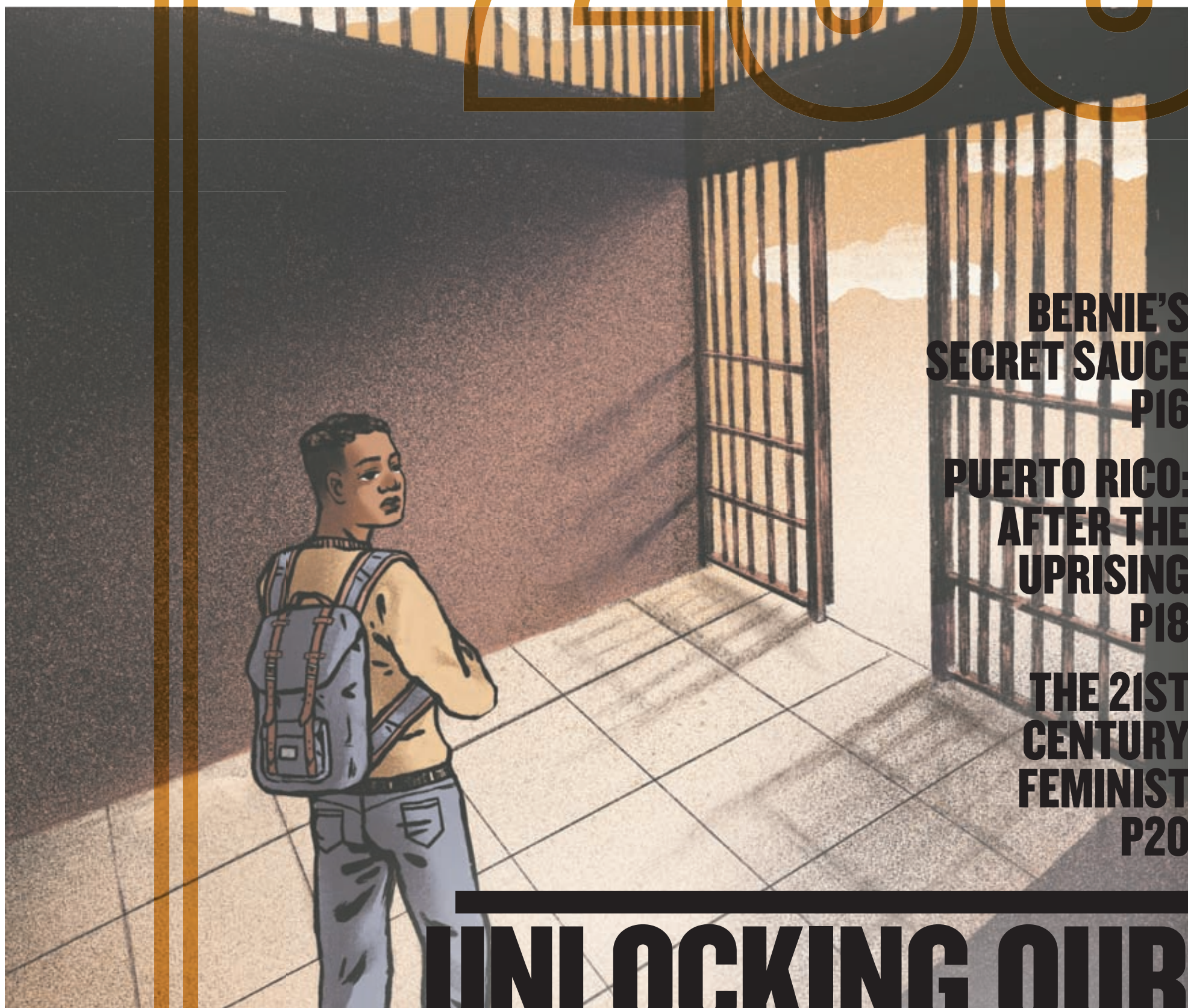


# THE INDYPENDENT

#250: SEPTEMBER 2019 • INDYPENDENT.ORG



**BERNIE'S  
SECRET SAUCE**  
P16

**PUERTO RICO:  
AFTER THE  
UPRISING**  
P18

**THE 21ST  
CENTURY  
FEMINIST**  
P20

## UNLOCKING OUR SCHOOLS

**THE CITY IS RELAXING GIULIANI-ERA POLICIES THAT HAVE  
CRIMINALIZED A GENERATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS.  
CRITICS WANT THEM SCRAPPED. P8**

TIFFANY PAI



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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



# SEPTEMBER

**THRU SEPT 29**

THU 1PM–9PM, FRI–SUN 12PM–  
5PM • FREE  
EXHIBITION: RESISTANCE RADIO  
Learn how grassroots move-  
ments use the people's airwaves.  
Features talks and film screenings  
about rebellious broadcasters.  
*INTERFERENCE ARCHIVE*  
314 7th St., Brooklyn

**MON SEPT 9**

9PM • \$35–\$60  
MUSIC: GHOSTFACE KILLAH  
The Wu-Tang cofounder takes  
the mic.  
*SONY HALL*  
235 W. 46th St., Mnhn

**FRI SEPT 13**

7PM–9:30PM • \$20–\$25  
MUSIC: LOUISIANA DANCE  
PARTY WITH THE REVELERS  
Get freaky on the dance floor  
with the Revelers, Louisiana's  
Grammy-nominated supergroup  
that combines swamp pop, Cajun,  
country, blues and zydeco into a  
powerful tonic of roots music that  
could only come from Southwest  
Louisiana. A brief dance lesson for  
beginners will be offered at 7 p.m.  
with music and dancing to follow.  
*STARR BAR*  
214 Starr St., Bklyn

**SUN SEPT 15**

12PM–6PM • FREE  
PARADE: 50TH ANNUAL AFRI-  
CAN AMERICAN DAY PARADE  
Celebrate black culture in Harlem.  
Marching bands, dancers, floats,  
the works.  
111th St. to 136th St. along Adam  
Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd, Mnhn

**TUE SEPT 17**

6:30PM–8PM • FREE  
BOOK LAUNCH: NAOMI KLEIN ON

**THE GREEN NEW DEAL**

Join renowned author Naomi  
Klein a public discussion of her  
latest book, *On Fire: The (Burning)  
Case for a Green New Deal*, which  
gathers for the first time more  
than a decade of her impassioned  
writing about the climate crisis.  
*THE COOPER UNION*  
7 E. 7th St., Mnhn

**WED SEPT 18**

5:30PM–7:30PM • FREE  
TALK: STANDING WITH STAND-  
ING ROCK  
Dispatches of radical political  
engagement from people taking a  
stand against the Dakota Access  
Pipeline.  
*PEOPLE'S FORUM*  
320 W 37th St., Mnhn

**WED SEPT 18**

7PM–9:30PM • FREE  
LIT: LGBTQ LITERATURE  
THROUGH THE AGES  
Scott Alexander Hess celebrates  
the launch of his newest LGBTQ  
historical novel *River Runs Red*  
with an evening of sizzling read-  
ings and discussion with author  
Robert Levy and writer Darley  
Stewart. The trio will talk about  
Hess' novel, set in 1891, as well as  
the evolution of queer fiction.  
*BLUESTOCKINGS BOOKSTORE,  
CAFÉ, & ACTIVIST CENTER*  
172 Allen St., Mnhn

**SEPT 19–SEPT 22**

Times vary • FREE  
LIT: PRINTED MATTER'S NY ART  
BOOK FAIR 2019  
An international gathering cel-  
ebrating the full breadth of the  
art publishing community. This  
event welcomes more than 350  
exhibitors from around the world,  
including a broad range of artists

and collectives, small presses,  
institutions, galleries, antiquarian  
booksellers and distributors.  
*MOMA PS1*  
22-25 Jackson Ave., Queens

**FRI SEPT 20**

12PM–3PM • FREE  
PROTEST: CLIMATE STRIKE  
Ahead of the UN Climate Summit,  
demand action to address the  
climate crisis with a march and  
rally featuring Fridays For Future  
founder Greta Thunberg.  
*Foley Square to Battery Park,*  
*Mnhn*

**FRI SEPT 20**

1PM–5PM • \$17.50  
HISTORY: SLAVERY AND UNDER-  
GROUND RAILROAD TOUR  
Follow the Freedom Trail, where a  
band of brave men and women in  
NYC formed the hidden networks  
that became the Underground  
Railroad.  
*Bowling Green to City Hall Park,*  
*Mnhn*

**FRI SEPT 20**

7:30PM–9:30PM • FREE  
MUSIC: ¡VAYA! 63: BOBBY  
SANABRIA  
Bobby Sanabria and his Multi-  
verse Big Band pay tribute to the  
mecca of all Latin dance halls, the  
legendary Palladium Ballroom,  
where the fusion of big-band  
mambo with jazz reigned supreme.  
*DAVID RUBENSTEIN ATRIUM AT  
LINCOLN CENTER*  
61 W. 62nd St., Mnhn

**SAT SEPT 21**

11AM–6PM • FREE  
MARKET: BROOKLYN FLEA RE-  
CORD FAIR  
Record labels, stores, plus  
vintage collectors will be selling

records and other  
music related good-  
ies all day.  
*SMORGASBURG*  
East River State Park,  
Bklyn

**SAT SEPT 21**

12PM–3PM • FREE  
PROTEST: BURY THE PLAN NOT  
THE PARK  
The city's plan to demolish East  
River Park and bury it under eight  
feet of landfill has sparked an  
uproar on the Lower East Side.  
Opponents of the plan will march  
at noon from Tompkins Sq. Park to  
the Labyrinth just north of the Wil-  
liamsburg Bridge where there will  
be songs, speeches, art for kids  
and a mock burial of the plan.  
*East River Park, Mnhn*

**SUN SEPT 22**

7:30PM • \$69  
MUSIC: JOAN JETT & THE  
BLACKHEARTS  
Catch hard-rocking legend Joan  
Jett, the voice behind such classics  
as "Bad Reputation," "I Love Rock  
'N' Roll" and "Crimson and Clover."  
*BERGEN PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER*  
30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood, N.J.

**SAT SEPT 28**

10AM–5PM • FREE  
SPIRITUALITY: NYC PAGAN  
PRIDE DAY 2019  
Meet pagans, Wiccans, Druids,  
Voodoo practitioners, Thelem-  
ites, etc. for multi-denomina-  
tional rituals and workshops.  
Experience tarot card readings or  
join a drum circle.  
*Battery Park City Park, Mnhn*

**SUN SEPT 29**

12PM–4PM • FREE  
FESTIVAL: BRONX NATIVE  
AMERICAN FESTIVAL  
A celebration of the indigenous  
peoples of the Western Hemi-  
sphere. Native music, dance,  
storytelling and vendors. Featured

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# THE INDEPENDENT

## IN THIS ISSUE



AFRICANAMERICANDAYPARADE.ORG

performers: the Silvercloud Singers and Cetiliztli Nauhcampa. Pelham Bay Park Watt Ave. & Middletown Rd., Bronx

**ON THE MARCH:** The nation's largest African-American parade streams through Harlem once again on Sept. 15.

**HARRY SITUATIONS:** Blonde's front woman Debbie Harry releases her new memoir at a Town Hall shindig this month.



RAPH\_PH/FICKR

copy of *Face It. THE TOWN HALL* 123 W 43rd St., Mnhn

**MON SEPT 30**

8PM • \$44–\$56

BOOK LAUNCH: DEBBIE HARRY: *FACE IT*

Join Blondie frontwoman Debbie Harry as she introduces her long-anticipated memoir. She'll be joined by Blondie co-founder and renowned photographer, Chris Stein, and multidisciplinary artist and director, Rob Roth. All tickets include a signed

**THE NEWS IN BRIEF, P4**

Getting a message across the Atlantic, A-list schools get an F, Cops lose their cool, tennis bums and silent soccer hooligans.

**NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN, P6**

A 77-year-old vet from Woodstock, NY has been stuck in Ireland for six months awaiting trial for protesting the U.S. military's role there. It's unclear when he will return home.

**SCHOOLS AREN'T JAILS, P8**

A new initiative in NYC aims to clarify this matter. Will the NYPD play along?

**JEWS AGAINST CAGES, P10**

Activists across the country are standing up to the paskudnyak in the White House and those abetting his attacks on immigrants.

**BUILDING WALLS, TEARING DOWN HOMES, P11**

Israel continues its ethnic-cleansing project with U.S. blessing.

**COMMUNITY MAKES IT POSSIBLE, P12**

Newspapers are dying all around, but we're beginning our 20th anniversary year with issue 250.

**WARREN VS. SANDERS, P16**

Some progressives may be ready for one or the other, but the two presidential candidates have very different philosophies and political bases.

**WHAT DID YOU DO OVER THE SUMMER?, P18**

In Puerto Rico, they overthrew their corrupt president and islanders aren't stopping there.

**ECO-FASCISTS, P19**

Meet the far-right environmentalists in Germany who want to keep more than the air "unspoilt."

**THERE IS POWER IN A UNION, P20**

In Steven Greenhouse's new book, teachers play hooky for their pupils and culinary workers carve up their bosses.

**ERASING THE REDLINE, P21**

A new exhibition explores histories of housing segregation in order to build a new future.

**MODERN-DAY MANIA, P22**

Jia Tolentino tackles the internet, reality TV and the wedding industry in her new essay collection.

**TRUMP HELP HOTLINE, P23**

The Indy's spiritual adviser Rev. Billy on youth-led activism and the legacy of Occupy Wall Street.



# PARTY WITH THE INDY

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING 250 ISSUES OF THE INDY AND THE BEGINNING OF OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR. THE PARTY WILL FEATURE REVEREND BILLY & THE STOP SHOPPING CHOIR MULTIPLE BANDS & MORE.

**SATURDAY OCT 19 7PM-1AM**

SIXTH STREET COMMUNITY CENTER  
638 E. 6TH ST., MANHATTAN  
\$10-\$20, SLIDING SCALE

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**EVERY THURS • 9-9:45AM**  
YOGA: Start your day with sun salutations and a vinyasa flow.

**FRI SEPT 13 • 7-9:30PM**  
BOOK LAUNCH: *In Queer Terror*, C. Heike Schotten draws on political, queer and indigenous theory to reframe the idea of 'terrorism.'

**WED SEPT 25 • 7-9:30PM**  
PARTY: Celebrate Tina Horn's new kinky, queer, dystopian comic book series *SfSx* (Safe Sex) with a special fetish cake-sitting by Lindsay Dye.

RESIST!

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HISTORY  
D STATES

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and **Michael Steven Smith**,  
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## BRIEFING ROOM

BY INDEPENDENT STAFF

**ON A MISSION:**  
Swedish climate activist  
Greta Thunberg (sitting),  
takes a break during her  
visit to New York.

### GRETA THUNBERG SAILS INTO CITY

Teenage environmental activist Greta Thunberg arrived in New York from Sweden on a sailboat August 28. "It is insane that a 16-year-old would have to cross the Atlantic Ocean to make a stand," she told the crowd that greeted her at Battery Park, calling climate change "the biggest crisis that humanity has ever faced." She plans to participate in a youth-led "climate strike" on Sept. 20 and attend the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit on Sept. 23.

opponents point out that upper-middle-class parents often game the admission system by buying their children test-preparation help. De Blasio says he is reviewing the recommendation.

### WHAT A RACKET

The U.S. Open tennis tournament at Arthur Ashe Stadium in Forest Hills generates hundreds of millions of dollars worth of economic activity every August and September, but the U.S. Tennis Association owes the city \$311,000 in back rent, according to an audit conducted by Comptroller Scott Stringer. The association's lease on the stadium says it's supposed to give the city a cut of its revenue, but the audit found that it under-reported its pre-expense earnings to the tune of \$31 million between 2014-2017. Locals also complain that the USTA charges nearly \$70 an hour in court fees to those who wish to play at the facility it operates in nearby Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.

### KEEPING QUIET FOR FREE SPEECH

Major League Soccer has successfully attracted a young, diverse audience — but many fans are too vocally left-wing for the tastes of team owners who fear alienating advertisers and conservative fans. The league banned fans from displaying "political" flags or banners before this season, and Portland Timbers management specifically barred flags with the three-arrowed symbol of the "Iron Front," a German socialist anti-Nazi, anti-Stalinist group banned in 1933. Timbers fans have adopted the logo, but management said it was associated with violent antifa actions. So when the Timbers played their Pacific Northwest rivals the Seattle Sounders on August 23, the "Timbers Army," their hardcore fan group, worked out a protest with the Sounders supporters: Silence. For the first 33 minutes of the match, the crowd of 25,000 was largely quiet — and then it erupted with cheers, waving rainbow and Iron Front flags. Both teams' starters posed for a photo with pennants reading "anti-fascism" and "anti-racism" before the match.

### POLICE UNION GOES BONKERS

On Aug. 19, more than five years after police officer Daniel Pantaleo was filmed putting Eric Garner in a fatal chokehold on Staten Island, Police Commissioner James O'Neill fired him following a disciplinary hearing. Patrick Lynch, head of the Police Benevolent Association, was incensed. Speaking to reporters in front of an upside-down Police Department flag, he said the union's rank-and-file were in "distress" over the decision to dismiss Pantaleo, and that "the streets are falling into chaos." Calling for the resignation of O'Neill and Mayor Bill de Blasio, Lynch suggested officers initiate a work slowdown, which might help reduce the kind of encounters that led to Garner's death.

### DE BLASIO MULLS 'GIFTED' PROPOSAL

NYC's schools are among the most segregated in the United States, especially its top public high schools: Only seven black applicants were admitted to Stuyvesant High School this year out of nearly 900 available seats. Earlier this year, Mayor Bill de Blasio proposed eliminating the test used to select entrants to the city's eight elite high schools, in order to admit more black and Latino students, but ran into opposition from Asian-American parents, whose children comprise more than 70 percent of Stuyvesant students. In late August, a diversity panel he appointed recommended eliminating all gifted and talented programs from city schools, and replacing them with magnet schools. The programs' defenders say they provide essential enrichment for bright kids, while

### COMMUNITY FORUM

## WHY THE 2020 CENSUS MATTERS



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The 2020 census will begin in a few months! Join us to learn:

- Why our community members need to be counted
- How the census will impact immigrant communities
- What issues immigrants may face with the questionnaire
- What we can do to ensure a fair and accurate count

In conversation with:

**Divya Sundaram** of Community Voices Heard  
**James Tillmon** of the U.S. Census Bureau

WHERE: **UNITED COMMUNITY CENTERS,**  
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PHOTO: Shadia Fayne Wood, Survival Media Agency. People's Climate March, NYC 2014.

# NYC: JOIN THE GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE

**Friday, September  
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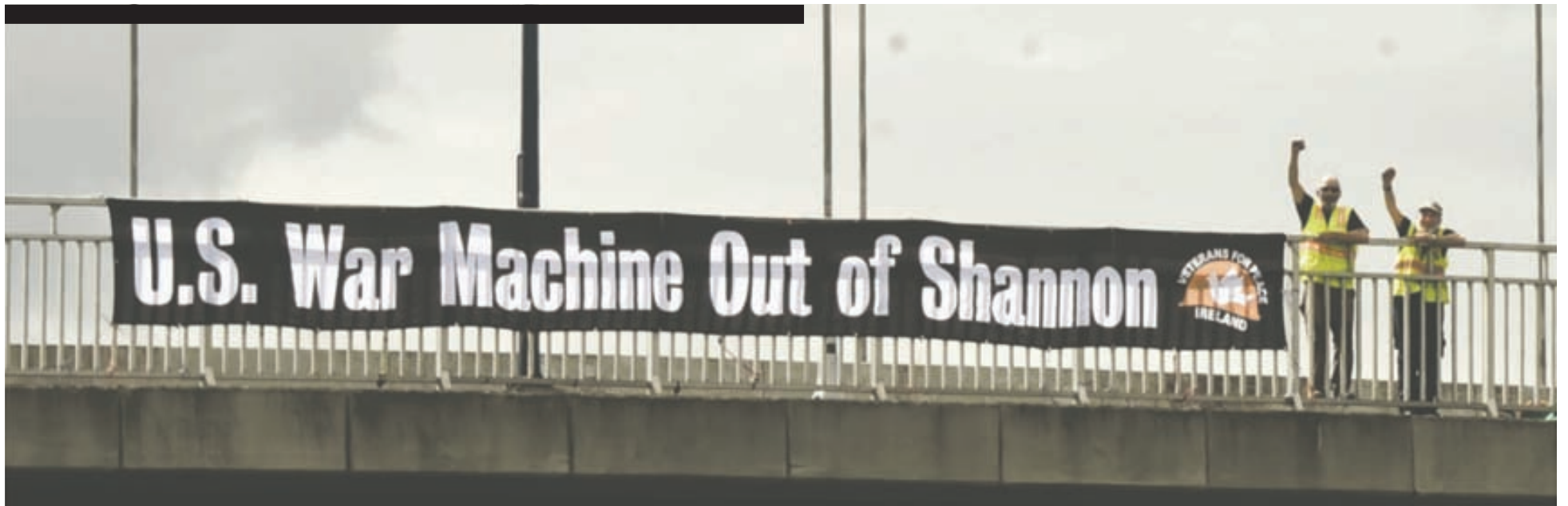
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# MIA IN IRELAND

## SEND OUR TROOPS HOME!

BY DEREK LUDOVICI

**T**hough they have received little media attention here in the United States, two American peace activists have been legally barred from leaving Ireland since March.

Tarak Kauff, 77, of Woodstock, New York, and Ken Mayers, 82 of Santa Fe, New Mexico, were arrested on March 17, St. Patrick's Day, for entering the tarmac at Shannon Airport in Limerick, Ireland. Members of Veterans For Peace, the pair were protesting the role that the civilian airport has played in the U.S. military's global War on Terror, in particular the transportation of troops and arms to bases in the Middle East, including Iraq. They were there to 'drive the snakes out of Ireland.'

Kauff and Mayers are charged with trespass and criminal damage for allegedly cutting through the fence surrounding the airfield and entering the premises. They face a maximum year in jail and a fine of \$1,000 each. However, they have become enmeshed in prolonged legal proceedings that will likely last longer than their potential sentences.

The two activists had traveled to the Emerald Isle with six other VFP members to protest what they say are repeated violations of Irish neutrality. Kauff and Mayers say they entered the airfield to inspect a U.S. military-contracted plane parked there.

"Part of the whole fiction that the U.S. and Ireland maintain in order to keep violating Irish neutrality is that there are no weapons on these planes," said Kauff's partner Ellen Davidson, who traveled with the veterans. "Two of the guys [in our delegation] had flown through Shannon to Iraq with their weapons, so we know this is a lie."

Ireland has been a neutral country since 1939. Although the precise definition of neutrality has been challenged many times in court, a majority of Irish support it remaining neutral.

"Since 2001, the United States has ferried some 3 million troops with their weapons through Shannon Airport," says Kauff. "They were going to wage war. They were going to kill people. They were going to destroy a country. Up to a million children have been killed because of these U.S. wars. So this was a chance to oppose that."

Both activists explain their actions as an act of international solidarity against U.S. militarism. A large number of Irish want their country to be neutral and the government is not following their wishes, says Mayers.

"The importance of Ireland in one sense is that if Ireland were to stand up to the United States, to confront the bully, it could set an example for other countries that would like to set a neutral status, or at least not be handmaidens to American Imperialism," he said.

While he and Kauff had expected to be arrested, they were not prepared for the legal proceedings that have continued to plague them since March. The two activists were held without bail for two weeks in Limerick Prison. The High Court in Dublin released them on March 28 on \$2,750 (2,500) bail each. As part of their bail conditions, they have surrendered their passports and may not go near Irish airports.

"This process is a clear attempt to punish the two VFP activists before any trial takes place," said Ed Horgan, coordinator of VFP Ireland. "We are calling on all peace and human rights activists in Ireland and internationally to campaign not only on behalf of Ken Mayers and Tarak Kauff, but, more important, on behalf of all the innocent people being killed and injured by the U.S.'s illegal wars."

The main challenge facing Kauff and Mayers is the length of time

until trial. Horgan, who himself was arrested for a similar action at Shannon in April 2017 has only recently learned that his trial will be in May 2020. Three years waiting for a trial would be an extreme burden on the activists.

"We have families and loved ones and we have responsibilities in the States and people are taking up the slack for us," says Kauff. "It's not fair to them. It's not right that we were denied our right to go home."

In the meantime, Irish human rights lawyer Michael Finucane, whose renown comes partially from investigating the murder of his father at the hands of British loyalists in 1989, is defending the activists. Finucane and the defendants are mounting a "necessity defense," claiming that trespassing on the airfield was necessary in order to expose violations of Irish neutrality and prevent more serious war crimes from occurring.

"Other people who have done very similar things, gone onto the airfield, have actually successfully used [this defense] and have been acquitted," Davidson says, citing the Pitstop Ploughshares, members of the radical Catholic Worker Movement who did upwards of \$2.5 million worth of damage to a U.S. Navy aircraft and were acquitted.

Despite the uncertainties, Kauff and Mayers are not backing down. They have used the national spotlight to bring more attention to the cause of peace and neutrality with weekly trips to Dublin, where they protest on the steps of the Dáil (Irish Parliament) and are often able to speak with members of parliament directly.

"A big issue here right now is if Ireland is going to participate in this European army and the Dáil is tending to go along with it," says Mayers, referring to the joint forces who work together under the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. "There is large public opposition to it, so what we are doing also helps support the effort to keep Ireland out of the European army."

"We are doing everything we can to give a voice to those who are opposed to U.S. militarism and abuse of Irish neutrality, to those who are opposed to warfare, to those opposed to Ireland joining the EU's military," Kauff says.

As they await the day they can return to the United States, the pair are taking it one day at a time.

"It's just a reality we need to face," says Kauff. "Fortunately we have a huge support network here. People have just been tremendous."

Irish activists have so far provided free lodging and a GoFundMe page has been raised nearly \$13,000 so far to help cover their expenses. Organizations such as the global social and environmental justice group Action from Ireland (AFRI) are also helping to raise funds.

Never ones to idle, the pair plan to begin a series of "Boots on the Ground for Freedom" walks through Ireland, holding speaking engagements at stops along the way. They begin at Limerick Prison, where they were initially held, and they will end September in Malin Head, approximately 230 miles away at the country's most northern tip, on the banks of an Atlantic Ocean they cannot cross.

For more information, see [stoptheseWars.org](http://stoptheseWars.org) and [shannonwatch.org](http://shannonwatch.org).

**SIGN OF THE TIMES:** Stranded peace vets Tarak Kauff (left) and Ken Mayers hang a banner from a freeway overpass.

**UP TO HIS USUAL TRICKS:** Tarak Kauff hands out copies of a pro-peace newspaper.



A Daily Independent  
Global News Hour  
with Amy Goodman  
and Juan González

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FOREWORD BY  
JACQUELINE WOODSON

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“We’ve all been waiting for this collection—all of us that know the brilliance, the heartbreaking truth telling, and the magic of Staceyann’s cadences. Now all of us who have been lucky enough to have seen her on stage, heard her from the ramparts, can be joined at last by readers in the quiet spaces to properly celebrate this remarkable voice and watch her take her place in American letters.”  
—Walter Mosley

## ONE YEAR BUILDING A PEOPLE’S INTERNATIONALISM

# SEPTEMBER 2019

# INTERNATIONALISM

**AFROFEMINISTS ON CARING  
FOR LIFE IN COLOMBIA  
PANELIST: SOFÍA GARZÓN**

**PANEL DISCUSSION  
TUESDAY, SEPT 17  
6:30PM-9:00PM | FREE**

**AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’  
HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 27  
6:30PM | FREE**

**THE GREENSBORO MASSACRE AT 40**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 28  
4:00PM - 6:30PM | FREE**

Join survivors of the Greensboro Massacre Rev. Nelson Johnson, Joyce Johnson, and Paul Bermanzohn as they reflect on the forty-year anniversary and make sense of the current confrontations with fascism and white nationalism. The conversation will be moderated by Roz Pelles.

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# PLUGGING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS TAKING A NEW APPROACH TO SAFETY THIS YEAR, BUT POLICE WILL STILL BE ROVING THE HALLS.

BY PETER RUGH

At first it was jarring, but Andrea Colon got used to it — the surveillance cameras, the officers standing guard, going about their rounds, always watching you. She wasn't an inmate exactly but she was doing time, at least until she graduated.

Then one day Colon, a junior at Rockaway Park High School, saw something that snapped her out of it. There was a commotion in the hallway and she stepped out of her classroom to see what it was all about. A fight had broken out between five or six boys, all of whom were black or brown, she recalls.

Colon watched as an NYPD school safety agent pressed one of them against a wall, choking him. One of her teachers, a big guy who was an Army reservist, body-slammed another to the ground. When one of the fighters attempted to walk away, the assistant principal told a safety agent to put him in handcuffs and announced he was calling the local precinct. Any student who was in the hall when backup arrived would be leaving in a squad car too, he said.

“It was just about criminalizing students of color,” says Colon. “They were going to get arrested, get suspended and then they were going to come back to school where it could happen all over again.”

That revelation led her to volunteer with the Rockaway Youth Task Force (RYTF), a grassroots advocacy group on the Rockaway Peninsula led by young people of color. Now studying economics at Baruch College, Colon is also on the organization's staff.

As the new school year begins, RYTF, which for years has been part of a movement pushing for New York City to rethink its approach to safety in its public schools, might see some of what they've been demanding put into place. There will be more counselors roving the hallways. And under a new agreement between the city Department of Education (DoE) and Police Department, officers will refrain from making arrests for low-level offenses such as graffiti, disorderly conduct and marijuana possession.

“Safety doesn't necessarily mean police,” says Colon. “Safety means feeling supported. Safety means feeling like you're in a community, and it is hard to feel that way when you are constantly being policed and watched. It makes you feel like you're a criminal and that's all there is to you.”

## BUILDING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

There's no literal pipeline extending from New York's middle and high schools to the prisons on Rikers Island and upstate. But tens of thousands of mainly black

and brown youths have found themselves ensnared in what criminal-justice reform advocates refer to as the “school-to-prison pipeline” since 1998, when then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani presided over a memorandum of understanding between the NYPD and the Board of Education that opened schoolhouse doors to police.

Overnight, 3,200 school safety workers who had previously been employed by the school board became deputized members of the NYPD. More than 5,000 officers now walk the halls of New York's public schools. They greet students at doorways that are often framed by metal detectors and respond on-call to mete out classroom discipline, handcuffs slung from their belts. More cops loiter just outside schools, should they be called upon to haul a student away to a station house for processing.

With 1.1 million students, New York City's public school system is a virtual city of juveniles, bigger than San Jose, California, smaller than Dallas. But while New York has 5,000 cops deployed in its schools, Dallas, with 1.3 million residents, has a force of 3,000 officers to cover the whole city. San Jose, with about 1,050,000 denizens, has less than 1,000 police.

“You increase the security apparatus, you increase arrests,” said Dr. Anne Gregory, a Rutgers University psychology professor who studies alternative approaches to discipline in schools. “You wear those kind of glasses and you see the world through that lens.”

Students are often arrested or receive court summonses for offenses that aren't even crimes. A landmark 2017 report from the Center for Popular Democracy and the Urban Youth Collaborative (UYC) noted that there had been “1,310 arrests, summonses, or juvenile reports for non-criminal violations” in the city school system in the previous year, including “trespassing for being on the wrong floor of a multi-school building, or ‘disorderly conduct’ for using obscene language or participating in a peaceful protest.” (“Juvenile reports” are issued for alleged offenses by students under 16 that would otherwise lead to an arrest. Students are detained while information is collected for such reports.)

Yet the original 1998 agreement that served as a permission slip for the police to enter New York schools expired in 2002. What were they still doing there? In 2003, then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg, heir to Giuliani's “tough-on-crime” policies, joined with then-Schools Chancellor Joel Klein and quietly renewed the agreement. Both the NYPD and the Department of Education denied the document existed until 2009, when inquiries from Karim Camara, then a state Assemblymember representing central Brooklyn, brought it to light.

New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) executive director Donna Lieberman called the denials “baffling” and indicative of a “confused, inconsistent and misguided



UYC



MICHAELAPLETON/MAYORAL PHOTOGRAPHY OFFICE



MICHAELAPLETON/MAYORAL PHOTOGRAPHY OFFICE



approach to policing our schools.” The document was not made available to the public until 2017, when the education news outlet *Chalkbeat* obtained a copy from the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.

By then Bill de Blasio was running City Hall. He had been elected years earlier in 2013, running on a promise to end “the tale of two cities” and bolstered by television ads that featured his multiracial family, including his

Afroed son, Dante, then a junior at Brooklyn Technical High School. Both the mayor and his son have commented frequently since on the racial dynamics between people of color and law enforcement.

Suspensions, summonses and arrests have declined since de Blasio took office, but racial disparities in the school system — including who has access to A-list academies like Brooklyn Tech, where the police presence is minimal, and who receives an education from the stiff arm of the law — have persisted.

Black and Latinx students make up 76.5 percent of the school population, according to city data from the 2017–2018 school year compiled by the NYCLU, but they accounted for 88.5 percent of arrests and nearly 92 percent of summonses issued. Black students, 26 percent of the student body, account for about 60 percent of those arrested and more than 50 percent of those who are issued a summons. Black pupils also account for nearly half of all suspensions, which increases the likelihood of dropping out by more than 15 percent, according to the Popular Democracy-Urban Youth report.

“It’s a racist policy,” UYC youth coordinator Roberto Cabanas says. “There’s no other way to talk about it without talking about race.” Year after year, even if arrests and summonses go down, black and Latinx students continue to receive the bulk of them, he notes. “It’s the same statistic, time and time again. It hasn’t changed.”

#### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

This school year, it just might.

At a June 20 press conference, de Blasio, with his wife, Chirlane McCray, and Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza at his side, announced a new agreement on policing. Under the arrangement, teachers and staff are to refrain from involving in-school cops with non-criminal offenses such as being late, smoking, “making excessive noise” and “engaging in verbally rude behavior” unless their safety is threatened. When it comes to discipline for behavior considered criminal, such as trespassing or disorderly conduct, the involvement of the police is at educators’ discretion, but they are encouraged to “utilize, whenever possible, diversionary responses and protocols.”

There, however, is a fine line between being rude and noisy, normal teenage behavior, and being disorderly; between trespassing and wandering onto the campus of another school, especially when those schools share a building. Some educators consider the option of turning to law enforcement to resolve classroom disputes to be an asset.

Now at least they have the option of a different approach. The Education Department is also launching a citywide restorative-justice initiative, an alternative to suspensions, summonses and arrests that several city schools have already been exploring.

Restorative justice asks “after a harm is committed, how do you repair the harm that has been done by bringing all parties into a conversation,” says Amy Chou, project officer for a restorative-justice pilot program launched by the Brooklyn Community Foundation at two high schools and a middle school.

“Let’s say two kids get into a fight,” Alliyah St. Omer, an RYTF activist and a senior at Channel View School for Research in Rockaway who takes part in a “restorative circles” program there, tells *The Indy*. “Everybody will be in a circle. There will be two peer mediators there [and] the kids who got in an argument. Maybe a staff member can be involved if he wants to, but normally the students take control over the circle. The point of the circle is that there’s no start and no end to

it. We’re all equals, so we’re all sitting down together. We take turns talking about how we felt about the situation and how we can move forward from the situation.”

Restorative justice can also prevent violence. St. Omer recalls how a rumor was circling around Channel View that two groups of girls were planning to fight one another in the cafeteria during lunch. The potential row was over gossip. St. Omer was called in by the principal to mediate before things got out of hand. “The girls decided to tell each other, ‘You know what? I think maybe we should just not talk bad about each other. I’ll stop talking about you and you stop talking about me.’”

More broadly, Chou says restorative justice also encompasses “the way that teachers interact with students in their classroom. It’s the way that schools interact with parents. It’s about shifting the way schools fundamentally think about punishment and discipline, from a way that is punitive to another approach where you honor the dignity and sovereignty of students.”

Schools involved in the Community Foundation pilot saw a 53 percent reduction in the number of suspensions over three years when compared to the three years preceding the program, said Dr. Gregory, who was in the midst of compiling a report detailing the pilot’s results for the foundation when she spoke to *The Indy*. Based on student surveys, there was also “documented progress in creating more equitable school climates,” she added.

The Education Department also began a separate restorative justice program in 2015 in Brooklyn’s District 18, which stretches from Flatbush to Canarsie. Suspensions fell by a

## ‘SAFETY DOESN’T NECESSARILY MEAN POLICE.’

quarter in the program’s first year and by 11 percent last year, according to City Hall. Racial disparities in discipline also dropped: Citywide, African-American pupils are 2.6 times more likely to receive suspensions than other students. In District 18, they are 1.2 times more likely.

Meanwhile, the department is reducing the maximum number of days students can be suspended from 180 days, the length of a full school year, to 20 days. It is hiring an additional 85 social workers, an acknowledgement of what observers have long noted is the source of many of the infractions that feed students into the school-to-prison pipeline: mental health crises.

“Police don’t make schools safe, period,” said Cabanas. “There’s no such thing as dangerous kids in schools. There’s kids who have social-emotional needs, but because schools lack social workers, guidance counselors, mental-health service workers, a lot of those needs are never addressed. We’re dealing with young people in poverty.”

#### PARALLEL PATHS

The departure from zero tolerance and toward restorative justice wasn’t a smooth one. It comes after the mayor convened a “School Climate and Discipline” task force in 2015 that put activists and civil libertarians in the room with the representatives of numerous city agencies, including the police and the Education Department. One year later, the task force issued its recommendations, but the de Blasio administration didn’t announce that they would be implemented until this June.

Chancellor Carranza, appointed in 2018, now refers to himself as a “realist” but initially pledged to boldly tackle civil rights violations within the school system, among the most segregated in the nation. Testifying before the City Council in March, he said he was not satisfied with the way the agree-

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**RAISING THEIR VOICE:** *Urban Youth Collaborative activist protest the police presence at the High School of Fashion Industries in Manhattan.*

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**MAKING THE ROUNDS:** *Members of the NYPD’s bloated school safety detail.*

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**PARADIGM SHIFT:** *Students demonstrate what restorative justice looks like while Police Commissioner James O’Neill (far left) looks on.*

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ment was developing. “There was a lot in that [agreement] that was very much law-enforcement centric,” he told the Council. “We’ve been pushing back, and we’ve actually been having great conversations with NYPD.”

As Carranza addressed the lawmakers, students stood up in the back of the room holding signs demanding more social workers and “culturally responsive education.” The protest was one of dozens students and young adults have orchestrated over the years, urging elected officials and school administrators to act to close the school-to-prison pipeline. Andrea Colon and Roberto Cabanas even flew Iowa to confront de Blasio at a meet-and-greet hosted by his presidential campaign on June 8. Two weeks later, he announced the discipline reforms.

“We’ve had these demands for a while, but it feels like the mayor just recently started listening to us a lot more,” says Colon.

Yet the police have not retreated from the city’s schools. The city is taking a parallel approach to safety. There will be more restorative circles like the ones St. Omer facilitates this year, but handcuffs will remain an option for disciplinarians.

“I have two main concerns,” Dr. Gregory says of the dual approaches. “One of which is resource allocation as a society. Are you going to put your funds into another security agent, or are you going to put your funds into a guidance counselor or school psychologist? These funds come out of different budgets but ultimately we’re talking about taxpayer money.”

There are 285 social workers in the Education Department’s employ, at a cost to the city of \$30 million this year with the new hires. When it comes to maintaining the 5,000-plus in-school police force, the city spends \$350 million annually. The additional social cost of policing the schools, including a loss of future tax revenue when students fail to graduate due to suspensions, come to \$350 million a year, the Popular Democracy-UYC study found.

Moreover, there is a “fundamental, philosophical clash, around social control and policing versus trying to correct and repair a wrong,” says Gregory.

The Education Department did not respond to requests for comment, including to written questions a spokesperson asked *The Independent* to provide.

“Doing restorative justice practices doesn’t happen overnight, but I feel like it would really benefit schools if they took the time and actually practiced it and learned from it and worked together to do it,” St. Omer says. “Having a heavy police presence in schools doesn’t help anybody. It’s the same thing repeating every year.”

For young activists like St. Omer, Colon and Cabanas, the reforms don’t go all the way but nonetheless signify the beginning of a major change. Time will tell how the new approach to safety plays out, given that it leaves much to the discretion of educators and safety agents, who aren’t going anywhere.

The Urban Youth Collaborative wants the metal detectors gone and a full ban on arrests, summonses and juvenile reports for minor infractions and misdemeanors.

“We still have a long way to go,” says Cabanas. “We have to prioritize the kinds of things young people are asking for: more restorative justice, social workers and police-free schools.”



ELI VALLEY/TWITTER

# AMAZON DRAWS HEAT FOR ICE TIES

## PROGRESSIVE JEWISH GROUPS PROTEST IMMIGRANT ABUSE

BY MIKE NEWTON

In the bookstore, next to those familiar signs — “Best Sellers” and “Customer Favorites” — there were other signs, made by hand and propped up on cardboard poles. “Never Again is Now,” read one. “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor,” read another. The sounds of cheery, retail-friendly dance-pop mixed with testimonials, read aloud, of migrants held prisoner in U.S. detention facilities. Demonstrators crowded between bookshelves and magazine racks to try and view the somber prayer service happening at the center of the sales floor. Outside, on 34th Street, tourists stopped to peer at the packed crowd of protesters and the steadily-growing police presence.

The demonstration at the Midtown Amazon Books was one of many similar rallies that took place on August 10 and 11, planned around the Jewish holiday of Tisha B’Av. The protests were organized by T’ruah, in partnership with other progressive Jewish groups like Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and Bend the Arc. Immigrants rights organizations, including United We Dream and Make the Road New York, together with numerous local Jewish congregations and community groups, also took part.

More than 50 demonstrations took place around the country, though broadly speaking, they didn’t receive much mainstream media attention. In Newark, members of over 15 New Jersey congregations held a morning Tisha B’Av service outside of the Peter Rodino Federal Building, home to regional Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices. In Houston, #JewsAgainstICE occupied roads and blocked traffic outside of a detention center for unaccompanied immigrant children. In Los Angeles, a coalition of local synagogues held a service and vigil outside of the Metropolitan Detention Center.

“The Bible is obsessed with the rights of the stranger, the non-citizen resident,” says Rabbi Elliott Tepperman of Bnai Keshet, one of the organizers of the Newark rally. “It says, flat-out, ‘If you want to know what God wants, just as God loves and protects the stranger, you too must

love and protect the stranger.’”

At the Newark federal building, as at the Midtown Amazon store, texts from the Book of Lamentations — documenting the disastrous events surrounding the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in 586 BC — were read alongside accounts of children and parents suffering in ICE camps.

“Tisha B’Av is a day of fasting and mourning for catastrophes and tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people,” Rabbi Salem Pearce, an

activist with T’ruah who helped organize the Midtown demonstration, told *The Independent*. “It’s very hard to look back on these tragedies and not also see this tragedy of immigration that’s unfolding right in front of us.

“We did this action as American Jews,” Pearce added. “Many of us have in our families experiences of being targeted in the countries we lived in and of being denied entry to countries as we tried to migrate. The same rhetoric that’s being used right now was used against us.”

The Midtown demonstration was a mournful one, with rally goers casting their eyes downward and marching quietly through the streets on the way to Amazon Books. Walking through Herald Square, people asked demonstrators why they weren’t smiling. Toward the end of the ceremony, the crowd sang traditional songs while NYPD officers dragged protesters outside of the bookstore. Several dozen were arrested. The police marshaled a literal city bus to haul people away, including eleven rabbis. In what may have been a grim attempt at humor on the NYPD’s part, most of them were given court dates on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

At issue was not the bookstore itself, but Amazon’s connections to ICE. Amazon works with software firm Palantir to provide essential tech services to the agency, making it possible for ICE to track and deport immigrants. According to the *Washington Post*, the massive Mississippi ICE raid on August 7 in which over 680 migrant workers were detained — a raid on the first day of school in the rural region and seemingly planned to do maximum damage to local communities — was carried out with Palantir software. As several demonstrators noted, the situation recalls IBM’s role in the Shoah, when the company provided data services for the Nazis to efficiently find and imprison Jews.

“We’re asking these companies to have the moral courage to say, ‘No, we’re not gonna allow our technology to be used in such a way,’” says Pearce. “We know where this leads.”

For the past few months, the concept of anti-Semitism has been an uncomfortably prominent vector of right-wing political discourse. In June, when Congresswoman

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez pointed out (correctly) that ICE detention facilities are concentration camps, some politicians were shocked that anyone would say such a thing. Earlier this August, President Trump and Israeli Benjamin Prime Minister Netanyahu teamed up to deny Congresswomen Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib entry into Israel based on flimsy accusations of anti-Semitic sentiment.

One week later, on August 21, Trump declared himself “King of Israel” on Twitter, claiming that American Jews would be foolish not to support him. That same day his administration unrolled plans to indefinitely detain migrant children.

Throughout all this chaos, there’s been a persistent appeal from right-leaning pundits: that comparing the experiences of recently-detained immigrants to those of Jews during the Shoah is anti-Semitic in nature since, by this logic, it minimizes or trivializes what those millions of Jews went through. They claim that our American detention facilities are, in other words, not that bad.

But, no, they are that bad. That was the message of this past Tisha B’Av. By integrating spiritual practice and solemn ritual into protest, Jewish communities are responding specifically as Jewish communities, with all that this entails, to the threat Trump’s policies pose to immigrant families. Tisha B’Av is a day of mourning, of bearing witness to historical catastrophe, from the fall of the First Temple to the Shoah. The point is to bring these tragedies into the present moment, to draw a clear line from then to now. On Tisha B’Av, mourners do not simply move on from past tragedy but sit instead with the pain and sadness in order to find transformation, healing and growth.

The catastrophe of U.S. immigration policy — based as it is in racism, carcerality and cruelty — finds antonymic resonance in some core principles of Jewish faith. “The Bible suggests that the experience of the immigrant is a unique entry point for coming to understand God,” observes Tepperman. “Being an immigrant or being concerned for immigrants are both paths to holiness.”

“What is happening right now is a humanitarian crisis, and I use that word carefully because I think this is about the dehumanization of people,” says Pearce. “In Jewish tradition, there’s the phrase b’tzelem Elohim, which is how humankind was described as being created in the image of God. That then dictates a certain kind of behavior that is owed each person, as a condition of their being human. To mistreat human beings, then, is a desecration of God.”



ILLUSTRATION BY MEGAN GIOVANNETTI

# APARTHEID IN ACTION

## RECENT HOME DEMOLITIONS A REMINDER IN ISRAEL SOME PEOPLE HAVE MORE RIGHTS THAN OTHERS

BY MEGAN GIOVANNETTI

In the early hours of the morning on July 22, hundreds of Israeli military and police personnel descended into the Wadi Hummus area of the East Jerusalem neighborhood Sur Baher. After the forceful removal of four Palestinian families — complete with the use of pepper spray and a few arrests — the Israeli authorities proceeded to destroy 12 buildings made up of roughly 70 residential homes.

“That day was a black day. A really black day,” Ismail Obeidah, 48, told *The Independent*. He and his family of eight had lived in one of the now-destroyed apartments for two and a half years. “Everything I did for our future was destroyed this day,” Obeidah said with a lump in his throat. “Everything we owned was in that house and everything is gone.”

The home demolitions in Wadi Hummus received ample media coverage for their ferocity. But the fact of the matter is that forceful evictions of Palestinian families is a systematic policy on the part of Israel — and one that is on the rise. According to a recent United Nations report, the first four months of 2019 already saw more Palestinians displaced by home demolitions than in all of 2018, 193 compared to 178.

“It has to do with displacing an entire people, with taking their lands,” Jeff Halper, founder of the Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions, explained. “Through house demolitions, we’re able to show how the occupation works. What the intentions are and, of course, the costs, the human costs of occupation and oppression.” According to Halper, 65,000 Palestinian homes have been destroyed since 1967, the beginning of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

### IMPUNITY IN PULLING THE ‘SECURITY CARD’

After the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the West Bank was partitioned into three areas. Eighteen percent is Area A and is meant to be under full control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Twenty-two percent is Area B and is under PA civil jurisdiction and Israeli military jurisdiction. Most of the Palestinian population in the West Bank, 2.8 million people, live in Areas A and B. The remaining 60 percent are under complete Israeli military control, in a region that is also home to almost 450,000 Jewish Israeli settlers.

Sections of Wadi Hummus are in Area A, others in Area B, but the neighborhood is surrounded by an Israeli separation barrier. This detail is significant, as the strategic weaving of the barrier includes areas Israel wishes to annex and excludes existing Jerusalem neighborhoods that have high Palestinian populations.

“When we look at these policies and put them in the bigger picture,” Rania Muhareb, a legal researcher at the Palestinian think tank Al-Haq, explained, “this is part of a systematic plan to change and to alter the status of Jerusalem, to alter the demographic composition.”

In the West Bank, in Gaza, in East Jerusalem and inside the borders of Israel itself, Palestinian homes are being demolished almost constantly. For stickier areas, like Wadi Hummus, “Israel pulls the security card,” Halper said. “They made a rule after the houses [in Wadi Hummus] were being built, a military order, saying you can’t build within 250 meters of the wall.”

“There is no military necessity that justifies the demolition of residential homes of civilians,” Muhareb said. The demolitions are illegal under international law, as is the wall itself, she added, noting that since 2004, the International Court of Justice has called on Israel to destroy the separation barrier, citing it as a political, not a security, measure.

Two weeks after the Wadi Hummus demolition, Israeli activist organization PeaceNow reported that 194 units would be added to the neighboring Ganei Modiin settlement and would run exactly along the perimeter of the wall, well within the claimed 250-meter limit.

“We know that all these protocols and the excuse of safety is just to remove all Palestinians from their land,” said Mohammed Abu Tair, an owner of one of the buildings destroyed in Wadi Hummus.

Meanwhile, the United States blocked a U.N. draft resolution condemning the home demolitions shortly after the

incident in Wadi Hummus.

“It’s completely illegal, by almost every article of the Fourth Geneva Convention, what Israel is doing,” said Halper. However, “you cannot enforce international law, only the Security Council can enforce it and obviously the U.S. has veto power. Israel knows it will never be sanctioned.”

“It’s gotten worse since Trump became president,” Obeidah said. “Day after day we become more sure that America is a partner with Israel.”

### A LEGAL VENEER

Though Israel cited security reasons in carrying out the operation in Wadi Hummus, most demolitions of Palestinian homes are carried out under civil law because they were built without Israeli-issued building permits.

“[Israel] uses zoning, planning law and administration mechanisms of control,” explained Halper. It has zoned almost 70 percent of the West Bank as “agricultural land” and most of East Jerusalem as “open green space,” both of which are set “for future urban development, which always means Jewish-Israeli” development.

In Jerusalem, Palestinians make up 40 percent of the population, yet have access to only 8 percent of municipal land. Of that 8 percent, only 1 or 2 percent is empty and available for construction. Through Israel’s zoning laws, it is nearly impossible for Palestinians to acquire a building permit. Meanwhile, Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are deemed legal by Israel because those areas were rezoned to be residential — just not for Palestinians.

Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are not Israeli citizens and are unable to vote in national Israeli elections. They are not members of the Jerusalem City Council nor of any city planning committee. Yet they must play the game within the Israeli legal system.

“Israel wants to appear democratic [so] everything is done legally,” Halper said. “It’s true, Palestinians can get lawyers, go to the court, but they can never win.” In almost 30 years of activism, Halper does not recall a single Palestinian legal victory involving house demolitions.

“We have to pay taxes as much as a [Jewish-Israeli person] pays and we get zero rights, we get nothing,” Abu Tair said. “There is only one way: go to the Israeli government even though we know we are not going to win. It’s the only place we can go. If you are Jewish, you have more rights than us as Arabs. The only demand we have for the Israeli government is to leave us alone.”

### BULLDOZED: Levelled homes in Sur Baher, East Jerusalem.

# ANOTHER JOURNALISM IS POSSIBLE

For 250 issues *The Indy* has been a bold, progressive newspaper and website that provides a unique voice in the NYC media landscape. Here are some of the highlights from our journey so far.

BY INDEPENDENT STAFF

**2 FALL 2000** Inspired by the Nov. 1999 Battle of Seattle and a subsequent wave of anti-corporate protests that rippled around the world, *The Independent* launches as a four-page, black-and-white newspaper dedicated to covering radical social movements in NYC and beyond. It is a part of Indy-media, a global network of grassroots media projects that flourished in the early 2000s, hence the “y” in our name.

**11 SEPTEMBER 2001** *The Indy* publishes a four-page special issue within 48 hours of the 9/11 attacks and another 12-page special issue a week later. As the Bush administration rushes to exploit public rage and fear following 9/11, *The Indy* becomes a magnet for New Yorkers who are alarmed by where the country is headed.

**22 NOVEMBER 2002** A who’s who of leading Democrats including Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden can’t figure it out. But four months before the United States invades Iraq, *The Indy* publishes a special issue titled “Why War? Why Now?” The issue debunks official rationales for war, offers a first-hand glimpse into the lives of ordinary Iraqis, and covers the growing antiwar movement. A two-page center spread highlights dozens of sites in the United States where weapons of mass destruction are developed and produced.

**52 SUMMER 2004** While corporate media push unsubstantiated scare stories about protesters and terrorists besieging New York during the upcoming Republican National Convention, *The Indy* trumpets the rights of dissenters and reports on the myriad reasons they are taking to the streets. Two August issues have print runs of 100,000 and 150,000, the largest circulation in decades for a radical, grassroots newspaper.

**62 DECEMBER 2004** John Tarleton profiles Harold Noel, a Brooklyn-born Iraq War vet who finds himself fighting mental illness and sleeping outside at the onset of winter while his family falls apart around him. Noel’s story is subsequently picked up by a number of national outlets. Noel tells *The Indy*, “I walk around crying every day. I feel lost in my

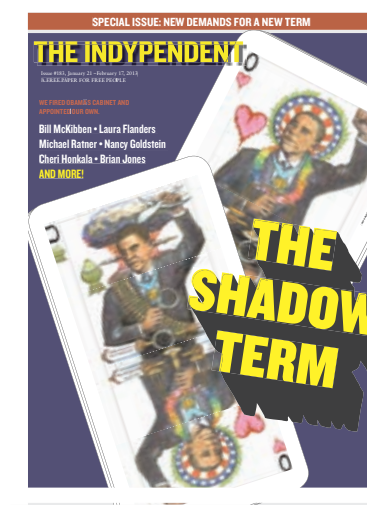
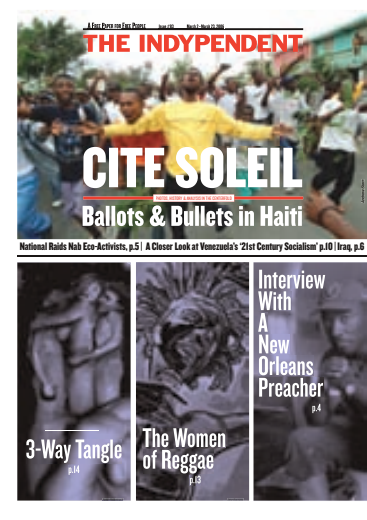
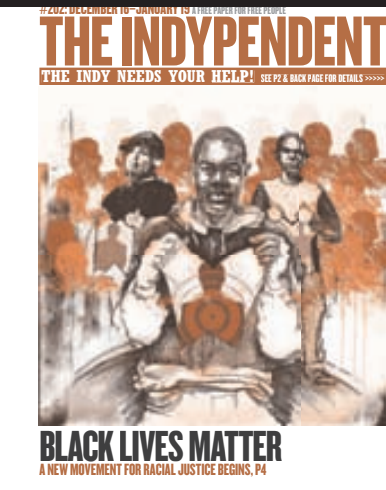
own land; the land I fought for ... Sometimes I just feel like picking up a gun and calling it quits ... But, something’s got to get better. I didn’t just risk my life for nothing. There’s a God out there — somewhere.” A month later, an anonymous donor puts up \$18,500 to cover a year’s rent for a three-bedroom apartment in the Bronx for Noel, his wife and three kids.

**65 FEBRUARY 2005** With the Republicans entrenched in the White House for another four long years, *The Indy* declares it’s “Moving Beyond Bush and Dick” in its first annual sex issue. Featured articles include a look at the working life of a dominatrix, boot fetishes, BDSM and the use of safewords, a how-to guide for making dildos and a first-person piece on fighting back against the police harassment of queers cruising in Central Park’s Ramble area.

**76 SEPTEMBER 2005** *The Indy* publishes a post-Katrina special issue that looks at the blatant disregard for Black lives in the response of the government and the corporate media as well as the hidden heroics of people coming to each other’s aid. “I’m in the Algiers neighborhood of New Orleans, the only part that isn’t flooded,” writes former New Orleans Black Panther and community organizer Malik Rahim. “The water is good. Our parks and schools could easily hold 40,000 people and they’re not using any of it. This is criminal. People are dying for no other reason than the lack of organization.”

**83 MARCH 2006** Photojournalist Andrew Stern spends a month living in Cité Soleil, Haiti, in the run-up to the country’s first elections since former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was toppled in a 2004 U.S.-backed coup. Stern’s photo essay captures the spirit of a sprawling urban slum on the edge of Haiti’s capital city, where repression by and resistance to foreign troops is a part of daily life.

**112 NOVEMBER 2007** When the House of Representatives approves the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Act by a vote of 400–6, it seems a sure bet that the measure will sail through the Senate and be signed by President George W. Bush. However, when Jessica Lee’s reporting reveals how the legislation could be used by the government to target people engaged in First Amendment-protected activity and traditional forms of nonviolent civil disobedience, a firestorm of criticism ensues



from activists and civil libertarians across the political spectrum. The legislation subsequently dies in the Senate. Lee would later win a Project Censored award for writing one of the 10 most important under-reported domestic news stories of that year.

**119 APRIL 2008** Using the story of a dementia-afflicted, 86-year-old homeowner in Crown Heights as a starting point, Joseph Huff-Hannon does a deep dive into the predatory practices of subprime mortgage lenders in neighborhoods like Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy. “If the housing market falls precipitously here as it has across much of the nation,” Huff-Hannon warns, “a cascade of foreclosures is likely to follow. An alarming number of those losing their homes will likely be black seniors.”

**133 MARCH 2009** Sarah Secunda captures the zeitgeist of the Great Recession in her coverage of striking immigrant workers at the Stella D’oro bakery in the Bronx who find themselves locked in a bitter labor battle against a private equity company demanding deep cuts in pay and benefits.

**155 SEPTEMBER 2010** In a special back-to-school issue of *The Indy*, we hear from activist parents, teachers, students and radical education scholars on the pitfalls of corporate school reform, over-reliance on standardized testing, the importance of teachers unions and the misuse of “gifted and talented” programs to maintain a system of de facto segregation in New York City’s public schools.

**170–172 FALL 2011** *The Indy* publishes three special issues during Occupy Wall Street and its immediate aftermath. Coverage ranges from photo essays and first-person pieces to analysis of the relationship between Occupy and labor unions, the police and the 99% and why taking over public squares in major global cities is such a powerful tactic.

**181 NOVEMBER 2012** We publish a 20-page, post-Sandy special edition that includes latest news on relief efforts and how to get involved, a look at the real estate industry’s drive to build on the waterfront and a deep-dive (so to speak) piece on the impact of rising ocean levels over the coming centuries.

**183 JANUARY 2013** As Barack Obama begins his second term as president, *The Indy* appoints a Shadow Cabinet of visionary thinkers and doers. Each Shadow Cabinet member writes a short essay about what she or he would do upon taking office. Shadow Cabinet appointees include Secretary of State Laura Flanders, Attorney General Michael Ratner and Secretary of Energy Bill McKibben, who

titles his article “One Thing Before I’m Fired.”

**202 DECEMBER 2014** After protests erupt across the nation in response to the non-indictments of police officers who killed Michael Brown and Eric Garner, Nicholas Powers writes in *The Indy*, “We show our hands because we’re scared of being killed by officers who have been given license to kill Black people and go unpunished. I’m asking you to take this weight from us. I’m asking you to hold your hands up too.”

**209 OCTOBER 2015** Soon after Donald Trump jumps to the front of the Republican primary field, *The Indy* runs a cover story on Trump’s career as a crony capitalist. While many pundits at the time assume Trump’s buffoonish campaign will soon flame out, the piece’s author Peter Rugh warns that former reality TV star can very well win the White House and if he does “President Trump” will morph into King Donald I.

**221 JANUARY 2017** Millions of people in hundreds of cities took to the streets in women-led marches on the day after Trump’s inauguration. In conjunction with marches, we published a 20-page Women’s March special edition that amplified the voices and concerns of the most progressive wing of the movement.

**236 JUNE 2018** “Holy SMOKES!” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweets on June 2, 2018. “Our campaign is the FRONT PAGE STORY of NYC’s classic monthly.” *The Indy*’s profile of AOC’s under-the-media radar run for Congress marks her first appearance on a newspaper or magazine cover. But it won’t be the last after the 28-year-old democratic socialist goes on to win a historic primary victory over Queens Democratic Party boss Joe Crowley.

**246 MAY 2019** “Take Down The Landlords” screamed the headline of the May 2019 *Indy*, a 24-page affordable housing special edition. A month later, tenants rights advocates did just that winning sweeping rent law reforms in the NY state legislature that stunned the real estate industry.



ERIK RIST

# WHAT THE INDY M

*From college campuses to labor union halls, from rent-stabilized apartment buildings to public libraries to outdoor news boxes across NYC, tens of thousands of New Yorkers pick up and read The Independent every month. Here is what a few of our favorite readers are saying about*

*The Indy and its impact as the paper marks its 250th issue.*

## **JULIA SALAZAR** BROOKLYN STATE SENATOR

*The Independent is an extraordinary publication because it actively engages readers and contributors. The Indy doesn't stop at reporting, but motivates us to become actively involved in the greater movement for social justice. When I was a freelance writer, The Indy empowered me to collaborate with other writers and editors to pursue our common political project. The Indy's work has a lasting and meaningful impact because it's a publication that inspires readers to take action. The Indy has shaped my political development as a community organizer by demonstrating the importance of amplifying the stories of those who are directly impacted by inequality and oppression. In New York's political climate, power is too often consolidated in the hands of the very wealthy, and that power is used to dominate the public narrative. For 250 issues, The Indy has played an indispensable role in countering that narrative by speaking truth to power, serving as a platform for the struggles of everyday New Yorkers. From reporting on the statewide movement for housing justice to investigating the mechanics of the Queens political machine, The Indy has been a leader in the popular education of the public. The Indy is a model for what it means for a news publication to provide a crucial public service and to operate with integrity.*

*State Senator Julia Salazar (D-North Brooklyn) is the first socialist elected to the New York state legislature in nearly a century and the youngest woman to ever serve in the legislature.*

## **ALEX VITALE** AUTHOR OF "THE END OF POLICING"

*The United States is experiencing a national crisis in policing. But the fight to end abusive policing is primarily a local struggle targeting local political actors. Unfortunately, across the country, local reporting has either gone out of style, or is under the control of a shrinking number of news conglomerates with little interest in directly challenging the "thin blue line" politics that stands in the way of the changes we need to implement to create safer communities without aggressive and invasive policing. That's why it's imperative that we have a source of independent local news like The Independent. And part of what makes The Indy so powerful is that it doesn't just report on events that are relevant to our movements, it directly works to help build those movements. It does that by including the voices of people doing the organizing for an audience of politically engaged readers. It's a sounding board for ideas and analysis that is essential to any real movement. And, because our movements are becoming more powerful, a growing group of mainstream journalists and political insiders are watching what's happening in The Indy. It's that diverse audience of movement activists, journalists, political insiders and yes, the general public, that makes The Indy an appealing place for me to share my ideas about how we create a world without police and prisons.*

*Alex S. Vitale is professor of sociology and coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College and author of The End of Policing.*



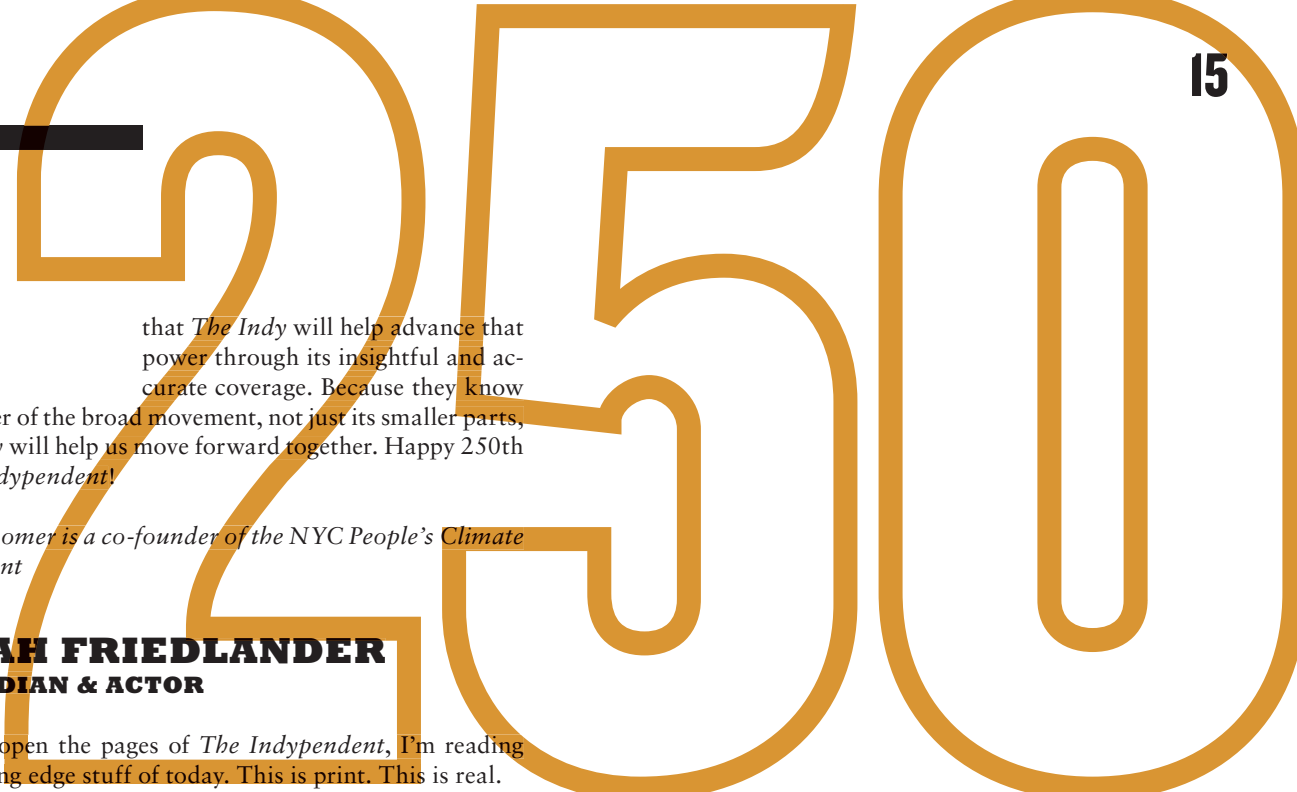
DAVE SANDERS



ERIC MCGREGOR



# MEANS TO ME



## **NANCY ROMER** CLIMATE JUSTICE ORGANIZER

Since its launch almost two decades ago, *The Independent* has been a crucial voice for the NYC left. It gives us news, opinions and connections to each other that we would have great difficulty establishing without it. For the climate justice movement that has meant that *The Indy*, in its print and online versions, consistently covers the actions and concerns of the movement. It covers the small, local actions that are never covered by other citywide media; it covers the big demonstrations and actions that are barely covered and often dismissed or misinterpreted by the corporate media.

*The Indy* has “followed the story” of the climate movement as it has ebbed and flowed over the years. *The Indy* knows that the thick thread that connects one environmental effort to the next is essential for the movement to understand itself more fully and for the broader public that may not be directly engaged in climate work to be better informed. It knows that the depth of the movement is measured by its importance to people of color and working people.

Because *The Indy* is a movement journal, it helps us to see the movements we are most invested in in the broader context of progressive organizing. We read about our own work and about the work of the other progressive movements too. That helps to give us good ideas for future organizing, to make contact and connections with groups we didn't know existed, and to broaden our understanding of how the left is progressing in general.

I believe the left is on the verge of becoming more powerful and effective than it has been in decades, and I know

that *The Indy* will help advance that power through its insightful and accurate coverage. Because they know the power of the broad movement, not just its smaller parts, *The Indy* will help us move forward together. Happy 250th issue, *Indypendent!*

*Nancy Romer is a co-founder of the NYC People's Climate Movement*

## **JUDAH FRIEDLANDER** COMEDIAN & ACTOR

When I open the pages of *The Independent*, I'm reading the cutting edge stuff of today. This is print. This is real.

When I was a kid, this is the kind of coverage I would hope to find in the big city — rebellious, really thinking about stuff. You have to get points of view that are not just being directly dictated to you from corporate-owned news sites. Otherwise, what are you getting?

Today, so much of New York feels like this dull, slowly creeping corporate oppression encroaching in on everyone. From the corporate chain stores everywhere to skyrocketing rents and cost of living. It's more important than ever to fight back, and this paper does it.

*Judah Friedlander is a comedian and actor best known for his starring role in the hit television sitcom 30 Rock.*

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GARY MARTIN

# WEIGH THE DIFFERENCES

## NOT ALL PROGRESSIVES ARE ALIKE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO BERNIE SANDERS AND ELIZABETH WARREN

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

“**W**hen you see a government that works great for the rich,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren shouted at an August 25 mass rally in Seattle, “that is corruption, pure and simple.” The audience cheered her on. Afterwards, she smiled in the bright flash of selfie photos.

Days later, Sen. Bernie Sanders stops his stump speech to ask people what they need. Did your healthcare plan cover you when you were sick and scared? Can you make it by on \$15 an hour? Where is your union picket line and can he join it?

In the 2020 presidential race, two candidates run from the left. Warren is a liberal technocrat brandishing detailed plans to fix the nation. She appeals to the middle and upper class. Sanders is a lifelong left populist. His political revolution attracts the young and the working class. The dividing line between them is mass line politics. For her, voting is end of the people’s role. For him, it’s just the beginning.

### THE MASS LINE

What is the role of the people? The question cuts across ideologies from the left to neoliberalism and fascism. The answer determines organizing and propaganda, it shapes how one envisions the future.

Mass line politics is listening to the people, learning what they need, gathering their ideas and using them as the blueprint for action. They and not a revolutionary elite or party bureaucracy are the driving force of historical change. It is often associated with Chairman Mao’s slogan, “From the masses, to the masses” but it was a manipulative tactic to serve his party. An authentic and homegrown version took shape in the civil rights movement in Ella Baker’s “participatory democracy,” which put people at the center in the work of groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. These ordinary Americans were heard. They made decisions in place of a professional activist class. They engaged in direct action. It was a bottom up practice echoed by today’s democratic socialists like Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who when asked if she ran from the left replied, “I’m running [...] from the bottom.”

Against mass line politics is the top-down model. It is

the proto-fascist leader who promises to fix everything and save the people. It is the neo-liberal technocrat studying data to splice the electorate into niches. It is the far left, which thinks as Lenin did in *What Is To Be Done* that the working class defaults to bourgeois reformism and needs the direction of a vanguard party. However much they talk of serving the people, inevitably the top-down model sees them as a means to an end.

What unites Trump, Biden and even Warren is that none of them envisions a role for the people beyond voting. Bernie is the only one

practicing a mass line, who calls for a political revolution that involves millions of people. He wants you to protest and strike, run for elected office or go out and knock on doors and phone bank for someone who is. He wants you to grow larger than the silos of identity. He wants you to join with others and act.

### THE BERMUDA TRIANGULATION

“I am a capitalist,” Sen. Warren said on CNBC, “I believe in markets. What I don’t believe in is theft.” When she frames her campaign as a moral corrective to capitalism rather than an effort to tear down an innately immoral system, Warren opens a lane between former Vice President Joe Biden’s centrism and Sen. Sander’s left-wing populism to squeak past both. It’s working. Her rallies are getting larger and more passionate. Her poll numbers rise. Her academic credentials shine ever more brightly against Trump’s buffoonery. Her status as a serious woman candidate, especially one who’s been insulted as “Pocahontas” by a sexist president would give her victory the taste of sweet revenge.

All of it would be a Pyrrhic victory. Warren is doing a classic political triangulation between the center and left. She adopted Sanders’ platform of Medicare-for-all, higher taxes on the rich and free college. In public she seems in sync with Bernie, even hugging him at the debate. Behind the scenes, she calls Democratic National Committee members to reassure them she wants to lead them back to power. The DNC pulled for Clinton over Sanders in 2016, it voted down a single issue debate on Climate Change and has been the centrist bulwark of the party for decades. Warren is signaling that her triangulation will fall back to the centrist position. Sure, we will get reforms. Sure, it will be a deep symbolic victory to have the first woman president. The cost is the loss of mass line politics and the loss of a presidency that champions a working class movement.

### THE CENTER CAN NOT HOLD

“Elizabeth Warren is Bernie with baggage,” conservative commentator S.E. Cupp said on CNN, “She doesn’t have the authenticity that voters really seek. What they love about Bernie is that, agree or disagree with him, you know he believes what he’s saying [...] In 2016 Bernie was a cause.”

She’s right. In 2016, Bernie was everywhere. A pop culture fever remade him into every one of us. Gay Bernie. Hip Hop Bernie. Captain America Bernie. He was a vehicle for frustrated hope at the end of the Obama presidency. We wanted what we were promised in the heady days of the 2008 campaign, a historic moment to unify and transform the nation. Obama did not do it. Clinton would not. Bernie could.

Trump’s victory turned that Obama era liberal optimism into a scared defensiveness. Now we ask, who can beat Trump? If the Democratic nominee is too liberal will they lose swing voters? If he or she is too centrist, will we fall into the same trap as before and lose voters who despair of seeing real change? How one answers that question, determines which one of the Holy Trinity — Biden, Warren or Sanders — is seen as “electable.”

The energy in both parties is coming from their respective bases. The deepening divide in wealth and America’s increasing diversity is causing stronger and stronger reaction. In 2016, Bernie rode that wave to the near tipping point of victory. Now his progressive platform has been split by a field of ambitious candidates who are younger, many are women and two are Black. He seems outdated. Bernie served a useful role but the implicit media messaging is that it’s time to shift that loyalty to, say, Warren, who if Biden stumbles badly is positioning herself to pick up the pieces. Lightning can’t strike the same place twice.

But it can. Bernie was never the cause. We were. He was a vehicle for a hope that we could change America. Now he is a vehicle for our hope that we can rescue it. His explicit mass line politics means that the measure of support he has also measures how ready we are to unite with the most vulnerable among us. And it is why Warren’s appeal to the progressive base is a sign of its internal class contradictions. The middle- and upper-class liberals are breaking her way because she offers “deep structural change” without the deep change in our lives that is the price of Bernie’s political revolution. And it is why his support is more solid among the working-class and younger voters of color.

We have a choice between a technocrat and a populist. The former says, “I have a plan for that!” The latter’s campaign slogan is, “Not me, us.” And he insists, “The only way we achieve these goals is through a political revolution — where millions of people get involved.”

It’s not Warren but Bernie who envisions us coming together, listening and learning from each other and turning ideas into a blueprint for action. If we see that then, yes, lightning will strike twice and when it does, it will strike right down the line.

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JUAN C. DÁVILA

# AFTER THE UPRISING

## AS THE “PUERTO RICAN SUMMER” DRAWS TO A CLOSE, PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLIES SPRING UP ACROSS THE ISLAND

BY JUAN C. DÁVILA

CAGUAS, PUERTO RICO — Puerto Rico captured the attention of the world this summer when a movement to force the resignation of the island’s governor Ricardo Rosselló mushroomed into an unstoppable force. First thousands and then tens of thousands and finally as many as a half million people rallied and march in the capital city of San Juan.

Rosselló had presided over draconian cuts in government spending to appease the debt-ridden island’s U.S. creditors. His bumbling administration had been of little help when Hurricane Maria pummeled Puerto Rico in September 2017, killing upwards of 3,000 people. But the final straw for Rosselló’s long suffering constituents came when hundreds of pages of private chats between the governor and his top aides were leaked to journalists. They revealed an arrogant, immature leader who attacked Puerto Rican activists, rival politicians and members of his own party. The chats also included homophobic and misogynist jokes, which Rosselló constantly encouraged, and, most unforgivably, there were jokes mocking Hurricane Maria victims.

The *Verano Boricua*, or Puerto Rican Summer, was under way and no amount of tear gas or baton-wielding cops could stop it. When Rosselló, the son of a former governor, announced his resignation on July 24, the crowds roared. He was succeeded by Justice Minister Wanda Vázquez, a member of his own party who vowed not to run for office when elections are held in 2020.

The protests subsided and the international media moved on to the next big headline-grabbing event. It was supposed to be the end of the story. But for some Puerto Ricans it was just the beginning as they looked to build power from below through popular assemblies not beholden to the island’s corrupt political parties.

There are now roughly 50 popular assemblies that hold public meetings in 20 cities and towns. They are promoted through social media and word of mouth. In Caguas, a city

of 140,000 people just south of San Juan, hundreds of residents gather every other Sunday at dawn in the center of town to discuss national and local political questions. Among the participants are university students, unionized workers, professionals, long-time activists and community elders.

Food is shared. There are recycling initiatives and sometimes artistic performances as well. The gatherings, which last from two to three hours, begin like this: people arrive with their beach chairs, register their attendance and then hammer out an agenda. The assembly splits into working committees and later regroups to hear report

backs from the committees and discuss next steps.

A recurring question that hovers over these discussions is how to harness the energy that moved so many Puerto Ricans to take to the streets to demand Rosselló’s resignation and turn it into political and social transformation. Some asambleístas propose trying to win approval of a new constitution, others are looking to back radical independent candidates in next year’s elections, others are pressing the issue of solving Puerto Rico’s political status and moving toward independence. Some objectives are long-term, while others are short-term.

In one recent Caguas assembly meeting, there were discussions about how to collectively support a call for a general strike proposed by radical feminists if Gov. Vázquez failed to call a state of emergency that would address the upsurge in killings of women in recent years.

“We want a country that is safe for all women,” said Zoan Dávila, 31, a member of the Feminist Collective Under Construction which is organizing for the general strike. “That’s why it’s important to discuss as people not only forms to remedy this, but also the importance that the state performs its duties.”

Some assembly participants are urging more of a focus on local issues. “I understand that the people’s assemblies must have things that pertain to the whole island, but they [also] must be more related to the needs of my town,” said Nancy Santiago Candelaria, 60, who proposed the assembly work to address the concerns of downtown car owners who are being ripped off by privatized parking meters that funnel 96 percent of revenues to the company that runs them and 4 percent to the city of Caguas.

“If there’s a parking meter in a public sidewalk, that money must go to the municipality, so that the municipality has improvements,” Santiago Candelaria said.

The issues addressed by the people’s assemblies vary from one locale to the next. In Utuado, a rural town in the mountainous central region of the island, residents are concerned about deteriorating service at their town’s one hospital, which

has discontinued its overnight shift. In case of a medical emergency, locals now have to travel about 30 minutes down the mountains to the coastal city of Arecibo. Assembly participants are currently discussing whether to organize a protest to demand the re-opening of the hospital’s third shift.

In Luquillo, a coastal town on the east side of the island, the people’s assembly has organized protests in San Juan in opposition to a government rezoning plan that would allow industrialization and commercial development in residential and environmentally protected areas. This could set a precedent that will be replicated in other parts of the island, further pushing people out of their communities.

The assemblies began in the first half of August and are now moving to appoint spokespersons from each city or town to continue discussions on a shared national platform and how to continue building the movement from the ground up. Jennifer Mota Castillo, 33, a personal trainer and marketing consultant, is a spokesperson for one of the San Juan assemblies who also travels to Caguas to stay in contact with organizers there.

“It’s very tiresome, but is a task that someone has to do,” she told *The Independent*. “From here, within the next years or the next decade, is going to emerge the Puerto Rico that we want and are going to design together, from the people, from below.”

The assemblies face many challenges. Sustaining a large volunteer-based movement whose members have differing objectives while operating outside of any established institutions is not easy to do. Hurricane Dorian’s brush with the island in late August was a reminder that in an era of regular Category 5 storms, people’s lives could be catastrophically disrupted again. And should the assemblies grow and become more powerful, they will have to navigate relationships with entrenched politicians, their liberal allies and NGOs that can provide access to resources but often with strings attached.

Whatever happens, the people’s assemblies represent a shift in Puerto Rico’s political activism and organization. They are the product of organizing by grassroots groups that predates the drive to push Rosselló out of office by many years. They are spaces where people seek to imagine something new, a future that has been denied, while combating years and years of dissatisfaction with the current political and economic system, which has only benefited the Puerto Rican elite and U.S. corporate interests.

### SIGNING IN:

Participants in the San Juan People’s Assembly held at Plaza Roosevelt register before the meeting begins. There are roughly 50 people’s assemblies active in 20 Puerto Rican cities and towns.

# WHEN FASCISTS GO GREEN

## A FAR-RIGHT ECOLOGY MOVEMENT IS ON THE RISE IN GERMANY ... AND IT'S SPREADING HERE

BY MARESI STARZMANN

**W**ith denying the reality of global heating being as much a core principle of the Trump-era Republican party as opposing abortion and gun control, there might seem to be little common ground between environmentalists and the far right. But some U.S. immigration foes have argued that not letting foreigners in would protect the purity of both nature and culture. In Europe, this idea is widely circulated as well — and in Germany, the racial-nationalist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany) party advocates protecting “an unspoiled and diverse environment.”

The AfD, which won seats in the German parliament for the first time in 2017, contends that “nature conservation” issues should not remain the exclusive domain of the left-environmentalist Green Party. Its platform opposes land speculation, supports holistic forestry management and calls animals “fellow creatures” that should not be subjected to inhumane treatment.

Despite this ostensibly green agenda, the AfD continues to deny the basic facts of climate science, which show a clear correlation between humans’ carbon-dioxide emissions and global warming. “The greenhouse effect is not real,” party climate specialist Rainer Kraft recently declared on national TV. The AfD accuses the German government and international agencies such as the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of conveniently omitting “the positive influence of CO2 on plant growth and world nutrition.” It advocates withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on reducing emissions and has called 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg a “sick child.”

Dismissing climate politics as socially unjust and economically risky, the AfD aligns itself with the interests of extractive industries and climate-change-denier think tanks like the German organization EIKE, the European Institute for Climate and Energy. Two AfD figures, energy-committee head Burkard Reimer and parliamentary candidate Michael Limburg, were coauthors of EIKE’s 2014 “Manifesto on Energy Politics.” EIKE’s annual conference is cosponsored by the Heartland Institute, a U.S.-based denialist organization. EIKE also appears to have ties to the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), a Washington-based nonprofit that advocates market-oriented solutions to environmental issues. Both U.S. groups have received funding from the Koch brothers and ExxonMobil.

The AfD, which was founded as an anti-Euro party and is rooted in a neoliberal tradition, uses green politics to portray itself as the party of the “little man.” It rejects government climate policies, such as the Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz (EEG), a series of German laws devised to encourage the generation of renewable energy, because it considers them to be measures of a “state-directed economy.” The AfD wants to scrap the EEG, arguing that it hurts lower-income households by raising energy prices. It also opposes wind energy on the grounds that “wind turbines present eyesores in cultural landscapes and pose an often fatal risk to birds.”

Instead of renewables, the party seeks to develop fracking and let nuclear power plants operate indefinitely. It also encourages market-oriented,

competitive agriculture, fishing, and forestry.

If this environmental agenda broadly resembles that of right-wing climate denialists, the AfD has other motives for its environmental concerns: Party spokesperson Georg Pazderski recently stated that they are about protecting the homeland (Heimatschutz). It is possible that Pazderski, who is consid-

ered a moderate, intended that statement as a way to compete with the Green Party, which rose to third place in the May elections for the European Parliament, winning almost twice as many votes and seats as the AfD.

Pazderski’s use of the word “homeland,” however, evokes an old German right-wing tradition. The Heimatschutz movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries sharply criticized industrialization, advocating an environmentally and culturally pristine German landscape. Soon after, the Nazis’ “blood-and-soil” ideology turned the concern for the German homeland into one for the German Volk. A supposed ethno-racial community of blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryans now claimed a natural right to the national territory in which it was organically rooted. To guarantee the health of the Volk, the Nazis sought to curtail “ecological stresses” in the form of environmental pollution, overpopulation and immigration.

Rainer Kraft echoed those sentiments in a 2018 parliamentary debate, when he accused the Social Democrats and the Greens of endangering the environment by “promoting mass migration to Europe, even though the CO2 footprint of the average European is ten times that of someone from Africa.”

Some U.S. far-right groups advocate a similar nativist vision that seeks to restrict immigration to protect both nature and the nation from cultural and racial “pollution.” “Immigration policy must be limited to conserve our environment, open space, and natural resources,” the Federation for American Immigration Reform declared in 2010. FAIR’s late founder, John Tanton, was a former Sierra Club official who started the group after he was unable to get much support for anti-immigration politics in the mainstream environmentalist movement. The man who massacred 22 people in El Paso, Texas on Aug. 3 referred to environmental scarcity several times in the racist screed against the “Hispanic invasion of Texas” he posted online just before the mass shooting.

Using green sensibilities to rally people around a nationalist ideology is also at the core of the AfD’s agenda. The party, which does not seem to see a contradiction in its embrace of “a healthy environment” and climate-change denial, fuels fears that climate politics could threaten Germany’s national sovereignty — for example, if ending fossil-fuel production would make the country dependent on oil and coal imports. The AfD’s new environmental agenda is thus not merely a rejection of the German government’s climate policies. It is an attempt at pushing back against a growing climate justice movement and international demands for a global response to the climate crisis.



DAVID HOLLENBACH

## LABOR LIVES

*Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor*

BY STEVEN GREENHOUSE  
PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, 2019

**LEADING THE WAY:** Striking teachers speak out in Phoenix, Arizona 2018.

By Chris Wright

We live in a paradoxical time. On the one hand, workers and organized labor are in their worst state since the early 1930s. Only 6.4 percent of private-sector workers belong to unions. Average hourly pay is below what it was in 1973. Forty percent of adults lack the savings to pay for a \$400 emergency expense. On the other hand, there is more excitement and organizing potential on the left, and among many workers, than there has been in generations. The Fight for \$15 has been remarkably successful. Hundreds of thou-

sands of teachers have gone on strike illegally and won. Innovative new forms of organizing are reinvigorating both labor and the left. Only 6.4 percent of private-sector workers belong to unions. Average hourly pay is below what it was in 1973. Forty percent of adults lack the savings to pay for a \$400 emergency expense. On the other hand, there is more excitement and organizing potential on the left, and among many workers, than there has been in generations. The Fight for \$15 has been remarkably successful. Hundreds of thou-

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GAGESKIDMORE

sands of teachers have gone on strike illegally and won. Innovative new forms of organizing are reinvigorating both labor and the left.

Steven Greenhouse, former longtime labor correspondent for the *New York Times*, surveys this terrain in his new book, *Beaten Down, Worked Up: The Past, Present, and Future of American Labor*. While he doesn't provide a detailed history of labor, he covers some of its most important moments of the past 120 years with a journalistic flair for personal stories that's often absent from academic accounts. Much of the narrative, particularly of the neoliberal attack on unions, is bleak, but in the end Greenhouse's argument is compelling: Labor's present weakness is not engraved in stone. A renaissance is possible.

The most interesting parts are those that lend support to this argument. Too few people are aware, for example, of the spectacular successes of Culinary

tel after another to accept "card check" neutrality (recognizing the union after a majority of workers signed cards supporting it, rather than insisting on an election). Even the very anti-union MGM finally changed its tune after the union held a series of demonstrations and distributed reports to MGM's investors warning them that a strike could damage the company's precarious finances.

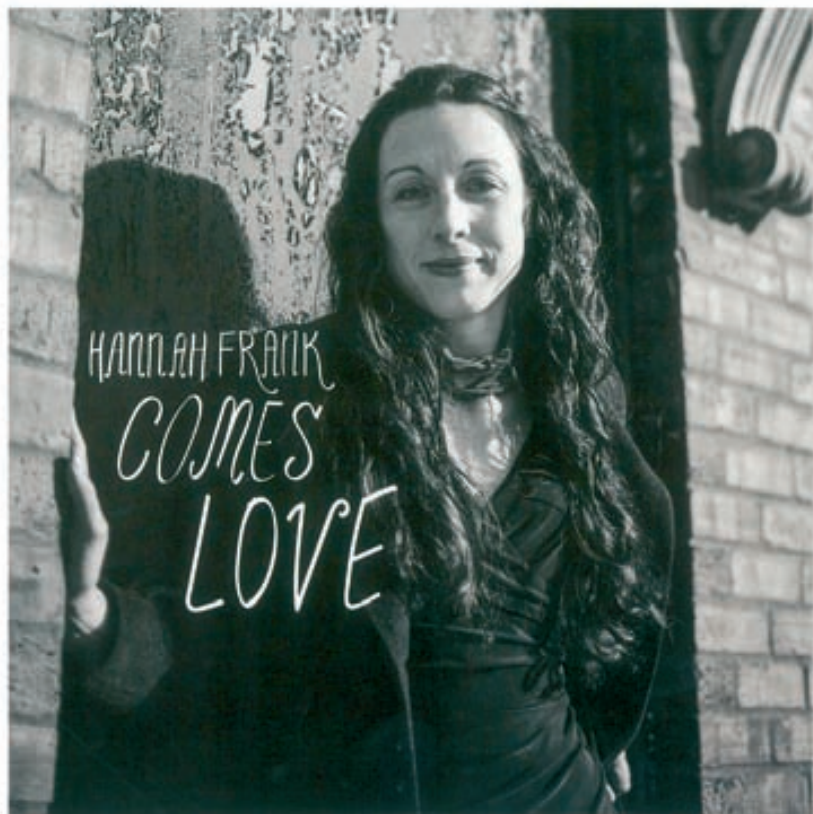
Other unions could also learn from the Culinary's dedication to mobilizing its members politically. In the 2016 election, its members knocked on 350,000 doors, got thousands of people to register to vote, and brought tens of thousands of early voters to the polls, as Democrat Hillary Clinton carried the state by 27,000 votes over Donald Trump. In 2018, the union's efforts were instrumental in unseating a Republican U.S. Senator and flipping the governor's mansion to the Democrats.

Continued on page 22

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# COLOR-CODED DISCRIMINATION

Undesign The Redline

BY DESIGNING THE WE

HOSTED BY THE GOWANUS HOUSES  
THROUGH SEPTEMBER

By Nancy Hoch

On a hot August day, I make my way to NYCHA's Gowanus Houses in Brooklyn to attend the opening of "Undesign the Redline," a national traveling exhibit on redlining created by designing the WE (dtW), a NYC-based design studio. The interactive exhibit explains how redlining, the once legal practice of systematically denying mortgages and other financial services to black and immigrant neighborhoods, baked poverty and social harm into those communities in a way that has yet to be widely understood, let alone undone.

Inside the Gowanus Houses community center, a handful of NYCHA residents and local activists have gathered for the opening. A portable air conditioner and a few standing fans are keeping everyone cool, but making it harder to hear. Karen Blondel, a NYCHA resident in the nearby Red Hook Houses and one of the community members trained by designing the WE to serve as a docent for the exhibit, is talking with two local police officers in front of a wall-sized "residential security map" of Brooklyn. Karen is explaining to the officers that as an area spirals down due to disinvestment, it becomes a place where police in trouble — officers who have psychological problems, get high, or deal drugs — are sent because what happens in redlined areas often stays below the radar. "I was asking them," she tells us later, "to send us the good police."

The map Karen and the officers were examining was created in 1938 by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, a federal housing agency that was part of the New Deal. Like a color-by-number painting, each section of Brooklyn has been assigned a color to show whether the area is "safe" for investment. Green means the area is a go for mortgages and loans. Blue and yellow get cautionary B and C grades. Red means the area is unfit for any kind of investment. In 1938, the only green neighborhood in Brooklyn is Bay Ridge. Almost all of northern Brooklyn, including Red Hook, Gowanus, and lower Park Slope, is shaded red.

The decision to draw a red line around a neighborhood, the exhibit explains, "was based almost entirely on race." The language government and real estate publications use in the 1930s is eerily similar to the racist and anti-immigrant language we hear today. Surveyors are told to keep track of "any threat of infiltration of foreign born, Negro or lower grade populations" and to estimate the likelihood of an area "being invaded by such groups." Almost all the neighborhoods where "colored people" live are classified as "hazardous."

At first glance, "Undesign the Redline" may seem bland — just a series of large red and white panels of text and pictures mounted on the walls. But the extraordinary thing about the

exhibit, what really makes it pop, is that what's on the walls doesn't stay on the walls. Every time I've visited — the show spent a month on the other side of the Gowanus Canal before moving to the Gowanus Houses in mid-August — something interesting has been going on. Often it's strangers striking up conversations with each other or with the docent on duty, but it's also the rich programming which

so far has included a neighborhood walking tour and discussion of Richard Rothstein's *The Color of the Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Local organizations, welcome to meet in the space, often break to view the exhibit.

"It's really local folks who bring the exhibit to life,"

become a part of future versions of the exhibit.

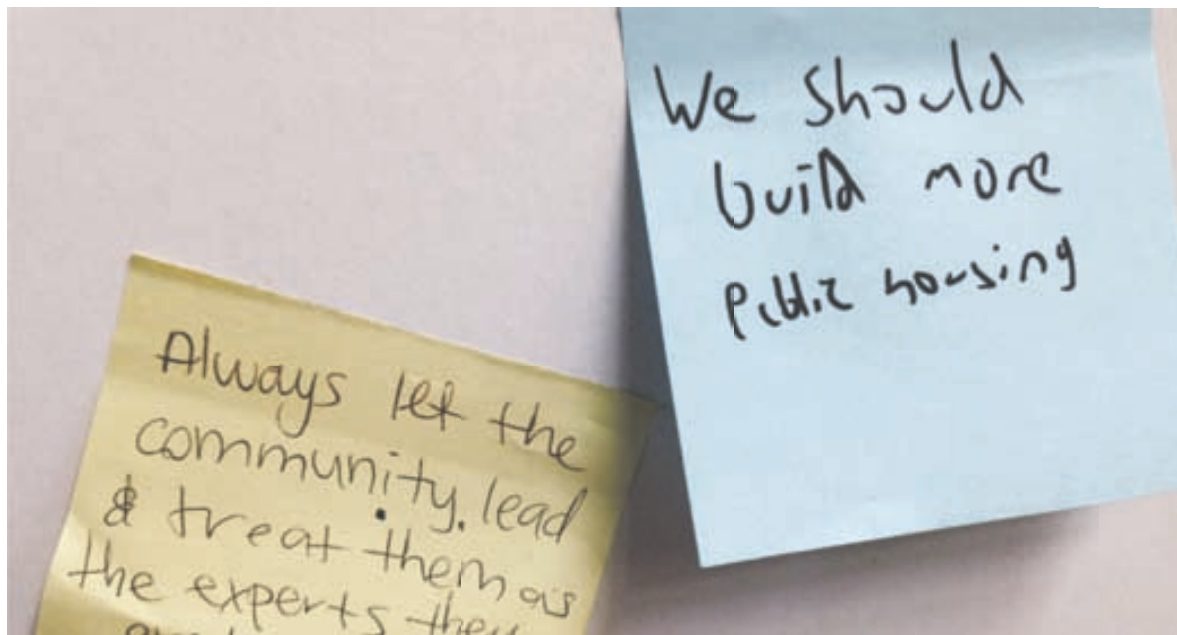
Redlining wasn't taught when Braden was an architecture student. "It is not something that America really wants to talk about" he tells me. "Most people who lived through it, know it, but so many people have been totally isolated from that experience." At the exhibit, you can see just how segregated our experiences are: some visitors express relief and a sense of validation because their story is finally being told, others shock and

## TALKING BACK:

People who attend the exhibit are encouraged to share their thoughts via post-it note on how to end the harm caused by banks refusing to extend credit to people of color, a practice encouraged by the federal government for decades.

## HISTORY LESSON:

NYCHA resident Karen Blondel draws on the Undesign the Redline interactive exhibit to explain the history of redlining in Brooklyn and its ongoing impact to this day.



NANCY HOCH

Braden Crooks, a co-founder of dtW, tells me. "It's not meant to be that we're the experts coming in, and this is all the knowledge." Instead, he says, the exhibit follows "a popular education model," in recognition that "we all share that knowledge."

Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), a community development corporation working in the neighborhood since 1978, has been the major activator of the exhibit in Gowanus. At the suggestion of dtW, FAC put together a community advisory board made up of local organizations and neighbors. That board met with dtW for several months with the result that local history, such as the building of the Gowanus Expressway and the creation of the Red Hook Community Justice Center, are included in the exhibit. One large panel is devoted entirely to local residents' stories. Visitors to the exhibit can also weigh in by writing their thoughts or pointing out what's missing on sticky notes and attaching them to the panels. Some of these ideas, Braden says, will

surprise because they "had no idea." When Braden and dtW co-founder April De Simone started research for the exhibit in 2015, the only place they could view some of the 1930s redlining maps was in the National Archives. Now all of the maps have been digitized. Earlier this year, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago used those maps to examine the long-term trajectories of two areas that were statistically very similar before one was redlined. The study found lasting negative consequences for the redlined area.

The large central panel of the exhibit, an American history timeline which begins with the genocide of the Native Americans and comes up to the present, is filled with curving arrows showing connections between seemingly disparate events, movements and policies. The idea, Braden says, is to represent history "as a kind of cascade, one thing leading to the next. A lot of the 'solutions' of one era end up leading to the crises of the next era." Redlining is a case in point: it was designed to help solve the 1930s foreclosure crisis by encouraging banks to give out affordable long-term mortgages to "stable" (i.e., white) neighborhoods.

The final panel in the exhibit takes up the question of what it would take to step off the merry-go-round of crisis-solution-crisis and solve problems in an antiracist and democratic way, driven from the grass roots and led by people in the neighborhood. This is not an academic question to the people who live in Gowanus. The city is proposing a rezoning of the area and, so far, many community members feel their input is being ignored. "This rezoning," Karen tells me as we leave the exhibit, "could be another chapter in redlining."

"Undesign the Redline" is at the Gowanus Houses community center through September. In October it moves to a tiny house in nearby Thomas Greene Park. For information about the exhibit, visit [fifthavenuecommittee.org](http://fifthavenuecommittee.org). For other venues in NYC or around the United States where "Undesign the Redline" is being shown, visit [designingthewe.com](http://designingthewe.com).

# GAZING INTO THE TRICK MIRROR

*Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion*

BY JIA TOLENTINO

RANDOM HOUSE, 2019

By Isobel van Hagen

**T***rick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion* is a collection of essays that are all about — in some way or another — trying to exist in the 21st century. Jia Tolentino writes nine pieces addressing drugs, religion, celebrity culture, modern-day feminism, and the wedding industry. The incisiveness of the disparate, yet intertwined essays comes not necessarily from the nuanced and precise writing style, nor the unique content that seems so frighteningly relevant you wonder why you hadn't thought of it yourself.

Rather, the importance of this book comes from Tolentino's shrewd portrayal of the problems in our internet-ridden world, our simultaneously self-obsessed and self-hating minds, and then her eventual and cruel reveal that there are no solutions after all. She reveals the trick. Even if we are aware of our self-delusion — our love-hate relationship with capitalism, our fears that caring about looking beautiful interferes with our feminism, our knowledge of how bad Instagram is and how badly we need it — perhaps it makes no difference.

She starts off where every thinker who ponders modern self-delusion assumes is probably the right place to begin: the worldwide web. In her first essay, "The I In The Internet," Tolentino examines how the internet has affected her personally, and notes that she has benefited from the opinion-based economy that the internet created. She describes being formed online, as an editor and writer for the *Hairpin* and *Jezebel*, before becoming a writer for the *New Yorker*. She doesn't even bother to try and fully reconcile this: "You will never catch me arguing that professional opinion-havers in the age of the internet, are, on the whole, a force for good."

She explores how the once innocent internet became corrupted, the endless possibilities of the web growing

harsher, until suddenly we were all at the mercy of an online-self that had shaped our real-world personalities. "Where we had once been free to be ourselves online," she writes, "we were now chained to ourselves online."

"Reality TV Me" begins as a nostalgic road trip into Tolentino's appearance on a forgotten reality series in her teens — a look at self-commodification. The essay is fascinating because while very few of us have ever been on a reality TV show, the way Tolentino describes feeling on the show, namely being performative and observed, is unpleasantly familiar.

While rewatching some of the episodes in which she was cast as the "smart girl" who refused to make out with

people — and characters — work through: childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The beauty in this essay derives from how Tolentino is able to pull something so clever from something regular and familiar: she starts with children's literature.

Referencing *The Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* — perhaps my favorite book as a kid—she notes the best thing about the story is that the protagonists aren't afraid to run away and live in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Childhood heroines aren't always fearless, but they are intrinsically resilient [...] sadness and fear are rooms to be passed through."

Tolentino quickly cuts to our core: the loveliness of reading about child heroines is their inherent toughness derived from a general obliviousness to fear. As we, and characters, get older, that same fear and existential dread seems to linger for most, if not all of the time.

In another gesture to her dichotomy theme—perhaps my favorite essay — "I Thee Dread," about the wedding industry, Tolentino, now 30 remembers leaving her Peace Corps assignment in Kyrgyzstan exhausted by "the awful juxtaposition between my obscene power as an American and my obscene powerlessness as a woman." This is the final chapter and she unwaveringly lays out the delusory aspects of becoming a bride, starting by showing the process of how much weddings cost — typically around \$30,000, spent in "the spirit of fun but the name of tradition."

As you near the end of the book, with many phrases underlined in ink that are both so obvious and so illuminating, it

will occur to you how kind Tolentino has been. Not only has she neatly laid out all the paradoxes you're concerned about, but she relieves you by saying your cognitive dissonance is understandable. She goes further to say that even she, who has thought so deeply about all this — written the book on delusion, as it were — still feels pulled toward modern-day mania and looking pretty and barre classes.

"I don't want to be diminished, and I do want to be glorified — not in one shining moment, but whenever I want," she says, speaking frankly in reference to her aversion to marriage.

And what's wrong with that?



GABRIELLA SZPUNT

anyone, Tolentino "can't tell if, on the show, I was more concerned with looking virtuous or actually being virtuous — or if [...] I was even capable of distinguishing between the two ideas."

This dual nature of the self is a problem particularly relating to womanhood. In "Always Be Optimizing," Tolentino tackles the aesthetics of the modern woman's "ideal life" — things that are workaday, suddenly seem like a creepy sci-fi movie through Tolentino's perceptive lens. Sweating it out at Pure Barre on your lunch break, then "refueling" at Sweetgreen with a salad designed to be eaten in 10 minutes, wearing athleisure the whole time ("a sort of late-capitalist fetishwear," she writes) is a perfectly accurate picture of modern life. Once examined a bit closer something seems alarmingly off.

"Pure Heroines" examines the various stages of life

## LABOR UNIONS RISING

Continued from page 20

Greenhouse is especially interested in how activists and a "militant minority" of workers have adapted to the adverse conditions of neoliberalism. In chapters on app-based work (such as Uber, TaskRabbit, and Mechanical Turk), the Fight for \$15, viciously exploited farmworkers in Florida, the teacher strikes of 2018, and "how Los Angeles became pro-labor," he explores the novel strategies and tactics that have been used—in some cases without having any traditional union.

Conditions for tomato pickers in Immokalee, Florida, for instance, once were close to slavery. In 1993, activists founded the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) to educate and entertain workers by means

of leadership training sessions, a low-power radio station, weekly skits about farmwork and social justice (with the immigrants as actors), and more. By the mid-'90s, the Coalition was organizing strikes to press growers for higher pay and better working conditions. But that strategy wasn't working.

So they switched their focus: They began to pressure tomato-buying chains like Taco Bell, and later McDonald's and Burger King. They had two demands: that these companies require their suppliers to adopt a code of conduct, and that they pay their suppliers a penny more per pound, money that would be passed on to the pickers. With the help of university and high-school students, the National Council of Churches and other religious organizations, federal prosecutions of forced labor on Florida farms, and highly visible tactics like a hunger strike outside Taco Bell's headquarters, the CIW

organized a boycott of Taco Bell until the corporation would agree to its demands. In 2005, it finally did. A few years later, other companies followed.

As a result, 35,000 farmworkers have had their wages and working conditions significantly improved. A workplace-monitoring program, which experts have called the best in the United States, ensures that violations are investigated and punished. "[T]he tomato fields in Immokalee," one researcher says, "are [now] probably the best working environment in American agriculture."

Such stories as these make *Beaten Down, Worked Up* an inspiring read. The final chapter is particularly interesting, for Greenhouse gives concrete advice on "how workers can regain their power." Perhaps there could be a major national workers' group comparable to the American Association of Retired Persons, called something

like the American Association of Working People, in which members would pay dues to an organization that would advocate for their interests. Activists could champion a system of worker representation on company boards, similar to Germany's. Union leaders should be given incentives to do more organizing. If the federal government won't act, states could implement new laws Greenhouse outlines.

Readers familiar with labor history and the recent corporate attacks on unions might find the book's treatment of these subjects a little superficial, but Greenhouse's purpose is to show ways and examples in which the struggle for workers' rights is winning. He succeeds admirably at that.

# TRUMP DEPRESSION HOTLINE



JON OULITY

*Hi Billy, climate change seems scary enough, and now the Amazon is on fire. Is it fair to ask these kids — you know, Greta Thunberg, the Sunrise Movement activists and the like — to be leaders? Why should the burden fall to them? Isn't it up to us adults who have been screwing up the planet?*

— BRUCE, Boerum Hill

BRUCE,

These kids don't need our blessing! We don't "burden" them.

Greta Thunberg joins Xiuhtezcatll Martinez and Marlow Baines of the Earth Guardians, Nessa Diab and Colin Kaepernick, Severine Fleming from the Greenhorns, Kandi Mossett from Standing Rock, Alicia Garza and DeRay Mckesson from Black Lives Matter and the brave Parkland survivors.

Among my examples here are some who were radical children a while ago. But check out how they have in common a highly original activism, not fulfilling the demands of an industry, not even the classic characteristics of "protesters." Generally the kids shaking the air have the organizational shape of a swarm. I don't hear them saying that there is a star or "next generation." I don't hear them using the word "leader" anymore because each of us needs to have that quality now.

My generation can learn from the young activists that our most basic sacred institutions are not as important as the survival of the Earth. They go on strike at their schools, for Christsake, which often means flouting their own parents. Our opposition to fossil fuel corporations and the big banks and fascist governments should take this inspiration and run with it. Strike, block the bastards with our bodies, talk to them and win them over — but don't hesitate to trespass in their space. You see, this struggle shouldn't be a burden — more like the sensation of weightlessness, of flying. Like being a child, Bruce, that joy!

— EARTHALUJAH!

• • •

*Hi Rev. Billy, the eighth anniversary of Occupy Wall Street is coming up. OWS was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. To see how masses of people could legit challenge bankers and politicians and police and real estate moguls was incredible. But every year the reunion gatherings in Zuccotti Park (Freedom Plaza) get smaller and I wonder if it all had any impact at all. Wall St. is corrupt as ever and Trump is president. You were there. Where's the revolution we fought for now?*

— TRISHA, Vinegar Hill

TRISHA,

The failure to stage anniversaries is not in any way a measure of OWS's impact. Occupy spread to 2,600 communities and it still resonates through the years the way that Standing Rock and Black Lives Matter do. The choir and I met veterans of Zuccotti Park in North Dakota and in Ferguson and the Women's March and WorldPride on Stonewall's 50th. This is a rushing stream of freedom fighters that will soon flood its banks.

Where's the revolution? It isn't what we thought it would be eight years ago. I believe that we will occupy space by pulling people from their screens. We will cause revolts by employees within fossil fuel and weapons and chemical corporations. We will march into the banks and pull the people off their screens with the hurricanes in our eyes.

Remember we have a lot to remember from Occupy, but each successful movement over the years has had its own unprecedented, unexpected and downright scary qualities. Wait a minute. Did you feel that? A movement is a starting over. The revolution is minutes away. It's right here. It's coming. Hear that? Get off that screen!

— REV

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**COULD DO**

— THE SCOTSMAN UK

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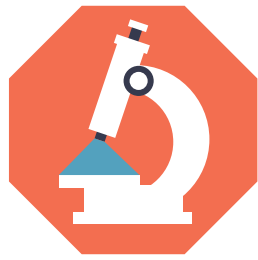
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September 2019 THE INDEPENDENT

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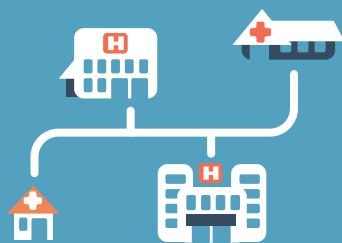


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