

Today Father Charles Kavanagh leads the church. He is the 16th pastor of St. Raymond Nonnatus Parish. The parish now provides the community with various social services, including the Family Outreach and Youth Program, St. Raymond's Head Start, an expanded East Bronx Hunger Program, the After School Program, and the senior center.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Parish of St. Raymond Nonnatus for its glorious history and service to our South Bronx community.

WHAT IS JUST ABOUT
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD and encourage Members to read the following editorial by Henry Payne which appeared in the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday, September 16, 1997.

'ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE' KILLS JOBS FOR
THE POOR

(By Henry Payne)

Last Wednesday the Environmental Protection Agency delayed its approval of a proposed plastics plant in the predominantly black southern Louisiana town of Convent. It was the EPA's first ruling based on the idea of "environmental injustice" or "environmental racism"—the claim that polluting industries locate in minority areas because their residents are politically powerless to stop them. "It is essential that minority and low-income communities not be disproportionately subjected to environmental hazards," EPA Administrator Carol Browner wrote in her decision obstructing Shintech Inc.'s plans for a \$700 million manufacturing facility.

But if Ms. Browner had bothered asking the residents of Convent what they think, it would have been clear that the injustice is being perpetrated not by industry but by environmental elitists and their political allies, who falsely claim to represent local citizens while promoting their own ideological agenda. "None of these people are speaking for our community," says Carol Gaudin, a black resident of Convent and the organizer of a local pro-Shintech group, the St. James Citizen Coalition. "These environmental groups never came here and asked me if I wanted the plant. They can't just come in here and take it from us."

Gladys Maddie, a black mother who lives within a mile of the plant's proposed location, agrees. "We have witnessed groups such as Greenpeace descend on [Convent] like a plague of locusts," she wrote to the local newspaper. "We find the exploitative use of the color of our skin and our socio-economic condition sickening and insulting."

A recent poll by the local NAACP chapter found that 73% of the people in the black communities near the proposed plant favor it. But the Clinton administration is listening instead to the radical environmental group Greenpeace, which has waged a long war against the plastics industry. Greenpeace has offered its political and organizational muscle to the small group of mostly middle-class Convent residents who oppose the plant.

Louisiana's Department of Environmental Quality—charged by the EPA to regulate state industry—found in May that Shintech's plans satisfied the state's demanding emissions standards. But Greenpeace and its allies, determined to stop the plant, invoked President Clinton's 1994 executive order on environmental injustice, which compels federal agencies to consider whether minorities bear an unfair burden in the location of industrial facilities.

In Convent, the charge of environmental racism is laughable. Louisiana has actually practiced economic affirmative action by declaring the area a state enterprise zone. The state encouraged Shintech to locate in Convent, offering it tax breaks in return for hiring 35% of its work force from the surrounding population. Shintech operates a similar plant in Freeport, Texas, a prosperous, mostly white Gulf Coast city south of Houston. When Convent residents, including Ms. Maddie and Ms. Gaudin, visited Freeport earlier this year, they saw a standard of living they'd like to bring home.

Ms. Maddie's brother Roosevelt Teroud does backbreaking seasonal labor in Convent's sugarcane fields for \$6 an hour. To him, Shintech's more stable \$12- to \$15-an-hour jobs look like an opportunity, not an injustice. And the cultivation of sugarcane entails environmental hazards of its own: fields sprayed with insecticides and the resulting runoff that pollutes local water. Convent residents understand that industrial development entails environmental trade-offs, but they also think industry is their key to a better future. "The big plants up the river came in and gave those communities opportunities," says Nanette Jolivet, a lawyer representing Convent resident, "My clients want the same opportunity."

Forty-five miles away, the taxpayer-subsidized Tulane University Environmental Law Clinic represents plant opponents before the EPA. I asked Tulane lawyer Lisa Lavie what the citizens of Convent can do about economic development if her side wins. Her reply: "That area has some beautiful old plantations. They could build a cultural tourism industry."

"That's horrible!" Carol Gaudin gasps. "My ancestors were slaves on those plantations. These white opponents don't understand—we don't want to remember our past. We want a future."

Aligned against media-savvy, full-time environmentalists and their Washington allies, Convent residents know they have an uphill battle. They're not getting much help from the national black leadership. Lobbied by Greenpeace, both the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Joseph Lowry of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference spoke out against the plant this summer.

"They blatantly ignored the opinions of all the local elected African-American officials," says an outraged Ms. Jolivet, noting that neither Mr. Jackson nor Mr. Lowry contacted Convent's local councilmen, all of whom voted in favor of the plant.

The EPA didn't give environmentalists everything they wanted. They had hoped for a firm definition of environmental racism that would set a plant-killing precedent for other such cases. The EPA only called for more study; it did not kill the Shintech plant outright. But the opponents' strategy seems to follow a common pattern: Throw up enough bureaucratic roadblocks and Shintech will eventually give up.

Sadly, this strategy works. In Claiborne Parish, La., where the federal Atomic Energy Board held up construction of a \$850 million nuclear fuel enrichment facility this

May on grounds of environmental injustice, one investor—Northern States Power—has announced that it will pull out after a seven-year (and counting) regulatory process. "At some point these companies just throw up their hands in frustration," sighs Mary Boyd, a spokeswoman for the Claiborne facility.

For the residents of Convent, eager for the 165 jobs and \$5.6 million in school revenue that the Shintech plant will bring, the EPA's obstruction is unconscionable. "Why do these people want to take away our jobs?" asks Gladys Maddie. "If we run Shintech away, we're finished."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB CLEMENT

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 415, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE NORTH JERSEY
HERALD AND NEWS

HON. BILL PASCARELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the momentous occasion of the 125th anniversary of New Jersey's North Jersey Herald and News.

The Herald and News had its beginning in 1872. Debuting as a weekly newspaper, the Herald and News has a storied and remarkable history which has impacted the people of northern New Jersey. For more than 125 years, the Herald and News has stood as a symbol of the character of its loyal readers. The commitment and dedication shown by its founders and its ability to adapt to a changing world have made the newspaper an important part of Passaic County's history.

The Herald and News has always maintained a respected, balanced, and detailed coverage of the people and events which have been brought to life on the pages each day. The Herald and News is more than just a newspaper—it is an institution in the everyday life of northern New Jersey. It has a heritage unique in the annals of American journalism and American history. The men and women who make the newspaper today are proud of its glorious traditions and continue to build on this impressive legacy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like for you to join me, our colleagues, the men and women of the Herald and News, and the people of northern New Jersey in recognizing the North Jersey Herald and News' 125th anniversary. As we celebrate the 125 years of its service to the community, it is only proper that we extend our heartfelt congratulations on a remarkable tradition and best wishes for continued success and prosperity well into the new century.