**Housing crisis**

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One of the six colossally dangerous promises made by Trump, should he regain the white house, is his plan to deport homeless people from urban centers to tent cities on the periphery.

Another word for tent cities is concentration camps. As anyone with a brain can deduce, a Trump team might very well not stop with packing off the homeless to concentration camps. Next could come Black Lives Matter protesters, anyone accused of being antifa, then all leftists in general, then immigrants, Muslims…you get the picture.

Arranging for forced relocation to tent cities is a slippery slope into fascist hell. Even if it is limited only to the unhoused, it would be an execrable violation of their human rights. So it is to be opposed on all counts. Even more so considering we have available housing for homeless people right now. Just in San Francisco there are 10 houses sitting empty for every one person sleeping on the street, as San Francisco District 5 supervisor Dean Preston tweeted October 13.

We have the housing, but the homeless can’t pay for it. Hello? What about nationalizing it? Or, less radically, the government could purchase it at a reasonable rate and then give people who need it shelter. But that involves ditching capitalist shibboleths, and our rulers are extremely rigid about those.

It’s time to instill some flexibility in our elites, not only regarding housing but also with food. Worldwide, plenty of food is produced, enough to feed everyone. It’s just that our unfortunate economic and political arrangement dispossessed so many billions that many of them can’t afford it. As a result, hundreds of millions of people don’t get enough calories each day. That’s easy to fix. You just have to decide to do it. And that requires not being a blind, capitalist ideologue.

In the US we have the novel and uniquely widespread phenomenon of vehicular homelessness – people who live in their cars. But with the skyrocketing price of gas thanks to Biden’s idiotic Russia sanctions to bolster his Ukraine proxy war infamy, these poor folk may soon have to trade down from their sedan to a sleeping bag on a city sidewalk. If they do that, they will incur the wrath of the affluent, who consider them a blight on neighborhoods that could otherwise sport eateries with 10-dollar coffees and 30-dollar sandwiches, or expensive gyms or any other of the commercial ornaments of the districts of the rich.

So, not surprisingly, Trump’s plan for tent cities is widely approved on the political right in the US. The homeless are so unsightly, you see. Their misery is supposedly their own fault, because they allegedly use drugs and are often falsely accused of not wanting to work. Rightists blithely skip over the inconvenient fact that many, maybe even most of the people sleeping in their cars do work, like whole armies of adjunct professors, but they get paid so pitifully that they can’t afford shelter.

Or, right-wingers become hysterical about the homeless being mentally ill – well, provide care! That’s not complicated, however it does cost money. But it’s easier to scream that vagabonds are nuts, the implication being “dangerous” (the equation of mental illness with violence is a pernicious lie, because the most lethal Americans are gun owners and very few crazy people own guns; they’re too busy trying to cope and survive the agony of cohabitating with their internal demons).

Whatever the excuse, the wealthy – along with Trump’s rabidly fascistic base, which includes many of the nation’s police – want the homeless to scram. They want to reclaim US cities as the playgrounds for the rich that they think they were meant to be.

This longed-for, expanded gentrification leads to another abysmal Trump proposal – executing drug dealers. My question is, does that include the Black teenager with one joint whom the cops frame as a dealer? Because if so, and you can be sure it does, this plan to execute drug dealers is a recipe for genocide. It might start small, but the executions would inevitably, horribly mushroom.

So my next question is – would they be public? Answer: Of course they would. Trump the reality TV star who so loved humiliating people by firing them in front of millions of viewers, might envisage a bloodier firing, as in, perhaps, firing squads. It’s not hard to imagine him saying: Just think of the ratings!

Some of the homeless use drugs. Some doubtless sell small quantities of them. A homeless drug dealer? That would be a twofer for the radical right. Vagabond drug dealers no doubt would require separate tent camps. We might even get their tent cities blatantly repurposed as death camps, and what starts as an exception for a pariah caste could soon become the norm for the larger group, because when dealing with such a big problem, reactionaries may soon conclude that nothing small will do.

After all, we have lots of homeless people in the US Officially 500,000, though that statistic is belied by another from the National Center on Family Homelessness, which says 2.5 million children are homeless each year in America. So we have, at a minimum, three million unhoused souls in America. My guess, just from casual observation of city life and from the sordid abuse of statistics by American officialdom, is that we have more than three million homeless people, maybe millions more. But that’s just a hunch based on another manipulated statistic, namely, the unemployment one.

Since unemployment stats diabolically delete the throng of long-term unemployed people who have given up looking for work, the question naturally arises – how do they live? How to these uncounted jobless, perhaps millions of them, pay rent with no income? Well, they probably don’t. There’s no charge for sleeping under the stars, and that’s about all you can afford if you’re unemployed for years.

True, you run the risk of getting beaten up by the police or dying of exposure, and if Trump is reelected, you could be shipped off to a tent city, where the first question to arise is, how will you eat? But if you’re one of the droves of unnumbered, invisible people who have been unemployed for years, this miserable calculus is all old hat. After all, food and shelter are luxuries for millions of Americans, who have been trained by the rigors of austere capitalism to do without the latter and skimp – to put it mildly – on the former.

Excerpted: ‘Homeless in America’. Courtesy: Counterpunch.org