

“Yes We Can” Campaign of United for Peace and Justice – Winter/Spring 2009

As amended and adopted at the 4th UFPJ National Assembly – 12/13/08

What...

A four-month campaign kicking off on January 19th, MLK Day, and building to an April 4th national mobilization in the financial centers of New York City connecting war and the economic crisis.

And Why...

This campaign is a call for a new set of national priorities rooted in the vision and values of Dr. Martin Luther King: A world without racism, poverty or war. Where hate is replaced by love, greed by generosity, and war by peace and nonviolence. As Dr. King said, “these triple evils are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle. They are interrelated, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community”.

On April 4th 1967, Dr. King gave his famous “Beyond Vietnam” speech. This great leader’s words and actions are just as resonant today. This campaign will draw on the wisdom of Dr. King and his call for radical change. There is no question that while the election of Barack Obama is another step closer to the “Promised Land,” the forces of racism, poverty and war are not undone. If Dr. King were with us today he would surely be calling for us to keep marching forward.

This campaign seeks to mobilize a new base of people who have been inspired by Obama and want to see an end to war with that money going to fund housing, healthcare, education, jobs and a radically different environmental policy. So much hope and inspiration despite the most challenging of economic and environmental times needs to be nurtured with lots of opportunities to learn and grow.

The goal is to reach out into the hearts of diverse local communities to engage in conversations about what our world could be like Beyond Iraq, offer written materials and visuals and extend an invitation to be a part of history, to be a part of the change so desperately needed by joining in the struggle from peace and justice now, here at home and around the world on April 4, 2009.

The point of projecting this work as a campaign is to help bring together several elements of our work under a common theme and to help us set specific goals and objectives. Organizing a national campaign will give greater coherence to our efforts, help strengthen local organizing and give greater visibility to our national movement.

Some of our objectives include:

- Keep the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – and our call to end these wars - on the front burner. Turn up the heat to bring the troops home now by amplifying voices of Iraq Veterans, military families, Iraqis and Afghans. Because the 6th anniversary of the war in Iraq is within this time frame, that would be a major opportunity to highlight our call.
- Expose the costs of war and connections between issues. Activate people to demand cuts in the military budget and the use of that money to fund housing, healthcare, education, jobs and infrastructure. Offer alternatives to the “war on terror” through a call for diplomacy and respect for international law.
- Collect X # of signatures by using a tool (petition, survey, postcard, ideas for how to re-shape the federal budget) to engage people in one-on-one conversation, build lists and other capacity building efforts, and to deliver a strong national message to Congress on April 6th.

- While building grassroots organizing capacity by engaging in the new political moment, our efforts will also be designed to offer support to groups working on justice issues.

TARGET: Obama Administration and Democratic Leadership in U.S. Congress

MESSAGING: Proposed overall campaign slogan: END WAR! YES WE CAN!

Examples of Some Possible Political Messaging

- Beyond Iraq: End Racism, Poverty and War
- Moving From the Dream to Beyond Vietnam
- Imagine Demilitarization!
- Demilitarize the Middle East - End US occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Bring troops home now! Yes You Can!
- Imagine Peace in the Middle East - End Israel Occupation of Palestine
- Demilitarize the Budget! Yes We Can!
- Fund Main Street not Wall Street! Housing, health care, and education now!
- Demilitarize our Energy Resources! Yes We Can! – U.S. military is the biggest user of fossil fuel!
- Demilitarize our Borders! Yes We Can! End Raids, Detention Centers, Deportations
- Demilitarize our Civil Rights! Yes We Can! End the Patriot Act and Homeland Security
- Demilitarize our Climate! End new nuclear and coal plants, mountain top removal
- Demilitarize our Planet, Abolish nuclear weapons! IMAGINE a planet with no nukes!

WHAT: A series of activities that build to April 4th, and beyond.

I. Visibility and Education Campaign

- Produce posters and stickers for sale and download – for MLK marches, Inaugural events, and for ongoing use in local work (possibly also flags, banners, yard signs or bumper stickers)
- Produce issue specific fliers for coordinated days of outreach
- Produce and distribute a tabloid with analysis, MLK info, issues articles, voices of vets and Iraqis/Afghans, call to action, campaign calendar and events for distribution at campuses, recruiting centers, local events, etc
- Etc.

II. Focus on Congress (some ideas include)

- Yes We Can tool to collect signatures for delivery to Obama and Congress
- Work with groups focused on struggles around the federal budget
- National Congressional Call-In Days
- Local delegations to visit elected officials over Congressional Recesses, to include our allies
- National Lobby Day – Monday, April 6th

III. National Mobilization

- UFPJ will organize an initiating group to call for a National Mobilization to End War and Fund Human Needs on Saturday, April 4th in New York City; focal points could include Wall Street/Stock Exchange and Riverside Church; link with same day anti-war demonstrations in Europe on the 60th Anniversary of NATO.
- Initiating group would include national organizations or coalition that are our allies in various movements, such as : Civil Rights, Labor, Women, Queer, Youth, Religious, or by issue - war, climate, workers rights, healthcare.
- Initiating groups comes together they would open up the mobilization for wide endorsement and build a good steering committee.
- First meeting of the initiating group would be in DC after the Inauguration.

IV. Grassroots Activities and Alliance Building

- Participate in local King Birthday activities, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Cesar Chavez birthday, etc.
- Organize Iraq Moratorium activities in local communities on the 3rd Friday of each month: neighborhood vigils, calling members of Congress in their home districts and other activities.
- Provide tools and training to help local peace groups respond to local economic crisis. Support local groups in building grassroots alliances in efforts to fund domestic needs. Engage in new conversations and spaces and find ways to be in solidarity.
- Organize around King speech, host local discussions or town hall meetings, build new alliances or start new local coalitions.
- Develop specific plans to use the signature gathering tool/s with the goal of expanding membership in local groups.

TIMELINE: to be further developed

UFPJ Assembly	Present campaign proposal
End Dec/Jan	Mass email blast announcing campaign and downloads of poster, flier and stickers for local events – begin discussions with allies re: April 4 th mobilization
January 17-19	KICK-OFF - MLK Holiday Weekend - Posters for marches and a flier talking about the connection between war and poverty and economic collapse.
January 20	Inauguration Day - distribute Peace Signs and messages in DC for visibility along the parade route and all around town.
February 15	Possible Nationwide Day of Education and Outreach w/ tool – common theme to be determined
February 27-3/2	Power Shift Conference and No Foreign Bases Conference - both in DC. UFPJ presence to connect with activists and promote campaign.
March 8	International Women's Day - Possible Nationwide Day of Activity focusing on the cost of war on women, possible lobby day on war and women's issues.
March 19	6 th Anniversary of the War in Iraq - local actions on and around the anniversary, focusing on the economic and human costs of the war – re-affirming our movement's call to end the war and bring all the troops home now!
March 31	Possible Day of Local Activity on Cesar Chavez's birthday.
April 4	King's Assassination and Anniversary of Beyond Vietnam Speech - National March in NY calling for a re-ordering of economic priorities.
April 6	Delegation and Press Event in Washington DC to deliver signatures to Congress and White House.

COORDINATION: Create a UFPJ Campaign working group to produce materials, further develop the plan of action, and other work move the campaign forward.