

The Monthly Voice

October 2016 - ONE DC Newsletter

"Movements should operate under the assumption of equality of sacrifice. Working in solidarity means doing something that's uncomfortable." -Eugene Puryear, founder of [Justice First](#)

The State of Black Labour Organizing in DC: Past, Present and Future

On Tuesday, October 25, ONE DC, along with Resource Generation, hosted an interactive panel discussion about the history and current state of black labour in DC as well as the role of intersectionality in solidarity organizing. Sitting on the panel were **limay Ho**, the Associate Director at Resource Generation and serving on the board of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice; **Kimberly Mitchell**, a long time union member and labor activist in the fashion, beauty, and retail industry as well as Vice President of the UFCW Board of Directors; and **Eugene Puryear**, founder of the anti-gentrification group *Justice First*, *Jobs Not Jails Coalition*, *Stop Police Terror Project-D.C.* and author of the book *Shackled and Chained: Mass Incarceration in Capitalist America*.



From Left: Kimberly Mitchell, limay Ho, Eugene Puryear

During the discussion, the panel named two forces impeding a robust and inclusionary coalition of black labour organization: 1) A shift away from labour organizing towards non-profit paternalism and 2) an absence of worker solidarity.

Many of the organizations built to work on behalf of black workers and communities are run by non-representational groups. It's the "professionalization of organizing," Eugene remarked. Non-profits embody an institutional hierarchy whereby the needs of the community are defined by an organization and not the people. "Black workers have become the object of organizing, not the subject," Eugene quickly added. Career activism has a

tendency to silence the voice of the community in favor of its own programs and political allegiances, especially when confronted with the need for funding.

This tendency speaks to the reality of organizing within conditions set by Neoliberal Capitalism. Organizations need money to function and that money must come from somewhere. Yet, Resource Generation has worked tirelessly to reduce the limitations funding an organization normally necessitates. "We have the flexibility to give to organizations, which frees you to support this or that,"



limay deftly explained, "There's no hoop jumping." One of Resource Generation's core values is believing that "social justice movements need to be led by communities most directly impacted by injustice." Resource Generation aims to reverse the status quo of funding: They subordinate their privilege and wealth to the voice of the community.

Still, even if an answer to the question of funding were found we must still confront the stark lack of worker solidarity and organization. Lamenting, Kimberly spoke a hard truth, "Mothers and daughters have always been organizing the community, church, schools, etc but they've become complacent. I have to remind them that they are needed." A little later she discusses the disparity between the older and newer generation of workers: "I see workers that have worked for forty plus years being disrespected and told 'We don't need you.' What we have now is an assembly line of workers who are unorganized and untrained who are lucky to be there past the ninety day probation period. Its very important we teach the younger generation to let them know that this is not okay or normal." Similarly, limay vigilantly highlighted the need for an intersectional approach to organizing: "The legal/illegal immigration status is a strategy for keeping a mass of workers that are vulnerable. Trans folk have some of the highest homeless and unemployed numbers, which are even more when you're black and trans. Queer youth can be cut off from their family and resources."

In the end, the panel left the audience with some advice for moving forward. "Accountability is a key issue. The city will pass anything that sounds progressive but will include either infinite loopholes or make it impossible to enforce." Kimberly was in agreement: "DC is dressed up with nowhere to go." Kimberly also was adamant about opposing gentrification: "What we need to organize around is housing. We are being displaced. This is everybody's fight." Earlier in the discussion, limay stood by countering the effects of gentrification: "I don't believe DC should be built on my needs and my consumption." By the end of the night she returned to this sentiment: "The powers that be center the needs of wealthy people and not long-term residents. We need to change the game. We need to focus systemically."

If you would like to find out more about Resource Generation [click here](#). [Click here to support ONE DC.](#)

Please join us in Standing with #NoDAPL

In a display of absolute barbarism, militarized police, in conjunction with the National Guard, brutally repressed the peaceful water protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota. The fascists subjected the Sioux Nation, along with fellow demonstrators, to beatings, tear gas, sound cannons, and dog attacks. There are also [reports](#) of inhumane treatment where protesters were thrown into dog kennels after being arrested.

The Sioux Nation are protesting the North Dakota Access Pipeline on grounds of both treaty and human rights violations. First, the pipeline would cut straight through Sioux territory violating the treaty of Fort Laramie drawn in 1868. Second, the pipeline would devastate the local environment and wildlife including our most precious resource: water.

These events must be taken in the context of America's long history of brutalizing and betraying indigenous peoples. This tradition traces all the way back to America's seventh President Andrew Jackson and beyond. The United States has endlessly violated treaties with indigenous peoples often redrawing them under the threat of violence.

From gentrification in the District to violating the land rights of the Sioux Nation we see the same pattern repeat. Power knows but two modes of response: indifference to the cries for justice and violence for those who resist.

We ask you to stand with the Sioux Nation and with all peoples displaced and dispossessed in the name of profit and Empire!

Begin by learning more and visiting the Sacred Stone Camp [website](#). Sign a [petition](#) calling for an end to the construction of the North Dakota Access Pipeline. Stay updated by following NoDAPL on [twitter](#).

ONE DC Member Spotlight: Luci Murphy



Over the weekend we sat down with Luci Murphy as a part of our Member Spotlight feature. We met at Lamont Park in Mt. Pleasant, which was soon to be the site of the annual Dia De Los Muertos or Day of the Dead celebration with Luci slated to perform later that day. Together we discussed her thoughts on ONE DC, politics, and the unique importance of music.

ONE DC: Before we get started, I see everyone is setting up for an event. What is it? Are you performing today?

Luci: Mmhmm! Its the Day of the Dead. The tradition is that people build an altar and bring photographs of their deceased loved ones, put them on the alter, and remember them. It's a day of remembrance. We'll have music and poetry. We usually do a little parade a few blocks through the

neighborhood to remind everybody.

ONE DC: You have a rich history with ONE DC stretching back 10 years. Could you briefly state what attracted you to the organization in the beginning and what motivates you to still be an active member?

Luci: The issues. The issues of housing and jobs. These are issues that we still have not resolved. There's a lot of dislocation. I remember when my aunt lived in a substantial house in the 60s and the price on it was 25,000. The same house is probably three quarters of a million now. How do you do that? People's salaries aren't changing. What is this?

ONE DC: What is it about ONE DC's approach to organizing that you like?

Luci: The emphasis on co-ops. Studying co-ops and preparing people to build co-ops!

ONE DC: Last month you performed at the Renter's Day of Action. What inspired your performance? What did you want people to take away?

Luci: We have a lot of vacant buildings in Washington, DC and then we have our homeless. Why can't we get these two together?

ONE DC: The Black Worker's Center Chorus is in its early stages of gestation. What's the difference between it and the DC Labour Chorus?

Luci: The Black Worker's Center Chorus will mostly be from Washington, DC. It's going to be the people who are dealing with these issues first hand. I would really like to see a good representation of wards six, seven, & eight, which is where the BWC is located.

ONE DC: When do you think it'll begin meeting?

Luci: It'll be after December 3rd.

ONE DC: And if someone is interested in joining?

Luci: Call me! People are scared to call me! They know I'm going to give them something to do!

ONE DC: As a performer, music and art are an essential dynamic in your activism. Who's work, either artistic or political, inspires you?

Luci: I grew up with some very activist congregations. St. Steven and the Incarnations and because I was a member of St. Steven I met a woman, an older lady from Mississippi who embodied the tradition. She played three chords on the guitar but she played them in a hell of a way! She got people to sing along with her. She had something called Mother Scott and her children and I was one of her children. The pastor would take us to city council hearings and she would sing to make a point and of course that would make the news. Not everyone comes to a city council hearing with a guitar prepared to sing!

ONE DC: There's something special about music, especially call-and-response, that can bring people together. What do you find unique about it?

Luci: It works!

ONE DC: Music and Art have always played a fundamental role in the struggle for justice, emancipation, and equality. Outside of the feeling of solidarity when performing music, how else do you see music contributing to the struggle for justice?

Luci: We didn't have the SNCC freedom singers here but we had their recordings. We were able to use them.

ONE DC: American University was hosting a panel and an art gallery to honor the work of Emory Douglas. They were discussing the power and importance of his work and the way he could communicate very complicated messages in a very simple way thereby reaching a wide variety of people. Do you feel that music shares this quality?

Luci: Absolutely! I think music is actually more social because more people can participate. The creation of visual art is a very solitary process whereas music is a social process.

ONE DC: You mentioned there's more participation in music not only in a call-and-response but people are also free to riff on music anyway they want to at any time they want to through rhythm, clapping, vocalization, improvisation, etc.

Luci: Fredrick Douglas KirkPatrick said that it used to be that anybody could sing a song or pray a prayer but now its gotten so complicated. We only have specialists doing these things and we're lost in this specialization.

ONE DC: This kinda goes back to politics where the only people to be respected are the specialists.

Luci: Our Chorus is singing a song called 'You can dance, you can sing' taken from a proverb from Zimbabwe, which has been translated as 'If you can walk, you can dance; if you can talk, you can sing' but thats really a message for us in the United States. What the actual song says is if you can dance, dance, if you can sing, sing! You know, like do it! Everyone in Zimbabwe can dance and sing and nobody's embarrassed. That is part of what you do as a member of a community whereas here if you don't move just right you may get criticized and if you're self-conscious you may decide not to participate.

ONE DC: Similarly, there are now specific places to do it. The community aspect is being pushed out. The only way to access it is by joining a club that you have to pay for or renting a space to play in.

Luci: And I see some of the singing and music playing has become commercialized: "If you pay such and such an amount you can play as a part of this jazz group we are starting."

ONE DC: You should be able to just pick up and play. That's just what you do.

Luci: But somebody has just rented some space and has decided that they're going to get some people to pay for their time. That shouldn't be the only way that culture survives.

ONE DC: All across the country people are facing dispossession and displacement at the hands of the ruling class for profit. From the District to North Dakota neoliberal capitalism is violating people's right to housing

and land. Even more, resistance is often met with brutal state violence and repression. How do you think people should go about building solidarity with one another, especially when you are economically contributing to those forces, willingly or unwillingly?

Luci: We need to study history because in order to know who we are we need to know where we come from. This country is built on great injustice and cruelty for which it's never apologized. It's never apologized to the indigenous people for all the murder and theft and never apologized to the African people for all the centuries of unpaid labor. We need to study who we are, where we come from, and then form that we will know what we have to do, but it starts with an apology.

ONE DC: How do you get an apology without allowing Empire to bury these issues as something that's happened only 'in the past'?

Luci: We have to build consciousness and right now folks are very unconscious. They are having poisonous television, poisonous food, poisonous water, and poisonous air thrown at them all the time. Well, how can they get conscious? We've got to build a movement. A movement that has to educate, energize, and encourage folks.

To contact Luci about the Black Workers Center Chorus you can find her Facebook page [here](#) or call her at **202.234.8840**.

Sponsor ONE DC's Presentation of Dance Place's *What's Going On: Life, Love, & Social Justice*

For one night only on Friday, November 18th, ONE DC will be hosting Dance Place's very special Marvin Gaye-inspired performance: "What's Going On? Life, Love & Social Justice." In Dance Place's first full-length production, taking inspiration from 1971's inimitable *What's Going On*, Marvin Gaye's insights into life, love and social justice are given fresh perspectives with new choreography by Vincent E. Thomas, Ralph Glenmore and Sylvia Soumah. The evening-length work features Modern, Jazz and West African dance and seeks to spark conversations to ignite change in each community it touches.



Dance Place has generously dedicated the performance of "What's Going On" on November 18th to be a night of fundraising for ONE DC. The evening will begin with a reception at 6pm, followed by the performance, lasting until 9pm.

[By sponsoring this event](#), you will contribute to our efforts to [raise over \\$1 million](#) to fund the opening of ONE DC Black Workers Center, as well as to

fund #Another10Years of organizing for our human rights to housing, income, & wellness in DC. *Securing sponsors will also enable us to offer more free/reduced price tickets to this event for our long-time members.* [Click here to become a What's Going On? sponsor!](#)

To make your sponsorship donation offline, please mail check to ONE DC, PO Box 26049, Washington, DC, 20001, or contact Dominic at 202-232-2915, dmoulden@onedconline.org.

[You can also buy your ticket to the event here.](#) Free or reduced price tickets are [available!](#)

We are looking for volunteers to both prepare for and help run the event!

Volunteer roles include:

- 6 Ushers - 4 volunteers to usher people in and out of the theater. 2 volunteers to assist stage manager Hannah with various tasks
- 4 volunteers to arrive at 5:00pm to both set up food and clean up afterwards
- 2 volunteers to monitor the food once it's been set up
- 4 volunteers to help clean up after the event
- 2 volunteers to help serve beverages

Similarly, ONE DC is also looking for volunteers to phone bank the weeks of 10/31 and 11/7. Phone banking will include spreading the word about the event as well as recruiting sponsors. If you're interested in volunteering for the event please email Claire at ccook@onedconline.org, or call **202.232.2915**.

ONE DC Welcomes New Staff!



Pictured right: Yasmina Mrabet

Yasmina Mrabet is a Moroccan-American organizer and conflict resolution practitioner. She grew up in the Middle East, North Africa, and the United States in a cross-cultural, interfaith household. Yasmina is Community Organizer for

ONE DC's People's Platform, and has been a member of ONE DC for three years. She joins ONE DC with experience as an organizer in the Labor Movement, the Anti-War Movement, and the Movement for Black Lives. Most recently, as a union organizer with UFCW Local 400, Yasmina worked to develop Project Retail, a growing group of retail and food workers fighting for living wages, fair working conditions, and access to public transportation in and around Washington, D.C. She remains a member of Stop Police Terror Project DC's core organizing group, and is President of the Board of Directors of NVMS, a conflict resolution organization based in Fairfax, VA. Yasmina is passionate about organizing to expose, oppose, and resist institutionalized racism and the systematic targeting of black and brown communities through gentrification, mass incarceration, and war. Yasmina holds a BA from the University of Virginia in Middle Eastern Studies and a MS from George Mason University in Conflict Analysis and Resolution.

Organizing & Coalition Building Updates

Congress Heights

On October 27, DC attorney General Karl Racine filed a lawsuit against Sanford Capital LLC, citing 129 code violations. This is the second lawsuit this year filed by the District against Sanford Capital (The first was on behalf of the Congress Heights residents while this lawsuit is on behalf of the residents of Terrace Manor Apartments). [Click here](#) and [here](#) to read more.

Brookland Manor



WE ARE THE **CURRENT RESIDENTS** OF BROOKLAND MANOR AND WE WILL BE THE **FUTURE RESIDENTS** OF BROOKLAND MANOR BECAUSE WE ARE ONE BIG FAMILY - *ON ONE ACCORD* - AND THIS IS OUR COMMUNITY!

WE HAVE GENERATIONS ON THIS PROPERTY AND **WE WILL FIGHT** BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY **TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY** AFFORDABLE AND OUR FAMILY TOGETHER.

WE ARE CALLING ON PEOPLE IN THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THE WHOLE CITY TO SUPPORT US IN OUR ENDEAVOR. **PLEASE BE READY WHEN WE CALL ON YOU!**

BROOKLAND MANOR/BRENTWOOD VILLAGE RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

[Click here to sign and show your support for Brookland Manor residents.](#)

Black Workers Center

Members from the Black Workers Center met on October 20 at our regular monthly meeting to continue discussing the [Five Faces of Oppression](#). In our discussion of **Marginalization**, the act of relegating or confining a group of people to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge of society, questions were raised concerning the disparity between gentrification in the District and the struggle for economic and racial equality. More specifically, how to organize in the face of the displacing and deteriorating effects of gentrification. Along these lines, members also discussed the Black Workers Center's definition of Blackness. By the end, the definition was left open and subject to develop as we continue to push our conversations each month.

Back in September, members of the Black Workers Center and Cooperation DC sat down with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. DMPED is beginning to develop a new economic strategy and is interested in cooperative development as part of a broader economic strategy for DC. [To get involved with Cooperation DC, click here.](#) Similarly, DMPED is hosting a panel discussion on the effects of sharing and gig economies on the District. [Click here for more information.](#)

Click [here to read](#) the feature of the ONE DC Black Workers Center in Yes! Magazine!

Upcoming Events

4th Annual Coop Clinic - Co-op Management

Saturday, November 12 - 9 AM - 12:30 PM

3047 15th St NW - Next Step Charter School

The next Coop Clinic will be focused on strategies for better Co-op Management. The trainings will be provided by organizations involved in supporting housing cooperatives in the DC area.

[Click here for more info and to RSVP](#)

DC Ideas Fest

DC IdeasFest opens on November 17, and what will follow are four days of high-profile keynotes, ideas events and workshops to showcase solutions and innovations from every quadrant of Washington and harness all of our diversity, creativity and energy to build a stronger city, specifically targeting opportunities in the areas of education, equity, and innovation. Signature events will include idea slams, participatory theater, "What Works" workshops featuring cross-experiential groups of thinkers tackling problems such as affordable housing, and a series of "Solve This" challenges to encourage grassroots solutions to intractable problems such as closing off the school-to-prison pipeline.

[Click here for more info](#)

Admin & Organizational Management Committee Meeting

Tuesday, November 29 - 6:00 PM

ONE DC Office - 614 S St NW, Carriage House

Admin Committee meets monthly to identify what tasks need to be completed that month, assign tasks to members, & discuss long-term committee strategy. Committee oversees some of the following: website, member database, social media, e-newsletter & communication, strategic planning, member events & more.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Member Appreciation Celebration

Saturday, December 3 - 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM

RISE Demonstration Center - 2730 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE

The Member Appreciation Celebration is our end-of-year event to celebrate the wins, actions, and accomplishments of our members, donors, supporters, and volunteers. All ages are welcome as well as long-time members and new supporters.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

National Conference on Gentrification and the Destruction of Black Washington DC

Saturday & Sunday, November 5 & 6 - 9:00 AM & 10:00 AM

The conference will feature panels exploring, among other topics, gentrification in DC, the state of public education & the school-to-prison pipeline in DC, and policing, mass incarceration, & the enforcing of unfair sentencing laws. The conference will also include workshops on the criminal justice system,

affordable housing, police brutality, political organizing, and school privatization.

[Click here for more info & to RSVP](#)

ONE Bit of Good News

For the last 10 years, ONE DC has been fighting for freedom and justice. Help us celebrate our anniversary by sharing your stories of the struggle! We would love to hear your memories and reflections on your experiences with ONE DC. Tell us about a particularly memorable campaign or event that you were part of, or share your thoughts on where we've been and where we're going. All you have to do is email Dominic at dmoulden@onedconline.org and we'll set up a time for you to be informally interviewed.

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Do you want to be a writer or editor for the *Monthly Voice*? Email organizer@onedconline.org

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