

# The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

The Monthly Publication of  
**PSARA EDUCATION FUND**  
“Uniting Generations for a Secure Future”

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The Black Panthers  
and Ike Ikeda

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## AARP Goes Sideways on Long-Term Care Legislation

By Robby Stern

The Long-Term Care Trust Act recently died in the House Rules Committee after passing with bi-partisan support in the House Health Care Committee and the House Appropriations Committee. The essence of the Long-Term Care Trust Act is to create a public fund that would provide Washington residents a total of 365 days of assistance to pay for long-term care. The benefit would be \$100 per day. It would be funded through a 0.49% payroll tax, an average of \$23.30 per month. The legislation had strong bi-partisan support and momentum and was one of PSARA's highest priorities for the 2018 session.

The AARP issued a press release that went to every legislator without any forewarning the week of February 12. Their release announced their opposition to the Long-Term Care Trust Act. The AARP was part of the coalition

known as Washingtonians for a Responsible Future, which was advocating for the legislation. Nevertheless, they gave no notice to any of the coalition partners of their intention to pull their support from the bill nor did they let any of the other advocates for the legislation know about the issues they suddenly had with the legislation. When PSARA testified in favor of the legislation in the House and Senate Health Care Committees, AARP never said a word about problems their organization might have with the legislation.

The sponsors of the legislation, Rep. Jenkins (D) and Johnson (R), were also blind-sided. They indicated that without unified coalition support, they would not move the Long-Term Care Trust Act forward for a vote by the full House this session. All the coalition partners with the exception of Lead-



Robby Stern

ing Age, the nursing home association, which supported the AARP position, were deeply disappointed by this outcome, especially after all of the hard work that went into working on the legislation.

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## 50 Years Ago in Memphis, a New Phase of Our Movement Began

By Jeff Johnson, reprinted from *The Stand*

**The time is right and it is our moral duty to work together to fulfill Dr. King's social and economic justice dream.**

At the end of a blustery and rainy winter day, two sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a malfunctioning compactor in the garbage truck they were assigned to as it headed to the Shelby County dump. Fifty years ago, on February 1, 1968, this tragic and avoidable accident marked the beginning of a 65-day sanitation

workers strike by AFSCME Local 1733, as 1,300 sanitation workers walked off the job in protest of poverty wages, inhumane working conditions, and the deaths of these two young men.

The rallying call for the strike became “I Am a Man.”

The picket signs didn't outline a set of grievances, but rather the statement “I Am a Man,” which said it all — we are all human beings, and we all deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

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Jeff Johnson

## The Retiree ADVOCATE

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## Successful PSARA Fundraiser House Concert with Rebel Voices

By Karen Richter

On February 17 more than 40 PSARA members and friends showed their love for PSARA and great music by attending a concert with Rebel Voices, featuring PSARA members Janet Stecher and Susan Lewis. Janet and Susan graciously donated their talent and time for the fundraising event.

The duo sang songs of today's rebels: union activists, gays and lesbians, pro-choice advocates, environmental activists, persons with disabilities, and those who are usually powerless: children, immigrants, and political prisoners. Rebel Voices wowed the crowd with their powerful voices, artful arrangements, and compelling lyrics. We raised our voices, joined in laughter, shed some tears, and were very glad to be among our friends and to meet new ones. In the end, we all felt inspired!

Thank you Robby Stern and Dina Burstein for welcoming us to your friendly home for this great event. Thank you Rebel Voices for the spectacular concert. And thank you to everyone who came to enjoy the music and support PSARA.

If you want to hear more from Rebel Voices, you can visit their website at [www.rebelvoices.com](http://www.rebelvoices.com)

Janet Stecher will perform with her other musical project, the Seattle Labor Chorus, on Saturday, March 10, 7-9:30 p.m., at the Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church, 7500 Greenwood Avenue N. Suggested donation is \$10-\$15, but no one will be turned away.

*Karen Richter is PSARA's Membership Co-Vice President and Chair of PSARA's Fundraising Committee.*



*Rebel Voices:  
Susan Lewis and Janet Stecher*

## We Need PSARA "Ambassadors"

Training Friday, March 16, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**W**ant to help PSARA get the word out about protecting and expanding Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid? Want to learn how to talk about retirement security to friends, neighbors, or people in your faith community?

Sign up to be a PSARA "Ambassador," and come to our training on March 16. We'll show you how to use your own stories to connect with people one-on-one. Even if you've never spoken in public and even if you don't want to be a speaker, you still talk to lots of people in your day-to-day lives, and we can show you how to speak to them heart-to-heart and convince them that together we can win the type of retirement security we want and need.

Here are the details:

**Friday, March 16, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., WSLC office, 321 16th Avenue S, Seattle.**

To reserve a place, email [educationcommittee@psara.org](mailto:educationcommittee@psara.org) or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

# What's Up with the Stock Market?

By Michael Righi

Before we go into what is real and what matters, let's clear the ground. Here are three misconceptions and a big worry:

*Misconception 1. The stock market mirrors the economy.*

No. Not if what you mean by the economy is wages, jobs, or overall health and prosperity. The stock market has been climbing relentlessly since the 2007-09 financial crisis. But wages have been barely keeping up with inflation, and job growth has been slow. I know the unemployment rate has finally come down, but we still have 8.4 million folks who have dropped out of the labor force.

*Misconception 2. It's a good thing overall if stocks have been rising.*

That depends. Corporate profits have been rising, yes. But to what extent is that because firms have been outsourcing jobs, containing wages, getting their taxes slashed, and having environmental regulations cut? Who is that good for? It's good for profits and stock prices, of course. It's our tech monopolists – Amazon, Google, Apple – whose stock has been going up the fastest as they control more and more of our economy. Who benefits from this?

Some do benefit. The wealthiest 1 percent now own over 40 percent of all wealth (and higher percentages of financial wealth, such as stocks). That is twice as much total wealth as the lowest 90 percent of the population. Most of us have not recovered since the financial crisis of 2007. So the recently rising stock market has benefited the few.

*Misconception 3. The stock market raises funds for capital investment in factories, buildings, and research and development.*

No. All that stock trading we hear about in the daily news is stock already issued and owned by the wealthy (except for a minute amount of initial offerings). Large corporations rely on

their profits to fund capital investment; they don't issue new stock. New stock would only dilute the value of what owners already have. Small and medium businesses have to go to banks to raise funds.

Not that corporations are using profit to build our economy lately: With about \$8 trillion of profits since 2012, they have put \$2 trillion into investment. The other \$6 trillion has gone into stock buybacks and dividend payments, keeping their stock prices humming. The stock market is designed to maximize the wealth and power of the most privileged people in the world, not to raise funds for capital investment.

*Big worry: The market is a bubble, and it's set to pop.*

Doubtful. There's no doubt stocks are due for a comeuppance. They have been blown up by all the buybacks, generous dividend payments, and high corporate profits. So probably we are in for what our media "friends" call a "correction." But we don't want the market to collapse even though Trump is touting it. What we need is a "correction" that delivers stable wages and incomes, not lower corporate taxes and higher profits.

I have no doubt, with the banking deregulation begun by Clinton and the weak reforms the Republicans are now busy dismantling, that there lurk somewhere within the banking system toxic assets that could cause another financial crisis. That's what happened in 2007.

## What is (NOT) to be done

*So, why the recent turmoil?* What is enlightening is to listen to the mainstream media on this question. According to them, a rise in wages could lead to higher prices (inflation), and so the Federal Reserve will likely fight that inflation with "tight money" and higher interest rates. That would slow a stock

market rise that has been dependent on very low interest rates.

Let's take that apart a little. First, there has been only one month of wage increase, and at only 3 percent. The stock traders tell us that the Fed is going to clamp down on the economy when workers' pay goes up 1 percent faster than inflation! The problem is that stock traders are probably right. This is exactly what the Fed will do, and it tells us a lot about who the economy works for. You know, workers get an "attitude problem" when labor markets are strong.

Even that 3 percent figure is bogus – the "wages" figure that is making everyone nervous includes "supervisory" workers (20 percent of the total), and nonsupervisory workers (80 percent). You guessed right, it is only the supervisors' pay that is accelerating.

Meanwhile, conservatives are once again making noise about privatizing Social Security. Recent volatility should warn us against that. Those of us with 401(k)s and IRAs have already been forced into the stock market, as pensions have been eliminated by corporate America. We should realize that that our investments are a stock price support mechanism, as our retirement savings flow into the stock market (besides all the fees paid to Wall Street).

The stock market is a playground for the wealthy, a way to concentrate wealth in even fewer hands. It is a way for the 1 percent to strip assets from the real economy – pumping up their own personal income and wealth with stock buybacks and dividends, rather than plowing corporate profit back into wages and training, or research and development, or modernized factories, or taxes to pay for infrastructure. It is as if our owning class has given up on the future and just wants to turn the economy's wealth into more private yachts and jets.

*Michael Righi is a retired economics professor and a member of PSARA.*

# Honoring Our Past, Creating Our Future

By Tom Lux

You are invited to the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association's Annual Conference and 50th Anniversary celebration! Our conference will be April 6 – 8, 2018, at the Hilton Seattle Airport and Conference Center in SeaTac.

Registration includes a Friday night social and movie co-sponsored with the United Association of Labor Educators (UALE).

This year's conference promises to be one of our best. We have two dynamic keynote speakers in Bill Fletcher Jr. and Kent Wong.

Saturday evening we have our Annual Awards Banquet, where we honor our own who are making labor history today. The featured speaker will be Nikita Oliver, organizer, educator, teaching-artist, and social justice activist.

We have 16 excellent workshops, including one by PSARA titled "Working Class Victories of Social Security and Medicare and the Struggle for Retirement Security in the Age of Trump."

This is a look at the struggles to win Social Security and Medicare, the opposition to these benefits especially since the 1970's, and what history teaches us about how to fight against the relentless attacks by the current right-wing administration.

The conference will also feature three movies: we are collaborating with UALE in premiering the new film *9to5/925 Legacy*, which looks at the 40-year history of the National Association of Working Women and its sister union, SEIU 925, based in Seattle; *Witness to Revolution* on the 1919 Seattle General Strike; and the just-released *Verona* which explores the events surrounding the Everett Massacre.

The PNLHA brings a history of struggle for labor and human rights to the forefront of our consciousness. For 50 years, we have explored regional, national, and international issues and used music, drama and re-enactments, talks, and papers to highlight labor history. In this era of disaster capital-



*The Pacific Northwest Labor History Association's 2015 Conference was also in Seattle. Photo courtesy of Tom Lux*

ism and income inequality, we especially need to remember what working people and unions have done and need to do to make the world a better place.

To attend this inspiring conference, please register online at [www.pnlha.org](http://www.pnlha.org).

For a paper registration form, email [pnlha2@gmail.com](mailto:pnlha2@gmail.com)

The PNLHA Labor History Conference is part of WSLC MayWorks 2018.

Tom Lux is PSARA's Treasurer and President of PNLHA.

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## Voluntary Simplicity: The Best Things in Life Aren't Things

In our country, materialism and consumption are encouraged by an endless stream of advertising. Could this be linked to our society's problems with mental health? Consumerism drains our time, money, and energy, which could be spent in ways that improve our sense of meaning in life and overall well-being. Voluntary simplicity is about "living deliberately" — making conscious choices about the well-being of people and the planet. It is a way to live more consistently with our values. Do you try to support local small businesses or eat local food? Changes like these can make us less dependent on multinational corporations and support our community while reducing our environmental impact.

PSARA member Cecile Andrews is the author of *The Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life* and has her doctorate in education from Stanford. She suggests practices such as paring debt and shedding possessions to enrich our everyday lives and create more time for family, friends, and community.

"Some people think simplicity is about self-deprivation or moving to the woods, but what I'm talking about is how to enjoy life more, right where you are," she writes. "Above all, it's important to come together to think in a collaborative manner and focus on the common good."

Come and join a discussion with Cecile at the PSARA-sponsored West Seattle Hot Topics event March 14. See Meetings and Events on Page 12 for details.

# Equity in Action: Black Panthers and Ike Ikeda

By Bob Shimabukuro (and Ike Ikeda)

**"Bob, Ike Ikeda is getting an award today. Can you get down there and get a photo or two to put with a short article for our newsletter?"**

---Joyce Yoshikawa, Asian Counseling and Referral Service.

I was a newcomer to Seattle, and I didn't know much about Tsuguo "Ike" Ikeda, but I learned a lot about him at the reception held in his honor. The most important lesson: Ike was a very important person to the Black Community in Seattle.

What follows is excerpted (and edited for length) from a handbook, "Ike's Principles," developed by Ikeda to guide himself and others in both nonprofit management and individual management, throughout life. Principle 10 refers to a time when Ikeda had to decide very controversial matters involving the Black Panther Party while he headed up Atlantic Street Center.

## Principle 10 MIZU (water)

"Don't fight it."

By observing the nature of water in different circumstances, I can learn there are times to choose accommodations or not fighting, and at other times it is better to fight with focus and perseverance.



Ike Ikeda in action  
(Photo: Seattle Times)



Ike Ikeda  
(Photo: Northwest Asian Weekly)

At a Law and Justice Seminar I met Elmer Dixon (a senior at Garfield High School and head of the Black Panther Party). He asked me if their Black Panther Breakfast might use our Atlantic Street Center (ASC) facilities. I first asked him for a week to think about the answer.

We had support from the national United Methodist Women's group among others, while Elmer had no financial support. The rumor was the Party was getting food from Safeway by intimidation. I had my ways and Elmer had his. It occurred to me God's observation of the two of us would show little difference in outcomes and our intent. After a discussion with the staff and board, I told Elmer to come right in. I did not "fight it," and of all the groups, the Black Panther Party was the most responsible in cleaning up after each breakfast session.

"Fight it."

ASC had a program for juvenile delinquents bound for correctional institutions. We hired a male and female couple from the Black Panther Party who were skilled in relating to the children. Subsequently, two reporters from the *Seattle Times* claimed that the

program was too expensive and suggested a Congressional investigation of the program.

The couple in charge of the program thought they should resign to protect the program from charges that Black Panthers were on ASC's payroll. They said they would not take the severance pay and would resign immediately. I knew they needed the money to continue their university studies. Because they were thinking about my welfare, I did not accept their resignation.

At times, one has to "fight it." Having Black Panther Party activists on our ASC team was a highly unusual management decision. The Panthers were "fighting" for social justice. Their methods were not mine. But I understood that fighting for social justice is a long-term struggle. Like the thousand



Seattle, 1970s: Sign advertising the Black Panther Party Free Breakfast Program

drops of water on a sheet of rock, it takes a lifetime and a variety of advocacy efforts to make a major impact.

*Ike's Principles* is available at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center, 1414 S Weller, Seattle 98114.

Don't miss the Black Panther 50th Anniversary Celebration, April 26-28. Visit their website at [seattlebpp50.com](http://seattlebpp50.com)

Bob Shimabukuro is Co-Chair of PSARA's Race/Gender Equity Committee and Associate Editor of *The Retiree Advocate*.

# PSARA Participates in Labor Summit on “Right to Work”

## When We’re United, We Win!

By Mike Andrew

On February 6, PSARA participated in a successful labor summit titled “Building Strong Unions: Winning in a Right-to-Work Environment.”

The summit was hosted by the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and brought together 500 union leaders, staffers, rank-and-file activists, and allies from around the state to learn about the challenges and opportunities presented by the Janus case, now pending at the US Supreme Court, and other right-wing attacks on our right to organize.

*Janus v. AFSCME* is a lawsuit that could take away our freedom to negotiate union security clauses and fair share requirements for all public employees. The court is expected to issue its decision near the end of June.

Unions are required by law to negotiate for everyone in the workplaces they represent and to handle their grievances. Employees who don’t want to belong to the union currently contribute to the cost of that representation through fair share fees instead of dues. Union security clauses, also known as a “union shop,” require employees covered by the contract to join the union and pay dues or make fair share contributions.

If the Supreme Court rules that public sector employees need not pay their unions for representation – and all the benefits that come with it – unions will still be stuck bargaining and enforcing contracts, but without the financial support necessary to sustain their work.

Although the Janus case is couched in terms of First Amendment free speech rights for people who don’t want to join unions, the aim is to take away the free speech and free association rights of workers who value their unions and the power unions bring them.

With the voice of organized labor silenced, the right-wing hopes to be able to push its agenda even harder and to undermine the very foundations of democracy.



A packed hall at the February 6 labor summit. (Photo: The Stand)

“When our voices are stifled, the result is income inequality, voter suppression, fear of the other, and free reign to a new set of entrepreneurs who make the robber barons of the gilded age seem tame,” WSLC President Jeff Johnson warned.

“But when our voices are united — we win!”

For PSARA the stakes couldn’t be higher. Like many community-based organizations, we rely on the organized political and economic power of working people to win the legislation and policies we need.

In a time when many private sector unions have been driven down, public sector unions remain a stronghold of real union power, at least enough power to hang on to the wages, benefits, and job security that used to be the standard in the US, and to be strong allies for organizations like PSARA.

That’s why we welcome Jeff Johnson’s call to build stronger unions and stronger communities.

“This is not a one-off summit but the beginning of a movement to win

power for working people. We will hold ourselves accountable over the next several months and years,” Johnson said. “This is a commitment for us to build stronger unions and stronger communities.”

As we go forward, regardless of what the Supreme Court decides in the Janus case, PSARA will continue to work with WSLC and other labor organizations to help build and support the power of working people.

We will continue this conversation with our members, our neighbors, and our communities. By sticking together we can continue pushing for gains in workplaces and all the other aspects of our lives.

By staying committed to each other we can win. We won’t be fooled by anti-worker organizations who care nothing about us or the challenges we face in our day-to-day lives.

PSARA members have worked hard all our lives, and we’re not about to let anyone take away our unions or the security we’ve won through them.

# New Seasons Markets Bad for Workers, Bad for Communities

## New Seasons Employees Warn Seattle About Their Boss

By Mike Andrew

“Anything that you could think of that’s bad in a business – that’s what’s happening at New Seasons,” Adrian Mendoza told the Martin Luther King County Labor Council’s February delegates meeting.

New Seasons, a Portland-based grocery chain, is trying to break into the Seattle market, with one store open in Mercer Island, another almost ready to open in Ballard, and a third planned for 23rd and Union in Seattle’s Central District.

Mendoza and several current and former New Seasons workers were in Seattle for a whirlwind tour of labor organizations and community groups, concluding with a standing-room-only community meeting at Casa Latina on February 22.

Many people at the event worried that New Seasons would add momentum to the ongoing gentrification of the Central District. In fact, that’s exactly the strategy of New Seasons’ corporate owners and of Lake Union Partners, the developers who are bringing New Seasons into the 23rd and Union site.

Monisha Harrell, Executive Director of Equal Rights Washington, who grew up near the site of the projected New Seasons store, noted the irony – Seattle’s African American community was red-lined into the Central District and is now being gentrified out.

The pricy food products New Seasons specializes in will be out of reach for most of the people who historically settled the Central District, Harrell warned. The store will shut out long-time working-class residents of the neighborhood while welcoming only the new people moving into high-priced condos and apartments.

“Something you value is not something you want to bulldoze over,” Harrell said. “If you want the community to shop at your store, it doesn’t make sense to offer products that aren’t accessible to the community.”

That’s exactly what happened at New Seasons’ Portland stores, Mendoza added.

“The store I worked at was located in what was an African American neighborhood,” they said. “People who worked at the store lived in the neighborhood, and we could walk to work. But soon the neighborhood was gentrified. No one who worked there could afford to live nearby. They had to move to the other side of town and take the train, or a bus, or a cab. And that cost extra money just to get to work.”

Mendoza said they went to work for New Seasons on the recommendation of a friend who also worked there, but

soon came to regret their decision.

“Soon after I started I saw things going wrong,” they remembered, “but I didn’t realize how bad things were going to get for me.”

*Continued on Page 10*



*New Seasons workers in Portland.  
(Photo: New Seasons Workers United)*

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## Displacement of Seattle's African American Community

According to a *Seattle Times* analysis, the African American population in the Central District, the Seattle neighborhood where black people have historically lived, has been declining for decades and is projected to decline even further.

The numbers tell the story:

In 1970, some 73 percent of the population in the Central District were African American.

By 2000, the number was down to 36 percent.

By 2014, it was only 19 percent.

By 2019, the number is projected to be 14 percent.

If the trend holds, by 2025 the black population could be down to less than 10 percent.

Most of the newcomers displacing African Americans are white (62 percent by 2019), but 24 percent are people of other backgrounds, especially Latinx.

## How the "Millenium Migration" from Latin America Shaped the US for the Better, Part IV

By Peter Costantini, Reprinted from *Foreign Policy in Focus*

### Paths out of the desert

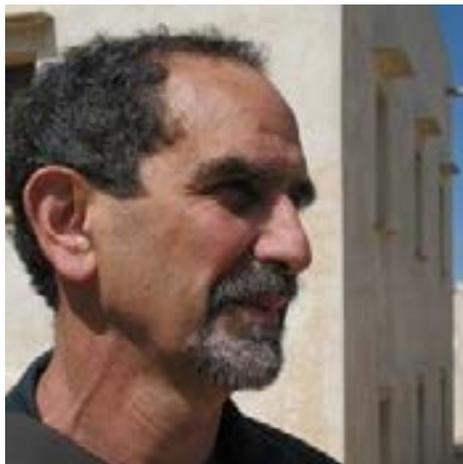
At this point, the old grand-bargain approach to immigration reform has failed twice in Congress. All it achieved was to fortify the immigration police state and gulag. Perhaps, though, its demise will give us a clearer view of more promising paths out of the desert. The policies that can implement real changes will be challenging to craft, but the goals are already clear.

The most urgent priority should be to grant safe status and clear roads to citizenships to the millions of humans without papers who have settled into lives, jobs, and communities here. We will need to develop sensible ways to facilitate the reunification of current immigrants with their mixed-status and transnational families. By running the gauntlet for all these years to become productive and valued community members, they have already demonstrated their commitment to their new home.

To give them security, we will have to thoroughly dismantle Juan Crow's police state and for-profit gulag, decriminalizing and demilitarizing immigration.

Another mass immigration from the south on the scale of the Millennium Migration is very unlikely to recur. Yet we will need to continue to find ways to responsibly welcome new immigrants from all over, guaranteeing their rights and respecting their economic needs in tandem with those of workers already here. This will involve allowing migrants to move easily back and forth across the border in response to exigencies on both sides. In the long term, a human-centered economy will also require providing much stronger safety nets for all, and resources for resuscitating deindustrialized and depressed communities.

With legal and economic systems in place that correspond to realities on the ground, immigration enforcement



*Peter Costantini*

should be de-prioritized in favor of immigrant integration. This should enable the country to sharply reduce border and internal enforcement budgets and personnel. These should be refocused away from persecuting ordinary immigrants and refugees, and onto protecting border areas from genuine threats such as organized crime. Beyond the border, we should support immigrants' "right to stay home" through cooperation with efforts to raise standards of living and protect human rights in immigrant-sending countries.

Today, the streets are still not paved with gold. We expected the Millennium

migrants to pick our crops, build our houses, and clean our hotel rooms. The newcomers did all of that and much more. Now many millions of them are raising their families here, and have sunk tenacious roots. They've paid their passage in sweat, tears, and sometimes blood. Their elbow grease has helped build their communities and the country as a whole. They've earned a freeway to citizenship for themselves and their families.

As to Trump's wall, Mexican-American comedian George Lopez said that when people ask him how he feels about it, he tells them, "You know what? We'll get over it."

At a recent gathering of immigrants, a mother was crying: "I have two daughters who are Dreamers. What's going to happen to them?" A friend was consoling: "You're not alone. We're all in this together." Then a man in a cowboy hat and a Pancho Villa moustache stood up and chanted: *Aquí estamos y no nos vamos, y si nos sacan, nos regresamos.* "Here we are, and we're not leaving, and if they kick us out, we'll come right back."

*Peter Costantini is a PSARA member. This is the final part of a longer article first published in Foreign Policy in Focus.*

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## W. E. B. Dubois Said It

**"To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships."**

*W. E. B. Dubois (February 23, 1868 - August 27, 1963)*



# 50 Years Ago in Memphis, a New Phase of Our Movement Began

*Continued from Page 1*

Dr. Martin Luther King, against the wishes of his staff, took a detour from his organizing around the Poor People's Campaign to come to the assistance of the sanitation workers and the people of Memphis. He found such inspiration, hope, and unity in the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis that it became emblematic of what the Poor People's Campaign was all about:

"You are doing many things here in this struggle... You are demanding that this city will respect the dignity of labor... All labor has dignity... the person who picks up the garbage is as essential to the health of society as the physician.

"You are reminding, not only Memphis, but you are reminding the nation that it is a crime for people to live in this rich nation and receive starvation wages!

"Do you know that most of the poor people of our country are working every day. And they are making wages so low that they cannot begin to function in the mainstream of the economic life of our nation.

"You are here to demand that Memphis will see the poor.

"If America does not use her vast resources of wealth to end poverty and make it possible for all of God's children to have the basic necessities of life, she too is going to hell!"

The new phase of the movement and struggle for freedom was to end racism, poverty, and to end the Vietnam War.

Dr. King noted that "now our struggle is for genuine equality which means economic equality. For we know that it isn't enough to integrate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?"

A complete restructuring of our economy is what Dr. King was talking about. More jobs, decent wages, union representation, affordable housing, and a guaranteed income was what was needed. And of course, that made Dr. King more dangerous to capitalism and the social order than ever before. All of this would cost money. All of this was about redistributing income and wealth. To top it off,



he suggested that we not waste more money on an unjustified and immoral war and use that money for constructive humanitarian purposes.

Of course, 50 years ago on April 4, as Dr. King returned to Memphis for a second march in support of the sanitation workers, he was slain by an assassin's bullet while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel.

The true soul of America broke that day.

While the Poor People's Campaign march that Dr. King planned still happened in June, 1968, and the poor erected an encampment named "Resurrection City" on the National Mall, riots and civil unrest captured most of the news in the spring and summer of 1968, as solutions to the grinding reality of systemic racism and poverty seemed now to be on what Dr. King had once referred to as the "outskirts of hope."

A couple of weeks after Dr. King's murder, the city of Memphis signed an agreement with AFSCME Local 1733 which included a wage increase, grievance procedures, the right to join the union without fear of retaliation, non-discrimination language, the right to promotions to higher paying jobs, the right to deduct union dues from their checks, and most importantly, a recognition from the workers' perspective that union membership was a basic right in America.

The victory in Memphis created an opening for AFSCME to organize tens of thousands of public employees throughout the South.

The goals of the Poor People's Campaign have yet to be fulfilled, the right, funded by the Koch brothers and other billionaires, has spent 40 years building a network of organizations, communications networks, language, and policies to silence the voice of unions and people of color. However, resistance and movement building has begun again through Black Lives Matter, Our Revolution, Indivisible, the Women's March, the climate justice movement, and the new Poor People's Campaign co-chaired by Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis. For more information go to [www.poorpeoplescampaign.org](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org)

The time is right, and it is our moral duty to work together to fulfill Dr. King's social and economic justice dream.

Note: Much of the thinking behind this piece was inspired by a forthcoming book published by WW Norton & Company, *To The Promised Land*, by Michael K. Honey. Michael is a good friend who is a professor of ethnic, labor, and gender studies at the University of Washington Tacoma. He has written a brilliant piece that traces the evolution of Dr. King's thinking on economic and social justice. The book will be released on April 3, 2018. I suggest that you put an order in with your local bookstore. You will not be disappointed.

*Jeff Johnson is President of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and a member of PSARA. The Stand is the online newspaper of the WSLC.*

# New Seasons Markets Bad for Workers, Bad for Communities

Continued from Page 7

Among the abuses Mendoza had to endure was being assaulted by a straight white employee who, rather than being disciplined, was promoted soon after to a management position. When Mendoza complained, he was accused of being “racist towards white people.”

Mendoza was eventually fired on trumped up charges after they became one of the leaders of a campaign for better conditions at work.

Another fired employee, Terra Bosart, worked for New Seasons for 12 years before being fired for leading the organizing at her store.

The company’s promotional materials describe it in glowing terms. A New Seasons store is “a happy place” where management is “firmly committed to environmental stewardship, to giving back to our community, and to providing a progressive workplace where our staff thrives,” the company website claims.

The reality is much different, Bosart said, especially after New Seasons was acquired by Endeavour Capital, a venture capital outfit, in 2010. After former Starbucks exec Wendy Collie was installed as CEO in 2012, the company became even more corporate and started to crack down on employees.

“When I started [the glowing description] was true,” Bosart recalled. “There was a time when working for New Seasons was a badge of pride. No more. They kept saying the words but they didn’t deliver the reality.”

The situation became particularly bad for LGBT workers, Bosart says.

“[Before Endeavour Capital took over] I was asked to help facilitate trainings on transgender issues for managers and staff,” Bosart says. “And management seemed genuinely pleased to know how to relate to their Transgender employees.”

“After Endeavour Capital came in, management became much more antagonistic. People noticed the difference in how management treats them.



Fired New Seasons Workers: Adrian Mendoza (left) and Terra Bosart.

“I think about it and I’m so angry, because of all our transgender employees who are now trapped in dead-end jobs where they’re never allowed to succeed because they’re different.”

Another New Seasons worker, Peter Szczepanek, added that Endeavour Capital has financial ties to Murdock Charitable Trust, which funds right-wing and anti-LGBT groups.

“I’m extremely disappointed,” Szczepanek said about New Seasons’ links to Murdock Trust. “No, I’m angry. Look, I’m bisexual. I moved from Michigan to be in a place where I could feel comfortable being who I am.”

“To find out that their profits are funneled into homophobic hate groups... Anger, for sure.”

All agreed that even straight workers became victims of short-staffing and draconian sick leave policies.

“There were 240 employees when I started [in 2005],” Bosart said. “There were only 160 when I was fired. People have to do the work of three or four people – but they’re not paid like three or four people.”

Employees who call in sick accumulate demerits, Mendoza said, and eventually have to choose between going to work sick or getting fired. One of their friends was reduced to tears, they said, when a manager told her “You can

go home because you’re sick, but you’ll be fired, or you can stay and finish your shift.”

Szczepanek still works for New Seasons and says that the company’s attempts to intimidate employees have increased as in-store organizing has gained traction.

“It’s all scare tactics and bullying,” he says. “Most people are quietly supportive, but they don’t want to risk their jobs, so they feel they can’t be actively involved.”

In spite of the intimidation, employees have achieved some successes. The company recently agreed to raise base wages by 50 cents per hour and to provide paid parental leave. Collie has resigned as head of the company.

Three complaints have also been filed with the NLRB (National Labor Relations Board), the federal agency charged with enforcing labor laws. One charges New Seasons with illegally firing Bosart. A second is based on the firing of Mendoza. The third alleges that managers are interrogating and coercing workers to deter them from organizing.

“New Seasons will tell you everything you want to hear,” Bosart warned. “But listen to the workers. Listen to the people who know what they’re like.”

## AARP Goes Sideways on Long-Term Care Legislation

Continued from Page 1

The appetite for the legislation that legislators demonstrated from both sides of the aisle was greater than anticipated. No doubt the reason for the legislative support was that the lawmakers understood that all of us are facing the problem of paying for long-term care. They viewed the Long-Term Care Trust Act as a good solution.

The AARP cited four concerns:

- They objected to the training requirements for family caregivers.
- They objected to the application of Medicaid rules that beneficiaries need assistance with three or more activities of daily living.
- The benefit was not portable outside Washington State.
- There is "confusion" (their word) about the impact on people receiving Medicare long-term care services.

However, at no point during the process of introducing the legislation, in hearings on the legislation, in coalition meetings, or prior to issuing their press release did the AARP raise these concerns so that the coalition partners could work to try and arrive at legislative language that could address those concerns.

The Washingtonians for a Responsible Future Coalition will work during the period between the 2018 and 2019 sessions to arrive at language that will try to unify all the parties. This will create the opportunity to find out if AARP was being forthright in their stated reasons for opposition. It should be remembered that: (1) AARP is the 900-pound gorilla of retiree organizations, and (2) AARP is a primary vendor of private insurance. The mechanism for funding the long-term care benefits of the legislation would be a publicly managed trust fund based on the model of Social Security and Medicare, which are publicly administered social insurance programs.

The PSARA Education Fund intends to sponsor educational forums in various locations throughout the region to build support for the Long-Term Care Trust Act, a piece of legislation desperately needed to help Washington residents pay for long term care.

# A Fitting End to GiveBIG Days

The Seattle Foundation announced that May 9, 2018, will be the last GiveBIG Day sponsored by the Foundation. The PSARA Education Fund, which publishes the *Retiree Advocate*, has come to depend on GiveBIG Day as a significant source of donations. After 2018, the Education Fund must develop new methods of raising the annual donations needed to assist in covering the cost of publishing and mailing the *Retiree Advocate*, currently \$19,000 a year.

In the next two issues of the *Retiree Advocate*, we will be asking our readers to please consider a significant donation (what is significant for each of us varies) for the 2018 GiveBIG Day. This will assist the Education Fund to enter 2019 with decent reserves.

The PSARA Executive Board and PSARA Education Fund Board will issue a challenge to our members in the April *Advocate* to match what these 35 leaders have pledged to donate. We do not have wealthy donors, so we rely on quantity of donations to reach our \$15,000 goal for GiveBig in 2018.

Please consider what you can do financially, over and above membership dues, to support this newsletter and the other work of the PSARA Education Fund. We want to continue being a leader in educating and advocating for the preservation and expansion of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other policies that allow all people to live their senior years with dignity and respect. We want to further our organization's commitment to and work for racial and gender equity and economic and climate justice. We want to do our part in organizing the resistance to Trump and his supporters while also helping to build a caring and economically just community for all people.

If you decide you prefer to send a check to the PSARA Education Fund for GiveBig, rather than go through the GiveBIG website (which will be a credit card transaction), please note GiveBIG on the memo line of your check so we can track the results of the campaign.

## To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund  
2800 1<sup>st</sup> 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, March 1, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**PSARA Government Relations Committee:** 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 1, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All welcome.

**Green Lake Discussion Group:** Noon - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, March 8, Green Lake Branch, Seattle Public Library, 7364 E Green Lake Dr. N, Seattle. Topic: *Gender Identity - Understanding the Spectrum*. Explore this complex topic in a conversation facilitated by Rebecca Crichton from Northwest Center for Creative Aging. Brown bag lunch.

**PSARA Southend Committee:** 12:30 p.m., Thursday, March 8, Burien Library,

400 SW 152nd St., Burien. Join us for lunch before the meeting at Elliott Bay Brewhouse & Pub, 255 SW 152nd St., Burien. Please arrive for lunch by 11:15 a.m. All are welcome as we plan PSARA events in South King County.

**PSARA Fundraising Committee:** 10:30 a.m. - Noon, Monday, March 12, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**PSARA Education Committee:** 2 p.m., Tuesday, March 13, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes:** Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 14, Southwest Library, 9010 35th Ave SW, Seattle, (at SW Henderson). Topic: *Voluntary Simplicity* with Cecile Andrews (see the article on Page 4). Brown bag lunch.

**PSARA Race/Gender Equity Committee:** 11 a.m. – Noon, Thursday, March 15, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S., Seattle. All are welcome.

**PSARA Executive Board Meeting:** 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, March 15, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. All are welcome.

**PSARA “Ambassadors” Training:** 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Friday, March 16, Washington State Labor Council office, 321 16th Ave. S, Seattle. Learn how to use your own stories to talk about PSARA's work. All are welcome, but please RSVP to [educationcommittee@psara.org](mailto:educationcommittee@psara.org) or call the PSARA office, 206-448-9646.

