

PSARA Stands With Black Lives Matter

(Photo: Garet Munger)



On June 12, 75-80 PSARA members braved a downpour to attend a PSARA vigil in support of the Black Lives Matter movement on East Green Lake Way N. Joining us were friends and family, and even neighbors from the surrounding area.

Because PSARA is committed to a secure retirement for all people, we absolutely oppose the systemic racism and violence embedded in the institutions of our country, especially the police and law enforcement agencies. As one participant put it, “We want young black men to live long enough to retire.”

But police are not the only instruments of violence. We also realize that wealth inequality and lack of access to healthcare, healthy foods, affordable housing, living wages – all the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow – do ongoing violence to communities of color.

Watch for future actions in your neighborhood.

Health Care for All: Why We Need It Now More Than Ever

A Webinar sponsored by Indivisible Sequim and
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA)

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically demonstrated why we must achieve health care coverage for all residents of the United States. The webinar will discuss how we got to where we are now and how we can achieve the health care system we need.

Sunday, July 12, 2 p.m.

Presenters include:

David Loud, PSARA Executive Board, Co-Chair, Health Care is a Human Right WA Campaign

Vicki Lowe, Executive Director of the American Indian Health Commission for Washington State (AIHC). Leader in Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Community

Steve Bauck, Outreach VP, PSARA

*To attend this webinar **you must register.***

If you already get regular emails from PSARA, we will email a registration link in early July. If you are not on PSARA’s email list and want the link, send your email address to organizer@psara.org

The Retiree **ADVOCATE**

Published monthly by the PSARA Education Fund, 321
16th Avenue S, Seattle, Washington, 98144. Phone
206-254-4910.

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The Barbed Wire

By Barbara Flye



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We Remember Imogene Williams (1931-2020)

By Tim Wheeler

Imogene Williams, a gentle soul with an iron will to win progressive change, died peacefully at her home on May 24, surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

In her years as a political activist, she was arrested for worthy causes dozens of times. She door-belled for progressive candidates in Seattle including for Rep. Pramila Jayapal, the incumbent US Congresswoman from Seattle, and for Kshama Sawant, the Seattle Council member, an avowed socialist.

She was the champion signature-gatherer in the campaign to place a measure on the ballot giving Washington a progressive state income tax, relief from the regressive sales tax.

She was an active member of Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) serving on PSARA's Executive Board. When PSARA's co-founder, Will Parry, was grieving the death of his wife, Louise, Imogene consoled him, and eventually took him into her home. They lived together, inseparable companions, until Parry died at age 93 in 2017.

She was born Imogene Bryant in Manila, the Philippines, October 20, 1931, daughter of William Cheney Bryant and Alice Franklin Bryant. As war clouds gathered, Imogene was sent back to the US to live with relatives. But the Japanese imprisoned her parents for the duration of the war.

In 1945, Imogene, 13, was reunited with her parents. They moved to Seattle, living with her grandfather, John Eddy Franklin in the family home on Capital Hill. Her mother became a legendary anti-war spokeswoman and an advocate of equality and social justice. Alice Franklin Bryant, as a Democrat, ran for US Congress and once against Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, always speaking out for world peace, equality, and justice.



Imogene as we'll always remember her

Imogene followed in her mother's footsteps while earning a degree in biochemistry, Magna Cum Laude, at the University of Washington. Doing research in a UW lab she met biologist Harvey Dean Williams. They married and she gave birth to four children, all surviving: Ruth Alice, Rachel Eileen, Loren Dean, and Rebecca Grace Williams.

The family moved to Corvallis, Oregon, where Imogene earned an elementary teaching certificate. In 1971, the family moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where Imogene taught third grade in a public school. She joined the New Democratic Party and worked in support of refugees.

After retirement, the family moved back to the family home in Seattle where she plunged into grassroots political work. She did not drive, so she rode public transit everywhere. She became an advocate for transit workers, joining them on their picket lines and speaking at their rallies.

She was a member of the Seattle First Baptist Church and sang in the choir. When the Seattle Unity Club of the Communist Party could not find a place to meet, Imogene arranged for them to meet monthly in the Peacemaker Room at First Baptist Church. A portrait of her mother, Alice Franklin Bryant, hung on the wall.

She was arrested repeatedly at Chase Bank branches protesting their investments in coal, oil, and gas corporations. Once, Seattle police officers refused to arrest Imogene, explaining that at age 87 she was too old. When they weren't looking, Imogene crept into the paddy wagon to join her younger brothers and sisters. She explained, "What would my mother say if I never got arrested." Her last arrest was on the railroad tracks in Vancouver, Washington, in September 2019. She was blocking a coal train as part of her struggle to save the planet from global warming.

Tim Wheeler is a member of PSARA's Executive Board.

Cancel Global South Debt!

By Michael Righi

The coronavirus, which originated and spread rapidly in richer countries, is causing economic devastation for the poorer countries of the Global South. Prices and exports of coffee, flowers, minerals, foods, and oil have collapsed. Global brands have cancelled clothing orders. Speculative capital has fled for the financial safety of New York and London. Lockdowns have destroyed employment, just as in the North. Labor migration, with remittances back home, has been shut down.

There is a history here, which we need for context. The history begins with slavery and colonialism, the pillage of the labor and resources of Africa and elsewhere. Protestors around the world are toppling statues of racists and colonialists, a welcome response to official amnesia.

Neo-Colonialism

More recently, in the 1970's, "neo"colonialism took an additional form – debt. Western banks and financiers poured money into what was then called the "Third World" to take advantage of higher rates of return. Global recession hit in the early 1980's, the US Federal Reserve hiked interest rates, and poorer countries' debts ballooned. Their exports fell, currencies collapsed, and foreign capital left. Their debts became unpayable.

In stepped the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with new loans to Third World countries so that the banks could be paid back. Yes, the banks were bailed out, mostly US banks, if that sounds familiar.

Countries still had to pay back the debt. Before we go further, let's be clear about the "morality" of debt. Western capitalist morality is that debt must be paid back, period. Whereas, if you think about this, lenders should take at least equal responsibility. But lenders, in our

hierarchical system of rich and poor, have power.

In this case, the IMF and the US forced programs of "structural adjustment" onto poorer countries. IMF and US economists required countries to adopt policies of austerity, to cut back on spending, in particular social programs. They had to privatize any government-run businesses, and base their economies on exporting commodities and low-wage goods to the industrial North.

Forty years later, we see how well that has worked out. The Third World is now the Global South. With a few exceptions, countries are still poor and they are even more in debt.

The COVID crisis spotlights the public health damage done to poor countries by four decades of debt-enforced austerity. Over the last several years, 15 Sub-Saharan African countries have spent more paying debt to overseas creditors than they did on doctors and clinics. Germany and Italy have 40 doctors per 10,000 people, African countries on average have one. Sierra Leone has .2 per 10,000; the IMF told them in the 1990's to cut public employees and their pay by 28%.

The 46 poorest countries spend 8% of their GDP on debt service; they spend 1.8% on public health. The debt developing countries owe to the IMF, to rich countries, to private banks, and to hedge funds and speculators amounts close to \$3 trillion, to be paid over the next 18 months. This dwarfs any so-called "aid" they get. Thirteen trillion dollars has been, on balance, sucked out of poor countries since 1980.

Debt Cancellation Yes, But Not Enough

There have been some weak responses to this looming COVID-caused debt crisis. The IMF has suspended six months of payment for the poorest countries. Rich countries have post-

poned some debt payments (postponed, not cancelled). But private funds refuse to cancel or lower any debt. The world's financial elite is anxious to get back to "business as usual."

But business as usual is killing people. UN agencies are predicting increased hunger, poverty, and famine. Cancelling the debt of Global South countries is a start on what is needed. Debt cancellation must include the debt of private banks and hedge funds and other speculators. Otherwise it would just amount to another bailout of the 1%. We must save lives, not pay private creditors.

But more is needed. If we can find trillions to rescue Northern corporations, we can certainly do the same for the Global South, at a Marshall Plan scale, to help fund national public health systems, purchase therapeutic drugs and vaccines, and support workers and economies. This is NOT charity; it would be a start on a road to justice and restitution. It should be "no strings attached." No more racist "poor – especially African – countries cannot manage their own lives" excuses.

All this can be funded by taxes on global corporations that are profiting from crisis and dodging taxes by "moving" to tax havens. Crack down on tax havens, and institute a Corona excess-profits tax. The IMF could issue new money, just like the US Federal Reserve does. The US is blocking this, because some of it might go to Iran. We need a global reset on how the world's financial system works.

Obscene levels of inequality are wired into the rules of globalization. COVID, just as in the US, is exposing this injustice and racism. Disasters are key moments to reimagine a more just global economic order. This is a moment for progressive internationalism. Let us not allow it to pass.

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

Millennials and Social Security: Part 1

By Linda Peterson

This is Part 1 of a 2-part article. Part 1 explains why preserving and expanding Social Security is especially important for millennials and younger generations. Part 2 will explore the implications that various reform proposals have for younger generations, and why we need to fight hard for the future.

How often have you heard a young friend say, "Oh, I know Social Security isn't going to be there for me when I retire." Or worse yet, "There'll be nothing left after the boomer generation gets through with it anyway."

Wall Street and their allies have spent decades trying to convince younger people that Social Security is in crisis and won't be there for them. But the truth is, this national insurance program has been operating successfully for 85 years, and as long as people are employed it will go on operating.

Furthermore, Social Security is likely to be far more important to millennials (and to the even younger Gen Z) than it is to current retirees.

First, consider that few millennials have traditional retirement pensions from an employer anymore -- if they even have an employer in this increasingly part-time and gig economy.

Some may have employer-sponsored 401(k) savings plans, where you (and sometimes your employer as well) may make contributions to a retirement savings fund, and you are on your own to make those savings last through your retirement years. Nationwide, the amounts people have saved in these plans are pitifully inadequate -- and highly skewed toward those at the highest income levels. A major recession, such as we had in 2008-2009 and are having right now, can reduce the value of any savings by half.

Second, consider the economy inherited by these young people. It is one with stagnating wage growth, increasingly characterized by part-time or gig



Linda Peterson

jobs with less predictable paychecks and no benefits. Who even has a long-time employer anymore?

Third, this is a generation already facing historically staggering levels of education debt.

And finally, at the same time, the costs of housing, healthcare, and raising a family have been skyrocketing.

How is it possible to save for retirement? The millennial generation is likely to be far more dependent on Social Security than previous generations.

Some of our friends have said they expect to just keep working. But that's easy to say when you're young and feeling healthy and invincible. Let's face it, in every generation a significant number will become disabled, whether by an accident or illness. Others will have to drop out of the labor force to care for a disabled family member. Still others will get laid off or essentially "pushed out" of the labor force as they get older, forced to retire years before they had planned.

Social Security is likely to be the only income that many millennials will have in their old age. It is also the only death and disability insurance that many will have to protect their children should they die. It must not be forgotten that Social Security is our nation's largest children's assistance program, providing survivor benefits that every year help lift 6.4 million children out of poverty.

Luckily, the fear about Social Security "going broke" is overblown, stoked by decades of right-wing think tanks' attempts to undermine confidence in a program they hate (socialism, you know).

The truth is, as long as people are working, their payroll taxes will continue to fund Social Security, and the program will continue to pay out benefits. It's true that after 2035, if Congress does nothing, payouts will only be about 80% of what's been promised. But that gap is a relatively small one, which Congress can fix as they have fixed issues with the program in the past. There are bills in both the Senate and the House that would not only fix the gap, but allow for expansion of benefits for current and future generations.

But the right-wing think tanks would have people believe that we can't afford it, that the gap can't be fixed without cutting benefits. They also call the benefits "entitlements," and say cuts are needed to rein in federal spending. This despite the fact that Social Security is a self-funded program that we pay for out of our payroll taxes, and doesn't contribute a dime to the deficit. They imply that current retirees are being greedy to the detriment of future generations.

Again, the truth is quite different. The Social Security actuaries anticipated the wave of baby boom retirees, and the 1983 amendments to the

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S'Klallam's "Healing Campus" on Track Despite Racism

By Tim Wheeler and Lisa Dekker

"Klallam" refers to four indigenous Native American communities. S'Klallam means the Strong People. There are four bands of S'Klallam, two of which - the Jamestown S'Klallam and the Lower Elwha Klallam - are here on the North Olympic Peninsula. Despite many challenges, both groups are an important part of what is now Clallam County. But right now the Jamestown S'Klallams are the target of a vicious attack, because they stepped forward to build a "healing" clinic in Sequim for victims of the opioid epidemic.

Over the years the Klallam have contributed much to the region. The Lower Elwha Klallam spearheaded the successful drive to remove two dams on the Elwha River and restore salmon in that river's headwaters. In addition, they generously share use of their beautiful Cultural Center in Port Angeles with many local non-profits.

The Jamestown S'Klallam have been key partners in restoring salmon and steelhead in the Dungeness River. In 2002, when Virginia Mason Health Care left Sequim, it was the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe that agreed to provide primary care to the community, and their clinics now serve over 17,000 residents of the area, the majority non-native. They are in fact Clallam County's second largest employer.

But racism, injustice, and collective amnesia have a long history here. In 1855 the S'Klallam Tribe entered into the Point No Point Treaty with the United States, but because they resisted removal to the reservation at Skokomish, they were stripped of their tribal recognition. They remained in their traditional areas, and in 1874 the S'Klallams from the village at Dungeness purchased 210 acres of land, establishing Jamestown. In other words, the tribal members had to buy back land that had been theirs from time immemorial. For the next 126 years, the S'Klallams fought for, and finally regained, tribal recognition in 1981.

In 2003, the Lower Elwha Klallam peoples were disregarded when the Washington DOT began a multi-million dollar project in Port Angeles to construct concrete pontoons for the Hood Canal Bridge. Almost immediately, excavation unearthed what had been a Klallam village, Tse-whit-zen, and a burial ground with the remains of hundreds of adults and children. For months, the Tribe endured the anguish of seeing the bones of their ancestors dug up, as they battled to stop the desecration of this sacred site. Despite the outright fury from many locals who saw only dollar signs, the Tribe prevailed, and construction ended. Bulldozing was at last replaced by careful removal and proper re-burial, but it has been difficult for the Klallam people to forget the pain and hurt they suffered.

In 2019 when the Jamestown S'Klallam announced plans to build an outpatient opioid clinic, a group calling itself "Save Our Sequim" (SOS), generated hostility against the clinic and the Tribe. Despite the fact that this MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) Clinic was planned in collaboration with the Olympic Medical Center, Jefferson Health Care, and Peninsula Behavioral Health, and has the support of law enforcement and most elected officials, SOS accused the Tribe of "profit greed." SOS flooded the community with yard signs proclaiming "No Regional MAT Clinic." In addition, SOS portrayed Sequim as a sort of unblemished retirement "Mayberry," while vilifying those struggling with addiction, the poor, and the homeless.

At one point the SOS Facebook page was filled with racist comments so abusive that a Tribal leader told Sequim Mayor William Armacost that Tribal members "feel unwelcome in a town that bears a S'Klallam name." Things



Tim Wheeler and Lisa Dekker

came to a head when three women came before the City Council and displayed several comments from the SOS Facebook page, to show the Council and the public just how ugly the racist attacks had become. The group's leader, Jodi Wilke, has since denounced these kinds of comments, most likely because she has filed to run for the State legislature against Democratic incumbent, and clinic supporter, Steve Tharinger. And in early May, Jon Gibson, the owner of a local manufactured housing community, helped to fund both an anti-MAT ad in the Sequim Gazette, and a lawsuit against the City of Sequim to block the Healing Campus. Mr. Gibson has supported right-wing causes and is connected with the Conservative Action Project.

Because so much anger and aggression was also directed at the Sequim City Council and staff, responsible governance was under threat. In response, a group of us formed "Voices for Health & Healing," a grassroots organization to support the MAT clinic, the Tribe, and the city staff, and to promote constructive solutions to health care, food insecurity, and homelessness on the Peninsula.

Despite the obstacles, the clinic application has passed many hurdles, and we hope to report that construction for this much-needed treatment center will begin soon.

Tim Wheeler and Lisa Dekker are members of PSARA's Executive Board and our Clallam County organizing committee.

Whether Social Security is Expanded or Cut is a Matter of Values

By Nancy Altman

During the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic collapse, Social Security benefits are continuing to arrive on schedule, providing certainty in an uncertain world. Social Security's \$2.9 trillion surplus is large enough to ensure sufficient revenue to continue to pay benefits in full and on time, no matter how long the current crisis lasts.

Even if the economy continues to crater and one out of four workers find themselves unemployed for the next twelve months, the only change will be that, instead of being able to pay all benefits in full and on time until 2035, Social Security will pay all benefits in full and on time until 2034!

Congress should expand Social Security, while requiring the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share, so that benefits can continue to be paid into the next century and beyond.

Expanding Social Security is a solution to the nation's looming retirement income crisis, which is worsening as a result of the current economic collapse. It is a solution to rising income and wealth inequality, also being made worse by today's crisis. And it is a response to institutional racism, which is currently the subject of a nationwide, much-needed conversation.

That conversation has appropriately focused on police brutality against African Americans. But reforming the police and increasing physical security is only the first step. African Americans disproportionately work in low-wage, physically demanding jobs with few if any pensions or other benefits. African Americans, on average, are more likely to become disabled, to die prematurely (leaving dependent children who qualify for Social Security survivor benefits) and to retire early. For all these reasons, while Social Security is crucial for everyone's economic security, it is especially important for African Americans and other people of color.

Whether Social Security is expanded or cut is a matter of values, not affordability. When looking at the long-term, the next three-quarters of a century and beyond, the pandemic will be absorbed, as the Great Recession was. At the end of the 21st century, in 2095, Social Security will cost considerably less, as a percentage of GDP, than Germany, Austria, France, and most other industrialized countries spend on their counterpart programs today.

What Congress absolutely should not do is use the intertwining crises we now face as cover to undermine Social Security. The Trump administration has floated a so-called "Eagle Plan," which would give individuals cash now, but only if they agreed to forfeit a portion of their future Social Security benefits. It would force desperate families, terrified of going without food or being thrown out of their homes, to choose between starving today or working until they die.

Just as alarmingly, some politicians are using this time of economic and public health threats to obscure their efforts to cut Social Security behind closed doors. Sen. Mitt Romney's (R-UT) TRUST Act is a dangerous scheme to fast-track cuts to Social Security out of public view. Unfortunately, 60 members of the House of Representatives have signed a letter calling for his reckless plan to be enacted.

After hearing from constituents, one signer of the letter, Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA), has publicly clarified that he supports expanding, not cutting Social Security and opposes acting behind closed doors. All of us should push all of our representatives to make the same public declaration — and then follow it up with action!

There's also the threat of slashing Social Security's dedicated funding. Donald Trump is obsessed with cutting what he calls the "payroll tax" — FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act),



Nancy Altman

the premiums workers pay for the Social Security benefits they earn.

As a response to the coronavirus crisis, cutting Social Security's dedicated revenue is vastly inferior to other sources of relief and stimulus. It's slow, inefficient, and fails to get money into the pockets of those who need it most. The only reason to support this policy over better targeted, more efficient measures is if your true goal is to undermine Social Security and its self-funded status.

These efforts to reduce Social Security's dedicated funding and cut benefits behind closed doors are much more worrying for Social Security's future than the current pandemic and economic downturn. Yet so long as we stay vigilant, we can defeat these attempts to sneak through devastating cuts to Social Security in the middle of racial justice uprisings, a global pandemic, and an economic crisis.

If we work together, we are collectively strong enough to demand that our government expand – not cut – Social Security.

Nancy Altman is President of Social Security Works and an appointee to the Social Security Advisory Board.

What Happens When It's Over: What COVID-19 Is Teaching Us

When the crisis is over, all of our lives depend on things not going back to normal.

By Dorothy Van Soest

The wake of death and destruction in COVID-19's path leaves us reeling. As I write this (May 7th), deaths in the US are estimated to top 100,000 with confirmed cases already over 1.2 million. Washington State has had over 891 deaths and 16,231 confirmed cases with more than half of the deaths (480) in King County. Every day there are new cases and deaths with experts fearing the actual numbers could be higher, perhaps by tens of thousands, than those reported.

As time goes on, with numbers that are staggering and the human suffering they embody unfathomable, there are calls to open businesses and get life back to the way it was. A desire to return to normal is natural but, given what we know about the consequences of the pandemic, going back to the same exact systems we had in place before should give us pause. COVID-19 is teaching us many things that point to a need to rethink our structures and reimagine our society. Here are some of them.

COVID-19 is shining a spotlight on racial inequality. While we are all facing a dangerous situation now, people of color faced a dangerous situation before the pandemic due to inequities such as poverty (54% of the 2.9 million poor or low-income people in Washington State are people of color), criminal injustice (40% of the 19,104 people imprisoned in our state are people of color, almost six times the rate of whites), health disparities (Black people are 1.5 times and Hispanic people 2.5 times more likely to be uninsured than whites).

COVID-19 is worsening racial inequality even more. It is hitting people of color hardest. In King County data, Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders and Hispanic people are testing positive at four times the rate of white and Asian people, Black people at twice the rate of whites. In Arizona and New Mexico

the coronavirus is taking an astoundingly disproportionate toll on Native Americans while in most other states they're not even being counted. Across the country Black people are dying in staggering numbers compared to their proportion of the population: in Michigan they are 14% of the population but 50% of deaths, in Louisiana they are 32% of the population but 71% of deaths, in Mississippi they are 38% of the population but 67% of deaths. Eight of the top ten hotspots are prisons and jails with a disproportionate number of inmates of color.

COVID-19 is exposing the vast disparities of wealth in our country.

Before the pandemic, 700 people a day died because of poverty; in our state, 33% of our population (2.5 million) were already poor or low-wealth people (including 48% or 787,000 of our children), 513,000 were uninsured, over 21,000 experienced homelessness (fifth highest in the country), and over 894,000 used the SNAP food assistance program. One hundred forty million people in the United States (over 40% of US citizens) cannot afford even a \$400 emergency, much less the ability to prepare for this public health crisis. They don't have the resources to stock up on food and supplies, stay home if they're sick or exposed, or take other precautions to survive COVID-19. In addition, when people have been unable to address other health conditions, they are more vulnerable to the virus.

COVID-19 is worsening economic disparities. Millions of people have joined the ranks of the unemployed; more people have been thrown into poverty and homelessness and have to struggle to find a place to shelter. Tens of millions remain without health care in the midst of a public health crisis. Many of the least respected and lowest paid workers have been deemed essential, but their wages haven't been raised and they have no access to the



Dorothy Van Soest

personal protective equipment needed to weather this storm.

COVID-19 is teaching us that poverty is everyone's problem. It's showing us that we are all impacted when we ignore poor and low-wealth people, that it's more expensive to ignore poverty than it is to fix it, and that poverty threatens not only the lives of the poor but the lives of all of us.

Think about it. The most vulnerable among us work in low-wage service industry jobs where coronavirus is most likely to spread. They prepare and serve food, clean hotels and public buildings, and care for children and the elderly, those most susceptible to the new coronavirus. And when they go home they don't leave the virus behind at work. Some 1.2 million workers (37% of Washington's workforce) make under \$15 an hour, and more than two-thirds of the lowest wage earners get no paid sick leave, so they cannot afford to miss a paycheck by staying home, even with symptoms of coronavirus. Even under normal circumstances, the uninsured people in Washington State don't have

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We Need You to Fight for Us to Breathe

Organized labor is a direct threat to white supremacy. We need to put that threat into action.

By April Sims, reprinted from *The Stand*

Say their names: Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbery. George Floyd. Tony McDade. David McAtee. Manuel Ellis.

Some days it's hard to breathe. Here's my truth:

I'm a Black mother raising Black kids. My son, Javonte, joined the US Marines at 17 because he wanted to make a difference, he wanted to serve his country. He came home five years later only to witness his country condone and sanction the continued murder and abuse of Black men who look like him. He won't tell me he's scared; he doesn't have to.



April and Javonte

My daughter, Jasmyne, is a freedom fighter, always has been. As her mom, I encouraged that fire; taught her to stand up for what she believes in, defend others, and use her voice to speak truth to power. Some days I worry I've failed her, that I haven't prepared her for the times she will need to give that power away so she can come home safe. She won't tell me she's angry, she doesn't have to.

My daughter, Niah, is graduating from high school this year, she has her whole future in front of her and has carefully planned every year step. Like her dad, she's always on time and is a

dedicated list maker and planner. She recently told me she's not sure she wants to have children because she knows they'll be born Black, and the world is too cruel to Black boys and girls. She won't tell me she's sad, she doesn't have to.

I'm a wife, married to a strong Black man.

My husband, Marcus, doesn't share his fears openly or freely, but I know he never does more than five miles over the speed limit. I watch him make sure our cars are well maintained so the police won't have cause to pull us over and so we don't end up broken down alone on the side of the road where he can't help us. I've listened to him have "the talk" with our kids more than once. He won't tell me he worries; he doesn't have to.

I'm a Black woman leader in the labor movement.

I spend my time working in systems and structures not designed with me in mind. The diplomacy and code shifting required to navigate these systems is sometimes exhausting, knowing I carry the hopes and dreams of my ancestors and the voices of my community into every space, every conversation, every decision. Some days the weight makes it hard to breathe. I won't tell you I'm tired, I don't have to.

Here is the truth:

The system isn't broken. The system is operating exactly the way it was intended to.

We have lost so many of our sisters, brothers, and siblings to white supremacy; COVID-19 is ravaging BIPOC communities that are already systematically under-resourced and over-policed. Against the backdrop of a pandemic already wreaking havoc on Black communities, these recent, public murders of Black Americans are sickening. While they may be shocking to some white



April with Marcus, Jasmyne, and Niah

Americans, this is the America that Black folks have always lived in – the America that I have always lived in. While the prevalence of camera phones fundamentally changed the conversation around policing in America, in fact, what we are witnessing is a steady stream of modern-day lynchings in real time. Lynching is defined as a murder committed in public by three or more perpetrators, for the purpose of punishing an alleged crime without a trial. Eric Garner was lynched. Michael Brown was lynched. Philando Castille was lynched. Charleena Lyles was lynched. George Floyd was lynched. And while laws may shield them from consequences, it was police who lynched each of these Black Americans and our governments that sanctioned these murders.

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We Need You to Fight for Us to Breathe

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Policing in America is too often violence, disproportionately directed at Black communities. There are clear, systemic causes leading to the hyper-policing of Black bodies. We are not experiencing a mass psychosis affecting police departments across the United States. Rather, this police violence, primarily targeting Black Americans, is the system of policing operating as designed.

Furthermore, we know that policing was born out of slave patrols, consisting primarily of white and poor men paid by landowning elites to return escaped Black folks to the brutality of slavery for their capital gain. With emancipation, Southern legislators passed laws empowering these same poor whites to curtail the free movement of formerly enslaved Black folks, attempting to recreate the subjugation of slavery. Black people, previously covered by slave laws, were now living under the same legal codes that whites lived under; thus, new crimes were created to control Black Americans. White supremacy is at the core of policing in America.

April Sims is Secretary-Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and a member of PSARA.

This is part of a longer article featured in The Stand, the online newspaper of the WSLC. For the full story, and to read all the vital news and analysis carried in The Stand, go to www.thestand.org

"Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob, and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe."

— **Frederick Douglass**

Juneteenth at Horizon House

(Photo: Gareth Munger)



June 19, 9th Avenue & Seneca Street: PSARA members Susan Levy and Gareth Munger joined Horizon House residents, including fellow PSARA members Shulamit Dektor and Mary Margaret Pruitt, to say "Black Lives Matter."

Denis Goldberg (1933-2020)

Veteran South African freedom fighter Denis Goldberg, who was tried alongside Nelson Mandela, died on April 29 at the age of 87.

Goldberg was a lifelong supporter of the African National Congress and became a member of its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), when it was formed in 1961.

Two years later, he was among the ANC leaders arrested at a hideout in Johannesburg.

At his trial, he was convicted of armed resistance to white-minority rule and sentenced to four life terms in 1964.

The Black defendants were sent to the infamous Robben Island prison. Because Goldberg was white, he was separated from the others, and spent 22 years in prison in Pretoria. After his release, he went into exile in Britain, returning when the apartheid government collapsed in 1994.

He recalled that he was attacked at school because his parents were Communists and the family was Jewish.

"I understood that what was happening in South Africa, with its racism, was like the racism in Nazi Germany that we were supposed to be fighting against," he said. "You have to be involved one way or another. That's what I grew up with."



Denis Goldberg

Millennials and Social Security

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program were designed to address it. The Social Security Trust Fund began to slowly build up a surplus for that very purpose. We are now drawing down on that surplus.

Unfortunately what the actuaries could not predict, and what is salient for the projected 2035 shortfall, is the growth of extreme income inequality. Most of the labor earnings growth since 1979 has gone to the top earners. The wages of the top 1% grew 158%, while the wages of the bottom 90% grew only 24%.

This earnings disparity is not news for most millennials and Gen X'ers, but they may not have recognized the consequences for the Social Security Trust Fund.

Because of the cap on wages subject to the payroll tax (\$137,700 in 2020), the earnings disparity means that most of the past four decades of earnings growth has escaped the Social Security system. Every year, over \$1.2 trillion in wages and salaries are estimated to escape the tax. If Congress had known at the time of the 1983 amendments that there would be such lopsided growth in earnings above the cap, would they have raised the cap or even scrapped it altogether? Would we even be talking about a 2035 shortfall?

But that's water under the bridge. The question is, what will Congress do now to preserve Social Security for future generations? Will the interests of millennials be sacrificed on the altar of fiscal austerity, or will their interests be protected? Part 2 will explore this question.

Linda Peterson is Chair of PSARA's Education Committee.

What Happens When It's Over

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the money to pay for health care. And when we ignore people who are sick and don't have the money to go to a clinic or emergency room or stay home from work, we are all in danger.

COVID-19 is showing us that poverty and race are inseparable and that we can't resolve one without resolving the other. While we know that Black Americans are dying at a rate of more than twice their population share and people of color are disproportionately poor, we also know that, in absolute terms, poor white people outnumber poor Black people and other poor nonwhite people, and that COVID-19 is ravishing all sectors of the poor and dispossessed, including poor whites. Both racial and economic inequities are worsened by the epidemic. And when we ignore the most vulnerable among us, and count on them to keep our cities and towns running without a safety net, we are all in danger.

If we are to learn anything from this epidemic it is this. When the crisis is over, all of our lives depend on things not going back to normal. The exploitative economic and social systems that COVID-19 has exposed and laid bare for all to see must be confronted and dismantled.

In this time of great danger but also real possibility, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival is doing just that. From Alaska to Arkansas, the Bronx to the border, and all across our country, people have been coming together since spring of 2018 to continue the work begun in 1968 by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. And on June 20, they held the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation's history. Voices representing the 140 million poor and low-wealth people across our country talked about how the global pandemic is exposing the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. For more information go to: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>

Dorothy Van Soest is a novelist, activist, retired university professor, and a member of PSARA. www.dorothyvansoest.com

To Renew or Donate

PSARA Education Fund

321 16th Avenue S, Seattle WA 98144

- 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

Out of concern for the health and safety of our members, in-person meetings and events have been canceled because of COVID-19 precautions. The following regularly scheduled meetings will be held online.

To attend any of these meetings, email organizer@psara.org for the links.

West Seattle Hot Topics for Seniors & Senior Wannabes: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 1, Topic: *Supreme Court Decisions*.

PSARA Climate and Environmental Justice Committee: 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 2.

PSARA Government Relations Committee: Noon – 1:30 p.m., Thursday, July 2.

PSARA Southend Committee: 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., Thursday, July 9, Topic: *Update on the Webinar “Essential/Not-Expendable: A Farmworker’s Experience During COVID-19.”* Presenters: Cindy Domingo and speakers from the Webinar, plus State Senator Claire Wilson.

Health Care for All: Why We Need It Now More Than Ever, a Webinar: 2:00 p.m., Sunday, July 12. Presenters include: David Loud, Co-Chair, Health Care is a Human Right WA Campaign; Vicki Lowe, Executive Director of the American Indian Health Commission for

Washington State (AIHC) and a leader in the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal Community; Steve Bauck, Outreach VP, PSARA.

PSARA Fundraising Committee: 11:00 a.m. - Noon, Monday, July 13.

PSARA Education Committee: 2 p.m., Tuesday, July 14.

PSARA Race and Gender Equity Committee: 11 a.m.–12:00 p.m., Thursday, July 16.

PSARA Executive Board: 12:30 p.m. – 3 p.m., Thursday, July 16.