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THE INDYPENDENT

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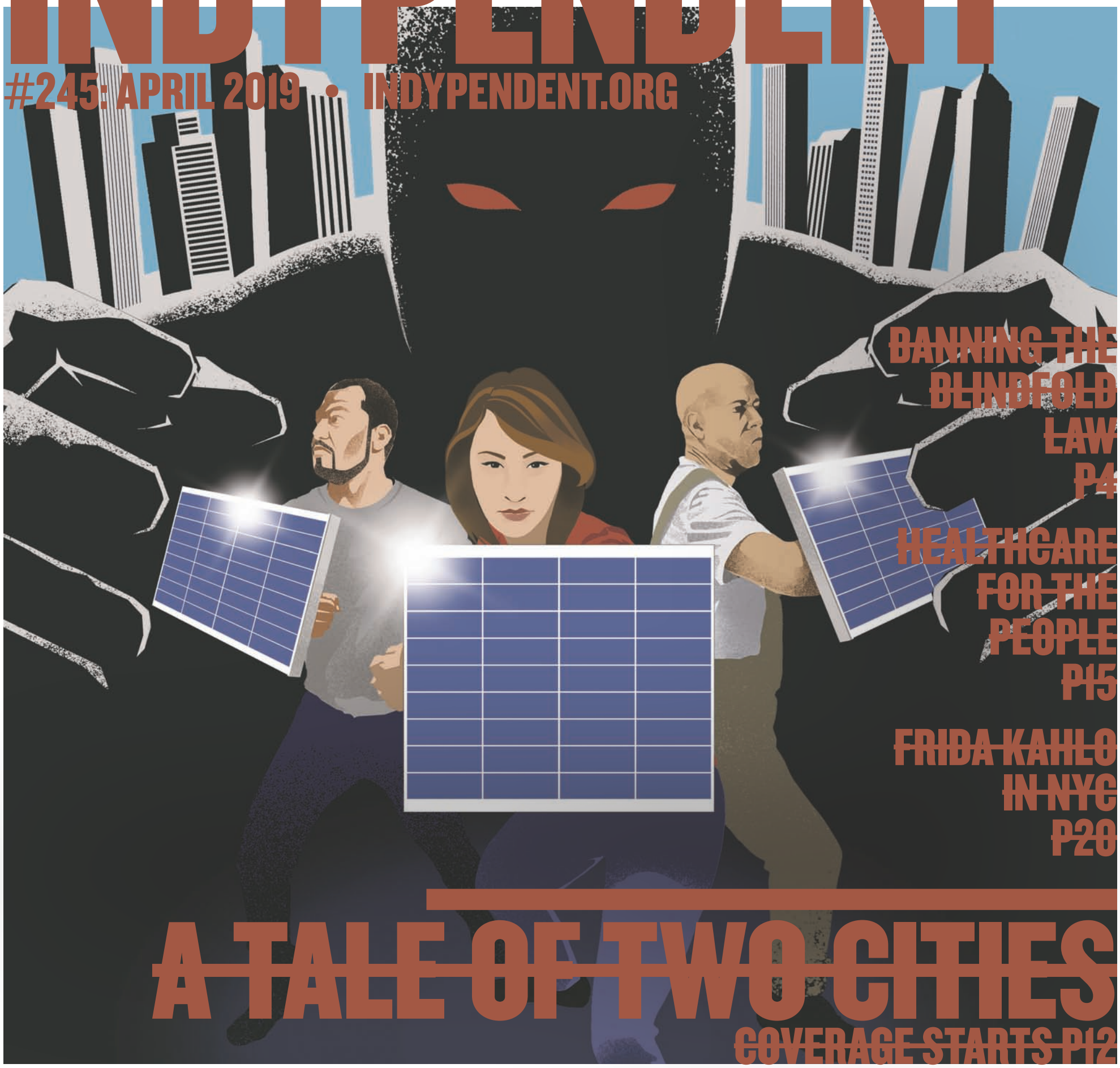

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

COVERAGE STARTS P12

THE INDYPENDENT

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR APRIL

THRU APRIL 20
WED–SUN, 12PM–6PM • FREE
EXHIBITION: BEGINNING, END, NONE
Hannah Black's video installation takes the cell, the building block of all living organisms, as its starting point. Questioning the classic analogy of the cell as "factory," Black explores the ideological aura of this comparison, which implicitly naturalizes the factory and commodifies the cell. Meanwhile, biotech has now made the analogy real by treating cells as sites of production.
Performance Space New York
150 First Ave., 4th Fl., Mnhtn

APRIL 1–APRIL 29
MON 8:30PM • FREE, one drink minimum, 21+
PERFORMANCE: NO ARTIST INFO OPEN MIC
Welcoming musicians, comedians, poets and performers of all kinds to bring their best and take the stage.
Starr Bar
214 Starr St., Bklyn

THURS APRIL 4
6PM–10PM • $5–$30
DANCE: THE GET DOWN
Dance like there's no tomorrow. No drinks on the dance floor. No cellphones anywhere. The Get Down is about music, movement and love.
House of Yes
2 Wyckoff Ave., Bklyn

FRI APRIL 5
7PM–10PM • FREE
SCREENING: LIBERTARIAS
At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, a nun is forced to flee her convent. She takes refuge in a brothel until it is liberated by a women's anarchist group. She joins the group and goes to the front.
The Base
1302 Myrtle Ave., Bklyn

APRIL 5–APRIL 7
Times vary • $25–$85
MUSIC: BROOKLYN FOLK FESTIVAL
Presenting the best in American and world folk music, a celebration of down home music, cultural diversity and memory.
St. Ann's Church
157 Montague St., Bklyn

MON APRIL 8
6PM–8PM • $5
PANEL: ARTISTS RESISTING GENTRIFICATION
Artists are often deemed catalysts harbingers of gentrification or pawns in neighborhood rebranding. Yet they can also take charge of their communities' future by bringing attention to economic pressures and pushing for protections for long-term residents. Sharon Zukin, author of Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places, leads a conversation on artists taking action.
Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St., Bklyn

TUES APRIL 9
4:30PM–6PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: FIGHT THE POWER: AFRICAN AMERICANS & THE LONG HISTORY OF POLICE BRUTALITY IN NEW YORK CITY
Author Clarence Taylor discusses his new book. Reception to follow.
Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, Bobs Library, NYU
70 Washington Sq. S., 10th Fl., Mnhtn

TUES APRIL 9
7PM–8:30PM • $12–$15
SCREENING: NO VIETNAMESE EVER CALLED ME N****R
This unflinching 1968 documentary follows 400,000 protesters as they march from Harlem to the United Nations building to decry the United States' continued involvement in the Vietnam War. An electrifying portrait of the righteous anger of black anti-war protesters and veterans, director David L. Weiss captures the ways in which black liberation and the anti-Vietnam movement were inextricably linked. Screening followed by a talkback with commentators and activists.
Museum of the City of New York
1220 Fifth Ave., Mnhtn

TUES APRIL 9
7PM–9PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: SIX BY TEN
Join prisoner-turned-activist Tyrrell Muhammad and the editors of Six by Ten for a discussion of their new book about resisting solitary confinement.
Bluestockings Bookstore, Café, & Activist Center
172 Allen St., Mnhtn

WED APRIL 10
6PM & 9:15PM • $45–$75
MUSIC: ROBERT GLASPER TRIO
Hailing from Houston, Texas, pianist Robert Glasper has a knack for mellow, harmonically complex jazz compositions that reveal a subtle hip-hop influence.
City Winery NYC
155 Varick St., Mnhtn

THURS APRIL 11
6:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: BLOCKCHAIN: THE NEXT EVERYTHING
Stephen Williams will discuss his new book, a vivid tour through the systems predicted to soon underpin economics, politics, global trade, science, art and numerous other aspects of our everyday lives.
LMHQ
150 Broadway, 20th Floor,

THURS APRIL 11
7PM–9PM • $25
PANEL: WHEN WE LEAD: WOMEN'S VOICES RESHAPING OUR MEDIA
Women in the media are pivotal in shaping and amplifying the narrative of this #MeToo moment of reckoning. Join Samhita Mukhopadhyay, executive editor at Teen Vogue, Mother Jones' Jamilah King and other female journalists as they discuss the challenge — and hope — of achieving a more equal conversation.
The New School Tishman Auditorium
63 Fifth Ave., Mnhtn

FRI APRIL 12
6:30PM–4AM • $0–$8
MUSIC: DIASPORIC SOUND: MIGRATION, RESILIENCE & REMIX
Activist and DJ Thanu Yakupitiyage curates a conversation on the impact that migrations from South Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean have had on the creation of diasporic, border-traversing sounds. Hop burroughs for an after party at C'mon Everybody. It starts at 11 p.m. and features sets from Yakupitiyage (as DJ Ushka), Oscar Ñ╗, Riobamba, Chief Boima and DJ Rekha.
NYU Silver Center
31 Washington Pl., Mnhtn
&
C'mon Everybody
325 Franklin Ave., Bklyn

SUN APRIL 14
11AM–5PM • FREE
PARADE: 2019 VEGGIE PRIDE PARADE
This annual event brings the vegan and veg-curious community together to celebrate animal-friendly, sustainable and healthy lifestyles. Parade lines up at 11 a.m. at 40 Gansevoort St. and ends at 1 p.m. in Union Square Park for music and vegan food.
40 Gansevoort St. & Union Square Park
Mnhtn

WED APRIL 17
6:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINX HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
An intersectional history of the shared struggle for human rights from 1776 to present, Paul Ortiz's new book places Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa at the center of the development of democracy in the United States.
The People's Forum
320 W. 37th St., Mnhtn

THURS APRIL 18
11AM–2PM • FREE
MARKET: STOP 'N' SWAP
Bring clean, portable, reusable items you no longer need and take home something new-to-you. No one is required to bring something to take something. Books, toys, fashionable clothing, housewares, electronics and more.
Brooklyn Borough Hall
209 Joralemon St., Bklyn

SUN APRIL 21
8PM • $45–$75
MUSIC: LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES & ATERCIOPELADOS
One of the first rock bands from Colombia to gain international notice, Aterciopelados' Claroscura

won the Latin Grammy Award for Best Alternative Album this year. Venezuela's Los Amigos Invisibles plays a blend of disco, acid jazz and funk mixed with Latin rhythms. The band is lauded internationally for their explosive, live shows.
Sony Hall
235 W. 46th St., Mnhtn

WED APRIL 24
7PM–9PM
PANEL: FIGHTING LIKE HELL FOR THE BRONX
Social movement organizers reflect on queer and trans leadership in struggles in the Bronx against jail construction, displacement, gentrification and homelessness.
Bronx Library Center
310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., Bronx

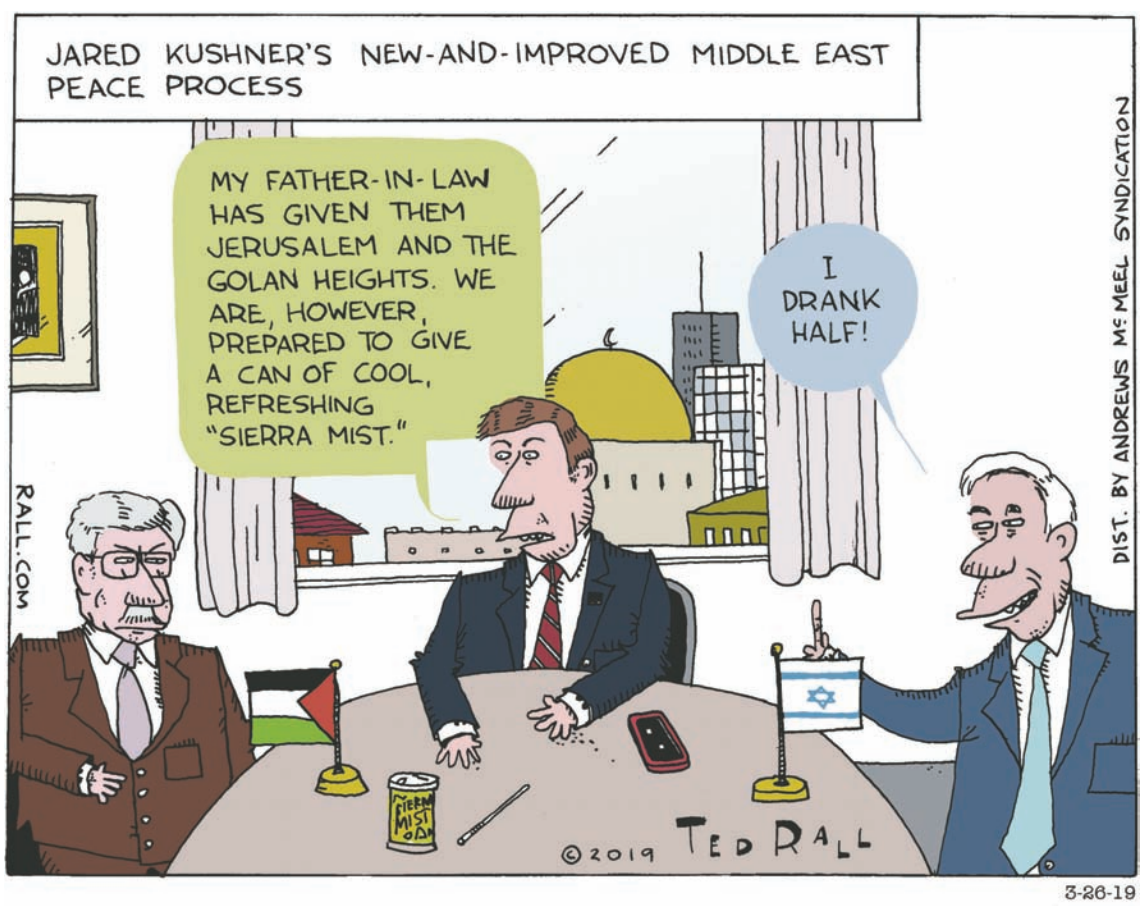
APRIL 26–APRIL 27
Schedule TBA • $25 & up
CONFERENCE: ORGANIZING 2.0
A digital bootcamp for organizers, techies and activists of all levels. Join hundreds of staff and members of unions, community organizations, grassroots campaigns and local nonprofits and independent activists, for workshops, trainings and networking opportunities.
The Murphy Institute
25 W. 43rd St., 18th Fl., Mnhtn

SAT APRIL 27
3PM–8PM • $35–$75
FOOD: CREOLE FOOD FESTIVAL
Come taste and celebrate creole blends of French, Spanish, West & North African, Native American, Haitian and Portuguese cuisine.
The DL Rooftop Lounge
95 Delancey St., Mnhtn

SAVE THE DATE: SAT MAY 18
7PM–1PM • $10–$20 sliding scale
PARTY: THE INDY'S RADICAL SPRING BALL
Cheap drinks, funky beats, good peeps, plus a special art auction, featuring photographs and illustrations from the muckraking mavens at The Indypendent. Who says radicals can't have nice things? Come dance your ass off and support independent, genuine leftwing-wing journalismts.
Sixth Street Community Center
638 E. 6th St., Mnhtn

HOOK, LINE & SINKER: Catch the Creole Food Fest at DL Rooftop Lounge on April 27.

A SCHOLAR & A MIXMASTER: DJ Ushka leads a discussion on migratory sounds April 12 at NYU, then migrates over to Brooklyn to spin for the after party.



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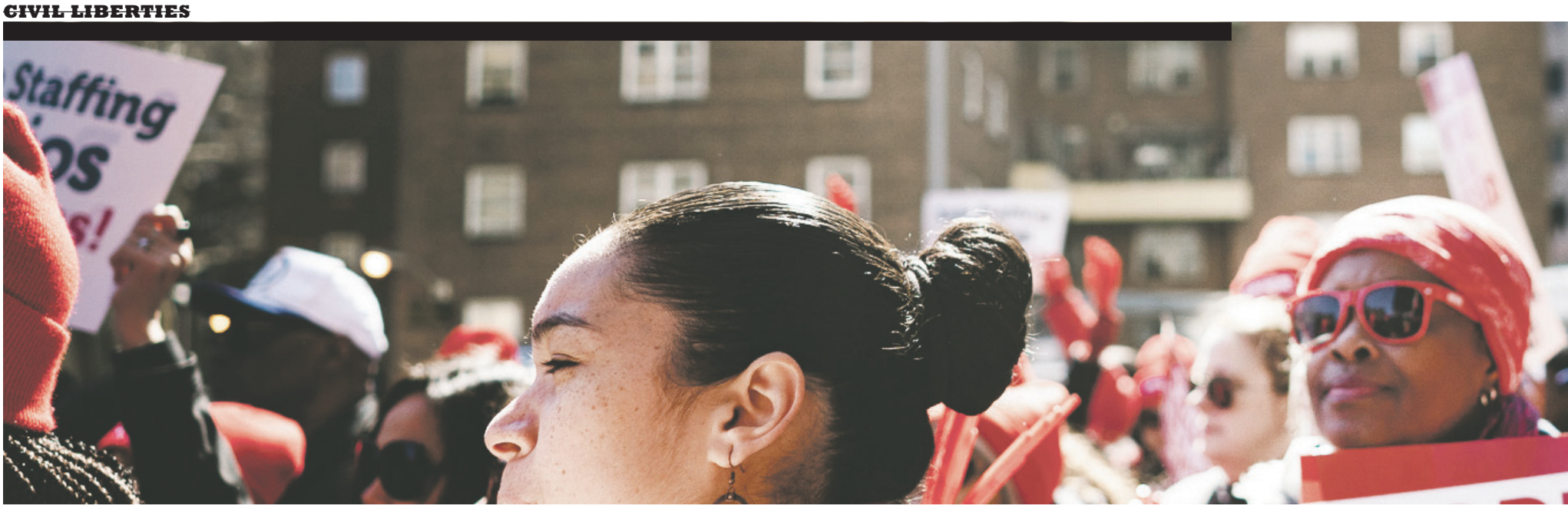

MAKING ROUNDS: RNs protest their ill-conceived working conditions outside Mount Sinai on March 18.

OUT OF PATIENCE

EXASPERATED NURSES READY TO STRIKE FOR BETTER HOSPITAL STAFFING

By Peter Rugh

How do you know when your employees are unsatisfied? When they vote by a 97 percent margin to authorize a strike. And if you think these workers are displeased, you should talk to their customers — or rather, their patients.

They complain of waiting in emergency rooms for hours, sometimes days; of lying on stretchers in hallways among surplus medical supplies, their fellow ill and bloody infirm limping and coughing past them; of clicking their attendant button and waiting and wondering when someone will arrive to alleviate their suffering.

"You're husbanding care between your sickest patients and your most recent patients, who may come in with chest pain or shortness of breath," said Jonathan Hunter, a 12-year emergency room veteran at Mount Sinai-St. Luke's Hospital in Morningside Heights. When he arrives for his shift in the morning, he often finds 20 patients who have been in the ER for half a day, sometimes as long as three days, and are still waiting to be transferred to beds upstairs.

"Conditions have never been worse," he said. "It's extremely dangerous."

Hunter is among more than 10,000 members of the New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) at the city's three major private hospital systems — New York-Presbyterian, Mount Sinai and Montefiore — who, as *The Indypendent* goes to press, have been working without a contract since December. On March 6, the union voted overwhelmingly to walk off the job. It was almost unanimous: 8,533–230. Twelve days later, they gave the New York City Hospital Alliance, which represents the three hospital chains at the bargaining table, notice of an impending strike. The walkout, originally slated for April 2, was suspended after the Alliance indicated it was prepared to make concessions on NYSNA's key demands, which revolve around patient care.

The progress in the contract battle highlights the power nurses have by virtue of where they stand in a medical field that has become increasingly corporatized and consolidated. While the institutions they work for began as humble philanthropic endeavors to meet the needs of the city's growing population in the 19th century — or, in the case of New York-Presbyterian, in the 18th century — they have evolved into hulking behemoths in a profit-driven medical landscape. They've gobbled up smaller, cash-strapped community hospitals and have left vast areas of the city with limited medical options.

Some 20 hospitals have shut their doors in New York over the last two decades, including Cobble Hill's Long Island College Hospital and St. Vincent's in the West Village. Both hospitals have since been converted into luxury condominiums. One apartment where St. Vincent's, a hub for HIV/AIDS care and research, once stood sold for $40 million to an anonymous buyer. There are now only two major medical centers serving the 300,000-plus people who live below 23rd Street in Manhattan: Lower Manhattan Hospital, run by New York-Presbyterian, and Mount Sinai's Beth Israel, which is downsizing.

The consolidation of care in New York is part of a national trend that has made it easier for large hospital networks to bargain with insurance companies, but has reduced quality of care while raising costs for patients.

"We're just being gouged by hospitals," said Timothy Faust, author of the forthcoming *Health Justice Now: Single Payer and What Comes Next*. "They have monopolies. They have pedigrees. And there's nobody really big enough to begin negotiating against them. The average insurer is too small to bring down prices. There's no real counterweight to escalating costs, and they rise much faster than the rate of inflation."

Consolidation has also meant more patients and fewer nurses to treat them. Medical staff are expected to do more than ever and to do it quicker.

The nurses *The Indy* spoke with don't want to strike, but they say the Hospital Alliance has refused to meet the demands they say are necessary to ensure the health and safety of their patients.

Last year, NYSNA members filed nearly 3,800 "protests of assignment" (POAs), signed by more than 20,000 nurses. Under state law, nurses are held liable for the treatment they deliver. The POAs are a way of documenting conditions that render it impossible for them to perform their duties to the best of their ability. They describe cramped and overcrowded conditions, dangerously ill patients and a scarcity of colleagues upon whom to rely.

The union wants the hospitals to lower their patient-to-nurse ratios, which it warns are perilously high, to reduce clinic wait times and to open up more beds.

"Inhumane" and "savage" are the words NYSNA President Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, who has over 30 years ER experience, uses to describe the overcrowding at the hospitals. "We have now eight patients per floor on a stretcher in a hallway for their entire hospital admission, with only a screen separating them from the world, and it doesn't even cover them," she said, outlining conditions at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, where she works. "There's no privacy, no bathroom, no toilet."

The hospitals could open up more beds, but they refuse to do so, she said. When Montefiore acquired

the bankrupt Westchester Square Medical Center in 2013, for instance, it turned it into an outpatient facility. There are now three vacant floors there, with dozens of empty beds. "It already exists and they could open it, but they say they won't," Sheridan-Gonzalez said. "I can't tell you why. I suppose it's because they can't make money off of it."

Nurses' working conditions, and by extension health-care conditions, in the Bronx are among the most rough-and-tumble in the city. Overcrowding was so intense at the onset of flu season in October that City Councilmember Ritchie Torres (D-Bronx) set up a hotline for patients to file complaints with the city Department of Investigation. It was also in the Bronx that a rank-and-file movement to transform the 42,000-member nurses union, led by Sheridan-Gonzalez and other veteran RNs, began. It culminated in the 2011 ouster of NYSNA's previous leadership, which was heavily bureaucratic and closely aligned with employers.

And employers are firing back. After NYSNA gave notice to strike, the Hospital Alliance warned that despite its offer of "significant wage increases, pension and health benefit funding, and an explicit offer to explore increased staffing, union leadership has called on their nurses to walk away from patients' bedsides so they can advance their political agenda of mandating rigid, inflexible staffing ratios."

Asked to respond to the criticism that a strike would only harm patients, Sheridan-Gonzalez thought for a moment: "I guess it is like teachers going on strike," she said. "Teachers going on strike deprives students of an education and in some cases their lunch, if that's what they depend on. But the bigger picture is that if you don't take a stand when all else fails, you end up hurting people in the long run. It's an excruciating decision."

Nurse Nichelle Ogiste, several months pregnant, stepped out of the cancer ward where she works at Mount Sinai on the Upper East Side on March 18 to show her solidarity with a temporary picket line that had formed outside. "My co-workers are as supportive as they can be while I'm in this condition," she said. "It gets tough sometimes, but if we had better ratios, it would be better for the patients, and maybe we can get lunch more often."

The Hospital Alliance warns that "[r]igid staffing ratios would lower patient care and drastically increase costs for not-for-profit hospitals — resulting in layoffs of other important members of patient-care teams." Yet the hospitals in question are not hard up. According to the latest publicly available figures, New York-Presbyterian made $404.5 million after expenses in 2017. Mount Sinai took in $205.2 million and Montefiore Health System $55.3 million. Executive compensation at these nonprofits runs in the millions and comes with perks like a housing allowance and, in some cases, personal chauffeurs.

NYSNA is part of a broad coalition that is pushing Albany to pass the Safe Staffing for Quality Care Act, which would mandate that the staffing ratios NYSNA is demanding in its contract dispute be instituted statewide. The mandatory patient-to-nurse ratio in intensive-care units, for instance, would be two to one. There's no set ratio now, but NYSNA members say it is common for them to balance three or four intensive-care patients at once, along with a regular load of a half-dozen who are recovering from surgery or life-threatening ailments.

California is the only state that sets such ratios. Hospital groups spent millions of dollars to defeat a safe-staffing law on the ballot in Massachusetts last year. A comprehensive 2010 study by the *Health Services Research Journal* that compared treatment in California to that in New Jersey and Pennsylvania showed that lower ratios improved patient outcomes and lowered mortality rates. California, the study found, also had lower turnover among nurses, which, as it means retaining trained staff, could save hospitals money.

"Our patients are not being treated in a humane manner," said Sheridan-Gonzalez. "The poorer you are, the less white you are, the less wealthy you are, the less social capital you have, the worse you are treated. We believe every patient has a right to dignity and respect and a right to quality healthcare. Quality healthcare is very much linked to having enough caregivers and providers to appropriately give you the time that you need to listen to you and talk to you and understand you and help you, and that's not possible in the current situation. Not at all."

She sees the rank-and-file revolt among nurses as having broader implications for the wider labor movement.

"We're in a position to take on a corporate structure in a way that many people are frightened to, or feel they could be harmed or replaced or run into trouble," she said. "I'm hoping that if we go on strike and are successful, that it will motivate labor out of the doldrums and get more unions to take on struggles, rather than spending their time going to Albany or Washington and begging for crumbs."

NYSNA members working at the city's public hospitals are also in the midst of contract negotiations. Their contract expires in June.

IMMIGRATION

BROOKLYN POLITICAL MACHINE

By Theodore Hamm

It's not exactly shocking when a reformer becomes a political insider, but the details still matter.

Once a determined foe of the Brooklyn Democratic machine, Margarita López Torres is running in the June primary for reelection as one of two Kings County Surrogate's Court judges — and she's doing so with the backing of party boss Frank Seddio, who has close ties to that court.

The Surrogate Court is where wills and estates are settled. Attorneys connected to the court via the office of Public Administrator collect lucrative fees. As in Queens during Joe Crowley's reign, the Brooklyn Democratic machine plays an integral role in the process.

After winning her first Surrogate term as an insurgent in 2005, López Torres contested the New York State law giving political parties control over judgeships (via its judicial conventions) in a battle that reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Although it was unanimously struck down in 2008, the case prompted Justice John Paul Stevens to declare that the "Constitution does not prohibit state legislatures from enacting stupid laws."

Now, with her first 14-year term expiring at the end of this year, López Torres is running for a second. But given that she will turn 68 later this year, if re-elected, López Torres will only be able to serve two more years because the mandatory retirement for New York's non-Supreme Court judges is 70.

López Torres tells The Indypendent that "unless there is a change in the law," she will indeed be forced to retire at the end of 2021 (and prompt another Surrogate election). She notes that the New York State legislators serve two-year terms, so her potentially abbreviated second term "is hardly cause for reservation."

López Torres has the full support of Seddio, along with his progressive allies, including Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, City Councilman Brad Lander, Assembly members Bobby Carroll and JoAnne Simon, and clubs such as Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats and Independent Neighborhood Democrats.

The Brooklyn party machine "no longer harbors [an] animus towards me," says López Torres, explaining that unlike his predecessors Clarence Norman and Vito Lopez, Seddio "has never asked me to select [one of his people] for my staff." She adds that Seddio "served as the other Surrogate judge with me for one and a half years, and thus is familiar with the qualities I bring to the bench."

Seddio's tenure on the Surrogate bench, however, was cut short when he resigned in 2007 amid an investigation by the state Commission on Judicial Conduct into his misuse of campaign funds. Seddio retains close ties to the attorneys appointed by Brooklyn's Surrogate judges to oversee the office of Public Administrator.

The party machine continues to control the judicial convention, which after the June primary will select a replacement on the Kings County Supreme Court for Harriet Thompson, who last year was elected as Brooklyn's other Surrogate judge. Asked whether she would accept a nomination to Supreme Court (where the retirement age is 76), López Torres flatly declares, "No"— and says she's made that clear to the party leadership.

One club that is not endorsing in the Surrogate race, New Kings Democrats, nonetheless plans to track the campaign closely and distribute explainers to its members. "People should go into the election knowing what they're voting for," maintains the club's president Brandon West. "Any backroom deals made within the party are not something we'll support."

Geoffrey Davis, a Democratic district leader from Crown Heights, has not yet decided whether to back former party boss Clarence Norman's preferred candidate, Meredith Jones, who has worked at the Surrogate Court. But according to Davis, López Torres has "failed to spot salient issues such as deed fraud and the erroneous sale of properties" that have plagued Brooklyn's black community in recent years.

Meanwhile, current civil court judge Elena Baron is also making a bid, and her consultant is Gary Tilzer, who ran López Torres' campaign when she beat the party machine in 2005. Tilzer is surprised by the cozy relationship between López Torres and Seddio.

"The machine makes its living off the Brooklyn courts, but now Seddio and company are endorsing a candidate who went to the Supreme Court trying to cut off their control of picking judges? It makes no sense," says Tilzer.

If nothing else, Frank Seddio certainly knows how to keep his bread buttered.

WILLIAMS PIPELINE

By Lydia McMullen-Laird

Stephanie Rivers, a single mother of five, survived Hurricane Sandy after moving to the Rockaways in 2011. Now she's worried she'll have to face another environmental disaster: a proposed natural-gas pipeline under the ocean just miles from her home.

"I'm raising my kids here and I feel like they're not going to have a future. By the time they reach adulthood, everything's going to be bad," Rivers said at a hearing held by the state Department of Environmental Conservation on March 6.

Rivers is one of the many who oppose the new pipeline, slated to be built by the end of 2020 in New York Harbor. Environmentalists have been fighting the project for the past two years. They argue that its construction could harm marine life.

They also worry that building additional fossil-fuel infrastructure will make it harder for New Yorkers to switch to renewable energy, and will undermine Governor Andrew Cuomo's pledge to reduce carbon emissions in the state by 80 percent by 2050. But those who support the pipeline say that without more natural gas, business development in the city will be stifled for years to come.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is expected to make a decision on whether to approve, deny, or delay construction on the pipeline by May 16. As the date nears, tensions surrounding it are rising.

The $1 billion pipeline, known as the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE) project, would add a 23-mile segment in New York Harbor to the Transco pipeline, which runs from Texas to New York City. It would pass just over a mile south of Staten Island, around six miles from Coney Island, and four miles from Rockaway Beach.

Sara Gronim, from the environmental group 350Brooklyn, says that is close enough to the coast for toxins dug up during construction to wash ashore and endanger human and marine health.

The Williams Companies, the Oklahoma-based firm applying to build the pipeline, said it has chosen a route that will avoid environmental damage. "We have effectively designed this project in such a way that any potential offshore environmental impacts will be largely temporary and minimal," it said in a statement Feb. 26.

New York Harbor wasn't always teeming with marine life. Waste discharged in the bay during the industrial era killed off animals and fish. "One of the really wonderful things about these waters is how much they've come back since the 1970s," said Gronim.

She said the water quality has steadily improved with the introduction of policies like the Clean Water Act, and now the area is inhabited by whales, seals, shorebirds, oysters and fish.

But during construction, Williams will need to dig around six to seven feet into the sea floor—which contains buried industrial-era toxins including arsenic, lead, and PCBs, according to testing done by the company. Activists like Gronim worry that will unearth those toxins and spread them into the water.

Environmental advocates also question whether New York needs more natural-gas infrastructure in New York and whether it aligns with Governor Cuomo's climate and emissions-reductions goals.

But many construction unions have come out in support of the project. They worry that if the pipeline isn't built, development projects they depend on for employment could be in danger.

"We know that a lack of reliable energy can threaten economic development and jobs for our members," John Hutchings, head of the New York State Laborers Union PAC, said in a statement.

A spokesperson for National Grid, the utility which requested the pipeline expansion and will be its sole customer, said it needs the pipeline for a projected 10 percent increase in natural-gas demand over the next 10 years.

A recent report from 350.org disputes that. It claims that the national forecast for residential and commercial natural-gas use is flat, and most customers switching from oil to gas in New York have already done so.

In January, Governor Cuomo announced that he would be increasing the state's renewable energy goals, from 50 percent of all energy consumed by 2030 to 100 percent by 2040.

Robert Wood, an organizer with 350Brooklyn said there is "no way" those goals can be reached if the NESE pipeline is built.

The pipeline plan represents a nationwide trend of moving towards natural gas over the past decade. Natural gas emits less carbon dioxide when it burns than oil or goal. However, the process of producing the gas emits methane, a greenhouse gas that over a 20-year period traps 86 times as much heat in the atmosphere as CO2.

"I think it's one of the main obstacles in keeping us from decarbonizing our energy system," said Gisela Winckler, a climate scientist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

She said in order to reach global climate goals, the U.S. needs to reduce its carbon footprint — and more natural-gas consumption is not the way to achieve that.

Over 200 groups have signed a letter by the Stop the Williams Pipeline coalition in opposition to the project, but seven labor unions and around 30 business associations have come out in support. "With this pipeline moving forward, there would be potentially millions of dollars of service upgrade work," said Vincent Albanese, director of policy and public affairs for the Laborers PAC.

Local politicians have increasingly been speaking out against the pipeline. "If you want to talk about a Green New Deal, if you want to talk about saving our planet, if you want to talk about an environmental crisis that we're in, then you must say no to fracking, then you must say no to pipelines," City Council Speaker Corey Johnson said at a press conference at City Hall on March 15. City Comptroller Scott Springer also spoke against it.

On March 17, 60 local politicians, including newly elected Public Advocate Jumaane Williams sent Governor Cuomo a letter urging him and the Department of Environmental Conservation to deny the permits necessary for construction of the pipeline. They have yet to receive a response.

However, only three major elected officials have come out in favor of the pipeline, according to Kivvit, a public-relations firm that represents Williams: State Senator Kevin Parker (D-Brooklyn), who chairs the Committee on Energy and Telecommunications; Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone; and Nassau County Executive Laura Curran.

SIDEBAR

Gov. Andrew Cuomo insists he can't be bought by deep-pocketed campaign donors. But can he be rented? The Williams Company's close ties to his administration have environmental advocates concerned, as a key May 16 deadline approaches for the governor to decide the fate of a controversial new natural-gas pipeline that would run beneath New York Harbor and out to the Rockaways.

TONIO BURGOS:

- *National Grid and Williams lobbyist.*
- *Former aide to Gov. Mario Cuomo.*
- *Firm and personal campaign contributions of over $200,000 to Andrew Cuomo's campaigns for attorney general and governor.*

MAGGIE MORAN:

- *Lobbyist for Williams.*
- *Cuomo's 2018 re-election campaign manager, and senior advisor for his 2010 campaign.*
- *Managing partner of the consulting firm Kivvit, which represents Williams.*

RICH BAMBERGER:

- *Kivvit's New York managing director, formerly Cuomo's communications director.*

The Williams Companies donated $100,000 to a Democratic Party governors' organization which supports Cuomo.


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SOCIAL SECURITY

By Eric Laursen

Now you see it, now you don't.

One of the most startling developments of the 2016 presidential race was the seemingly out-of-nowhere appearance of proposals to expand Social Security. When Sen. Bernie Sanders registered his proposal during his presidential campaign, the idea proved so popular that the designated center-right candidate, Hillary Clinton, decided to endorse some version of expansion, and candidates for Congress began talking up the idea as well.

Then Donald Trump won the presidency, the Republican Party firmed up its control of Congress, and Democrats largely (but not completely) stopped talking about Social Security.

And now you see it (again): As a result of last November's election, expanding and updating Social Security is back in the forefront in Washington. In January, Reps. John Larson (D-CT) introduced the Social Security 2100 Act, which quickly gained the support of more than 200 House Democrats. A Senate version, sponsored by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), soon followed.

Social Security is America's biggest, most successful and most popular anti-poverty program, and the main pillar of what's left of Washington's social compact with working people. For the first time in more than 45 years, a bill to expand it has a strong possibility to pass at least one house of Congress. It's unlikely to become law as long as Trump is president and the GOP control the Senate, but it's now virtually guaranteed to be a major issue in the 2020 presidential election, which means it has a chance to build enough momentum to be enacted into law in the years that follow.

This would be big news for New York City, where the population of adults over 65 is on the rise; it grew more than 19% from 2005 to 2015 alone, according to the city Comptroller's Office. A boost in Social Security benefits would be a relief to many New York seniors, whose incomes are increasingly swallowed up by housing costs — 6 out of 10 spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent — and who increasingly must work to make ends meet. Tthe number of working seniors grew by 62 percent between 2005 and 2015.

Due to the decline in private-sector pension funds, rising healthcare costs, and the difficulty of amassing personal savings in an economy with slow or no wage growth, 50 percent of working-age households are at risk of being unable to maintain their standard of living in retirement — up from 30 percent 20 years ago, according to the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

Not surprisingly then, Medicare for All is also finding sponsors in Congress. But the odds of Social Security expansion becoming reality may actually be somewhat better than for extending government-sponsored healthcare to the entire working population, because there are fewer competing proposals and therefore less controversy over how to do it.

That's partly thanks to lawmakers including Sanders and Larson and advocacy groups like Social Security Works, which have been working on proposals to make Social Security a more generous system for years and quietly building support for a core set of features. Adding momentum are the cohort of younger, more progressive lawmakers elected last fall.

Thanks are also owed, in a backhanded way, to Trump and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Trump rendered protecting Social Security a much bigger issue when, after pledging to leave the program alone during his presidential campaign, his 2018 budget proposed cutting Disability Insurance, which is part of Social Security. McConnell shot down talk in the Senate of "saving" Social Security by cutting benefits on the grounds that it would be political suicide.

MILLENNIAL ANXIETIES

That helped open the door for a more robust effort to improve Social Security. Larson's bill would boost old-age benefits for everyone by about 2 percent of the average benefit, increase the minimum benefit for people who worked in low-wage jobs most of their careers and adjust the benefits formula to better reflect the expenses the elderly actually face in retirement — higher healthcare costs, for example. To pay for this, the bill would raise the cap on earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax, currently $132,900 per year, and gradually raise the payroll tax rate to 14.8 percent from the current 12.4 percent over the next 24 years.

In other words, Larson would pay for his expanded benefits by raising taxes — for decades a non-starter not just for Republicans but for the center-right Democratic establishment. That's a radical shift.

One reason such ideas are becoming acceptable now may be changing attitudes among younger voters, especially millennials. "They're the first generation that's lived their entire career in a world of insecurity and constant change," Jessica Fulton, director of economic policy at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, said in January at the annual policy conference of the National Academy of Social Insurance.

A survey by the accounting firm EY, unveiled at the conference, found that 71 percent of millennials — people born after 1981, who now make up more than one-third of the total workforce — are worried that they will not have enough money to retire on.

Those worries may be reflected in the politics of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other new members of Congress, which suggests why they're not afraid to endorse measures that would raise taxes and expand social obligations to working households. It also suggests new enthusiasm for the basic idea underlying both Social Security and Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance): social insurance.

Social insurance programs aren't government programs in the usual sense: they aren't paid for out of the annual federal budget, but out of taxes that are specially earmarked for them. They also are not means-tested: they cover everybody in the workforce, regardless of income level. That makes them partially immune to Washington's periodic attacks on "welfare" programs targeted at lower-income and disadvantaged groups. Raising payroll taxes to expand Social Security means that more money goes into a self-financing program that's owned by the people who pay into it and receive benefits.

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

Is social insurance the key to reversing the tide in Washington, which has run against poverty reduction and shared obligation for decades now? Will it lead to new programs that answer to working people's needs today?

Another idea discussed at the National Academy of Social Insurance conference is the creation of the first new social insurance program in the United States since Medicare was passed in 1965. Called Universal Family Care, it's being promoted by Caring Across Generations, the national caregiving advocacy group. It's designed to provide support for family caregivers who are burdened with providing for elderly family members, often at the same time they are bringing up children, and to give paid home care workers a better deal. Caring Across Generations is promoting it at the state level initially. The first ballot initiative to enact the plan was rejected in Maine last November, but supporters have vowed to push it in the state's legislature this year.

Universal Family Care would include universal child care, as well as home care for seniors and the disabled, plus paid family leave. For care workers provides a 50 percent wage and benefit increase, new quality standards and payroll check-off to form worker advocacy organizations.

Paying for the new program would be an additional payroll tax on incomes above the Social Security earnings cap amounting to 6.2 percent each for employers and employees. This would also be applied to non-wage income such as stock dividends through a "worker solidarity tax." Other contributions would come from federal appropriations like Head Start, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Medicaid. But, like Social Security and Medicare Part A, the benefits would not be means-tested.

"I hope [Universal Family Care] will stimulate efforts at the state and eventually at the federal level," said Indivar Dutta-Gupta, co-executive director of the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, in part because caregiving is one need that simply can't be solved through the free market. "You can't offshore it and nobody wants a robot to take care of [seniors]. The answer is a substantial public investment."

There's no telling how far Social Security 2100, Medicare for All and Universal Family Care will go in the months between now and the next presidential election. But at the moment, social insurance has a chance to build momentum to expand the social safety net for the first time in generations.

WARREN PIECES

DOES THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE'S PLAN TO BREAK UP BIG TECH GO FAR ENOUGH?

By Maia Hibbett

If you think you don't use Apple, Google, Facebook, or Amazon, either you're not on the internet, or you're probably wrong. If you have a smartphone, it most likely runs on an iOs or Android system — Apple or Google. Maybe you deleted Facebook, but if you post on Instagram or message on WhatsApp, you use a Facebook service. Even without a Prime order or a Washington Post subscription, you probably visit websites run through Amazon Web Services, which hosts servers from Airbnb to the CDC, Netflix to the New York Public Library.

With this level of integration, most of us have no choice but to patronize a few big businesses. Not many lawmakers seem to grasp that problem like Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) does. To date, Warren is the only presidential candidate with a detailed policy proposal to curb Big Tech's dominance. The characteristically vague Beto O'Rourke prefers the idea of "regulating" over "having five more Facebooks." Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) suggested "some kind of a tax," though she doesn't have a plan for it yet. But while it stands more or less alone, we shouldn't regard Warren's policy recommendations as our only option, nor should we constrain debate about tech regulation to the 2020 arena.

Warren calls for breaking up "the new tech monopolies" by designating the largest tech companies (those worth over $25 billion) "Platform Utilities," which would have to choose between hosting platforms and providing content. Amazon could no longer sell its own products, and Google Search would have to recommend outside web services. The proposal would also unravel the largest recent tech mergers, so Facebook would relinquish Instagram and WhatsApp. Anyone can read the plan; it's written in lay terms and available on Medium.

Warren unveiled her proposal on the morning of March 8, and that night she rallied in Queens, not far from where Amazon has sought to place its HQ2 before it was derailed by public opposition. Former New York Attorney General candidate Zephyr Teachout greeted the news with tweets of approval: "Warren is coming out swinging at the right targets!" The next day, Warren discussed the plan with Time's Anand Giridharadas at the South by Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas. "So yesterday you made a pretty big announcement about tech," Giridharadas said. "Then like the gangster you are, you flew down to a tech conference."

It seems funny to call the slight, somewhat dorky Warren a "gangster," but Giridharadas has a point. Her proposal is aggressive. Divorcing platforms from content would shake up the web, though Warren invites questions when she notes that "smaller companies" with revenues between $90 million and $25

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HOT TO GLOBE TROT: Sen. Sanders leads the pack on a Congressional tour of Afghanistan in 2011.

SANDERS FOREIGN POLICY

DEK:TK

By Mark Haim

For many decades, progressives have looked in vain for candidates who'd be taken seriously on the national stage, while at least starting to come close to representing our thinking. In 2016 that changed. Bernie Sanders energized a grassroots movement that gave the presumptive nominee a real run for her money. He did this primarily by motivating constituencies concerned about economic justice and climate change.

His platform for "political revolution," however, had relatively little to say about foreign and military policy. Perhaps this is because there has been a broad, bipartisan consensus dating back at least to World War II that embraces the role of the United States as the dominant global hegemon, often referred to euphemistically as "leader of the Free World." Those who step out of this consensus are generally dismissed or ignored.

While there have been moments of exception, most Democrats in positions of power have embraced massive military budgets that fund bases and naval deployments around the world, permanent maintenance of a vast nuclear arsenal, engagement in one war after another — overt, covert and proxy — and support for regimes that are designated "allies," regardless of how undemocratic or repressive they are. There's been broad support of, and subsidies for, the deeply entrenched military-industrial complex. Those who fail to conform to this bipartisan agenda have been labeled "soft," "unrealistic," even "un-American" and deemed threats to our "security."

The Democratic leadership has often adopted much more militaristic positions than those embraced by the party's rank-and-file members and voters. During the Vietnam War most elected Dems were latecomers to antiwar positions and few offered systemic critiques, writing off the war in Indochina as a "mistake." Bernie, an antiwar activist, questioned the underpinnings of U.S. imperialism.

As a congressperson, Sanders spoke out in unequivocal opposition to both the 1991 resolution authorizing the first Gulf War and the 2002 resolution authorizing the Iraq War. While millions of citizens, many of them Dems, opposed both these wars, congressional Democrats were divided, with many in leadership roles voting for the war resolutions.

While Sanders, in his 2016 campaign, did call for cuts to the military budget, his military and foreign policy prescriptions were both less of a departure from the Washington Consensus than his domestic agenda, and also far less prominent in his campaign. Is there reason to believe that his 2020 campaign will take a more "revolutionary" approach? Let's take a look.

MILITARY SPENDING

Bernie has broken ranks with upwards of 80 percent of his Democratic colleagues by consistently voting against Trump's increases in Pentagon spending. Sanders, in his book *Where We Go from Here*, asks the question, "Do we really have to spend more on the military than the next 10 nations combined — most of which are our allies?"

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

To date, Bernie has not made addressing the nuclear threat a major focus of his campaign for the 2020 nomination. He condemned Trump's decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and, along with nine other Dems (including three of his primary opponents, Warren, Gillibrand and Harris), he's co-sponsored the Prevention of Arms Race Act of 2019, which would deny Trump funding for procuring, testing or deploying weapons that would violate the INF Treaty.

KOREA

While challenging Trump on many foreign policy fronts, from Venezuela to Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Iran, among others, Bernie has praised the willingness of Trump to sit, face to face, with adversaries, including North Korea. Few Democrats have supported such diplomatic efforts, but Bernie seems to be putting principle over party in supporting negotiations.

WAR IN YEMEN

One foreign policy issue where Sanders has taken a major leadership role is pressing for an end to support for the Saudi-led, U.S.-backed war on Yemen, which is the greatest humanitarian crisis today, with many millions threatened with starvation.

While working to end the Yemen War, Sanders and his allies are also working to assert congressional oversight, invoking the War Powers Resolution of 1973. While this bipartisan effort is backed by a majority in both houses of Congress, the resolution is likely to be vetoed by Trump. It does, however, indicate that Bernie is in the process of laying out his foreign policy agenda; one that will contrast sharply with Trump's erratic record.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Bernie has, over the past few years, grown increasingly critical of Israel's actions. He has spoken in favor of addressing the rights of the Palestinians and has condemned the Gaza blockade, as well as the killing of Palestinians in Gaza protests.

He also supports the Iran nuclear agreement and is opposed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's moves toward war with Iran. This said, he supports a two-state solution, which, until recently, has long been the official U.S. position. He supports a robust U.S. diplomatic initiative to seek resolution to the long-festering conflict, while opposing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that would isolate Israel on the global stage, much like apartheid-era South Africa.

VENEZUELA

Sanders has been walking a tightrope on Venezuela. His position criticizing the Maduro government, calling for new elections and, at the same time, opposing U.S.-backed regime change has been attacked from both the left and the right. Recognizing the humanitarian crisis, he has refused to back a so-called "humanitarian intervention," the fig leaf often used to justify the use of military force. In his Feb. 25 CNN town hall, referring to Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, which he branded as "despotic," Sanders stated, "I think we have got to do everything we can to create a democratic climate. But I do not believe in U.S. military intervention in those countries."

The political calculus over Venezuela has been complicated by the fact that the GOP has been conflating "democratic socialism" — the term Sanders has long used to describe his New Deal-style social democracy policies — and the more authoritarian forms of "socialism." Their strategy appears based on creating a new Red Scare. Trump and company would like nothing more than to smear Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and others on the left with the "sins of Maduro" and the hyperinflation, unemployment, shortages of food and medicine and political repression being experienced today in Venezuela.

AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ & SYRIA

Sanders supported the post-9/11 authorization of the use of military force that was used to justify the American war on Afghanistan. He subsequently came to favor ending the war and voted against Obama's Afghan surge. He supported sanctions against Iraq during the 1990s but

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THE TWO 9/11s

DEK TK

By Nicholas Powers

Under the exploding Twin Towers, you see her face. In early March Republicans displayed a poster in the West Virginia statehouse that showed the fireball jet crash of 9/11. The caption reads, "Never forget — you said." Underneath the image of Rep. Ilhan Omar wearing a hijab it warns, "I am the proof you have forgotten."

Fourteen days later and 9,000 miles away, a white supremacist seeing the same "enemy" on the GOP poster, entered Al Noor Mosque in New Zealand, lifted his semi-automatic guns and shot. Fifty people were killed. Fifty people were injured.

The image on the Republican poster was the same one in the killer's mind. It was the enemy, a caricature — Muslim or Jewish, Black or immigrant — created by an international white power movement. For them any act of terrorism or crime by immigrants is an attack that must be met with violence. It feeds into the ongoing cycles of hate that chokes our lives.

THE TWO 9/11'S

As the Twin Towers fell and nearly 3,000 people were burned alive or crushed, the horror was already split by two ideologies. For the left, 9/11 was the tragic result of American imperialism; Noam Chomsky's book 9-11 set the template even as smoke rose from Ground Zero. He and subsequent leftists argued the United States had carried out terrorism from Latin America to the Middle East. When the United States funded and armed Islamic militants in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union, it was inevitable that they'd turn on us.

The right's 9/11 was that the United States was a good and moral superpower, wounded by barbaric fundamentalists. American Exceptionalism was reaffirmed by Congress singing "God Bless America" as firefighters picked through rubble for bodies. Patriotism flowed down from the White House, news, movies and music. The War on Terror was a war on the "Axis of Evil"; 9/11 became a category of unjustified pain inflicted by militants on "good" people, us, the Americans.

The right's 9/11 detached from ash-covered New York into a floating metaphor to brand permissive liberalism as the handmaiden of terror. In 2001 Rev. Jerry Falwell blamed the attacks on "pagans, abortionists and the feminists" saying, "All of them who tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face." In 2010, when an Islamic Community Center was to open in downtown Manhattan, the right protested it as "The Ground Zero Mosque." In 2015, when gay marriage was legalized, radio host Bryan Fischer, tweeted, "6/26 is now our 9/11 … the day the Twin Towers of truth and righteousness were blown up by moral jihadists." Now Republicans showed a poster of a Black Muslim woman, Rep. Omar, recently elected, under a photo of the towers exploding.

9/11 is a thermometer for Republican Christian ethnic-nationalism. When they lose politically, fear heats their rhetoric. It is invoked as proof they're facing a cataclysm. The farther right one looks, the more End Times imagery one sees. The GOP poster repeats Pat Buchanan's drumbeat of the death of the West. Alongside him is Tucker Carlson's immigrant bashing. Further right, there's the Nazi propaganda of Jared Taylor and Richard Spencer, who talk of white genocide and white replacement.

The doomsday scenes flood the internet where lonely, broken men create community around a shared vision. At the end of their transformation, faces glowing with faith, they pick up semi-automatics, go to a temple to kill Jews, go to a mosque to kill Muslims, go to a church to kill Blacks. Splattered with blood, they are arrested and jailed but rarely apologize. They never realize they have become the terrorists they supposedly feared.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE TOWERS

Three days after the white supremacist killed 50 people in a New Zealand mosque, a Turkish man in Utrecht, Netherlands, killed three and injured seven. The police believe it is an act of terror. If so, it joins a long list of Islamist terrorism.

If white supremacists read Nazi propaganda and look at 9/11 footage, then Islamists read religious propaganda and look at history. And there's lots to see. They could start with the European Crusades and later colonization or footage of children starved to death from U.S. sanctions on Iraq or U.S. bombs destroying Baghdad or U.S. soldiers torturing prisoners. They could start with the racism they feel in the West even if they grew up in it. They could do all of this because they are less the children of Islam than the children of neoliberalism, floating between cultures, adrift in the backwash of capitalism and searching for meaning. It could be alienated youth in New York or Paris or London. Everywhere broken men are lost and, like moths, go to the brightest, loudest angriest websites or mosques or leaders.

Documentarion Deeyah Khan followed Jihadists and white supremacists and saw how eerily alike they are and how the men in both fail at relationships. And why the news alternates between mass killings. Now it's the Muslim driving a truck and mowing down innocents in France. Now it's the white boy going into a Black church and shooting. Now it's bombs ripping apart runners at the Boston Marathon. Now it's another gunman entering a mosque and live-streaming the death.

Islamicism and white power are two ideologies, feeding each other fresh blood and growing stronger with every death. Between these two hatreds, liberals decry the violence and hold peace vigils. But they very rarely challenge the history of violence that created the trauma of these men, nor the ideologies that express it nor the emptiness of modern life, nor the hopeless future. For lost souls, sometimes only pain seems real.

9/11 SOLIDARITY

We are trying to breathe in a time where interlocking ideologies choke our lives. Each new headline jolts us. Mass shootings and terrorism splash the front page. White power says to fear the others. Islamism says to take revenge. Liberalism says it can all be managed without changing anything. Blind terror drives people into polar opposite ideological camps.

Even as conservatives use 9/11 to incite fear, a more powerful antidote to that fear can be found in what happened afterward. Really, not just 9/11 but every terrorist attack, people rush to help the wounded, save the dying and comfort the grieving. If you were around in New York in 2001, if you smelled the chalky dust and washed ash out of your hair, if you lost someone, if you took pills to numb yourself, if you sank into despair, if you hated, if you were scared, if you were injured or came down with cancer from the air, if you had to forgive to keep living: you have more in common with the many, many victims of terrorism in the world than any ideologue trying to recruit you into hatred. Remember, when the next leader says it's us versus them, that there is no "them" — there's just us.

BANNON FILM

Over the course of Alison Klayman's new biopic The Brink, Steve Bannon utters a number of chilling lines, but the most unnerving comes during a particularly contentious interview with veteran journalist Paul Lewis of The Guardian. "It's all right, no matter what I'm gonna convert 20 percent of your audience," Bannon quips with a smile.

Bannon is a charming, smart, reasonable-sounding, rogue-ish, unpretentious ethno-nationalist. He can say things like "We are working on building an old-school Christian democracy" to an audience full of liberals and you almost don't notice the implications of what he's talking about: the purge Muslims from the Western world.

He lands this line between a series of self-deprecating jokes about how much he's hated and keen observations about the very real concerns of people left behind by the global economy. It's an astute performance, and a perfect encapsulation of the dangers of giving Steve Bannon a platform.

The challenge even extends to writing this review. See how I've already lavished praise on Bannon, extolling his intelligence and personal charm? Bannon allowed the filmmakers to shadow him for two years although he knew they were hostile to his political views. He is that confident in his ability to convert his 20 percent. By making this film verite style, Klayton has largely ceded the floor to Bannon. This was a real risk. So who made the right choice, Bannon or Klayton?

In her time spent as a fly on the wall, Klayton was able to gather material that punctures the carefully crafted image Bannon has fashioned for himself as a mad genius who made Donald Trump president. While this image falls apart, Bannon's poetic waxings offer insight into the gains the right has made and the follies of the left. This is the film's most valuable contribution.

Klayman had the good fortune of following Bannon during the time of his fall from power. He has already been fired from the White House and, just as the film begins, he has been let go by Breitbart, the online media platform with millions of readers that he helped build, and dropped by his longtime benefactors, the billionaire Mercer family. Trump is savagely attacking him via Twitter and has by this point largely driven him from U.S. politics altogether.

Bannon pivots toward Europe in an attempt to pull various far-right groups into what he calls "The Movement." His efforts are disturbing but ultimately unimpressive. He's all posture and bluster, trying to talk something into existence that he really doesn't have the juice to create.

He returns to the United States as a gladiator in the fight to elect Roy Moore in the Alabama special election for Senate, a campaign that goes up in the flames as a sex scandal engulfs the candidate. Bannon sinks deeper into irrelevance, the worst form of hell for someone with his colossal ego. His image is exposed as a thin charade. The filmmakers didn't need to do a lot here and wisely chose not to. They adeptly and methodically chart Bannon's fall and take us along for the ride with excellent pacing and studied patience.

But it's Bannon's comments on the left, and on the current political terrain writ large, that are most compelling. Even though it came at a tremendous personal loss, Bannon knows how to make an impact. Here are a couple of lessons he offers: 1) outrage is today's most important political currency, and 2) never shut up. It's politically effective to stoke the outrage of one's followers and the contempt of one's enemies. The former ensures loyalty, the latter ensures that you are the topic of conversation. Social media is hyper-conducive to the production of outrage. If you can be its master, you will win.

The left is vulnerable on topics like immigration because it lacks a coherent stance. Racist and xenophobic as it is, "build a wall" it is a clear mission people can get behind; saying walls are immoral and calling for open borders isn't. Identity politics is another battleground Bannon sees as advantageous terrain for the far right. Once you write off the white working class, with whom will you build a winning coalition, the white ruling class?

Left wing populism only wins if it foregrounds the material interests of working people of all races and backgrounds. Building movements requires some uneasy alliances. That's coalition politics. By its nature it's impure.

Bannon understands this better than most left activists do, and he relishes every opportunity to play the left against itself. Doing so keeps left populism on the margins while the right grabs power. Bannon has set his will to the task of winning. We cannot let that happen. That is the lesson of this patient, well-crafted and deeply-unsettling film.

JUMP HED:TK

Continued from page 13

billion "would not be required to structurally separate from any participant on the platform." Why this massive middle ground? And will platforms really separate when companies get too big?

From an anti-monopoly standpoint, Warren's plan seems warranted, even as the government has become increasingly lax about enforcing antitrust laws in recent decades. Most antitrust action in U.S. history took place during the early 20th Century, when the administrations of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft launched over 100 Sherman Antitrust suits, most notably breaking up the Standard Oil Company in 1911 into 34 separate companies, including the oil giants Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, Amoco and Conoco. The Depression-era banking collapse ushered in the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act, which kept commercial and investment banking separate until its repeal in 1998. Now, Congressmember David Cicilline (D-RI) wants to levy a version of the law against Big Tech.

Calling Warren's proposal "smart and practical," Open Markets Institute fellow Matthew Stoller linked the two ideas. "Time to begin hearings on @davidcicilline's big tech Glass-Steagall idea to flesh [Warren's plan] out," he tweeted.

While enforcing anti-monopoly laws would be helpful, is that sufficient? Looking back on history, successful prosecution of antitrust laws has ultimately had limited impact. A 2001 antitrust suit put a dent in Microsoft, yet Bill Gates recently saw his net worth soar over $100 billion. The Standard Oil breakup created a group of fabulously wealthy energy corporations that have used their power to thwart serious action on climate change. In 1999, the two largest offshoots of Standard Oil, Exxon and Mobil, were permitted to reunite.

Progressive Era antitrust warriors had the free market in mind, and Warren likewise describes herself as a "capitalist to the bone" whose antitrust plan is intended "to make sure that the next generation of great American tech companies can flourish."

But what if we don't need a next generation of great American tech companies? Astra Taylor, author of The People's Platform (2014) among other works, questions the utopian promise of the Internet. "I'm struck by the fact that we use these civic-minded metaphors, calling Google Books a 'library' or Twitter a 'town square'... but real public options are off the table," she said in 2014. "We hand the digital commons over to private corporations at our peril."

Political analyst Richard Eskow has similarly argued that the largest tech companies should be publicly-owned utilities, because "these corporations were not created in garages or by inventive entrepreneurs. The core technology behind them is the internet, a publicly funded platform for which they pay no users' fee." The services they provide, Eskow adds, have become necessities, the sort of thing people should be able to access as basic resources, without trading in their monetized data.

In a future under President Warren, using federal regulators to break up Big Tech sounds promising. But what if the following chief executive doesn't share her priorities? If we want not just to rein in Big Tech's worst abuses, but decisively break their power, we should think radically — or, to take a page from the tech world's book, innovate.

If you feel fed-up with criminal justice reform efforts touted by the Koch brothers that leave our prison industrial complex firmly in place, two new books offer practical solutions to the longstanding dilemma of how to hold people accountable for violent crime without perpetuating mass incarceration.

In Until We Reckon, Danielle Sered draws on her work as founder and director of Brooklyn-based Common Justice — the first victim services and alternative-to-incarceration program that focuses on violent felony crimes like gunpoint robberies, shootings and assaults — to show how restorative justice a process of charting "a course for repair" that helps survivors heal and makes us all safer, unlike the current criminal justice system.

"Transforming our national response to violence will require placing the people who survive it at the center of any response to it," Sered writes. "This is not what we currently do — though we pretend that it is."

While acknowledging each survivor's unique experience and that many are not ready to forgive, she shares examples of how the responsible and the harmed party can agree on a shared definition of accountability. It requires: "(1) acknowledging responsibility for one's actions; (2) acknowledging the impact of one's actions on others; (3) expressing genuine remorse; (4) taking action to repair the harm to the degree possible, and guided when feasible by the people harmed, or 'doing sorry'; and (5) no longer committing similar harm."

In the examples Sered highlights, this process supports healing for survivors, provides an "avenue to dignity" to people who caused harm and fosters their intrinsic motivation not to be violent again. As she notes, "although we can sometimes escape the police, we can never escape ourselves." This outcome seems much better than imprisonment, which she cautions shares the same core features that often drive violence in the first place: shame, isolation and an inability to meet one's economic needs.

Most people who engage in violence are themselves victims of violence. Sered, who is white, notes this violence is minimized by white people who engage in and benefit from economic exploitation and systemic violence fueled by racism, and what Michelle Alexander calls "new Jim Crow" laws that disproportionately target people of color. Throughout the book, she draws on this analysis to round out her vision of reckoning and to call for white people to acknowledge the harm their laws and actions cause, then hold themselves accountable by working to end mass incarceration. Failure to do so, she concludes, "will only add to the toll for which we ultimately have to answer."

No single tool works for all kinds of harm and Common Justice is not designed to address gendered and sexual violence. Fortunately, in All our Trials, Emily Thuma offers a timely account of how imprisoned domestic violence survivors, criminalized rape resisters and dissident women prisoners and their supporters formed coalitions and campaigns which contested the rise of "law and order feminism" in 1970s and 1980s. Law and order feminism pushed for a punitive approach to violence against women. Instead, they worked to develop an anti-carceral feminist analysis that shaped broader debates on addressing root causes and remedies. She describes the book as her "contribution to the larger collective project of upending today's hegemonic story that incarceration is necessary to end gender violence."

An Assistant Professor of Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University of California-Irvine, Thuma explores

the often overlooked history of anti-violence mobilizations that focused on the lives of marginalized women, acknowledged how they often felt re-victimized by law enforcement and "pointed to the carceral state as a source of further harm rather than safety and redress." She details the work of prisoner support campaigns like the one for Joan Little, a black woman in North Carolina charged with murder for killing a white prison guard who tried to rape her and was ultimately acquitted, and notes how self-defense cases of women of color emphasized "advocated an intersectional… analysis of rape."

When Boston police failed to investigate a spate of 12 murders of black women and girls, Thuma recalls how feminists organized for community safety. She also recounts debates among feminists of color such as Nkenge Touré of the D.C. Rape Crisis Center over whether to accept funding from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, "the linchpin in the dramatic expansion of the state's capacity to surveil, police and imprison across the 1970s."

In a fascinating titled chapter, "Printing Abolition," Thuma allows us to follow the feminist discussion that unfolded in prison newsletters and grassroots publications about alternatives to relying on law enforcement to protect women against sexual and domestic violence, including a woman's right to defend herself against her attacker. She features excerpts of letters, essays, poetry and covers from Through the Looking Glass and No More Cages, and Aegis: Magazine of Ending Violence Against Women, which was published by the National Communications Network and Alliance Against Sexual Coercion after it merged with the Feminist Alliance Against Rape Newsletter.

This history lives on today in the work of Sered at Common Justice, and many other women based here in New York City. Donna Hylton, who was formerly incarcerated for her role in the murder of her abuser, is now Director of the Women and Girls Project at the Katal Center for Health, Equity, where she emphasizes that most women in prison suffered sexual and physical violence before they were incarcerated. Journalist Victoria Law covers the experience of women in prison for local and national outlets and on Twitter. Organizer and educator Mariame Kaba documents her extensive work to dismantle the prison industrial complex and pursue transformative justice on her blog, Prison Culture. At the end of a recent discussion, she held up a poster she was selling to raise funds for the legal defense of a women who had shot her partner after nearly a decade of horrifying domestic violence and now faced life in prison. It had a simple message: "Prison Is Not Feminist."

JUMP HED:TK

Continued from page 14

opposed the invasion of Iraq before it started in 2003 and repeatedly voted against it. He has also pointed to the U.S. war as fueling the rise of ISIS.

He likewise has questioned the legality of the U.S. presence in Syria. This noted, he has also criticized Trump for his erratic policies toward these wars, including his on-again, off-again, announcements of withdrawal, and his lack of both communication with allies and the use of diplomatic means to achieve peace.

Sanders has been a strong critic of the so-called "War on Terror," while not rejecting it entirely. In 2016, he stated he'd continue, but limit, drone warfare. In a major foreign policy speech in September 2017 he stated: "In addition to draining our resources and distorting our vision, the war on terror has caused us to undermine our own moral standards regarding torture, indefinite detention, and the use of force around the world, using drone strikes and other airstrikes that often result in high civilian casualties." ust how he'd balance this remains to be seen.

Mark Haim has been a lifelong activist for peace, justice, sustainability and climate action. He serves as Director of Mid-Missouri Peaceworks..

BIRTH STRIKE

Birth Strike: The Hidden Fight Over Women's Work
By Jenny Brown
PM Press, 2019

By Ann Schneider

It took more than a decade of litigation by feminist plaintiffs for RU-486 (mifepristone), known as the "morning-after pill," to be legally sold over the counter in the United States. The medication, which causes the pregnancy to be expelled, was fiercely opposed by anti-abortion forces.

Why would opponents of abortion also want to keep birth control out of women's hands? In Birth Strike: The Hidden Fight over Women's Work (PM Press), veteran feminist Jenny Brown, a plaintiff in the RU-486 litigation, argues that record numbers of women are declining to have children because they do not have the social or government support — such as paid parental leave and universal healthcare — to raise children unencumbered. In response, she contends, the corporate patriarchy is trying to coerce them into having more children by reducing or eliminating access to abortion and birth control.

Fertility rates among all women in all major U.S. racial groups hit lows in 2018. The birth rate among Latinas, who have more children than either non-Hispanic whites or African Americans, fell from 97.4 births per 1,000 women in 2007 to 67.6 in 2017.

Who is that a problem for, Brown and her compatriots ask; why have states passed 668 restrictions on reproductive rights over the past decade? In Texas, 82 family planning clinics were shut down by pretextual regulations that made it impossible for them to function. The result, according to the New England Journal of Medicine, was that use of birth control went down and childbearing rose 27 percent for women in the affected areas. So who wants us to have babies against our will, and why?

Conservative New York Times columnist Ross Douthat has one answer: "Today's babies are tomorrow's taxpayers, workers and entrepreneurs. No babies, no consumer demand."

Birth Strike supports its arguments with facts culled from a vast historical survey of the changing legal status of abortion, contemporary interviews, economics and germinal feminism — such as that of the Redstockings, the 1970s New York radical women's group. In keeping with tried-and-true radical-feminist principles, it relies on testimonials of women who have faced the choice of whether to reproduce or not, and at what price.

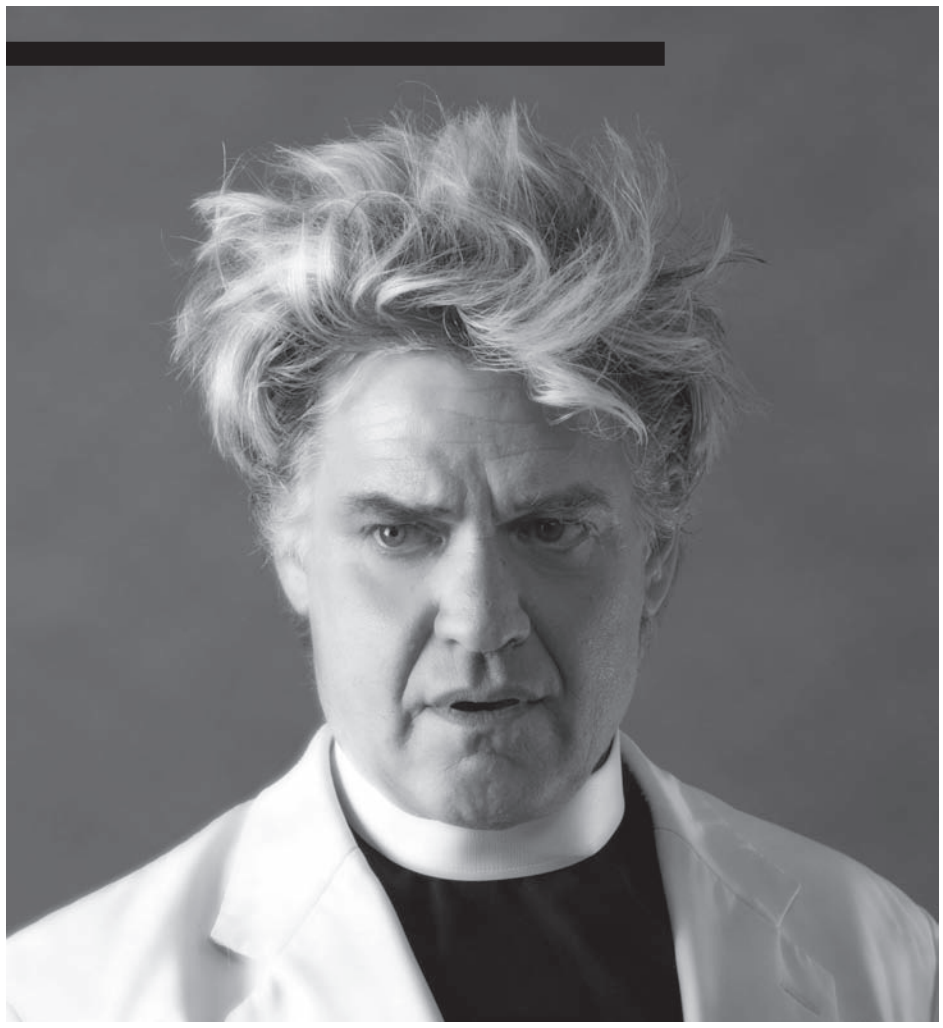
That the United States provides so little support for mothering comes as a shock to most immigrants. Around the world, 185 of the 193 members of the United Nations provide paid leave for new parents, five of them for six months or more. Redstockings once organized a speak-out at the UN where women from Columbia, Cuba, Hungary, Costa Rica and elsewhere bragged about what their governments provided.

Keeping women's reproductive labor unpaid amounts to profits for the 1 percent by keeping the burden of parenting in the private rather than public sphere. The website Fatherly.com gave its review of Brown's book the headline, "How Childless Adults are Secretly Protesting for American Parents."

Given that reproduction rates are below the number needed to keep the population level, Brown concludes, "In the U.S., women have not yet realized the potential of our bargaining position."

This is not "lean in" feminism. For radical feminists, there are no individual solutions. Rather, they say, tax wealthy corporations and individuals and their offshore tax havens to provide subsidized day care for all children, and pay the providers (who are mainly black and Latina women) a sufficient wage. Birth Strike also demands the repeal of the 1976 Hyde Amendment, so Medicaid can again pay for abortion in all states.

Women's refusal to carry children under current circumstances is an undeclared birth strike. Rather than looking at our physical capacities as a vulnerability or a disability, having the choice to carry a child can be a source of political power for women. This is a truly revolutionary realization.



TRUMP DEPRESSION HOTLINE

Dear Rev,
Every year I take my kids to the annual Earth Day celebration in Union Square. They love it and I feel like it's a great way to get them psyched about recycling and treating nature with respect. But there's all these companies there giving away cheap shwag. Is there a way to get back to the original spirit of the Earth Day?

Conflictedly yours,
ALLISON, Bushwick

Friends don't bring friends to the corporate Earth Day at Union Square. A key early lesson for your child is identifying a co-opted green event. Starbucks is a big backer of Earth Day. Has anyone put more trash in the ocean than the mermaid-with-no-nipples?

The Earth's crisis means we must break our relationship with corporations. They should be considered toxic until proven otherwise. All the marketing departments dip their websites in green pixels and are on the lookout for Earth Day sponsorships. Don't believe the hype.

Help your kid memorize the lyrics to "Fight the Power," then call the Bronx River Alliance and makes some parent-child bonding happen at that next riverbank cleanup!

• • •

Hi Billy,
Have you been following all this business surrounding the specialty schools here in NYC? I feel like they're pitting parents against each other. Yellow, black, white and brown — all our kids deserve more resources and the best education possible. I'm a student of capitalism, artificial scarcity is part of the game. But I want my kid to have the best and I'm prepared to fight like hell for her to get it.

— ALI, South Bronx

How funny that everybody, even movie stars, seem to be scamming their way up the ladder. But how much sense does elitism make in 2019? We'll have to use that ladder to get out of the flood and onto the roof.

It seems the shape of the class system has changed. The world is no longer a community with many roles. It's more like you live good or you die miserable. There are two classes now with a Trumpian wall in between. We desperately fear being on the wrong side of that wall. That's why, Ali, formal education has never been more meaningless than it is now.

Super-educated people are lost in a culture that is exploding. Let's not be afraid of all that. We won't be safe from the coming cataclysm because we went to Yale. A smart kid always has a degree in homeschooling. Regardless of the nonsense violence of the world, the child is safer who follows her passion, hones it until she is important to others. A survivor knows how to pull others up the ladder to safety.

— Reverend Billy

REVEREND BILLY IS AN ACTIVIST AND POLITICAL SHOUTER, A POST-RELIGIOUS PREACHER OF THE STREETS AND BANK LOBBIES. GOT A QUESTION FOR REVEREND BILLY? JUST EMAIL REVBILLY@INDYPENDENT.ORG AND UNBURDEN YOUR SOUL.