

SYRACUSE

PEACE COUNCIL'S

# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice

March 2012 #812



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# SPC INFO

## SPC Steering Committee 2012

Susan Adair, Jessica Azulay, Carol Baum, Jack Brown, Saptarshi Lahiri, Andy Mager, Jessica Maxwell, Kimberley McCoy, Julianne Oldfield, Amelia Ramsey-Lefevre, Carole Resnick, Ursula Rozum, Richard Vallejo, Rose Viviano, Wendy Yost.

## SPC's Peace Newsletter

**Editorial Committee:** Saptarshi Lahiri, Andy Mager, Amelia Ramsey-Lefevre, Christina Sterbenz, Aly Wane. **Layout & Calendar:** Jessica Maxwell. **Proofing:** Rae Kramer, Andy Molloy.

## peacecouncil.net

Read the *PNL* online (issues dating to 1936!), learn about projects and upcoming events, get involved, and subscribe to our e-announcements list.

## SPC Committees & Projects

**Bikes 4 Peace:** fixing bikes and working cooperatively with youth  
**Bring Our War Money Home:** education, outreach, advocacy, demos  
**CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine & Israel:** education, action  
**Ground the Drones:** education, demonstrations, outreach  
**Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation:** education, hydrofracking ban  
**Youth & Militarism:** counter-recruitment and youth empowerment  
**Fundraising:** overall planning to raise funds to support SPC's work  
*Event Committees:* Birthday, Bowlathon, Plowshares, SummerCrafts  
**Finance:** analysis, reports, budget, general oversight  
**Peace Newsletter:** produce SPC's monthly newsletter

## Affiliated Projects & Coalitions

**Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse:** faith & secular groups  
**Caribbean Latin America Coalition:** sister communities, solidarity, SOA  
**Public Power Coalition:** working for municipal power in Syracuse

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## Peace Newsletter

**Submissions:** pnl@peacecouncil.net or 472-5478.

**Advertising:** Call 472-5478 or visit our website for rates and sizes.

**Calendar:** Submit items for the April *PNL* calendar by March 16.

## The Syracuse Peace Council (SPC),

founded in 1936, is an antiwar/social justice organization. We are community-based, autonomous and funded by the contributions of our supporters.

SPC educates, agitates and organizes for a world where war, violence and exploitation in any form will no longer exist. We challenge the existing unjust power relationships among nations, among people and between ourselves and the environment. As members, we work to replace inequality, hierarchy, domination and powerlessness with mutual respect, personal empowerment, cooperation and a sense of community.

Present social injustices cannot be understood in isolation from each other nor can they be overcome without recognizing their economic and militaristic roots. SPC stresses a strategy that makes these connections clear. We initiate and support activities that help build this sense of community and help tear down the walls of oppression. A fundamental basis for peace and justice is an economic system that places human need above monetary profit. We establish relationships among people based on cooperation rather than competition or the threat of destruction.

Our political values and personal lives shape and reflect each other. In both we are committed to nonviolent means of conflict resolution and to a process of decision-making that responds to the needs of us all.

# Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace & Social Justice

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# Educate, Agitate, Organize: SPC IN ACTION

compiled by Carol Baum

## Iran: Stopping another US War

We really are living under a permanent war economy—with ongoing occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama's rhetoric towards Iran continues to escalate recklessly. SPC hosted a teach-in on Iran, social movements and the US war economy on February 22 at the Westcott Community Center. We are also co-sponsoring upcoming presentations at the ArtRage Gallery on **March 7** (photos and discussion) and **March 14** (see box).



Kathy Kelly (left) with members of the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers. Attend Kathy's talk with Ann Wright on Feb. 28 for an opportunity to speak live with members via Skype at ArtRage. Photo: kathykellytour.org

## Ground the Drones: Get Active

**Resisting the Drones: An evening with Kathy Kelly and Col. Ann Wright (ret.) of the Hancock 38 Drone Resisters.** On **Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 7 pm**, Kathy and Ann will speak at ArtRage Gallery (505 Hawley Ave.). Kathy (Voices for Creative Nonviolence, [vcnv.org](http://vcnv.org)) will talk about her recent trip to Afghanistan, where she met with the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, a small group of Afghan young people who seek to "encourage wide-scale, person-to-person relationships towards peace and reconciliation, with a resolute commitment to non-violence, non-killing and the well-being of ALL people" (from their mission statement). Kathy then accompanied some of them to India, where they met with Gandhian peace activists. Cyberspace willing, Kathy will facilitate a Skype call with them. Ann, a former diplomat who resigned her commission in protest of the US invasion of Iraq, will speak on her continued resistance to the drones.

Kathy's and Ann's other speaking engagements are free and open to the public.

Kathy will speak:

- **Saturday, Feb. 25**, at the **4 pm** mass and on **Sunday Feb. 26**, at the **9 and 11 am** masses at St. Lucy's Church (432 Gifford).

- **Monday, Feb. 27 at 7 pm**, also at St. Lucy's sanctuary, she will participate in the play, *The Predator*. Discussion and light refreshments will follow.

- **Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 12:30** in Whitney 101 at Onondaga Community College.

Ann has one additional speaking engagement planned: The Thursday Morning Roundtable on **March 1**. It is a private event, but SPC may bring several people. Contact Andy.

**Next court appearance of the Hancock 38.** Now, almost a year after the action in which they were arrested, the court appearances of the Hancock 38 are winding down. Please come and support them once again, on **Wednesday, Feb. 29 at 5 pm** at the Town of DeWitt Court House (5400 Butternut Dr., East Syracuse). What's happening:

- Kathy Kelly's trial (she had been out of the country when the others were tried;

she is expected to plead guilty).

- The sentencing of four people who weren't able to be in court for the verdict [Col. Ann Wright (ret.), Veterans for Peace President Elliott Adams, Dorothy Day's granddaughter Martha Hennessy, and Jules Orkin (peace walker extraordinaire)].

- Those who are refusing to pay their fines and/or perform their community service are mandated to appear before Judge Gideon. At least 11 of the resisters have paid their fines to the Afghan Youth Peace

continued on next page

## SPC Monthly Program

### Iran Under Escalating Sanctions & a Growing Threat of War

**Wednesday, March 7, 7 pm**  
ArtRage Gallery (505 Hawley Ave.)

Judy Bello and Lynda Howland will present a slideshow of Iran photos taken during their travels with Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Delegations. They will share their experiences and discuss the US' current threats of war against Iran—what are the real issues; what are the effects of these coercive measures, and what are the likely consequences of a war against Iran.

On **Wednesday, March 14 at 7 pm** we'll show the Iranian film *Night Bus*, also at ArtRage. This 2007 film is a suspenseful Iranian anti-war movie, taking place over the course of a single night, and telling the story of a young private delivering a busload of Iraqi POWs from the front line to a prison inside Iran.

Both events are free and co-sponsored by SPC and ArtRage Gallery.

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[www.peacecouncil.net](http://www.peacecouncil.net) • **OFFICE HOURS:** M-Th, 10 am–5 pm; F, 10 am–2 pm

### STAFF ORGANIZERS

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Jessica Maxwell: [jessica@peacecouncil.net](mailto:jessica@peacecouncil.net) • Ursula Rozum: [ursula@peacecouncil.net](mailto:ursula@peacecouncil.net)



## SPC in Action / from previous page

Volunteers (see previous section) and will present their receipts to the judge.

Come by early for the **4 pm news conference** just outside the Court.

**Upstate NY Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars.** SPC hosted a recent meeting of 30 activists from Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Ithaca, Rochester, Syracuse, and the Utica area. We discussed many ways to collaborate in our activism, including: jointly bringing speakers to the region, focusing on Rep. Buerkle's pro-drone stance (she is a member of the Unmanned Systems Caucus), looking into holding a Tribunal on Drones, organizing larger demonstrations, and more. See [upstatedroneaction.org](http://upstatedroneaction.org) for resources and upcoming events.

Several activists from the upstate group will participate in a panel on drones at the United National Antiwar Coalition's national conference in late March (see page 21).

**Panels, speaking, etc.** Would your group like to learn more about the drones in our midst? SPC's Ground the Drones Committee would be happy to arrange speakers, put on a tableau, participate on panels, etc. Please contact Carol.

## Super PACs not Welcome

On Feb. 15, Karl Rove spoke at Syracuse University. Former deputy chief of staff under G. W. Bush, he is currently an advisor for the American Crossroads super PAC, which was highlighted in *Forbes* for the number of contributions from billionaires looking to shape the upcoming elections. An impromptu coalition of campus and community groups held a boisterous demonstration outside the student center, featuring a giant, inflatable rat. If you're interested in getting involved with local efforts to challenge corporate personhood and reverse the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision that granted corporations the ability to donate unrestricted amounts of money to political campaigns, contact Ursula.

## Why Wait to Get Involved?

There are so many issues that Peace Council activists are working on, it might be difficult to wrap your head around ways to get involved. That's

why we've been hosting bimonthly Activist Orientations—to create a space where SPC supporters can learn about the variety of ways to be a part of our work. The next Activist Orientation will be in April, but you don't have to wait until then! Contact Ursula anytime to get up to speed about ways you can contribute to the Peace Council's work. In addition to welcoming new members to various committees and projects, we are especially in need of individuals to help with posting event fliers around town and as the weather gets warm, to help with outreach tabling.

## Working with Occupy Syracuse

**Occupy Solidarity.** On Feb. 8, Occupy Syracuse hosted a bus-load of activists from Occupy Wall Street. After a brief march and rally through downtown, a discussion on movement building and a potluck dinner were held at Plymouth Church. The evening culminated in several teach-in sessions, including an hour-long discussion of drones and US wars led by SPC activists.

Occupy Syracuse activists continue to organize around economic injustice and corporate power. SPC continues to be supportive, and we work to expose the connections between corporate power, capitalism, war and injustice.

**Occupy the Courts.** On Jan. 21, the Peace Council joined Occupy Syracuse for Occupy the Courts to mark the two year anniversary of *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court decision which opened the



Can you tell the difference between a corporate person and a real person? The Supreme Court can't. Help us change that by getting involved with local Move to Amend efforts (see p. 13).

## Winter Peace Outreach



Say "No!" to the drones in our midst. Join us **the first Tuesday of each month through April** at the main entrance to **Hancock Air Base** (E. Molloy Rd. between Thompson and Townline Rds.) from **4 – 4:45 pm** to catch the Hancock shift change. Use one of our signs or bring your own. This is your chance to have an impact on hundreds of people, and in only 45 minutes.

**Next Peace Outreach:**

**Tuesday, March 6.**

Contact Ed or Ann, 478-4571.

floodgates to unlimited corporate spending on elections. The action marked the beginning of a campaign for a Syracuse Common Council resolution in support of the Move to Amend campaign to abolish corporate personhood. You can read more about the Move to Amend on page 13. Visit the SPC website or Facebook page for video footage of SPC staff organizer Jessica making the connection between corporate personhood, war profiteering and ongoing wars.

## Strike for Peace Bowlathon: Sunday, March 4

The registration deadline for teams for this year's Bowlathon was February 24—but since you're just reading this now, we'll give you a few days leeway! However, you need to register asap—we can't reserve a lane for you without registration.

It's great fun—come up with a creative team name and clever costumes ...or just come as yourself. Teams are 4-6 people, \$15/adult, \$10/kid (12 or under). Sessions are 12-2 pm and 3-5 pm. Come even if you're not on a team—we'll put you on one and you can make new friends (helpful if you contact us first). If you're a non-bowler, but want to join in the fun as a volunteer, that's *very* welcome.

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# With Liberty and Justice For All—Except Muslims

Christina Sterbenz

The US has become a breeding ground for religious prejudice. This post-9/11 atmosphere of ignorance and fear has even infiltrated Central New York. Arrested in 2003 for violating economic sanctions against Iraq, money laundering, and Medicare fraud, Dr. Rafil Dhafir, a prominent Rome, NY oncologist, has already served almost 10 years in jail. The prosecution tried him as a white collar criminal—while mumbling accusations of terrorism into the ears of the law. In early February 2012, Judge Norman Mordue of the Syracuse Federal Court upheld his 2005 decision to sentence Dhafir, now 63-years-old with numerous serious medical conditions and no prior criminal record, to 22 years of incarceration.

The FBI not only arrested Dhafir on February 26, 2003 but staged one of the largest local mass interrogations ever, according to Barrie Gewanter, director of the New York Civil Liberties Union Central New York chapter. The feds “aggressively interrogated” over 150 local Muslim families.

Tanweer Haq, the Islamic Chaplain at Syracuse University’s Hendricks Chapel, recalls the FBI’s questioning of Islamic community members about their faith, prayer habits, and Muslim identity—all of which had no bearing on the case against Dhafir.

“It is kind of accepted—I shouldn’t say accepted—but recognized by the Muslim community that the loyalty of Muslims is being questioned and that Muslims are being looked at with suspicion,” Haq said.

By violating these individuals’ personal liberty solely on the grounds of religion, the interrogations violated the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants all citizens equal protection under the law. They also shirked basic democratic principles such as freedom of religion and maintaining

innocence until proven guilty. And the Muslim community felt intimidated.

“After the interrogations, some people didn’t even want to come to the Mosque. Some people, even today, still do not come, because they feel if they come, something bad will happen to them, the government is going to come after them. They have people watching them, people doing wire taps on their phones. It’s very intrusive,” said Mohamed Khater, President of the Central New York Islamic Society.



A demonstration for civil liberties and solidarity with Muslim neighbors on Feb. 24, 2004, the first anniversary of the FBI interrogations of over 150 local Muslim families. Photo: Donna Mühs-McCarten

## A Community Under Pressure

When Gewanter got wind of the situation in 2003, she immediately approached the Central New York Bill of Rights Defense Campaign, a coalition of individuals and organizations working to restore civil liberties curtailed by the federal government since 9/11. They collaborated from 2003 to 2007 to create and organize an annual day of Muslim solidarity on February 26, the date of Dhafir’s arrest. The first year nearly 200 individuals pledged to engage in one of four ways: making a symbolic donation of at least \$1 to a Muslim charity; standing in silence or praying at least three to five times that day; as a female, wearing a hijab; and lastly, attending a peace rally or press conference on the issue. These events, while instrumental in educating the community about the unjust events of

February 26, gathered mostly non-Muslim participants.

One of these supporters, Katherine Hughes, attended Syracuse University when the Dhafir trial began. After witnessing the first few days of proceedings as a court watcher for the ACLU, she felt the need to go every day of the 14-week trial. After taking incompletes in her classes, she began spearheading the Save Dr. Dhafir movement locally.

“I knew the government wasn’t saying, ‘He’s a terrorist’ on one hand, and on the other, saying, ‘He’s a crook. He stole money from Medicare’ for no reason. And I think I was one of the first people to realize what was happening,” Hughes said.

As a result of her activism, Katherine has not only lost faith in the government, she fears for herself. Before becoming a citizen a few years ago, she worried the government could deport her. “But I’m definitely not as afraid as if I were a Muslim man,” she said. “We have a responsibility to each other. Because I’m not a Muslim or Arab, I need to speak out.”

And Katherine isn’t the only one watching, nor is she the only one concerned.

Ismail Pathan, vice president of the Muslim Students Association at Syracuse University, has followed the Dhafir Trial as well.

“It makes me wonder what this country actually stands for. You hear about the American dream and how America is so great. Many of the people that come here, come here for a better life, and it’s sad to see the way they’re treated,” he said. “It could happen to my friends and family. It could happen to anyone.”

According to Haq, a few people wouldn’t sign one of the petitions to free Dhafir for similar reasons—fear for themselves and their families. And Gewanter understands.

“Just as African Americans in the inner city have a distrust of the law, Muslims,

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*Christina Sterbenz is an intern with the Peace Council, is on the PNL editorial committee, and is the executive editor of SU’s JERK Magazine.*

continued on next page

South Asians, and Arabs have that same wariness when they see the police, and I completely understand,” Gewanter said.

Hughes also spoke of the fear surrounding the interrogations and Dhafir’s case in general. “That’s what this story is really about—the government scaring the shit out of people,” Hughes said.

### A National Problem

This fear doesn’t just stem from the fallout of Dhafir’s case either. Consider Yassin Aref and Mohammed Hossain, two Muslim men tried in Albany, N.Y. for their supposed terrorist links. As *The Nation* reported in 2008, an FBI sting operation, led by an informant with a lengthy criminal record, pinned charges of laundering money from a missile sale on Aref and Hossain. Aside from crafting an entirely fictitious story, the conversation happened in such broken English that Aref and Hossain might not have even understood.

And then there’s Syed Fahad Hashmi, a Pakistan-born US citizen who grew up in Queens. The government accused him of conspiring with al-Qaeda. According to a 2010 *Slate Magazine* article, the government didn’t accuse him of being a member

of al-Qaeda or even direct contact with the group. The case pivoted around testimony from Junaid Babar, an acquaintance who stayed with Hashmi and found luggage containing raincoats, ponchos, and waterproof socks—“military gear” by the government’s definition. Babar then delivered these materials to a high-ranking official in al-Qaeda and borrowed Hashmi’s cell phone to call other terrorist conspirators. The government, however, blamed and tried Hashmi. Denied due-process and prevented from reviewing all of the evidence of his case, he pled guilty after three years in prison.

This only describes three of the questionable cases against Muslims in this country. Yet when Voices in the Wilderness, a non-Muslim activist group, also violated sanctions by sending food and medicine to Iraq, the government simply fined the organization \$20,000—which it refused to pay.

Dr. Dhafir, however, cannot refuse to serve another 12 years in jail.

The justice system and

major media have turned a blind eye to his and other Muslims’ struggles. This era of fear will continue as long as the US government sidesteps the Constitution by fighting its “War on Terror” on the backs of Muslim community. ♣



Image: artist unknown

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# Why Did the US Invade Iraq and Afghanistan?

Ed Kinane

*“A state of war only serves as an excuse for domestic tyranny.”*

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

*“The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.”*

—Eugene Victor Debs

Few nations have such extensive borders or coasts as the United States. Few have borders as blessedly uncontested and unthreatened. Why, then, is the US so contemptuous of international law? Why does the US intervene in and invade other lands, often far from our shores, with such alarming frequency?

Why does this nation squander trillions of dollars on “security” and “defense”? Why does this nation maintain fleets and hundreds of costly military bases all over the globe? Why does this nation dissipate its treasure deploying the world’s most massive killing machine?

We may never solve these riddles unless we better understand both human nature and the nature of war. Toward that end, I’ll pose some questions; they may imply some answers, if only fragmentary ones.

Let’s start with “human nature” (whatever *that* means). Why does “human nature” seem often to lead to destruction, of others and of ourselves? [To really explore this issue, see Erich Fromm’s *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, published in 1973 during the Viet Nam War.] Is brutality just part of who we are? Does militarism—highly organized violence—stem from our mammalian or primate pedigree? Or, as

*Over the years the search to better understand the causes and consequences of war has taken Ed to Iran, Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Reach him at [edkinane@verizon.net](mailto:edkinane@verizon.net).*

some might plausibly suggest, is it a male? Would women-led societies be steeped in militarism?

Who “volunteers” to be the cannon fodder and why? Don’t many enlistments—mostly male—stem from the “poverty draft” and from chauvinistic indoctrination? What impact does war have on those who serve and fight? How many come home intact? When the warriors come home, how do they and their families fare?

But maybe human nature—and men—get a bad rap. Perhaps war isn’t human or even male but a reflex or emanation of *power structures*. Such structures aren’t persons; most humans have no say in the



Image: Ben Heine

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## Are our minds so colonized and compartmentalized that we can’t see the consequences of our actions?

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power structures’ callous indifference to life. These structures—mostly regimes and corporations—tend to be machines with connected, but blindered parts.

Each nut and bolt plays its little role often oblivious to its contribution to the machine’s malign functioning. Usually those who have risen to positions of oversight and command internalize the machine’s inhuman dynamics. Consciously or not, malevolently or not, these leaders tend to make policy detrimental to the 99%. The logic of their positions calls for achieving short-term gains with little consideration of anyone out of sight, whether socially, geographically or generationally.

## More Questions

Historically, did militarism loom as large as it has over the past century? Was human governance more—or less—warlike before the rise of agriculture millennia ago and before the rise of industrialism two or three centuries ago? Was the power structure as warlike before capitalism turned greed into an MBA program and a science?

On a finite planet, does exponentially rising population lead to exponentially rising aggression? Along with population pressure come two quantitatively and qualitatively distinct types of consumption—that needed for human survival (essential consumption) and that merely sought for status, comfort or self-indulgence (excessive consumption).

Excessive consumption is at least an order of magnitude greater than essential consumption. But those consuming a little more than what is necessary greatly outnumber we who consume far too much. Together both the haves and the have-nots—the over-developed and the not-so-developed nations—wreak havoc on the planet and severely tax its habitats.

Our dependence on increasingly scarce resources (especially fossil fuel) spurs the national and imperial rivalries that intensify militarism. [See Michael T.

Klare’s excellent *Resource Wars*.] And note: within the global power structure much of the world’s limited

resources are devoured maintaining the war machine(s). War itself is a major engine of ecological mayhem.

Can war—especially offensive or “pre-emptive” war—ever be morally justified? When has resorting to violence, rather than negotiation, ever served broad human interests? Doesn’t violence usually or always generate more violence? Doesn’t war corrupt? (What, for example, has become of the billions of dollars the Pentagon can’t account for?)

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## War and Empire

Who benefits from the organized violence of war? War is enormously profitable for US “defense” industries. These industries shape US governance and foreign policy. This is true whether the target was Viet Nam or the Pentagon’s current land and air wars elsewhere in Asia.

Despite the recent and projected drawdown of troops, will the US imperium ever voluntarily loosen its grip—all those bases!—on regions that corporations and the Pentagon deem strategic? Or must we wait until, like the Soviet empire, impending bankruptcy forces our full withdrawal and demilitarization?

Without designated “bad guys,” corporate war profiteering would wither. Negotiation risks leading to a peace settlement; peace is the enemy of the war industry. The war industry, through lobbying and by financing election campaigns, buys and sells Congressional representatives. These kept men and women, in cahoots with the Pentagon and with the Executive branch, keep the war pot boiling.

Just look at all the manufactured frenzy about Iran—as if modern Iran has ever invaded its neighbors; as if Iran itself wasn’t totally flanked by saber-rattling nuclear powers; as if Iran had a fraction of the air (or land or sea) power of the US and Israel. [See chart of hostile military bases encircling Iran in the February 2012 *PNL*, page 9.]

## Nationalism and Patriotism

What is the role of nationalism and patriotism—each a type of tribalism, each promoted by imperialism—in fostering war? Considering how many of the victims are non-white or Islamic, what role does white racism and “Christianity” play in the mindsets that make mass-killing so casual?

By refusing to close Guantanamo and by authorizing the Reaper drone’s extrajudicial and civilian killings, Congress and

the Pentagon assure that whole swaths of the Middle East and Central Asia will long remain hostile to the US. Since US contempt for the “other” isn’t a policy calculated to “win hearts and minds”—i.e. to quell hostilities—what *is* it calculated to do?

We can imagine why the 1% don’t embrace nonviolence. But why do the insights of prophets like Gandhi, Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. elude so many of the 99%? Is it “false consciousness”; how has Debs’ subject class come to be so misled and dumbed down? Is critical thinking so absent from school curricula

bombs, hellfire missiles, cruise missiles, etc.,—keeps raining terror on poorly defended peoples.

## Weakness or Strength?

Do militarism and the imposition of a surveillance state make a nation safe and strong—or vulnerable and weak? The “war on terrorism,” it turns out, has been a wonderful device for stifling dissent and ratcheting up surveillance and social control here in the US—witness the Patriot Acts and the recently enacted National Defense Authorization Act. Witness the prosecution of Dr. Rafil Dhafir and the calculated intimidation of Muslims here in Syracuse [see page 5]—a pattern repeated across the country.


Why do we refuse to see what the Pentagon does, not only over there but here? The trillions squandered on US land and air wars provide the rationale for class-targeted domestic budget cuts. Such cuts help heighten the privilege precious to the 1% and to those who curry their favor or aspire to join their ranks.

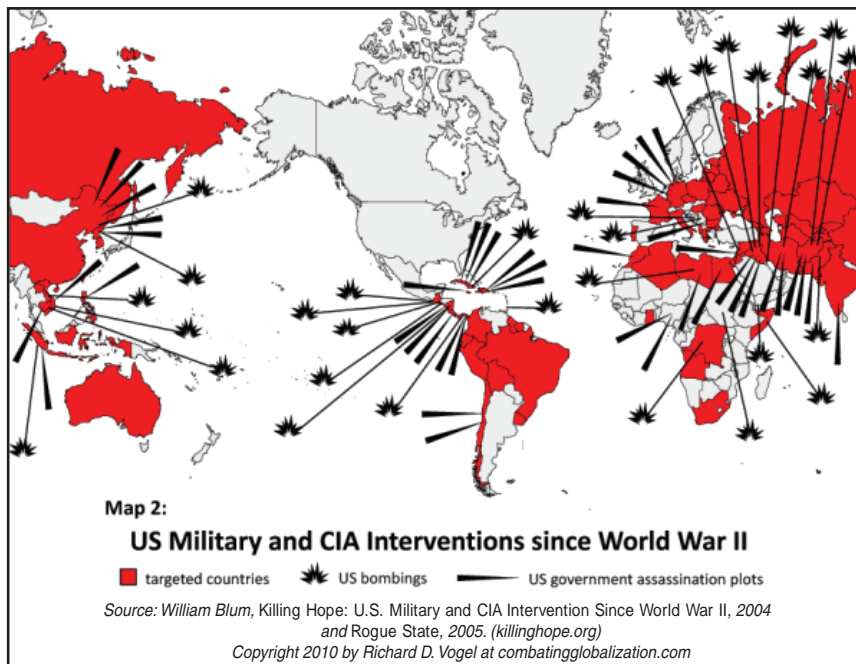
Such cuts decimate the safety nets that reduce human despair and help assure domestic tranquility. The ensuing social discord is then used to justify the further militarization of our

police. With that domestic militarization the US itself insidiously becomes an occupied territory. Unlike people of color, middle class white folk seem blithely unaware of the process. As the middle class shrivels, that ignorance will diminish.

And can’t we see our complicity in our own oppression? Don’t we contribute to militarism through the federal taxes we pay—about half of which goes to the Pentagon? The Pentagon, of course, then funnels much of this swag to its corporate cronies.

Are we so caught up in personal debt, are our lifestyles too snared in addiction, distraction and co-optation that we can’t think straight? Are we so snared that our hearts have gone AWOL?

Don’t we give a damn that our children are inheriting an increasingly depleted and dangerous world? Or that our nation’s much vaunted democracy—like our proud Judeo-Christianity—risks becoming a soulless sham... 



and university courses? Are our minds so colonized and compartmentalized that we can’t see the consequences of our actions?

To mobilize the US population to support its interventions and invasions, the Bush administration eagerly seized on 9/11 as a pretext for its phony “war on terrorism.” I say “phony” because many questions about 9/11 are studiously avoided. For example, the official 9/11 commission failed to investigate leads suggesting that elements of the Bush administration, despite pointed warnings, chose not to take measures preventing that holocaust. [For a quick video on some of the gaps in the official narrative, see [www.corbetteport.com/911-a-conspiracy-theory/](http://www.corbetteport.com/911-a-conspiracy-theory/)].

Although “terrorism” is incessantly invoked by politicians and the corporate media, defining the word seems to be taboo. Surely such a taboo will persist as long as the Pentagon—with its gunships, napalm, Reaper drones, white phosphorus, cluster



# Unarmed Resistance Still Syria's Best Hope

Stephen Zunes

The Syrian pro-democracy struggle has been both an enormous tragedy and a powerful inspiration. Indeed, as someone who has studied mass nonviolent civil insurrections in dozens of countries in recent decades, I know of no people who have demonstrated such courage and tenacity in the face of such savage repression as have the people of Syria these past 10 months.

The resulting decline in the legitimacy of Bashar al-Assad's government gives hope that the opposition will eventually

Instead, the regime has responded with live ammunition against overwhelmingly nonviolent demonstrators and with widespread torture and abuse of detainees, even as the protests spread to every major region of the country. The death toll as of this writing now stands at more than 5,000.

Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, where the opposition was relatively united and was able to take advantage of divisions within the ruling circles, the elites in Syria have been united against a divided opposition. Decades of human rights abuses, sectarian divisions, suppression of independent



The heart of the conflict: civilians flee from fighting after Syrian army tanks entered the northwestern city of Idlib on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012. Photo: AP

win. The question is how many more lives will be lost until then.

While the repressive nature of the regime has never been in question, many observers believed it would be smarter and more nuanced in its reaction when the protests of the Arab Spring first came to Syria in March 2011. Indeed, had the government responded to the initial demonstrations like those of Morocco and neighboring Jordan with genuine (if relatively minor) reforms and more subtle means of crowd control, the pro-democracy struggle would have probably faded rather quickly.

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*Stephen Zunes is Professor of Politics and Chair of Mid-Eastern Studies at the University of San Francisco.*

civil society institutions, ubiquitous secret police, and an overall culture of fear have made it difficult to build a unified opposition movement. Furthermore, the Israeli occupation of the southwestern region of the country, foreign invasions and occupations of neighboring Lebanon and Iraq, and periodic threats by Turkey, Israel and the United States have allowed the nationalistic regime to further solidify its control.

Another difference is that Assad is not a singular ruler, but part of a powerful oligarchy composed of top military officers, wealthy businessmen, Baath Party officials and others. Dictatorships that rest primarily on the power of just one man are generally more vulnerable in the face of popular revolt than are oligarchical systems

## Excerpts from Juan Cole's "The Dilemma Over Syria"

### *On the legitimacy of armed intervention:*

"My critics have sometimes suggested that I support Democratic but not Republican Party wars, but they, like most Americans, just don't understand the UN Charter. First of all, my default position is to oppose war under most circumstances, what I call "the option for peace." War should not be a war of choice, but should be a very last resort. But large scale armed aggression by one country on another, or genocide, need to be opposed by arms where that is practical. As for legitimate use of force, I am against wars that do not stem from either self-defense or from a UN Security Council resolution. I wouldn't necessarily support any old war the UNSC authorized, but its authorization is a sine qua non."

### *On the length of the nonviolent struggle:*

"The hope lies only in the longer term. Prague got its spring when the Soviet Union got a reformist premier, who was influenced by decades of Soviet dissident thinking and writing. Syrian dissidents will just have to keep up a non-violent struggle for the truth that might go on for a while. If they can prevail nonviolently, their revolution would immediately be more well-grounded and likely to succeed."

*Juan Cole is Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan.*

where a broader network of elite interests has a stake in the system.

Syria has not had much experience in democracy. Its brief democratic period following independence was aborted by a CIA-supported coup in 1949. Following two decades of coups, countercoups, a brief union with Egypt, and chronic political instability, Defense Minister Hafez al-Assad seized power in 1970 and ruled until his death in 2000. Despite that the republican Baath movement was founded in large part

continued on page 22



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MY FRIEND  
ONE DAY THE  
BLACK WILL  
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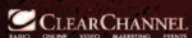
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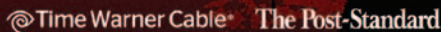
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# When the Camps Come Down: The Occupy Movement Post-Occupation

Ben Kuebrich

I'm sitting at the Freedom of Espresso in downtown Syracuse, a local endorser of the Occupy Movement. It is the weekly Do Stuff meeting (for direct action, outreach, and art). Seventeen people crowd around two linked tables to plan actions and outreach for the next few weeks of the local movement. Fresh off a day of workshops with the traveling Occutrip (a group from Occupy Wall Street that is traveling around the Northeast in a school bus), Occupy Syracuse appears energized for the next stage of the local movement.

The movement's focus is shifting from maintenance of the camp site, which faced eviction after 109 days of occupation in downtown Syracuse, to political action, mobile outreach, and local collaboration. While the general direction is clear, naming an explicit agenda for the movement has always been impossible, if not antithetical to its spirit and process. Local occupier David Salerius calls Occupy "a populist, organic, evolving movement" and fellow occupier Kaitlyn Shanahan describes it as "a movement of equal individuals" where ideas are taken up based on their resonance with the group. These characteristics describe the movement on both the local and national levels with its distributed authority and consensus process, all of which obliterate the guise of official histories, agendas, and philosophies.

## The Value of Occupy Camps

*"A strong camp site is a great asset but its loss will not end this movement."*

—Syracuse Occupier Miguel Santana

Johanna Berlin, an occupier and human services worker, describes the camp as "an information spot" and a "training ground." Fellow organizer Ryan O'Hara

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*Ben is a graduate student in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric at Syracuse University and organizes with Occupy Syracuse and the Westside Residents Coalition.*

agrees, explaining that many occupiers "didn't have any background in activism" before coming to camp. He says that Occupy Syracuse has developed between 15-20 committed activists over the past four months. The campsite also served as the physical embodiment of the movement's



Local and out-of-town Occupiers share ideas during the Occutrip stop at Plymouth Congregational Church on February 8. Photo: Michael Di Giglio

daily commitment, process, and message. The ideal Occupy camp is a microcosm of the society the movement hopes to create—an extremely participatory society in which everyone has decision making power and everyone is cared for.

Whether individual camps lived up to that ideal or not, their destruction signals the necessity of political action to go along with the prefiguring of a new social reality. Even the most liberatory, peaceful, and democratic Occupy camps have eventually been met with newly written or enforced laws (against propane tanks and camping at night in Syracuse) and subject to bulldozers and arrests. This is the current reality of unrepresentative politics and corporate dominance colliding with the ambitious vision of the Occupy movement and the threat it has become.

## What's Next for Occupy?

A number of questions confront the movement and were raised recently in the Occutrip stop in Syracuse: How can the Occupy movement claim to be the 99% if it is predominately white? Will the movement work inside or outside the

political system?

While some occupations rent storefronts (Albany) and office space (OWS), others have also moved to engage with communities of color and to occupy the lawns of homes facing eviction. In the last few months, the Occupy the Hood movement has spread to seventeen cities, organized by people of color and working from "the realization that we must craft a movement that uniquely and directly speaks to the issues of People of Color," as the mission statement explains. Here in Syracuse, the movement plans to spread its message and listen to local concerns in neighborhoods that surround downtown.

Occupy Our Homes has staved off evictions nationwide. Occupy Atlanta has been particularly effective, fighting foreclosures with several residents, including the home of a wounded Iraq War veteran and a 103-year-old woman. Occupy Rochester, in collaboration with Take Back the Land, recently protected a home from foreclosure by intensifying publicity and threatening to occupy the property's lawn. Similar opportunities in Syracuse are being discussed.

Other viral ideas include the recent campaign against corporate personhood; a national action in support of prisoners on February 20 (growing out of an Occupy Oakland resolution); a global vigil against police repression on February 27; and a nationwide call to shut down the corporations on February 29 (issued by Occupy Portland). Occupy Syracuse, like other Occupy sites, discusses the stream of national calls for action and works to find local targets, educational opportunities, and collaborators. Stay tuned for related actions and teach-ins in Syracuse.

Occupy sites across the country have also begun planning bigger, collaborative events for the near future. A nationwide general strike on May 1 and massive actions against the G8/NATO Summit in Chicago from May 19-20 are gaining support. Visit [occupysyracuse.org](http://occupysyracuse.org) or [occupytogether.org](http://occupytogether.org) for details as they become available. ♻️

# Health Care Reform in a Post-ACA Era

Karen Nezelek

When the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) became law in March 2010 did we get real healthcare reform or just corporate care for health insurance companies? Many of the provisions will come into effect between 2014 and 2020. Some of the major immediate benefits include: insurance for children with pre-existing conditions; a temporary high-risk pool for uninsured people with pre-existing conditions; the end of rescission – losing insurance once a person becomes gravely ill; and prohibition on discriminating in favor of higher-paid employees. Immediate gains for insurers included a huge increase in the number of the potentially insured and an only slightly curtailed ability to increase premiums, co-pays, and deductibles.

## What has been happening since ACA began?

As of 2010, the ACA requires insurance companies to spend 80 to 85 percent of their income on delivering healthcare to their customers or pay rebates to consumers if not compliant. Some insurance companies are appealing to state oversight agencies for added time to raise spending from their current levels of 50 and 65 percent of their income. This request is particularly troubling to consumers since, in 2009, during our greatest recession since the Great Depression, the top five most profitable healthcare corporations made record profits of \$12.2 billion. Their profits in 2009, not cash flow, increased from a low of 28 percent (United Health) to a high of 346 percent (Cigna) over profits made in 2008. All of this increase in profits occurred while there was a drop in enrollment and almost no change in the proportion of their income used to pay claims. The trend continues with four of these corporations still on the Fortune list of the top 100 earners in 2011. The

*Karen is a retired speech-language pathologist, teacher and voice researcher who now gives her energy to healthcare reform.*

need to make profits and be accountable to stockholders is still not a good model for health care delivery.

Even in the nonprofit health insurance sector, companies such as Empire BlueCross

where private healthcare providers bill one single public entity for their services. Consumers can choose their providers. A simple step toward true, universal health care in the US would be to expand our Medicare system to cover all residents from birth to death.

## What is happening now?

It is unlikely that US citizens will ask for a national health service similar to England's or our Veterans Administration system, where healthcare providers are employees of the government. There is support for modifying ACA, which is still going to include insurance companies as the middleman. There is also support for an "Expanded and Improved Medicare for All" from birth to death. One can cite moral, ethical and fiscal reasons to continue to work for a single-payer system. Some national groups continuing to work toward that goal are Health Care-Now ([www.healthcare-](http://www.healthcare-now.org)

[www.healthcare-now.org](http://www.healthcare-now.org)), Physicians for a National Health Program ([www.PNHP.org](http://www.PNHP.org)), National Nurses United ([www.nationalnursesunited.org](http://www.nationalnursesunited.org)) and the Green Party ([www.gp.org](http://www.gp.org)). At least 10 states have single-payer legislation efforts now. In 2011, Vermont enacted a law which will take them from a new plan administered by nonprofit health insurance companies to a final state-administered system. California just missed getting their single-payer bill passed in the Senate by two votes in January. This is the same bill that passed and was vetoed twice by Gov. Schwarzenegger. In New York, efforts are underway to revise a bill introduced for the last 20 years by Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (A2356-2009). Lobbying in Albany took place February 7 and will occur again on May 8.

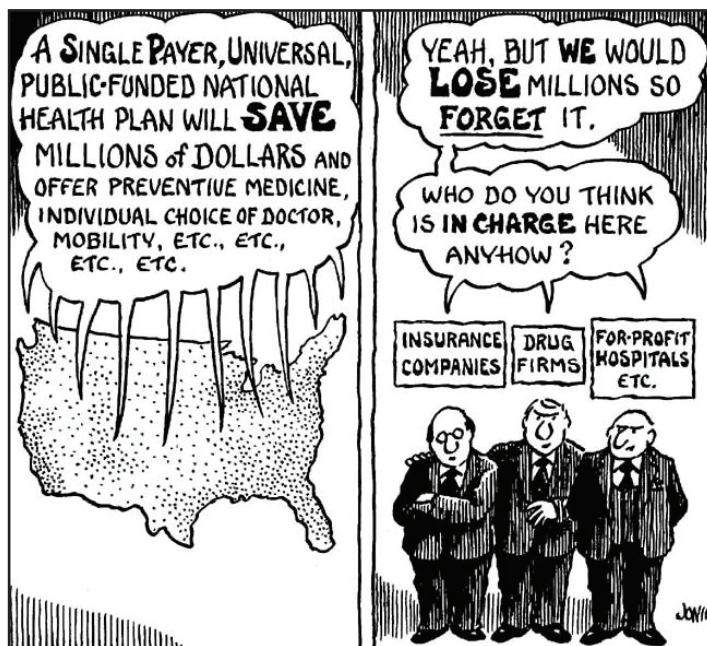


Image: Jonik

BlueShield or Excellus are sequestering more money than is mandated to meet consumer claims. Wendell Potter, a former vice president who blew the whistle on insurance giant Cigna's rescission policies, reports figures from 2010 showing the "Big Blues" are holding five times more capital than state regulators mandate. Why are they asking for premium rate increases in the 20 to 30 percent range? These companies are doing well. The 51 million uninsured Americans are not. Last year 48,000 deaths were linked to lack of health insurance.

## What can we do?

Can we do better than this for the residents of the US? Yes, but only if we continue to strive for real health care reform. T. R. Reid, in his book *Sick Around the World*, describes five developed countries that have done much better than the US in providing healthcare to all of their residents at half the cost we pay per person. The Taiwanese government appointed a commission to study healthcare delivery systems and their funding in developed nations. The commission decided our Medicare model was the best. This is a single-payer system

*There are signs of progress toward universal healthcare, but it is slow and uncertain. Only constant pressure via grassroots organizing by concerned US residents can ensure positive change. If you are interested in working towards a single-payer healthcare system, please contact me at [knezele@twcny.rr.com](mailto:knezele@twcny.rr.com).*



# Are You Ready to Move to Amend?

Dr. Joan Coff and Ursula Rozum

*"I'll believe corporations are people when Texas executes one."*

—Occupy Wall Street sign

On January 21, citizens in 100 cities and 48 states participated in Occupy the Courts to protest the second anniversary of the infamous Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*. In *Citizens United vs The Federal Election Commission* the Supreme Court ruled that political donations are considered speech, since corporations are considered people and people have the right to free speech. This ruling opened the floodgates of unlimited corporate money into elections.

In response, spearheaded by the California-based group Democracy Uprising, Move to Amend (MTA) emerged as a campaign and coalition in 2010. We seek to undo this ruling through grassroots education and mobilization, with the long term goal of amending the Constitution to state that *corporations are not people and that money is not speech*.

## Money Corrupts Democracy

There are many ways that corporations being considered people is problematic. Joan's experience as a chiropractor is a good example. Research has repeatedly shown that people who use chiropractic care have lower overall healthcare costs in their lifetime. In a society where healthcare costs are a leading cause of bankruptcy, it would make sense to educate people to be healthy with the help of chiropractic care, and thus lower the nation's healthcare costs. For years the chiropractic community has tried to make inroads in the laws to make chiropractic care more accessible. However, the pharmaceutical and insurance industries spend millions of dollars each year supporting pro-pharmaceutical

candidates and lobbying to keep the status quo—one where people can only rely on medicine and the pharmaceutical industry for "healthcare." Chiropractic is a small profession and does not have the funds to compete with the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, and so is unable to get legislation passed that would help more people benefit from natural healthcare.

Most people agree that corporations

know—to supply the push needed to take this campaign to the federal level. Some counties have already passed resolutions supporting a constitutional amendment through ballot referendums—such as in Madison and Dane County in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, New York State does not have a referendum process that allows citizens to put measures on the ballot. Thus, on January 21, Occupy Syracuse launched an effort urging the Common Council to pass a resolution supporting the MTA campaign, and on February 7, Onondaga County legislator Mark Stanzyk introduced a similar resolution in the Onondaga County legislature.

Move to Amend's strategy relies on local movement building and democracy. Local chapters that adopt the MTA name are asked to practice consensus-based decision making and to engage in traditional style organizing that puts us face-to-face with our neighbors and members of our community. While some activists find petitions ineffective, the Move to Amend

campaign recognizes them as valuable educational and organizing tools that can spark conversations with strangers who are potential new members of the campaign and gatekeepers to new communities. Currently, there are MTA groups as close as Rochester, Buffalo and Ithaca.

Once enough local groups form in a state, a state coalition will be created. The final step will be to form a national coalition.

Learn more at [www.movetoamend.org](http://www.movetoamend.org). Sign the petition and see the scope of the movement across the country. **If you are in Onondaga County, please call your county legislator and ask him/her to support the resolution limiting corporate personhood.** Are you ready to join the campaign to amend the Constitution? National Move to Amend will sponsor a talk with David Cobb entitled "Creating Democracy and Challenging Corporate Rule" as well as an activist training workshop in Syracuse on March 24 (see calendar). For more information or to help launch Move to Amend Onondaga County, contact Joan 562-235-7032, [drjoancoff@gmail.com](mailto:drjoancoff@gmail.com). ♣



About 40 people gathered outside Federal Court (located inside the Federal Building) in Syracuse to call for an end to corporate personhood on the 2nd anniversary of the Citizens United decision. Photo: Ursula Rozum

are not people. A recent Hart Research Associates poll found 79 percent support for passage of an amendment to overturn the decision and make clear that corporations do not have the same rights as people. Despite popular sentiment, the Supreme Court has granted corporations rights that were intended solely for humans. However, neither the Declaration of Independence nor the Constitution mention corporations, which were rare entities at our nation's founding. But thanks to decades of rulings by Justices who molded the law to favor elite interests, corporations today are granted privileges that empower them to deny citizens the right to full self-governance.

## Building a Movement

The Constitution can be amended. It's been done before when citizens have risen up and put mass pressure on the political system. Think women's suffrage, the end of prohibition and the lowering of the voting age to 18. A Constitutional amendment will require a large grassroots movement—people like you and us and everyone we

*Joan, a chiropractor and small business owner, and Ursula, an SPC staffer, are co-initiators of the Move to Amend campaign here in Central New York.*



# TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS



Image: Mark Babushkin

Terry Tempest Williams has been called “a citizen writer,” a writer who speaks and speaks out eloquently on behalf of an ethical stance toward life. A naturalist and fierce advocate for freedom of speech, she has consistently shown us how environmental issues are social issues that ultimately become matters of justice. Williams, like her writing, cannot be categorized. She has testified before Congress on women’s health issues, been a guest at the White House, has camped in the remote regions of Utah and Alaska wildernesses and worked as “a barefoot artist” in Rwanda. She is known for her impassioned and lyrical prose, and is the author of numerous environmental literature classics. Williams is currently the Annie Clark Tanner Scholar in Environmental Humanities at the University of Utah. Her writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Orion Magazine*, and numerous anthologies worldwide as a crucial voice for ecological consciousness and social change.

Tempest Williams’ latest book, *Why Women Were Birds* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) will be in stores on April 24. The SU Bookstore will have a limited number available for purchase at the event.

## Terry Tempest Williams

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# Righting the Ship of State

## Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign Gets Serious about Creating Change

Andy Mager

As peace and social justice activists, do we really think we can foster meaningful social change? Are we content with sharing our sharp critiques of the racism, classism, militarism, patriarchy, colonialism and other oppressions that permeate our society, or can we use that analysis to develop campaigns to move us toward the kind of peaceful, just and sustainable society we envision?

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON), which was born over a decade ago with the goal of preventing an antagonistic, racist response to the expected Onondaga Land Rights Action, is developing a campaign to move our work into such a practical direction. As a result of the actions of the Onondaga, supported by NOON's educational work, the Greater Syracuse area has responded differently to the Onondaga court case than other upstate communities have responded to related native land claims.

### Some Background

On September 22, 2010, Federal Judge Lawrence Kahn dismissed the Onondaga Land Rights Action, arguing that the Onondaga had waited too long to seek justice for the illegal taking of their land and that any remedy would be too "disruptive" to Central New York (see [www.peacecouncil.net/NOON/land](http://www.peacecouncil.net/NOON/land) for background). Neither argument stands up to reasonable scrutiny outside the confines of US "Indian Law."

Judge Kahn's decision was based largely on legal precedents which had been accruing since shortly after the Onondaga filed their case on March 11, 2005. Although these larger legal trends had been moving against justice, people at the Onondaga Nation were nonetheless disappointed, as were

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*Andy coordinates NOON's work as part of his SPC staff position and is eager to see this project develop. Some language in this article is drawn from other campaign materials, with significant input from Kate Lewis and Jack Manno.*

Hickory Edwards (center) of the Onondaga Canoe and Kayak Club led a trial paddling trip down the Hudson last summer to prepare for the 2013 symbolic enactment. With him on the New Jersey shore are Brandon Homer, his dog Larry and Bud Homer (New York City in the background). Below: Larry watches Bud (left) and Brandon paddle. Photos: Suzanne Halbritter, Hickory Edwards



those of us in NOON and other supporters of justice.

One month later, speaking at the Onondaga Land Rights and Our Common Future series program entitled "Onondaga Land Rights: Progress for Mother Earth," Tadadaho Sid Hill and Onondaga Nation general counsel Joe Heath reflected on the decision and described the many positive achievements arising from the case. Joe said that maybe what we need "is a land rights *movement*." His comments stimulated conversation about what such a larger movement would look like and how it might be developed.

Over the winter, NOON tossed around various ideas such as organizing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (à la South Africa) or an event to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Two Row Wampum Treaty (2013). As we considered how to support the Onondagas in their quest for justice, reconciliation and environmental preservation, it became clear that the powerful educational and organizing work NOON had been engaged in since 1999 needed to be extended throughout New York State and beyond.



### Development of the Campaign

Over the past year, this effort has evolved into a statewide education and advocacy campaign focused on the Two Row Wampum Treaty, the first treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Europeans. Our aim is to build sufficient grassroots pressure to compel New York State to assume responsibility for its past and future dealings with the Haudenosaunee and the environmental consequences of its policies. Although the Onondaga are appealing their case to the US 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit Appeals Court, the federal courts appear to be a dead end. Therefore, justice requires that we take these issues directly to

the people of New York.

The Two Row Wampum Treaty (signed in 1613 with the Dutch) describes an inspirational vision for the peaceful co-

existence of different nations living on and caring for the same land. It is seen by the Haudenosaunee as the basis on which all subsequent treaties were made. The treaty outlines a model of friendship and peace, of living in parallel forever, working together where appropriate and respecting one another's sovereignty. It describes the Haudenosaunee and the Europeans as traveling down the river of life in different boats, both agreeing not to interfere in the internal affairs of the other or to damage our shared environment. For centuries the Haudenosaunee have observed this treaty. We aim to use the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary to build public support for US governments and peoples to begin keeping up our side of the treaties and honor this vision.

The Two Row Wampum Renewal

continued on next page

## Two Row Wampum / from page 15

Campaign will develop understanding of, and build advocacy networks to address, two interrelated issues: first, the devastation experienced by the Haudenosaunee nations as part of centuries-long efforts to destroy/assimilate them; and second, the environmental crises in New York State and around the globe. The project seeks to develop a broad alliance between New Yorkers and the Haudenosaunee with the long-term goal of achieving social and economic justice for the Haudenosaunee as well as environmental justice for all residents of New York State.

Our extensive educational effort will feature a strong internet presence ([www.honorthetworow.org](http://www.honorthetworow.org)), social media, publications for schools and the community-at-large and educational and cultural events throughout the state. All events will feature Haudenosaunee leaders as speakers.

### Bringing the Two Row to Life

A focal point of the campaign will be a symbolic "enactment" of the treaty, with canoes (representing the Haudenosaunee) and ships (representing European settlers) sailing side-by-side down the Hudson River. We will start with a major kickoff

event near Albany, stop at various spots along the route for educational and cultural events and end in New York City with a larger commemoration, perhaps near the United Nations. The enactment will last for approximately two weeks during the summer of 2013, providing plenty of time to travel, meet people along the route, and generate considerable media attention and publicity. Efforts are beginning to involve a wide range of people and organizations, including environmental groups, social justice organizations, faith communities and educational institutions.

The Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs has agreed to partner with NOON on this statewide effort and we expect other Haudenosaunee Nations and people to join them. The Onondaga Chiefs want the campaign to have a strong environmental message, focusing on climate change as well as other pressing environmental issues such as hydrofracking.

Discussions are underway with the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater and other activists in the Hudson Valley, New York City and elsewhere about supporting the project. An honorary advisory committee of high profile supporters of indigenous rights and environmental protection is being recruited. Grant applications and

### Getting Involved

Any project of this magnitude requires lots of organization and detail work. The Two Row Organizing Committee meets monthly and has committees working on education, outreach, fundraising and enactment planning. More folks are needed to bring this vision to reality. Contact [andy@peacecouncil.net](mailto:andy@peacecouncil.net), 472-5478.

fund appeal letters are being developed. Our initial statewide organizing meeting is set for **Sunday, April 15** in Albany.

We have much work to do over the next two years to accomplish our ambitious goals. We'll need to draw on the skills and expertise of many people willing to roll up their sleeves and contribute in different ways. Please consider joining us.

When I read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* in high school, I was appalled at what my nation had done to the native people in the West. I never imagined that I could be part of an effort to make amends for these crimes committed by our forebears. Now, I have that opportunity... we have that opportunity. ♣

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# Local Groups Join Statewide Alliance for a Nuclear Free NY

Jessica Azulay

It's the kind of scenario that has haunted our imaginations for decades. An unlikely event sparks a chain of improbable system failures that end in a terrifying nuclear disaster.

On March 11, 2011, a massive earthquake caused a huge tsunami off the coast of Japan. The Japanese government and the nuclear power industry had assured everyone that Japan's power plants were designed to withstand such natural disasters. The wave, however, breached the protective seawall and disabled the diesel generators meant to supply back-up power to the six reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power complex. Nuclear reactors depend on a constant power source to regulate the temperature in the reactor core as well as the pools containing spent fuel. If cooling systems fail, the fuel can get too hot and lead to uncontrolled nuclear reactions, hydrogen explosions and other serious problems.

When disaster struck at Fukushima Units 1, 2 and 3 overheated, causing major releases of radiation inside the plant as well as explosions that damaged its physical structure. In loss-of-cooling accidents like Fukushima, the last line of defense is the reinforced concrete structure of the plant which is supposed to contain the disaster and prevent the radiation from escaping into the environment. At Fukushima, however, containment was breached and massive amounts of radiation leaked out of the reactors.

Units 4, 5 and 6 at Fukushima were shut down for maintenance at the time of the earthquake and did not experience as

serious problems. However, loss of power at those units threatened to deprive the spent fuel pools at those reactors of needed coolant. The cause of an explosion at Unit 4 on March 15 is still unknown, and scientists remain extremely concerned about the vulnerability of the spent fuel pools, which house many more fuel rods than the reactor cores and do not have the same

a nuclear shutdown in the United States.

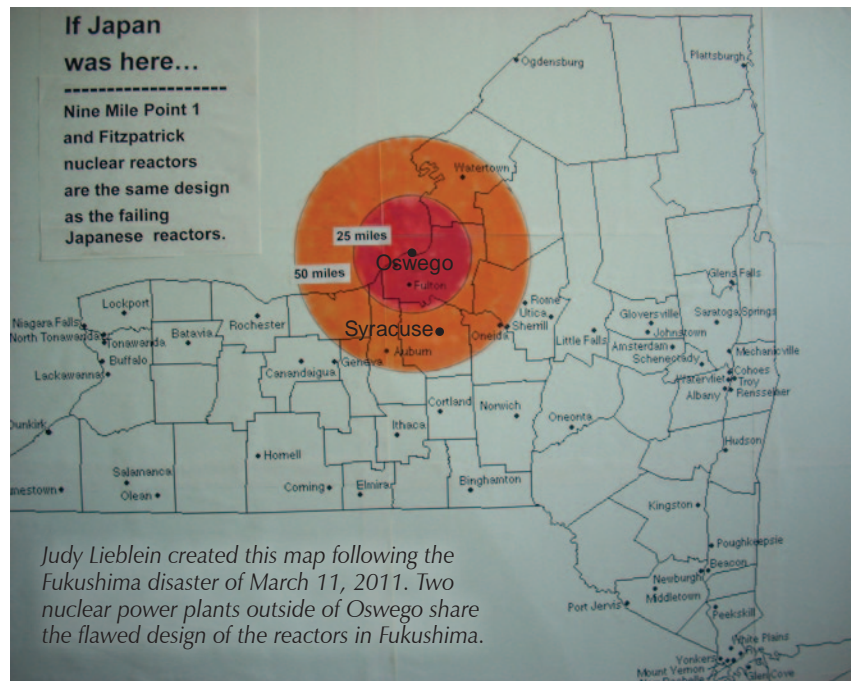
Beyond Nuclear, a national anti-nuke group, has launched the "Freeze Our Fukushimas" campaign, which targets the 23 nuclear reactors in the United States that share the same design as the plants at Fukushima. Two of these reactors are just about 36 miles from Syracuse: Nine Mile Point 1 and Fitzpatrick, both located just outside Oswego. These GE Mark I Boiling Water Reactors have been widely known to have flawed containment designs since the 1970s, when scientists at both the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and General Electric raised concerns that their containment structures would not successfully withstand a nuclear accident. The scientists and watchdogs who have echoed this warning were tragically proven correct last March.

Since Fukushima, the NRC has done nothing to improve safety at the 23 Mark I Boiling Water Reactors operating in the

US, and it has not implemented a single one of the recommendations put forth by its Fukushima Task Force.

Beyond Nuclear submitted a petition last April asking, among other things, that the NRC shut down these plants until their safety could be reviewed in light of the Fukushima disaster. The NRC denied the request for an immediate shutdown but agreed to review various concerns raised by Beyond Nuclear and the 8,000 groups and individuals that co-signed the petition. Local co-signers include the Syracuse Peace Council, along with our neighbors Peace Action CNY and the Iroquois Group of the Sierra Club.

In New York, momentum has been building to close the Indian Point reactors



level of containment protection.

It's been one year since the Fukushima Daiichi catastrophe, and the plants are still not completely stabilized. The nuclear fallout from Fukushima has rendered miles around the plants unlivable. It has contaminated the Japanese food supply and radioactive particles have been blown around the world. More than 70,000 nuclear refugees are still unable to return to their homes in the designated exclusion zone, which is a 12-mile radius around the plant where the highest radiation readings are found. Hundreds of thousands still live, work, and farm just outside the exclusion zone in areas that are also contaminated.

## Freeze Our Fukushimas

Fukushima has put nuclear power advocates worldwide on the defensive and renewed the urgency of the decades-long fight for

Jessica is the staff organizer with AGREE as well as a member of the SPC Steering and other committees.

continued on next page

## Alliance for a Nuclear Free NY / from previous page

in Westchester County. Indian Point, operated by Entergy, is just 25 miles north of New York City in an area nearly impossible to effectively evacuate. The NRC has estimated the likelihood that an earthquake could do enough damage to the Indian Point 3 reactor to harm the public is one in 10,000, making it the most earthquake-prone plant in the country. Compare that to the odds of winning the Powerball lottery jackpot, which are about one in 175 million.

While New York State officials lack direct power to shutter the plants, various legislative committees and agencies are pushing for a shutdown. The Assembly Committee on Energy and the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions recently held a hearing on the potential closure of Indian Point and concluded the reactors could be shut down without undue cost to consumers.

### AGREE to Act

Activists against nuclear power in Central New York are stepping up their efforts as well. The Syracuse Peace Council has joined forces with the CNY chapter of Citizens Awareness Network; Peace Action CNY; Peace Action New York State; Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter; Center for Health, Environment & Justice; and the Citizens' Environmental Coalition to form the **Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE)**. The Alliance plans to launch a campaign in March, focused on phasing out the reactors in our midst: Nine Mile Point 1 and 2, and Fitzpatrick, all near Oswego; and Ginna, located about 20 miles east of Rochester.

The concern in Central New York is obviously not a tsunami,

but that another kind of natural disaster—like an ice storm—or some kind of purposeful attack could similarly knock out the power supply to the local nuclear plants or otherwise disable critical safety systems. Watchdogs are also concerned about problems associated with the plants' age, such as the severe cracks discovered in the shroud surrounding the reactor core of Nine Mile 1 in 1997. Ginna and Nine Mile 1 are two of the oldest nuclear plants in the country, and the NRC has allowed all of the plants in Central New York to operate beyond their original licensing periods.

While working to phase out nuclear power locally, AGREE is working to draw the connections between nuclear power and other dangerous and polluting energy sources like natural gas and coal. The Alliance rejects the false choice between one terrible energy source and another, and is working instead for a 100 percent nuclear and carbon-free New York. National studies have already shown that it *is* possible to transition away from nuclear power, natural gas, coal, and oil. Studies like *Carbon-Free and Nuclear-Free: A Roadmap for U.S. Energy Policy* put out by the Nuclear Policy Research Institute and the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research in 2007 say this is possible through major conservation and efficiency measures and widespread use of wind, solar and non-food-crop biofuels. AGREE is working on securing funding for a state-specific study that will light the path for New York to leave dirty, dangerous energy behind.

To join our efforts, visit [www.agreenewyork.org](http://www.agreenewyork.org), or contact (315) 480-1515 or [info@agreenewyork.org](mailto:info@agreenewyork.org). **Learn more about the ongoing consequences of Fukushima and what we can do to build a Carbon Free Nuclear Free NY on Sunday, March 11 at 1 pm at ArtRage Gallery (Syracuse).** ♻️

### Upcoming Shows at May Memorial UU Society . . .

(3800 East Genesee St., Syracuse)



#### Dana & Susan Robinson

Mar. 2 / *Neo-trad, Americana stylings in original and standard material, with guitar, mandolin, fiddle, banjo, and harmonies.*

#### Téada

Mar. 9 / *Special second-Friday, pre-St. Patty's Day show. This high-energy Irish traditional outfit blew our doors off in 2008. They're back!*



#### Jeffrey Foucault

Mar. 16 / *Songs exploring the darker seams of country and blues, with a terse, elegant brand of songwriting set apart by haunting imagery and a weather-beaten cool.*

All shows start at 8 p.m. Details at: [www.folkus.org](http://www.folkus.org)

At the Westcott Center:  
**Joe Crookston, Mar. 10** Engaging story-songs



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# Overcoming the Military Obstacle to Democracy in Egypt

David Cortright

The popular uprising that brought down the Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt stands as one of the most dramatic expressions of people power in history. In the space of just 18 days, from January 25 through February 11, 2011, millions of people poured into the streets to overthrow one of the world's most entrenched dictatorships. Through unarmed mass revolution the Egyptian people defeated a seemingly impregnable redoubt of concentrated military and police power. The enormity of what was accomplished is breathtaking. Estimates of the number of people actively involved range from a low of seven million to as high as fifteen million. Exact figures may never be known, but this much is clear: it was one of the largest outpourings of civil resistance in history.

The revolution remains incomplete, however, and the struggle for genuine freedom in Egypt continues. The greatest threat to Egyptian democracy remains the continued control of the government by the Egyptian military. The generals of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) who removed Mubarak from office on February 11, 2011 have refused to step down as they promised. They have acted ruthlessly and lawlessly and are demanding the right to exempt military operations from parliamentary oversight and civilian control.

I have been to Egypt twice in the past few months. When I arrived in November new waves of mass protest were emerging in what activists called 'revolution 2.0.' The resurgence of civil resistance began in response to government attacks on demonstrators in Tahrir Square who were demanding that the military step down and turn over authority to a civilian government. They were also demanding

*Transformed into a peace advocate shortly after enlisting in the Army during the Viet Nam War, David later served as Executive Director of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. He is currently the Director of Policy Studies at Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies.*



*Egyptian citizens continue pro-democracy protests in Tahrir Square. The mood on November 25 (seen here) is hopeful despite violent clashes just a few days earlier. Photo: Karen Jacob*

compensation for the injured veterans and families of those killed and injured during the January 25 revolution.

On November 20 I visited Tahrir Square to interview a professor at an academic institute. In the midst of our discussion we suddenly heard shouts and screams and the boom of military cannon. We rushed to the balcony overlooking the Square to survey the unfolding carnage: contrails of tear gas hurtling across the Square, clouds of stinging gas wafting up to our landing, panicked crowds frantically rushing from the police. The news later reported that several people were killed during the tumult.

We saw people severely beaten right in front of our eyes. Just below us soldiers in black uniforms savagely beat an already prostrate demonstrator, clubs repeatedly pounding his motionless form. Was he one of the fatalities? Nearby a young man struggled to wrestle out of the grip of soldiers, staggering under the blows of continuous whacks to his head, arms and shoulders.

The protests and police assaults that began that day went on for weeks and are continuing even now. Dozens of protesters have been killed, and hundreds more wounded. Instead of driving people away and clearing the streets, however, the military attacks have had the opposite effect. They have motivated tens of thousands of people to return to the Square and defend those who were and are being attacked.

People have continued to demand that the military step aside and allow a complete transition to full democracy.

The road ahead for Egypt's transition to democracy will be difficult and uncertain. The US government can help by using its influence with the Egyptian military to demand that the generals step down. In recent weeks President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have urged SCAF leaders to do just that. Congress has attached conditions to the \$1.3 bil-

lion per year the United States provides in military assistance, demanding that the military-led government adopt steps toward democratic reform.

By supporting these efforts the peace and human rights community can help to fulfill the democratic promise of the Egyptian revolution. Let's add our voices to those who are insisting that Egypt's military leaders turn over authority to civilian leaders. A sign I saw in Tahrir Square in November said it well: "The army should defend the nation not rule it." Tell members of Congress that they should withhold any further funding for the Egyptian military until it returns to the barracks. ♻️

## **The Power of Nonviolence: Examples from Egypt & the US**

a talk by David Cortright at  
*Peace Action CNY's  
Annual Awards Dinner*

**Sunday, April 1, 2012**

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Amelia Ramsey-Lefevre [amelia@  
peaceactioncny.org](mailto:amelia@peaceactioncny.org) or (315) 478-7442.**



## JONATHAN FRANZEN



Image: Greg Martin

When *The Corrections* was published in the fall of 2001, Jonathan Franzen was probably better known for his nonfiction than for the two novels he had already published. In an essay he wrote for Harper's in 1996, Franzen lamented the declining cultural authority of the American novel and described his personal search for reasons to persist as a fiction writer. Five years later, *The Corrections* became an international bestseller and won Franzen the National Book Award. Franzen's most recent novel, *Freedom*, was published in 2010. In August of that year, Franzen was featured on the cover of Time magazine — only the second time in the last decade that a living writer has been on the cover of this national magazine. *Freedom* debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times bestseller list and was chosen later that year as one of the New York Times 10 Best Books of 2010.

### Jonathan Franzen

#### ON AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND FICTION WRITING: AN EVENING WITH JONATHAN FRANZEN

**Tuesday, March 6, 2012  
7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel**

This lecture is sponsored in cooperation with the Writing Program in The College of Arts and Sciences.



## ZADIE SMITH



Image: Roderick Field

Novelist Zadie Smith will speak about the point of writing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially given social media and other influences. Smith's award-winning first novel, *White Teeth* (2000), is a vibrant portrait of contemporary multicultural London, told through the story of the three ethnically diverse families. Her tenure as Writer in Residence at the Institute of Contemporary Arts resulted in the publication of an anthology of erotic stories entitled *Piece of Flesh* (2001). She wrote the introduction for *The Burning Children of America* (2003), a collection of 18 short stories by a new generation of young American writers. Smith's second novel, *The Autograph Man* (2002), a story of loss, obsession and the nature of celebrity, won the 2003 Jewish Quarterly Literature Prize for Fiction. In 2003, Smith was nominated by Granta magazine as one of the 20 'Best of Young British Novelists.' Her third novel, *On Beauty* (2005) won the 2006 Orange Prize for Fiction. She has also written *Fail Better* (2006), a nonfiction book about writing. Smith is currently a Radcliffe Fellow at Harvard University. Her most recent book is *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (2009).

### Zadie Smith

#### WHY WRITE?

**Tuesday, March 20, 2012  
7:30 pm, Hendricks Chapel**

This lecture is sponsored in cooperation with the Writing Program in The College of Arts and Sciences.



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\*Reduced-rate parking for this event is available in the Irving Avenue parking garage.



## SPC in Action / from page 4

Contact Carol and/or see peace council.net/bowl.



This beautiful trophy is awarded to the team with the best team spirit at SPC's annual Strike for Peace Bowlathon. There are prizes for best team name, most outrageous/creative costume and more. All kids 12 and under get prizes too! Photo: Carol Baum

### Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation

Despite an ongoing heavy workload, NOON took time at our January meeting to step back and look at our overall work for the coming year. In addition to the major projects on hydrofracking (below) and the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign (see page 15), NOON renewed its commitment to supporting the call of the Onondaga Nation for a **clean** Onondaga Lake and ongoing educational work here in Central New York. We're also updating our organizational guidelines. As we reach out with the Two Row Campaign and seek to engage many new people, it seems particularly important to clearly articulate how we understand our work as allies to the Onondaga. NOON's next meeting will be **Tuesday, March 13** at 7 pm at SPC. Contact Andy.

### Stop the Frack Attack

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) has partnered with the WESPAC Foundation (Westchester County) to bring indigenous voices more strongly to the anti-fracking movement. With funding support from the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, we are distributing the 12 minute video *The Unfractured Future: Indigenous Perspectives on Hydraulic Fracturing*. We're providing a DVD to Onondaga County legislators and state representatives. You can check

it out at SPC's YouTube Channel (search YouTube for Syracuse Peace Council. Go to our channel. Then click on NOON).

We're also distributing the hot new CD *Singing Clear: Clean earth, air, water, round here*, a compilation of Earth-celebrating and preserving music put together by Colleen Kattau. It's available for \$10 from the office or online at: [bit.ly/SingingClear](http://bit.ly/SingingClear). The next meeting of ShaleshockCNY is **Wednesday, March 14 at 6 pm** at Onondaga Free Library, 4840 W. Seneca Tpk. Contact Jack, 424-1454 or [ramskids2go@aol.com](mailto:ramskids2go@aol.com).

### Radical Reading Group Returns: *The S Word*

In a recent email survey, SPC activists and supporters showed an interest in coming together for informal learning and discussion. For the first 2012 meeting of the Radical Reading group, we've selected *The S Word: A Short History of an American Tradition*, an "unapologetic retort to the return of red-baiting in American political life—arguing that socialism has a long, proud, American history." *The S Word* is Available for purchase at Syracuse Cultural Workers, 400 Lodi St. We will meet to discuss *The S Word* on **Wednesday, March 21 at 7:30 pm** at the Center for Peace and Social Justice. Contact Ursula.

### Activist Appreciation: Julienne Oldfield

Need soup for 30? Hospitality for 10? A dedicated, determined worker? Call Julienne



Julienne Oldfield participated in the "die-in" at Hancock Air Base last April. She is one of the Hancock 38 Drone Resisters. Photo: Chris Sabas

Oldfield, activist *par excellence!*

Julienne is an incredibly hospitable, kind, creative, indefatigable peace worker. Through her work with the School of the Americas Watch, she has been a prisoner of conscience, having been sentenced to six months in jail for "crossing the line" at Ft. Benning. She most recently was one of the Hancock 38 Drone Resisters, and has paid her fine to the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers instead of to the Court. Throughout the many hearings and visits from the 38, "Hotel Julienne" was open and given five star ratings. She's a builder too—in the fall she got her tools out and helped make model drones for upstate communities.

Julienne is also a member of SPC's Steering Committee, and always has something interesting to say.

Thanks, Julienne, for your good work and good heart.

### UNAC Conference March 23-25

The United National Antiwar Coalition's national conference, "Say No to the NATO/G8 Wars & Poverty Agenda: A Conference to Challenge the Wars of the 1% Against the 99% at Home and Abroad," is March 23-25 in Stamford, Connecticut. At least one carload of SPC folks will be attending. See the conference program at [nationalpeaceconference.org/Conference.html](http://nationalpeaceconference.org/Conference.html); for more information, contact Carol.

### Direct Action Still Gets the Goods

On January 26, SPC hosted a skillshare for activists to learn about and discuss the role of direct action and civil disobedience in movements for justice and social change. Participants included SPC activists, as well as activists with neighborhood groups, workers' rights and Occupy Syracuse. Some participants are interested in a more intensive, full day training. If you work with a group that is planning or considering a direct action and would also be interested in a training, please contact Jessica.

We held the skillshare in the training room at SEIU 1199's beautiful new centrally-located office downtown at 250 S. Clinton Street. Congratulations, SEIU, on your new home!

continued on page 23

# Apology

To the Afghan people:  
We apologize for our boys  
pissing on the bodies of your  
rag tag Taliban resistance fighters.  
We have a saying here,  
“boys will be boys”  
but this “is absolutely inconsistent  
with the standards of behavior that the vast majority  
of Marines hold themselves to,”  
as reported in the paper today;  
we are a nation of high moral standards.  
It won’t happen again,  
we promise.  
“Those found to have engaged  
in such conduct  
will be held accountable  
to the fullest extent.”  
In the future, we will have  
more drones and  
robot soldiers with no penises  
(no souls, really)  
programmable strictly  
to kill—only—  
not to laugh  
at war bounty.

—Tania Ramalho  
January 13, 2012  
Queensbury, NY

*Tania is an associate professor of  
education at SUNY Oswego who  
often joins us for Peace Outreach.*

## *Unarmed Resistance Still Syria’s Best Hope / from page 9*

on opposition to dynastic succession so common in the Arab world, Assad was succeeded by his son Bashar. The younger Assad, while allowing for an initial wave of liberalization upon first coming to power, soon cracked down on dissent. Indeed, the only liberalization subsequently has been on the economic front, and that has primarily benefited only a minority of Syrians and greatly increased social inequality.

Though nominally a secular regime, the top sectors of the government and armed forces are controlled by Alawites (members of an Islamic sect similar to the Shiites) who are concentrated along Syria’s northwestern coast—home of the Assad clan—and represent barely 12 percent of the country’s population. Stoking fears of a takeover by hard-line elements of Syria’s Sunni Muslim majority in the event of its overthrow, the regime still has a fair amount of support among the country’s Christians (representing around 10 percent of the population) and other minorities, as well as secular elements and powerful business interests.

In reality, the opposition’s goals are economic justice and political freedom, not the establishment of a Salafi Sunni theocracy, as the regime claims.

Despite the ruling Baath Party’s nominally socialist ideology, the uprising in Syria has a much stronger working-class base than most of the other Arab uprisings. The vast majority of the opposition rejects foreign intervention, recognizing that it would likely result in strengthening support for the nationalist regime and open the way for inordinate Western influence in a post-Assad system.

Despite enormous provocations, the uprising—which has brought millions of people out into the streets in scores of towns and cities across the country—has been overwhelmingly nonviolent. Hundreds of soldiers have been executed for refusing orders to fire on unarmed demonstrators. Thousands more have defected from the armed forces, forming the “Free Syrian Army,” which has engaged in a series of firefights with forces still loyal to the regime, leading to fears that the country could descend into a civil war.

This would likely harm the pro-democracy movement. Recent history has shown that armed struggles are far less likely to be successful than nonviolent struggles, even against dictatorships, since they lessen the likelihood of defections by security forces and government officials, reduce the numbers of active participants in the movement, alienate potential supporters, and give the regime the excuse to crack down even harder by portraying the opposition as “terrorists.”

The best hope for Syria is that continued protests, strikes and other forms of nonviolent resistance, combined with targeted international sanctions, will cause enough disruption that powerful economic interests and other key sectors currently allied with the regime would force the government to negotiate with the opposition for a transfer of power to a democratic majority. Indeed, this is the scenario that eventually forced an end to another notorious minority regime, that of South Africa. ♻️



Julie McLaughlin



### CNY Working Says "Occupy AIPAC"

In addition to ongoing efforts to educate Central New Yorkers about the terrible injustices suffered by Palestinians, CNY Working for a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel also participates in national efforts to change US policy. As part of that work, a small contingent is heading to Washington, DC for a summit and actions March 2-6. Occupy AIPAC is a series of events to put a spotlight on the role of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). AIPAC, the largest and most powerful "pro-Israel" lobby in the US, plays a disproportionate role in the framing of US policy. Activists will counter AIPAC's position, call for US support for a just Palestinian-Israeli settlement and let DC know that the tide is shifting on this issue. CNY Working meets next on **Thursday, March 1 at 11:30 am** at the SPC office. Contact Andy.



Codepink joins a demonstration against AIPAC outside the White House. Photo: codepink.org

### SPC Retreat

In early February, the Peace Council Steering Committee spent a weekend at the lovely Alverna Heights Spirituality and Nature



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Center reflecting on the various challenges and opportunities for Peace Council organizing. We evaluated the success of the new People Power staff position and discussed our ongoing commitment to diversity and the need to be flexible and ready to respond to breaking events. Look for more details from the staff and Steering Committee in an upcoming *Peace Newsletter*. Thank you to the Sisters of St. Francis for hosting us!

### Build Long-term Sustainability for SPC

There are many ways to provide long-term financial support for SPC that you might not be aware of. These include: Life Insurance or Annuity, Charitable Remainder Trust, Charitable Lead Trust, Bequest, Donor Advised Fund and Gifts. To learn more, see [peacecouncil.net/bequest](http://peacecouncil.net/bequest) or contact Sue Hansen who has generously offered to provide free consultation for people wishing to discuss long-term donations to SPC. Contact Sue at 637-5153 or [sue@hansensadvisory.com](mailto:sue@hansensadvisory.com).

### Join SPC in ACTS Work

Steering Committee member Carole Resnick recently attended the annual meeting of the Alliance for Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS) as SPC's representative. Working with ACTS has been an opportunity for SPC to meet like-minded people from faith communities, as well as join in organizing around local issues. Upcoming ACTS Task Force meetings:

- Public Education Task Force: March 5 at 7 pm at Grace Episcopal Church
- Food Access Task Force: March 14 at 7:30 pm at the ACTS Office (basement of University United Methodist Church)
- Justice Task Force: check out [acts-cny.com](http://acts-cny.com)

Contact Carol Baum if you would like to attend any of these meetings as an SPC representative.

The ACTS Spring banquet is **April 19**. We always encourage SPC folks attend.

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