

If “The Economy is Recovering” Why Is There a Surge in Homeless Children?

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For the last three elections now, 2010, 2012 and 2015, corporate media and corporate politicians have ceaselessly assured us that “the economy” whatever that is, is “back on track”, wherever that is.

Despite what corporate media and politicians tell us, the positive indicators of soaring stock market valuations, rising real estate prices and the rigged unemployment figures that don’t count the jailed, the recently released from jails and prisons, and those who’ve given up on finding work or those working part time who desperately want full time hours real life for most real people hasn’t got any better since 2008 or 2009.

Last week an extraordinary and shameful study emerged from the [National Center on Family Homelessness](#) confirmed it by demonstrating that almost 2.5 million children in the US were homeless at some point during 2013. That’s one child in every thirty, in what we’re accustomed to thinking of as the richest nation on earth. In the most recent months for which statistics exist, the rate of homelessness among children is spiking, increased 8% nationally from 2012 to 2013, and by 10% or more in 13 states and the District of Columbia. In 2006 one in 50 children were homeless. In 2010 it was one in 45. Now, in the age of Obama, the 2013 number is 1 in 30.

The causes of homelessness among children are not your comforting stereotypes of drug use and mental illness. These are “comforting” because they encourage us to blame the drug-addicted, and pity the mentally ill, and our comfort keeps us from questioning the capitalist system which declares that we must have poverty in the midst of plenty, or wondering why we ourselves are no more than a month or two from homelessness.

America’s shameful surge in homeless children is caused by the fact that wages are NOT rising, low income housing is NOT being built, and the stock of available housing is being demolished or cannibalized by gentrifying speculators. Speculators can’t make money off stable neighborhoods, so the poorest have to leave wherever they are to make room for something else.

In California, the nation’s most populous state 34% of households are paying more than half their annual income for rent, and while the state’s minimum wage is \$8 an hour, a 2 bedroom apartment at a third of annual income would require tripling the minimum wage to \$25.78 an hour. The issue then, is poverty.

Millions of children are not suffering because their parents have suddenly become addicted, or neglectful or lazy or stupid. Their parents, many of whom are working as hard as they

can, are simply not able to afford a roof over their heads. This is just capitalism. It may be a scandal, but it's no surprise.

This happens to be just the way that "the economy" works when it's "back on track." It's time to tear up those tracks.

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