

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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**PSARA EDUCATION FUND**  
"Uniting Generations for a Secure Future"

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## PSARA Visits El Centro de la Raza

On Thursday, September 10, 2015, PSARA's Diversity Committee invites PSARA members to visit El Centro de la Raza (Centro), 2524 16th Ave. S., on Seattle's Beacon Hill. Beginning at 10 a.m. PSARA members will be led on a tour of the facility by Centro staff and will also learn about the exciting plan to build a new low-income housing project on the site as part of the Centro campus.

The history of the Centro is rich and is a wonderful example of what can be achieved with bold community action. Since the initial occupation and creation of the Centro, it has been host to many historic events in Seattle's recent progressive history. There will be a discussion session with Centro staff after the tour.

Please RSVP to the PSARA office by calling (206) 448-9646 or email [diversitycommittee@psara.org](mailto:diversitycommittee@psara.org)

## Celebrate Labor Day with PSARA

All PSARA members are invited to celebrate Labor Day with the M.L. King County Labor Council and PSARA. On Monday, September 7, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., we will gather at Lower Woodland Park – Shelters 1, 2 & 3 at 50th Street and Woodland Park Avenue N. in Seattle.

Free hot dogs, ice cream, and soda are being provided along with clowns, games, face painting and raffle prizes. (It is a fun event for kids and grandkids.) There will be live music by Rick Wetzel & the Groovin' Higher Orchestra.

PSARA always provides free cookies to the celebrants. Please bring your favorite home baked cookies or if you don't want to bake, bring store-bought cookies. We attract a lot of people to the PSARA picnic table. If you have portable lawn chairs, please bring them, as the picnic is a wonderful time to sit around and schmooze (and eat cookies!).

You enter the picnic area from N. 50th St. The entrance is west of Greenlake Way N. and east of Greenwood Ave. N.

Politicians always show up for this event, so you will have the opportunity to talk with elected officials and candidates about your favorite issues. Hopefully, if US Senators and Representatives are present (they are not running this year), you can let them know that you want Medicare and Social Security expanded and you want them to support Scrapping the Cap!

## Education Happened on August 8

By David Groves, with photos by Garet Munger

When Senator Bernie Sanders accepted an invitation to speak at the Social Security/Medicare/Medicaid birthday celebration on August 8, organizers may have wondered whether the event's message about these critically important programs would be overshadowed by coverage of the Democratic presidential candidate and his surge in popularity.

Bernie-mania didn't turn out to be a problem.

Instead, it was two women from the local Black Lives Matter movement who seized the microphone and the headlines, preempting Sanders' speech that afternoon at Seattle's Westlake Park and

supplanting the event's message. Much has been written about that disruption -- almost none of it describing the hour and 45 minutes that preceded that drama.

So, please allow me.

Thanks to Sanders' presence, a festive and energized crowd of more than 4,000 people heard from some inspiring community leaders about the importance of Social Security,



David Groves (right) with Washington State Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Dodson at the rally.

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## The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

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## To Save Planet Earth: Handcuff the Fossil Fuel Industry!

*By former Retiree Advocate Editor and PSARA President Will Parry, reprinted from The Retiree Advocate, December 2012*

This article is for my grandchildren. And yours. And everybody's, all around the world. I want them—all of them—to live out their lives on a vibrant, living planet. So do you.

To make that future a reality, we have work to do.

Our work starts by listening to the scientists. Their verdict is virtually unanimous. Unless we handcuff the fossil fuel industry, Planet Earth as we know it is doomed.

Environmentalist Bill McKibben is especially worth listening to. For twenty years he has been warning about the impending threat of climate change. And he is doing something about it. McKibben is the founder and leader of the grassroots climate campaign which has coordinated 15,000 rallies in 189 countries since 2009.

One day after this year's election, McKibben launched a 22-city "Do the Math" tour with a packed rally at Seattle's Convention Center.

Indeed, we must "do the math." Here is the chilling calculation.

First, a scientific consensus has established an increase in global temperatures of 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial averages as a red line, an absolute limit beyond which catastrophic and irreversible climate disruption will occur.

Second, we are already perilously close to that red line. The scientists estimate that we can only release about 565 more gigatons of carbon into the atmosphere without pushing temperatures above the two degree limit.

And third, the proven oil, gas, and coal reserves that the extractive industries expect to exploit amount to five times the 565 gigaton upper limit. To preserve the planet, these reserves must stay in the ground, which amounts to the fossil fuel industry writing off \$20 trillion in assets.

Clearly, the business model of Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, and BP is at war with Planet Earth.

McKibben summarizes the findings of more than 60 recent studies along with numerous review pieces that themselves each cover a large segment of the recent literature.

He cites "three of the best recent analyses of what we are headed towards." An M.I.T. analysis doubles its warming projection to 10 degrees Fahrenheit by 2095. A Hadley Center analysis foresees "catastrophic" warming of 4 to 7 degrees Centigrade by 2100 on the current emissions path. And a "definitive" report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration warns of a scorching 9 to 11 degrees Fahrenheit warming over most of inland U.S. by 2090.

So far, we've warmed the planet by 0.8 degrees Celsius—enough to generate Hurricane Sandy and cause drought conditions in half the U.S. Continuing on or even near the current emissions path would invite these impacts:

Staggeringly high temperatures over much of the United States.

Permanent Dust Bowl conditions over the U.S. Southwest and many other regions around the globe.

Sea level rise of about one foot by 2050, then four to six feet by 2100.

As much as half or more loss of biodiversity

Food insecurity—trying to feed billions of people in a world with an ever-worsening climate.

Unexpected impacts—the fearsome "unknown unknowns."

Again we turn to McKibben. He is initiating a campaign to disinvest in the fossil fuel industry, similar to the campaign that helped materially to bring down apartheid in South Africa. Already, students are at work to persuade their universities to disinvest. Foundations will soon find it bad public relations to have their funds in BP stock. Religious funds, too, will find such investments tainted.

# My Take on August 8

By Robby Stern

It has taken me some time to process all that occurred at the celebration of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security on August 8. As my feelings and thinking have evolved I am of two minds.

I understand and deeply grieve the opportunity that was lost. Had the disruption by the two women from Black Lives Matter not occurred, we very likely would have projected the demand to expand Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security across our nation and helped make the expansion of these programs a larger issue for the 2016 presidential race. Expansion of these programs is critical to the well-being of all communities in our nation (except for possibly the wealthy few and their political minions who seek to cut or even eliminate these programs).

On the other hand, the issues that were raised and dramatized by the disruption are critical. They directly address life and death issues for the African American community in our nation. Senator Sanders had not yet adequately addressed those issues, and the disruption put that demand front and center both for Senator Sanders and in the presidential race.

We accomplished good education about Social Security and Medicare and the need to expand those programs with the thousands of people at the event. I am deeply grateful to the amazing speakers and musicians. The program up to the disruption was educational and soulful and presented the beautiful diversity of our community speaking in one voice. It was wonderful to hear thousands of people chanting Scrap the Cap!

But the press and social media coverage about thousands demanding the expansion of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security was completely eclipsed by the BLM action.

There are lessons to be learned about the level of security that is required for an event such as this one, where nationally prominent speakers are part

of the program. We were only notified a week prior to the celebration that Senator Sanders would participate. It was very challenging assembling the number of peace keeper/security volunteers that were present, and we thank them for their efforts. The measures that would have been necessary to stop determined disruption from happening were greater than what we were able to organize before the event. What we had on hand was clearly inadequate.

I do not regret that we failed to forcefully eject the Black Lives Matter protesters from the stage. When we got wind of a possible disruption late Friday afternoon before the event, there was an effort to identify who it might be. Had that been successful, we would have tried to reach out and discuss if we could find a way to accommodate all interests. The person we asked to reach out got back to me and told me he could not determine who it was, much less provide contacts for reaching out. He was skeptical that something was planned.

It was decided that if Black Lives Matter people disrupted the event and reached the stage, we would give them time to speak after Senator Sanders. That offer was made on the stage and rejected. When we agreed to give the protesters time prior to Senator Sanders, I was told by a person who was present on the stage but was not one of the two women leaders that after the four and a half minutes of silence in memory of Michael Brown, whose body was left on the streets of Ferguson for four and a half hours, the disruption would end and the program would be allowed to continue. Evidently, the person who told me that was not in a position to speak on behalf of the two women.

After it was apparent that the protesters were unwilling to leave and that Senator Sanders would not be allowed to speak, I made the decision to end the program.



August 8 - Robby at the mic with PSARA Board member and Advocate Associate Editor Bob Shimabukuro.  
(Photo: Garet Munger)

We made a genuine effort in planning the program to incorporate the demands of the Black Lives Matter movement into the program. I specifically asked Gerald Hankerson, the leader of the NAACP, to address the intersection between the BLM movement and Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Other speakers in the program also addressed these issues. It is a symptom of institutionalized racism that Social Security is the sole source of income for 42 percent of African Americans who are recipients of Social Security income. There is no question that expanding Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will have a positive impact on the African American community. At the same time, the threats to cut Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare would be particularly hard-felt in the African American community.

The subject of the disruptive protest is very legitimate and rightfully emotional. Black Lives do matter!!! What has been occurring in our country to African American men and women is

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# Climate Change Is Violence ...NOW

By Bobby Righi

One day last week, a friend visiting from out of the state asked me, "I know that lots of people are concerned about the environment and climate change, but what about concern for people?" This is a person who works on issues of food and is very concerned with social justice. That she would see the fight against climate change as a side issue was a shock.

For many of us, the pain of climate change seems far into the future, and we here in the Northwest are enjoying the sunny summer, though such a summer should be a kind of warning. Of course, if you are living near a coal plant or in the Duwamish Valley and you often have to race your children to the hospital as they struggle for a breath because of dirty air, you are not so removed from climate change's threat.

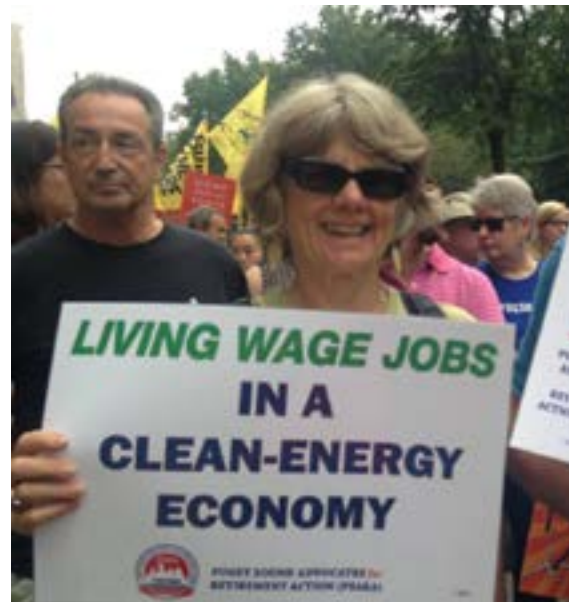
A recent article by Rebecca Solnit called "Climate Change Is Violence" derides some scientists and the U. S. security apparatus as they predict that climate change will cause more social unrest and war. The authorities are just worried about the poor "behaving badly," she says. But people should rebel when faced with unbearable and oppressive conditions. Rebecca Solnit points out that the real violence is climate change itself.

stan, over 1,000 impoverished workers died in the streets. Every day in China over 4,000 people die as a result of breathing polluted air from coal-fired power plants.

In the Northwest, there are now 160 forest fires burning, and three fire fighters just died in one of these fires near Twisp. In low-lying coastal areas like Louisiana, Florida, and Bangladesh, and in fact, the whole eastern seaboard of the U.S., farm land is being inundated by higher and higher tides, driving people away and into deeper poverty. Oceans are acidifying and species are disappearing.

Deaths, desperation, and disappearances. And it is all happening NOW, not sometime in the future. These are not "acts of God." Climate change is anthropogenic -- caused by human beings -- and by some humans much more than others.

The top perpetrators are those who profit from the use of fossil fuel and who wage powerful fights to keep any regulation off the books. The oil, gas, and coal companies have huge reserves that they are determined to dig up



We have to work together to force our governments to quit subsidizing the energy companies and start subsidizing job training programs for a new fossil-free economy. The first to benefit should be the people who lose their jobs as fossil fuels are phased out and the front line communities who, as we can see, bear the brunt of pollution and climate change devastation.

All of this has to be done at once – demand jobs and a safety net and also an end to support for fossil fuels. Hard to do, but we are the working class and that is what we do – hard work. Things are only going to get more and more violent if we don't.

On Wednesday, October 14 there will be events around the world and across Washington State to demand results from leaders in Paris at the UN Climate Change Conference in December. Here in Seattle, a coalition of unions, community groups, schools, and environmental organizations are planning a day of creative events and demonstrations culminating in one large gathering in the evening.

Save the date. Details will be published in the next Advocate.

*Bobby Righi serves on PSARA's Executive Board and is a member of the PSARA Environmental Committee.*

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***We can stop this. The fossils must stay in the ground where they have been for millions of years. We cannot afford to keep burning them.***

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There are widespread and massive droughts and loss of food crops causing famine. Distribution systems that normally starve the poor are even worse when food gets scarce. We have all watched the films of massive hurricanes and storms that flood, and wipe out communities, killing hundreds.

This summer effective temperatures in some areas of Iran and Iraq reached highs of 150 degrees! In Karachi, Paki-

and burn -- to hell with the rest of us. They will not suffer; they will have their islands of comfort protected by their own military.

But we can stop this. The fossils must stay in the ground where they have been for millions of years. We cannot afford to keep burning them. Scientists say that we could now transition to renewable energy. We just need to do it.

# Puerto Rico's Debt Crisis: The Cost of Being a US Colony

By Mike Andrew

On August 3 Puerto Rico defaulted on an installment of its \$72 billion debt. The Commonwealth paid a mere \$628,000 toward a \$58 million bill due at the beginning of August to creditors of its Public Finance Corporation (PFC).

The default was expected, and it's easily understandable when you consider the fact that Puerto Rico's GDP is only \$69 billion.

The interesting detail that was not widely reported is that the island did pay the regular installments on all its debt obligations other than what was owed to PFC.

In fact, Puerto Rico's government made a strategic decision not to pay PFC because its investors were merely credit unions representing ordinary Puerto Rican citizens. The debts that were paid were ones owed to Wall Street hedge funds, which could have made much more trouble for the Puerto Rican government.

Emigration to the mainland shrinks the island's tax base, making it harder for the Puerto Rican government to pay its debts or even to keep basic services going. There have been reports from many towns that supplies of drinking water have been interrupted for days at a time.

What went wrong?

According to former IMF chief economist Anne Krueger, the problem is that Puerto Rico is a US commonwealth, and therefore has to comply with US minimum wage laws, while other Caribbean islands do not. US investors who want to open Caribbean resorts, Krueger says, would rather go to the Dominican Republic, where wages are one-fifth of those in Puerto Rico.

Krueger also claims that US public assistance programs make it more



from trying to attract competing non-US investors.

Puerto Rico's main problem is that it's surrounded by other island countries that are also economic colonies of the United States but are not protected by US social legislation. Puerto Rico is poor when compared with US states, but when compared to other Caribbean countries it has the highest per capita GDP in the region.

That sounds good, but in a neo-colonial system it's not. What it means is that US resort developers can go to the Dominican Republic and pay \$1.45 per hour for hotel staff – one-fifth of the \$7.25 US minimum wage that they have to pay Puerto Ricans.

And because they can do so, they do. That's the reason employment on the island is so low compared to the mainland US.

While Krueger thinks US safety-net programs encourage Puerto Ricans to avoid gainful employment – the same argument Republicans in the US make, by the way – islanders pay US income taxes and are entitled to get the benefits they've paid for.

If a Puerto Rican family on public assistance earns more than the median income on the island, as Krueger claims, it must mean that many Puerto Ricans who are eligible for assistance are not getting it.

Puerto Rico has been called "America's Greece," and like Greece, the island is trapped in a destructive system not of its own making and which it can't escape unless it changes the terms of its relationship with the US.

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***Puerto Rico has the highest per capita GDP in the Caribbean. That sounds good, but in a neo-colonial system it's not.***

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According to *Forbes* magazine, at least 36 US hedge funds and some big mutual funds have invested in Puerto Rican bonds and now own 47 percent of the island's debt.

Debt is only part of the problem for the island. Puerto Rico's Governor, Alejandro Garcia Padilla, says the island's whole economy is in a "death spiral." Only 40 percent of the island's population is employed or even looking for work. The figure for the US mainland is 60 percent.

Puerto Rico's population is declining as its people flee to the mainland US. In fact, more Puerto Ricans live on the mainland than on their native island, and the emigration trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

desirable for Puerto Ricans to be unemployed than to get a job. According to Krueger, a Puerto Rican household of three that is eligible for food stamps, AFDC, Medicaid, and utility subsidies could receive \$1,743 a month, which is more than the median income on the island.

Apart from proving the futility of expecting anything helpful from the IMF, what does Krueger's analysis show?

Krueger is half right. Puerto Rico's problems do, in fact, stem from the fact that it's a US commonwealth – although the more accurate word would be "colony." That means that the island is wide open to US corporations and is subject to their needs, including trade restrictions which prevent the island

# Education Happened on August 8

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Medicare, and Medicaid. There's no doubt they were disappointed they didn't get to hear Sanders speak, unless they were also among the 15,000-plus at the campaign rally later that evening at University of Washington.

They did, however, get an education about America's most successful anti-poverty programs, the threats against them, and the growing support for not just protecting but also expanding their benefits. They heard about the arbitrary cap on Social Security/Medicare taxes that currently exempts all income above \$118,500. They learned that if we "Scrap the Cap" so all Americans pay the same tax rate for these critical programs, their financial stability will be guaranteed and benefits could be improved.

They got to hear from Lynne Dodson, Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO: "Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. These are the programs that make lives better for everyone. They need to be constantly defended against those who would enrich themselves by cutting off the most vulnerable: seniors, the disabled, the poor, and people of color... On this important birthday, we need to recommit ourselves in the labor movement and the entire movement for social justice. We need to protect and improve these programs."

They got to hear Marcelas Owens who, at age 11, stood beside President Obama as he signed the Affordable Care Act in 2010. Now a junior at Seattle's Garfield High, a student leader, and an active member of the Washington CAN, Owens described how Social Security has kept his family together following his mother's death.

"Social Security doesn't just benefit the elderly and the disabled," Owens said. "I'm 16 years old, and I'm benefiting from Social Security... That's why I'm fighting for the protection and expansion of Social Security benefits, and I'm fighting to 'Scrap the Cap' so

the rich can pay their fair share of taxes and help support Social Security."

They got to hear Seattle City Councilwoman Kshama Sawant explain that Social Security and Medicare "are under attack not because they do not work; they are under attack precisely because they do work. Because they efficiently provide human services to those in need while not creating a penny of profit for the billionaire class."



*Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant chats with fellow speaker Heather Villanueva while PSARA Board member Jackie Boschok looks on.*

Sawant added: "That is the real complaint by the corporate establishment with what they like to call 'entitlement' programs. They object because it conflicts with their entitlement, their deeply felt sense of entitlement to make profits off the backs of workers and retirees."



*State Senator Pramila Jayapal.*



*Marcellas Owens at the mic.*



*Seattle NAACP President Gerald Hankerson backstage.*

They got to hear Gerald Hankerson, President of the Seattle-King County NAACP, explain that Social Security is especially important to black Americans because they are less likely than whites to have pensions or retirement savings. In addition, blacks would be disproportionately harmed by proposals to raise the retirement age for Social

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Security because they have shorter life expectancies as compared to other races.

They got to hear US Representative Adam Smith (D-9) make an impassioned call to action not only to strengthen Social Security but to tackle income inequality.

"We have to be relentless in telling corporations that this is not acceptable. It is not acceptable to pay your CEO \$40 million a year and pay your employees minimum wage."

On August 8 in Westlake Park, more than 4,000 people got to hear from

these and other elected and community leaders. They heard how the struggle to protect and strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid is inextricably linked to struggles to address income inequality, immigration reform, prison sentencing reform, and other social movements — including the Black Lives Matter movement.

*David Groves is Editor of The Stand, the online news service of the Washington State Labor Council --www.TheStand.org -- and a PSARA member.*



*Featured performers Daniel Pak (left) of Kore Ionz and Geo Quibuyen (right) of Blue Scholars.*



*Two views of the diverse crowd of more than 4,000 that attended the rally.*

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**"Social Security and Medicare are under attack not because they do not work; they are under attack precisely because they do work."**

**Kshama Sawant**

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*Always a crowd favorite, the Raging Grannies perform.*

# What's Next in the Fight for Fair Trade?

By Lynne Dodson

For the past six months a broad coalition of labor, environmental, faith, and community organizations has been united in a single purpose: defeating Fast Track for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal. With over 150 actions; thousands of letters, postcards, and phone calls to our Democratic congressional delegation; and more news coverage than trade issues have seen since NAFTA, in the end both our Senators and Representatives DelBene, Kilmer, and Larsen joined with Republicans in Congress and voted for Fast Track. Representatives Heck, McDermott, and Smith stood fast in the face of tremendous pressure from the White House, and voted against it.

While Fast Track ended up passing by a narrow majority in both the House and Senate, we stalled the vote for months, held over 100 actions in the five months leading up to the vote, and certainly raised the awareness around the problems with our *status quo* free trade agreements.

Fast Track gives the means to push free trade agreements (FTAs) through Congress without debate or amendments. Now that it has passed, we turn our attention to the two big agreements that are coming up – the TPP, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

First, let's be clear - this hearty coalition is not trade adverse. Trade should benefit people in partnering countries. It should improve the standard of living, and bring benefits to people living in trading countries. What trade deals do is write the rules for globalization and for how our economy works. As one of the most trade-dependent states in the nation (so we hear again and again), it is particularly incumbent on us to ensure that trade agreements are driven by the values and principles of civil society. That is not the case with the current negotiations on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP)

The Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal is at the heart of our opposition, though a similar deal – the Trans-

atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is also of concern. Since Fast Track legislation is in place for the next six years, it is likely that other trade deals, like the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA), are likely to come up during this time as well.

The agreements all have some things in common. First, their primary goal is to "liberalize trade" – increase the ability to profit, not "improve the lives of people." Second, they are negotiated in secret, and the primary negotiators at the table hail from multinational corporations and investors. The fundamental process by which these deals are negotiated is flawed in ways that preclude meaningful input from civil society.

We have been assured that the TPP (for example) will contain higher labor and human rights standards than any previous trade deal. This may well be, but according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, monitoring and enforcement of standards is sorely lacking. Since 2008, the Department of Labor has accepted only five formal complaints, and only one – with Peru – was resolved. The Columbia FTA has the highest labor standards yet, and trade unionists continue to be threatened and murdered. The recent news of a change in Malaysia's human rights status leads one to wonder how low standards can go in order to include countries in trade agreements. Half of the countries in the TPP have a current US State Department ranking of Tier 2 or 3 – poor standards on human slavery and trafficking.

From leaked text so far it is difficult to see any improvement in the TPP over NAFTA and similar FTAs. This is no surprise. The fundamental objective, to increase profits through the "liberalization" of trade, remains the same. We can expect more of the same results, and this is what leaked text suggests – increased income inequality, more off-shoring of jobs, increased prices for medicine, prohibitions on "buy American" policies, and a roll-back of Wall Street and banking reforms.



As Stan Sorscher, President of the Washington Fair Trade Coalition, says, "Trade creates winners and losers." Those who are negotiating these *status quo* trade deals are not negotiating to be the losers. It is up to us to not only identify the problems with the TPP, TTIP, TiSA, and other trade deals. We also must identify what a trade deal would look like that benefits people. It's also up to us to hold our elected representatives accountable for their actions on trade. They need to hear from their constituents as the TPP and other FTA's unfold.

We don't know when the negotiations will be complete on the TPP. We do know that once they are complete, public access to the text will be available, and we will be doing our analysis of the impacts on workers here and in countries with whom we trade.

We also must continue to work to create trade policies that truly benefit people. We'll be doing that at the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, along with our partners like the WA Fair Trade Coalition. Please join with us as we work to change this trajectory and use trade not to erode our economy but to improve the standard of living for people in the new global community.

Lynne Dodson is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and a PSARA member.



# What's Wrong with Europe?

By Mike Andrew

"You, with your vote, will judge us," Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras told his country in an August 20 speech, calling for new elections on September 20.

Only seven months after coming to power, the leftist SYRIZA party was splitting into pro- and anti-Europe factions, and the Prime Minister was calling for a new election to decide whether the country will remain in the Eurozone.

Tsipras is in a tough situation. Sixty-one percent of Greek voters voted against EU-imposed austerity in a July referendum, but polls show that the same percentage want to remain in the Eurozone. Those aims may be incompatible.

Greece's political crisis exposes deep contradictions in the European Union and its economic arm, the Eurozone. Former Greek Finance Minister and internationally known economist Yanis Varoufakis described the shortfalls of the Eurozone in his book *The Global Minotaur*. You can understand what's wrong with Europe, Varoufakis says, by comparing it to the United States.

The United States is also a currency union – the "Dollarzone" if you will. Like the Eurozone, the Dollarzone includes rich states and poor ones.

The rich states regularly produce tax surpluses. Their residents pay more in federal taxes than the states get back in so-called "transfer payments" -- in other words federal investments and benefits.

They put up with this inequality because they also regularly produce trade surpluses. They sell more to neighboring states than they buy from them, and they know that destitute neighbors make poor customers.

It would be unthinkable for the rich states to refuse to make transfer payments to the poorer ones because the US is a political union as well as a currency union. Most Americans agree that the federal government has a constitu-

tional obligation to invest in the poor states and provide a safety net for their residents.

(Ironically, the poor states which are beneficiaries of federal spending also tend to be "Red" states that regularly vote for candidates who promise them "smaller government." But that's a subject for another article.)

The Eurozone is not a political union, however. The richest European countries have no obligation to make transfer payments to poor countries like Greece, and they have resisted doing so.

In fact, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble – Varoufakis' antagonist in this spring's loan negotiations – seemed perfectly happy to see Greece out of the Eurozone, the country's banks out of cash, and the Greek people living like paupers on the fringes of Europe.

Under the circumstances why would Greeks want to stay in the Eurozone?

The answer is that, like the states of the Dollarzone, the countries of the Eurozone are economically integrated, although Europe is integrated in a way that sends transfer payments from poor to rich rather than the other way around.

Like the richest US states, the richest European countries also generate a trade surplus – they sell more to their neighbors than they buy from them.

That's part of the trap for Europe's poor countries. They could quit the Eurozone altogether, return to their former currencies, and then devalue their money from its nominal exchange value.

That would make Euros flow into their countries as their neighbors took advantage of cheap money in southern Europe. As the rich countries consumed more of the exports of their poor neighbors, the internal markets of Greece and the other poor countries would revive, businesses would hire new employees, and money would circulate again.



*Alexis Tsipras looking glum in the Prime Minister's chair in Parliament.*

However, Europe's economy has developed unevenly. The poor countries import more than they export, and the imports would become much more expensive.

Greek wine would be cheaper, but the bottles to put it in and the corks to seal them – both of which Greece has to import – would be more expensive. Greek vegetables would be much cheaper, but beef and pork would cost more because they're imported.

Seeing a doctor would be cheap, but the medicine prescribed would be much more expensive. Donkeys would be cheap; cars, trucks, and vespas would be expensive.

In short, Greece could leave the Eurozone and probably see long-term economic benefits, but the short-term cost would be terrible and maybe too great for Greek voters to bear.

That's the challenge for any Greek government, and, as Tsipras said, it's up to the Greek people to judge.

# "Secret Memo": Primary Election Bad News for Developers and Landlords

By Jonathan Rosenblum

Your crack team of PSARA 2015 primary election investigators has discovered a secret post-primary election memo issued by one of Seattle's big developers and landlords. While we're continuing to analyze the document for authenticity (fingerprint and handwriting analyses, etc.), we believe the memo bears a striking resemblance to what Seattle's big developers and landlords are probably thinking in the wake of the August primary. Read on!

Aug. 20, 2015

Dear fellow developers and big landlords:

The results from Seattle's 2015 primary elections are in, and if there's a single message I want to convey to you it's this: We'd better double-down our efforts in the general election or we will be facing big problems in 2016 – like new laws forcing business to subsidize affordable workforce and retiree housing, making it harder for us to kick out tenants when we want to, forcing us to fix up rundown units for tenants who complain, and even...rent control. Yikes!

It seems that working people and their friends, having won a historic increase in the minimum wage, have now set their sights on what they quaintly call "making Seattle affordable for all." And you know what that means for us: less money in our bank accounts and lower profits for all the hard-working landlords and property developers out there.

Let's face it, we've had a good run lately. Housing prices are going through the roof – average home prices in Seattle are now over half a million dollars, an 11% increase in just the last year (more money for us!). New downtown luxury condos are selling like hotcakes (again, more money for us!). And we're raising rents across the city – 30% in just the last four years (yep, that's more for us again!).

But I have to share with you that this wonderful profit-taking is at risk. In the primary election several candidates made "affordable housing for all" a top issue. And guess what? They beat our candidates or exceeded expectations. If we don't reverse this trend, we're in trouble. Can you imagine being forced by

Big Government to build housing that is affordable to baristas, office workers, bus drivers, machinists, and such?

Now I know what you're thinking: Don't worry, Jack, the conservative-leaning seniors will vote in droves in November.

Well, I have news for you: Seniors in Seattle are rallying to our opponents' message about affordable housing. We've recently learned that many of them are living on fixed incomes and can't afford the new rents. We're going to need to convince them that rising housing costs are inevitable, that housing is a complex issue, and there's little they can do about it. The *Seattle Times* editorial board has promised me they will drill down this point relentlessly.

Our problem? Take West Seattle's District 1, for example: along with the Chamber of Commerce, landlords plunked down \$73,000 to support Shannon Braddock. She came in second, behind Lisa Herbold. Do you know Lisa Herbold? She's the long-time aide to Councilmember Nick Licata – no friend of us landlords and big developers. She's for making developers pay for affordable housing. She's for tenants' rights. And she's for letting Seattle decide if it wants rent control. She's dangerous to our interests. We have to defeat Lisa Herbold.

Over in central Seattle's District 3, that crazy socialist Councilmember Kshama Sawant – leader of the affordable housing movement – did well, scoring 52% of the vote. But I'm pleased to report that her opponent Pamela Banks polled respectably – 34%. That makes the District 3 race competitive. I want to thank the 100-plus big developers, landlords, bankers, timber company executives, hotel operators, and private equity partners who gave to Banks' campaign. And a special shout-out to my friend, Alaska Airlines CEO Brad Tilden, who gave big to Banks. (Side note: Sorry, Brad, about losing your court case blocking airport living wages.)

In the at-large District 8 race, we've got our stalwart Council President, Tim Burgess. But guess what? He's in trouble! Burgess, the incumbent, only got 46% of the vote – much worse, by comparison, than Sawant – and his November opponent, Jon Grant, is former director of the



Author of the secret memo?

Tenant Union. Now if there are two words that we never want to see put together it's "tenant" and "union." But that's Grant – standing up for renters. We must defeat him. Burgess outspent Grant by \$177,000 to \$38,000 in the primary. We will all have to open up our checkbooks to ensure Grant is defeated. (Special thanks again to Brad Tilden for the \$950 Alaska Airlines contribution to Burgess.)

In District 4 (U-District and northeast Seattle), landlords and the Chamber teamed up with the Washington Restaurant Association to back Rob Johnson, donating \$74,000. Johnson came in first, but with only 33% of the vote. His opponent, Michael Maddux, got 25%. Like our other opponents, Maddux also wants to limit housing costs. This race could go either way in November.

So please – open your checkbooks! Call your CEO friends! Do whatever is necessary to defeat this populist surge for "affordable housing!" What's at stake is our profits, our ability to run our properties any damn way we like, and nothing less than our Free Enterprise Way of Life.

Sincerely yours,

Jack D. Rent III

*Jonathan Rosenblum is a member of PSARA. He has served as a consultant to City Councilmember Kshama Sawant's re-election campaign.*

# My Take on August 8

Continued from Page 3

unacceptable. PSARA will support the efforts to address the causes of this human tragedy. Institutionalized racism is a plague on our country. PSARA and all of our allies must be involved in confronting personal and institutionalized racism in every aspect of our work.

At the same time, I am deeply sorry that the message of the need to expand Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security that would assist literally tens and even hundreds of millions of people in our country did not get projected as broadly as is needed for a genuine movement to be built. I am very sad that so much work by so many people that went into the effort to project the message nationally was unable to reach people all over the country.

Our struggle will continue.

## Why should You Join PSARA?

*It's a kick-ass organization!*

*It's important. It involves everyone. Young and old.*

*Do you want to protect your Social Security, Medicare, pensions, health care regulation, hospital oversight, and coordination of services, etc., from being reduced by corporate interests in Congress, in the State Legislature, city councils and/or financial interests? If you do, join with us and make it happen.*

*PSARA is involved in everything we care about: workers' rights, environmental justice, civil rights, social justice, democracy.*

At PSARA's 2014 Summer Meeting, we asked our members to describe PSARA in a couple of sentences. The above were some of the things they said about us.

You can be part of this kick-ass organization. Just send in the handy coupon on the right.



Honoring the financial contributors to the August 8 Social Security Works rally: AFGE 3937 (Social Security workers), AFT-WA, Asian Counseling and Referral Service, EOI, IAM 751, IBEW 46 and 77, OPEIU 8, Physicians for a National Health Program, Pierce County Labor Council, PSARA, Rick Erickson, Seattle NOW, SEIU 1199NW, UFCW 21, WSARA, WA CAN!, WFSE, WSLC.

## To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund  
2800 1st Avenue, Room 262, Seattle WA 98121  
Donations are tax deductible

- Basic contribution: \$20
- Limited income/living lightly: \$15 or whatever you can afford
- Supporting: \$50  New contributor
- Sponsoring: \$100 or more  Renewing contributor

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# Meetings and Events

**PSARA Environmental Committee:** 10 a.m.- 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 3, Seattle Labor Temple, 2800 First Ave., Room 208, Seattle. All welcome as we determine how we can best contribute to the education and action necessary to address the causes and solutions to the fossil fuel-created climate crisis.

**PSARA Government Relations Committee:** 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 3, Seattle Labor Temple, Room 226, 2800 First Ave., Seattle. All welcome as we discuss taking action on important local, state, and federal issues.

**Labor Day Celebration:** Sponsored by M.L. King County Labor Council (PSARA is an affiliate), 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Monday, Sept. 7, Lower Woodland Park, Shelters 1, 2 & 3. See article on Page1 for more information.

**PSARA Tour of El Centro de la Raza:** 10 a.m. – noon, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2524 16th Ave. S., Seattle’s Beacon Hill. PSARA’s Diversity Committee is inviting all PSARA members to the tour of the Centro facility, led by Centro staff, and a discussion with staff following the tour of the history and lessons to be learned from the creation of this dynamic Seattle institution.

**Green Lake Discussion Group:** Noon to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 10, Green Lake Library, 7354 East Green Lake Drive N., Seattle. Brown bag lunch. The topic of discussion will be: *Classic Books – what are they & what are the criteria?* All are welcome. For further information contact Susan at [sjlevy.01@gmail.com](mailto:sjlevy.01@gmail.com)

**PSARA Diversity Committee:** 11 a.m. – noon, Thursday, September 17, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. Members welcome as the Committee continues planning for the next committee project.

**PSARA Executive Board Meeting:** 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, September 17, Seattle office Washington State Labor Council, 321 16 Ave. S. All members are welcome. Note location change.

