

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Triangle, NC
Chapter



Newsletter Spring 2018

Confederate Monument Has to Go: WILPF Joins UNC Student Activists

- Emily Keel

The statue of the Confederate soldier occupying the entry to UNC Chapel Hill has been a subject of controversy since it was erected in 2014, including many Black Student Movement protests in the 1970's. Following the deadly protest in Charlottesville in August, the figure once again became central to protests regarding the overt racism it engenders.



In August, several days of protests at the site and verbal conflicts prompted Chancellor Folt, along with

signatures from President Spellings, UNC Board Chair Bissette and UNC- CH Trustee's Chair Cochrane to ask Governor Cooper for a ruling about relocating the statue in light of the 2015 law forbidding removal of historical monuments on public property. After receiving the governor's support for relocating the monument to avoid safety concerns, the group failed to act promptly and are now ensnared in the foot dragging measures created by the state legislature and supported by the partisan UNC Board of Governors. The NC Historical Commission has been given the responsibility of soliciting expert opinions of historians and legal advisers across the state and finally of opening a venue for public comment. They also plan to hold a single public hearing before issuing a recommendation to the legislature in April. The Republican leadership has since stated that no statue is to be removed to avoid threats to it by the public but only if there are dangers from nature, from construction or other events.

Students created regular sit-ins to raise awareness of the injustice and to educate fellow students. Weeks into the vigils, it became apparent that a UNC police officer in plain clothes had infiltrated the student group, posing as a sympathetic member of the community. Students had never planned any subversive activity and lost even more trust in the university's ability to judge

the controversy surrounding the monument with any pretense of fairness.

In November, student activists invited WILPF to join the struggle. We have been a presence each Wednesday from 12-2 since. The Raging Grannies, many of whom are also WILPF members, have also joined in each week. Our goal is to inform those we encounter in the South Campus area by distributing leaflets on the history of this and other monuments erected in the period of Jim Crow, nearly 50 years after defeat in the Civil War. The narrative put forth in support of Sam and other statues has been to honor the soldiers for fighting for "their country" in a war where the North had no respect for the Southern way of life. However, the fight to maintain slavery and white supremacy was cited in numerous succession speeches as it was in the dedication of what we benignly call "Silent Sam". At that very dedication in 1913 Julian Carr, local industrialist, stated that such soldiers' "steadfastness had saved the very life of the Anglo-Saxon race in the South". A pictorial history of the monument can be seen here:

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/Z4gHJKurmmkZS/> prepared by the UNC Dept. of History. Another, prepared by the English Dept., shows the dedication photo with Sam surrounded by Confederate flags. <https://digitalresearch.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/chronicling-silent-sam/about-chronicling-silent-sam/dedication-of-silent-sam/exhibit-items-group2>

The presence of the Confederate soldier is a constant reminder to the African American community of the esteem with which some still hold the old South. It pays homage to a time when the South chose to leave the union in order to support enslavement of fellow humans to maintain a way of life. It was dedicated at a time when the assertion of white supremacy was more than a subtle message. It was anything but patriotism and should certainly not be a point of celebration at this time. To allow this to occupy a place of honor at our university envelopes us in a cloud of shame.

The following actions can be taken by each of us to urge the statue's prompt removal:

- The NC Dept of Cultural Resources is currently receiving public comments on relocation of the monuments at the State Capitol. Please submit your recommendations for those and the UNC CH monument, as well, to:

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<https://digitalresearch.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/chronicling-silent-sam/about-chronicling-silent-sam/dedication-of-silent-sam/exhibit-items-group2>.

- Contact University System President Spellings at president@northcarolina.edu | 919-962-6983.
- Contact Chancellor Folt at chancellor@unc.edu
- Everyone is welcome to join our group every Wednesday 12-2 in solidarity with the student protesters.

Environmental Struggles Continue

- John Wagner

GenX Contamination from the Chemours (DuPont Chemical) into the Cape Fear River has been going on for over 30 years and has hidden the contamination and the health risks from the public. Recently it has been revealed that GenX and related compounds have also been released into the air and have affected a widespread area beyond the Cape Fear River. A new federal law suit has been filed for "willful, wanton, and reckless conduct" by the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority. The lead editorial in the Wilmington Star News on March 6, 2018 called for the DEQ to shut down the factory because it has shown an inability to stop the contamination, and a long-term disregard for public health.

- **Action Item:** Write ^{governor} Cooper at <https://governor.nc.gov/contact-governor-cooper> or call **(919) 814-2000** and to the DEQ <https://deq.nc.gov/contact> to demand that the Chemours Plant be shut down. Companies that pollute our air and water and violate the law should have their permits revoked.

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline cannot cut a gash across NC, cross hundreds of wetlands, streams, rivers, and swamps without serious and permanent harms to our state's waters. However, the ACP has now been permitted by Governor Cooper and the NC DEQ. In a sudden move, Governor Cooper pushed through the final 401 water permit for the pipeline while information was still being gathered by DEQ about major issues that had not been resolved about the effects of the pipeline construction and maintenance on the waters of NC. There were serious questions that had been raised by citizens and by DEQ, that Duke, Dominion and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) had left unanswered.

Governor Cooper has spoken out strongly against offshore drilling and should be supported and thanked for this action. However, to advocate for protecting our climate while approving an unneeded and major commitment to the ACP and its infrastructure that commits the state and Duke Energy to 40-50 years of continued and expanded use of fossil fuels is not only hypocritical but is an act that threatens planet earth. Governor Cooper's push to allow the ACP is also an act of environmental racism. Cooper is protecting wealthy coastal homeowners, fishing, and the tourist industry but allowing Duke Energy's ACP to bulldoze through communities of color, small farms, low income communities, and though the counties with the highest indigenous populations in the state.

The permits may have been granted but the fight to stop the ACP is not over. A statewide Day of Action to stop the ACP took place in February. As part of the protests, a group went to the NC Administrative Building to speak to Governor Cooper about revoking the ACP permits, and then refused to leave when he would not meet with them. WILPF's Lib Hutchby and



other NC citizens were joined by 24 people from across the United States in the sit-in; after a full day of talking, singing, praying, and discussions they were arrested at the end of the day.

- **Action Items** – The ACP protests and actions to prevent the pipeline will continue. Some tree cutting has begun, but legal challenges to the use of eminent domain to strip citizen property rights for corporate profits are in the courts. An escalation of protests and direct actions are being planned and will need participants and a large showing of community support. ***Please be ready to join and help with these non-violent actions in whatever way you can.***

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Climate Breakdown -The NC Environmental Management Commission will hear the young people's request for the consideration of rules to phase out CO2 emissions and protect their constitutional rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" which will be grossly violated if the state refuses to act to move to a fossil free future. The issue will be addressed in the next full meeting of the Environmental Management Commission in March.

- **Action Item:** Please show up and support these courageous high school students who are not old enough to vote yet but are asking for the state – and those of us that can vote – to act now to protect their generation and all future generations.



WILPF Continues to Support Mission of NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture –Peggy Misch

Back in 2005 when a group of people became aware of Aero Contractors' flying planes from the Johnston County Airport to transport captured men from places all over the world to undergo "enhanced" interrogation in dark sites and Guantánamo in a CIA program, members of WILPF often participated in protests and/or educational programs held by NC Stop Torture Now, the organization that formed and later initiated the NC Commission of Inquiry on Torture (www.nccit.org, a 501 (c) 3 organization). WILPF Triangle Branch became one of 27 early endorsers of NCCIT (www.nccit.org/endorse#ncorgs).

Some members of WILPF attended the two-day NCCIT Public Hearings in Raleigh on November 30 and December 1, an effort to put North Carolina and the nation back on track to uphold local, state, national, and international law: to demonstrate torture of humans is unacceptable under any circumstances. During these Hearings 11 well-recognized Commissioners from various backgrounds, 6 of whom are North Carolinians, heard testimony from 20 individuals, including two victims of US torture, psychologists, former governmental officials, the co-founder of the UK Rendition Project, academics, attorneys, and military personnel (www.nccit.org/hearing).

The evidence of the effects of torture on the victim as well as the victimizer was overwhelming. It was noted that current surveys show over 50% of the American

public believes torture is acceptable under certain circumstances for national security. This justification appears so abhorrent to me, as one who attended the Nuremberg Trials as a high school student and witnessed Nazi criminal physicians given fair, transparent, public trials for their crimes before being sentenced to death.

Currently NCCIT is focused on preparation of a report from the evidence given last fall that must be compiled, written, and put into a report we aim to give to the public by September 2018. The volunteer board and commissioners are working with two part-time staff and a few contracted experts under a need to meet a minimum budget of \$30 to \$50,000 to complete the project with a detailed document that recommends the state take responsibility for transparency, acknowledgement, apology, and restitution.

Members of WILPF can continue to help this project by:

- informing people of North Carolina's role in the CIA program of torture,
- participating in NC STN activities,
- and assisting in fundraising to insure a successful release of a report in the fall.

Living Wage Campaign – Miriam Thompson
WILPFers and its Labor Committee are working with the Orange County Living Wage, a local volunteer organization that has negotiated over 60 contracts with county private businesses who agree to give their workers a living wage of \$15 per hour. OCLW is asking WILPFers and other supporters to go on their website, frequent the participating businesses and thank them. Names and locations can be found on <http://www.orangecountylivingwage.org> or the OCLW Facebook page.

WILPF's weekly radio show, **WILPF's WAKE-UP CALL** at **WCOM 103.5 FM**, features social justice newsmakers, elected officials, and community leaders. The show airs **every Wednesday at 5-6PM**; you can also stream live at www.wcom.org. Hope you will listen/ watch – and let your friends know too! The program is also broadcast on **The Peoples Channel Thursdays at 10pm and Fridays at 6am**– TWC Channel 8 in Chapel Hill, TWC Channel 4 in Carrboro and TWC 18 in Durham. Call Lori Hoyt, Program Coordinator – 984-999-4069 with suggestions for guests and issues)

- Crew -Lori Hoyt, Emily O'Hare, Iris Schwitzer

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All Labor Has Dignity – Sunday, March 18, 3-5:30pm, United Church of Chapel Hill, MLK Blvd. Speakers include Rev. T. Anthony Spearman, President, NC NAACP; Allan Freyer, Director Workers Rights Project, NC Justice Center; Gene Nichol, UNC-Law professor; Nathanette Mayo, President, NC Public Service Workers Union UE 150

Pilgrimage for Peace & Justice- March 26-30. This year walking to advocate for a change in US immigration policies and to highlight the roots of migration. On 3/28, 10am Church of the Reconciliation, Chapel Hill then walking to the Pit, UNC campus

Poor Peoples Campaign: A Call for a Moral Revival – 40 Days of Action, May 13-June 21; as updates become available go to <https://poorpeoplescampaign.org/>

Memorial Day – Remembering Victims of War – Monday, May 28, 2-3:30pm, Chapel Hill Public Library



WILPF c/o Lucy Lewis
119 Oak Street
Carrboro, NC 27510

MEMBERSHIP TIME!

In these times, it is especially critical that we strengthen our collective voices and actions. Join us!

Triangle WILPF meets the 2nd Saturday of each month (except February and July), 10am-12noon, Chapel Hill Friends Meeting, 531 Raleigh Road, Chapel Hill. Check out our website www.trianglewilpf.org and Triangle WILPF FB page.

Your local dues fund this newsletter, make our membership in WCOM and The People's Channel possible (so we can continue our radio and TV show) and support our work for peace and freedom. Thanks you for your continuing support!

TRIANGLE WILPF DUES

Sliding Scale: \$12-30

Youth Student: \$5

Make checks payable to: WILPF-Triangle

Mail to: WILPF Triangle Branch

c/o Margaret Herring

201 NC 54, Apt 610

Carrboro, NC 27510

US WILPF DUES

Sliding Scale: \$35-150

Annual dues can be paid online by going to:

www.wilpfus.org and clicking Join/Renew Membership

US dues will bring you the Peace & Freedom publication, voting rights for WILPF Board elections, and support the work of Branches and Issue Committees nationwide

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