

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



**Tuesday May 15 , 12:30—3PM
Unions Brought the 8-Hour Day
Where Are the Unions Today?**

**Unitarian/Universalist Center
Fireside Room, 1187 Franklin (near Geary)**

GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

All meetings and events take place at 1182 Market, Rm. 203, unless otherwise noted.

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, May 2 & June 6**

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 12:00 AM
Wednesday, May 9 & June 13**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, May 3 & June 7**

**Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, May 28 & June 25**

Our April General Meeting

Our membership meeting featured two aspects of the war on women, one concerned with reproductive rights discussed at length by David Trujillo of Planned Parenthood and the other a chilling description from Michael Lyon on the feminization of poverty. The 2010 election campaign which gave the GOP control of the House of Representatives was all about jobs, but the first action was an attempt to limit the availability of abortion demonize, family planning, and birth control. Anti-choice, Tea-Party people have passed laws banning abortions & pregnancy health information in Nebraska, Arizona, New Hampshire, & Georgia Interestingly, so far every attempt to defund Planned Parenthood has been met by increased public support and initial contributions of \$3 million. PP is promoting 2 bills in the California legislature; SB 1338 expands the role of nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, and PA's in abortion treatment: and AB 2348 increases access to birth control by allowing RN's to prescribe and dispense contraceptives without a doctor's signature. CAN opposes both bills.

Michael emphasized the economic war on women. In spite of the current unemployment rate there has been only a 15% increase in welfare in welfare rolls, not because more people don't need help, but because that help is so restricted. When Clinton was president and with full bi-partisan support the welfare laws were revised. Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) provided federal matching funds to states with no time limits on health and none amounts. Clinton welfare reform abolished AFDC and replaced it with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TAMF). TAMF puts a lifetime time limit on receiving welfare, imposes a work requirement on recipients, caps the amount of federal matching funds, provides no help for childcare, transportation or sick leave. Welfare rolls, nationally, dropped 68% and 32 states reduced welfare by 66% to much applause in Washington. What happened to those dropped? They were mainly single moms and children. And they continue to be mainly single moms and children unable to meet the stringent, punishing, dehumanizing and strictly enforced welfare requirements. Economic sanctions for women for daring to assert themselves.

Sticking' To The Union



Come to the May general meeting wearing a union shirt, button, hat and tell your

story. Many Gray Panthers have been union members, so let's share some of those stories, and talk about where the union movement is today.

SAN April Meeting

SF Gray Panthers is an organizational member of Senior Action Network and many of our members are active participants in SAN programs. One of SAN's earliest interests was pedestrian safety, and of considerable concern to all of us as we walk the sidewalks and cross the streets and keep a wary eye out for bicycles, skateboards, other pedestrians cars and MUNI. The SAN April meeting featured a discussion of pedestrian safety and right of way. The second half of the meeting discussed the merger of SAN with Planning for Elders in the Central City. This will likely lead to a *new organizational name*. Suggestions are being actively solicited. (This reporter would hate to see the well-known name SAN abandoned and hopes it is prominent in any new name selected.) If you have an idea for a new name, send it to SAN at their new address, 1360 Mission, 4th Floor Mission at Tenth), call them at 546-1333, or e-mail it to www.sfsan.org.

Forget The Flowers Pass the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

Mothers' Day is May 13th. It was not started so that you would send your mom a loving card or take her out to dinner. Founded by Julia Ward Howe, among others, it was a call for peace and disarmament after the Civil War. Since a great many domestic workers are mothers, an excellent way to honor them would be to require by law that they get paid vacation, overtime pay, and workers compensation protections!

SF Safe Civil Rights Ordinance

:San Francisco Safe Civil Rights Ordinance : In our April Newsletter we reported on this ordinance, passed by the Board of Supervisors, which covered the conditions under which the SF Police Department cooperates with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and aimed to insure the protection of civil liberties and civil rights according to SF standards. As anticipated, at the urging of Police Chief Greg Suhr, Mayor Lee vetoed it. There were not enough votes on the Board to override that veto.

Supervisor Jane Kim was the sponsor of the Ordinance at the behest of the Asian Law Caucus, the ACLU and other civil rights groups. After the veto she introduced a compromise version with the mayor's backing. It would allow the police chief to retain his authority to enter agreements with the FBI but the Police Commission would have to hold a public hearing before they could be signed. (Could the Commission veto signing?) It does not place restrictions on surveillance in the administrative codes, which would have strengthened such restrictions, but refers to the Police Department's internal prohibitions against surveillance without suspicion of criminal intent – a prohibition which leaves the police free to surveil at will as they have been doing under the “suspicion” cover. Missing are the specific aims of “avoiding profiling, avoiding use of city staff and resources in federal immigration enforcement, upholding supervision and accountability procedures, guaranteeing civilian oversight, and enhancing public confidence”. In other words, emasculated. Thank you, Mayor Lee

Park Merced Update

Park Merced Action Coalition and SF Tomorrow have filed a law suit against SF certification of the Park Merced Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a development proposal which would increase zoning capacity there and decrease affordability of dwelling units. The lawsuit targets not just the sufficiency of the EIR but Development Agreement between the Park Merced investors and the City which insufficiently addresses the loss of affordable dwelling units at Park Merced.

From the San Francisco Tomorrow newsletter

Heads Up For Absentee Voters

The primary election is June 5th. For the first time on a state level the 2 top candidates for office, irrespective of party, will advance to the general election in November. This unfortunately eliminates all minor party candidates from the Nov. election. You wanted to vote Green? Too Bad. State propositions in June include changing how legislators term limits are determined and an additional tax on cigarettes for cancer research (this is a regressive sin tax.) Local measures include opening the bidding on garbage collection, currently done by locally-owned Recology, and a non-binding advisory measure about environmental protection for Coit Tower. Be a responsible voter. Read your Voters Handbook carefully. Consider not only promised future charges, but how they might be determined including such matters and union contracts and SF minimum wage laws– and who supports them

San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station

As of this date all three reactor units at San Onofre are off-line and the plant is shut down. Unit 1 is permanently closed. Unit 2 was shut down for maintenance when extensive wear on its alloy tubing was discovered. Unit 3 was closed in January after one of those alloy tubes leaked, releasing radiation into the air. Alloy tubes carry super-heated radioactive water at high pressure for steam generating. The generators and tubes are made by Mitsubishi. The NRC is investigating why the tubing is so rapidly deteriorating and has assured the public that the plant will not be restarted until it is safe. They also said the radiation released so far presented no danger to workers or the public. Are you reassured? Will it take a Fukushima-style meltdown close San Onofre closed permanently?

The International Journal of Health published an article by scientists Joseph Mangano & Janette Sherman documenting an unexpected rise of 22,000 deaths in the U.S, after the fallout from Fukushima. Just 6 days after the meltdown radioactivity measured in air, water and milk showed U.S. levels hundreds of times above normal. There was also an unusual rise in infant deaths in northwestern U.S. for the 10-week period following the arrival of airborne radioactive plume.

The full report at <http://www.radiation.org>

The Rise of Labor Unions

The robber barons of the 1800's accumulated wealth by ruthless exploitation of workers in steel mills, on railroads, in mines and factories. Most of these fortunes were gained with the collaboration of government and courts which granted legislation in exchange for outright bribes—accomplished today by lobbyists. The Central Pacific Railroad bribed politicians and got 9 million acres of free land; Union Pacific 12 million acres. The race to build the great railroads, laying racks across the country, also left workers dead on the tracks from exhaustion.

The period of rampant industrialism required tremendous numbers of workers. The large populations of immigrants in the 1800's provided a labor force to be exploited, and nationalities to be pitted against one another. Over 5 1/2 million came to the U.S., including over 1 million children as part of the work force. Workers rebelled with strikes breaking out across the country and labor unions started to form to fight for workers' rights. 1881-1885 were the years of the great labor uprisings averaging 500 per year involving 150,000 workers. By 1996 the number of strikes in the United States would reach its lowest level in 50 years.

In 1877, the Molly Maguires were being executed for their pro-miner and anti-company militancy. But the Knights of Labor in 1869 with 500 local assemblies in hundreds of communities became the leading organization of workers in the period. With their motto, "An injury to one is the concern of all," the Knights offered a vision of a "Cooperative Commonwealth" and supported reform movements from land nationalization to temperance, and even socialism. It included 50,000 African American workers, 10,000 women workers, and organized both skilled and unskilled workers. That policy brought them into conflict with established craft unions formed in 1891—the American Federation of Labor. (*In 1935, John L Lewis formed the CIO in response to the AFL refusal to organize skilled and unskilled workers!*) Other unions arose including American Rail Road Union under Eugene Debs in 1893; Teamsters Union, 1903; Industrial Workers of the World, 1905. It is time for workers to rise up again and take control away from compromising union bosses.

Before Francis Perkins

Frances Perkins, appointed in 1933 as Secretary of Labor and first woman Cabinet member, vowed to make work places, "as safe as science and law can make them." She created a Bureau of Labor Standards in 1934. Prior to this setting of standards, job safety and health legislation was created in a piecemeal system and workplace hazards uncontrolled. States lacked or failed to provide adequate funds for enforcement. The states with strong safety and health laws lost industries to those with fewer protection.

Industrial accidents and deaths awakened social reformers and the growing labor movement demanded factory safety and health laws. In 1877, Massachusetts passed the first factory inspection law. Some states followed with factory inspectors, machine guarding, and limited provision for health hazards. In 1887, Congress created the Interstate Commerce Commission partly because of the large numbers of railroad workers killed or injured in train wrecks. After railroad worker strikes and union demands, Congress passed the "coupler bill" banning the dangerous link-and-pin method of coupling cars.

In 1907, the worst U.S. mine disaster claimed 362 coal miners' lives in West Va. It led to the creation U.S. Bureau of Mines to promote mine safety. In 1910, muckraker William Hard estimated that 1,200 were killed or seriously injured in one steel mill each year. That led to the creation of the National Safety Council in 1915.

In 1912, Congress passed the Each Act, which placed a prohibitive tax on white phosphorus matches. Phosphorus necrosis caused "phossy jaw", a disfiguring and often fatal disease of the jawbone suffered by workers in the white phosphorus match industry

In 1913, Congress created the Department of Labor. Accepting the position of Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, an ex-coal miner and mine union official, wrote a poem, "The Explosion"

*Stalwart men were but as feathers
Driven with a cyclone's fire
Fast their flesh and sinews shriveled
Scorched and roasted with the fire.*

U.S. Labor Laws After 1932

Norris-La Guardia Act (1932): Prevents federal courts from issuing injunctions against striking, picketing, union membership, and peacefully assembling. Before this act, courts routinely issued court orders injunctions against striking and picketing, enabling any and all law enforcement agencies to attack, jail and convict any union activists. This Act didn't stop widespread court actions against unions, but it at least limited the most blatant federal rulings.

The National Labor Relations Act (1935): The Wagner Act. Regulates labor relations in private industry "Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations to bargain collectively through representatives of their choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection." The Act is administered by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

The Fair Labor Standards Act (1938): The Wages and Hours Act. Years of campaigning finally paid off. The 8-hour day and the abolition of child labor -prohibiting employing a child under 16, establishing of a minimum wage, requiring overtime pay after 40 hours work in one week. Full of holes:doesn't require overtime 8 houses in a day; doesn't cover domestic health; specifically exempts agricultural labor, to name a few. Administered by the Dept of Labor.

The Taft-Hartley Act (1947): A series of amendments to the NLRA prevents secondary boycotts and facilitates "right to work" laws. A secondary boycott is an act against one business to try to force another business to bargain with the union. Right to work laws prohibit union contracts that make union membership and payment of dues a requirement for hiring-i.e. a union shop! Such laws are in effect in at least 23 states.

Civil Service Reform Act(1978): This gave government workers the right to form and join unions. It limited the right to strike and to bargain on wages, but allowed bargaining on working conditions. It was a wedge opening the door for today's Influential public sector unions.

Solidarity Forever!

To the tune of John Brown's Body

When the union's inspiration through worker's blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun. Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one.
For the union makes us strong!

Solidarity forever, Solidarity forever,
Solidarity forever,
For the union makes us strong,

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold.
Greater than the might of atoms magnified a thousand fold,
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the union makes us strong!



Union Maid

Words by Woody Guthrie to tune of RedWing

There once was a union maid
who never was afraid
Of goons and ginks and company finks
And deputy sheriffs who made the raids
She went to the union hall when a meeting it was called.
And when the company boys came round she always stood her ground.

Oh, you can't scare me I'm stickin' to the union
I'm stickin' to the union
I'm stickin' to the union
Oh, you can't scare me I'm stickin' to the union
'til the day I die.

We Shall Not Be Moved

We shall not be we shall not be moved
We shall not be we shall not be moved
Just like a tree that standing by the water
We shall not be moved.

Gray Panthers of SF

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We believe ALL people are entitled to certain fundamental rights:

- meaningful employment
- economic security
- decent and affordable housing
- quality health care
- a life of dignity from birth to death free from fear and abuse
- a world in peace



Age and Youth in Action

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated

May 2012

Actions and Events

Complete listing at <http://graypantherssf.igc.org/calendar.htm>.

May 10-13 Oakland Laney College 900 Fallon St.
WEAP Hearing on Growing Violence to Women
& Families from Rising Poverty

Monday, October 5, 11:00 AM

Supervisors Public Safety Hearing to support legislation to restore Sanctuary City by preventing undocumented youth from being turned over to ICE unless found guilty of a felony.

Also attend the Supervisor votes on the legislation

Tuesdays, October 13 & 20, 2:00 PM

City Hall

Thursday, October 8, 9:00 AM

SAN General Meeting "Senior Economic Summit"
Food, Music, Dancing, "Meltdown" a participatory workshop on economic crisis with 20 seniors, lunch with elected officials, **1:00 PM** Keynote Address by Norman Solomon, UDHR Reprise UU Church, 1187 Franklin/Geary

Friday, October 9, 9:00 AM

Court Hearing for Francisco Torres, last member of the SF 8 behind bars. Free him now!
Hall of Justice, 850 Bryant, Dept 22, 3rd Floor.

Saturday, October 17, 11:00 AM

Anti-war Rally & March, Troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan & Pakistan, money for human needs
UN Plaza, Market/5th/6th

Sunday, October 25, 5:00—7:00 PM

Zoya, member of RAWA, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, on the war, its effects, especially on women, what to do
Presented by WILPF of SF
Friends Meeting House, 65—9th Street

