San Jose and the Thomas Merton Center. Please rsvp by calling the Merton Center at 412-361-3022.

Tom Webb is currently on the staff of the Oakland Catholic Worker and a regional council member of Pax Christi Northern California. He is also freelance journalist, former resident of Pittsburgh, PA and a member of the Thomas Merton Center.

ANTI-PALESTINEAN RACISM

FROM PAGE 11

of America, and the Israel on Campus Coalition. (The methods and reach of these organizations are the subject of an undercover documentary commissioned by al Jazeera entitled "The Lobby," now available on the website of the Electronic Intifada.) Efforts on the part of such organizations to monitor classroom speech, infiltrate student groups and stifle discussion of the Israeli occupation understandably generate resentment, and are likely to backfire, as they resurrect long-standing antisemitic tropes about secretive Jewish organizations using their resources and international connections to advance their own agendas.

Ironically, while campus organizations like these attempt to stifle debate on campus, right-wing Jewish anti-Muslim hate groups defend their incendiary rhetoric on free speech grounds. The David Horowitz Freedom Center, which

also operates on college campuses, has been described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as "a driving force of the anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black movements," according to Joshua Liefer in *The Nation*. The American Freedom Defense Initiative, which received \$100,000 in 2013 and 2014 from the Jewish Communal Fund, the *Forward* has reported, places anti-Islamic ads in video that "parts of Gaza were returned to the Stone Ages," adding "6,231 targets Co-founder Pamela Geller claims that destroyed," "1,364 terrorists killed." (UN although she has been "defamed" by sources reported 2251 Palestinians, leftist Jews, "many, many Jews have including 551 children, were killed in expressed immense gratitude for my work."

Racist hate speech from organizations like these echoes the incendiary rhetoric employed by Israeli politicians during the recent election campaign, which strident anti-Muslim rhetoric reached levels that would have been virtually unnoticed. The intolerance unthinkable in the past. Much of it was directed against Palestinians in Gaza, speech and academic freedom on which has been under blockade for more than a decade. Commenting on the weekly protests held as part of Gaza's Great March of Return, former Shin Bet director Avi Dichter claimed that "The Israeli army has enough bullets for every Palestinian." (<http://imemc.org/article/author/chriscarlson/>) Army chief Benny Gantz, who commanded the 2014 assault on Gaza, boasted in a campaign video that "parts of Gaza were returned to the Stone Ages," adding "6,231 targets destroyed," "1,364 terrorists killed." (UN although she has been "defamed" by sources reported 2251 Palestinians, leftist Jews, "many, many Jews have including 551 children, were killed in expressed immense gratitude for my work."

When our ears have been so exquisitely sensitized to remarks deemed antisemitic, it's remarkable that such underlying attempts to disrupt free speech and academic freedom on campus is part of the same process that condones racist hate speech and offers tacit support to anti-Muslim violence in this country and in Israel. As the nephew of two victims from the Tree of Life massacre, Chad Rosenbloom, has written, "The congregants that were gunned down in Pittsburgh have something important in common with the protesters gunned down in Palestine: both groups are victims of hateful and dehumanizing iterations of right wing extremism. The fight against antisemitism needs to be waged as part of a larger reckoning with bigotry in all forms or else it is meaningless. Apartheid Israel, which enjoys virtual impunity due to American diplomatic and military support, should not be exempt from this discussion."

Leila Richards is a retired physician who worked in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank with church groups and humanitarian organizations.

NECESSARY ACTIVISM

WORLD'S WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL

The conflict in Yemen, now in its fourth year, continues to bring horrific suffering to its civilian population. Millions are at risk of famine, with nearly 17,000 civilians killed or injured since the beginning of the war there. Last year, the air forces coalition of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have bombed residential areas and civilian infrastructure throughout the country. In addition, Yemen's Houthi armed group has conducted reckless ground attacks, shelling urban centers and villages. The U.S., the United Kingdom (UK), France, Italy and others continue to send billions of dollars of sophisticated military equipment in support of the coalition forces.

These war crimes and human rights violations cannot be tolerated. Responding to cries from Amnesty International, civil society organizations, and journalists, countries including Greece, Norway, Germany and Denmark have begun cutting off arms supplies to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. and the UK, however, have continued supplying equipment and providing vital technical and logistical assistance to the Royal Saudi Air Force.

Amnesty International and other organizations have documented remnants of munitions found in the rubble in the aftermath of the air strikes, identifying U.S. manufacturers Raytheon and Lockheed Martin as

The Saudi Arabia Accountability and Yemen Act of 2019 has been introduced

in the Senate (S. 398) and one will soon be introduced in the House. It calls for the peaceful resolution of the civil war in Yemen, addresses the humanitarian crisis, and the accountability of the perpetrators responsible for murdering Saudi dissidents. Please contact your U.S. Senators today asking their urgent support of this critical bill.

(Information for this article comes from *Amnesty Insider*, Spring 2019.)

Joyce Rothermel is a long time member of Amnesty International.

SHAREHOLDERS MEETING AT PNC

On Tuesday, April 23, six of us went into PNC's opulent but sustainable monument to capitalism at Fifth and Wood, to speak at the shareholders meeting about the bank's investment in nuclear weapons. Mr. William Demchak listened to three of us speak in civilized tones about the weapons and alternative investments.

When Peter Deutsch began to speak about the dangers of radiation if a bomb is exploded, Mr. Demchak had had enough. He interrupted him, saying PNC has no intention of giving up their investments in nuclear weapons, and ended the meeting.

So it's another year at Fifth and Wood, and bank branches, friends. Remember the Quakers got them to stop investing in mountain top renewal. Perhaps the profit is higher on the nukes.....

Below are my remarks, which followed Molly's:

"A heap of praise is due to PNC for funding the program, Growing up Great, to prepare our community's children, from birth to age five for success in school and in life. It's now a \$500 million

dollar remarkable initiative."

(After Molly's remarks, Mr. Demchak said the investment in nuclear weapons is \$300 million, rather than \$600 million. We, at this time, are not sure if this means

case, I modified my remarks to say the following:)

"But, meanwhile, in an effort to make a profit for the good people in this room, PNC has loaned out, according



(L-R) PETER DEUTSCH, FR. BERNIE SURVIL, MOLLY RUSH, FR. GARY DORSEY – FOUR OF THE SIX WHO WENT INTO PNC DURING THE SHAREHOLDER MEETING.

they have reduced their investment in those companies, or if they are refining makers of nuclear weapons, and, their description of what constitutes "nuclear weapons." Stay tuned. In any case, I modified my remarks to say the following:)

amount to additional companies who deal in deadly weapons, through underwriting and financial management.

"Investing in both children and weapons intended to rain down death brings to mind the words of the 1960's, 'War is Not Healthy for Children or Other Living Things', and believe me, folks, war is the business of these companies. Weapons must be used, replenished and updated. We now have 7000 nuclear armed weapons. Who needs more?

"As my friend Molly mentioned, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has set the Doomsday Clock at 2 minutes to midnight this past year. They believe we are in immediate danger of destroying ourselves from two sources, nuclear annihilation and climate change.

"We, each of us, and all those who make up the bank, are the ones who can change things. We are the change we've been waiting for."

Bette McDevitt is a member of the Editorial Collective.

THREE PANTHERS FIND HOPE IN THE MIDST OF US HELL

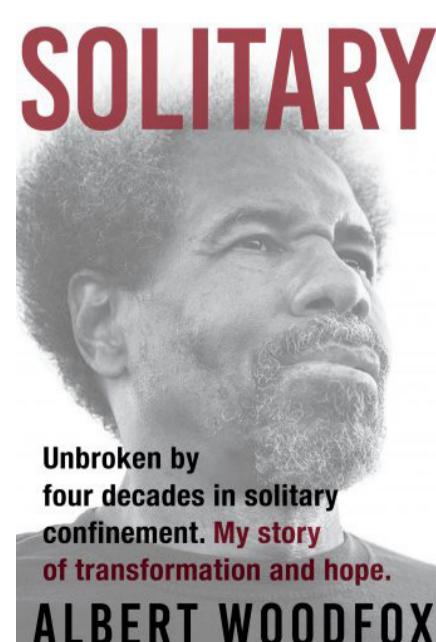
In 2016, I had the privilege to meet and have lunch with Albert Woodfox and Robert King at the International & Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Prolonged Solitary Confinement Conference at the University of Pittsburgh Law School.

It had only been a few months since Mr. Woodfox had been released from 44 years of solitary, more than any other human being in the history of the world. He was obviously stunned by his newly won freedom after so much extreme confinement, but his passion for justice, his humility and his strength of character were also evident. In reading his newly published book, I learned just how strong and determined these two actually are.

I warn you. Reading this book is a challenge. It is a dark tale of some of the most inhumane cruelty you will ever encounter. It is also a story about hope and determination, solidarity and success in the face of a seemingly all powerful and corrupt system.

Woodfox, King and Herman Wallace (deceased) were set up and wrongly convicted of killing a prison guard. They were targeted specifically for their political beliefs as members of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense.

As the name suggests, BPP Chapters were never about revenge or hate. They were all about self defense, in this case at a very dangerous place, Angola State Prison in Louisiana. The three



BY JEFF C

gentlemen ultimately became known around the world as the Angola 3.

The USA incarcerates more people than anywhere else on earth. Solitary confinement is torture and yet it is considered standard operating procedure throughout the USA. Often our prison administrators and staff punish the best prisoners brutally because they decry injustices. They reward the worst prisoners and give them parole in exchange for covering up official corruption. In such a hellish world, how can one keep one's integrity and will to live, Albert Woodfox shows us how.

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OVERCOMING IGNORANCE

THE ABORTION OF ROE VS. WADE

BY RENÉE ANNELIESA

Alabama and Georgia are the most recent states to ratify legislation known as "fetal heartbeat" bills in 2019. Similar "heartbeat" bills are in the works in 10 other states — Missouri, Tennessee, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, South Carolina and West Virginia — according to the Guttmacher Institute. These laws are intended to define the personhood of a developing embryo as soon as a heartbeat can be detected, and thus render abortion after that point a felony. A federal judge has already blocked Kentucky's law. Other courts struck down similar laws that were recently enacted in Iowa and North Dakota.

I am so thankful for the women who have shared their experiences with me. Keep talking about your ectopic pregnancies, your spontaneous miscarriages, your abortions, your intersex chromosomal and hormonal variations, your vanishing twins, your calcified babies, your fertility treatments and implantations, your infertility, your cancer, your labor and delivery, your surgeries, your hysterectomies, your cysts, your endometriosis, your rapes, your incest, your molestations, your assaults, your abuse.

We were not taught these things in school. We were not taught these things at home. Women never

talked about their miscarriages, only their successful deliveries. We were taught to keep quiet about our reproductive health. We were taught to endure pain and not tell our doctors about it, that pain is part of being a woman, not that it could signal health problems that could be managed or resolved with treatment. We were taught to not talk about these things with other women, especially not our feelings about it. We were taught to never tell men about it, to never chance them feeling ignorant or guilty about our reproductive health or experiences.

We were taught fear, shame and ignorance. That's where these bills are coming from. They're coming from an extremely limited understanding of women's reproductive health based in myth and idealism, not reality and its variations. From women not talking about their experiences with other women, their partners, their children, their friends. How else would people believe that an embryo or fetus could be transplanted to another place in the uterus? How else would people whole-heartedly believe that women's bodies choose to absorb unwanted pregnancies from rape or incest? How else would women blame other women for being abused or assaulted? How else would a woman blame herself for spontaneous miscarriages? We have to learn

to trust ourselves and each other, to talk to others about our experiences, to recognize and challenge misinformation.

Contraception is about health, not sex. Abortions are about health, not about murder. Abuse is about power and control, not sex and not love. Assault is about opportunity, not a misunderstanding. Communication is about understanding, not attention. Asking for help is about meeting basic needs, not a weakness or unfitness.

When you come across something you do not understand, look up "myths about _____. If you are surprised that a thing you believe is listed as a myth, ask yourself why you believe it. Is it from your culture, your parents, your religion? It may be time to reevaluate your belief or understand that it does not apply to all people. It might be time to reconsider beliefs with compassion and awareness, not rightness or justness. Try it. The first time I did it, I was shocked and horrified at how many myths I took as facts because I never questioned them.

Renée Anneliesa is a Texas-born, Georgia-based graphic designer and arial artist.

THREE PANTHERS FIND HOPE IN THE MIDST OF US HELL

FROM PAGE 13

Today Albert Woodfox and Robert King are free and traveling the world, speaking out against the evils of solitary confinement. They are living proof of how evil our system is. For 44 years the System said the Angola 3 were too dangerous to release. They have now proven the System wrong. Truly those who run this System are revealed to have been the dangerous ones all along.

These humble, brilliant, compassionate, gentle men have demonstrated superhuman strength, both physical and mental, to get where they are today. But they didn't get there alone. It took help from a whole network of activists and lawyers on the outside supporting the Angola 3 to get them out.

In this book Mr Woodfox expresses his heartfelt gratitude for all the sacrifices that were made to win their freedom.

But he will tell you. There are hundreds of thousands still locked up in solitary. Far too many of us don't care. Working class people of all races need to wake up and realize that it could be any of us in there some day. One need not be guilty to become a victim of mass incarceration. One only needs to be too poor to afford a lawyer. That includes me. Does it include you?

The battle against mass incarceration is far from over. Its architects are still in positions of power. Its investors are counting on the continued growth of

the industry. They have staked their fortunes upon it. They are not about to give up without a fight. This problem could get much, much worse before it gets better.

There is hope, though, in solidarity. Read this book. Open your eyes. Resist.

Jeff C is a professional fundraiser, a writer and an advocate.

KUDOS TO CITY THEATRE

BY JOYCE ROTHERMEL



Joyce Rothermel is a long time member of the Thomas Merton Center

RALLYING IN SQUIRREL HILL

MAY DAY 2019: JUSTICE FOR ALL WORKERS! PARADE

MAY 1, 2019 AT 6:00P AT SIXTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SQUIRREL HILL

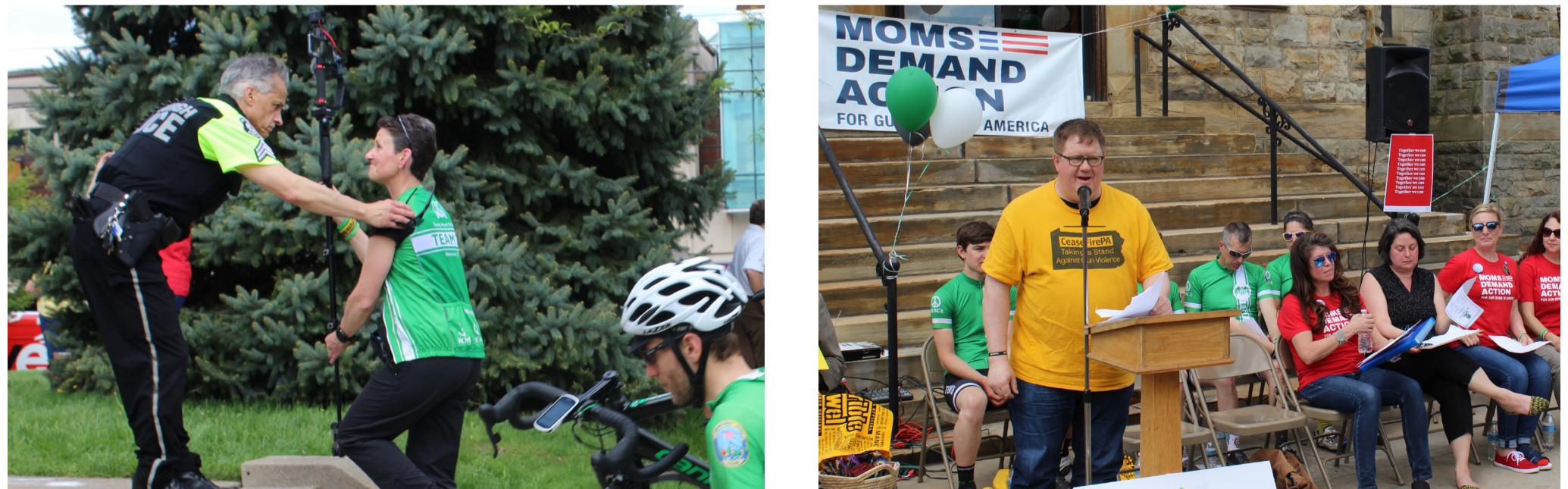
PHOTOS BY NEIL COSGROVE



"JUSTICE FOR ALL WORKERS! FIGHT TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS FOR TODAY AND OUR FUTURE!" MAY DAY 2019: JUSTICE FOR ALL WORKERS! PARADE HOSTED BY LCLAA PITTSBURGH, LABOR COUNCIL FOR LATIN AMERICAN ADVANCEMENT (LCLAA), PITTSBURGH UNITED, SHUT DOWN BERKS COALITION, THOMAS MERTON CENTER, PENNSYLVANIA IMMIGRATION & CITIZENSHIP COALITION (PICC), ONE PENNSYLVANIA, ALLIANCE FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY-APA, PITTSBURGHERS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT, IFNOTNOW PITTSBURGH, BEND THE ARC: PITTSBURGH, RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER OF PITTSBURGH, SOMALI BANTU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF PITTSBURGH, VETERANS FOR PEACE OF WESTERN PA, PENNSYLVANIA STUDENT POWER NETWORK, ARYSE, APALA PITTSBURGH, LET'S GET FREE WOMEN AND TRANS PRISONER DEFENSE COMMITTEE, JUSTICE AT WORK PA, AND CASA SAN JOSÉ.

SQUIRREL STANDS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE RALLY

PHOTOS BY NEIL COSGROVE



A MEMBER OF TEAM 26 FROM NEW TOWN, CT MOUNTS THE STEPS OF SIXTH PRESBYTERIAN FOLLOWING THE TEAM'S CROSS-STATE BICYCLE TOUR IN FAVOR OF SENSIBLE GUN LAWS. TEAM 26 ADVOCATES FOR SUCH LAWS IN MEMORY OF THE 20 CHILDREN AND 6 ADULTS WHO DIED IN THE SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTING IN DECEMBER, 2014.

ROB CONROY ADDRESSES ATTENDANTS AT A RALLY IN FAVOR OF SENSIBLE GUN LAWS ON MAY 2 AT SIXTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SQUIRREL HILL.

JUNE 2019 EVENTS CALENDAR

1 JUN, SAT. 2:30 – 4:30pm. Lgbtqia+ Advisory AAPI Town Hall. Department-Human Services

2 JUN, SUN. 4 – 6pm* Book'Em Meets First Two Sundays of the Month for a Book Packing Session. Thomas Merton Center

5 JUN, WED. 7 – 8:30pm. Independent Police Review Board Event. Sixth Presbyterian Church

5 JUN, WED. 7 – 8pm * Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP) meeting. First Unitarian Church (Ellsworth & Morewood Avenues, Shadyside)

6 JUN, THU. 4:30 – 10pm. State of Black Pittsburgh. 4802 Fifth Ave

7 JUN, FRI. 10am – 1pm. Homewood Backyard Market – Work Day. 7137 Frankstown Ave

7 JUN, FRI. 5 – 6pm. Revolutionary Fridays. Corner of Liberty Avenue and Millville.

7 JUN, FRI. 7:30 – 8:30pm * Southwest Chapter of Healthcare for All PA. 2101 Murray Avenue, Squirrel Hill. First Floor

8 JUN, SAT. 1:30 – 3:30pm. Labor and Environmental Coalitions: A Must for Survival of Both. The Pump House, 880 East Waterfront Drive Munhall, PA 15120

8 JUN, SAT. 1:30 – 3pm. Labor and Environmental Coalitions: A Must for survival of Both. 880 E Waterfront Dr

9 JUN, SUN. 10 – 11am * Women in Black monthly peace vigil in Slippery Rock. Ginger Hill Unitarian Universalist Congregation

9 JUN, SUN. 4 – 6pm* Book'Em First Two Sundays of the Month Book Packing Session. Thomas Merton Center

10 JUN, MON. 7 – 9pm* Amnesty International # 39 Monthly Meeting. First Unitarian Church, Morewood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, United States

10 JUN, MON. 7 – 9pm *Association of Pittsburgh Priests Meeting. St Pamphilus Church

11 JUN, TUE. 6 – 7pm. Black Political Empowerment Project Meeting Second Tuesday of the Month. Hill House Association Second Floor 1835 Centre Ave Pittsburgh

12 JUN, WED. 9 – 11am. #JeremiahJusticeJune12 at the White House. New York Avenue Presbyterian Church 13th Street & New York Avenue Washington, DC

14 JUN, FRI. 5 – 6pm. Revolutionary Fridays. Corner of Liberty Avenue and Millvale

15 JUN, SAT. 10am – 12pm *Fight for Lifers West meeting. Thomas Merton Center Annex, 5119 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224, United States

17 JUN, MON. 6:30 – 8:15pm *Monthly PUSH meeting. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Squirrel Hill.

21 JUN, FRI. 5 – 7pm. PGH United & PA United Happy Hour. 2517 Penn Ave

21 JUN, FRI. 5. 5 – 6pm. Revolutionary Fridays. Corner of Liberty Avenue and Millvale

25 JUN, TUE. 6 – 9pm. New Person of the Year Award 2019. National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 84841 California Ave, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212

28 JUN, FRI. 5 – 6pm. Revolutionary Fridays. Corner of Liberty Avenue and Millvale

"Peace demands the most heroic labor and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience."

-Thomas Merton

The Thomas Merton Center works to build a consciousness of values and to raise the moral questions involved in the issues of war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, oppression and environmental justice.

TMC engages people of diverse philosophies and faiths who find common ground in the nonviolent struggle to bring about a more peaceful and just world.

The NewPeople is invested in fostering conversation around topics that affect communities and vulnerable groups both locally and globally. We encourage contributions for each issue from the public that will generate conversation and we invite perspectives that are not widely considered. Opinions expressed in the published articles do not necessarily represent those of the Thomas Merton Center or its Editorial Collective.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Sundays:

Book'Em: Books to Prisoners Project

First three Sundays of the month at TMC, 4-6pm
Contact: bookempgh@gmail.com

Mondays:

SW Healthcare 4 All PA /PUSH Meeting

3rd Monday, 6:30 —8 pm

Squirrel Hill Library

Contact: bMason@gmail.com

Green Party of Allegheny County

1st Monday, 6-8pm

Panera, 3401 Blvd of the Allies, Oakland

412-532-9194 alleghenycountygreens@gmail.com

Association of Pittsburgh Priests

2nd Monday, 7—9 pm,

Prince of Peace Center, 81 South 13th St.,

Southside, Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILP)

2nd Monday, 7:00 PM

Thomas Merton Center, 5129 Penn Ave

Amnesty International #39

2nd Wednesday, 7—9 pm

First Unitarian Church, Morewood Ave. 15213

Tuesdays:

Black Political Empowerment Project

Second Tuesday of the Month, Hill House Association,

2nd Floor, 1835 Centre Ave. 6pm.

Wednesdays:

Darfur Coalition Meeting

1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm,

Meeting Room C Carnegie Library, Squirrel Hill

412-784-0256

Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (PADP)

1st Wednesdays, 7-8pm, First Unitarian Church, Ellsworth

& Morewood Avenues, Shadyside

Pittsburghers for Public Transit

2nd Wednesday, 7pm, 1 Smithfield St., lower level

Thursdays:

Global Pittsburgh Happy Hour

1st Thursday, 5:30 to 8 pm, Roland's Seafood Grill, 1904 Penn Ave, Strip District

Black Political Empowerment Project

2nd Thursday, 6 pm: Planning Council Meeting, Hill House, Conference Room B

Fridays:

Unblurred Gallery Crawl

1st Friday after 6 pm, Penn Avenue Arts District, 4800-5500 Penn Ave., Friendship and Garfield 15224

Hill District Consensus Group

2nd Thursday, 6pm - 8pm, Hill House Conference Room 2

People of Prisoners in Need of Support

3rd Friday, 7:00pm New Hope Methodist Church, 114 W. North Ave, Pittsburgh 15212

Saturdays:

Project to End Human Trafficking

2nd Sat., Carlow University, Antonian Room #502

Fight for Lifers West

1st & 3rd Saturday, 1 pm, TMC Annex

Anti-War and Anti-Drone Warfare Coalition

4rd Saturday at 11:00 am at TMC, 5129 Penn Ave., Garfield, PA 15224

BECOME A MEMBER

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Call 412-361-3022 for more information, or visit:

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