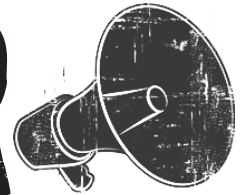


# PEACE NEWSLETTER



CNY VOICES FOR PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE • #870 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020 • PEACECOUNCIL.NET • FREE



Details of art from the "Carrying the Weight: Fire & Ice" exhibit at ArtRage Gallery. The exhibit features California forest fire photos by Stuart Palley and large-scale pastel drawings of glaciers, icebergs and oceans by Zaria Forman.

## REALITY CHANGES EVERYTHING: INTERNALIZING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

by Carole Resnick

From February 1 through March 15, ArtRage Gallery at 505 Hawley Avenue will be showing "Carrying the Weight: Fire & Ice," an exhibit of art related to the current climate emergency. During the course of the show, there will be a series of events and offerings designed to help us engage more deeply with the immediacy of the threats to human survival on Earth, and to consider how the choices we make about our political organizing and community activism must change as the urgency of the climate crisis becomes clearer.

The best way to do this is in community, and openly. Talking with each other and giving voice to our fear, despair, and rage can empower us to rise together to face the truth of this dire circumstance, and to hold each other up as we move forward into truly unique and extraordinary times.

Hopefully we will begin to preface our thinking about personal and organizational priorities with the question, "Given that there is a 10-12 year window estimated for humans to make changes that may decrease the degree of

environmental devastation, how can we, as a creative and loving community, plan now for changes and needs which can be anticipated, as we make choices about our use of resources, time, and personal energy?"

As activists and people interested in progressive politics, it's no news that we're facing a climate emergency. But how can we integrate this horrifying reality into our work addressing so many varied areas of oppression and injustice that aren't explicitly about environmental issues? These times call for the ultimate level of intersectionality. Everything impacts, affects, and changes everything else. When we actually feel in our bones that our "house is on fire," we will make immediate and drastic changes in how we think and the choices we make.

It is well established that as members of the human species, we are not neurologically constructed in a way which makes it easy for us to genuinely take in a devastating reality that isn't in our own backyard. Fight or flight is a survival mechanism that is designed to protect us from immediate danger. It doesn't

*continued on next page*

### *Climate Conversations*

Feb 11 - Mar 9

[bit.do/artrageclimate](http://bit.do/artrageclimate)

### *Active Hope Workshops*

Feb 9 - Mar 15

[bit.do/artragehope](http://bit.do/artragehope)

*Climate, continued from previous page*

kick in easily when the danger is more remote, so we need to find ways to light the fire of reality if we are not immersed in work which brings it to our attention constantly and deeply.

We have to expand our empathic reach and feel threats beyond what is familiar and present in our individual lives. This is essentially the same process as really feeling the threat—even if you do not experience it personally—from police to young men of color, or the humiliation and sexual attacks experienced by women, the danger trans people live with daily, or what it's like to live under drought or flood or war or extreme poverty and starvation conditions. The threat of climate collapse is no different, but the consequences of allowing ourselves to become dulled to other peoples' pain are more globally catastrophic than anything humans have ever experienced.

There are ways that we can work together to make the climate emergency

really real while we strengthen and develop community that is able to acknowledge and speak of the current threats honestly.

*Climate Conversations* is a weekly series of gatherings for a light dinner and conversation. Presentations will come from a variety of perspectives and experiences looking at the intersection of the climate crisis with the many other issues facing our community and the world. The presenters will include youth climate activists, local farmers and farm workers, leaders from the Onondaga Nation, mothers, and organizers addressing poverty and green jobs.

In addition, on several weekends, *Active Hope Workshops* are an opportunity to participate in experiential activities based on the work of Joanna Macy. (Those who are interested can check out her books, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*, and *Coming Back to Life*). These workshops provide a space to voice our feelings about the climate

crisis through structured and guided group activities, so that we can clear our minds and bolster our courage to take the necessary steps moving forward.

Please check [artragegallery.org](http://artragegallery.org) for full details of the scheduled offerings, and come join in as often as you are able.

Our collective futures require us to create a fully intersectional and collaborative community of resistance to the status quo while also shaping and planning new visions for the future. Let's not leave anything unsaid, in the shadows, in the shroud of denial. Let's raise up our courage to face an unspeakably dangerous situation together, by bringing it into the light and developing the capacity to think and talk about it without collapsing under the weight of fear, grief, and outrage. ☮

*Carole Resnick is a long-time activist in the Syracuse community who has a burning desire to help move action forward by opening to the truth of the moment.*



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**Advertising:**  
[peacecouncil.net/pnl/advertise](http://peacecouncil.net/pnl/advertise) or (315) 472-5478

**Deadlines:**  
Check the web for issue deadlines as they become available.

**SPC Affiliated Projects & Coalitions:**  
Alliance for a Green Economy (AGREE)  
Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse  
CNY Solidarity Coalition  
Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars  
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## WINTER STREET HEAT

Please join us the **first Tuesday of the month from 4-4:45pm** at Hancock Airbase (E. Molloy Rd.) for our public presence calling for an end to attacks by weaponized drones. Next dates are **February 4 and March 3**. All are welcome—bring a sign or use one of ours. Questions? Call Ann or Ed, (315) 478-4571.

## NO WAR WITH IRAN



Joe Heath was one of many community members who spoke out against the US getting into another war. Photo: Michaela Czerkies

On Saturday, January 4, SPC gathered along with several other community organizations and over a hundred community members and activists in Clinton Square to say NO to war with Iran! Activists spoke about the history of US aggression toward Iran and intervention in Iran's politics; the crippling toll that US sanctions have taken on the Iranian people; and the US role in perpetuating endless wars in the

Middle East at the cost of millions of lives and trillions of dollars. Together, we called for diplomacy instead of military action; for Congress to reassert its War Powers and refuse authorization and funding for a war with Iran; and for an end to these endless wars and their dehumanization of people in the Middle East. To get involved in local organizing for peace with Iran, contact SPC.

— Michaela Czerkies

## CELEBRATE SPC'S 84TH BIRTHDAY DINNER MARCH 28!



Celebrate SPC's birthday on Saturday, March 28! Our keynote speaker is Dr. Ira Helfand, co-founder and past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility, and a leader of both the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, both Nobel Prize-winning organizations. Dr. Helfand will speak about "Fighting the Dual Threats of Nuclear Disaster and Climate Collapse," and the Back from the Brink campaign to build a grassroots movement to prevent nuclear war (preventnuclearwar.org). He describes what we face with grim clarity, and has an achievable program and belief that we—ordinary people—can pull us back from the brink of nuclear war.

You can get involved with the dinner by being a table host, advertising in the written program, helping with setup and cleanup, and more! Contact Michaela or Carol to volunteer.

— Diane Swords

continued on page 4



Speakers gave voice to stories of children who have been imprisoned in New York State, at the southern border, and in Palestine. Photo: Carol Baum.

## JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

On November 20, Universal Children's Day, Justice for Palestine was joined by Unchained and the Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network for a rally outside of Rep. Katko's office to demand an end to the inhumane detention of children at the US-Mexico border, in New York State, and in Palestine. We delivered over 700 petition signatures urging Rep. Katko to cosponsor HR 2407, the Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act. We are continuing to build support for this legislation through petitions and organizational endorsements—contact [michaela@peacecouncil.net](mailto:michaela@peacecouncil.net) if your organization is interested.

Join us on **Monday, February 17**, at 7pm for a free screening of the documentary *The Wanted 18* at ArtRage Gallery (505 Hawley Ave). The film depicts the true story of the Israeli army's pursuit of 18 cows, deemed a national security threat, from a dairy co-op in Beit Sahour during the First Intifada.

– *Michaela Czerkies*

## A BETTER FUTURE FOR ONONDAGA LAKE

A Better Future for Onondaga Lake encourages concerned members of the public to reach out to the County Office of the Environment (OE) about the beach feasibility study process. The County claims there will be no beach if the public says no.

There are multiple reasons to say no, including that the lake is not "cleaned up" (26 health-impacting contaminants remain); there is intense noise pollution from the Thruway next to the proposed beach area; and Onondaga Lake is a sacred site.

You can resist by calling at (315) 435-2647, emailing [Travis-Glazier@ongov.net](mailto:Travis-Glazier@ongov.net), or submitting a comment at [www.ongov.net/environment/submit-public-comment.html](http://www.ongov.net/environment/submit-public-comment.html). The next beach feasibility study public meeting hosted by the County OE will likely be at the end of February, and your presence there is necessary to influence decisions that will cause the least harm in our community and protect water. Please stay alert for information about when and where to come to the next public meeting.

– *Hilary-Anne Coppola*

## GETTING TO FAIRNESS

Syracuse residents, especially minorities, will not benefit from the upcoming I-81 jobs if nothing changes about realities of the current construction trades. For a fairer outcome, the Urban Jobs Task Force (UJTF) pushed for two collaborative processes.

The first is a steering committee to help the city launch Syracuse Build (SB), Mayor Walsh's construction trades training initiative for Syracuse residents. The second is a "big table" of relevant stakeholders, committed to finding creative solutions to achieve local hire on I-81.

For the UJTF, the ultimate goal is negotiation of a community workforce agreement (CWA) to govern the I-81 Project. CWAs are Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) that include community workforce provisions. PLAs are agreements between the trades unions and the lead agency for a project, which in the I-81 case is the NYS Department of Transportation. The good news is that the Mayor has created these processes, and both the trade unions and the UJTF are SB steering committee members and sit at the "big table."

So how can you help? Sign our CWA-PLA petition at [www.ujtf.org](http://www.ujtf.org).

– *Deka Dancil and Aggie Lane*



## SPC'S 49TH PLOWSHARES A SUCCESS!

Our endless thanks to the incredible Plowshares committee, the crafters and vendors, the entertainers, The Mission restaurant, and all SPC volunteers who worked hard to make Plowshares 2019 a huge success: a weekend of community, music, laughter, love, and joy, to celebrate the culmination of a decade of diligent social justice work. Thank you.

And just think...next year is the 50th!

– *SPC Staff*

## JOIN UPCOMING WHITE PRIVILEGE WORKSHOP

As part of our commitment to developing our understanding of white privilege and its implications for social justice work, the following workshop will be held on **Saturday, March 7**, from 9am–3pm at Bishop Harrison Center (1342 Lancaster Ave, Syracuse)—Understanding White Privilege, Challenging White Supremacy, Working for Social Justice. This workshop provides an opportunity for participants to discuss how white privilege, white supremacy, and different types of oppression affect daily life while giving strategies for addressing issues of privilege and oppression, and advancing social and economic justice. Our presenters are Twiggy Billue and Deka Dancil. Donations welcome, sliding scale \$0-50. See more details and pre-register online at [www.cnysolidarity.org](http://www.cnysolidarity.org) as seats are limited.

– *Peter McCarthy*

*continued on page 8*



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# END CHILD DETENTION FROM THE US TO PALESTINE

*The following collection of articles was inspired by a rally to end child detention held on November 20, 2019 by the Justice for Palestine committee in coalition with Unchained and the Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network.*

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## CHILD DETENTION IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE

by Jonathan Brenneman

The US not only imprisons children in inhumane conditions within and along its border but supports such mistreatment around the world. The most glaring example is the military, financial, and political support for the Israeli military's systemic abuse of Palestinian children. Israel is the only country that automatically prosecutes children in military courts, prosecuting over 500 Palestinian children a year without fundamental fair trial protections. The abuses are rampant, as I saw firsthand when doing unarmed civilian accompaniment with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in the Palestinian city of Hebron.

CPT patrols checkpoints near the school to make sure children and teachers are not harassed by Israeli soldiers. On a patrol as Palestinian children walked to school through a maze of Israeli military checkpoints, we got a call that something was happening at another checkpoint. When we got there, we saw Palestinian children being dragged into police vehicles and carted off to the station. Twenty-seven Palestinian boys had been arrested. They were as young as six. The oldest were only 15. An Israeli soldier explained the situation, "Someone was throwing stones at this checkpoint, and this is the reason they are arrested now." The soldier paid no mind that he had arrested innocent people, or that they were minors.

The children were interrogated without adult representation. The kids were handcuffed and blindfolded, which is not uncommon—95% children are handcuffed and 86% are blindfolded according to Defense for Children International. After seven hours the children who were considered "minors" were released. (According to Israeli law a Palestinian is only a minor up to age 12, but Israelis are minors up to 14.) The boys over 12 were moved to a military compound, and after five more hours of interrogation all but three were released. Those three were sent to a military prison.

The children were held for over a week without seeing a judge (if they were Israeli children they would see a judge in less than 12 hours). Even then most trials for Palestinians last less than five minutes. Less than 2% get a full evidential trial, and over 99% are convicted! It is commonly known among Palestinians that the only way to get out of jail is to admit whatever the Israelis want you to admit. Children have pleaded their innocence yet were still held for months with no trial. False confession is their only way out. Israeli authorities hold all the power and will do whatever they want to these children. Verbal abuse, humiliation, intimidation, denial of rights, placement in stress positions, and solitary confinement are all common practices.

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*Jonathan Brenneman worked with CPT in Palestine from 2012-2014.*



A Palestinian schoolchild dragged by Israeli soldiers (in the event described here). Photo: International Solidarity Movement

Our tax dollars fund this abuse. Every year \$25 of each US taxpayer's taxes go to the Israeli military. This money has basically no checks on it, enabling the Israeli military to use it for child detention. Today there is a bill in congress to change this. H.R. 2407, "The Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act," would prohibit US military funds from supporting detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of children. You can support this important legislation by joining SPC's effort to support the national No Way to Treat a Child Campaign.

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## CHILD DETENTION IN SYRACUSE/NEW YORK STATE

by Emily NaPier Singletary

New York State only stopped sending 17-year-olds to adult jails and prisons on October 1, 2019, and only stopped the same abhorrent practice with 16-year-olds on October 1, 2018.

Prior to landmark legislation referred to as Raise the Age taking effect on those dates, New York State automatically prosecuted any 16- or 17-year-old child charged with a crime as an adult. This sent nearly 28,000 children every year through adult courts, and those who were detained pretrial or sentenced to incarceration were caged in adult jails and prisons. Many of these children were branded with an adult criminal record for the rest of their lives. More than 70% of the 16- and 17-year-olds arrested across New York State, and more than 80% of those sentenced to incarceration, were Black or Brown due to overzealous policing and prosecuting. Raise the Age was passed in 2017 in large part due to the organizing and advocacy of formerly incarcerated youth, their parents and other loved ones,

*continued on next page*

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*Emily NaPier Singletary is the Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Unchained, a Syracuse-based organization that organizes and advocates to dismantle the carceral state. She leads the organization with her husband Derek who is currently serving a 20-year state prison sentence.*



Syracuse teenagers and allies advocate for Raise the Age legislation at the New York State Capitol in March of 2016. Photo: Raise the Age NY.

faith leaders, legal providers, and other concerned community members. Under the new law, most cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds will be handled in family court, and if detained or incarcerated, the teenagers will go to youth facilities.

Prior to Raise the Age being passed, in 2014 the Criminal Justice Task Force of the Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS) launched a campaign after discovering that 16- and 17-year-olds in Onondaga County jails were routinely placed in solitary confinement for weeks or even months at a time. Partnering with other organizations in Central New York, the campaign successfully forced the Onondaga County Legislature to unanimously pass a resolution in September 2017 banning the solitary confinement of youth held in any facility in Onondaga County.

This resolution and the subsequent Raise the Age law protect children in Onondaga County jails and juvenile detention centers from the terror of solitary confinement and the horror of adult jails. However, a loophole still exists allowing children from Onondaga County and the rest of the state to be held in solitary confinement in prisons known as Adolescent Offender Facilities (none of which are located in Onondaga County). These facilities are run by the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (which manages adult prisons), where solitary confinement is still permitted. During the 2019 legislative session, the leadership of the New York State Senate and Assembly capitulated to Governor Cuomo's objections to a bill that would ban solitary confinement in these adolescent prisons and adult prisons across the state, and they refused to bring the bill to a vote. This act of cowardice was especially egregious because the HALT (Humane Alternatives to Long-Term) Solitary Confinement Act (A.2500/S.1623) had enough co-sponsors in both the Senate and the Assembly to pass, even if no other legislators voted in favor of it.

Unchained is organizing support for the HALT Solitary Confinement Act and engaging in court watching to monitor the implementation of Raise the Age to ensure that 16- and 17-year-olds are treated appropriately under the new law. To get involved in these efforts, contact Emily NaPier Singletary at [emily@weareunchained.org](mailto:emily@weareunchained.org) or 315-243-5135.

## FROM PALESTINE TO MEXICO: FAMILY SEPARATION AS A WEAPON OF WAR AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

by Fabiola Ortiz Valdez

At the southern border, the Trump administration has been separating families who are fleeing violence and seeking protection in the US and placing thousands of their children in detention camps. Detained children are separated from their families and are classified as "unaccompanied alien children" even if they come with their parents, who are later charged criminally for unlawful entry. The impact that family separation has on children is immense: trauma, disrupted development, and neurological damage. Some of the parents are lucky enough to be reunited with their kids but are later heartbroken because their children don't recognize them. Yes, some fortunate parents have been reunited with their children, but many more have died in the hands of immigration agents. Just to mention a few painful names: Darlyn (age 10), Juan (16), Jakelin (7), Felipe (8), Wilmer (2), Carlos (16), Marilee (20 months). Like them, many more have died while crossing the border.

For those who are able to request asylum, policies like the Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP) enacted by Trump, force people to return to Mexico while they wait for their case to be heard, putting them in extreme danger at the hands of the narco death squads and the Mexican military. If a family is fortunate enough to make it across the border, the nightmare continues because ICE has been terrorizing communities and showing up at homes, work, daily commutes and continuing to separate children and parents with false claims of child endangerment.

Like the children in Palestine, children at the Mexico-US border are being hunted down, caged, abused, and murdered in their own land. The Americas are lands of the indigenous. California, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Nevada once belonged to Mexico, but were taken by the US. And now children that come from families like my own who ended up on the other side of the border, and children that come from indigenous families that have inhabited this land long before any of us, are being imprisoned in their homeland.

What is happening to immigrant children is not up for debate. There is no nuance, no matter of "needing better immigration policies." Family separation is a war weapon. Israel's child detention policies and the US immigration system are weapons used to displace and essentially murder indigenous people.

We could say that separating families, banning refugees, putting children in cages, undermining human rights, and restricting due process have all made a broken and outdated immigration system worse. But what we as immigrants know, and have always known long before Trump, is that this system is designed to do exactly what it is doing.

Our struggle is a long one. Our fight is not to repair a broken immigration system. It is to build a new and just one from the ground up. 🕊

*Fabiola Ortiz Valdez is an organizer with the NY Immigration Coalition.*





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## NUCLEAR FREE WORLD COMMITTEE

The Back from the Brink campaign to build a grassroots movement to abolish nuclear weapons is becoming increasingly crucial. We've gotten ten local groups to endorse the campaign so far and are seeking more! Join us in speaking with community groups and religious congregations, Common Councilors, and state and federal legislators. We must ask all candidates running for office what they would do to reduce our nuclear arsenal and calm international tensions. Can the US lead the way to stepping back from the brink? Learn more at [preventnuclearwar.org](http://preventnuclearwar.org).

The UN Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference will begin at the UN on April 27, 2020. From April 3-26 Buddhist nun Jun-san Yasuda is leading a walk from Buffalo to New York City through areas where nuclear waste dumps threaten Indigenous territories. This Walk for a Nuclear Free Future brings disarmament to the attention of communities along the way. Please join these efforts!

— Margrit Diehl

## ALLIANCE FOR A GREEN ECONOMY

Our HeatSmart CNY program continues going strong. In the past year, over 60 households and businesses have reduced or eliminated their fossil fuel use by installing heat pumps and/or insulation, dramatically reducing their carbon footprints. If you want to learn how you can do this too, visit [HeatSmartCNY.org](http://HeatSmartCNY.org), follow us @HeatSmartCNY, and look for upcoming workshops and open houses in Madison and Oswego County!

AGREE will also be hosting two workshops in conjunction with ArtRage Gallery's Fire and Ice exhibit: AGREE's Jessica Azulay will present "Energy 101—A Guide to New York's Energy System" on **Thursday, March 5** from 7-9pm and "100% Renewable How?" on **March 12** from 7-9pm at ArtRage Gallery. Both are important for climate change activists and energy affordability advocates who want to understand how the energy system works and who to target to get what we want, making a clean energy future a reality! More resources are also available at [AllianceForAGreenEconomy.org](http://AllianceForAGreenEconomy.org).

— Lindsay Speer



### VICTORY!

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## BWAM ACTIVITIES CONTINUE

The Beyond War and Militarism Committee (BWaM) continues our Alternative Education series. On **March 16** at 7pm we will present a free screening of the film *Nuclear Savage* at ArtRage Gallery (505 Hawley Ave). The film exposes the struggle of Pacific Islanders for dignity and justice after decades of human radiation experiments conducted on them by the US government. On April 20 Pat Hynes, a retired environmental engineer and Professor of Environmental Health, will speak about the connections between militarism and climate disaster.

BWaM participated in the emergency NO War with Iran rally on January 4, and this participation evolved into plans for a comprehensive effort to examine and resist US imperialist activity towards Iran. On January 13 we held an initial public meeting to initiate this process. Contact SPC to get involved.

— Ron VanNorstrand and Barry Gordon

## NEIGHBORS OF THE ONONDAGA NATION

In October and November, as part of a collaborative program with the Skā-nohñ Great Law of Peace Center, we conducted ten Witness to Injustice workshops in three Syracuse City High Schools, providing an opportunity for over 200 students to gain a glimpse into the experience of being colonized and targeted for genocide. The workshop was well received by students and teachers, and may be able to continue into future years.

In December we met with Mayor Walsh to discuss our campaign to get the city to start commemorating Indigenous Peoples Day rather than Columbus Day. As part of that work we are again circulating our petition calling on Syracuse, Onondaga County and the Syracuse City School District to make this change. We'd love help circulating the petition. Keep an eye out for details of an event to turn in those petitions in the coming weeks. Contact [andy.mager@gmail.com](mailto:andy.mager@gmail.com).

— Andy Mager

## WE DESERVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW!

SPAARC (Syracuse Police Accountability and Reform Coalition) is supporting legislation that would require Syracuse Police Department officers to get affirmative consent to search people. The law would also require officers to provide business cards each time they stop someone, stating their identity, the reason for the stop, and Citizen Review Board contact information, and it would mandate data reporting by the police department. This three-fold law will strengthen protections for those stopped by police, notify them of how to lodge complaints if necessary, and provide crucial data that will make it easier for watchdog groups to show patterns of misconduct.

Please join SPC in supporting this important legislation. People are needed to make phone calls to city councilors, attend another public meeting in February, and assist in public education. Contact Amelia at the SPC office to get involved.

— Amelia Lefevre