

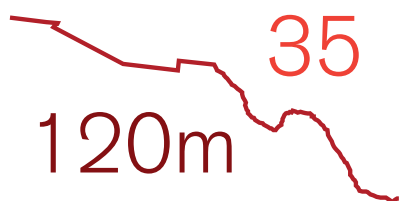
# The Philadelphia Partisan

Volume 1, Number 2  
SPRING 2018

## tearing down the walls

page 2

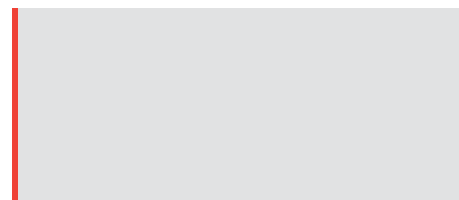
PHOTO BY MADDIE ROSE



There are 35 cities along the Mexico–United States border, with over 120 million permanent residents living in the vicinity of the border, according to the League of Women Voters



In 2015, there were at least 25,000 vacant properties in Philadelphia, including investment homes for the wealthy, but at one “point-in-time” count by the city in the same year, there were 5,328 people staying in shelters and 670 people identified sleeping outdoors



Of the 1,147 people killed by police in 2017, officers were charged with a crime in only 13 of these cases

# Fighting for Redemption in an Unjust System

by Maddie Rose



Patricia Marshall Vickers, a CADBI organizer, with mementos from her imprisoned son Shakaboona's youth.

PHOTO BY SUZY SUBWAYS

*For those serving life in prison in Pennsylvania, there is no parole. Ever. As a result, nearly 10% of our prison population is serving life sentences (over 5,000 people). This is why one campaign is choosing to rename "life without parole" for what it really is – Death by Incarceration.*

The Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration (CADBI) is a campaign fighting to end life without parole, or death by incarceration, sentencing in Pennsylvania. In a recent victory, the Supreme Court ruled that those sentenced to life while young teenagers should now have a chance at parole. Some are starting to come home after decades in prison. But for those handed their Death by Incarceration sentences at the age of 18 or older, the story is much different.

"Sixty years, to someone that's already 40, that's a death sentence," says Mrs. Dee Dee, a proud member of CADBI since its very first meeting. "To someone that's young, you're taking their whole childhood away. My son went in when he was 18, and my baby just turned 42."

Mrs. Dee Dee has a unique vantage point to our justice system. She speaks both with confidence and a heavy heart.

"Being the mother of a lifer, but also the sister of a murdered brother, I'm on both sides of the fence. I'm not in this just for my son, because my son's a lifer, but that man that killed my brother? I'm fighting for his freedom just as much."

And fight she does. CADBI is currently backing two bills, one in the PA Senate (SB942) and one in the PA House (HB135). Both allow for *presumptive parole eligibility* after 15 years for those currently serving

Death By Incarceration sentences.<sup>1</sup>

However, CADBI is a group that not only is fighting for justice, but simultaneously suffering constant injustice. Key elements of CADBI's work include community support and relationship building. Members show up at resentencing and parole hearings, and carpool together to visit loved ones on the inside – most recently, they took a multi-hour trip to both Huntington and Smithfield prisons.

These trips are also opportunities to organize. A significant portion of CADBI's membership is on the inside. Visits and paid email interactions allow information to move between members who are connected to politics on the outside and members who report about prison conditions and organizing on the inside.

"They're letting us know what we need to do, what bills we need to fight for, how we need to get out here and march, so you know – we're one," Mrs. Dee Dee explains. "They're on the inside and we're on

<sup>1</sup> Presumptive parole generally means that if you meet some standards and guidelines, you are automatically eligible for parole unless the parole board can demonstrate that you should not be released. In this case, it means anyone who has served 15 years of a Death by Incarceration sentence should be eligible for parole unless evidence suggests otherwise.

continued



the outside, but we're one."

Every day, money is sunk into keeping prisons afloat. "We could spend that same money on schools, on education, on building programs where we can keep our young people out of going to prison. Keep these recreation centers open. And these people that are coming out can start grabbing these young people and say 'Look, because of a simple mistake I made I wasted so many years of my life in prison, and that's not the place to be.' They could be advocates for these young people."

To those who would voice concern over the return of people with serious offenses to free society, Mrs. Dee Dee asks:

"If they did years, don't you think that's enough? I mean, they could spend a thousand years in there. It's not going to bring your loved one back. People have this tendency of saying 'closure,' but no. There is no closure. Our loved one is not coming back. I tell people that about this guy that killed my brother. Had they asked me when it had happened, I would have said 'Execute him. Fry him.' When your hurt is so fresh, you don't think. You're going by emotions. But you see, after all these years, I realized, you know, he's somebody's son. He's somebody's brother. He made a mistake like all of us do."

"Mistake" is the word that she and many other CADBI members use to describe the reasons for incarceration. It isn't an attempt to downplay the harm done, but to combat the narrative that people who have done things as serious as murder are heartless, or beyond hope. They made mistakes, many of them when they were very young. What would happen if we treated everyone the way we treat incarcerated people? If, decades after making a mistake, we were assumed too dangerous to be allowed even a chance of freedom? She gives a sad laugh. "What would we do? We'd all be in jail."

**I'm not in this just for my son, because my son's a lifer, but that man that killed my brother? I'm fighting for his freedom just as much.**

Meanwhile, the man who murdered her brother, Peter Angel, is currently on death row. Mrs. Dee Dee only learned last year: "It just blew me away. I cried like I had never cried before, 'cause I didn't want them to kill this man before I had a chance to tell him, 'I forgive you for what you did. And I'm fighting for your freedom like I'm fighting for my son's.'"

She has grown worn out, over the years,

continued on page 16

# An Even Worse Prison?

*Pennsylvania is still building more prisons – and filling them. The Partisan asked organizer Kerry Shakaboona Marshall how people where he is incarcerated feel about being moved to a newly built prison.*

*The majority of prisoners here at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Graterford have expressed to me and to the SCI Graterford administration major concerns about moving to SCI Phoenix. The majority of prisoners have expressed that they were suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. They have expressed anger at the officials for making them pay to have their personal property shipped to Phoenix or shipped home or forced to destroy it. The elderly prisoners and prisoners with major health problems are expressing anger at being told that they will have to be double-celled with a cellmate now. Prisoners are afraid that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections isn't going to allow the variety of programs and the number of inmate organizations at Graterford to be continued at Phoenix. Prisoners are upset about the religious services being severely limited or outright denied. Prisoners believe that the Department of Corrections has no-good intentions of turning Phoenix into a really restrictive, oppressive, and racist institution, as exists at most correctional facilities in the rural parts of Pennsylvania. Prisoners fear a change for the worse at Phoenix.*

– Kerry Shakaboona Marshall

Kerry Shakaboona Marshall is a co-founder of Human Rights Coalition and CADBI. He is editor of *The Movement* magazine and has been active with the Lifers' Association at Graterford and other organizations in Pennsylvania prisons, where he has been locked up since 1988, when he was 17. CADBI organizers hope Shakaboona will be coming home to Philadelphia soon, due to recent movement victories. His re-sentencing hearing will be held May 17th. 📌

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*LifeLines* and the *Tubman/Brown Organization* also contributed content to this edition.

COVER PHOTO  
CADBI ORGANIZER MRS. DEE DEE

## Letter from the Editors

We encounter walls daily. Whether metaphors or literal barriers, we bear witness to division: The state constructs borders that cut the world into binaries. "Lock them up," the court house says. "Build that wall!" the White House says. "Male or female?" government forms ask. "DO NOT CROSS," the police tape says after cops evict a family.

This spring, we're shedding light on the way walls divide our society and culture, sometimes in ways we don't notice. Explore stories about people pushed out of housing, high school students pushing for safety without police, and people in prison envisioning freedom. As we go to press, the #No215Jail Coalition has won its demand that the city close the House of Corrections without building a new jail – inspiring us to keep tearing down the walls.

During our first year, we've grown from four pages to 16, and from 250 copies to 750. We're now publishing four times a year. This extra time between print issues allows us to deepen our coverage and provide more frequent, timely content online at our blog. We could still use your help: in addition to writers, we're looking for guest editors and fact-checkers to join us in this work.

We also want to hear from you via Letters to the Editor. Send your feedback to: [phillysocialistslocal@gmail.com](mailto:phillysocialistslocal@gmail.com) or *Philly Socialists*, PO Box 3731, Philadelphia, PA 19125.

We have a new domain! Access our content from past issues online at [PhiladelphiaPartisan.com](http://PhiladelphiaPartisan.com) and [PhillyPartisan.com](http://PhillyPartisan.com). You can still find the same website at [PhillyPartisan.Wordpress.com](http://PhillyPartisan.Wordpress.com). And of course, you can find us on Facebook and Twitter as well. 📌

# Philadelphia Students Don't Want Cops in Schools

Content note: This feature discusses death, policing, gun violence, and racism.

by Danielle Corcione



ALL PHOTOS BY K. DANIEL BRYAN



Students all over the country walked out of their classrooms for 17 minutes on Wednesday, March 14 to protest gun violence. The action was called by the student survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on February 14, which left 17 victims dead.

The Youth EMPOWER Women's March helped coordinate the morning walk-outs; the Philadelphia Student Union and Juntos helped coordinate a march outside the School District

of Philadelphia building on Broad Street, according to a press release by PSU.

Philadelphia students also gathered outside City Hall in Center City. It's important to note that these young people were not only expressing solidarity with Parkland students, but also rallying against school policing. Teens chanted in unison, "No justice, no peace! We don't need school police!" and "Whose lives matter? Black lives matter!"

The connection between gun violence and

the prison industrial complex is often overlooked by mainstream media coverage. In *Teen Vogue*, prison abolitionist Mariame Kaba describes the school-to-prison-pipeline as a "national trend that criminalizes rather than educates students—and one that disproportionately targets black students—as 'tough-on-crime' policy has resulted in millions of mostly black and brown people winding up behind bars."

The demonstration called for the following actions:

## 1 Divestment from school police officers

Although school resource officers have been employed in schools since the 50s, Kaba says they have been heavily concentrated in urban schools since the late 90s, especially following the Columbine shooting. (Plus, *The Washington Post* reports that MSDHS's armed school resource officer never went inside the school building as the mass shooting occurred.)

## 2 Comprehensive mental and emotional health services

Oftentimes, when mainstream news discusses mental health issues, the narrative centers the mass shooter as a "lone wolf," as if white supremacy is a disease you can catch rather than a worldview engendered by systematic oppression. Instead, demands for quality mental and emotional support center those who have been on the receiving end of violence.

## 3 More guidance and social workers

Those who favor school policing perpetuate the myth that school resource officers replace guidance counselors by serving as a more informal resource compared to teachers. However, school resource officers don't receive the same education and training when it comes to providing the academic guidance and social support counselors offer. According to *The Notebook*, officers outnumber guidance counselors in Philadelphia public schools.

## 4 Expansion of restorative justice practices

The restorative justice framework is a relationship-based model for accountability. When students feel supported by a community, they are more likely to become invested in it. When applied to schools, restorative justice can call for peer mediation and peer councils.

## 5 Protection for students and families from ICE arrests around schools

Undocumented families are at risk for detention and deportation by ICE. Youth are protected at schools, since they are designated sanctuaries, but parents and other family members are not protected



when picking up their children from school.

**6 Gun control that does not result in targeted policing of black and brown bodies** Just like outside school grounds, Black and Brown people are unfairly targeted by law enforcement using racist stop-and-frisk practices. This discriminatory surveillance shouldn't be ignored when considering alternatives to school policing.

Kaba also mentions that school policing disproportionately criminalizes young Black girls, who are six times more likely to be suspended compared to their white female counterparts. One example of targeted zero-tolerance policing is when Black girls are punished and even suspended for their hair, since many Black hair-

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**Trans Black girls are likely to be hit the most by the school-to-prison pipeline, because they face both transmisogyny and misogynoir from overlapping marginalized gender and racial identities.**

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styles do not fall in line with white-dominated school dress codes.

Additionally, queer and transgender youth are also at a higher risk for targeted policing by school police officers, explains *Rewire News* contributor Kieran Alessi. LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to be placed in juvenile detention centers compared to their straight and/or cisgender classmates. That means trans Black girls are likely to be hit the most by the school-to-prison pipeline, because they face both transmisogyny and misogynoir from overlapping marginalized gender and racial identities.

Whatever walls we march around, whether it's hallways, cubicles, or borders—to fight back against gun violence, we should absolutely stand with Philadelphia students to oppose school policing. 🇺🇸





# The Paper or the People?

*Bill in City Council would toss out squatters and people with verbal leases in less than 48 hours*

by Andrew Sejong

On February 15th, city council held its first public hearing to hear testimony on a new bill against "squatting."

What is squatting? Squatting is occupying a building without owning it, paying rent for it, or having permission from the owner. Whereas trespassing also involves illegally being on property, squatting includes *living* and *claiming a right to live* on a property. For example, squatters will actually be living in the property and claim a legal right, or have some documentation, demonstrating that they have some arrangement to live on this property. However, in other cases, squatters are simply living in a vacant building because no

one is using it and they need a place to stay.

The new bill was put forward by Republican City Councilman David Oh and has been a rallying cry for landlords across Philadelphia. It does two main things. First, it clearly defines squatting as a crime punishable by up to \$300 in fines and/or 90 days in jail for each day the squatter fails to vacate the property. Second, once the police are called, accused squatters must produce credible evidence that they have a right to be there within 48 hours. If such evidence is presented, then the accused squatter and property owner go to court to settle the matter.

Both Community Legal Services and Pub-

lic Interest Law Center raised concerns about this legislation, writing in a joint statement: "The bill seems to assume that people with the right to be in a property will naturally have written documents to prove their rights, and that those documents are readily available to the occupant."

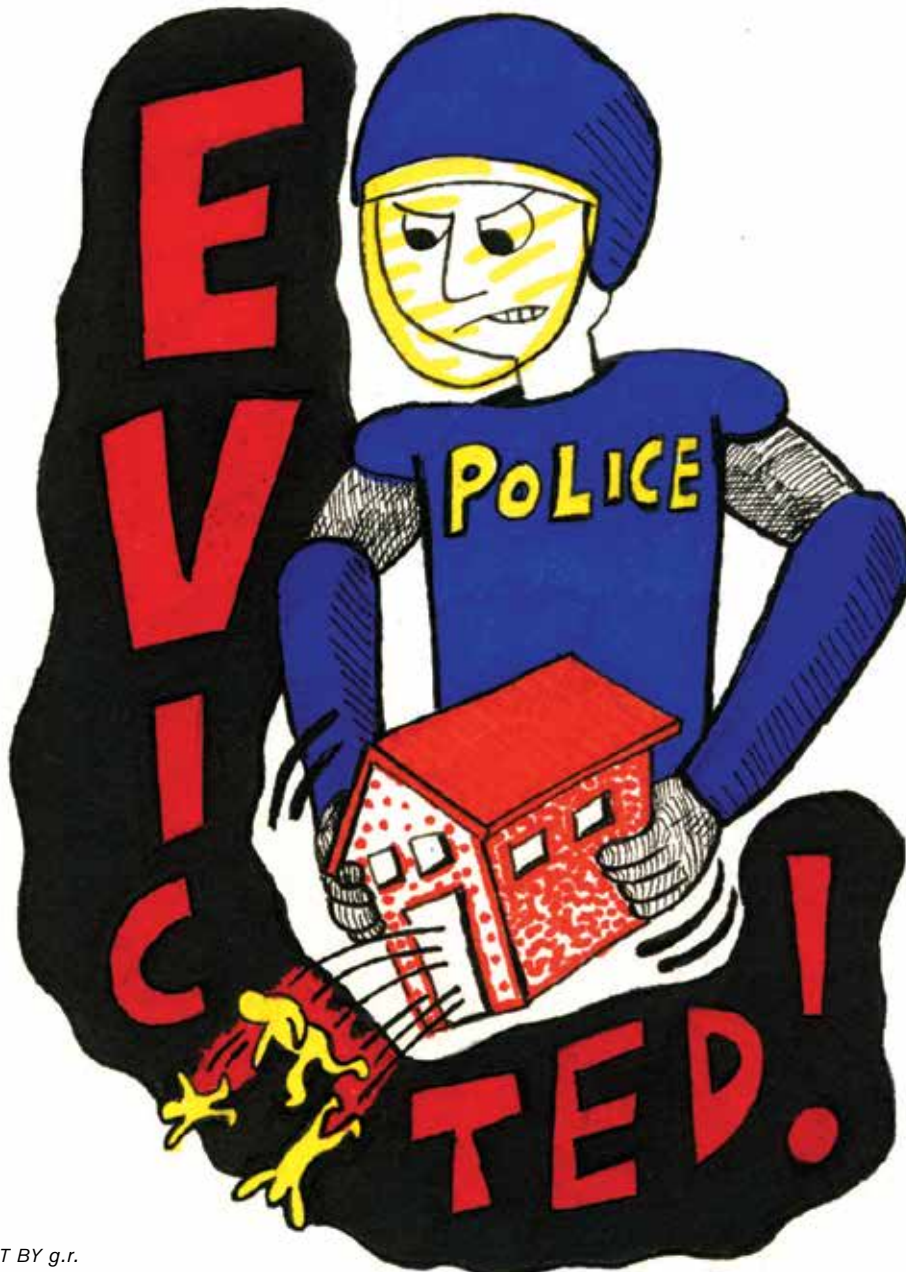
Pennsylvania recognizes oral leases as valid and enforceable by law. According to the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections, thousands of Philadelphians live under such agreements. These are simply spoken promises to house someone. Tenants that are living based on spoken promises from their landlords won't have serious documentation to contest claims that they are squatting. Landlords already use verbal lease agreements and shoddy documentation to evict tenants. This bill creates a loophole whereby landlords can accelerate the process and evict a tenant in just 48 hours.

Moreover, this bill further empowers the police to expand their role in the ongoing eviction crisis in Philadelphia. As Michael Barry, former Deputy of the Pretrial Division in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, said during his testimony to city council: "[W]hat we're doing is empowering the police to do what they already have the power to do, which is arrest people for committing felonies."

Under this bill, accused squatters have 48 hours to present credible evidence to the police that they have the right to live on a property—and the police determine what is credible often through duress. As Matthew White, representative of the Philadelphia Police Commission's legal team, explained before City Council, one tool the bill hopes to give to the PPD is the right to bring accused squatters to detective offices to be questioned: "*I think having a mechanism to compel them to that venue [detective office] to sign an official statement with the detective would be to the benefit of resolving these issues.*" When asked whether 48 hours is sufficient for the accused squatter to gather the necessary documents to write a complete and honest statement, Mr. White stated, "I don't know what the answer is, but I think if you are compelling people to a detective division, then you're talking about something that's taking place in a matter of hours, single digit hours, not 48 hours."

A police department as corrupt and racist as the PPD has no place determining whether thousands of Philadelphians on verbal lease agreements have *credible* evidence. We should not trust that the PPD will do what is necessary to protect the rights of poor tenants, often Black and Brown, against the interests of landlords.

Squatting is simply not a problem for the



ART BY g.r.

continued on page 15

# Mural Arts May Remove Rizzo Mural in Italian Market

by Avery Minnelli

In the aftermath of the tragic murder of Heather Heyer during a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, as well as the toppling of outdated statues in Durham, North Carolina, Memphis, Tennessee, and other communities, a country-wide dialogue erupted about whether racist monuments have a place in our society.

This conversation has already been going on in Philadelphia, where a campaign to take down the Frank Rizzo statue was launched over a year ago. Frank Rizzo, former “law and order” mayor and police chief of Philadelphia, used local law enforcement to crack down on Black, LGBTQ+, and leftist communities with brute force.

Not only is there a statue commemorating the former mayor, but there is also a Rizzo mural in the Italian market on 9th Street in the Bella Vista neighborhood. The mural, painted in 1995 by Diane Keller, was commissioned and maintained by Mural Arts Philadelphia, a public art program that started in 1984.

The maintenance of the Rizzo statue seems to run contrary to the Mural Arts mission statement, which states that their “work is created in service of a larger movement that values equity, fairness and progress across all of society.” For much of Philadelphia, especially working-class Black neighborhoods, Frank Rizzo’s legacy was the opposite. Furthermore, that Mural Arts maintains a tribute to a figure with Rizzo’s legacy may call into question their professed commitment to progress.

The Rizzo mural was spray painted back in August in an act of protest against the racist figure. The person arrested for allegedly being one of several who splattered paint over the mural and wrote slogans against police brutality on it was originally facing up to 16

years in prison. Instead of removing the mural, Mural Arts paid to have it repaired and told police how much it cost, Joan Reilly, Chief Operating Officer of Mural Arts, said in an interview with *The Philadelphia Partisan*. Because a representative of Mural Arts testified at the preliminary hearing that the damage to the mural cost in excess of \$5,000, the defendant’s two charges were graded as felonies instead of misdemeanors or summary offenses.

Reilly told reporters that she would look into requesting clemency for the defendant. “Do I think this person serving time in prison for that is a good outcome?” she said. “I do not.”

Reilly said in February that Mural Arts

would make a decision by the end of March as to whether or not to keep the mural up, although she expressed that they should have “addressed it sooner.” Mural Arts has since said they will make a decision by the end of April, after receiving more than 1,200 responses during a public comment period on the subject. Reilly made clear that this decision was not a “referendum,” but rather the decision of Mural Arts with input from “Bella Vista Neighbors [Association], the 9th Street Market, the building owner” and “some faith-based institutions.” Ultimately, it will be up to the building owner to implement the decision. At presstime, a decision has not been announced.

continued on page 15



ART BY LILY CROOKS



# Codependency, Freedom, and Women in Prison

Excerpts from interviews with Mechie Scott

conducted by Emily Abendroth and Layne Mullett for the LifeLines Project

My name is Marie Scott. My friends call me Mechie. I nicknamed myself after my best friend, Peachie, whose real name is Sharon Wiggins. She is deceased now, but as a teenager I always wanted to grow up to be like her. Because of Peachie, today I am proud to be who I am. I have two children, a son and a daughter. In 2008, I lost my son to a motorcycle accident. I thought I could lose my mind because we always thought that I would be released one day to share time with both of my children. My daughter's name is Gretta.

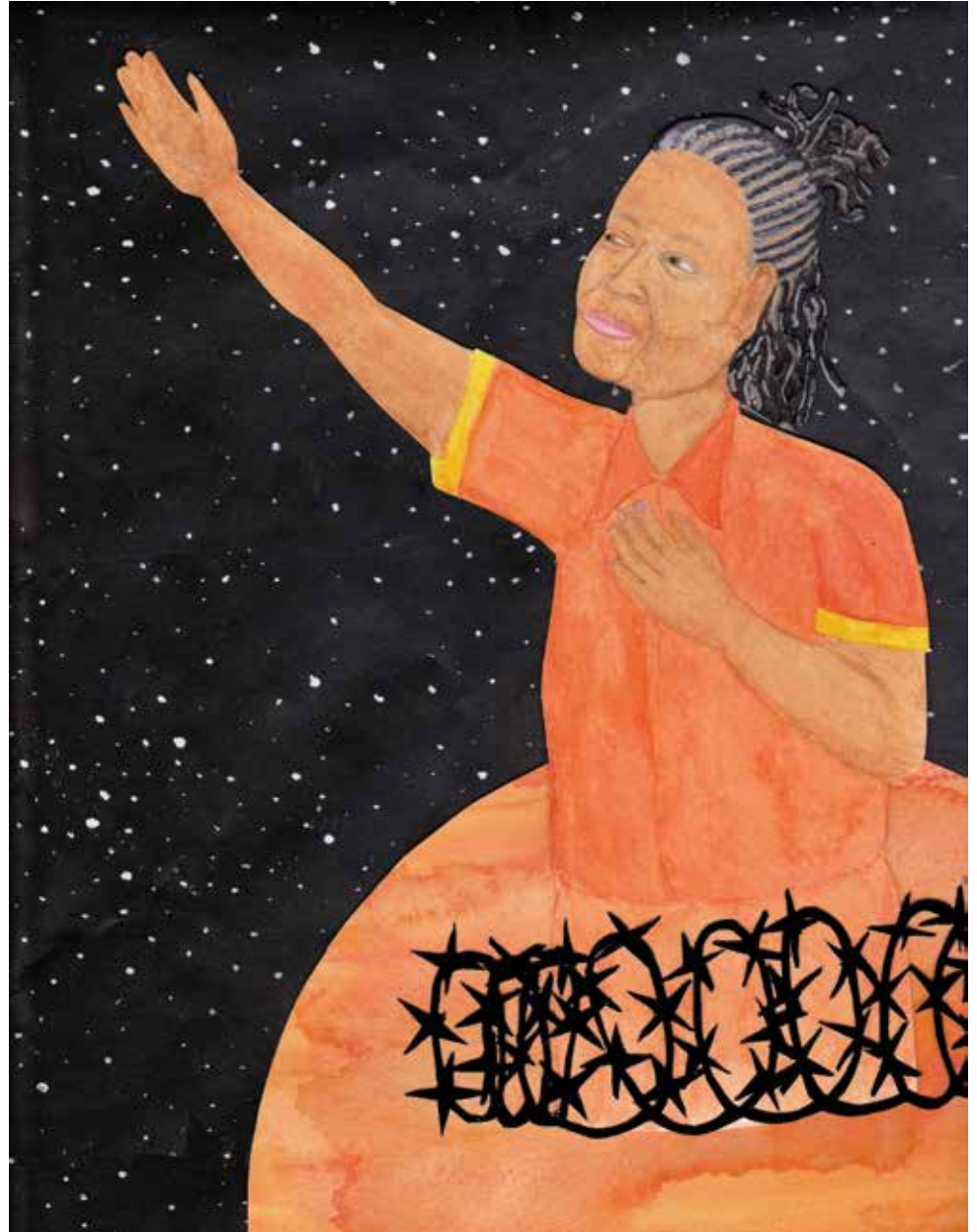
I was born in Harlem, New York. Growing up I was constantly molested and raped until I was fifteen. Behind it I became severely codependent.\* The kind who could not say "no." I felt if a man took me to a movie, that he was in love with me, so if he took me to dinner afterwards, he wanted to marry me. Love had been distorted in my childhood.

Codependence is a disease that brought most women to prison. Because codependency is a disease, I had to treat it as such. It is what caused me not to be able to say "no" to a guy who saved my life during a robbery that took place at the store I was employed by. I felt I owed my life to this guy after saving mine. How could I say no to a request to be a lookout in a robbery? Albeit, I had never robbed or stolen from anyone, my codependency just would not let me turn down the chance to help him back. Although I did not pull the trigger, I am just as guilty as my co-defendant.

**What are some of the strategies, tactics or practices that you and people you know use to support one another and to challenge the conditions/realities that you experience?**

Forty years ago, we'd stage sit-ins and hunger strikes. We had the one element that made such practices possible; UNITY. When the system found a way to destroy that by giving me 180 days for a misconduct and giving my comrade 30 days for the same misconduct, we were tactfully pitted against one another, and despite our announcements of how the system was using the divide and conquer method, no one believed us. Today, a female will tell on you simply because she's suffering from the disease of codependency and just needing to be patted on the head. In the 80's, we resorted to

\*Merriam-Webster defines codependency as a dependence on the needs of or control by another.



**"IMAGINE THE PLANETS. HERE'S EARTH AND HERE'S MARS. I'M ON MARS IN MY PRISON GARB, WAITING TO BE TRANSFERRED BACK TO EARTH AFTER 44+ YEARS SERVED ON MARS. I'M AWAITING TRANSPORTATION BACK TO A PLANET, A LIFE THAT IS SO NEW TO ME, IT'S LIKE I'M A MARTIAN FROM MARS COMING TO EARTH FOR THE FIRST TIME."**

**—MECHIE SCOTT**

ART BY ROBIN MARKLE

continued on page 11



# Setting Sights: Histories and Reflections on Community Armed Self-Defense, edited by scott crow

by Ben Curtright

*If Setting Sights has a single thesis, it's that support for gun control is not an inherently left-wing position.*

This is a particularly hard sell in the United States, as author and historian Neal Shirley admits. Those opposed to gun control “tend to be right-wing, pro-government folks in their practical attitudes toward domestic and international military and police repression, yet somehow they see themselves as fighting against government control.” The National Rifle Association (NRA) has spent over \$200 million since 1998 lobbying, campaigning for, and contributing to the campaigns of (predominantly) Republican candidates. A large majority of domestic terrorist attacks are committed by right-wing extremists. On February 14, a 19-year-old gunman, Nikolas Cruz, killed 17 people at his Florida high school with an AR-15. As if drawn to match Shirley's description, Cruz was a former ROTC member who allegedly trained with white supremacist groups (though these claims have been disputed) and posted Islamophobic rants on Instagram; in his profile picture, he's wearing a MAGA hat.

It makes sense to think of the right-wing gun nut as performing at the logical endpoint of the nationalist/imperialist ideology that's dominated the U.S. since World War II and especially since 9/11. America is the global cop; the most venerated of its servants are the troops; the truest way to embody these ideals in this atomized, individualistic world is to buy a gun and declare oneself a cop, swearing to protect and serve the “Real America.”

Setting Sights aims to provide an alternative framework for thinking about guns. The authors, writing primarily from an anarchist tradition, reject the liberal consensus on gun control: “that violence is bad, and guns are often used in violence, therefore guns are bad, therefore it would be better if the government was the only entity able to use them (presumably against everyone else?).” Instead, they see guns as a “fact of life” for any social movement, a necessary tool for those who resist power. “Guns are like forks,” quotes the Western Unit Tactical Defense Caucus. “You may not believe in forks, but that doesn't mean they don't exist and aren't a useful tool for the revolutionary. Guns, like forks, have a use and a purpose within the revolution. Quite simply put, guns are tools.”

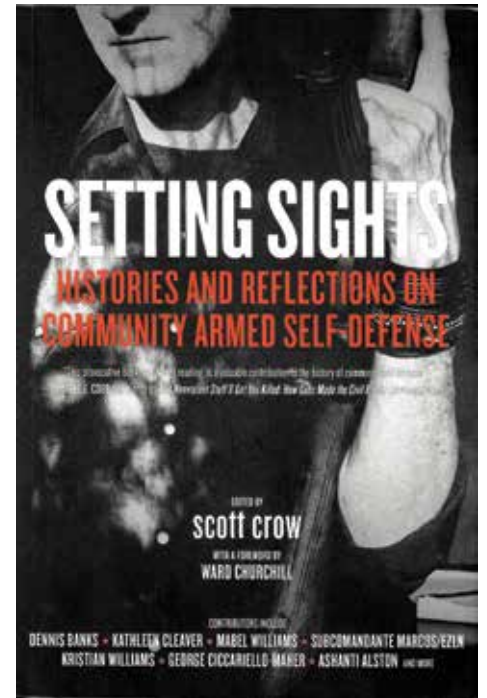
Tools, yes; “like forks,” not so much. Whether arguing, as scott crow does, that “if we want

to transcend violence in the long term, we may need to use it in the short term” or asserting “the right of oppressed peoples to protect their interests by any means necessary,” firearms must, by any self-interested social movement, be treated more seriously than forks.

The right of oppressed groups to defend themselves, whether against the state (see Michele Rene Weston's essay, “Ampo Camp and the American Indian Movement: Native Resistance in the U.S. Pacific Northwest”) or against white supremacist vigilantes (see the Mabel Williams interview “Negroes with Guns” and a panel discussion between Williams, Kathleen Cleaver, and Angela Y. Davis, “Self-Respect, Self-Defense, and Self-Determination”), has been reasserted since the Parkland shooting by R.L. Stephens of Democratic Socialists of America (“In my socialism, I believe in the democratic right to bear arms among the people, not to defend against the government but because the government does not in fact protect everyone equally”) and *Setting Sights* contributor George Ciccariello-Maher (“And so, we know that the government has no interest in prosecuting and undermining white supremacist organizations, and that organizations on the ground are going to need to do that themselves”).

This particular argument is sort of outside this reviewer's purview. If nondiscriminatory gun control, in concert with demilitarization or, ideally, abolition of the police, is possible, the Left should advocate for gun control. At the same time, if oppressed groups organize community self-defense groups to protect themselves, white leftists can have few reasonable complaints. Long-term, the idea that armed groups of anarchists are the best defense against armed white supremacists, as described in J. Clark's “Three-Way Fight” on post-Katrina confrontations in Algiers Point, New Orleans, feels all too similar to the reactionary (and flawed) idea that only a “good guy with a gun” can stop a bad guy with a gun.

However, the idea that guns are inherently liberatory (in former Black Liberation Army member Ashanti Alston's words, the “liberation gun” gave the BLA “the power of the people to inject fear into the oppressor and make them do as we command”) appears throughout *Setting Sights*, often in the form of a warning: “Some radicals might fetishize armed struggle,” warns Wingnut Anarchist Collective member Mo Karnage, especially armed struggle by people of color. “For me,



collective liberation is not about fetishizing arms as the only true means toward freedom,” writes crow. In perhaps the deepest essay in the collection, “Notes for a Critical Theory of Community Self-Defense,” philosophy professor Chad Kautzer details the dangers of “machismo and narcissism” in social movements based around the “sovereign subject” as defined by armed self-defense. The sovereign subject, Kautzer writes, actualizes freedom through asserting the *individual's* right to self-determination; in doing so, the revolutionist undermines the “conditions of freedom for others.”

As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor wrote in the wake of Parkland, any social movement that aims to deal with gun violence “will inevitably force a deeper engagement with the causes of proliferating guns, violence and the toxic masculinity that often expresses itself in gun violence.” Per Taylor's analysis, America is a systemically flawed, violent society, bound together by “guns, violence, racism and war.”

If these factors are, as Taylor presents them, bound together like blood and sinew, then gun control should be a left-wing position. The history is certainly more complicated than that. And, if you're on the fence about the potential for armed self-defense, *Setting Sights* will certainly give you a lot to think about. 🇺🇸

# A Borderless World

by Lauren Beard

Borders were a common theme in the 2016 presidential election, with Donald Trump's threat to build a wall between the United States and Mexico, as well as his promise of a travel ban. These borders are very important to Trump's America First plan. Harsha Walia is a Canadian social justice activist and the author of *Undoing Border Imperialism*. In her book, she argues against the idea of borders. Instead, she argues for a borderless world.

Britain divided India and Pakistan in 1947, causing violence. Fourteen million people were forced to move because of this border. The creation of the border led to an outbreak of violence between different groups, resulting in the deaths of an estimated one to two million people. This destruction is an example of "border imperialism," a phrase Walia uses to describe how Western countries maintain their power through borders. Dawn Paley, a journalist and colleague of Walia, stated, "far from preventing violence, the border is in fact the reason it occurs."

Walia says that four elements make up border imperialism: 1) unfair relationships between countries, 2) governments hinting that most migrants are criminals, 3) governments being rac-

ist about citizenship, and 4) governments and businesses abusing migrants and low-income workers. Israel's occupation of Palestine shows how unfair international relationships can hurt people. Treaties like NAFTA have also worsened economic crises in countries like Mexico, pushing people out of the country. Governments and businesses can also profit from investments in private prisons by incarcerating migrants, who they treat as criminals.

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Removing borders would replace the racism, sexism and exploitation with communities built upon mutual aid, collective liberation and humility.

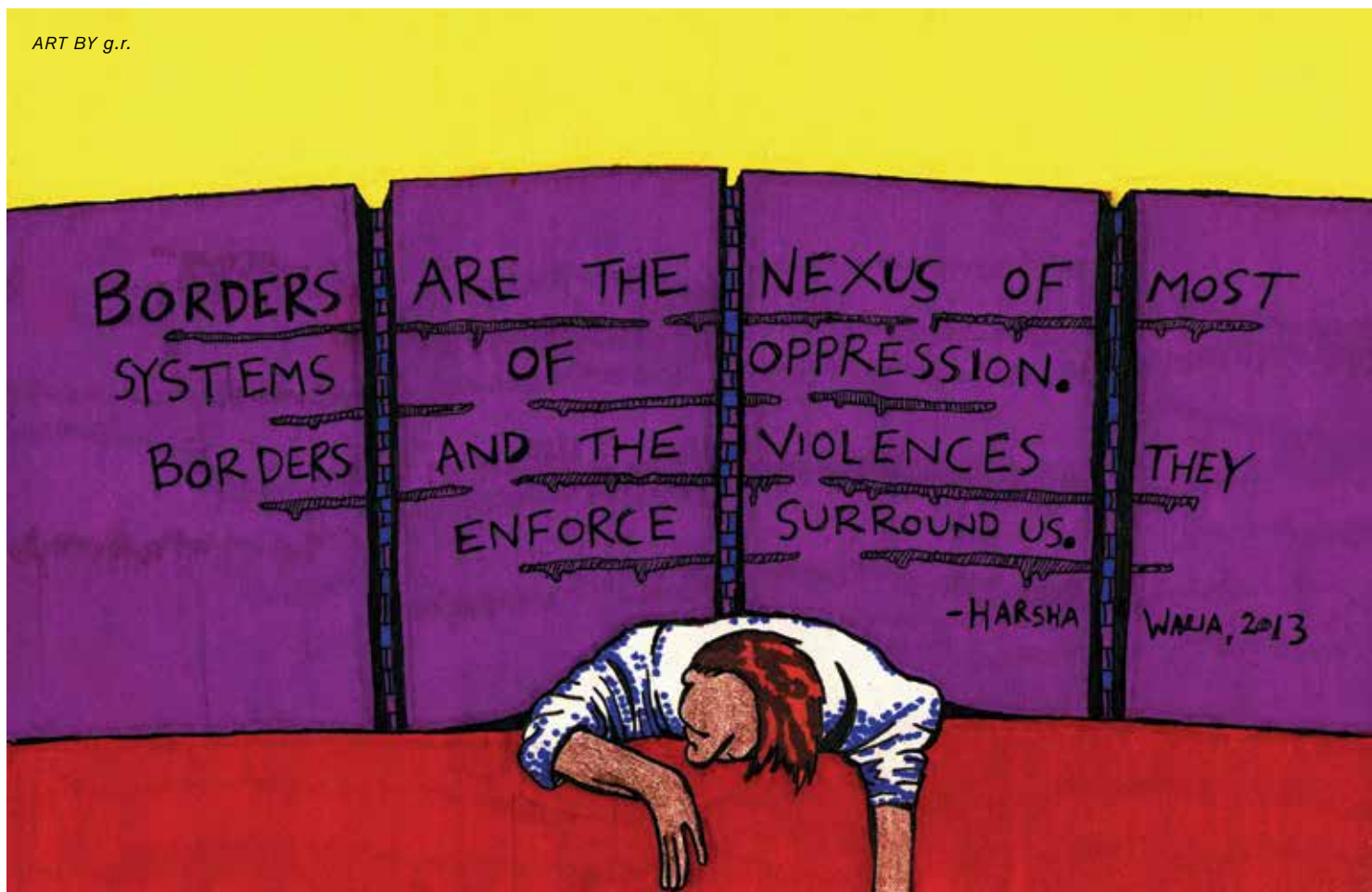
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The third element of border imperialism includes racist ideas of who belongs and what

makes a "good citizen." Racist ideas of citizenship can be harmful. Examples of this include slavery, segregation, internment camps, and the war on drugs. Racism also carries a sexist component. This is often seen when the "civilizing" or "making better" of other women is disguised as feminist solidarity. Post-colonial Professor Gayatri Spivak gives the example of "white men saving brown women from brown men" as racist and sexist. The fourth element is the exploitation of migrants and low-income workers. It is easier for businesses to take advantage of people who do not have citizenship.

These four structures of border imperialism show that the state reinforces and furthers the exploitation of migrants and low-income workers through racism, sexism, and abuse of immigrants and workers. Walia shows that borders only protect people who already have power. Therefore, she proposes decolonization as the alternative to this oppressive system. Removing borders would replace the racism, sexism and exploitation with communities built upon mutual aid, collective liberation and humility. She believes that a borderless world would help communities grow together. 🇺🇸

ART BY g.r.





class action suits. I was a part of the Beehler vs. Jeffees civil action which brought non-traditional education here for women so that they could get better paying jobs upon release.... Now, the only thing we have is a lifers group that can only fit 12 people.

#### What do genuine justice and healing look like in your ideal vision of each?

I believe the principles of Restorative Justice are needed in order for all affected parties to benefit from an offender committing a crime. Finding the root and destroying it by all parties involved: the offender, the victim, and the community. The offender understanding and being able to empathize with the impact of crime and really buying into that. Mediation between the offender and the victim or surviving victim, if both want it. And most of all, reaching out, and helping the survivor go through a process of healing if they choose to.

#### What's one thing that you think people would be surprised to know about you?

That I'm the first female to have written a bill that was sponsored by five senators in its original version. It called on several state agencies to conduct a study of the problems and needs of children whose parent(s) are incarcerated. It later became Senate Resolution 71. Out of that experience, I've published several articles on the subject. I'm the editor of C.O.P.I.N.G. newsletter (Children of Parent Inmates Needing Guidance). And I'm in a book, co-authored by a very close friend of mine, Howard Zehr, on the subject of children of incarcerated parents.

#### What led you to study sociology?

I studied sociology because that's what was being offered by Penn State University for an Associates degree in Letters, Arts, and Science. It's one of the major changes our lawsuit brought. I made the decision to take the courses because I wanted so desperately to find out or understand what caused me to change my life to where I no longer had my own life to live. I wanted to know what made me not be able to say no, what made me so suicidal as a child, what made me use drugs and do the things I did before coming to Philadelphia. I wanted to know what made people do whatever it was they were doing to lose their freedom. \*

*LifeLines is a media and cultural project based on a series of interviews conducted in collaboration with eight people serving Death By Incarceration (DBI) sentences – more commonly known as Life Without Parole – in Pennsylvania. How Are We Free is a visual art exhibit that explores the nature of freedom and confinement through creative collaboration between people who have been sentenced to die in prison and visual artists outside prison. The exhibit will be traveling across Pennsylvania to community spaces, churches, art galleries, universities, and more. Contact LifeLines at lifelinesphilly@gmail.com.*

# 4 Reasons to Dismantle the Punitive State

## Police, Prisons, Jails, and the Courts

by Tubman-Brown

**1** According to a 2015 study in PLOS ONE, the punitive state targets the most marginalized groups of people, and this has nothing to do with higher crime rates. Rather, people are criminalized because of racial and class discrimination. Numerous reports have shown that you are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated if you are poor, undocumented, black, trans, queer and/or disabled.

**2** The police are almost never charged and convicted for use of force. Of the 1,147 people killed by police in 2017, officers were charged with a crime in only 13 of these cases. That's *one percent* of all killings by police. And according to [policeviolencereport.org](http://policeviolencereport.org), most of these killings

took place in response to suspected non-violent offenses or cases where no crime was reported.

**3** Government statistics indicate that the largest percentage of people are incarcerated for drug offenses. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies and rich people who commit the same crimes are aided and protected by the state.

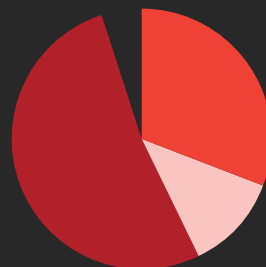
**4** Academic studies show that mass incarceration does not reduce crime. Instead, it is a drain on the economy and taxpayers. If the punitive state were defunded, and state resources were instead used to fund education, employment, drug treatment and rehabilitation services, it's likely that crime would go down drastically. \*

### state violence as waged against varying U.S. demographics



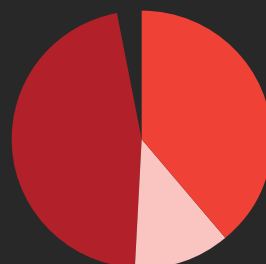
#### U.S. POPULATION

**Black** 13%  
**Hispanic** 17%  
**White** 63%



#### POPULATION KILLED BY POLICE

**Black** 31%  
**Hispanic** 12%  
**White** 52%



#### PEOPLE KILLED BY POLICE WHILE NOT ATTACKING

**Black** 39%  
**Hispanic** 12%  
**White** 46%

from the FBI 2012 Supplementary Homicide Report

# First Contact

## How organizers connect with people by tabling

by David Thompson



*If you want to improve your living conditions and change the world, you have to reach out to people. Whether at a neighborhood festival, music concert or political event, setting up a literature table and talking to people can offer them an inspiring invitation to get involved in your work. Here are some tips from Philly Socialists' chair David Thompson that can be used by any group!*

When you're out tabling, you have *two goals*:

- 1 To have conversations with people who you plan to engage in the near future.
- 2 To get those people's phone numbers so you CAN engage them in the near future!

### The set up

- 1 Literature – pamphlets, newspapers, etc.
- 2 Sign-in sheets where you can get people's name, email, and most importantly, their **phone numbers**. Fill in the top spot of your sign-in sheet with any name, number and email and then asterisk it [put \* next to the info] so whoever enters the data knows it's not a new contact.
- 3 Ideally, you should have a flyer for an event that's coming up.

### The approach

Greet people with a smile and an **active, rhetorical question**, not one you're actually trying to get answered. Go right into your "an-

swer." Give them the lit you're holding in front of them as you're talking, without looking at it or making a big deal out of it.

For instance, this is my standard opener:

"Hey! Have you heard about Philly Socialists? (they don't run away while saying "sorry" so I go...) We do community organizing all around the city and we have a meeting next week. You should come out! What's your name?"

This introduces what you're representing, **why they should care**, gives them a **clear action** they can take, and **opens up a conversation**. It also lets them know you're not looking for money. This makes people feel good.

**\*You have to approach people.** Most people will walk away. It's okay! It's a great way to get used to being rejected in other areas of your life. If someone looks totally uninterested, you're probably right and shouldn't waste your time on them!

\*People will vibe with whatever you're putting out. If you're tentative and unsure, they will be unsure and will probably walk away. **If you think what you're doing feels weird, so will they.** But if you fake that it's totally normal, it will put people at ease and they'll be more open to talking to you.

### The conversation

Once you get the person's name, share yours and ask one more small talk question, like, "Where are you from?" Then tie their response into something about yourself, and, if it feels natural, tie that into something about the orga-

nization.

"Oh, South Philly? Cool! My sister lives there, I love it. We're having one of our rotating neighborhood meetings there in February. We had ESL classes there for a few years but not right now. We have them going in North and West Philly but we'd love to get them started again there."

Then after that, I tend to do a quick list of our projects:

"But yeah we do those classes, a community garden, we organized the Philly Tenants Union to build tenant power and fight landlords, and we have an awesome magazine, the Partisan."

By then you'll see what, if anything, has grabbed the person's attention. If nothing has, you can probably start wrapping up because they're just not into it. You can ask, "Any of that sound interesting to you?" to be sure.

Finally, tell them a bit more about what they show interest in, and/or say something like, "I can put you in touch with (so and so) to plug you into that." Then move onto....

### The ask

It's very simple. Ask for their number! I like to say something like:

"Can I get your info so we can keep you posted about stuff we're up to?"

Then I show them to the sign-in sheet and have them sign up.

**\*Phone numbers are best.** Ask for it as they sign up if they don't put it down. If they say, "Can I just do my email?" say "Sure! It's just easier for us to stay in touch by texting," which is true. If they don't give us their number after that, that's okay! But when they leave, **write a fake number in and asterisk it for whoever enters the data to know it's fake.** Otherwise, every person who follows that person **WILL NOT** write their number down and everyone will hang their heads at the end of the day.

**\*Look at what they write as they write it so you can make sure it's legible.** If it's not, confirm with them what they wrote ("Is that a 4 or a 9?") and write it below what they wrote. Otherwise, they may be waiting forever for a phone call that will never come.

### Extra tips

- 1 Remember that this is a numbers game. Most people will walk away from you. Of those who don't, only some will want to sign up with contact info. Of those, few will ever show up in person to a Philly Socialists event. That's why we do this so much. But you never know, you could be talking to the future revolution's pride. I like to imagine as much with nearly everyone I talk to.

continued on page 13



# Interest Group Politics Versus Leadership Across Differences

by Tim Horras

“Base-building” is the idea that cohering a working class constituency supportive of socialism is the central task of our present political moment. However, the working class is cut across various lines of difference, and the correct management of those differences is crucial to building a broad, democratic, and truly liberatory working class movement.

In mainstream politics, this contradiction is resolved through the use of “interest group politics.” Through “interest group politics,” demographic categories imposed onto society from above harden into de facto segregation, and communities are transformed into pressure groups.

The key figure in this framework is the “power broker”: a leader often selected due to their privileged relationship with more powerful outside forces, be they financial or political. While the power broker is sometimes raised up by the community through a legitimate and democratic process, more often, the broker is imposed by outside forces or self-selected.

Through the figure of the “broker,” interfacing with people from different backgrounds becomes someone else’s job. The “broker” caucuses with other “community leaders” without the involvement of the community, allowing everybody to stay safely in their little bubble. We never have to attempt to organize a multinational and even international politics of class unity—a politics capable of uniting working people across race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, etc. Relying on a politics of brokerage is convenient for us, since it allows us to avoid having to do the painstaking work of organizing, an endeavor which continually exposes our flaws and limitations and throws in our faces ugly truths about living, breathing human beings.

The idea of “leadership across differences”

arises from the need or desire to construct a multinational, heterogeneous working class movement, the act of which runs diametrically counter to very powerful objective tendencies in our society which impel us toward segregation and atomization.

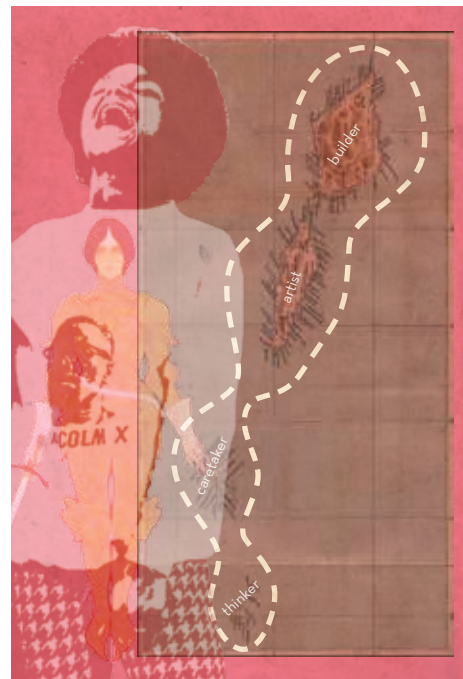
Electing people to office doesn’t automatically establish leadership across difference. In fact, it is easily incorporated into a brokerage model, precisely because the various social bases are only coming together around the election, rather than maintaining constant contact that goes beyond a particular political campaign.

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Until socialism itself becomes a political identity binding together an archipelago of organic working class constituencies, we remain trapped within the parameters of interest group politics.

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If anything, given the broad base of support necessary to win an outright majority of voters under current conditions, it impels radicals toward reproducing interest group politics in the service of a political campaign. Until socialism itself becomes a political identity binding together an archipelago of organic working class constituencies, we remain trapped within the



parameters of interest group politics.

Socialists cannot merely rely on soliciting support from existing “community leaders,” as has been the model of activism in recent decades. “Leadership across differences” is the antithesis of brokerage politics, because it *forces* us to get out of our comfort zones and put the work in to building political relationships based upon mutual trust and respect. It confronts us with the necessity of raising up new leaders rather than relying on existing institutions and power structures. This process of working class leadership development is identical with base-building, and in fact constitutes its core imperative. ✚

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Tabling | from page 12

Don’t feel down if your conversion rate is low! Everyone’s is! If you stand out there and talk to people, you’ve done your part.

**2 Do NOT lead with phrases like, “Are you interested in...” or “Would you like...”** People are hardwired to say and think, **“NO look away KEEP WALKING”** when they hear any of those questions.

**3 Do NOT ask, “Would you like a flyer?”** Again, **everyone will say “NO” as they run away.** The material you have is a prop—it’s not important. Focus on giving lit out to people you

connect with. A flyer in the hands of someone you haven’t connected with is going in the trash. A flyer in the hands of someone you *have* connected with is going to remind them of you and your connection.

**4 Talking only to other tablers puts people off.** It’s cool to take breaks and chat with your comrades. Just know that when you do that, you’re *not* talking to passersby, and you’re encouraging passersby to *not* stop and find out more.

**5 Don’t sit behind the table and wait for**

**people to come to you.** Stand in front of the table with your material and approach people.

**6 Seriously, if you’re at a table and sitting behind it, you are wasting your own time!**

**7 Have fun and enjoy the chance to get to meet new people who want to talk about socialism.** There are plenty of them out there. Remember that you’re doing them a solid! You’re giving them a way to get active about their beliefs and do meaningful work. It’s good. You’re good. Thank you for being you. ✚

# Local Refinery's Bankruptcy Docs Show Financial Interactions

by Jack Grauer

U.S. law, in its discreet charm, indifferently releases arrestees' identities even before they're charged. Creditors' identities, however, with some exceptions, stay private. Bankruptcy is one of those exceptions. Southwest Philly refinery Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) and some of its holding companies declared bankruptcy earlier this year. Some of the organizations with financial ties to PES, a major polluter damaging residents' health and the environment, may come as a surprise.

A federal judge approved the refinery's proposed reorganization plan in early April.

Most company bankruptcies fall under one of two parts of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code: Chapter 7 or Chapter 11. Chapter 7 means selling your company in pieces to repay your debts. PES declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Under Chapter 11, lawyers, judges, government and financially interested parties meet and negotiate a plan to make the company make money again.

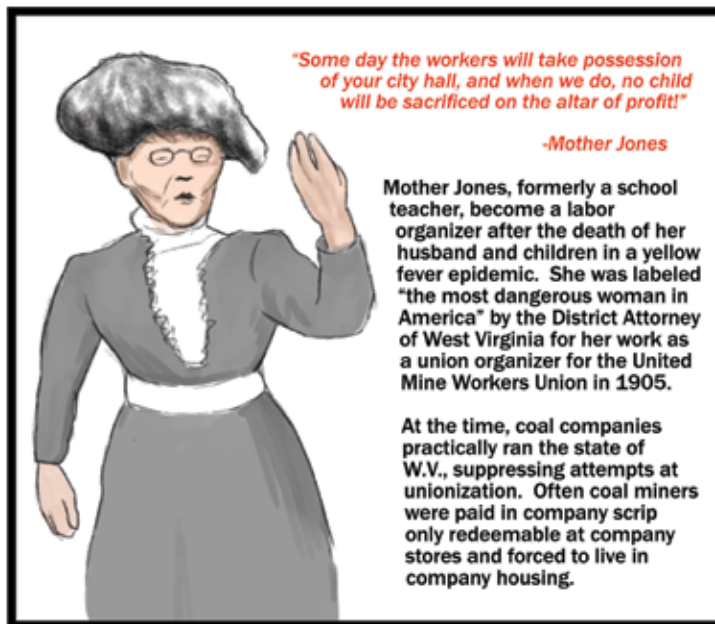
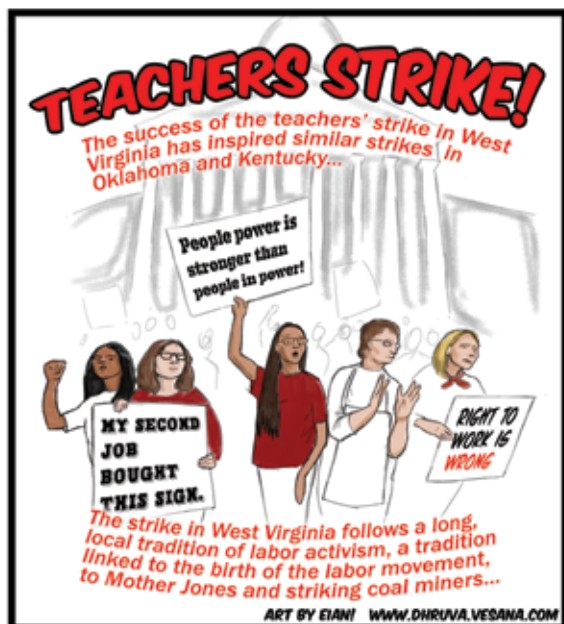
It's like how the sports teams in movies like *The Sandlot* and *The Mighty Ducks* always suck at first. Then someone goes, "Okay, we do X, Y and Z and then this team will be awesome." The teams do all that and get awesome. That's how a Chapter 11's supposed to work.

PES released a "creditor matrix" in accordance with Chapter 11 rules. That document lists everyone with whom the bankrupt company had financial dealings.

The term "creditor" can mean different things. Unsurprisingly, names like Carlyle Group

*continued on page 15*

ART BY JACK GRAUER





and Energy Transfer Partners, the refinery's owners, appear on it. Somewhat surprisingly, Fairmount Park Conservancy and United Way of Pennsylvania also appear on the list.

## Fairmount Park Conservancy and United Way of Pennsylvania also appear on the list.

The *Philadelphia Partisan* asked the latter two organizations about their involvement with PES.

The refinery "does not currently owe [United Way of Pennsylvania] money," said organization president Kristen Rotz. "They sponsored an event we hosted two years ago, and paid their full amount of sponsorship at that time."

The Fairmount Park Conservancy denies any financial relationship with the refiner.

This article's online version links to the full text of PES's creditor matrix.

Check it out. Who knows. Maybe your politically woke Reiki instructor or whatever is on there.

The *Partisan* will address the terms of PES's bankruptcy in a later piece.

Drexel climate scientist Peter DeCarlo's Powerpoint presentation, entitled "Philadelphia Energy Solutions Refinery—emissions and monitoring," catalogs a lot of the publicly available data on what this refinery releases into Philadelphia's air.

See also survey data available from the federal Center for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and Philadelphia Health Management Corporation's South-eastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey for evidence of elevated asthma levels in the region that surrounds PES's refinery. 🍷

average Philadelphian. This is a problem for absentee property owners. To defend this small class of people, this bill is willing to risk the living situations of thousands of Philadelphians who rent on verbal leases. The main housing problem in Philadelphia is not squatting—it is rising rents, house prices, and homelessness. Wealthy individuals who leave properties empty and often in states of disrepair do not deserve a single ounce of additional support while thousands of Philadelphians flock to shelters every year and many more sleep in the streets.

A home can raise your kids; you can grow old in it or sell it to afford your retirement. It can also be a piece of paper with your name on it—a quick flip investment. A home is more than just four walls and a roof over your head, but this issue boils down to a simple question. Who has the right to the space between these four walls? The name on the paper or the people living between the walls?

What is the purpose of those four walls? To make someone rich? Or to take someone off the streets?

Who do the police, the judge and the law respect—the paper or the people?

As Stephanie Altamari, an organizer with the Philadelphia Tenants Union, said before city council:

*"As of 2015, there were about 25,000 abandoned properties in Philadelphia, and probably an equal amount of homeless people. They all seek shelter, and they all deserve shelter. It is often conveniently forgotten that homeless people are citizens, too. There's no reason those properties cannot be turned into designated affordable housing, rather than a profit mill for developers."*

We believe "People over profit"—every single time. 🍷


Bella Vista, however, is a largely Italian-American neighborhood. Rizzo, being Italian-American himself, tended to enjoy much higher approval in Italian neighborhoods in South Philly than in the Black neighborhoods in West and North Philly which were the targets of his "anti-crime" campaigns. The survey does not take into account the views of residents from various nationalities and neighborhoods, as the Italian Market is a popular destination for both tourists and residents from other neighborhoods.

## The person arrested for allegedly being one of several who splattered paint over the mural and wrote slogans against police brutality on it was originally facing up to 16 years in prison.

However, as Joan Reilly stated, Mural Arts is not looking to call a referendum, but rather to make the decision for themselves informed by public opinion. We can only hope that Mural Arts will make the right choice and replace the mural with something more positive than a symbol of racism and hatred. 🍷

Additional reporting by Suzy Subways.

**West Virginia Governor Jim Justice, the richest man in the state, is a political ally of Donald Trump. Justice has deep ties to the coal industry, and owes millions of dollars in back taxes across multiple states, as well as being subject of numerous EPA lawsuits.**




**Corporate tax cuts have starved W.V. schools of funds. The wages of W.V. teachers rank 48th in the nation.**

**The first schools to strike were in the southern coalfields, where striking teachers wore red bandanas, as a nod to the "red-neck" union miners that once struck fear in the hearts of the coal bosses.**

**The historical culmination of the labor conflicts in West Virginia was the battle of Blair Mountain, the largest armed conflict in the U.S. since the civil war.**

**In 1921, 10,000 armed miners fought against private guards hired by the mine bosses in Logan County, West Virginia. The battle was largely a loss for the union, whose membership declined afterwards.**



**However, the labor movement that was forged partly in those mountains would struggle onwards, to win the legal right to form a union. Their struggle continues today, with those rights under attack by corporations and legislators.**

of the bitterness of the court models of retributive justice. When cases finally reach court—often many years after the event—all the pain and suffering is dragged up again. “Let’s try to find a way where we can come together and work. Yeah you’re hurting, because you lost someone. I’m hurting because mine caused yours to be lost. So we both lost somebody. Let’s come together and work together.”

**Let’s rehabilitate people.  
Let’s help people.  
Let’s transform people.**

The values of CADBI are unwavering: everyone deserves a second chance. It is a deeply spiritual and political refusal to write off anyone

as beyond saving, beyond hope, beyond change. “Even the worst of the worst,” Mrs. Dee Dee says, “deserves a second chance. If we can learn to forgive, we can have a way better world for the next generation that comes in. Let’s rehabilitate people. Let’s help people. Let’s transform people. Stop locking them up like animals.”

Connecting with others with similar struggles and similarly passionate feelings on redemption makes a world of difference to many inside members and their families. The stigma of having a child in prison keeps many people suffering in silence, a silence Mrs. Dee Dee is happy to finally break. Between the victory of Krasner for DA, and finding CADBI in her life, she says she’s more hopeful than ever. “More hopeful than I’ve been in these 24 years that my baby’s been in jail.” \*

**CADBI meets every 3rd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Mosaic Community Church at 123 S. 51st Street.**



*Recently released CADBI organizer Robert Saleem Holbrook, who was sentenced to life without parole when he was 16.*

PHOTO BY SUZY SUBWAYS

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**May 29**

6:30pm – 8:30pm

**Imagine There’s No Economy: Talk by Joshua Ramey**

JERRY’S ON FRONT

**June 2**

**Work Day**

CESAR ANDREU IGLESIAS  
COMMUNITY GARDEN

**June 16**

**Community Garden Day**

CESAR ANDREU IGLESIAS COMMUNITY  
GARDEN

**June 20**

5:30pm – 7:30pm

**Philadelphia Tenants Union  
Legal and Organizing  
Training**

LOCATION TBA

Cada sábado, del

19 de mayo al 30 de junio

3:15pm – 4:30pm

**Clases de Ingles GRATIS**

BLACKWELL LIBRARY

Cada miércoles, del

19 de mayo al 30 de junio

4:30pm – 5:30pm

**Clases de Ingles GRATIS**

BLACKWELL LIBRARY

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