

# OCCUPY PEACE SUMMIT REPORT



***Beyond War: A New  
Economy is Possible***

**United for Peace and Justice**

[www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

February 24-26, 2012, Philadelphia, PA

Dear UFPJ Supporters and Member Groups,

From Feb 24-26, 2012 close to 100 people from a wide range of local and national peace groups came together in Philadelphia to reflect on the current political moment, assess opportunities and challenges, and see if there was work ahead that the UFPJ network was called to do. What follows are the notes from our weekend together. Click here <http://smu.gs/xZfp8T> for great photos taken by UFPJ's own Siri Margerin.

Work has already begun on some of what we planned. It was exciting to see how much energy, care and compassion was in the room and how many people made commitments whether it was to help stop a war with Iran or to start challenging corporate power in a more direct ways like protesting the Bank of America's investments in war at its annual shareholder meeting.

For 10 years UFPJ has been fighting for peace with justice. It has been a long and difficult struggle. Despite enormous challenges, we turned world opinion against war, even if we did not stop our government's destructive wars. We built a broad and deep mass movement that continues to support those most impacted by war. We can learn and build on this rich history as we organize for the long haul that lies ahead.

2012 will be one of the most significant years for organizing in a long time. With the rise of the Occupy Movement, a serious challenge is underway toward the 1% and the corporations who are profiting off our backs. We also see new wars on the horizon. Building alignments in the fight for economic justice and supporting people-powered movements are more possible than ever before.

Those of us who gathered in Philadelphia agreed we must step boldly into this moment and we must do it together!

Looking forward to a year of strong collaboration and building our power to stop war and win true justice for our communities and our planet.

In peace and solidarity,

Lisa Fithian, National Convener

Michael McPherson, National Coordinator

# Occupy Peace Summit Notes

**Saturday, February 25**

## Goals:

- Reflections & connections
- Synergies & strategies
- Collaborations & convergences
- "Organization" in this new moment

## Norms/ Agreements

- Respect/Listen
- Assume the best
- Brevity + Time limits
- What is working?
- W.A. I.T
- ID yourself
- Step up, Step back
- No Acronyms
- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Speak Loudly
- Constructive criticism
- One Mic
- Confidentiality
- Amnesty
- SaFe Space

## Issues People Are Working On:

- Iraqi refugees; need for reparation for Iraq
- Move the Money campaign
- Occupy
- Counter-recruitment
- Racism/sexism in the military
- Nuclear weapons/power, abolition, nuclear free zone in the Middle East
- Iran
- Climate change
- China solidarity
- Militarization of community policing; loss of civil liberties
- Afghan war
- Fracking
- Drone, robotic wars
- Health care
- Palestine/Israel
- Banking issues, economy 1% control lead to military control
- Dept of Peace/Declaration of Peace
- Guantanamo; other detention centers
- War profiteering corporations (GE, Lockheed)
- Operation recovery, civilian-solider alliance (taking care of the troops)
- Privatization of public schools
- War tax resistance
- LGBTQ
- Women's empowerment & leadership
- Anti-NATO/G8
- Green collar economy
- Youth
- Close School of Americas, Militarism in Latin America

## United For Peace and Justice Status Report

Re-affirmed the UFPJ Points of Unity – to read go to: <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/ufpj-unity-statement/>

UFPJ is a hybrid of a network and a coalition. The UFPJ network shares information and resources, provides space for member groups to discuss public policy and helps to mobilize local grassroots activism through action alerts. In the role of a coalition UFPJ provides space for member groups to organize, lobby, mobilize and take direct action.

The Steering Committee is no longer active. The Coordinating Committee and 2 part-time staff have been moving the bulk of the work of UFPJ. Members of the Coordinating Committee are:

Lisa Fithian Co-Chair Alliance of Community Trainers, Jackie Cabasso Western States Legal Foundation, Rusti Eisenberg Brooklyn For Peace, Cole Harrison United for Justice with Peace, Siri Margerin UFPJ Bay Area, Sam Miller Military Families Speak Out, Gael Murphy Code Pink, Terry Rockefeller September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows and Janine Schwab American Friends Service Committee

Part-time staff:

Michael T. McPhearson National Coordinator

Robby Diesu Webmaster/social media/internet specialist

Working groups.

Afghanistan WG – Contact Cole Harrison for more information, [cole@masspeaceaction.org](mailto:cole@masspeaceaction.org)

International WG – Contact George Martin for more information, [niiadjetey@gmail.com](mailto:niiadjetey@gmail.com)

Legislative WG – Contact Rusti Eisenberg, [Hiscze@aol.com](mailto:Hiscze@aol.com) or Gael Murphy for more information, [gaelmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:gaelmurphy@gmail.com)

Nuclear Disarmament/ Redefining Security WG – Contact Jackie Cabasso for more information, [wslf@earthlink.net](mailto:wslf@earthlink.net)

Member Groups

At one time UFPJ could count over 1,400 organizations as part of our coalition. Since 2008 many of these organizations no longer exist and/or have found new space in which to do their work. As a network/coalition we are not sure how many organizations see themselves as part of UFPJ but have been working with a member group list of around 300 groups.

Financial

UFPJ is no longer in debt having recovered from being tens of thousands of dollars in the hole. We have a modest \$23,000 in the bank with a general operating cost of less than \$4,000 a month. This monthly cost does not include actions, programs or conferences.

**The Political Moment Now**

Conversation broke down into three distinct themes

**Local Organizing** - We need to focus on local organizing, and start changing things at a local level. Some people feel we need to focus on our work in the context of the elections, may it be city councils, school boards, etc. Getting them to oppose the wars, kick the military out of our schools, or divest from multinational corporations. A prime example is that Occupy Philly is going from block to block, and doing basic canvassing to get people interested in their work. It is also important to note that by focusing on local organizing we will start building a base, and once we have a power base, we will be able to create radical change. Another example is the New Haven City Council was taken over by pro-labor folks and they have been able to make great strides.

**The Effects of War** - The people who are affected the most by US wars are the people in the countries we are invading. There is still a huge refugee crisis in Iraq and we need to counter the narrative that the Iraqi people should be thanking us. We also need to look at the military families and returning veterans. They bear the brunt of the war. Also, there is the environmental damage caused by war, with climate change being a critical issue.

**We need to change our Organizing Strategy** - We keep doing the same thing over and over again, and we keep losing. What can we do differently? Building a base of power is key, and is something that we have lost since the Obama Administration won the election. Local organizing is key and reaching out to people but not in the same way we have always done it. We need to start going to their events and building our base there. The peace movement is not going to be the base, but we can bring our issues to other peoples' meetings and show the connections. Whether focusing on local campaigns, move the money campaigns, or focusing on the connections between corporate power and the larger political-social-economic system, we need to be looking at other movements and recognizing the intersectionality of our struggles. We need to meet these movements where they are and join in their work – be it anti-racist movements, civil liberties, or numerous other movements. The focus around direct democracy and self-organization support the building of a power base. Focus on nonviolent direct action and the ability to carry out direct action. Can we create a new role and interrupt the space of corporate America? We need to talk about capitalism. The reality is that we need to focus on the money. We can't keep doing things the same way!

### Saturday Afternoon Discussion

In a multi-movement context, how do we shift From this War Economy to a Justice Economy?

Break out into small groups: 45 mins working on:

- 1.) Synergy - Strong leads of connections, people want to connect and connect on the issues,
- 2.) Obstacles - Insular movement can't connect with those younger or cross class and race boundaries. Can't get past the old school solutions
- 3.) Opportunities - the real links between militarization in our foreign policy and what is happening at home? We don't capitalize on them. Peace and anti-war groups need to develop of good materials about these links.

Synergy	Obstacles	Opportunities
Connect Issues – communicate how they all relate	<b>Obstacles are opportunities:</b>	Environmental impacts of war
A narrative that connects communities	Insular	Time for popular education
Narrative that connects struggles	Trouble connecting with youth, people of color and working class	Emphasis on working local
Linking war, racism and poverty	Using old framework and tactics	Militarization at home – law enforcement, prisons
Share lessons and success	Stop focusing on singular cause of war	Election year
	Creating “the Other”	Need good materials
	Changes in communication	Build relationships with other groups
	Image of peace movement	Economic issues
	Lack of strategy in anti-war movement.	Popular uprising
		Social media
		Mentorship

Report backs - There are many movements and you can transfer success across groups. What are the successes that we should be sharing?

We are in a confusing time. We need to understand the reasons why we go to war. We need to see the linkages with groups that aren't about war and show how their issues are affected by war. We need to start using Facebook. We need to be mentors to the younger generations. We need to look towards MLK and the understanding that the liberation of oppressed communities is possible. Not only is it possible it is so needed.

## **Issue Break Out Groups**

### **Iraq**

- Needs of refugees in US
- Connecting with vets
- Seeking reparations for Iraqi citizens and destruction of their land

### **Iran**

- Spread discourse, change
- Pledge of resistance
- Reach beyond anti-war groups
- Fact sheet, draft letter to the editor
- Even US gov't officials acknowledge Iran has no nuclear weapons program

### **Citizens United**

- How to get constitutional amendment?
- Test court cases
- States have power to pass laws forbidding corporate election \$\$
- Use humor to connect with other orgs
- Educate

### **Afghanistan**

- Re-initiate working group

### **Nukes**

- Arms race: US- RUSSIA-CHINA
- US wants to maintain military superiority
- Human cost of nukes
- Anniversary of Fukushima event
- Nonviolent civil disobedience + lobbying

### **Environment**

- Climate change is key issue - provide jobs reduce resource wars
- Local projects – retrofit houses, rebuild infrastructure
- 350.org campaign re:subsidies
- Oppose Fracking

### **Domestic**

- Variety of ways to link across movements
- How can events contribute to ongoing movement building?
- How can we better share and communicate?

## Drones

- Lethal use in 6 countries
- New momentum in war; create a new form of warfare
- Campaigns at bases and against producers
- KNOW DRONES tour
- Drone Summit 4/28-29
- Used for recon on both borders
- FAA allowing drones
- Campaign to prohibit remote control and fully autonomous drones
- Need to help those who are injured and relatives of those killed
- Medea Benjamin has new book on drones coming out soon

## **Saturday Evaluation**

- Generally a good day
- Michael really hit with saying that UFPJ has a space to occupy and is pretty awesome
- Great combo of being in the large group and the small groups/ break outs
- Facilitation was great, as well as the networking aspects
- Really encouraged to keep UFPJ going and its working groups
- We need an analysis of capitalism tomorrow
- Need a clearer agenda and need something concrete around Iran.

## **Sunday, Feb 26**

### Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions  
Reflections from Sat  
Iran  
Confronting Corporate Power  
G8/NATO  
Lunch  
UFPJ: Building for the Future

- Leadership
- Working Groups
- Member Groups
- Finances
- Communications

Evaluation  
Close

## **NOTES:**

### **Iran**

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| - Support Iranian people, not the government | - Resolutions                    |
| - Educational materials                      | - Context of Middles East Crisis |
| - Pledge of resistance                       | - Peace Action petition          |
| - Middles East Nuclear Weapons free zone     | - Pressure Media                 |
| - Promoting facts                            | - Promoting facts                |

- Connect w/ occupation of Palestine, AIPAC, Etc (this is a challenge for Labor Mvt.)
- Environmental threats
- Oppose sanctions (separate sanctions + military)
- Relation to Syria- proxy war
- Member of Congress Letter
- U.S troops in Afghanistan threat to Iran
- Budget angle- no\$ for war
- Statements from: Clapper, Panetta, Ahmedinejad – all say Iran has no nuclear weapons development

### **Iran Pledge**

- Mobilize religious communities
- Role for diaspora community
- Travel delegations
- Simple messaging – pocket angle
- Social media
- No war, no sanctions, no repression
- Support Self-determination ( also a part of UFPJ Unity statement)
- Threats to people in U.S threat to Iran thru bases
- Who will join based on messaging

## **Confronting Corporate Power**

The current political moment has two strands:

- Revolutionary/Anti-capitalist Movement that is horizontal and people-powered: Occupy Movement
- Corporate Accountability Movement – aimed at reform

Opportunities: Divestment

- Shareholder Season –
  1. Bank of America in North Carolina – linkages to housing, education, environment, labor, immigrants
  2. War corporations
- War corporation campaigns
  1. Drones
  2. Tear gas
  3. Oil and gas
  4. Nuclear
  5. Weapons
  6. Security
  7. Fracking
  8. Depleted uranium [DU]
- Military/Wall St. Events – Action
- Citizens United
- G8/NATO
- Security State

Research Needed

- Which war corporations are unionized?
- Which war corporations are in our communities?
- What is the impact on jobs of contracts/cutting contracts for war corporations?
- Resources – “Dirty Dozen” [by WILFP] – Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

### **DISCUSSION NOTES:**

- February 29 Day of Action on ALEC [American Legislative Exchange Council]
- 99% Spring – NVDA training for 100,000
- April 17 – Tax Day and Days of Action



- War Resisters League Campaign [warresisters.org] “No More Tears” against tear gas manufacturers, especially Combined Systems Inc.; WRL has produced an educational comic book
- Need to connect with military veterans
- Depleted Uranium
- Need to find out what is in our community and what they do. Make local links to the “M.I.C.” – especially universities and research
- Need long-term commitment
- “Think tanks” + our own research and ideas
- Communications and social media
- Go on the offense
- New DOD regulations threaten G.I. Rights to protest
- Hold Congress Accountable
- “Dirty Dozen” war corporations by WILPF – Reaching Critical Will.org
- Connect all these movements on the UFPJ website
- Unite with shareholder season.

**Nato/G8 Summit:** Chicago Counter-Summit 5/18 & 19 Natofreefuture.org// submit workshops

- Unac March May 20<sup>th</sup>
- Nobel Laureate Meeting in Chicago
- Call for occupy during Nato/G8
- UFPJ Contribution: Tabloid to hand out @ Nato/G8
- Video Contributions: what is NATO/G8?
- AFSC PowerPoint
- Develop pop education workshop
- 10 steps to criminalizing dissent

## **NEXT STEPS**

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant lists w/ issue groups</li> <li>• Issue list serves</li> <li>• Report from Conference</li> <li>• Initiate new working groups:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Iran / Pledge of Resistance</li> <li>○ Confronting Corp. Power</li> <li>○ Communication/Info/Resources</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Group- Recommitment</li> <li>• Reach out to Staffers</li> <li>• Develop 2012 Budget</li> <li>• Raise Money to staff</li> <li>• Office Space in NY/ Volunteer meet ups</li> <li>• Regional Meetings</li> <li>• Chicago internal UFPJ Meeting (G8/NATO)</li> </ul> |
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## **Evaluation**

### POSITIVES

Food  
Turnout/Participation  
New +Old Friends  
Facilitations/Group Process  
Reconnecting UFPJ  
Flexibility +Planning  
Horizontal Structure  
Hopeful Future  
We're Alive!  
Welcoming Space

Re-energizing

Support of local Work

Timeline

Ongoing Nat'l Recourse

Traditional Peace Issues + Connecting to Occupy Etc,

Beneficial for Nat'l Orgs

Meeting in different communities

Community space

Finding commonalities

### NEED TO IMPROVE

Focus on Media

Other facilitators too  
Inaccessibility's  
Saturday Dinner  
Safe Space  
More Outreach to youth!!!  
Advertise Agenda

Vigil Planning  
More Diverse Groups  
More Preparations  
Lots of Speakers  
More People from Occupy Philly  
Connect with AFL +JWJ

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### **The Political Moment Now - more extensive notes:**

The transformation of US imperialism from being in your face to not being straightforward exploitation.

The rise of Occupy and the rise of class consciousness.

The internationalism of the reality that the real victims of the wars are the people in those countries we invade.

Our role is to stop them from funding these wars, it's important for us to keep that notion alive. And we have to take care of returning veterans, reparations, etc.

We cannot just forget the militarism of our culture and how that allows for war to happen.

The Occupy Movement is coming to the forefront and in a different way. They will not be running politicians because it's against the status quo and about creating a radically different world.

There will always be young people who will sacrifice themselves for the wars; we will not be able to change that, but we can decrease the numbers.

We have an opportunity and situation with the trillion dollars cut in 2013 and the Bush tax cuts expiring. We have an opening for the Move the Money campaigns.

We need to start sustainability campaigns, and make it a part of American society

We need a political instrument, we need members of Congress, and we need social movements, and a change in the Democratic Party.

The money is pouring into elections and look at those who vote weirdly on issues. We need campaign finance reform.

The challenge for us is that there are no youth anywhere but in the Occupy Movement. We need to focus on the youth!

The Obama administration learned from the Bush administration, which is why there was war in Libya, Pakistan, and Yemen.

Way too many people think it's OK to kill with drones

Congress is owned by the financial world, and the Occupy Movement is challenging this.

New Haven was taken over by the labor council and now in control of the city. We have to change to focusing on cities and states, not on the national government.

We need to focus on the local and look who is making all the decision, where are the women? Have women in charge at every level. We need to diversify from the process; we always do.

We need to change the way we articulate the issues, and get them related to other movements like jobs, racism, labor, etc. Maybe even joining a larger coalition with labor and people of color.

War tax resistance and giving it to the green economy

We are doing our work in the context of the elections and we need to keep that in mind. We need to collectively talk and get this election period moving in our direction.

Look at the logistics of the movement

Occupy Philly is going to start organizing block by block to build a power base.

We are flexible and support each other in the work we do.

Women + Small group + and we need alignment of the creative class. How do we challenge the narratives and make sure they are positive.

Any strong org needs a strong base, we don't have one here. We have no diversity, and we need to combine and the strong base needs to be started

Taking on lots of other issues that are connected, things like *Citizens United*. We know that it's been dangerous to our government and we need to make that a part of the work.

The new internationalism and the Obama Adm's liberal interventionism are real threats. There are highly placed individuals and who are claiming to be humanitarians when they're not.

The anti-war movement should join with other movements. The ongoing attacks on civil liberties and the Obama administration and the recent period directly attack the anti-war movement and other target groups, especially Muslims.

War is something bad, and we need to keep going. The military families and veterans are key part of the antiwar movement already and we don't have to deal with it the way they do. We have to fight and we are more powerful!

Climate change is happening and we need to be able to address it. Thinking about our lifestyle is crucial.

The Arab spring is directly linked to UFPJ work and we need to keep it in mind and we need to talk about it more. Cautionary tale of OWS, and realize that we need to do it in a in-depth way

Like to mention the rhetoric of ending the war, and what I like to see is the shift from focusing on ending the war to the aftermath of the war but in the terms of the people of Iraq and their refugee crisis etc.

The Arab spring is very hyped up by the media; the media is very biased towards the idea of a certain kind of democracy. Please pay attention to what the people want!

I like the fact that we are thinking big and globally but we need to act locally and it will have effects globally. How many town councils can we get to say they are against the Afghanistan War with ballot initiatives? Focus nationally, but act in local communities on the issues. We need to do that locally and it will build the national movement!

We keep going back to local issues and we have to look at Occupy and how they connect. The point being that if we are going to be a part of the local community, the issue must connect us all.