

# Inspiration is Contagious! Native American Women, Guantanamo Solidarity, The Battle Against Monsanto, The TPP...

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Inspiration is Contagious: Native Indians, Workers, Climate, Food and Torture Activists, and a Polar Bear

A group of [Native American women are walking the length of the Mississippi river – 1,200 miles](#) – to raise awareness about pollution. They carry a 1½ quart bucket of clean water from the headwaters of the Mississippi which they plan to pour into the mouth of the river to show the her what she can be.

Climate Justice activists may be [more powerful than we realize](#). The French energy company, Total, sold its 49% ownership in the Canadian oil sands to the Canadian energy company, Suncor, for a \$1.65 billion loss. Why? The cost is getting too expensive and profits are going down. With all of the highly publicized tar sands spills recently in Minnesota, Arkansas and other states, people are seeing the environmental risks. Since we know that the Alberta Tar Sands is the tipping point for climate change, shouldn't corporations be held accountable for the climate disasters that will inevitably follow? Protest pressure is building. See [here](#) and [here](#).



The hunger strike continues. [Solidarity protests were organized last week by Witness Against Torture against the Guantanamo Bay prison](#). Guantanamo is an example of criminal injustice. The trial against the NYPD's Stop and Frisk program is exposing the practice of racial targeting by New York police. This week, one of the [commanders caught on tape settled a lawsuit against him for \\$78,000](#). We wrote an overview of the abusive criminal (in)justice system, "[A Forest of Poisonous Trees.](#)"

In New York City, low-wage, [fast food workers walked off the job today in the largest-ever strike against the fast food industry](#) which has virtually no unions. Workers are demanding that chains like McDonald's and Wendy's raise their wages to \$15 an hour and allow them to

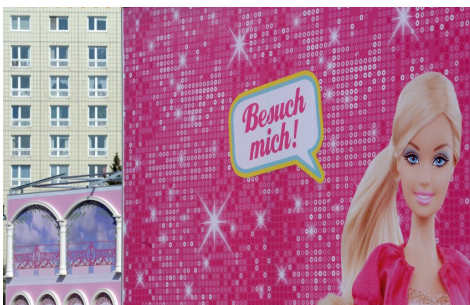
organize a union without retaliation. More than 400 workers, from 50-some stores, will participate in the surprise strike, doubling the size of their previous walkout and potentially shutting down several fast food restaurants for the day. [Waging Nonviolence published an article](#) that explained what it takes to organize a workplace.

With the passage of the [Monsanto Protection Act](#), which protects Monsanto's dangerous GMO foods from litigation, [more people are speaking out](#). The nation's food supply, already in bad shape, will be put at greater risk as Congress gets more deeply in bed with the massive corporate criminal, Monsanto.



[Seven thousand coal miners and their families protested](#) in West Virginia against Peabody Coal which set up a sham corporation designed to go bankrupt and take the pensions and health care of workers with them by terminating the contract between the United Mine Workers Union negotiated with Peabody.

Teachers are organizing to take back education from the corporations as part of the commodification of American youth. This weekend [Occupy the Department of Education](#) is holding a series of teach-ins in Washington, DC.



We're reminded how important the corporate take-over of our culture is by an [Occupy Barbie protest against a life-sized Barbie house](#) that is opening in Berlin and planning a European tour. Haven't we grown beyond Barbie as the symbol for women?



It's not only corporations that pollute culture, white supremacists continue to do their dirty work. The KKK went to the black majority city of Memphis to protest the city changing the name of a park from a past Grand Dragon of their despicable organization. [Thousands turned out to protest the KKK](#) – as usual in these

cases, more protesters than KKKers. Students, faculty and the university president at Towson University [celebrated diversity](#) in protest of a new unofficial white supremacist group, the White Student Union.

This week we were reminded that we are part of a global movement, when 50,000 went to Tunisia for the World Social Forum; [Medea Benjamin gives us a report](#). A thousand people marched to where the fruit vendor set himself on fire in December 2010 and sparked not only a revolt in Tunisia but the Arab Spring and the Indignado and Occupy movements. They held a mass General Assembly at the spot. The [World Social Forum issued a declaration](#) which made many important points and described the work of all of us:

*“Together, the peoples of all the continents are fighting to oppose the domination of capital, hidden behind illusory promises of economic progress and the illusion of political stability.”*



We love [this photograph of a one-person protest against arctic drilling](#) on the Moscow River near the Kremlin. It shows that you don't need a lot of people to effectively get out your message. Will we see this on the Potomac?

A few more people can do even more. These [eight families in Minnesota declared an eviction-free zone](#) stating *“We will no longer be held hostage by the financial institutions that crashed our economy. We hereby declare our community a Foreclosure and Eviction Free Zone. We will not leave our homes until the following demands are met.”* They go on to list specific demands and conclude saying *“We believe that safe, equitable, and affordable housing is a human right. We shall not be moved.”*

There are issues that unite all of us; perhaps the most important is [the global corporate coup – the Trans-Pacific Partnership](#). It is becoming more and more evident that no matter what issue you care about – financial regulation, food, healthcare, climate change, jobs and wages, the environment . . . – the TPP will undermine your work. The TPP should bring us together. And, [it is a fight we can win](#). The time to [get active is now](#). There is strength in solidarity.

Finally, we were reminded how the Occupy movement scared the power structure is of the people as [more information was released](#) about government efforts to suppress the movement, [resulting in a variety](#) of [news reports](#).

- [Margaret Flowers's blog](#)

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