

# Speak Out Now at BART (February 12, 2024)

## What Took The Social Out of Society?

**802!** That's how many deaths from fentanyl were recorded in San Francisco last year. Frontline city workers and BART workers are familiar with the situation. People afflicted by the epidemic are on the streets, in the stations, riding the trains and sometimes falling onto the trackway. Many are disabled, bent over or twisted by the injection of this powerful drug, that affects the muscles, weakens the bones and can damage the brain.

It's easy to criticize those who fall into the trap of addiction and are often blamed for the crisis facing San Francisco. But it's not "dope fiends" that brought the city into this situation. It's the "money fiends." It's the billionaires who have been celebrated, with their massive wealth and shiny steel and glass buildings (that are now 30% unoccupied).

The vibrant community that made San Francisco what it was has been destroyed by the tech boom and the soaring cost of housing, which forced many working class people to leave the city.

The politicians are helpless dealing with the crisis they have overseen. Their job is to protect the status quo – the needs of the rich and powerful. They just want the problems, and for many of them that means the people who have been pushed to the streets, to disappear. And they are – one fatal overdose at a time.

Every day this system is put on trial by the crises it has created. There are ways to address this and other problems. But it would take a real mobilization of resources, both human and financial. And it is even more difficult today because the community isn't there to provide support for people who have been cast aside if they try to recover from this abuse.

So, what took the Social out of Society? This social desert is the result of the system of capitalism that puts profit above human lives. But there is a solution. If we could put the Social back into our society, then we could create a society which encouraged the full development of all our potential. We would have Socialism – a society run by and for the people who do the work.

No one will hand that to us. It's up to us to take the steps, at work and in other aspects of our lives, to build the connections and organize ourselves, to defend our interests and our future.

## Let the Gates Take Care of It

The new frontline employee "Safety Initiative" developed by BART Management says it is going to include "De-escalation training" (Pathlore Training classes) for frontline workers.

This is supposed to de-escalate potential assaults on frontline workers. Maybe... But one simple step is for Management to stop emphasizing fare evasion as a problem for Station Agents to address.

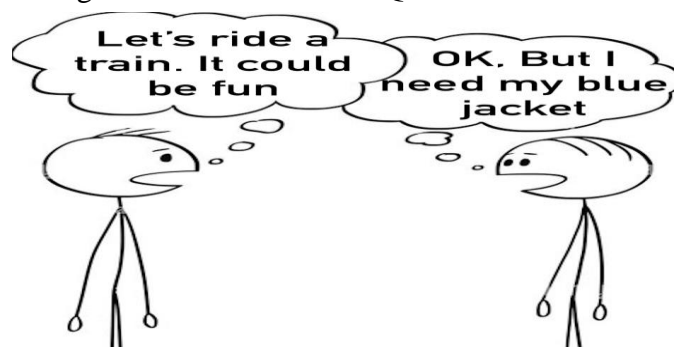
As the new gates are set in place, gate revenues will probably increase. That's what they are for. Station Agents, Station Managers, are present to assist passengers in many different ways – collecting fares is not one of them.

## Tuesday Blue Stalkers

They are still emerging from BART HQ, wearing their blue jackets and traveling around the system. Watching and what? Are they enjoying being in the system? It is a good system. Hopefully they are getting an understanding of what it is really about.

To get a real feel for what it's like, how about showing up to open or close the stations? Or how about riding the first train out or the last one in, to get a real sense of how the system operates? How about responding with System Service Workers to clean up a mess at the end of the platform?

A mid-day, ride is a piece of cake, almost like sitting in the office at Bart HQ.



## *Exposing the Lies of Israel's War Machine* *A report from an Anti-Zionist Activist in Palestine*

The Israeli propaganda apparatus claims Israel is the victim, while it has killed nearly 30,000 Palestinians. The lies are repeated by the the U.S. media. Hear the truth from Tali Shapiro live from Ramallah, Palestine.

**Saturday, Feb 24, 4pm** participate with others

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