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Louisianans march for clean water



By Blake Deppe

Beginning June 20 and ending June 28, Louisiana citizens and environmental activists staged a 155-mile march from Grand Isle to Baton Rouge. The event was in protest of the continuous poisoning of the state's water by the ever-greedy oil and gas industries.

The march was prompted when Gov. Bobby Jindal, R.-La., signed SB 469 into law earlier this month. The bill was a direct reaction to a lawsuit filed against 97 oil and gas companies by the South Louisiana Flood Protection Authority (SLFPA), which correctly asserted that oil and gas canals and pipelines have destroyed much of the Louisiana coastal lands. SB 469 would prohibit certain state groups, like the SLFPA, from filing such lawsuits, effectively saving the skins of oil and gas execs - or so many state Republicans had hoped.

On the first day of the march, June 20, the Louisiana Levee Authority in New Orleans voted to allow the SLFPA to continue pursuing the lawsuit, overriding the bill's authority and giving the group another chance at forcing fossil fuel corporations to own up to the damage they have caused.

With that spark to ignite their enthusiasm, the marchers began the long trek, marching along Louisiana Highway 1. The journey was largely a team effort. Environmental and civic activist Mike

Stagg, who organized the event, told the People's World that the walkers had no formal support from any environmental group for the march itself, but each of the participants are active members of groups ranging from the Louisiana Bucket Brigade to Restore Louisiana Now (RLN) to 350.org to the GreenARMY.

The march culminated in a June 28 demonstration - the Flood Into Baton Rouge - at Gov. Jindal's mansion. Stagg noted, "The Flood Into

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Baton Rouge, which is where the march ended, had support and participation from a number of environmental groups including the Gulf Restoration Network, the Louisiana Environmental Action Network, and a number of other local grassroots environmental action groups from across south

The aftermath of the catastrophic BP spill is still being felt today.

Louisiana.” He stated he considered the march to be a success, both on the local and national level. “Most importantly,” he said, “we advanced the ongoing coastal conversation about land loss, rising seas, and who will pay for coastal restoration - if it gets done at all.”

While SB 469 will certainly prove to be a roadblock in future efforts by state groups to fight the crimes of oil and gas companies, RLN president John Barry remarked, “Although the legislative battle is over, the war isn’t. To quote the classic words of John Belushi, ‘It ain’t over ‘till it’s over.’” Meanwhile, he said, “is there a single person in Louisiana who believes the governor is putting the state’s interest ahead of his personal ambition? At last count, 106 legal scholars warned that signing the bill would put at risk claims against BP” for damages done during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. “The attorney general, the president of Jefferson Parish, the New Orleans City Council, and others all called upon the governor to veto the bill. I think he signed it because they were just the beginning of a broad chorus from around the

state, and he wanted to cut that off before the chorus became deafening.” And this bill, moreover, will affect future claims against BP and other oil corporations, he added, “if, for example, a pipeline ruptures in the coastal zone.”

The march and Flood Into Baton Rouge, Stagg added, were very much intended also to draw attention to Jindal’s signing of SB 469. “The bill was so hastily drawn and poorly written that it might jeopardize the state’s share of the BP environmental damages resulting from the 2010 Gulf gusher,” he said. “The stated purpose of the legislation was to retroactively kill” the SLFPA’s lawsuit, which was “insane enough.” But even worse, he noted, was “their rush to spare the most profitable industry in the history of the world the legal liability growing from their actions.”

The aftermath of that catastrophic BP spill is still being felt today, and is just one of the many reasons for the marchers’ push for clean water and coastal reparations.



Blake Deppe writes for Peoplesworld.org.

Supreme Court rules against buffer zones

By John Wojcik

The Supreme Court unanimously nullified Massachusetts’ abortion buffer zone policy last week, ruling in favor of rightwing protesters who claimed having to remain 35 feet from clinic doors is a violation of their first amendment free speech rights. The Massachusetts policy aimed to protect women as they accessed reproductive health care against a backdrop of harassment and even physical attacks from anti-choice protesters.

The High Court ruled that “by its very terms the Act restricts access to public ways and sidewalks, places that have traditionally been open for speech activities and that the Court has accordingly labeled traditional public forums...The buffer zones burden substantially more speech than necessary to achieve the Commonwealth’s asserted interests.” Choice advocates have noted angrily that for purposes of their own safety the Supreme Court justices have drawn a substantially larger buffer zone around the High Court building itself - one that includes the entire 252-by-98 foot plaza

in front of the building.

Supporters of women’s right to choose note that the buffer zones are needed because the activities outside clinics constitute much more than just free speech. “The idea that the people standing outside clinics screaming and yelling, chasing people into the streets, surrounding medical transport vehicles and threatening staff are there for First Amendment expressions would be laughable if the potential for violence wasn’t so real,” said Katie Klabusich, a long-time clinic defense escort volunteer in Chicago, on her blog June 26.

There have been more than 300 acts of violence against reproductive healthcare clinics between 2010 and 2012 alone, including eight murders and seventeen attempted murders since 1991.

According to the National Abortion Federation (NAF), which closely follows the violence at clinics, buffer zones have had a measurable and positive impact in places where they are in effect. The group reports a 51 percent drop in criminal activity where the zones are maintained.

More than 300 acts of violence against reproductive healthcare clinics have occurred between 2010 and 2012.

Children fleeing violence and poverty

By Rossana Cambron

Displaced children as young as 13 are leaving their homes in Central America in greater numbers than ever before due to violence from wars involving the cartels, gang initiations and or extortion. And for some it is the longing to be united with their parents that sets them on this journey. Nearly 21,000 from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras have travel to the US in 2013.

The great majority of these children travel unaccompanied by adults, they walk and jump on trains, some die in their attempt. They experience horrific situations such as theft, starvation, unsanitary conditions, physical and sexual abuse. Over the course of two days, Estela Jimenez and Father Richard Estrada members of Angeles Sin Fronteras (Angels Without Borders), announce at a press conference in Los Angeles, that they will participate in "Caminata por los niños no acompañados" (Walk for the unaccompanied children), in Mexico, by walking a portion of the route that many children take on their way to the U.S. They will stop in Tapachula, a town that borders Guatemala and Mexico, and visit with Pastor Ramon Verdugo who runs a shelter for migrant children, many times under threats by gangs and cartels.

"We are going as observers and we will return to inform you of some of the experiences that these children face and to let them know that we will take care of them when they reach Los Angeles," commented Estela Jimenez.

Some of the supporters of this pilgrimage are members of Jovenes Inc. an organization in the Los Angeles area that help homeless youth, mostly migrant, that come into this country and have no one to look after them but who have come seeking a better life free from violence and poverty. "We



support this action because we know first hand what these children have experienced" stated Andrea Marchetti, Executive Director of Jovenes Inc. "We are also asking for under garments for youth, which you can donate to Jovenes Inc. This may seem like an odd request but this is what most of these children are in need of."

Gloria Saucedo of Hermandad Mexicana spoke to the press stating "We are worried about our youth who come escaping the poverty and violence in their home country and those that come to unite with their families. We need to protect them as they make their way in this long journey. "The crisis these children are facing in their home country is a result if an economy of violence, wars, poverty extortion. Invasion by large corporations that are exploiting the towns and contaminating the water is another crisis they are facing. Townspeople are being displaced as the corporations move in to exploit the riches through mining. These corporations are treating our people as a disposable commodity.

"We are here to be the voice for these children. We will be taking this message to the children and to hear first hand what they experience and assure them that we will there to help them get the necessary assistance when they arrive," stated Estela Jimenez.

The great majority of children travel unaccompanied by adults in a desperate search for safety and security.

LOCAL NEWS

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Unions celebrate LGBTQ progress

By PAI

In celebration of LGBTQ Heritage Month, the AFL-CIO and Pride At Work hosted a panel discussion Monday that surveyed efforts by various unions in advancing LGBTQ rights and discussed ongoing challenges that unions face in advancing the rights of LGBTQ workers. In particular, panel participants talked about the need of unions to become more inclusive, to increase efforts to protect transgender workers and to fight for state laws that prevent employers from firing workers for their sexual orientation or gender expression. The panel was introduced by Carmen Berkley, AFL-CIO's director of civil, human and women's rights; moderated by Peggy Shorey, AFL-CIO's director of state government relations and deputy director of government affairs; and included Shane Larson, legislative director for the Communications Workers of America (CWA); Darlene Nipper, deputy executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Tim Schlittner, assistant communications director for politics for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); and Canieasha Washington, a program specialist in the women's and fair practices department for AFGE.

Nipper said that while "the rate of progress now is extraordinary," many activists have been working on these issues for 40 years, so while it's good to see some of the recent changes, "we still have a lot more progress to make." She noted that getting married is such a fundamental part of our culture that everyone should be able to marry.

Clara Zetkin, gran comunista y mujer extraordinaria

Por Wladimir Abreu

Nacida el 5 de julio de 1857, en la municipalidad de Königshain-Wiederau, en el distrito Mittelsachsen del estado federal alemán de Sajonia, bajo el nombre de Clara Eissner, adoptaría el apellido Zetkin al casarse con el revolucionario ruso Ossip Zetkin; de profesión docente se vincula al movimiento obrero y feminista a partir de año 1874.

Clara Zetkin participa, desde el último cuarto del siglo XIX, en el proceso de unificación del movimiento obrero alemán, uniéndose en 1878 al Partido Socialista Alemán, organización que es producto de la unificación del Congreso de Gotha de 1875, y que posteriormente, en 1890, se constituye como Partido Socialdemócrata Alemán (SPD).

Ante la ley de prohibición anti-obrera emitida por el canciller Otto Von Bismarck, Clara Zetkin debe exilarse primero en Zúrich y posteriormente en París, donde será una importante activista en la fundación de la Segunda Internacional.

Clara Zetkin, desde la óptica del marxismo, promueve una fogosa campaña por la reivindicación de los derechos de la mujer, el derecho al sufragio femenino, el derecho al divorcio y el aborto, la planificación familiar y la igualdad jurídica entre el hombre y la mujer; destacándose como su más ardiente militante.

La instauración del Día Internacional de la Mujer Trabajadora, el 8 de marzo de 1911, será casi en la práctica un logro de Clara Zetkin, por el cual se establecía un día conmemora-

tivo de los sacrificios y luchas de las mujeres trabajadores por sus derechos. En los momentos históricos que darán como resultado la primera gran carnicería del capital por el reparto del mundo –también conocida Primera Guerra Mundial–, Clara Zetkin junto a los sectores más consecuentes del movimiento obrero alemán denuncia el carácter burgués y criminal de esta guerra, rompiendo con la política de colaboración de clases y chovinista de los traidores de Kautsky y Bernstein.

Clara Zetkin junto a Rosa Luxemburgo y Federico Liebknecht conformarán la Liga de Espartaco, que aglutinaba a los sectores más decididos y consecuentes del movimiento obrero alemán, que enfrentan decididamente a los sectores claudicantes del reformismo alemán.

Clara Zetkin será fundadora del histórico Partido Comunista de Alemania (KPD), será diputada comunista desde 1920 hasta 1933 en el Reichstag (parlamento), será presidenta del Socorro Rojo Internacional (la célebre organización mundial de solidaridad obrera).

Siendo la diputada de mayor edad será quien inaugura el último periodo del parlamento alemán en 1933, en el cual denuncia la barbarie fascista que se aproxima.

Luego de la maniobra del incendio del Reichstag, se ve obligada a refugiarse en la URSS, en donde vivirá sus últimos momentos, siendo enterrada en las murallas del Kremlin, junto a otros célebres comunistas y revolucionarios de su tiempo.

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