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truthout

Annual Report 2016-2017



# Mission & Vision

## Mission Statement

Truthout works to spark action by revealing systemic injustice and providing a platform for transformative ideas through in-depth investigative reporting and critical analysis. With a powerful, independent voice, we will spur the revolution in consciousness and inspire the direct action that is necessary to save the planet and humanity.

## Editorial Independence

Truthout is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing independent news and commentary on a daily basis. In order to remain free of bias and adhere to high editorial standards, Truthout accepts no advertising or corporate backing. Instead, we depend on our readers, and a handful of foundations who support our mission, to make our work possible: Readers and foundations who donate to Truthout do so in their knowledge that our editorial principles and judgment are in no way influenced by those donations.

## Financial Transparency and Donor Privacy

Truthout respects the privacy of our readers and supporters and will never share personal contact information with third parties. For transparency and with gratitude, donors and foundations who give \$500 or more in a year are listed, with their approval, in this annual report each year. We also report contributions totaling \$5,000 or more to the IRS.



# Contents

Dear Readers / Our Team	4
Editorial Highlights	6
The Trump Regime: Its Rise	6
The Trump Regime: Its Agenda	8
Health Care: Defending the ACA, Fighting for Single Payer	10
Standing Rock and the Struggle for Indigenous Rights	11
Climate Disruption and Other Environmental Threats	12
The Prison System: Severed Ties and Fights for Freedom	14
US War Crimes and Foreign “Intervention”	16
Economic Justice and Alternatives to Capitalism	18
Heartfelt Opinion, Informed Commentary	20
Truthout Collections from Haymarket Books	22
Progressive Picks	23
Reaching Our Readers	24
Living Our Values	26
Truthout’s Financial Statements	28
Donor Honor Rolls	30
Foundations and Funds	31
Board of Directors	32
Board of Advisers	33
Looking Forward	34

“Truthout has consistently made available information that is hard or impossible to find in the major media.”

Noam Chomsky | Author and professor



# Dear Readers

If there was ever any doubt that the world urgently needs a truly independent news source like Truthout, the past year has made it crystal clear. Our mission has never been more challenging or necessary.

In the aftermath of Donald Trump's election and inauguration, many corporate media outlets made vocal commitments to holding him accountable. Yet in most cases, that has not happened.

Whether it's treating far-right racism as just another "side" that deserves a platform, repeating the political establishment's dishonest narratives, demonizing protesters, or going along with the White House's ridiculous demands for "private" press briefings, far too many media outlets have failed the test in this urgent moment. Moreover, this has been another year in which too many media outlets have fired writers and editors, downsized copy desks, and generally neglected the journalism that ought to be their bread and butter.

Truthout is different. Long before the election, we warned that Donald Trump's candidacy and rhetoric were no laughing matter -- while also being honest about the failings of Hillary Clinton's campaign and record. Not many publications can say they did both. That puts us in a unique position and leaves us with a responsibility we take very seriously.

At Truthout, we combine a steadfast commitment to journalistic integrity with a willingness to question and rethink the supposed pillars of conventional journalism, such as the idea that total "objectivity" can ever be achieved. Rather than pretending to adhere to a standard of neutral objectivity, we anchor our work in principles of accuracy, transparency, and independence from the influence of corporate and government forces.

There is a growing awareness that this is the way forward. More and more people in the United States -- whether readers, funders or makers of media -- have come to the realization that the history of profound inequalities in

## Our Team

Our dedicated editors, reporters, designers, and other staff work all year round to bring you the best in investigative reporting and news analysis. Truthout is a proud member of The NewsGuild-CWA union.



**Candice Bernd**  
Editor/Staff Reporter



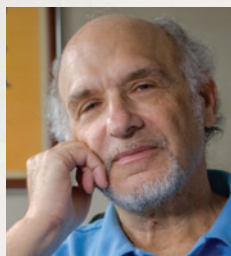
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**Joseph Peterson**  
Community Liaison



**William Rivers Pitt**  
Senior Editor and Lead Columnist



this country, and the problems of our current systems, require a truly transformational approach. That's the only way we stand a chance of overcoming the entrenched forms of injustice that we are up against: mass incarceration, white supremacy, widening economic inequality, and a militarized form of global capitalism that disproportionately affects people of color and women worldwide.

In this report you'll find more details about the investigative reporting we've published on everything from climate disruption to endless US wars. You'll learn about informed commentary from Truthout stalwarts like Henry Giroux and William Rivers Pitt, and why we thought it was vital to make sure we made space for firsthand accounts of the Standing Rock fight and analysis of this struggle by Native writers.

You'll read about the special projects we launched this year, including **Severed Ties: The Human Toll of Prisons** and **Fighting for Our Lives: The Movement**

**for Medicare for All**, and about the two print anthologies we've published with Haymarket Books. But all of the stories and projects packed into this report represent just a fraction of the work that Truthout does. After all, we publish seven days a week, 365 days a year.

We've been speaking truth to power for over 15 years now, no matter who was president, no matter which party had the upper hand. The stakes have been raised, but our mission remains the same. It's still powered by the same people: You, our readers. We hope you will continue to support us as we light the way forward, providing the information that the public needs to fight injustice and build a better world.

In solidarity,

*Maya, Ziggy and Joe*

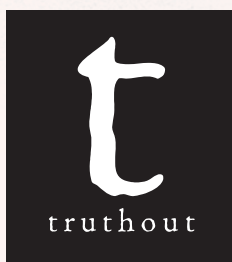
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# The Trump Regime: Its Rise

The day after the 2016 presidential election result came in, there's no denying that the mood at Truthout was grim. Not because we thought Hillary Clinton was the answer to this country's problems, but because we were all too aware of the long list of new dangers posed by a Trump administration.

But how did the United States get here?

The 2016 presidential election will long be remembered for, amongst other things, the extent to which the mainstream media elevated Donald Trump, ignored almost all real issues of substance, and pretended that no position to the left of Hillary Clinton could exist.

Truthout approached our coverage of the election differently, in the way that we believe should be the norm for news media, yet which is strangely rare.

We are fiercely nonpartisan when it comes to parties, yet just as fiercely committed to being frank about injustice and the impact of candidates' policies. Above all, we focused on candidates' policies and their impact on real people -- whether the issue was **mental health**, **"counterterrorism"** or the Federal Reserve. We were committed to going, as the title of our special election coverage section put it, **Beyond the Sound Bites**.

In trying to understand the appeal of Donald Trump, the analysis we've published has been clear about issues on which many others in the media have been confused or disingenuous. A couple of months before election day, philosophy professor Douglas Kellner outlined how Trump used **"classic authoritarian propaganda techniques"** to organize "a fervent mass movement outside of the conventional political party apparatuses."





As James Kilgore wrote in an analysis immediately after the election, understanding Trump's victory requires grasping factors such as the deep culpability of the mainstream media, the collapse of the American labor movement, and the way the campaign used "a toxic mix of white and male supremacy."

Henry A. Giroux discussed how Trump's media strategy of making shocking provocations was successful due to the "widespread atomization and depoliticization" that neoliberalism has imbued in our society. Typical of the analysis at Truthout, Giroux was clear in recognizing Trump as a white supremacist early on, but also in warning that "There is a need to understand the context -- historical, cultural, political and economic -- that has created this moment in US society in which fascism becomes an endpoint. Trump is only symptomatic of the problem..."

We were equally frank about Hillary Clinton's shortcomings, whether her refusal to consider a progressive running mate, her attacks on single-payer health care or her record on the criminal punishment system. As Michael Corcoran, a key author of many of our pieces on the election, wrote in a piece on the Clinton Foundation's relationship with the media: "It is understandable that many want to avoid criticizing Clinton, out of fear of giving the reckless, racist, authoritarian Donald Trump fodder to attack her. However, this type of suspension of critical thinking will not prevent a Trump presidency."

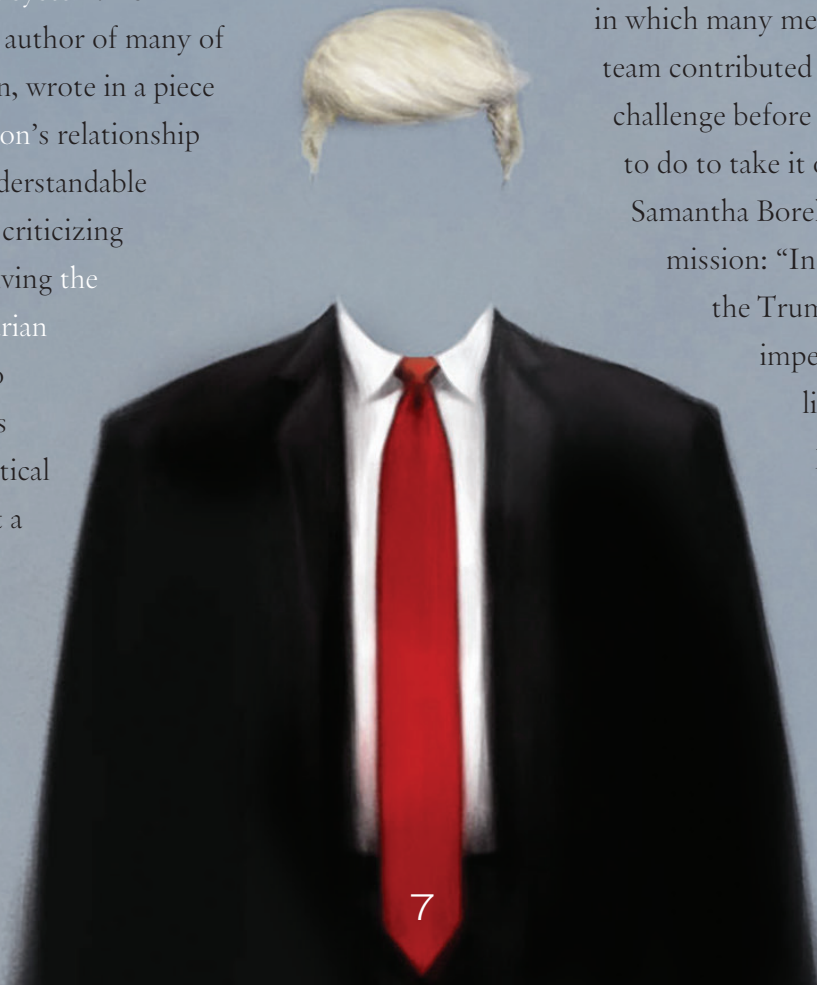
Moreover, too many attempts to analyze the election have ignored or underplayed the role of voter suppression.

Yet election-rigging has a long history in the US, as a piece we published by Victoria Collier revealed.

What undermines American democracy is not the racially charged myth of "voter fraud" invoked by Trump, but racist voter intimidation and other tactics that the right has used to deliberately suppress the votes of people of color. Truthout staff reporter Mike Ludwig told these stories of voter intimidation on the eve of the election, and related advice from legal and civil rights groups on how to protect voting rights. Veteran investigative reporter Greg Palast covered the presidential vote recount for Truthout, and revealed how the GOP worked to "sabotage" the recount in Michigan and Wisconsin.

To return to that day after the election: The Truthout team came together for an all-staff meeting. We listened to each other, comforted each other, and began to lay plans for building a force for justice-powered journalism in the face of fascism.

Out of that meeting came a collective piece, "Resisting Despair: Speaking Truth in the Face of Trump," in which many members of the Truthout team contributed our reflections on the challenge before us and what we're going to do to take it on. Associate editor Samantha Borek summed up our ongoing mission: "In the coming days of the Trump administration, it's imperative that publications like Truthout exist to hold public figures accountable, inform the people and give marginalized voices a chance to speak."





# The Trump Regime: Its Agenda

While mainstream media outlets either clung to the hope that Donald Trump would conform to some kind of “moderation” in office, or portrayed his excesses as an unprecedented break with US history, our writers knew better.

Truthout contributors understand both the serious stakes of the current unique political situation, and the American history that has led to this moment -- a history often characterized by white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalist excess and shameless violence.

When reporting on and analyzing Trump’s online and in-person words, our writers knew to treat them not simply as a “distraction,” but as part of a project to instill fear and instigate racist animosity. William C. Anderson translated the White House’s “**White Words**,” particularly when it comes to the racially charged dog whistles around “crime” and “law and order.” It’s important, warned

Anderson, that we understand “what’s meant by political buzzwords like ‘gang’ or ‘cartel.’”

In the wake of President Trump’s first address to a joint session of Congress in February, Truthout’s Kelly Hayes **sounded the alarm** not just about the content, but over the easily impressed media’s reaction. “Rather than talking about the substance of what Trump had to say, most focused on the style in which he said it” -- and declared it to be presidential. Kelly exhorted readers to get ready for the Trump administration to ramp up its agenda, and offered concrete suggestions for how to do that.

As each disreputable addition to the Trump cabinet was announced, Truthout examined their records and held their failings and crimes up to the light -- even the people others were hailing as supposed moderating influences. For example, our staff reporter Dahr Jamail had personal experience with retired marine General **James Mattis**, having been inside the city of Fallujah during one of two sieges that Mattis led in 2004 during the Iraq War. While some in the media were reassured by Mattis’ selection as Secretary of Defense, Dahr testified that “I personally witnessed women, children, elderly people and ambulances being targeted by US snipers under Mattis’ command. Needless to say, all of these are war crimes.”







As befits a cabinet packed with military men, the new regime has employed a “shock and awe” strategy, rolling out wave after wave of attacks to implement its agenda. With each new threat, Truthout has been there. [Marjorie Cohn](#) has written extensively on the legality of Trump’s moves -- or more often, the lack thereof. [Sarah Jaffe](#), author of the acclaimed book *Necessary Trouble: Americans in Revolt*, is talking to the resistance to Trump on a regular basis -- the real resistance, not the term as co-opted and cynically deployed by established nonprofits and corporate Democrats. We’ve been proud to run her series **Interviews for Resistance**, in which she consults experienced organizers, troublemakers and thinkers about what works and what doesn’t, what has changed and what is still the same.

Above all, we’ve tried to ensure that those most targeted by Trump get a platform to respond. Transgender journalist and critic Ana Valens pointed to [the Nazis’ destruction of Germany’s Institute of Sex Research](#) -- a pioneer of not just academic study but also medical care services for trans patients -- as a precedent being repeated by the Trump administration. Gabriel Arkles, an ACLU lawyer and trans Muslim, wrote about the wider implications of the administration [rescinding Title IX guidance](#) addressing protections for trans students. And Laleh Khalili responded to the [Muslim travel ban](#), naming it as “a malignant, strategic attack on democracy.”



# Health Care: Defending the ACA, Fighting for Single Payer

Since inauguration day, Republicans have been attempting to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Truthout has covered these repeated efforts to pass “Trumpcare,” outlining why this would have such devastating consequences. We have not pretended to be impartial on an issue which is literally a matter of life and death for millions of Americans. We have published reporting both on the brutal details of the proposed legislation and the groups who are fighting back.

We have also taken note that in the response to these attempts to take away so many people’s health care, progressive forces have increasingly articulated a bold vision for something better than the current system: Medicare for All. The House of Representatives’ single-payer plan now has more co-sponsors than ever before, and activists and politicians alike are increasingly approaching Medicare for All as a real possibility -- not just a far-flung dream.



In recognition of this moment, Truthout has created a special project, **Fighting for Our Lives: The Movement for Medicare for All**. In this ongoing series, we’re covering the front lines of the campaign for single-payer, the history behind it, its practical implications,

its intersections with other movements, and the millions upon millions of lives it will affect. **Fighting for Our Lives** shines a spotlight on the campaigns that have seized this moment to push for a systemic change that brings about universal and affordable health care.



Some articles have told the stories of people failed by the current US health system: people who have come to believe that single-payer is the solution based on their experiences. These have included personal pieces such as Truthout columnist William Rivers Pitt’s powerful “[A Lesson From My Hospital Bed](#),” sociologist [Patricia MacCorquodale’s piece](#) on the death of her developmentally disabled brother-in-law (who relied completely on government assistance), and Type 1 diabetic author Karyn Wofford’s frank account of how the US for-profit health system often drives people to [skip doses](#) of necessary medication.

Other pieces have chronicled the battles to win single-payer that are ongoing at both the state and federal level. Michael Corcoran profiled both single-payer’s [record support in Congress](#) and its [biggest opponents](#), while Michael Arria wrote on the successes and setbacks encountered during attempts to implement single-payer in [Vermont](#). Truthout staff reporters Candice Bernd, Dahr Jamail and Mike Ludwig respectively reported on the [veterans](#), [doctors](#) and [advocates for the elderly](#) who have come to believe in the necessity of single-payer.



# Standing Rock and the Struggle for Indigenous Rights

One of the most simultaneously inspiring and heartbreaking stories of the last year has been the opposition of the Standing Rock Sioux -- together with other Native people from across North America, and their allies -- to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

It was important that Truthout recognized early on the significance of what came to be known as the #NoDAPL movement. For too long, media -- even independent or progressive media -- have failed to give due attention to either current struggles for Indigenous rights, or their historical context of displacement and genocide.

Truthout's response to #NoDAPL owes a great deal to the essential role played by our social media strategist and contributing writer, Kelly Hayes, who is also a Native organizer. She connected us to sources on the ground and reviewed other news stories to sort fact from fiction -- as well as reporting from and analyzing events at Standing Rock.

In an influential and acclaimed piece, "[How to Talk About #NoDAPL: A Native Perspective](#)," Kelly shared thoughts from those on the front lines and discussed the need to recognize Standing Rock as part of an ongoing struggle against colonial violence. "Yes, everyone should be talking about climate change," she wrote, "but you should also be talking about

the fact that Native communities deserve to survive, because our lives are worth defending in their own right -- not simply because 'this affects us all.'"

Other pieces by Kelly made the connection between #NoDAPL and the [#FreedomSquare](#) camp in the shadow of Chicago's infamous Homan Square "black site" police compound, and warned with chilling prescience against complacency after the "[illusion of victory](#)" offered by the Obama administration's temporary hold order in September 2016. Beyond Standing Rock, she outlined why American Indian Movement activist [Leonard Peltier](#), widely believed to have been framed, deserved his freedom as much as Oscar López Rivera and Chelsea Manning.

Our coverage of Standing Rock consistently elevated Native writers and photographers, including [Four Arrows](#) and [Desiree Kane](#), and included work by [Jason Coppola](#), who has won awards from the Native American Journalism Association. It has also made global connections: In November, Alexis Bonogofsky reported on how the the Indigenous Sámi people successfully [pushed Norway's largest bank](#) to withdraw their investment in the Dakota Access pipeline.





# Climate Disruption and Other Environmental Threats

The scale of climate change caused by human activity -- what many scientists call anthropogenic climate disruption or ACD -- has become starkly evident. With grim irony, this has coincided with the reigns of power in the United States being seized by an administration that is more committed than ever to climate change denial.

Acclaimed Truthout staff reporter Dahr Jamail has continued to carry out extensive original reporting on the impacts of anthropogenic climate disruption, as well as round-ups of the latest scientific data, as part of his ever-popular **Climate Disruption Dispatches** series. He spent the summer of 2016 in Alaska, and **reported** that “I’ve yet to have a conversation with national park rangers, glaciologists or simply avid outdoors-people that has not included a story of disbelief, amazement and often shock over the impacts of [ACD] across their beloved state.”

Dahr reported from other locations as far-flung as **Guam** and New Zealand in order to capture the real-world impacts of climate disruption currently hitting every corner of the globe. These impacts include **unprecedented polar melting** and megadroughts, **reef extinction events**, **“biblical” flooding**, the release of dangerous amounts of **methane hydrate** into the atmosphere, and more.

Dahr Jamail has also covered **the damage the US military is doing to the environment**, particularly in the Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest. His exclusive reports have detailed the extent to which **whales are being killed and injured** as a direct result of Navy sonar training and testing; the massive amounts of **toxic and plastic debris** being injected into the oceans -- in addition to heavy metals and explosives -- during naval exercises; and the Navy’s pervasive use of **depleted uranium** in US coastal waters, threatening both human and marine life.

The details of these dispatches and reports are often dire indeed -- “catastrophic” and “apocalyptic” are now words used in **serious scientific studies**. With this in mind, in an intensely personal piece, Dahr **spoke with Joanna Macy**, an eco-philosopher and a scholar of Buddhism, general systems theory and deep ecology, about how we respond to catastrophe, and the need for a collective “waking up,” no matter how painful. In recognition of the need for collective and collaborative work, Dahr **collected stories from our readers**, sharing their observations to provide a snapshot of how climate disruption is visibly changing our surroundings.





Truthout's reporting team as a whole is committed to taking seriously the damage that human activity has done to our environment, and the impacts that in turn are visited upon humans -- normally the most marginalized and least powerful people, not the ones who have caused the most environmental harm.

For example, prisons are sites of some of the worst environmental injustices in this country. In partnership with Earth Island Journal, our staff reporter and editor Candice Bernd has begun a collaborative investigative project to delve deeply into [the intersection between mass incarceration and environmental justice](#). Candice has also investigated the oil-and-gas processing sites in New Mexico that have given rise to [the largest methane emissions "hot spot"](#) in the nation.

Meanwhile, with the help of Freedom of Information Act requests and a lawsuit filed by environmental lawyers, Truthout staff reporter Mike Ludwig has been keeping up the pressure on the federal government to share records about fracking in the Gulf of Mexico.

In September 2016, Mike revealed that the EPA had granted [over 1,500 permits](#) to offshore oil drillers to dump unlimited amounts of fracking chemicals and other waste products directly into the Gulf of Mexico, even while marine species continue to suffer from the lingering effects of the 2010 BP oil spill. He also discovered that the Obama administration had even approved fracking jobs during the [Deepwater Horizon disaster](#).

Mike's exemplary investigative work throughout the past year brought attention to other stories of environmental pollution, including the burning of explosive military waste in the open air in Louisiana -- a story that was followed by [Senate pressure on the military](#) to move away from the practice of open burning and detonations.



# The Prison System: Severed Ties and Fights for Freedom

Nearly 2.7 million children in the United States have an incarcerated parent. There is a dire need for both a shift in public perception and a change in public policy regarding incarceration, particularly as it relates to children and families. Driven by our belief that high-quality journalism can spur these shifts, Truthout published the series **Severed Ties: The Human Toll of Prisons**.



Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this 10-part series included both personal accounts and diligent reporting. Lacino Hamilton, who has been incarcerated since 1994, wrote about **how gentrification drives mass incarceration**, while formerly incarcerated Monica Cosby drew attention to the difficulties of **finding community after prison**.

Making the connection to immigration policy, Truthout staff reporter Candice Bernd exposed how hundreds of thousands of women and children fleeing violence in Central America have been **traumatized again**

through separation or incarceration together in US immigrant-family jails. Victoria Law examined **the benchmarks incarcerated parents must meet** to avoid permanently losing custody of children. And our editor-in-chief Maya Schenwar wrote with Soros Justice Fellow and author Erica Meiners about the intersections of **mandated child services reporting** and the criminal punishment system, demonstrating how each exacerbates the other's damaging effects.

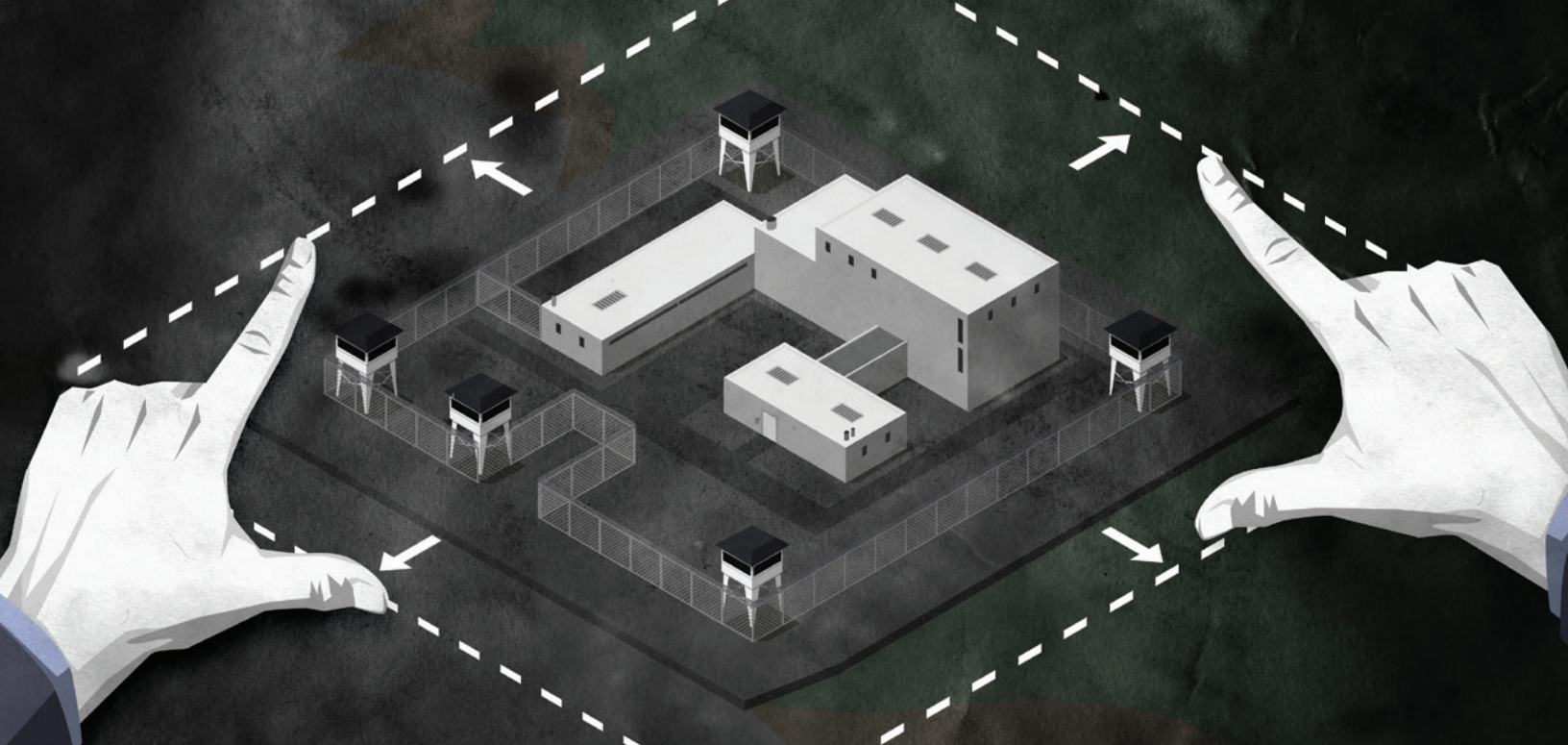
Victoria Law, who is the author of the acclaimed *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*, writes regularly for Truthout on prison issues and has continued to play a crucial role in our coverage, from **the fight against solitary** to campaigns for clemency.

As the end of Barack Obama's presidency loomed, Law followed closely the clemency campaigns waged on behalf of **thousands of people** imprisoned on federal drug sentences, paying particular attention to those **incarcerated mothers** making a desperate plea for their freedom.

Law's coverage focused on mothers who were serving extraordinarily long prison sentences for nonviolent offenses, bringing their stories to many who didn't realize that this phenomenon was still playing out. The publicity generated by Law's work was a major contributing factor to the commutation and release of several women.

Truthout has long covered the campaign to free Marissa Alexander, originally sentenced to 20 years in prison after being found guilty of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon -- for firing a warning shot in what many argue was self-defense against her abusive ex-husband. An appeals court overturned her conviction, and Alexander agreed





to a plea bargain that included time served for the 1,030 days she had already spent behind bars, another 65 days in jail and two years of house arrest. When her period of electronic ankle monitoring ended, and she was finally truly free, Alexander [spoke to Truthout](#) about her experience and her commitment to fight for other criminalized survivors of domestic violence. We have doggedly covered the cases of those survivors -- usually women and girls -- who find themselves locked up for defending themselves, from [Bresha Meadows](#) (accused of killing her abusive father at age 14) to [aging survivors](#) serving lengthy or even life sentences.

It is indicative of Truthout's approach to journalism that we claim no easy victories and examine very carefully even those narratives that would seem to validate our work. In August 2016, the US Department of Justice announced it would no longer use private prisons for its federal prisoners, and many outlets rushed to hail this decision and take credit. However, [as Victoria Law wrote](#), this by no means spelled the end for private prisons: "Private prison corporations will continue to control 46 immigration detention centers that detain nearly 25,000 people (or 62 percent of the country's 33,676 immigrant detainees) on any given day."

The DOJ's memo, such as it was, was soon countermanded. Under the Trump administration, prospects for even modest prison reform -- let alone the kind of system-wide dismantling of mass incarceration that our reporting shows is necessary -- have grown more dim. "The prison industrial complex has found the right person to feed it," a formerly incarcerated community organizer in Detroit told James Kilgore [in December](#). "I expect the worst in terms of patterns of repression."

Prior to the election, Kilgore (the formerly incarcerated author of *Understanding Mass Incarceration* and a regular contributor to Truthout) reported on [the first ever US prison labor strike](#), and talked to some of the [historic figures from past prison struggles](#) who have inspired a new generation. As new Attorney General Jeff Sessions pushed a return to the worst excesses of the "war on drugs" and a new round of "tough on crime" rhetoric, Kilgore picked apart the memo that undid even the moderate reforms put in place by Eric Holder. And Victoria Law once more brought us the voices of incarcerated women, providing [their responses](#) to the charging and sentencing memo issued by Sessions, which seeks a return to the disastrous hardline policies of the "war on drugs."

# US War Crimes and Foreign “Intervention”

Unlike so many in the mainstream media, we have not forgotten that the United States is still carrying out acts of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, even as an endless global war (sometimes no longer even justified under the rubric of the “war on terror”) spreads to new corners of the world.

In fact, as Ruchi Kumar, an Indian journalist based in Afghanistan, [observed](#): “the 2016 civilian casualty figure [in Afghanistan] was the worst since 2009, when the UN started documenting civilian casualty counts.” 2017 was no better.

In April, the US dropped a 21,000-pound Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAB) bomb on an Afghan town of almost 150,000 residents -- the largest non-nuclear bomb used in history -- allegedly aimed to destroy ISIS tunnels. As [Seelai Popal](#), [Ali A. Olomi](#) and [Laila Rashidie](#) wrote for Truthout, “This bomb, like the drones, air strikes, night raids and the destruction that came before it, was used as a tool for warfare that prevents the stability of people living in provinces all across the country... Afghans have suffered 16 years of this so-called ‘war on terror’ illegally waged by the US and its allies.”

Neither have we forgotten those who have risked their freedom and even their lives to expose war crimes and put a halt to the US war machine. As the end of Barack Obama’s presidency drew near, a campaign intensified to demand the release -- and thus spare the life -- of imprisoned whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who faced “administrative charges” and solitary confinement. These punishments were cruelly done in response to one suicide attempt, prompting another.

On January 13, 2017, Truthout published [an exclusive article](#) by one of Manning’s lawyers, Chase Strangio, arguing that President Obama could and should save her life. “She has already endured more than one should be expected to encounter in 30 lifetimes,” wrote Strangio. “Chelsea’s incarceration has been marked by mistreatment and abuse.” Four days later, her commutation was announced. It was a ray of light in a year marked by too many setbacks.





Attempts to stifle public knowledge and debate about US foreign policy take many forms. As the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement has gained ground as a strategy to counter Israel's oppression and displacement of the Palestinian people, so too have attempts to quash BDS, particularly **in academia**. Truthout published op-eds addressing this attempt to silence dissent, and talked to **organizers** and **authors** about why BDS is so threatening to the unjust status quo. Meanwhile, Marjorie Cohn reported on the **hunger strike** by Palestinian prisoners, as well as other repression and resistance, taking place as Donald Trump visited Israel in May.

Another regular contributor to Truthout on these issues is award-winning investigative journalist and historian Gareth Porter, who in the last year has written about the "crucial role" the United States played in enabling the Saudi strategy of **threatening Yemen with mass starvation**, and the reality of both the **Obama** and **Trump** administrations' policies on **Syria** and **Iran**. Unafraid to

grasp thorny issues, Porter also deconstructed the notion that the Obama administration supported the regime change war in Syria in order to protect plans for a natural gas pipeline. Instead, he **laid out the evidence** that the central concern driving US policy remains a desire to maintain key military facilities in the Middle East.

Elsewhere in the world, Latin America is still experiencing the ramifications of the legacy of US attempts to control, influence or subvert the region. Santiago Navarro F. and Renata Bessi exposed how the United States Southern Command, in concert with the local government, has been conducting mining and oil prospecting under the guise of providing "humanitarian aid" to **Costa Rica**. And Antony Loewenstein reported for Truthout on how **US military funding to Honduras** has caused unprecedented levels of violence against civilians and environmental activists, exacerbating gang activity and corruption.

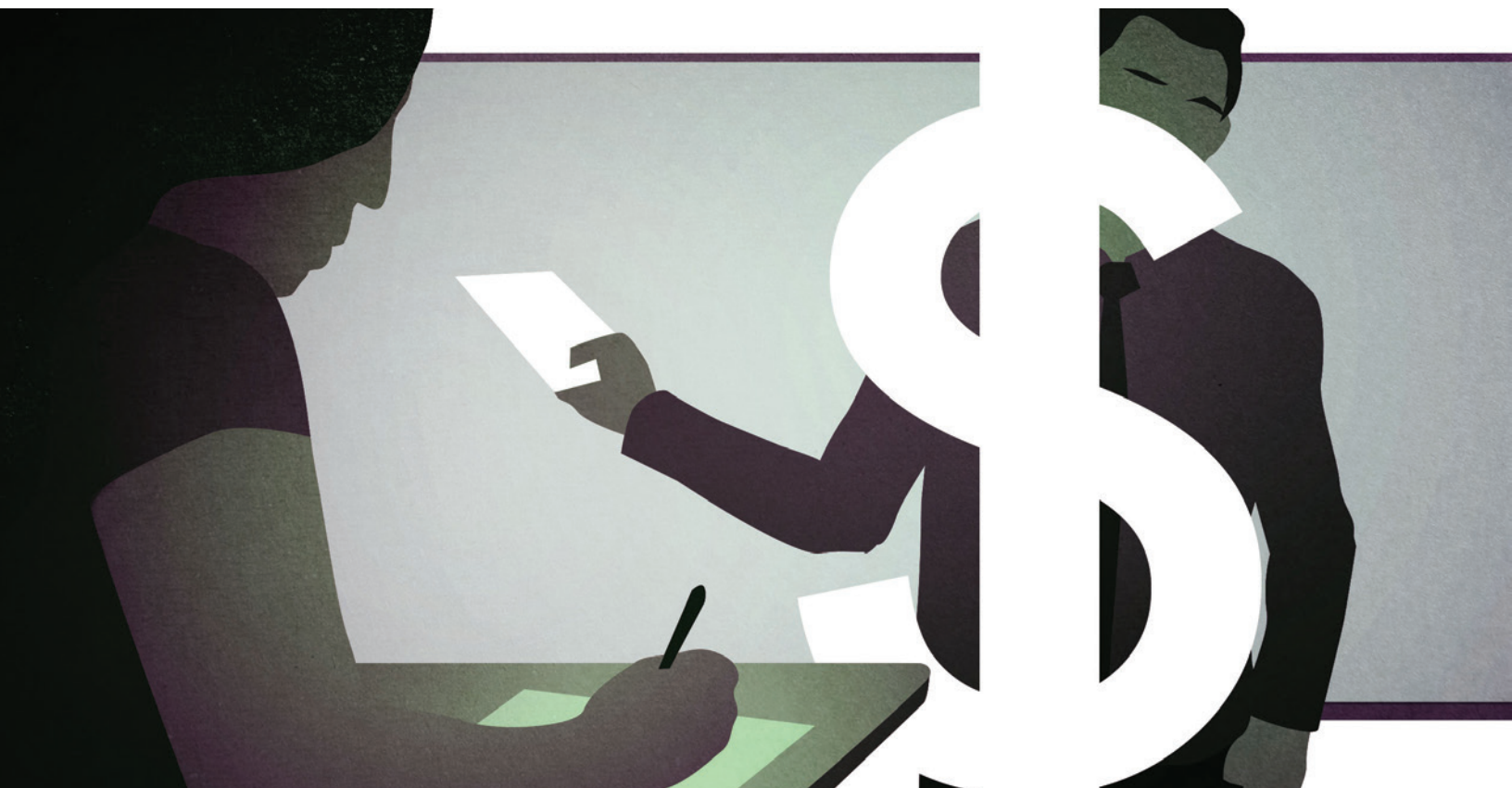


# Economic Justice and Alternatives to Capitalism

A seismic generational shift has taken place within the United States. While it was always true that more Americans were discontented with capitalism than the media or political class would ever admit, for decades the Cold War and its hangover meant that “socialism” was still a dirty word.

That’s no longer the case, in part due to the popularity of Bernie Sanders and his campaign, in part due to the undeniable failures of American and global capitalism, and in part due to a willingness on the part of young organizers and writers to question the status quo. Here again, Truthout has been ahead of the curve, long willing to give a platform to voices making the argument not just for mild reforms but for various forms of socialism, anarchism and other systemic alternatives to capitalism.

A frequent contributor to Truthout on this topic is Professor Richard D. Wolff, hailed by Cornel West as “the leading socialist economist in the country.” In a December article about the “**changed debate**” regarding capitalism and socialism, Prof. Wolff argued that “The last century’s so-called great contest between capitalism and socialism was thus actually a contest between private and state capitalism,” and made the case for a form of socialism built around worker cooperatives. In other pieces, he has discussed how the capitalist system **produced men like Donald Trump and Steve Bannon**, examined how capitalism drives both the conditions that necessitate immigration and **the scapegoating of immigrants**, and looked beyond **the ongoing slow collapse of global capitalism**.







We have also continued to sponsor and run Prof. Wolff's informative weekly radio program, *Economic Update*. He and his guests have discussed topics including *capitalism's failures*, the *housing crisis*, the economic and social costs of *prisons*, the history of *American labor unions* and the "unfinished revolution" of *women's paid labor*.

Another economic luminary who regularly provides analytical insight via his columns at Truthout is Dean Baker. The co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, he has tackled issues in the past year such as the need to hold *bank CEOs* accountable, *interest rate hikes* at the Federal Reserve Board, a clueless plan to *tax robots* courtesy of Bill Gates, the danger of relying on private companies like Uber to *fund research*, and "*The Slow, Painful Death of the TPP*" (Trans-Pacific Partnership). Sadly, as Baker has observed, economists and political elites still don't seem to grasp that deceptively labeled "free" trade deals are justifiably *unpopular with the general public*.

In February, C.J. Polychroniou (author of our new book of conversations with Noam Chomsky,

*Optimism Over Despair*), interviewed world-renowned Cambridge University Professor of Economics *Ha-Joon Chang* regarding "myths and lies about capitalism," austerity and public debt. As Chang puts it, "In the last few decades, the rich have been increasingly protected from the market forces, while the poor have been more and more exposed to them."

We have also made sure to share economic analysis from less established voices. Noelle Sullivan wrote about the ways in which the economic stress created by neoliberal capitalism causes *depression and other mental health problems* on a global scale. Asha Rosa Ransby-Sporn marked *MLK Day 2017* by reminding us that Martin Luther King Jr. named racism, militarism and, yes, capitalism as the "three evils of society." And Emma Catherine warned against the nostalgia that portrays the 1950s as the so-called "*Golden Age of Capitalism*," when in fact the achievements of that era came hand in hand with a violent campaign against communism domestically and abroad, and were achieved at the expense of people of color.

# Heartfelt Opinion, Informed Commentary

For most publications, the opinion pages have become a cynical exercise in either pointless provocation, or “balance”-- which often means hiring or publishing climate change deniers, bigots and cheerleaders for endless war.

Here again, Truthout is different. We give a platform to voices you can trust, and to people and points of view that are usually shut out of the rest of the media, even supposedly liberal papers and news channels.



Long beloved by Truthout readers, William Rivers Pitt continues to do yeoman’s work as our lead columnist. In one of his most popular columns of the last few years, Will went against the grain of a historical nostalgia

for **the presidency of George W. Bush**, even before that rose-tinted view had become so prevalent. Rather than serving as a positive contrast to Donald Trump, Bush played a key role in paving the way for him. “Fear and hatred are powerful elixirs, and George W. Bush trained the nation well to imbibe them, and thus accept what he foisted upon us for personal gain,” wrote Will.

Another established Truthout author is Henry A. Giroux, whose scholarly, in-depth analysis goes against the grain of quick-fix, reactive “takes.” In addition to his aforementioned critiques of the phenomenon of Donald Trump, Giroux’s work at Truthout has addressed the “**war on youth**” in the United States, where “some children are treated as criminals and increasingly deprived of decent health care, education, food and housing.”

The criminalization of young people is part of an increasingly cruel “war culture” in which the US no longer finds the idea of **violence against children** unthinkable -- not when it affects children who are marginalized by class, race and ethnicity. With this in mind, Giroux argues that **the role of public and higher education** is more essential than ever in defending democracy. We should praise those underpaid, overworked teachers who are nevertheless committed to educating students and fighting for labor rights.

“Your work is essential and I’m glad to support it!

I donate because of William Rivers Pitt and his excellent work.”

Nora | Reader and donor





Mark Karlin, founder and managing editor of BuzzFlash, continues to write regular commentaries that scrutinize current events and take apart corporate media myths. In [one of his most widely read columns](#), Mark dismantled what Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting has called the “racialized rural mythology” that conservative white rural voters subsidize urban residents of so-called “blue” states.

Other long-time BuzzFlash contributors continued to address the most pressing problems facing the country and the planet. Award-winning Chicago-based journalist and nationally syndicated writer Robert Koehler wrote about the apparently endless willingness of the United States to [make war](#) and the futility of trying to stop terrorism with [a weapons deal](#), among other subjects.

Paul Buchheit, who this year published *Disposable Americans: Extreme Capitalism and the Case for a Guaranteed Income*, laid out his analysis of the reasons for US economic inequality and the possible solutions in a number of BuzzFlash columns. In August 2016, Buchheit outlined [the argument for a guaranteed income](#): “We’re fooling ourselves by believing in a future with satisfying middle-class jobs for millions of Americans. It’s becoming clear that income should be guaranteed, so that recipients have the wherewithal and incentive and confidence to find productive ways to serve society.”

As well as this original content, BuzzFlash continued to reprint commentaries from trusted partners like EcoWatch. These covered topics as diverse as [a bill passed by the House of Representatives](#) that attempts to undermine all future federal regulations, the relevance of a “letter to the future” written by the great Kurt Vonnegut in 1988, and the disturbing results of a urine test that found the cancer-linked weedkiller glyphosate in the systems of 48 Members of the European Parliament.



# Truthout Collections from Haymarket Books

In summer 2016, Haymarket Books published Truthout's first-ever print collection, *Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect? Police Violence and Resistance in the United States*. This anthology examines the reality of US policing and the growing movement opposing racist police violence, with chapters from Truthout staff and regular contributors including William C. Anderson, Candice Bernd, Kelly Hayes, Victoria Law and Mike Ludwig, and a foreword by Alicia Garza of Black Lives Matter.

*Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect?* has been acclaimed by authors and organizers in the field of police accountability, and by publications including the Chicago Review of Books and New City, which called it "an urgently necessary book, one that deepens and complicates thinking around police violence." It was awarded the Social Justice/Advocacy Award for 2017 by the School Library Journal's "In The Margins" book committee.

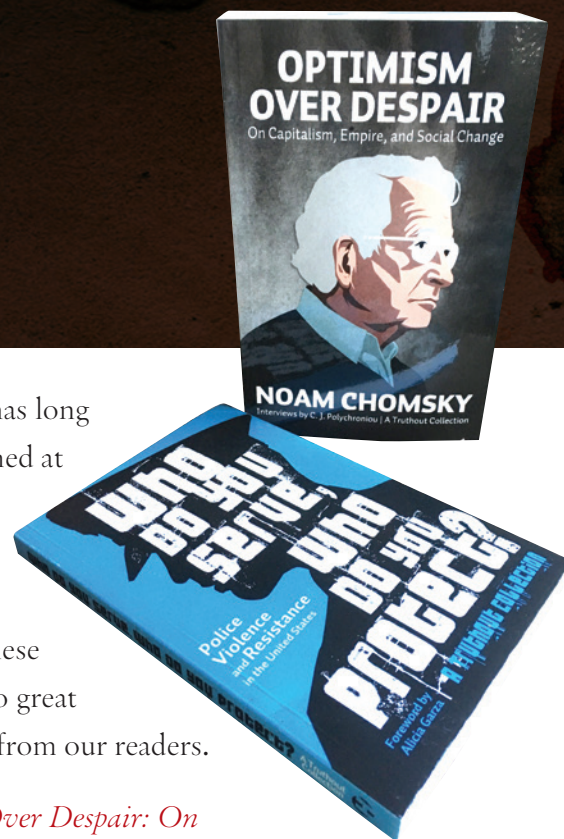
Our second book with Haymarket, out now, collects wide-ranging interviews conducted by C.J. Polychroniou with Noam Chomsky, arguably the most well-known American public intellectual and critic of US policy. Chomsky, who once described our work as "performing an invaluable service for those who hope to understand the world, and to go on to

change it," has long been published at Truthout, and we originally published these interviews to great enthusiasm from our readers.

*Optimism Over Despair: On Capitalism, Empire, and Social Change*

is the perfect introduction to Chomsky's ideas for newcomers and provides a great way for long-time readers of his work to catch up on his analysis of the 2016 election and the Trump regime, cracks in the European Union, Black Lives Matter, the dismal US health care system, the threats of nuclear war and the climate crisis, and our prospects for building a better world.

*Optimism Over Despair* has already resonated with Truthout's readers: It has already become our most popular Progressive Picks on record. It's been described as "simply exhilarating, especially in our current dismal era of Donald Trump" by Robert Pollin of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and "Especially valuable in helping us navigate the dreadful challenges of the Trumpian era" by Michael Klare of Hampshire College and The Nation.



“I cannot imagine a better primer for anyone seeking a better, safer, fairer future.”

Richard Falk, Professor of International Law Emeritus, Princeton University, on *Optimism Over Despair*



# Progressive Picks

Truthout's Progressive Picks program remains a unique fusion of our fundraising model and our editorial mission. It's a part of what we do that comes from the shared appreciation that Truthout staff and readers have for informative books -- and, as it turns out, documentary films.

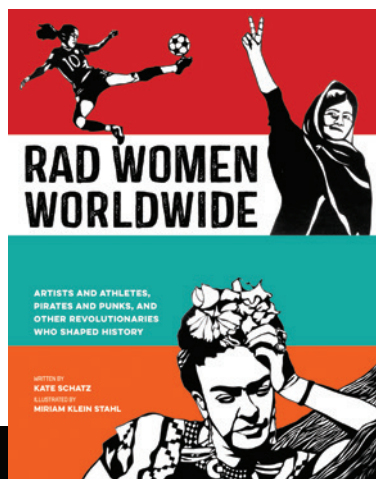
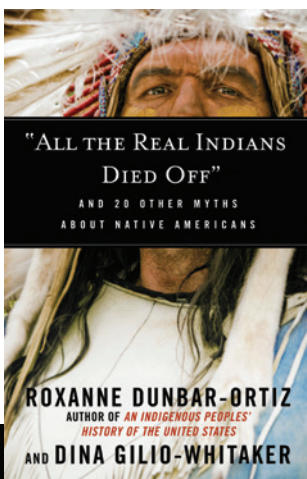
Progressive Picks aren't just a great way for us to give our readers something tangible to hold. They're another way in which we're plugged into a wider community of independent and free-thinking authors and publishers. And the excerpts, reviews and interviews we publish are standalone Truthout stories, often very popular ones.

For example, not only was Jordan Flaherty's *No More Heroes* one of our most frequently ordered books in the past year, but a selection from it, explaining the problem of the "savior mentality" that is at the heart

of the book's argument, was one of our most widely read articles of the year.

There is often a timely synchronicity between Progressive Picks and our other editorial content. For example, another highly popular piece this year was a paper written by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz making clear that "*Yes, Native Americans Were the Victims of Genocide.*" Later in the year, her book *"All the Real Indians Died Off" And 20 Other Myths About Native Americans* was an in-demand Progressive Pick.

We've also seen that, even in the era of streaming television, our readers are still interested in owning documentaries on DVD. Two of our most successful picks in the last year were *Requiem for the American Dream*, featuring Noam Chomsky, and Greg Palast's *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*.





# Reaching Our Readers

From May 2016 to the end of April 2017 Truthout's website was visited by over 11 million readers and our articles were shared over 4 million times across multiple social media platforms -- an average of 600 shares per article. At the time of writing, Truthout and BuzzFeed have a combined 768,500 Facebook fans and 200,000 Twitter followers. Social media brings in 24 percent of all traffic coming to Truthout, with Facebook being our number one social media referer.

In an era of Trump tweets and corporate media misinformation, Truthout stands out as a rare and valued source of critical reporting and commentary. To date, over 31,500 websites have cited or shared Truthout articles. These include media sites like The Intercept, The Huffington Post, Alternet, Bitch Media, Rewire, Salon and Shadowproof,

and prominent organizations such as the ACLU, CODEPINK, Greenpeace, Black Lives Matter, Planned Parenthood, MoveOn.org, NAACP and the Sierra Club. We were recently amazed to learn that a story in Teen Vogue on the presence of **white male extremists** cited a Truthout **article** and was shared over 300,000 times!

Throughout the period of this report independent media continued to play an increasingly important role in the dissemination of information and a growing number of activists, musicians, celebrities, politicians, cultural commentators and thinkers chose Truthout's work to share with their communities. Amongst these are Chelsea Manning, Mark Ruffalo, Shailene Woodley, Nina Turner, Naomi Klein, Susan Sarandon, Bianca Jagger, Jill Stein, RoseAnn DeMoro, Lawrence O'Donnell, Julian Casablancas, and many more.





# 28,926,637

Pageviews on truthout.org

# 11,338,305

Visitors to truthout.org

# 200,000

Follow @truthout and @buzzflash on Twitter

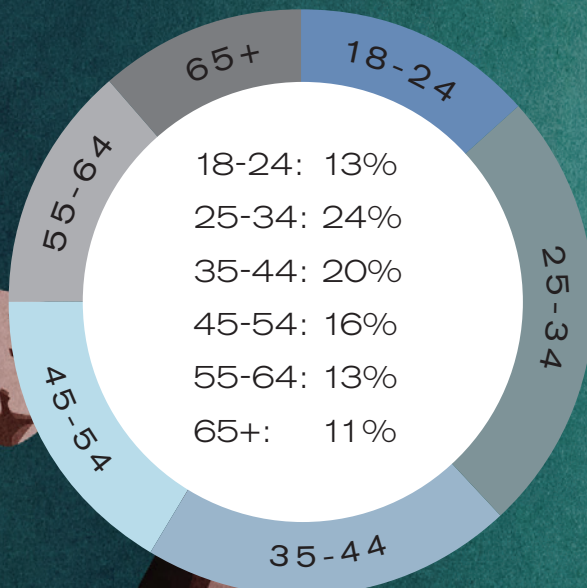
# 768,500

Fans of Truthout and BuzzFlash on Facebook

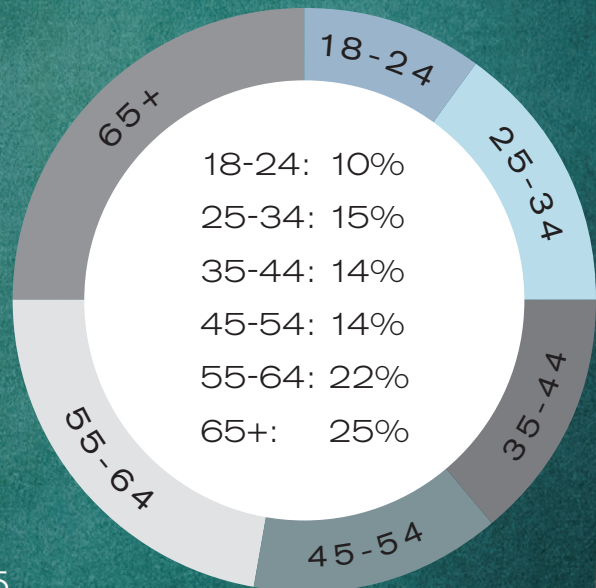
## Cities with the Most Truthout Readers

New York  
Los Angeles  
Chicago  
San Francisco  
Seattle  
Washington, D.C.  
Portland  
London, England  
Houston  
Toronto

## Demographics of Facebook Fans



## Demographics of Website Visitors



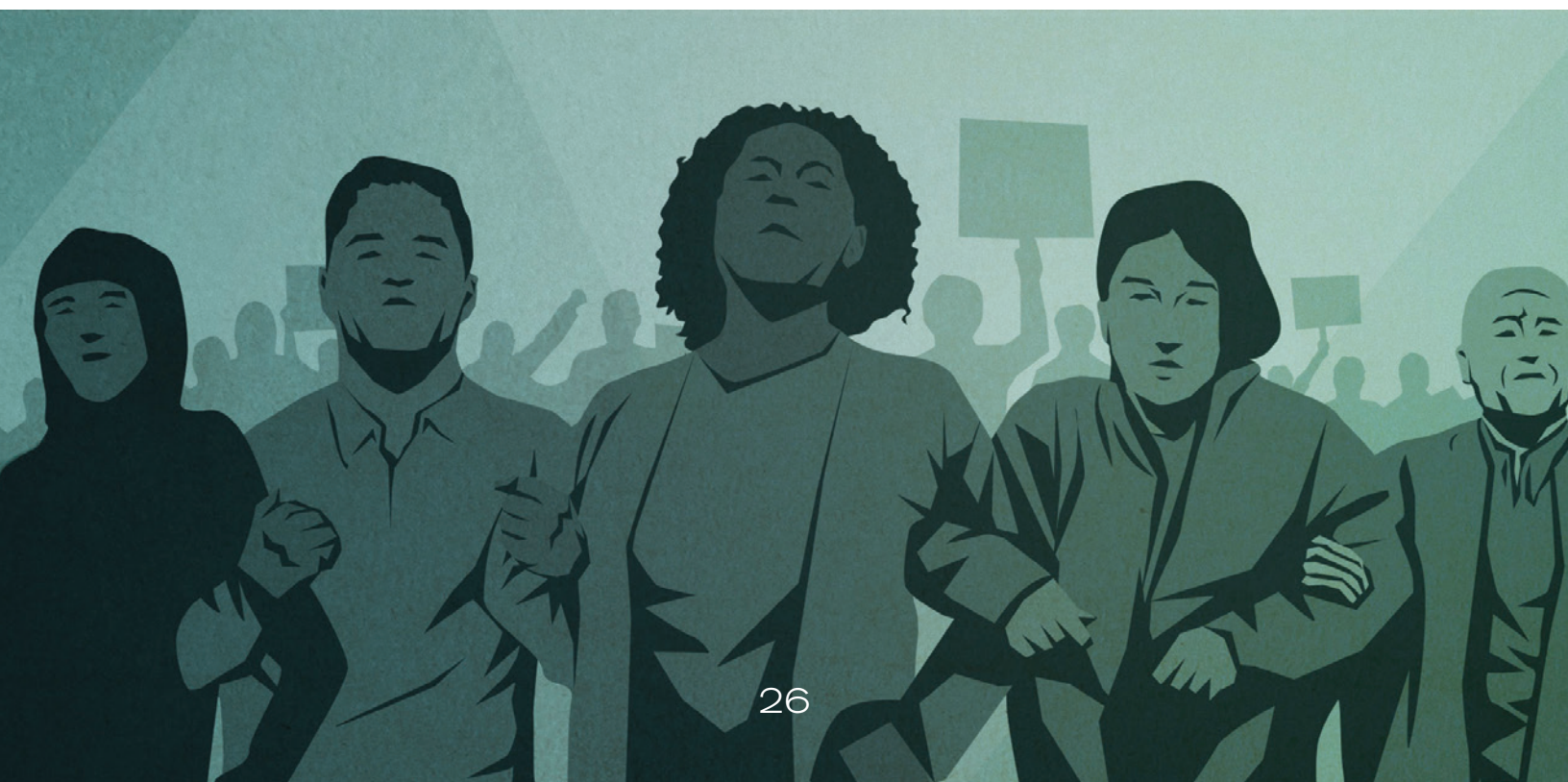


# Living Our Values


Over the past 16 years, Truthout has established itself as a publication whose independence and integrity are unparalleled in the news industry. Many media outlets talk the talk. But we understand that when it comes to trust and transparency, actions speak louder than words.

While billionaires buy or bankrupt media outlets, and so-called nonprofit news ventures materialize under the sponsorship of for-profit media conglomerates, Truthout has refused to sell out, remaining steadfast in our commitment to real grassroots journalism.

In fact, in order to remain entirely independent while adhering to the highest editorial standards, Truthout accepts no advertising or corporate investment. Instead we depend on our readers -- and a handful of foundations -- to make our work possible. The majority of Truthout's budget comes from individual donations of less than \$1,000. These made up 65 percent in the fiscal year 2016-17, while the average size of a donation was just \$28.







Accepting no advertising money whatsoever may seem drastic, but we believe it's critical that the interests of advertisers don't interfere with the way our stories are written, edited and published, and that our editorial decisions stay free from corporate influence. This sets Truthout apart from most publications and websites, a distinction that our audience continues to recognize. It also means that Truthout readers are never interrupted by ads or misled by "sponsored content" when they visit our site.

Furthermore, in recognition of our commitment to transparency and accountability, Truthout continues to be proudly unionized, having been the first ever online-only news publication to do so when our staff joined The NewsGuild-CWA in 2009.

There is so much work to be done by independent, reader-powered media like Truthout: exposing injustices, analysing policy, and reporting on the struggles for a better world. Our supporters play an essential role in our success by helping us accomplish all this on a shoestring budget and in the face of escalating threats to press freedom.



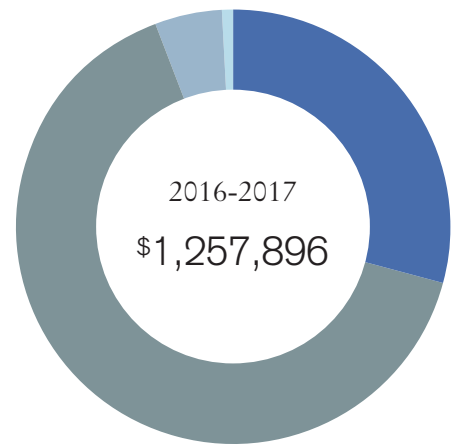
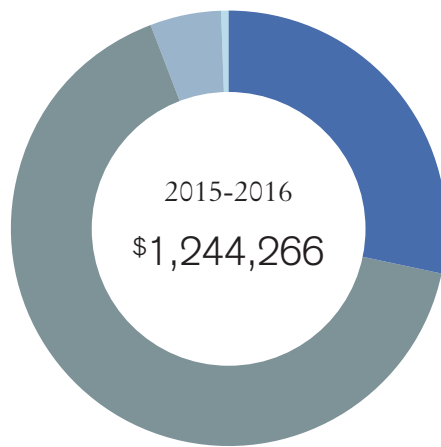
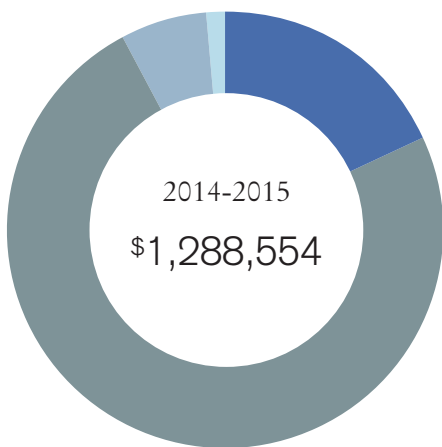
"Truthout is an incredible platform. The contributors are A1; editors have always treated me and my work with the utmost respect. If you've got some extra funds to support a truly and consistently solid independent media outlet, I would very much encourage you to help them out."

Zoé Samudzi | Freelance journalist and researcher

# Financial Statements

## Revenue

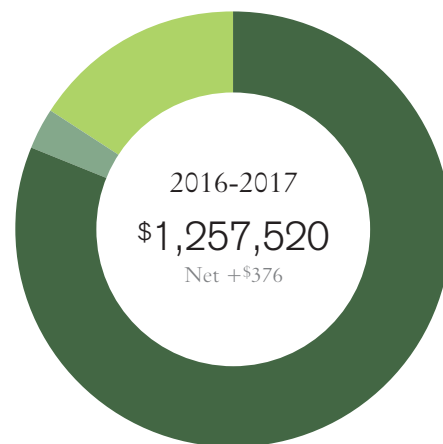
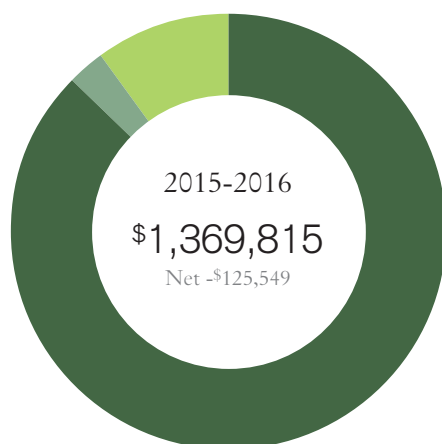
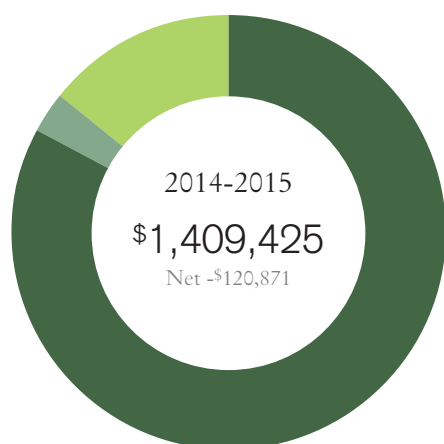
	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Grants	\$234,940	\$354,440	\$367,700
Donations	\$953,769	\$819,296	\$819,884
Major Donations (\$1,000 or greater)	\$82,500	\$64,000	\$61,500
Interest, Royalties & Collaborations	\$17,345	\$6,530	\$8,812
Total Income	\$1,288,554	\$1,244,266	\$1,257,896





## Expenses

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Program & Staff Expenses	\$1,167,407	\$1,197,395	\$1,020,841
Fundraising Expenses	\$42,534	\$36,598	\$39,589
Administrative Expenses	\$199,484	\$135,822	\$197,090
Total Expenses	\$1,409,425	\$1,369,815	\$1,257,520
Net Income	-\$120,871	-\$125,549	\$376



# Donor Honor Rolls

## Nellie Bly Donor Circle (\$1,000 to \$9,999)

Frank and Betsy Babb

Alan Breslauer

George Cox

Nora Daly

Bob and Laoni Davis

Philippe and  
Jacqueline Eberhard

V. Fidler

Lewis Gordon

William Griffith

Nance Hikes

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David Smiley and  
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Thomson von Stein

Dana Wordes

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Annie E. Casey Foundation

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Craigslist Charitable Fund

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Lannan Foundation

Leaves of Grass Fund

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Park Foundation

Quitiplas Foundation

The Susan and Ford  
Schumann Foundation

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Janine Sternlieb Fund of  
RSF Social Finance

Seeds of Justice

“Truthout is where I go to get the unvarnished version of the news.  
Straight no chaser, not sugar coated or spun toward this political party or that.  
News the way it's meant to be, honest, tough and reliable.”

Mark Ruffalo | Actor, producer, director and activist



# Board of Directors

**Robert Naiman** is policy director at Just Foreign Policy. Naiman writes regularly for Truthout, The Huffington Post and Common Dreams. Naiman has worked as a policy analyst and researcher at the Center for Economic and Policy Research and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. He has master's degrees in economics and mathematics from the University of Illinois.

**Lewis R. Gordon** is Professor of Philosophy at UCONN-Storrs; Honorary President and Core Professor at the Global Center for Advanced Studies; and Honorary Professor at the Unit of the Humanities at Rhodes University (UHURU), South Africa. His most recent books are *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought* (NY: Fordham UP; London: Hurst; Johannesburg: Wits UP, 2015; in Swedish, *Vad Fanon Sa*, Stockholm: TankeKraft förlag, 2016), *La sud prin nord-vest: Reflecții existențiale afrodiasporice*, trans. Ovidiu Tichindeleanu (Cluj, Romania: IDEA Design & Print, 2016), and, with Fernanda Frizzo Bragato, *Geopolitics and Decolonization: Perspectives from the Global South* (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017). His website is [lewisrgordon.com](http://lewisrgordon.com) and he is on twitter at [@lewgord](https://twitter.com/lewgord).

**Henry A. Giroux** currently holds the McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the English and Cultural Studies Department and the Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy. His most recent books are *America at War with Itself* (City Lights, 2017) and *The Public in Peril: Trump and the Menace of American Authoritarianism* (Routledge, 2018). He is also a contributing editor to a number of journals and media outlets.



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# Looking Forward

## Keeping an Eye on the Health Care Fight


Truthout will continue to keep health care as one focus of our work, because we know two things: The existing US health care system is inhumane and unsustainable, and the right wing will not stop trying to make it worse. Future entries in the **Fighting for Our Lives** series will include Black Lives Matter Chicago's Aislinn Pulley on single-payer health care as a racial justice issue, Wendell Potter giving a former health insurance industry insider's view, and pieces that examine intersections with disability rights, mental health, and sanctuary for undocumented people

## Connecting with Organizing Communities

The current political movement has finally prompted more news outlets (though still too few) to recognize the importance of talking to organizers on the ground. This is something Truthout has known for a long time. We will continue to uplift unapologetically the efforts of those fighting for justice -- and to go to them for thoughts and ideas about strategies and tactics for that fight. **Sarah Jaffe's Interviews for Resistance** series has an ongoing home at Truthout, and our reporters and other staff remain plugged in to networks and communities of activism and advocacy. We see our journalism as complementing, and complemented by, this work.







## Investing in Leadership

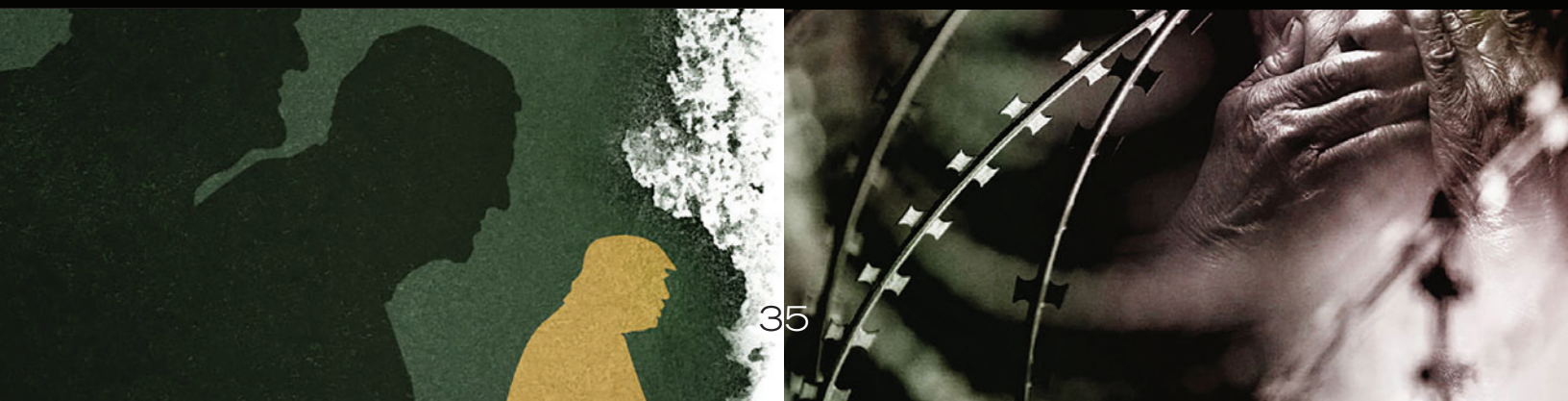
We've been delighted to welcome Ziggy West Jeffery back to Truthout. Formerly our development director, Ziggy has taken on the new position of managing director, focusing on reader fundraising as well as overseeing social media and finances. Ziggy's new role means that we're devoting more resources and senior staff time to making sure Truthout can remain financially sustainable, while freeing up Joe Macaré (in his new position as head of publishing) to build relationships with foundations, lead the Progressive Pick program, publish Truthout books and improve our information security.

## Putting Truthout in Print

With Haymarket Books, Truthout has now published a groundbreaking anthology on police violence, and a collection of interviews with Noam Chomsky, perhaps the left's most famous living intellectual. Together with several ebooks we have put out (most recently Dahr Jamail and William Rivers Pitt's *The Mass Destruction of Iraq*), these Truthout collections form a foundation on which we intend to build with more books, bringing the knowledge and insight our readers associate with Truthout to new audiences.

“Democracy requires a full marketplace of ideas, and Truthout meets that obligation by supplying facts and commentary which are unavailable elsewhere. I hope it will get the support it needs to continue its indispensable work of honest journalism.”

Howard Zinn | Author and historian (1922-2010)





Truthout is a  
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The NewsGuild-CWA.

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