



69% of Americans support regulating carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants, according to the Yale Program on Climate Communications environmental pollution kills

1.7 million

children under 5 each year globally, according to two recent WHO reports 12,000

Philadelphia-area homes could be underwater by 2040, according to the high-end estimate in a Climate Central report

Philadelphians Demand Green Jobs, but

SEPTA and PECO Supply Smoggy Air

by Suzy Subways April 6, 2017



"This is a class war issue—it's life and death for people," says activist Ron Lester Whyte, "You don't go out to the Main Line or Upper Merion and see a natural gas plant in the middle of their neighborhoods. They want their neighborhoods to be clean, with fresh air for their kids. But they don't care about that when it comes to poor people or Black people or working class people."

What would you rather see in your neighborhood—an asthma-causing natural gas plant, or solar panels installed for \$26/hour by your formerly unemployed neighbors? If Philly's public transit system and electric utility don't make the same choices you and I would for our communities, it's because they don't really answer to us. But Philadelphians are getting organized to make them listen.

SEPTA's racist asthma hazard

On March 23, SEPTA's board authorized the construction of a natural gas plant in Nicetown, a low-income Black neighborhood in North Philadelphia. "My children go to school there, and we live there," one parent testified before the vote. "It's an already overburdened, polluted area, and we're just concerned—myself and other parents—about the lack of a health study to show how the pollutants in the air can affect the neighborhood and young, developing lungs."

The plant's effect on young lungs is expected to be sickening. Natural gas power plants make ozone smog, which can cause chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and is likely one cause of asthma, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. While SEP-TA estimated how much the plant will release of some types of pollution that are linked to everything from heart disease to impaired cognitive development in children, it didn't study the health impacts.

"We definitely heard loud and clear that people did not want the plant in their neighborhood," says Mitch Chanin, a member of the all-volunteer environmentalist group 350 Philly. "It'll be next to SEPTA's largest bus depot, a few blocks from the Roosevelt Expressway. People said, "We have enough air pollution." In fact, nearly a third of all children in the 19140 zip code already have asthma, according to the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation. A statement by City Councilmember Cindy Bass said 19140 also has the city's highest rate of childhood hospitalizations from asthma.

SEPTA claims the plant will help slow climate change, because it'll mean less reliance on coal-burning power plants. Natural gas does produce less carbon dioxide than coal. But when natural gas is extracted during the "fracking" process, and when it's transported and used, methane leaks into the air. Harvard University researchers have found that methane leaks are increasing dramatically. And molecule for molecule, methane is a far more powerful cause of climate change than carbon dioxide.

Private industry robs the public

So why is SEPTA building this fracked gas plant? It will power six Regional Rail lines, used mostly by suburban commuters who live far from Nicetown's smog. But why does SEPTA need its own power plant when it continues to buy electricity through the regional power grid? "SEPTA is saying that because of climate change, there will be more intense storms that will knock out the electricity supply to the trains, and the only solution is to generate their own electricity on site," Chanin says, adding, "It seems a little perverse to say we need to use more natural gas to address problems caused by climate change." And he's skeptical that the plant is necessary to prevent power outages. "We asked SEPTA to conduct a full study that looks at all their options for making the rail system more resilient and reliable in case of power outages, but they refused to do that," he explained.

#NODAPL

The Fight for Native Sovereignty, Clean Water, and a Decolonial Future

By David Bedford + Sejong, the Marxist April 6, 2017

In April 2016, when the Dakota Access pipeline project crossed through the Standing Rock Sioux's territory, a native elder named LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, along with many youth from her tribe and the surrounding area, set up a small encampment near the pipeline's construction site. Allard and other members of the Standing Rock Sioux established the campsite as a space for resistance, spiritual healing, and cultural preservation. This struck a chord with native justice and environmental activists, and is eventually what led to the international movement known as #NODAPL.

The 1,172 mile-long Dakota Access pipeline was designed by Dakota Access, LLC, a subsidiary of the Dallas-based corporation Energy Transfers Partners. The pipeline was designed to carry oil from the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota to Pakota, Illinois. Initially plotted to cross the Missouri River near Bismarck, north of native territory, it was decided that it would be too close to the city's municipal water sources, residential areas, and natural wetlands. The pipeline was rerouted south instead, through native Sioux land.

Over the course of the Summer, thousands of people from across the United States, and the

world gathered at Standing Rock and the nearby resistance sites to obstruct the construction of the pipeline. Solidarity organizations arose in cities across the globe, including here in Philadelphia with the organization Philly with Standing Rock. Under the guidance of Native leadership, many of the organizations rallied against the major banks funding the pipeline, such as Wells Fargo and TD Bank. US protesters also took the fight to their local Army Corps of Engineers offices, demanding that they rescind the permits to the pipeline.

On September 7, 2016, the #NODAPL movement hit the international spotlight when footage surfaced of six protesters and a horse being attacked by security dogs. When police from across the country were deployed to Standing Rock, the native territory was essentially under a military occupation. By October, clashes with police became more frequent as they attacked protesters and utilized tear gas. On November 20th, police officers turned water cannons on crowds of protesters, tearing skin and soaking them to the bone. Almost two dozen people were sent to the hospital that night, most were suffering from hypothermia. In below-freezing weather, it was nearly a death sentence.

As news spread of these acts of police brutality, the international movement grew even more passionate. People fought for divestment across the globe. In Norway, the indigenous Sami people of Northern Europe successfully pressured Odin Management to divest from the project. Tribal leaders from outside of the US converged on Standing Rock. On December 4, a massive contingent of 2,000 US veterans marched into the campsite to show solidarity for native people. On that same day, the Army Corps rescinded the permits to the pipeline.

• •

The severity of police repression is not the only reason why the #NODAPL movement is so significant; rather, the severity of the repression reminded us of the deep history of the conflict unfolding before us. The ghosts of Natives murdered by colonialism and Westward expansion, and the echoes of their demands, haunted the story.

These have always fundamentally been demands for power.

As we navigate the environmental justice movement, our demands must be rooted in demands for power. Environmental justice move-

continued on page 6



Political restaging of *The Fever* to benefit Philly Socialists

by Lexi Lewis April 6, 2017



April 12^e-22^e at Plays and Players' Skinner Studio Tickets for each night starting at \$1



Plays and Players Theater and Scott Rodrigue proudly present a new political re-staging of Wallace Shawn's *The Fever*. Written during the waning consumerism of the first Bush era, this work is poignantly relevant today. The production offers important insight into entitlement and co-existence at a crucial time, when America's political landscape is in rapid and unsettling upheaval.

A privileged liberal artist awakens in the middle of the night, afflicted by a growing awareness that the life he leads comes at a cost to others. Winner of the 1991 Obie Award for Best Play, this blistering monologue sets wry and quirky humor against searing self-scrutiny. What is the extent of our accountability to a world of widespread social injustice, vast disparity of wealth, and abhorrent foreign policy?

The Fever runs from April 12 to April 22, Wednesdays through Saturdays. All shows are at 7:30 pm, at Plays and Players Theatre, in the Skinner Studio (third floor), located at 1714 Delancey Place.

This production has partnered with Philly Socialists to offer two special evenings. April 13, the second preview, will be Socialist Night, with 10% of ticket sales benefiting Philly Socialists. A "Socialist Social" at Quig's will follow the performance. Additionally, complimentary tickets to Prommunism will be made available to all audience members who attend the closing show on April 22. Prommunism is "a fancy dress fundraiser for Philly Socialists." It will be held at R.U.B.A. Club Ballroom, 416 Green St., from 8 pm to midnight.

"Class-Conscious Ticketing" is currently available on OvationTix, 866-811-4111 or https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/970770. Tickets start at just \$1 for each performance, and prices increase as supply dwindles (like Megabus). •

Landlords and Capitalism

by Klyde Breitton + Sejong, the Marxist April 6, 2017

1 Rent is exploitation

At worst, a landlord barely or never does repairs and ignores problems like heating or cockroaches. And if you complain, you're threatened with eviction. At best, your landlord takes care of your home and is nice to you, but the bottom line remains: rent is exploitation.

Why do landlords think they deserve to profit off your rent? Every month you pay hundreds of dollars to your landlord, and what do they do with it? No matter how nice they are, the way landlords make money is by profiting off your rent. Landlords don't spend all your rent money on repairs or refurbishing because they can't. There would be no money left for themselves. All the money that doesn't go to repairs is profit from your rent.

But why should landlords profit off your rent?

Landlords make money not by working like you do, but by already having enough money to buy and build housing that people need to live in. They make money from your rent because they already had enough money to buy and rent a place to you. You earn money because you hustle: working gigs, working in a store, office, factory, etc. But a landlord doesn't do that. A landlord earns money by doing nothing but owning homes that are rented. Rent is exploitation because landlords have no obligation to spend your rent money on making your home decent. Rent is exploitation because landlords exploit the fact that you don't have enough money to buy your own home. Rent is exploitation because you have to spend your hard-earned money on a home you will never own. Rent is exploitation because a landlord can profit off your rent without doing anything productive, because a landlord can make a profit off of you, because you are poor and they are not.

Landlords exploit the poor.

The difference between you and a landlord isn't that your landlord is better, smarter, or more hard-working than you. The only difference is that your landlord has the money to get a loan, buy an apartment, and rent it to those that can't.

If you had the money, you could do that. Since you don't have the money, your landlord takes advantage of your situation and charges you rent. You pay rent not because your landlord deserves it, but because you are poorer.

2 Landlords create a vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation

Philly has an eviction crisis: in some parts of the city, over 15% of tenants are evicted every year, many times for no good reason. But no matter the reason, an eviction has a lasting impact

on a tenant's life. It can make it nearly impossible to find good, affordable housing because landlords will use eviction histories against you. Landlords can also overcharge you if you have an eviction history.

An eviction history makes it hard to find any other housing. Tenants with their backs against the wall have no choice but to accept poorly kept and unaffordable housing. Tenants with eviction histories are forced to take housing that isn't decent for anyone, because it's better to have a home than none.

Even worse is that each eviction puts you at higher risk for future evictions. Each eviction sets you up for another apartment with too high of a rent and too many problems in worse neighborhoods. People fall further and further away from affordable housing and a chance at digging out of their situation. It's a vicious cycle setup by landlords to keep the poor forever poor.

3 Landlords exploit the poor because that is exactly how capitalism works

Landlords exploit you, not because they are "bad" people but because that is how they make their living. This is capitalism. This is our system, and how it works is those with money and economic power fundamentally take advantage of those without, no matter how nice they are. Capitalists use the profits from exploitation to keep the poor continually poor. Landlords are capitalists. They control all the capital (resources) to keep you from owning your own home. Capitalism is the system where only a few people like landlords control the money, the resources, the housing—the capital—needed by the many.

This doesn't have to be the way things are. There is NO REASON that we HAVE to have a housing system based on letting the rich and powerful take advantage of the poor. There is NO REASON to base a housing system on the right to exploit the poor. We have every reason to base our housing system on the simple right to having quality housing for everyone, because everyone deserves to live with dignity.



The Curious Case of Lawrence Krasner

By Zak Krone April 6, 2017

Citizens of Philadelphia have an interesting decision to make this May in the primary for the upcoming District Attorney's race. Seth Williams is leaving office, recently indicted for more than 21 counts of bribery including wire fraud. Good riddance to another cravenly ambitious prosecutor. So who is left to fill the gap? Amid the usual lame promises to be tough on crime, bridge the gap between police and citizens, and pursue the death penalty in "extreme cases", one candidate seems to be running dramatically left of the pack.

Lawrence Krasner is running for District Attorney, though running under the umbrella of the Democratic Party, his politics are anything but. In February he fielded questions from an unvetted crowd at Everybody Hits on 6th and Girard. During the hour long Q&A session Krasner spoke as a concerned citizen, appalled by the

EAVING IT UNUSABLE FOR AGES

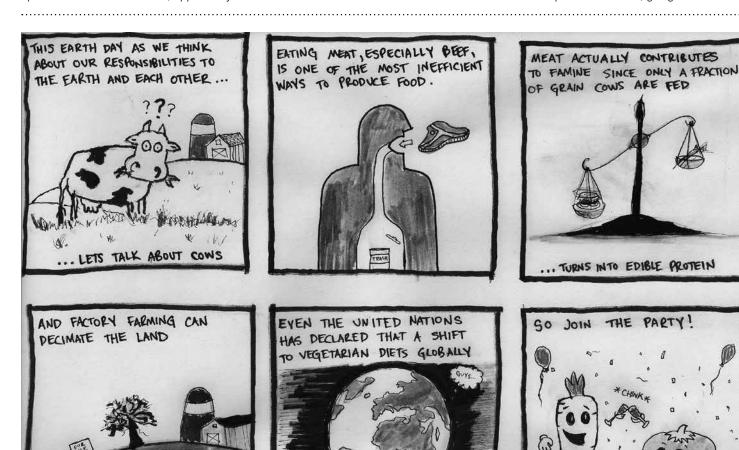
injustice in our criminal justice system, and frustrated by the cynical "Dirty Harry style" approach to policing that fails us everyday. "We have more black men in prison right now than slaves at the beginning of the Civil War... Justice is what makes us safe. Right now we have injustice, and it's not keeping us safe," he explained throughout the night.

Change, so often turned into a hollow political slogan, in Krasner's case seems born out by his career as a defense attorney. He's carved out a niche defending protesters of all stripes for the past twenty years, including last year's Democratic National Committee and those seeking help through the Up Against the Law coalition. Krasner at times seemed especially hostile to elements of law enforcement, specifically calling out the Fraternal Order of Police's John McNes-

by. "I don't want his endorsement. A lot of these other candidates want to run for something else later on. I don't want the FOP's endorsement so long as John McNesby is in charge."

Some stark promises of the evening included:

- Ending illegal use of stop and frisk. He explained "What we have now is fifty kids, they're all black and brown... and they're going to search them all for no reason other than the fact that they're black and poor... The reality of what's going on is that it's a sweep and they're acting like an occupying army." He would require officers to log pedestrian sweeps in order for evidence to be usable.
- No longer going for maximum sentencing. "Six percent of criminals perpetrate sixty percent of crimes, going for maximum sen-



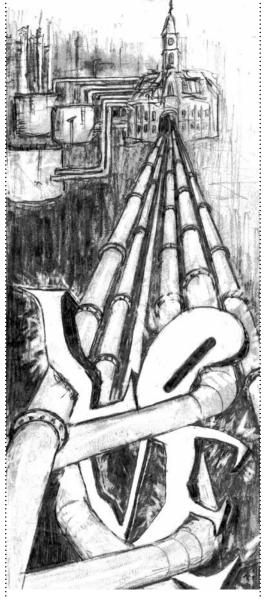
IS NEEDED TO AVOID THE WORST

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

GO VEG!

- tencing is unnecessary and a waste. We're not trying to win a trophy."
- Unequivocal support for sanctuary cities. "The Obama administration created a more efficient deportation apparatus not realizing [what] would come later... I can tell you that in every way the law allowed me to, I would not be helping... I will not be mining for charges that allow it easier for people to be taken away when ICE comes to round up families."
- Using a societal perspective when facing prosecutions. "I've seen homeless people given one to two years for stealing food. What a great use of resources." This would also include refusing to prosecute minor marijuana possessions. "Marijuana should be as available to adults as beer... Adults should be able to enjoy it recreationally." This includes recognizing the opioid crisis for what it is, a reaction to the peddling of dangerous drugs by big pharma which require a rehabilitation-first approach.

Nonetheless there are still some concerns. For one, Krasner is running within the confines of the Democratic primary. He labels himself a progressive but wasn't quick to embrace the mantle of socialism publicly. "There's an idea," he explained to a smaller crowd after the address, "that begins with an 's' and ends with an 'm' It's a good one. And all I'll say is that you need people to sail the ship after the pirates take over." Why not come out with it? Maybe the approach of normalizing policy and ideas before political labels makes sense when an ill-informed public is still afraid of boogeymen. But there's also the danger of letting oneself become homogenized in a party which has failed to convince the working poor of this nation that it's worthy of their trust. Engaging in electoral politics is no substitute for direct action, but at the very least Krasner seems to promise an arm of the law more keen on on staying out of the way of radical activism. Philadelphia radicals and activists will have a chance to decide whether or not a guarded ally is worth their vote by May 16th.



ART BY BETH PULCINELLA

ments that are solely focused on climate change because of its threat to all of humanity should be criticized; rather we should center environmental justice on a critique of those who have power and the structures that keep them in power.

The #NODAPL struggle makes this clear: environmental justice is impossible without fulfilling the demands for power being made by those facing grievous environmental injustices. It is unjust for a company to risk polluting the public water of millions in order to secure a private profit. It is unjust to deny people the right to govern their own land, especially a people that never chose American governance. Environmental justice cannot be just the survival of the human species; it must be primarily about establishing a just relationship between people and the environment. Public resources like clean air and water cannot be for sale to the highest bidder, but instead must be under the democratic control of the people.

On February 7th, 2017 Donald Trump signed an executive order to continue construction of the Dakota Access pipeline, thus ending the EPA's environmental impact study. This however has not deterred groups fighting for #NODAPL. From Standing Rock to Philadelphia, the movement for indigenous sovereignty and environmental justice continues, as it always has, but with much greater strength and fervor. Not in recent memory has America's domination of indigenous people been brought to the national spotlight. Nor has there been a mainstream environmental movement in the US that explicitly challenges colonialism in such a bold manner. Despite the distractions of some misguided activists, for the most part, the actions and decisions of the movement have been conducted under the guidance of native leadership who consistently address the need to respect the land and the treaties involved. The Dakota Access pipeline may be back in development, but the movement is here to stay. Carrying forward, it may be the spark that lit the national flame to address our complex legacy of settler-colonialism.



To understand why SEPTA is building this plant, we need to look at two other big players in Pennsylvania politics: The Marcellus Shale Coalition and the Greater Philadelphia Energy Action Team.

The Marcellus Shale Coalition is the natural gas drilling industry's trade group. It lobbies for laws to benefit the industry and pushes the media for positive news coverage of fracking. The Greater Philadelphia Energy Action Team looks for ways to turn Philly into a major "energy hub" for the transportation, storage and use of fracked natural gas and other fossil fuels.

SEPTA Board member Robert D. Fox's law firm is a member of both of these organizations.

Activists objected to his conflicts of interest—and to the industry dumping its product on Philly's public institutions to guarantee its own profits. Adams Rackes of *Reclaim Philadelphia* wrote in an op-ed, "There has been no serious justification for this unnecessary project.... It is a solution in search of a problem, a supply of natural gas desperately seeking demand."

The fracking industry has had its eye on SEPTA for years. In 2012, when SEPTA bought fuel-efficient hybrid buses instead of buses fueled by natural gas, State Representative Stan Saylor threatened to punish SEPTA by cutting its funding. He was the third most powerful Republican in the House at the time. The *Philadel-phia Inquirer* reported that SEPTA officials took the threat seriously: "Believing that Harrisburg's desire is mainly to increase markets for natural gas, SEPTA offered to explore building a natural-gas powered generator at its Wayne Junction station to produce electricity for its rail system and heat for the station." And boom. The gas plant in Nicetown was conceived.

SEPTA will be paying for it for at least 20 years. "Their claim is that it's guaranteed to save them money," Chanin says. "We think they're just saying this is cheaper than buying electricity generated at other fossil-fuel fired power plants. They haven't compared cost projections for natural gas with projections for renewable energy.

If you contract to buy wind energy for 20 years, you know exactly what it'll cost, and there's no fuel to buy. If natural gas prices spike and SEP-TA is locked into a 20-year contract, fares might have to rise, and people might have to be laid off."

350 Philly, neighborhood residents, and other allies in the Fossil Free SEPTA campaign have been asking Councilmember Bass and Mayor Kenney to stop the plant's construction. Whatever happens, Fossil Free SEPTA will continue to push SEPTA to switch to renewable energy. SEPTA is actually considering building more gas plants, at 69th Street and near 30th Street Station. Visit 350philly.org to learn more and get involved.

Visions of environmental anti-racism

But what if SEPTA and PECO listened to the people? Instead of fracked gas plants, would we get electric buses built here by Philadelphia workers and powered by the sun and wind? Instead of smoggy coal plants that fuel climate change, would we run our homes on local solar energy?

The Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) and Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild (POWER) are calling on PECO to create jobs installing solar panels for local workers in areas with high unemployment. The plan is to boost our region's use of solar energy so that 20% of PECO's electricity would be generated using local solar power by 2025.

And it would create jobs in Philly neighborhoods where the loss of factory work over the past few decades has caused deep poverty. "Local solar generates the most jobs of any energy source, by far," says Greg Holt of EQAT. "They're good-paying jobs. The average is like \$26 an hour, and about half of them don't need more than a high school diploma."

A community-based demand for green jobs is one way to fight environmental racism. "We see this campaign as very intersectional," Holt says. "It addresses a lot of things like local community

control, divestment and reinvestment—issues that are of course universal, but also form parts of the Movement for Black Lives policy platform."

Whyte says the basic structures of society need to change. "For me, environmental racism is part of a larger structure of white supremacy, racism and class war, where society gets benefits from the fossil fuel industry, but all of the negative impacts are pushed onto mostly Black and Brown people, poor people," he says. "Obviously the answer is clean energy, but so many people are making so much money right now from the status quo, that they don't want to change it, and they don't care that the byproduct of the system is killing and hurting Black and Brown people, because the system wasn't really created for us anyway."

Environmentalist nonprofits should hire people from impacted communities, he says. "They want to have people at their marches and rallies, but they don't want to actually bring people into the organization and hire them and have them be actually at the table."

Whyte is part of the #DumpWells campaign to get Mayor Kenney and City Council to take Philly's money out of Wells Fargo bank. Wells Fargo is using our dollars to fund the Dakota Access Pipeline, private prisons, and the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery, which makes our air unsafe to breathe. If #DumpWells can get the city to ditch Wells Fargo and start its own public bank, we might be on our way to a future in which all Philadelphians could have a say in what our money is used for, what kind of jobs we have access to, and what is in the air we breathe.

Visit EQAT.org/walk for info on EQAT and POWER's 100-mile walk through PECO's service area May 8-22, from old energy sites to new, to demand local solar jobs. Join in for an hour at an action along the way, do the whole walk, or ride along in the van!



American Prayer

by D. Ted Tarnovski 2017

In the next world, when all is provided, when we're without need, no want, no fear, no fetish, when we have no reason to do anything at all but look on and stand smiling, freed from what we want,

Please don't judge us for what we did in America.

ART BY EQAT

Trump Supporters Clash with Antifa at Independence Mall

by David Bedford April 6, 2017



On March 25th, Trump supporters across the US organized rallies in support of our new president. Here in Philadelphia, it was met with extreme opposition.

The "Make American Great Again" rally ultimately pulled in a much smaller crowd than the 300+confirmed attendees on the Facebook event. Roughly 100 Trump supporters gathered at Independence Hall, and almost as many counter-protestors on the sidewalk outside the barricade.

The MAGA event organizers intended to host a series of speakers, then march to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and conclude at the Rocky statue.

At the opening speaker session, they featured politicians, conservative community activists, and regular crowdgoers. Their main talking points were in support of repealing the Affordable Care Act (the recently failed Republican alternative plan would have kicked 24 million off insurance and given billions in tax breaks to the wealthy) and supporting the racist border wall.

Shortly into the speaker session, a massive contingent of antifa protesters arrived. By this point, less than a half hour into the event, the counter-protesters greatly outnumbered the Trump supporters, by a ratio of almost 2:1.

Barred from entering the event by Police, protesters instead marched around the block, obstructing traffic on Market st., Chestnut st., 6th st., and 5th st. Bystanders engaged with protesters and joined in to denounce the Trump supporters for their anti-immigrant remarks.

Because the amount of counter-protesters outnumbered the Trump supporters, the police initially called off the march. It was

not until 2pm, far after their intended departure time that the counter-protesters dispersed and the police allowed them to march.

By the time the MAGA rally actually began to march, the crowd had dwindled to only about 50 Trump supporters. As they chanted phrases such as "Build the Wall," protesters on the sidewalks chanted phrases like "No Racists, No KKK, No fascist USA!"

As the march progressed west towards Broad St, the crowds grew on the sidewalks. Bystanders started joining the crowds of counter-protesters to denounce the views of the Trump supporters in the street.

By the time they made it to City Hall, the police ordered the Trump crowd to return to Independence Hall. Outnumbered and shouted down, they retreated.

A large group of Antifa and other organized protesters filled the crowd at City Hall, but more movingly, the streets filled with ordinary people. Children, old folks, working people, and other bystanders gathered to join the protest and prevent the Trump crowd from making their way to the Museum.

At one point, when the police tried to cage in the crowd of protesters west of City Hall, a group of a few hundred kids on bikes cut through to surround the crowd. They also took part in the chants and rallied against the Trump supporters.

Ultimately, the counter-protest was wildly successful. The counter-protestors greatly outnumbered the Trump crowd, and twice stopped the march from happening. Only one arrest was made. Philly came out strong to defend the rights and dignity of immigrants, LGBTQ people, and the working poor against the supporters of the new administration.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 13

The Fever!: A Play 1714 DELANCEY PLACE

April 15

Philly Socialists Garden Work Day
CESAR ANDREU IGLESIAS COMMUNITY GARDEN

April 19

6:30pm

Philly Socialists Cadre Meeting
TBD

April 22

8pm

Prommunism:

A Fancy Dress Fundraiser

RUBA CLUB

April 26

7pm

Philadelphia Tenants Union 2nd Annual Convention

ANNUNCIATION CHURCH

May 1
MAY DAY STRIKE

EVERYWHERE THERE IS WORK, SHUT IT DOWN

May 13

12pm

Garden Party

CESAR ANDREU IGLESIAS COMMUNITY GARDEN

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