

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Triangle, NC
Chapter



Newsletter Summer 2018

Poor People's Campaign A National Call for Moral Revival- Emily Keel

The Poor People's Campaign was organized in 36 states by co-directors, Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis and Rev. Dr. William Barber II after years of meeting with poor people around the nation to chronicle their needs for a more just society. They found that in communities across the country, people have been impacted by systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and our distorted moral narrative. Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr's Poor People's Campaign began we are taking up the mantle again for the unfinished business of the poor and forgotten masses.



In previous movements for real social change the most success has occurred when "those most impacted by social injustice have joined hands with allies. These movements did not simply stand against partisan foes. They stood for the deep moral center of our Constitutional values and faith traditions."

Consequently, the national movement has focused on educational sessions in communities and on social media several times each week arming the people with facts and inspiring the actions needed to call national attention for change. Each Monday, thousands are gathering in the 36 state capitals to rally and to take moral direct action.

In N.C., the first of our weekly actions occurred on May 14 after a rally at Halifax Mall in Raleigh. the emphasis for that action was "somebody is hurting our people: children, women and people living with disabilities in poverty". WILPF members Liz Evans, Emily Keel and Fran Schindler engaged in civil disobedience on Jones Street in front of the state legislative building. The street was blocked by 46 protesters who were given citations after singing and chanting. Ruth Zalph was arrested at

the Washington D.C. protests the same day.

The following week's focus of education and action was on linking systemic racism and poverty. WILPF members who participated in direct action and were arrested included Lucy Lewis, Brenda Hines, Mary Jenne and Ruth Zalph. They joined 9 others in demanding a meeting with Senators Berger and Moore to address the links between racial gerrymandering, mass incarceration, segregation and the chaotic immigration enforcement. The third week brought teach-ins on militarism and the war economy and its diversion of money from our common needs and rights for health care, housing, equitable educational opportunities, care of our veterans and job opportunities with living wages. Rally participants then headed to the Legislative Office Building, where a joint House-Senate committee was holding a hearing on tax-related portions of the state budget. Twelve protestors were arrested for interrupting the proceedings by calling for funds to address education and health. On Week Four, WILPFers Margaret Herring and John Wagner were among twelve protestors arrested outside Speaker Moore's office as they presented demands regarding the right to health care and a healthy environment.

The campaign will continue with 2 additional gatherings in each state, the last a mass rally on June 23 in Washington D.C. After this there will be a prolonged campaign carried out in each state as we organize for voter registration and mobilization and education. It is by educating voters, electing representatives that we educate on our demands and then holding them accountable that change will come. We will shift the moral narrative to focus on the injustices to the poor. Dr. King said: "The poor of this nation live in a cruelly unjust society. If they could be helped to take action together they will do so with a freedom and a power that will be a new and unsettling force in our complacent national life."

You may join the campaign by going to www.poorpeoplescampaign.org or on Facebook at NC Poor Peoples Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. We will not lose a fight for justice when we chose to fight it! "Somebody's been hurting our sisters and brothers and it's gone on far too long, and we won't be silent any more".

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Triangle, NC
Chapter



Newsletter Summer 2018

WILPF's Labor Voice Was Loud and Clear in May – Miriam Thompson

On May 16th, we joined the historic 20,000 teachers' rally in Raleigh to demand the General Assembly reverse its defunding of our public schools (while removing funds from public schools to fund private schools and vouchers), provide the classroom resources our students deserve and pay teachers and staff the salaries that respect their critical positions in our schools. Of course, the rally that won national attention, along with other teacher revolts around the country, is only the beginning. The NC General Assembly just passed a budget and continued tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest individuals and corporations among us without debate and behind closed doors that will not satisfy the demands of the public they were elected to serve. We will share teacher plans to continue organizing and marshal public school stakeholders for the upcoming election. (A useful tool is the website for the NC Justice Center' where you can find valuable information from its Budget & Tax Center's economic analysis, NC Policy Watch and its Worker Justice Center.



On May 18, 20 protesters rallied outside the Circle K gas station market at the corner of Franklin Street and Estes Drive in Chapel Hill as part of the nationwide boycott campaign organized by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) to press Reynolds Tobacco to negotiate living wages, and decent housing and safe working conditions for farm laborers in their supply chain. The boycott targets those markets like Circle K that sell most of Reynolds' most profitable product - its e-cigarette VUSE to remove VUSE from their shelves

until Reynolds sits down with FLOC. WILPF members stood with allies who joined us, including the local NAACP Branch Labor Committee, Church Women United, Triangle Friends of Farmworkers, National Farmworkers Ministry, and the voices of the Raging Grannies. A delegation of us then went into the Circle K Manager to present our letter to the Circle K CEO.

Actions-

- **The next two rallies in Chapel Hill are at the same Circle K, Tuesday June 19 \and Tuesday July 17, 5-5:45pm.**

On May 22nd WILPF members joined the AFL-CIO and RaiseUpfor15 (see RaisingWagesNC.org) and over 200 workers and small business owners from around the State at the NC General Assembly in Raleigh to press the legislature to raise the minimum wage, frozen at \$7.25 since 2009 - at the same time big corporations have gotten tax breaks. Talking points to legislators included: 1.3 million North Carolinians, a third of the workforce would benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 and \$15 by 2022. Most of these workers are women, many single parents. 72% of NC voters support increasing the minimum wage according to recent polls. And increasing the minimum wage would help the economy by adding billions of dollars in consumer spending power. The lobbying power of the workers and small business owners was intense and will continue and be a major issue in the upcoming elections. **Branch members are urged to call their legislators to support HB 289/ S210.**

Growing Resistance to Environmental Destruction – John Wagner

Water issues in North Carolina keep bubbling up to the surface, flowing to the sea, and raining down across our state. It is hard to keep up, but water is life and we all need to pay attention to water issues.

GenX - Awareness of the GenX contamination of the Cape Fear River keeps expanding. This Teflon-related toxin has been dumped by the Dupont and Chemours corporations directly into the river for almost 30 years. As investigations into it continue, the extent of the contamination clearly extends far beyond the lower Cape Fear River and the Wilmington water supply. The air releases and subsequent spread of GenX contamination by rain has affected crops and gardens,



Newsletter Summer 2018

and GenX in wells and ground-water is showing up around the area. Meanwhile, our NC General Assembly just placed a limit on the NC Department of Water Quality to test for the presence of other chemicals that might be present in our rivers. Please contact your representatives and let them know that corporate dumping of chemicals into our air and water are unacceptable, and the public deserves to know what is in our water. Don't let them hide the truth!

Pipelines – The Atlantic Coast Pipeline has hit a few delays due to violations of stream buffer protections, the lack of protection for endangered species, and court cases about the lack of consideration of the huge Environmental Justice issues created by slicing through low income communities, communities of color, and large indigenous populations.



The newly proposed “Southgate Pipeline” extension of the Mountain Valley pipeline is hitting large community resistance from residents from Rockingham County through Alamance County as the pipeline’s damages from the VA line to the Burlington/Graham area becomes clear. Resistance is growing, and your voice is needed to bring these pipeline disasters to a halt.

Wood Pellet Industry – Enviva is continuing to clear-cut old-growth mixed hardwood forests in NC and throughout the southeast. They grind the trees and ship them to Europe as a “green” replacement of coal – even though the effect on the planet’s climate is far worse than coal. The loss of diverse forests affects communities throughout eastern North Carolina by removing stream buffers that protect streams and rivers, magnifying the risks of floods, destroying wildlife habitat, producing vast quantities of air toxins, and degrading the quality of life. **Contact Governor Cooper and your representatives and push for forcing Enviva to**

follow their pledge to only use scrap wood and to immediately halt all cutting in our old growth forests.

Actions –

- **June 16th** - join the “Between the Streams” walk in Nash County. This short 2.5 mile walk between the Little Sapony Creek and the Big Sapony Creek is a chance to remind Governor Cooper that the community of Elm Grove (and communities like it all along the ACP route) will be gashed by the pipeline. This community, and these creeks, were the topic of Roy Cooper’s father’s book about his childhood and “nature at its finest”. June 16th, 11 – 2:00pm near the town of Nashville, NC.
- **June 21st** – Come to Halifax Mall – just behind the General Assembly building – for a day of protest, music, and marching about the ACP and Southgate pipelines.

Maya Little “Contextualizes” Silent Sam -Emily Keel



Maya Little, history grad student and a leader of the Silent Sam sit-ins, has led the current movement to remove

the confederate monument for the past year. On April 30, she felt forced to send a powerful message to the chancellor who has ignored student demands for recognition of the racism depicted by the statue and its removal. In a courageous move, Little threw her own blood and red ink on the statue to provide the context including the violence and genocide it represents. The 1913 dedication speech given by Julian Carr was read aloud as she carried out the action at the soldier widely viewed as symbolizing the “mutilation of black bodies, the degradation of black people and the celebration of an army that fought for enslavement” of black people. “We see our blood and now you will, too” was her conclusion as she was immediately arrested by campus police.

Her first court appearance on May 7 was attended by hundreds of supporters from the community and fellow students; it served as a rallying point for all involved in the sit-ins that began in August 2017. **Her trial is**



Newsletter Summer 2018

scheduled for August 20 when we will again call on the community to support Maya at court in Hillsborough.

WILPF members are meeting at the statue each Wednesday from 12-1 handing out educational information and talking with those who pass by about the necessity of removal of this symbol which continues to attract white supremacists and Neo-Nazis to the community. **You may voice your demands for removal by emailing to chancellor@unc.edu and to trustee chair haywoodcochrane@yahoo.com**

Honor the Dead by Working for Peace –

Lucy Lewis

WILPF was deeply engaged in Memorial Day activities, bracketed by two Poor People's Campaign events. On Sunday May 27, five WILPF members traveled to Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro NC for an inspiring Mass Meeting focused on the campaign's theme for Week 3 -The War Economy: Militarism and Proliferation of Gun Violence - with Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis, co-chairs of the campaign.

On Memorial Day, the Orange County Peace Coalition, of which Triangle WILPF is an active member, sponsored its annual Commemoration of the Victims of War. More than 75 community members gathered at the Chapel Hill Public Library to hear Isaac Villegas, pastor of the Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, address The Violence of Borders. Pastor Villegas began by remembering Claudia Patricia Gómez Gonzáles.



"Gonzáles left her hometown of San Juan Ostuncalco in Guatemala, traveling 1,500 miles to Texas, crossing from Mexico into the United States somewhere near Laredo, finally arriving at San Bravo, a little over a mile into the United States.

She was on her way to Virginia, to reunite with her boyfriend, and find work, but this past week a U.S. border patrol agent killed her in San Bravo, Texas." He continued, "Gonzáles is part of a whole movement of people who have been enslaved by a global economy that keeps them poor, barely alive, desperate for work,

and desperate to escape the network of U.S. gangs that have migrated to Central America...There are all sorts of reasons for migration, reasons as old as the first human beings. Movement is part of what it means to be human, to move with the rhythms of seasonal work, hunters following the migration patterns of animals, searching for food, struggling for their economic well-being, people fleeing famines and wars, migration as survival." Pastor Villegas shared with the audience his concerns about how this administration is dehumanizing immigrants in order to justify the brutality of its immigrant policies, and concluded, "For this Memorial Day, I remember Claudia Patricia Gómez Gonzáles, a brave woman, refused at the border, now a victim of this undeclared war against migration. An unofficial war yet warfare nonetheless."

Other program highlights included Memorial Day Proclamations from Mayor Pam Hemminger and Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle, songs by the Raging Grannies and the folk duo A Different Thread, a statement from the national Veterans for Peace by Doug Ryder, chapter president for NC Veterans for Peace, readings of *Whom Will We Honor Memorial Day?* by Howard Zinn and *Things We Carry on the Sea* by Wang Ping, and *Preemptive Peace* - North Carolinians Speak, a responsive recitation. The event began and ended with a somber trumpet playing of Taps.

The following day WILPF members gathered in Raleigh to hear Rev. Barber, NC veterans, and members of Moms Demand Action address the war economy, failure to address human needs or curb gun violence, followed by civil disobedience by twelve protestors.

Residents Vote Priorities in Tax Day Penny Poll – Emily Keel

A Tax Day education booth was organized by WILPF member Lorna Chafe for April 17. Other participants were Mary Dooley, Mary Jenne, Emily Keel, Lucy Lewis and Ruth Zalph. A penny poll was set up at Chapel Hill's Peace and Justice Plaza where passersby on the street were invited to place 10 pennies in jars labeled with budget categories to indicate their personal preference for tax spending. Of the 138 who participated, 27% prioritized education, 21% health, 14% housing, 12% energy/environment, 8% food. Seven percent of those polled prioritized military spending, which in our actual



Newsletter Summer 2018

federal budget in 2016 was 53% of discretionary spending excluding veterans' benefits. Fewer voted support for transportation and international affairs.



Overall the war economy ranked as a lower priority for most participants. US. military spending in 2016 was

\$611 billion, exceeding the combined total of the next 8 countries with highest spending. Rather than the \$11.59 billion to the Dept of Defense from NC taxpayers (not including the cost of war), we could instead have paid 191,636 elementary teachers for 1 year or created 208,623 infrastructure jobs or helped 5 million low income children receive health care. Where do our national priorities actually lie? Participants were given a flyer showing the actual distribution of tax dollars through discretionary spending. A similar chart can be found at <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/budget-basics/federal-budget-101/spending/>.

WILPF Members Attend Hearing for Alamance 12 – Emily Keel

WILPF members Mary Dooley and Emily Keel attended a courthouse protest and press conference on May 15 in Graham for 12 felons who unwittingly registered and voted before completion of their parole or probation. The rally was organized by downhomenc.org, Alamance Chapter, which advocates for rural counties' concerns. About 20 people gathered with signs and were promptly told by Graham police to disperse due to the requirement of a permit for 2 or more people to assemble for protests. The meeting was relocated to a local business where 3 people gave their arguments for dismissing the prosecution of those charged.

Prosecution for voting without full information on legality likely discourages others with any criminal record from voting. The Alamance NAACP president stated that the errors in voting were “more clerical than criminal” and should not be charged. The state board of

elections has not called this voter fraud. Most of the state's 441 felons that erroneously voted in the 2016 election are not being prosecuted. Another county has convicted 2 people and 2 more have been charged.

The state elections board has now made new policies to check all registrants against current felon's database and



has added additional check boxes on voter forms to ensure voter qualification awareness. Ninety six percent of NC counties had

at least 1 case of felons voting. Most of these filled out registration forms and received a card from the BOE.

Advocating with the BOE for more information to be provided on the registration forms and cross checking the felon database to prevent active felons from unintentional illegal voting could be useful in avoiding these clerical errors until this discriminatory law can be successfully challenged.

WILPF's weekly radio show, **WILPF's WAKE-UP CALL** at Carrboro's community-operated radio station, **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

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Triangle, NC
Chapter



Newsletter Summer 2018

CALENDAR (please check newsletter for other key dates)

Pastors for Peace - Saturday, June 30, 3-5pm, US-Cuba Friendship Caravan, Community Family Life & Recreation Center at Lyon Park, 1309 Fayetteville St., Durham

Carrboro Fourth of July – Wednesday, July 4, 10-3:30, Carrboro Town Hall, WILPF information table

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) – Workshop for WILPF members, Sat., July 21, 9:30-12noon, Manley Estates, CH (please park on the lower level to leave room for residents)



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. Thank you for your continuing support!

TRIANGLE WILPF DUES

Sliding Scale: \$12-35

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

\$35

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 as well as the International WILPF Sections

**Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom**

Triangle, NC
Chapter



Newsletter Summer 2018