



Walter Reuther and Augustus Pollack
Monuments @ Wheeling's Heritage Port

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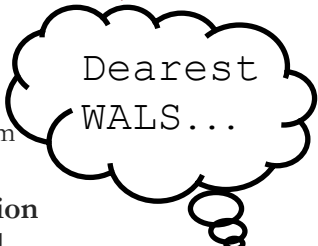
Admission: \$30 (students \$10)

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The First State Capitol
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Heritage Partners:
Walter P. Reuther Library Archives of Labor &
Urban Affairs
West Virginia Mine Wars Museum



WALS ~ OUR LOCATION

The WALS Foundation is based out of the First State Capitol building at 15th and Eoff streets in Wheeling, which housed the first government of West Virginia, established on June 20, 1863, with Arthur I. Boreman as governor.

WALS ~ OUR MISSION

The Wheeling Academy of Law and Science Foundation (WALS) is a non-profit established to promote educational programming in the areas of education, employment, labor history, local history, human rights, energy, and the environment; and to promote local economic opportunity, employment, and job creation in our city and region.

REUTHER-WHEELING LIBRARY & LABOR ARCHIVE

The WALS Foundation maintains a library and archives as a research and study center on the life, times, and thought of Wheeling's native son, labor leader and human rights activist, Walter P. Reuther. The archive collects, preserves, digitizes and makes accessible, material related to the life and work of Reuther and to the history of organized labor and the working class in Wheeling and the Upper Ohio Valley region.

What is the JOBS FIRST AGENDA?

One of primary initiatives of the WALS Foundation is called the "Jobs First Agenda," which seeks to create a new narrative based on fairness, not ideology; and on scientific facts, not partisan politics.

Top Ten Features of the Jobs First Agenda

- 1) Amend the U.S. Constitution to guarantee living wage jobs, free universal health care; and free public education through college.
- 2) Change state employment laws to require good faith and fair dealing in all employment relationships, and re-introduce empathy in our courts of law.
- 3) Abrogate the King's law of "employment at will" to provide job security based on the doctrine of good faith and fair dealing.
- 4) Make the government the employer of last resort, rebuilding the national Infrastructure like the Civilian Conservation Corps.
- 5) Change to a green, new energy economy in response to the existential threat of climate change, and offer more jobs in the process.
- 6) Reform tax code using incentivized rates and deductions as a reward for hiring employees at a living wage; eliminate favorable rates for corporations.
- 7) Implement a living wage through reformed collective bargaining by allowing every employee to choose or decline a labor union or professional association at the time of hiring in the private sector.
- 8) Abrogate the King's law of "Sovereign Immunity" by making the government accountable for making employment easy.
- 9) Broaden the scope of fiduciary duty laws to include avoidance of harm to the workforce; to the community; and to the environment.
- 10) Implement all future laws and policies based on the Jobs First Agenda, to restore America as the leader of the free world in values.

For more visit: walswheelingcommentaries.com
And walswheeling.org



WALS
FOUNDATION



and the Reuther-Wheeling Library
& Labor History Archive present:

Reconciling Labor Interests & Environmental Justice



September 2, 2023

Reuther-Pollack
Labor History Symposium VII

The
First State Capitol
Law Firm
CASSIDY, COGAN,
SHAPELL & VOEGELI, L.C.

ABC Bail Bonding	Ohio County Probate
Catholic Committee of Appalachia	Real Time Reporters
Patricia Croft Artist-in-Residence	The WALS Foundation
	WV PUBLIC BROADCASTING Northern Panhandle Bureau

SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, September 2, 2023

An annual symposium focused on regional labor history.

Doors Open: 9:30 am

Registration & *Continental Breakfast*

10:00 am - Dr. Hal Gorby

"The Ohio Valley's Struggle to Balance Labor and Environmentalism"

11:00 am - Dr. Josiah Rector

"The Black Lake Center, Deindustrialization, and the Social-Democratic Origins of the Environmental Justice Concept"

12 pm - Lunch Break:

- ◆ Lunch provided
- ◆ Reuther Birthday Celebration
- ◆ Walking Tour to the Reuther & Pollack monuments led by **Dr. David Javersak**

2:00 pm - Dr. Erik Loomis

"The Lost History of Labor-Environmental Alliances"

3:00 pm - Dr. J. Mijin Cha

"The Power of Environmental Justice-Labor Coalitions to Deliver a Just Energy Transition for All"

SPEAKER BIOS & ABSTRACTS



Dr. J. Mijin Cha is an assistant professor of environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is also a fellow at Cornell University's newly launched Climate Jobs Institute, where she works on the Labor Leading on Climate initiative. Dr. Cha's work looks at the intersection of climate, labor, and inequality. Her recent research is on "just transition," how to transition workers and communities equitably into a low-carbon future. Dr. Cha is on the board of the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, Greenpeace Fund, and a member of the California Bar.

Abstract: Ending fossil fuel use is necessary for protecting the future of humanity. But, ending fossil fuel use will result in job loss and economic hardship for communities. This talk will discuss the challenges decarbonization raises and how environmental justice and labor interests can work together to build a more just future where all communities can thrive.

Dr. William Hal Gorby is a Teaching Associate Professor of History at West Virginia University, and his work focuses on the history of West Virginia and Appalachia. He is the 2020-21 recipient of the Eberly College's Outstanding Teacher award and the University's Nicholas Evans Excellence in Advising Award. His book, *Wheeling's Polonia: Reconstructing Polish Community in a West Virginia Steel Town* was published by WVU Press in 2020, and won the Oskar Halecki Book Prize as the top book on the Polish American experience in 2022-23.



Abstract: For generations, working people throughout the Upper Ohio Valley have fought for better wages, safer working conditions, and raised concerns about the wider environment. Pollution and diseases tied to industry were very pertinent issues for local labor unions. In the early 20th century, the Ohio Valley Trades and Labor Assembly improved working class life, as seen in their advocating for a filtrated water system. However, labors' goals did not always align perfectly with the rising environmental movement. Many unions initially raised concerns about strip mining and other new technologies, but as the economy turned precarious in the 1970's and 1980's, many working people came to view environmental regulations as detrimental to their economic security. Striking a balance supporting economic and environmental justice has been a long feature of the region's labor history.



Dr. Erik Loomis is Professor of History at the University of Rhode Island. He is the author of three books. *Out of Sight: The Long and Disturbing Story of Corporations Outsourcing Catastrophe* (2015), *Empire of Timber: Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forest* (2016), and *A History of America in Ten Strikes* (2018). He has written about labor, environmental, and other issues for *The NY Times*, *Washington Post*, *Dissent*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, and other publications.

Abstract: The 1970s saw an enormous upswing in both the environmental and labor democracy movements. This talk explores the connections between those movements to demon-

strate what could have been and what could be. Versions of a labor environmentalism extend back to the 1930s in the timber industry and these slowly grew, even before the popular environmental movement began rising after World War II. The expansion of chemical usage, toxicity, and the environmental crisis increasingly clear to Americans by the late 1960s helped to bring these movements together and created significant alliances between environmental groups and unions in timber, steel, oil, chemicals, auto, and other industries. The economic stagnation of the late 70s and the rise of capital mobility that closed factories strained and eventually destroyed these relationships. Today, some unions engage in overtly anti-environmental actions while many environmental groups struggle to speak to working Americans. This talk will explore this forgotten history, discuss current conflicts in historical context, and point the way forward to the rise of new and increasingly meaningful alliances.

Dr. Josiah Rector is an Assistant Professor of History at the University of Houston. He received his Ph.D. at Wayne State University in Detroit, where he spent many hours at the Walter Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs. He is the author of *Toxic Debt: An Environmental Justice History of Detroit* (Univ. of N.C. Press, 2022), and two articles about the UAW and environmental politics (in the *Journal of American History* and *Modern American History*, respectively).



Abstract: This paper argues that UAW President Walter Reuther's social democratic conception of economic justice shaped his approach to environmental issues. Reuther believed that environmental protection should be integrated with the economic agenda of the trade union movement, the civil rights movement, and the War on Poverty. The Walter and May Reuther Family Education Center in Black Lake, Michigan, inspired by the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions' worker education centers, expressed these values. The "Working for Environmental and Economic Justice and Jobs" conference, held at Black Lake in May 1976, promoted the concept of "environmental justice" over five years before the mass protests in Warren County, North Carolina, which scholars often cite as the "birthplace" of the environmental justice movement. Tragically, however, deindustrialization, automation, and union-busting inflamed tensions between environmental and economic justice. Revisiting Reuther's social democratic politics can offer inspiration for us as we grapple with these challenges today.