

PEOPLE'S WORLD

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May 14, 2010

At Blue-Green Alliance meet, the cry is, “Good Jobs, Clean Air!”

By Tim Wheeler

Truck driver Porfirio Diaz brought the 3,500 delegates at the Good Jobs, Green Jobs national conference in Washington D.C. to their feet May 5 with his harrowing story of the struggle he and his fellow drivers are waging for union rights and clean air in the Port of Oakland in California.

Diaz was hired 25 years ago as a teamster transporting cargo containers to and from the port.

He is not paid when waiting in line to pick up a container nor does he receive overtime pay. He must pay for fuel and maintenance. “Sometimes I work 70 hours a week and after covering my expenses, I come home with \$500,” he said.

He told the conference that with help from the labor and environmental movement, the drivers are struggling to pass legislation to win back the benefits they lost and force the companies to reduce port pollution. The crowd was on its feet and Teamster union members led them in chanting, “Good jobs, clean air!”

The conference May 4-6 sponsored by the Blue-Green Alliance was nearly twice as large as last year’s gathering. The alliance was founded by the Sierra Club, the Communications Workers of America and the United Steelworkers and now unites more than two dozen unions and environ-



mental organizations.

United Steelworkers President Leo Gerard cited the explosion at an oil refinery in Anacortes, Wash., that killed six workers, the Massey Energy mine blast that killed 29, and now the explosion of BP’s offshore rig that killed 11 and is spewing millions of gallons of crude into the Gulf. It shows, he said, “that the labor and environmental issues are connected in many ways.”

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka also re-

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mentalized the delegates of BP’s oil well explosion.

“Never before has the need been so urgent to produce clean energy, to use energy more efficiently, to prevent climate change and to protect our natural environment,” said Trumka, a former coal miner. “And not since the Great Depression

Trumka argued that the nation needs coal, oil, nuclear, hydroelectric and wind and solar power but with strict regulations.

have so many Americans needed new and better jobs with secure benefits,” jobs, he said, “that can’t be off-shored, downsized or downgraded to part time positions.”

Trumka argued that the nation needs coal, oil, nuclear, hydroelectric and wind and solar power but with strict regulations to reduce or eliminate release of carbon dioxide and other gases. He called for insulating existing buildings, a project that save energy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs. “Tens of thousands of miles of new high-voltage transmission are needed to bring solar, wind, and geothermal power and bio-fuels,” he said.

“It’s great news that the Obama administration is providing \$8 billion in high-speed rail that will save or create tens of thousands of jobs,” Trumka said, but he added, “These jobs need to be American jobs ... high skill, high wage jobs with safe conditions ... and the right to be free from discrimination and the right to form and join unions.”

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said the House-approved Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act will “create 1.7 million jobs, reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil and cut the pollution that causes global warming.”

She declared, “This legislation is an opportunity to transform our economy and create jobs that cannot be shipped overseas ... It will promote new, clean energy technology - made in America by American workers.”

“The House has acted,” Pelosi said. “We hope the Senate will act soon.” She received a standing ovation.

On the final day, the conference recessed and participants went to Capitol Hill to lobby their senators and representatives for comprehensive clean energy and climate change legislation and for legislation to create millions of jobs.



Tim Wheeler writes for the People’s World.

President Obama makes history - again!

By PW Editorial Board

In his proclamation the president mourned the 29 miners killed recently in West Virginia, the seven killed at the refinery in Washington State, and the 11 killed when an oil platform exploded in the Gulf of Mexico.

In a dramatic departure President Obama yesterday became the first president to issue a proclamation for Workers Memorial Day. In that proclamation he notes that 40 years ago, with passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, the nation was declaring that all American workers have the right to a safe workplace and that all employers have an obligation to provide such a safe workplace.

“Yet today,” the president declared, “We remain too far from fulfilling that promise.”

The record shows the president could not be more correct. Each workday, it is likely 14 workers won’t go home to their loved ones because they will be killed on the job.

In 2008, along with the 5,124 workers killed, there were the 50,000 who died from work caused diseases, the 4.6 million who were reported injured and the almost 10 million who were injured but feared that reporting the injury would result in loss of their jobs.

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The president, again to his credit, noted that the health and safety laws that are on the books resulted from many years of struggle by workers themselves and by unions and that the task for his administration now is to achieve safe working conditions for all Americans by strengthening those laws and by creating stronger enforcement.

We applaud the president for his historic and bold proclamation on Workers Memorial Day and we take this opportunity to renew the call for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. When workers choose unions they get safer workplaces. Millions of new union members will bring us closer to the day when no one, union or non-union, has to risk his or her life when they go to work in the morning.



Fraternity of Martin Luther King Jr. to boycott Arizona

By Pepe Lozano

In response to the anti-immigrant Arizona law, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, known as the oldest, integrated and historically black Greek-lettered organization in the world, recently announced it will boycott the state and relocate its 104th anniversary convention from Phoenix.

The fraternity said it plans to boycott Arizona due to the anti-immigrant law signed by Republican Gov. Jan Brewer last month. Critics say the law criminalizes immigrants, violates civil liberties and encourages the racial profiling of Latinos.

“Our national board of directors voted unanimously to rescind the location of Phoenix, Ariz., as our meeting location, and to denounce the egregious immigration act signed recently by the governor of Arizona,” said Herman “Skip” Mason Jr., national general president of the fraternity.

The convention was scheduled to take place in July and will now be moved to Las Vegas, Nevada.

Alpha Phi Alpha was formed in 1906 at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY and is viewed as one of the most influential groups in the country. Notable civil rights leaders in its membership include U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young. Others are McDonald’s President Don Thompson; National Urban League President and former New Orleans Mayor Marc H. Morial; CNN Political Analyst Roland Martin; White House Deputy Associate Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Michael Blake; and several high-ranking members of Congress.

The late civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall were also members of the organization. Many of the fraternity’s members held key posts during presidential administrations dating back to Ronald Reagan. Several continue to serve under



President Barack Obama.

“Our late brother the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, in a letter he wrote while sitting in the Birmingham Jail, ‘injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,’” said Mason. “Alpha Phi Alpha’s decision to boycott Arizona continues that same fight, fought during the Civil Rights era.”

Mason continued, “We will not only speak with our voices and our feet, we will speak with our economic clout. And we will not spend our money in Arizona and urge other organizations and people who believe in equality under the law, to do the same.”

Supporters of the fraternity’s decision to boycott Arizona say the move highlights Black-Latino unity and is an affirmation of broad African American solidarity for undocumented workers and immigration reform.

The fraternity has long stood at the forefront of the African American community’s fight for civil rights. Through its college and alumni chapters, the organization serves the community through its more than 600 chapters in the U.S., Europe and the Caribbean.

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Steelworker addresses socialist meet

By Rick Nagin

Long-time labor activist Bruce Bostick called for building a “wide coalition to isolate the right wing” to win basic necessities for working people and move towards socialism, at a forum in Marion Ohio, May 3.

Bostick, a retired steelworker and member of the Communist Party USA National Committee was the first labor leader to speak at the annual event since it began in 1972. About 25 campus and community activists were in attendance while others watched a live broadcast of the event at another OSU branch.

“We live in a time of deep crisis and great opportunity,” Bostick said.

A massive movement from below is needed to pass legislation to create jobs, repair the infrastructure, develop green energy industries and reform health care and the financial system, he said.

Two trends have emerged on the left to deal with this challenge, he said. “One is broad and inclusive. The other is sectarian and narrow.”

The Communist Party, he said, agrees with the broad point of view. “We are an organization of regular working people helping to build a coalition for change. We believe in socialism and want to work with everyone pushing for progress.”

Socialism, Bostick said, is the defeat of “corporate financial control of the government and empowerment of a new coalition of the people.”

He cited a recent Rasmussen poll that found that 20 percent of the American people prefer socialism to capitalism.

La lucha continua — Primero de Mayo en Los Angeles

Por Tomas Marchante

Desde tempranas horas eran numerosos grupos de personas que se miraban por toda la ciudad de los ángeles buscando un punto común la esquina de las calles olympic y broadway.

Familias enteras muy animadas con su bandera de los estados unidos, vestidos de blanco, se aprestaban a marchar por una reforma migratoria que beneficie a mas de doce millones de indocumentados. Un primero de mayo fuera del normal festejo en los estados unidos. Pais donde el día de la clase obrera es celebrado en otro mes contrario a la lógica mundial.

Nada impedía que la multitud se acercara a el punto de concentración y muchos trabajadores inmigrantes hicieron enormes sacrificios para estar presentes. Un ejemplo, Francisco el para poder ir a la marcha trabajo por la mañana, apoyado en su familia y amigos terminaron su labor de limpieza en unos bares de Beverly Hill, para no faltar a la cita colectiva historica, donde toda el pueblo migrante marcharía.

Si de marchas numerosas se, por mi recorrido por el globo terráqueo, podría decirles sin temor a equivocarme que los inmigrantes se tomaron el centro de los ángeles, de alguna manera también el corazón de muchos que conocen del sufrimiento de las familias separadas por las redadas. La constante sosobra que vive un indocumentado en los estados unidos y en cualquier país capitalista del mundo.

Fue tanta la gente que marchó que

cualquiera llenaba su espíritu de lucha, fe, esperanza y es que el repertorio de consignas animaron los sentimientos de los presentes. Algunas recuerdo; como Si Se Puede abajo la ley SB 1070 la controversial ley de arizona; “Boicot Boicot” refiriendose a el boicot económico a Arizona.

Pero una consigna llamo mi atención los inmigrantes decían “Abajo los Republicanos” parece ser que alguna forma consciente o inconsciente los migrantes entienden que estos son su enemigo, adversario politico. Ellos escucharon a Bush prometer una reforma migratoria, llevan largo tiempo esperando una ley que los favorezca y en cambio de parte, de ese partido recibieron la indiferencia, separación de su familia, en algunos casos la destrucción de sus sueño americano se trunco al perder su casa o ultimamente el trabajo.

Este primero de mayo fue fenomenal eran cientos de organizaciones presentes sus lideres, activistas junto a los trabajadores. Dos grupos llamaron mi atención una el grupo de jóvenes del partido comunista de EEUU vestidos de rojo entusiasmados coreando sus consignas y el otro grupo el partido comunista también de EEUU rojos vestidos asi, personas mayores de apariencia intelectual norteamericana marchando y coreando consignas repartían una volante que invitaba a un festival llamado asi; “festival primero de mayo”.

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