

Sheltering people does not address the flaws of an economic system that creates mass homelessness

Los Angeles Times, Opinion, Readers React, January 23, 2018

To the editor: Gustavo Arellano says that "it's time to think radical" on homelessness, but he only deals with a symptom rather than the deeply rooted causes of the increasing inequality of American society, seeking a "remedy" that keeps people without homes from the streets of the "respectable class." ("Should we set up New Deal-style work camps for the needy?" Opinion, Jan. 17)

He does not ask whether our private economic system provides work that can pay for a home, or question the unregulated financial system that led to the Great Depression and our recent recession.

He writes the astonishing statement that "it was World War II's industrial boom that ultimately gave the Okies jobs, not the government." Who but the federal government declares war? Who but the federal government drafts millions of men into the military opening up jobs for Okies and women? Who but the federal government pours money into the military-industrial corporations?

Doris Isolini Nelson, Los Angeles

..

To the editor: For all the reasons Arellano cites, work camps would provide some dignity to homeless people.

I was a member of the Bakersfield City Council in the late 1980s when it voted to build the Bakersfield Homeless Center with great help from the our local trade unions. This facility still helps many homeless people today.

Arellano references the Sunset Labor Camp near the unincorporated community of Weedpatch and Sunset School outside Bakersfield. Each year a festival celebrating the Dust Bowl migrants is held at this school. Several historic buildings at what is also known as Weedpatch Camp were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.

Apr 01, 2014 | 2:11 PM

The camp continues to assist and house migrant workers.

Mark C. Salvaggio, Bakersfield

..

To the editor: Does anybody remember Rodger Young Village in Griffith Park after World War II? There, Quonset huts were erected to house the war veterans returning home along with their families.

This would seem like a good solution for L.A.'s homeless population. The Quonset huts would be inexpensive to build, and if we found room in Griffith Park, they would be isolated from communities that do not want homeless people.

The village would provide a central location for homeless services. We could even call it "Eric Garcetti Village."

Ed Burrows, Agoura Hills