



## Together at Midnight

*Indian People's Action and Blue Skies Campaign organize to confront the tar sands industry*

*By Blue Skies Campaign*

Shortly after midnight, on March 13, 2014, 70 people rallied in a cold parking lot off Missoula's South Reserve Street and waited for a "megaload" sized piece of equipment which was slated to pass through town.

The equipment onboard was tar sands processing machinery and was heading for Alberta, Canada, but they had to get through Missoula first.

Protesters held signs that read "Tar Sands Destroy Life" and "Idle No More," as the group of Native and non-Native activists awaited the massive load, which is so disruptive to other traffic that it is only allowed to travel at night. When the megaload arrived, many protesters were prepared to literally stand in the way of it passing through Missoula.

This was the fourth time since the beginning of 2014 that a tar sands megaload was met with community opposition in Missoula. In January, three other loads (all traveling after midnight) were greeted by a loose coalition of groups led by Indian People's Action. On two of those occasions, Indian People's Action members led protesters in a traditional round dance in the middle of Reserve Street, temporarily halting the loads in

their tracks. The dance not only held up the loads, but also drew attention to how tar sands development hurts indigenous peoples. On each night that the round dance was performed, a subset of activists chose to risk arrest by refusing to leave the street, further delaying the loads.

Blue Skies Campaign, a Missoula-based grassroots organization that op-

posed a round dance, which drew the largest turnout of any of the protests so far.

As protesters filed into the street, the vehicle carrying the massive piece of tar sands processing equipment slowed to a crawl, and then stopped. Lights from the convoy of escort vehicles played on handmade protest signs, as the round dance began to the rhythmic beat of a drum. Indian People's Action members sang the words to a traditional song, as the megaload sat unmoving.

By the time police cleared the street, allowing the load to resume its journey, the protesters had stopped the Alberta-bound equipment for some twenty minutes. The action also placed a spotlight on the negative impacts of fossil fuel development and communities who are fighting extraction. Next time a massive piece of fossil fuel equipment tries to pass through the streets of Missoula, we will certainly be back.



*Photo: Indian People's Action and magickalsea on Flickr.com*

**Grantees Indian People's Action and Blue Skies Campaign blockading a mega-load truck carrying tar sands equipment.**

poses fossil fuel extraction, worked to support the indigenous-led protests in January by helping to turn out Missoulians who would take to the street. By the time the fourth load of 2014 arrived in mid March, the list of groups involved in the protests had grown to include Northern Rockies Rising Tide and 350-Missoula (although Indian People's Action continued to play the lead organizing role). A group ranging from elders to teenagers and all ages in between walked on to Reserve Street to participate in another

*Grantee Blue Skies Campaign is a grassroots, volunteer-run organization based in Missoula, Montana that organizes to stop destructive fossil fuel projects. Blue Skies worked with grantee Indian People's Action to support action against the tar sands megaloads in early 2014.*

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# The Struggle for Prisoners' Rights

*The movement for freedom for all took a huge leap forward*

This past year marked a major shift in the movement away from mass incarceration, the drug war, and the prison industrial complex and towards prisoners' rights. This shift happened mainly because of a hunger strike that spread across California (and then across the country) by prisoners to protest the conditions of their imprisonment. We have not seen such a movement spread so quickly...well, maybe ever. As our grantee Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity put it, "On July 8th 2013, more than 30,000 California prisoners initiated an indefinite hunger strike in response to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's failure to meet their five Core Demands. Sixty days and one death later, strikers suspended the strike, and California legislators committed to hold public hearings." Here is part of that statement.

*By The Pelican Bay State Prison-Security Housing Unit, Short Corridor Collective*

The Pelican Bay State Prison-Security Housing Unit (PBSP-SHU), Short Corridor Collective Representatives hereby serve notice upon all concerned parties of interest that after nine weeks we have collectively decided to suspend our third hunger strike action on September 5, 2013.

To be clear, our Peaceful Protest of Resistance to our continuous subjection to decades of systemic state sanctioned torture via the system's solitary confinement units is far from over. Our decision to suspend our third hunger strike in two years does not come lightly. This decision is especially difficult considering that most of our demands have not been met (despite nearly universal agreement that they are reasonable). The core group of prisoners has been, and remains 100 percent committed to seeing this protracted struggle for real reform through to a complete victory, even if it requires us to make the ultimate sacrifice. With that said,

we clarify this point by stating prisoner deaths are not the objective, we recognize such sacrifice is at times the only means to an end of fascist oppression.

Our goal remains: force the powers that be to end their torture policies and practices in which serious physical and psychological harm is inflicted on tens of thousands of prisoners as well as our loved ones outside. We also call for ending the related practices of using prisoners to promote the agenda of the police state by seeking to greatly expand the numbers of the working class poor warehoused in prisons, and particularly those of us held in solitary, based on psychological/social manipulation, and divisive tactics keeping prisoners fighting amongst each other. Those in power promote mass warehousing to justify more guards, more tax dollars for "security", and spend mere pennies for rehabilitation — all of which demonstrates a failed penal system, high recidivism, and ultimately compromising public safety. The State of California's \$9.1 billion annual California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) budget is the epitome of a failed and fraudulent state agency that diabolically and systemically deprives thousands of their human rights and dignity. Allowing this agency to act with impunity has to stop! And it will.

With that said, and in response to much sincere urging of loved ones, supporters, our attorneys and current and former state legislators, Tom Ammiano, Loni Hancock, and Tom Hayden, for whom we have the upmost respect, we decided to suspend our hunger strike. We are especially grateful to Senator Hancock and Assembly Member Ammiano for their courageous decision to challenge Governor Brown and the CDCR for their policies of prolonged solitary confinement and inhumane condi-

tions. We are certain that they will continue their fight for our cause, including holding legislative hearings and the drafting legislation

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[www.resistinc.org](http://www.resistinc.org)

## Justice for Prisoners

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responsive to our demands on prison conditions and sentencing laws. We are also proceeding with our class action civil suit against the CDCR.

We have deemed it to be in the best interest of our cause to suspend our hunger strike action until further notice.

From our perspective, we've gained a lot of positive ground towards achieving our goals. However, there's still much to be done. Our resistance will continue to build and grow until we have won our human rights.

Respectfully,

For the Prisoner Class Human Rights Movement

Todd Ashker, C58191, D1-119

Arturo Castellanos, C17275, D1-121

Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa (Dewberry), C35671, D1-117

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Gabriel Huerta, C80766, D3-222  
Frank Clement, D07919, D3-116  
Raymond Chavo Perez, K12922,  
D1-219

James Mario Perez, B48186, D3-124

**Support for the hunger strikers poured in across the nation, including from many RESIST grantees and allies.**

**Grantee Prison Birth Project in Massachusetts penned a beautiful letter of solidarity with hunger strikers in California.**

**Here in its entirety is the statement which was published by the San Francisco Bay View.**

*By Prison Birth Project*

As prisoners across the country prepare to strike, our hearts and thoughts

are with them. As incarcerated women we know firsthand many of the abuses the strikers face on a daily basis – as well as many of the repercussions they may face in retaliation for the action against this abuse.

As incarcerated mothers, we experience lack of access to healthy food, lack of respect, autonomy and access to health care, lack of access to children – and we are regularly set up by the system to fail.

As we stand in solidarity with striking prisoners, we ask you to stand in solidarity with us. Not just on July 8 – but every day of the year. To be in solidarity with us, we need folks from outside to come inside! Being behind the wall is hard, and we need support while we are here, so when we get out we can be leaders. We need allies to be here both inside and out, to support us in creating space and community, to come together and be leaders. We need to be leaders because we are the experts.

We are here. We need folks to listen from their heart and be by our side when we are ready to speak, to strike and to stand out. We need allies to rally in support of policies inside and out so we can survive while we are here and thrive

when we get out. We need allies to help us break down the wall between men and women inside – to help us bridge the gap and support our families through the realities of the criminal system.

Because of our experience, we are the experts on these issues and we ask that all allies, reformers, abolitionists, lawyers, legislators and our families work together, come together around the realities – not rhetoric – and help us move mountains and break down the walls in supportive and sustainable ways physically, spiritually, politically and personally.

**Our allies at Iraq Veterans Against the War and grantee Civilian Solider Alliance also wrote a message of solidarity**

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Grantee Milk Not Jails in New York collected signatures and took photographs to show their support and solidarity with the prisoners on hunger strike. They say, "May the journey continue until every heart and eye is opened to the suffering these people have to endure! Support the 5 demands!"

# The Fight for Justice in Palestine

## *TIAA-CREF divests social choice fund from controversial Veolia Corporation*

**Grantee We Divest recently won a huge victory in the struggle for justice in Palestine. Here is a little background about the companies involved and the campaign, as well as words of support from people across the US.**

### *By We Divest*

The We Divest coalition joins workers, environmentalists, and corporate accountability organizations in congratulating pension fund giant TIAA-CREF for removing Veolia Environnement SA stock (VIE:EN Paris) from its Social Choice Funds portfolio. In July 2013, TIAA-CREF's website showed over \$1.2 million in Veolia shares for its Social Choice Funds. Today it shows zero. TIAA-CREF still holds Veolia stock in its regular accounts.

"Some of us in the socially responsible investment community are asking the question: does it make sense

to own stock in a corporation that is violating international law in Palestine and committing so many environmental abuses around the world?" said Lincoln Pain, a Certified Financial Planner practitioner, specializing in socially responsible investments for over 27 years.

"TIAA-CREF made the right decision," said Rabbi Alissa Wise, Director of Campaigns at Jewish Voice for Peace and National Coordinator of the We Divest Campaign. "Veolia cannot seriously be considered socially responsible given its infamous anti-labor practices, privatization of public resources, disastrous environmental practices, and ongoing servicing of illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian West Bank land."

"As the largest private operator of municipal water and sewer systems in

the United States, Veolia Water North America has an atrocious track-record and was kicked out of six different cities and towns in the US last year alone," said Matt Ohloff, organizer with Food & Water Watch. "Water privatization is not socially responsible, nor is Veolia."

"It is no coincidence that Veolia has a poor record on labor and environmental issues given its violations of international humanitarian law in Palestine. The complicity of multinationals in illegal projects in such a contested conflict zone reflects poor governance and risk management, and is often related to other corporate abuses. These companies have no place on any socially responsible investment

ning four continents, Veolia has lost or failed to secure contracts totaling more than \$18 billion worldwide. Last month, a diverse coalition of environmental, labor, Palestinian rights, and social justice activists in St. Louis, Missouri forced the multinational to withdraw from bidding on a city water contract. In Boston, Massachusetts, a broad coalition of labor and community groups are fighting Veolia's union-busting tactics since it took over a school bus contract. In the San Francisco Bay Area, Veolia is known for the role its attorney played in opposing BART unions, and others have been protesting against Veolia subcontractors' poor labor practices. Additional campaigns in

Sonoma County CA; Los Angeles, CA; Seattle, WA; California statewide; Boston, MA; Baltimore, MD; Washington, DC; and beyond have cast light on Veolia's controversial practices.

### **What others are saying across the country:**

Steve Tamari, St.

Louis Dump Veolia Coalition:

*As a TIAA-CREF client and as a Palestinian-American, I am gratified to hear that Veolia is no longer in TIAA-CREF's Social Choice account. Veolia has no business calling itself 'socially-responsible' and TIAA-CREF is wise to divest. This is a testament to the extraordinary work of progressive communities worldwide in exposing Veolia's true colors.*

Erin McNally-Diaz, Corporate Accountability International:

*TIAA-CREF's decision to drop Veolia Environnement SA from its Social Choice Funds portfolio is a clear sign that the global water privateer's abusive behavior in the U.S. and around the world has created significant risk and liability for investors. This move should come as no surprise to Veolia, a corporation*

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portfolio," said Dalit Baum, Middle East Program Director for the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

Veolia has been the target of boycott and divestment campaigns worldwide by Palestine solidarity activists. Veolia was invested in bus lines on segregated West Bank roads until recently, when it ended the practice under intense worldwide pressure. However, Veolia continues its controversial support of illegal Israeli settlements. A United Nations report warned last year that the engagement of Veolia and similar companies in the West Bank could cause "damage to a company's public image and impact on shareholder decisions and share price, and could result in employees being criminally responsible for rights abuses."

Following public campaigns span-

## Justice in Palestine

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that has a track record of failed contracts, rate hikes, labor abuses and shut-offs for those who can't afford to pay—all in the name of profit... In an attempt to expand the market for water privatization in the U.S., Veolia has turned to the same backroom deals and political interference that has earned the corporation its negative reputation in communities all over the world. We applaud the coalition organizing on this issue for their work bringing Veolia's abuses to light and to the attention of socially-responsible pension funds. We also commend TIAA-CREF for taking this important step to disassociate this harmful corporation from its Social Choice Funds and call on all socially responsible funds to do the same.

USW Local 8751, Committee to Defend the Boston School Bus 5:

The Committee to Defend the Boston School Bus 5 is gratified that TIAA-CREF and other funds are divesting from the Veolia Corporation. Veolia is engaged in very harmful union-busting here in Boston and our community coalition supports the work of the We Divest coalition.

Marcela Olivera, Coordinator of La Red VIDA: Vigilancia Interamericana para la Defensa y Derecho al Agua:

In the 1990's, many public water utilities were privatized, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa, under pressure from financial institutions like the World Bank and the IMF and their primary neoliberal government underwriters. Veolia and its French partner, Suez, were the biggest beneficiaries and became the biggest failures. Most of their global operations failed to provide water to the people. They failed to meet expansion goals; they increased water prices beyond what most people could afford; they promoted expensive connection fees that prevented water access by the poor; and they laid off workers to increase profits. As a result, people around the world mobilized against these practices, leading to termination of many of the contracts. But Veolia and Suez have not only failed to provide water to people abroad, they have also failed at home where they have controlled water services since the late 19th century. More than 40 French municipalities and communities have taken their water services back in the last decade and the list of countries that has re-municipalized their water services in

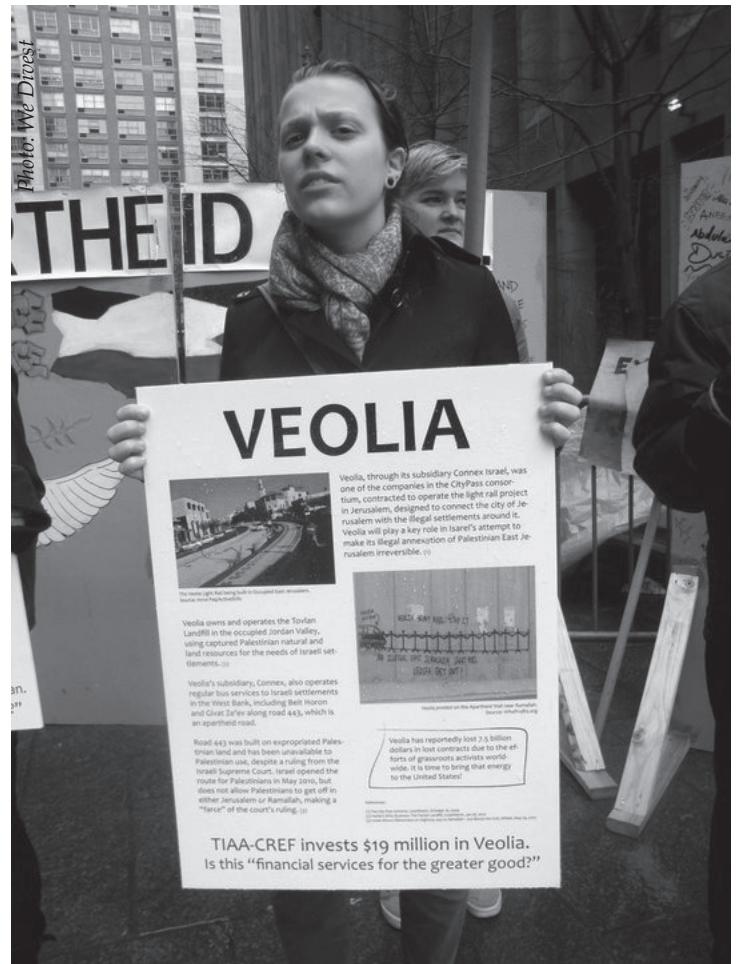
the world is still growing.

Stop Veolia Seattle:

We are excited by the impact this success will have on movements and communities around the world. From water justice to Palestinian justice, labor justice to disability justice, from Latin America to India, the Philippines and beyond, we celebrate the power of this triumph. In Seattle we are working to not only end Veolia's contract with Metro Access, but also to unite communities striving for workers' rights, disabled persons' rights, and the rights of all people to a living wage, clean water, and safe, affordable transit. We join together to end Veolia's practices of privatization and exploitation of workers.

Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights, on behalf of the 16 groups of the Transit Accountability Coalition/Derail Veolia:

As Bostonians we remember well the damaging protests against school busing and the iconic photograph that shocked so many Americans into an awareness that racism and discrimination are hardly confined to the South. Veolia, a company that only very recently sold off segregated bus lines serving the settlements in the occupied West Bank, has proven susceptible to pressure. They have much to answer for in Palestine, and here in Massachusetts, where they are the major stakeholder in an insider-dealing conglomerate that has virtually privatized the fifth largest commuter rail network in the country leading to a big drop in ridership, hefty fines from OSHA for worker abuses, and the de-



Students and faculty at New York University joined the campaign and called on the pension fund TIAA-CREF to divest from the US-backed Israeli occupation.

frauding of the Commonwealth's taxpayers of tens of millions of dollars.

Driver (who prefers to remain anonymous) for MV Paratransit, subcontracted by Veolia in San Francisco:

Veolia is a very dangerous corporation. Veolia is going after all the Bay Area private transportation contracts in addition to the union busting at the public transit level.

Grantee We Divest is "a campaign to compel retirement fund giant TIAA-CREF to stop investing in companies that profit from the Israeli occupation." It was started in 2010 by Jewish Voices for Peace and is now led by a coalition of groups, including many RESIST allies and past grantees who are working to end the support of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The campaign is endorsed by over 50 organizations. Their website is: [www.wedivest.org](http://www.wedivest.org)

## The Struggle for Prisoners' Rights

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with the prisoner hunger strikers in California. Their statement brilliantly and personally links the injustices of mass incarceration to the injustices of war and militarism. Here is the statement in its entirety.

By Iraq Veterans Against the War and Civilian Soldier Alliance

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and the Civilian Soldier Alliance celebrate the resistance demonstrated by California prisoners at the suspension of their third hunger strike organized to protest the cruel, inhumane and tortuous conditions of their solitary confinement. After growing participation since 2011, 30,000 people on the inside joined this strike and many continued for 60 days

(Roughly 23 percent of the entire prison population of CDCR, according to the CDCR website from June 2013). At the close of the strike, led by the Short Corridor Collective, many of the demands of the organizers still have not been met. The struggle continues, and is far from over. IVAW and the Civilian Soldier Alliance honor the resistance by the prisoners and express our continued solidarity.

We see many parallels between the strikers' resistance within the Prison Industrial Complex and our own work of resistance within the Military Industrial Complex. Jeffrey Beard, the Secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, stated that many of the hunger strikers were only participating in the act of resistance because they were under "extreme pressure to do so from violent prison gangs, which called the strike in attempt to restore their ability to terrorize fellow prisoners, prison

staff and communities throughout California" This particular type of lie about the dedication and purpose behind the personal sacrifices of the resisters is similar to the lies spread by military command against war resisters, an attempt to discredit resistance as "a few bad apples". Contrary to a claim like Beard's, we know individuals cannot be coerced into resisting a system so oppressive as the military or the prison system, but must act at great risk, with much personal reflection and from values and commitment to justice.

The California prisoners are resisting the tortuous conditions of their imprisonment, and many of us, as veterans of the Global War on Terror, have played a part in the

torture of thousands of people. As part of boundless war, the United States military would capture prisoners and turn them over to parties, such as the Iraqi Security Forces or third-party countries, which the United States military knew would torture them. After learning the truth of our military's role in the torture of prisoners, and sometimes our own personal role in this, we have an intimate connection to the torture happening within our nation's own prisons. The conditions experienced by some of California's prisoners amount to torture. This includes people who are forced to live within Security Housing Units (SHU), with little or no contact with other people for weeks, months, years, even decades.

There are many ways in which the lines between the Prison Industrial Complex and the Military Industrial Complex overlap and blur. For example, our prison industry and domestic police force is another extension of US militarism. They are profit driven, and made possible by dehumanizing "the other" through racism, sexism, and xenophobia. It is through the guises of Wars on Terror and Drugs that these powers are able to strive towards higher and higher profit margins through the exploitation of "the other". Stopping these oppressive systems takes people who have experienced it first-hand, taking action through all kinds of resistance and self-sacrifice. We have seen this with whistleblowers such as Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden, also with the Short Corridor Collective hunger-strikers in California prisons and the prisoners in Guantanamo Bay who are also on hunger strike.

We are inspired by the unity developed and demonstrated by the strikers under such repressive conditions, and we ourselves as war resisters have much to learn from these fellow resisters. We look forward to seeing what progress Senator Hancock and Assembly Member Ammiano will make through legislative hearings in challenging Governor Brown and the CDCR's policies of solitary confinement and inhumane conditions. We will be watching these next steps closely and are prepared to take further action to support the Short Corridor Collective in their resistance and struggle.

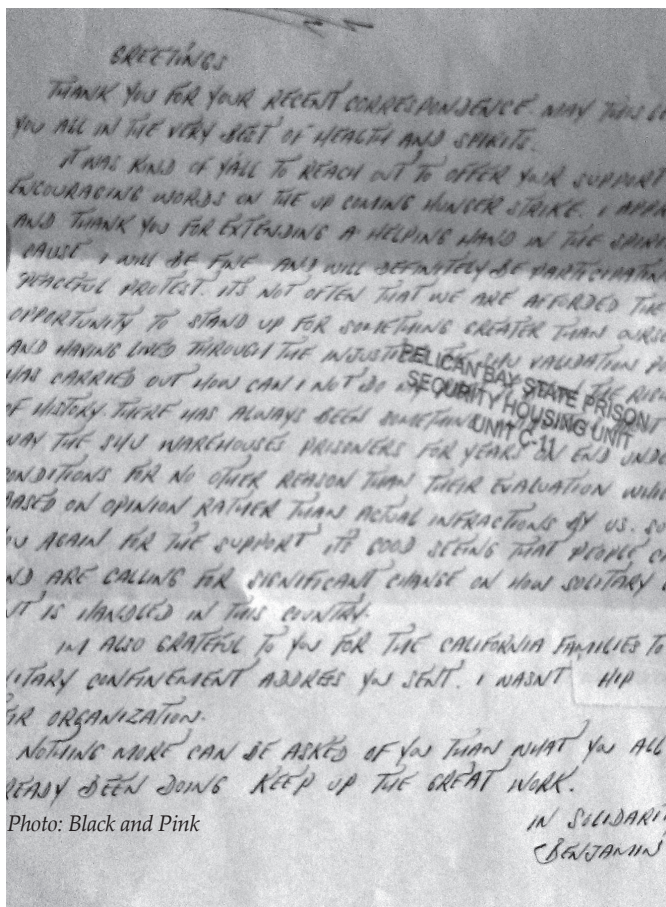


Photo: Black and Pink

Grantee Black and Pink, which is "an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and 'free world' allies who work toward(s) the abolition of the prison industrial complex," recieved a letter from one of their members who was on hunger strike at Pelican Bay to thank them for their support of the strike.

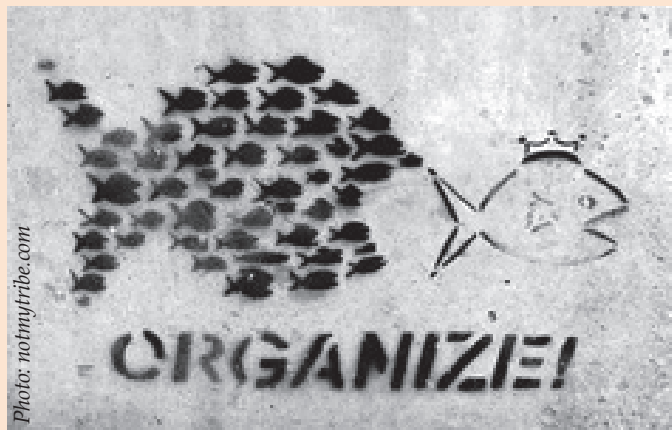
# In This Together

By Saif Rahman

As the radical activist Helen Keller once said, “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

As you know, RESIST supports hundreds of activist organizations throughout the US who are dedicated to organizing their communities to make this world a more peaceful and just place. But what you might not know is that every year these groups also often come together, organize together, and fight for this new world together.

Building a movement is no easy task. As the saying goes, if it were easy, they wouldn't call it a “struggle.” That is why we love when we hear about multiple RESIST grantees strategizing together, organizing for a common goal together, or express solidarity for one another. That is what building a movement is all about to us: frontline communities banding together to take on the most powerful forces in the world.



This *Newsletter* tells stories of a few RESIST grantees who have come together to organize and support each other. In Montana, two grantees are coming together to bravely stop environmental destruction from rolling through their communities. It tells the story of how prisoners in California went on hunger strike to protest their conditions and how messages of solidarity came in from across the country. It highlights a major victory in the struggle for peace, justice, and human rights in the Middle East and how critical it is for people to raise their voices and support that work.

We all know that those in power have the money, weapons, and media to maintain the status quo. But we have the numbers, the determination, and morality on our side. Therefore, as these grantees have shown us, the more we organize together, the stronger we are.

*Saif Rahman is the director of communications at RESIST and the editor of the Newsletter.*

## Support grassroots social justice organizing today.

Your contribution to RESIST supports hundreds of progressive groups across the country. Please send what you can, as often as you can. The groups we fund count on us, and **we count on you.**

### RESISTance Wear Order Form

- Fidel Hat: \$16. How many? \_\_\_\_
- Protest Hat: \$16. How many? \_\_\_\_  
(price includes shipping)



Protest Hat



Fidel Hat

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*Inside this issue:*  
In This Together



Meet RESIST

## GRANT RECIPIENTS

RESIST awards grants six times a year to groups throughout the United States engaged in organizing for social, economic and environmental justice. Below is a list of a few of our recent grantees.

For more information, visit the RESIST website at [www.resistinc.org](http://www.resistinc.org)

### Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice

331 E Willetta Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004,  
[www.azworkerrightscenter.org](http://www.azworkerrightscenter.org)

The Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice was founded in 2006 to mobilize the local faith community to support unions and campaigns to strengthen labor protections. They have partnered with low-income workers in residential construction and hotel and laundry worker campaigns and opened the Worker Rights Center to better meet the expressed community needs for services, training and campaigns that support non-union, low-wage immigrant workers.

A \$3,500 grant from RESIST will help

build a union of underrepresented workers in Arizona to end anti-worker policies and injustice in the workplace.

### Olneyville Neighborhood Association

122 Manton Avenue, Box 8, Providence, RI 02909, [www.onaprovidence.org](http://www.onaprovidence.org)

Olneyville Neighborhood Association began in 1998 in one of Rhode Island's most marginalized neighborhoods to address day to day living conditions. Olneyville Neighborhood Association has been instrumental in building the state-wide coalition "Todos Somos Arizona"

A RESIST grant of \$4,000 will allow Olneyville Neighborhood Association to continue to empower those most affected by the issues. And continue to build state-wide opposition to anti-immigrant sentiment and policies.

### Indian People's Action

PO Box 826, Tucson, AZ 85701,  
[www.nwfc.org](http://www.nwfc.org)

Indian People's Action champions direct action to improve the lives and build

the voice and power of Montana's urban Indians as they organize to achieve racial, social and economic equality.

RESIST's \$1,500 grant will help Indian People's Action continue to push for health care reform, to address the lack of ambulance services in Native communities and to organize for full funding of the Indian Health Improvement Act.

### Vermont Workers' Center

294 North Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401, [www.workerscenter.org](http://www.workerscenter.org)

Vermont Workers' Center was formed in 1998 by a group of low income workers wanting to address a broad range of issues facing workers and their communities. Today they continue to fight for workers' rights, livable wages, healthcare and housing.

A RESIST multi-year grant of \$4,000 will enable the Vermont Workers' Center to continue to expand their mission and vision for social change. They will also continue their campaign work for accessible and affordable healthcare coverage in Vermont, and continue to expand leadership development statewide.