

WILPF-US PARTICIPATION IN THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN: A NATIONAL CALL FOR MORAL REVIVAL

Week 2 (May 20-26): Linking Systemic Racism and Poverty: Voting Rights, Immigration, Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and the Mistreatment of Indigenous Communities

Branch reports received as of May 23, 2018

Des Moines, IA Branch

Showing up For Racial Justice (SURJ) took the lead on organizing an event that started our State Justice Building. Over 60 people came together, including at least 7 WILPF members. We began our rally by singing songs, led by a member of local clergy. We then walked to a monument, titled Shattering the Silence, which was built to memorialize when Iowa, in 1837, even before it became a state, freed a slave and established the precedent that all people would be free in Iowa. Another local clergyman, shared the following statement from the Iowa Constitution

All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security, and benefit of the people, and they have the right, at all times, to alter or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it.

We also sang some songs and then a SURJ member lead us in making a public commitment to not be silent when we saw racial injustices.

We then marched back to the Justice Building singing a song reclaiming our dignity and humanity.

WILPF members, along with members from Catholic Peace Ministry, Methodist Federation for Social Action, Veterans for Peace, Iowa Peace Network, and a member from the Poor People's Campaign are preparing an event for next Tuesday. In the process we are building our Poor People's Campaign Coalition in Iowa.

Tucson, AZ Branch

In Tucson, AZ WILPF, Code Pink, Veterans For Peace, and Raging Grannies held our Moral Monday/Poor People's Campaign event in front of the Federal Courthouse as a vigil against "Operation Streamline" during the afternoon rush hour. We got lots honks of support from cars and interest from people passing by.

The Tucson Raging Grannies sang their newest song:

*MacJustice to the tune of
Take me out to the Ballgame!*

"Operation Streamline has no place in our courts.
It treats everyone, even refugees
Like assembly line burgers with cheese.

'N speaking of this MacJustice
It's a shame on us all
Join us now to demand that this stop
For the good of all."

Our Teach-In happens this Thursday. We have a Palestinian speaker coming from the group "Southern AZ to Palestine Solidarity Alliance" His talk will be relating Systemic Racism and Poverty.

Triangle, NC Branch

More than 150 people gathered again in Raleigh opposite the State Capitol to hear a dozen powerful speakers address the week's theme, Linking Systemic Racism and Poverty.

Following the rally, 100 rally participants moved into the Capitol to the offices of Senate Leader Phil Berger and House Speaker Tim Moore to find closed doors. When they were refused meetings, those gathered outside read their demands- including what can be done to address systemic racism in areas including education, criminal justice, environmental degradation, voting and elections, immigration in NC, and Islamophobia - chanted and sang.

WILPF members Brenda Hines, Mary Jenne, Ruth Zalph and Lucy Lewis were among the 13 persons arrested and charged with second degree trespassing when we refused to leave after being ordered to do so. By midnight Monday night everyone had been released with orders for court dates. We will back for the next 4 weeks.

Here's the story from the Raleigh News and Observer: <http://www.newsobserver.com/news/state/north-carolina/article211617519.html>

Boston, MA Branch

Today, across from the Boston State House more than 225 people arrived to listen to the a few musicians and singers, and several speakers representing Blacks, immigrants, Moslems and indigenous Americans.

Only a few people represented each of these minority groups and Sabrina Martin, one of the three leaders of the MA PCC movement explained, "You see we don't have many of our Black brothers and sisters here. They are in pain and do not trust any more. It will take time to see them in the movement." Another speaker explained the attack on race is also an attack on the working class.

After the rally more than half the attendees went into the State House for a teach in. Twenty people trained in civil disobedience were ready to stay later than 5pm when the doors are closed to the public for the day.

Monterey, CA Branch

Yesterday Judy Karas attended the Friends Committee on Legislation Lobby Day at the state capitol, Sacramento. We met with staff members for our state senator, Bill Monning, and Assemblyman Mark Stone. We supported SB 1392, a measure to get rid of the extra year enhancements for prisoners' sentences, SB 982, which would increase the Earned Income Tax Credits for those in poverty in the state, and supported AB 3131, which requires local governing bodies to have to discuss and approve any purchase of military equipment by sheriff/police depts., etc.

This bill would require a law enforcement agency, defined to include specified state and local entities, to obtain approval of the applicable governing body, by adoption of a military equipment impact statement and a military equipment use policy, as specified, by ordinance at a regular meeting held pursuant to specified open meeting laws, prior to taking certain actions relating to the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment, as defined. The bill would also require similar approval for the continued use of military equipment acquired prior to January 1, 2019. The bill would allow the governing body to approve the funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment within its jurisdiction only if it determines that the military equipment meets specified standards. The bill would require the governing body to annually review the ordinance, and to either disapprove a renewal of the authorization for a piece of military equipment or amend the military equipment use policy if it determines, based on an annual military equipment report prepared by the law enforcement agency, as provided, that the military equipment does not comply with the above-described standards for approval.

Several other bills were also discussed, including the concept of an oil severance tax for California, and we had good talks with the legislators' reps. We learned about how bills progress, what the opposition to key bills is and what the opposition's arguments are.

I urge that WILPF members set up appointments to meet with their elected officials--either in state capitals or at home. Raise issues related to the PPC, as we did.

It's good to demonstrate, have speakers, etc. But we need to talk to those who are making decisions, promote our goals, our legislation, and our priorities. The FCLCA knows how to advocate, and it was extremely educational for me to join with other Quakers up there in Sacramento.

Oakland, CA

What follows is WILPF Member Phoebe Anne Sorgen's account of her arrest in Sacramento:

I was released yesterday around noon after 15 hours in custody. The first hours with the highway patrol were rather comfy. Not so for the many hours in the filthy county jail, partly because of sleep deprivation and because we did not sing in jail (having been advised that doing so might delay our release,) and the air quality and crowding in jail was tough, and the cops nasty. In my experience (atypical as I'm white), cops have treated inmates of conscience with more respect than other prisoners. Not this time because they wanted to discourage us from returning. The cop who released me said so. I'm grateful that they "kept it real" and that I had a home to return to, did not have to post bail, had a public defender and support team waiting outside, and if necessary can dip into retirement savings for the 5 misdemeanors they charged me with. So I'm not complaining. Just a heads up that -- while there was no physical brutality -- the most frail amongst us may not want to risk arrest in this case.

There are other important ways to get involved, egg. supporting those who choose to risk arrest. Large attendance at the Sacramento rallies is much needed this Tues and the following 3 Mondays. (Good to see Tova at the rally.) If you plan to risk arrest, get adequate sleep the night before (my only regret) and have a good breakfast. For potential arrestees, the PPC has a mandatory training at 9am the day of. Otherwise you need not arrive until the rally starts (2pm like last times?) <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>

Fresno, CA Branch

The Fresno CA branch sent word out to partner groups in our peace, social justice, and faith communities that we will hold a weekly demonstration in front of our Federal Courthouse building. Many involved people in our area are gathering in Sacramento at our State Capital, but we wanted to be sure to have a local action for those who cannot make to Sacramento. About 25 people gathered and our local Raging Grannies sang 3 songs. Our local branch's Legislative Committee has been preparing a letter regarding Gaza which we will be delivering in person to our Representatives offices. Our Committee chooses a topic each month to do this, so we will incorporate the PPC Moral Revival issues into our next letters.

