

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Gray Panthers September Meeting

Marie Jobling

The Dignity Fund



Tuesday, September 20, 1 PM

**Fireside Room, Unitarian Center
1187 Franklin (at Geary)**

Free, Public Invited, Wheelchairs OK

This month's Gray Panthers meeting will be on the Dignity Fund, Prop I on the November ballot, to guarantee and increase funding for programs for San Francisco seniors and adults with disabilities. Read more on page two. We will also discuss plans for more City revenue from business.

Wed, Sept 7, Gray Panthers Board:
1 PM, Main Library, 3rd Fl, Paley Rm.

Thurs, Sept 8, CARA Town Hall on Election Issues and Candidates: 10AM-2PM, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin at Geary. Keynote: Mark Leno, Info on selected State/City Propositions, Q&A with selected candidates. More on page 5.

Thurs, Sept 8, Gray Panthers Newsletter Meeting #1: 3 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3, by 16th St. BART.

Fri, Sept 16, Gray Panthers Remember Robeson Committee Meeting: 1:30 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3. Please call 415-668-9572 to confirm.

Wed, Sept 21 SF Gray Panthers Newsletter Meeting #2: 1 PM, GP Office, 2940 16th St, Rm 200-3, by 16th St. BART.

Mon, Sept 26, Gray Panthers Book Club: 11:30 AM, Celtic Café, 142 McAllister, betw Hyde & Leavenworth. Please call 415-931-1126 to confirm.

September Membership Meeting: The Dignity Fund

September's Gray Panthers Meeting (Tues, Sept 20, 1 PM) will have Marie Jobling, of the Community Living Campaign, talking about the Dignity Fund.

Passage of Proposition I in this November's SF election would establish a Dignity Fund to pay for increased services for seniors and adults with disabilities over the next twenty years. It would not be an additional tax; instead, it would guarantee increased funding from regular City revenues, a so-called set-aside. It would cover such services as home and community-based long-term care, food programs, caregiver programs, community centers, advocacy programs and wellness programs. The Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), other City Agencies, and community consultation would prepare Needs Assessments to plan increased services, with oversight.

San Francisco has the highest percentage of seniors and adults with disabilities in California. They have been hit with decreased State services and vastly increased rents and living costs. They deserve guaranteed and adequate services. Other under-served groups need guaranteed services also. Ultimately we need more money from business.



Muni driver demanded better services and downtown business money to finance them. He took this poster on his bus to get rider support. He described these actions at a Gray Panthers meeting.

Are We Complicit In Eliminating Jobs?

By Denise D'Anne

Have we become complicit in eliminating jobs? Is our desire for convenience or low prices helping corporations eliminate jobs in the U.S.? It's more than just off-shoring production: many jobs have been eliminated in the U.S. retail supply chain, even goods produced in the U.S. which are shipped long distances to be sold on Big Retailer's websites.

Take Amazon: Brick-and-mortar retailers employ 47 people for every \$10 million in sales, according to the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's analysis of U.S. Census data. But Amazon employs only 14 people per \$10 million in revenue, according to its 2012 Annual Report. As Amazon grows and takes market share from other retailers, the result is a decline in jobs, not a gain. In 2012, Amazon expanded its share of retail spending in North America by \$8 billion, which works out to a net loss of about 27,000 jobs. Also warehouse workers are subject to deplorable conditions competing with robots, while receiving low pay.

Wal-Mart's poverty wage forces its workers to get food stamps and other government benefits costing 6.2 billion per year (Forbes, 4-15-2014), or about \$45 per year for each U.S. income tax payer. And that doesn't count the costs of unemployment insurance, food stamps and other social services for people laid off from other stores that Walmart has put out of business. So is shopping at Wal-Mart really such a bargain?

On closer inspection the deals advertised at Wal-Mart are not always real deals. Unfortunately, people accept the illusion that they are paying less. Again there are environmental and human costs associated with Wal-Mart and Amazon models – their use of cheap labor and shipping goods long distances.

Safeway and even Rainbow are vying to reduce jobs with their self-service lanes at a cost of thousands of jobs and less viable local economies. And these checkout lanes do not materially translate to reducing retail prices.

What is the cost of convenience? Have we become complicit in eliminating jobs?

Privatization Racket: Pearson PLC and the Hijacking of Education

(Info compiled by Marcy Gabriela)

In recent years, business corporations & “banksters” have made vast inroads warping public education systems worldwide. One of the most notorious mega-corporations exploiting the education sector is UK-based Pearson PLC, which now has tentacles reaching across the globe, including all levels of U.S. public schools. Its effects:

* Sterile, scripted, corporate-driven, packaged curriculum: The “privateering” manipulation and top-down takeover of public schooling has resulted in a narrowing of educational experiences for students, emphasizing isolated skills and mindless (paper or online) 'worksheets' – instead of enhancing greater cognitive development via holistic tasks, 'critical thinking' projects and creative academic products (such as having students work together to actually perform and describe the useful steps to solve a math 'story problem' and also encouraging students to think up and write their own illustrative story problems for specific equations).

* Standardized Testing Obsession (for London/Wall St. profits, at others' expense): According to the UK Guardian News (2012), hundreds of parents protested outside Pearson's New York offices, unhappy at the company's \$35M contract for controversial tests (of dubious quality and relevancy). The parents' group voiced their concerns about "the excessive power and influence that the billion-dollar, for-profit company, Pearson, has over New York City's education department." Pearson, which reportedly arranged a \$500 million five-year contract to provide tests for Texas schools, also sets tests across numerous other states. An incisive Altnet.org report pointed to Pearson as “the major player in the rise of standardized testing”, while other profiteers are involved, including Pearson’s main competitor CTB/McGraw-Hill.

* Control of public education via deep pockets, extensive lobbying and outside influence: Pearson is the world's largest education firm (in addition to running Penguin books and the Financial Times). An eye-opening Politico.com investigative report refers to Pearson's “aggressive lobbyists” and mar-

keting. “Pearson’s charitable foundation made a practice of treating school officials from across the nation to trips abroad, (and) to conferences where the only education company represented was Pearson.” There are also many instances of no-bid contracts (and 'guaranteed profits') for Pearson services; of course this means that taxpayers' money is siphoned away.

Pearson's extensive empire ranges from curriculum, assessment and monitoring (pre-k through university for thousands of schools, colleges and career training programs, plus operation of a charter schools network and online courses). Well-known author Diane Ravitch has exclaimed that profit-mongering Pearson wields enormous, “astonishing” influence over American education. (Note: Pearson is listed on the London Stock Exchange as PSON.)

Some varied and interesting links for more information on the background and deep politics of the Pearson PLC:

<http://www.politico.com/story/2015/02/pearson-education-115026> and <http://www.altnet.org/education/corporations-profit-standardized-tests>

UCSF: Stop Cutting Home Care!

UCSF plans to eliminate its Home Health Care program on September 30, making it more difficult for patients to get specialized home care. California Nurses Association (CNA) is resisting this plan. Stay tuned for more news.

The 16-year-old UCSF’s Home Health Care program gives more specialized care than most public and private home health providers, needed for more complex and higher acuity patients such as transplant and pediatric patients. They made almost 20,000 visits last year, with nursing, physical, occupational and speech therapy, registered dietitian, and medical social worker services.

UCSF says: "...it has become increasingly difficult to financially sustain the UCSF Home Health Care program. No insurer or payer to this program generates a positive margin of money, and any additional growth will lead to increased losses,” but their million-dollar CEO just got a raise. We say healthcare for patient need, not for profit.

New Gerald Horne Book Shines Light on Paul Robeson's Later Life

Gerald Horne, author of *The Artist as Revolutionary* (Pluto Press, 2016), focuses attention on Paul Robeson, and Robeson's later life.

Horne says Robeson was a champion to Black prisoners, particularly when Robeson's long-time Black friend, Rep Ben Davis from Harlem, was jailed in 1949 for being a communist. Davis wrote from his cell that Black prisoners' knowledge of Robeson was their passport to pride.

Robeson's experience with the Loyalist troops in Spain influenced him to support the American war effort to defeat the Axis powers. His *Song of Free Men* was recorded by Columbia in Russian, Spanish, and German, as well as English. He said that languages were his passion; singing, his hobby.

Robeson was the target of racist mob violence even before the infamous Peekskill riots. His appearance at a 1948 campaign rally in Houston for the Progressive Party presidential candidate, Henry Wallace, one of 500 free performances, was disrupted by hecklers, many prejudiced against Jews and Blacks. The backlash against Robeson gained momentum when he challenged President Truman to support anti-lynching legislation. His support of African independence movements added to the backlash and was the "official" reason for the State Department revoking his passport.

The 1949 Peekskill event, just north of New York City, was supposed to be a rally on behalf of the Civil Rights Committee, headed by William Patterson. The first concert was cancelled because of predicted violence, but Robeson returned the following week protected by supporters. There were chants of "Lynch Robeson," effigies of him, bottles hurled at the audience, and car windows smashed by the police, but the concert went on. When Robeson returned to Harlem he was greeted by 5,000 supporters.

He was not intimidated. Though he had been blocked from the concert stage and theatre, he continued to study and to attend events with friends at embassies in Washington. The Workers Music Association in 1951 lamented the marginalizing of

Robeson, demanding recordings of *Joe Hill* and *Scandalize my Name*. He established the newspaper *Freedom in Harlem* and, with the Civil Rights Congress, petitioned the United Nations to sanction the United States for perpetrating genocide against African Americans. The petition set the stage for the Civil Rights movement. In May of 1954, the High Court ruled against Jim Crow.

Between 1952 and 1954, Robeson sang four concerts for thousands of Canadians and Americans on both sides of the border at Peace Arch Park. In 1955, in response to a warming of US-USSR relations, as well as the anti-Jim Crow ruling, Picasso, Sartre, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Ingrid Bergman, and many other luminaries appealed for a restoration of Robeson's passport. The government demanded that he sign an affidavit declaring he was not a member of the Communist Party. Robeson quoted Shakespeare and sang *Water Boy* in his refusal to sign.

From 1954 to 1958, he recorded more than 100 tracks in the living room of friend and pianist Helen Rosen. His son Paul Robeson, Jr., sound engineer newly graduated from Cornell, commented that the evening sessions were relaxed and his father's voice especially full and beautiful. Results were excellent despite the primitive equipment; the CD *On My Journey* is testament to the success. The founding of an independent record label, Othello Records, in 1958 published Robeson's memoir *Here I Stand*.

Plans in 1956 to travel to Toronto in support of the metal miners were aborted when the FBI influenced Canada to deny entrance. He was thought by the FBI to be more dangerous than Communist leaders. His \$25,000 award of the Stalin Peace Prize in 1953 was eagerly pursued by the IRS, as can be imagined.

Anticipating good news, the two concerts at Carnegie Hall in May of 1958 were sold out. As the curtain fell after the second, Robeson announced that his travel rights as a US citizen had been restored. He told the Pittsburgh Courier, "All my life I've been fighting to prove that all men are brothers, I am still fighting to prove it, and I intend fighting to prove it the rest of my life."

(continued on next page)

(Paul Robeson, continued)

Invitations came from Russia, England, Japan, Nigeria and India. 120,000 people crowded the sports Palace in Moscow, 4,000 in St. Paul's Cathedral. In China, he sang *The March of the Volunteers*, the post-1949 national anthem. As his income increased, his health deteriorated. Both Paul and Essie Robeson were hospitalized in Moscow. He toured Mexico, Australia and New Zealand to celebrate his 60th birthday. In 1962, he was back in England in a nursing home in London.

Though he wanted to go to Ghana in 1963, the Robesons were ill and returned to Philadelphia to live with his sister. Mrs. Robeson died of cancer in 1965. Paul rested watching football with his grandson and enjoying renewed friendships. The renewed interest in Robeson and the revolutionary socialism he represented brought him into contact with SNCC, the National Urban League and the Congressional Black Caucus. In April 1965 Cesar Chavez, Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Louis Armstrong, James Baldwin and other famous people came together for a tribute to Robeson. Columbia Law School honored him in 1969.

In 1974 Paul Robeson retired from public life. In January 1976, though he seemed "in fine fettle," he suffered a few strokes and died on January 23rd.

At his death Paul Robeson was considered "both a partisan of the most degraded sector of humanity - Africans - while being an advocate of a working-class internationalism that embodied universality. The multi-lingual descendant of enslaved Africans, whose dedicated study of languages was designed in part to illustrate the essential unity of humankind, continues to symbolize the still reigning slogan of the current century: "workers of the world, unite."

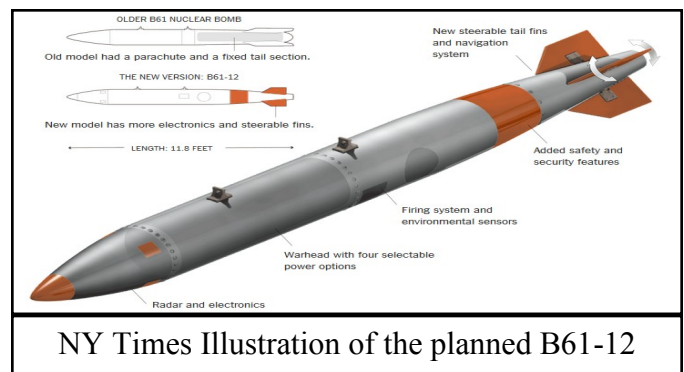
Is U.S. Preparing for Nuclear War?

The US National Nuclear Security Administration gave the final OK last month for a major, trillion-dollar upgrade of the stockpile of U.S. nuclear warheads, producing some 480 modernized versions from 2020 to 2024. 20 are planned to be deployed in Europe as a possible deterrent to Russia.

The B61 model 12 precision-guided nuclear bomb fits existing warheads with movable tail fins, radar, and a navigation system making it steerable: it also has an adjustable explosive force. The U.S. military labels the smaller bomb "a more credible and a more ethical approach," which critics say means it is more likely to actually be used, perhaps even as first-strike use, as opposed to retaliation use. Opposition to the plan within the government has failed to stop it.

Russia has already called the B61 flight tests "irresponsible" and "openly provocative," and the upgrade program as a potential "violation of the strategic balance in Europe" that would demand a Russian response.

Sources: Global Research, 8-5-2016
<http://tinyurl.com/hav5hfk> and
New York Times, 1-12-2016
<http://tinyurl.com/go99ybv>.



CARA/SDA Town Hall on Election Issues and Candidates Thurs, Sept 8, 10AM-2PM, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin

- Guest Speaker: Mark Leno
- Information on selected State & City Propositions
- Short Q & A's with Supervisor Candidates
- \$10 includes snacks & lunch, scholarships available
- Call 510-663-4086 to register (before Sept 5 please)
- This meeting replaces SDA's regular meeting

Gray Panthers of SF

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We believe ALL people are entitled to certain fundamental rights:

- meaningful employment
- economic security
- decent and affordable housing
- quality health care
- a life of dignity from birth to death free from fear and abuse
- a world in peace



Age and Youth in Action

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Call the office for membership information.

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Non-Gray Panthers Actions and Events

(Complete on-line Calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/ce2gy6enb>)

Thurs, Sept 8, 10 AM, CARA Candidate & Town Hall Forum on Senior Issues: 1187 Franklin. See p. 5.

Fri, Sept 9, 6-9 PM, SDA Annual Celebration/Fundraiser: 180 11th St (at Howard). Food, prizes, drawing, silent auction. Call 415-546-1333 for more info.

Wed, Sept 14, 11 AM, Senior & Disability Action's Health Action Team Meeting: 1010 Mission at 6th St.

Wed, Sept 14, Noon, Support the Year-Long Midtown Rent Strike and Anti-Eviction Actions: Mayor's Office of Housing & Community Development, 1 S. Van Ness. See <http://tinyurl.com/zvwmu5y>

Fri-Sun, Sept 16-18, Legacy Film Festival on Aging: Films to educate, entertain, and inspire intergenerational audiences about the issues surrounding aging. 1746 Post, Japantown. See <http://tinyurl.com/ze6ob15>

Wed, Sept 21, 1 PM, Senior & Disability Action's Housing Collaborative Meeting: 4th Floor, 1360 Mission, near 10th St. Demand housing for all.

Wed, Sept 21, 6 PM, SF Living Wage Coalition Meeting: Rm 301, 2940 16th St, at Capp, 1 block from 16th St. BART

Sat, Sept 24, 10AM-1PM, OWL-SF Ballot Roundup for Nov 2016: Main Library, Hispanic Rm.