

## IN THIS ISSUE

### “WAR ON TERROR”

Anti-War Organizing

Immigrant Rights

Patriot Acts I & II

### ORGANIZING UPDATES

Reproductive Freedom  
Network

Fiscal Crisis Solutions

World Social Forum

Candidate  
Recruitment

### PLUS

Nilak Butler Memorial

Books for Organizers



Like Gulf War I, the war on Iraq spawned large protest rallies. Can the resistance movement sustain its momentum once military action subsides?

Credit: Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington

## Resisting the “War on Terror” Organizing for the Long Haul

by Holly Pruett

Over the past six months, the build-up to the war on Iraq generated an unprecedented level of resistance in small towns, big cities and countries around the world. Many of the mass protests resembled those during the first Gulf War, raising the specter that energy will dissipate once the military actions ends, as it did in the early 1990s.

Large-scale rallies demonstrate to politicians, the press, and our global neighbors that the policies of Bush, Inc. do not enjoy unquestioned support. In theory, they raise the political cost of the Administration’s course of action. But typical rallies are by nature anonymous. People come, chant, march, leave. No one knows who was there or how to contact them again.

In this issue, *Views* profiles organizers around the region who are working to infuse anti-war activism with strategies that build the relationships and political commitment required for an enduring movement. Organizations like Seattle Young People’s Project, Jews for Global Justice, Rural Organizing Project and a number of peace coalitions are seizing the moment but planning for the long haul.

“The big question I ask myself every day,” says Liz Paul of the Idaho Peace Coalition, “is how do we keep the majority around when the war starts and afterwards? How do we show them there’s a bigger problem?”

cont. from page 1

*“This is an opportunity to radicalize people.”*

— Staci Cotler,  
Jews for Global  
Justice

## Resisting the “War on Terror”

### Organizing for the Long Haul

A look at anti-war activism around the region reveals a greater variety of tactics involving a broader range of people advancing a more complex analysis than in Gulf War I. Internet technology alone has transformed the nature of activism. People have readier access to alternative sources of news and opinion. Mass Internet action sites like MoveOn.org and True Majority make it easy for people to register their opposition without leaving their homes or even licking a stamp. The model has proved so popular that MoveOn reports a U.S. membership of 1,300,000: one in every 216 Americans.

While virtual marches, Internet petitions and email action alerts support mass participation, they do little to foster the relationships that will be needed to sustain a movement. They also illustrate an inherent limitation of actions geared towards attracting the largest number of people. Targeting “the middle” is usually done with a lowest-common-denominator message.

Many organizers like sixteen-year-old Duwan Tyson of Seattle Young People’s Project are more interested in building a base that is committed to a deeper political analysis. For Tyson, that means linking the “war on terror” to the wars on drugs, crime and the poor. “My goal is not just to stop the war on Iraq,” he says, “but to stop aggression against my people in ghettos, reservations and barrios all over the world.”

“This is an opportunity to radicalize people,” says Staci Cotler with Jews for Global Justice. “It’s imperative that we get to know each other, use the numbers that we have right now to our advantage, and learn to operate as a collective force.”

### Speaking the Truth

What started with a couple of phone calls around Boise just after September 11<sup>th</sup> led to an initial organizing meeting attended by sixty people. The Idaho

Peace Coalition was born. Eighteen months later, there are over 700 activists linked by an email list serve, participating in a wide range of weekly and monthly events. Their goal? “We are building a long-term community dedicated to peace and justice,” says organizer Liz Paul.

Being visible against the war in small towns and more conservative cities carries a greater sense of risk than joining a 30,000 person mobilization in Portland or Seattle. Despite the pressure to conform to rigid notions of patriotic obedience, activists throughout the region have found countless ways to come together to express their opposition.

Communities with little history of dissent have organized Women in Black vigils, Civil Liberties Salons, student walk-outs, faith-based gatherings, veterans’ voices, banners in high-traffic locations, slide shows, workshops and photo exhibits, civil disobedience, local government resolutions both opposing a preemptive war on Iraq and upholding the Bill of Rights, and stagings of the ancient Greek play *Lysistrata*, in which women withhold sex from men until they cease their war-making ways.

“Opposition in Utah has been fairly constant with a wide variety of actions practically every week,” reports Lorna Vogt, director of the Utah Progressive Network and a Western States board member. “The actions are relatively small but because they are constant, they are fairly visible.”

Kate Kahan, director of Working for Equality and Economic Liberation in Montana and a new Center board member, says that the visibility created by small but steady efforts in her state has had an empowering effect. “The fear being used to manipulate people into silence and isolation has been rejected as Montanans have begun to speak up in opposition to war. Rejecting the fear mongering and speaking the truth is incredibly powerful and inspiring.”

### “Here Everyone Knows Us”

Joanne Cvar and her husband Art live in Waldport, a coastal Oregon community of 2,000. On their retirement income, they couldn’t afford to travel to large city protests, so they decided to organize their own. “I’d never done this before,” she says, “so I



had to get up the nerve. Peace marches in cities are anonymous. But here everyone knows us.” She began gathering with a handful of others for three hours every Saturday at the intersection of two rural highways. They held signs, and once the war began, a coffin containing the American flag, the Constitution, a peace dove and photos of Iraqi women and children. They did not bury the coffin but are “holding it for resurrection.”

The Waldport vigils soon linked with others along the Oregon coast in a “peace wave” where activists traveled to each other’s towns to swell their numbers. “At first I was embarrassed,” Cvar says. “I got over it because we got so much support from passers-by. Now I feel proud of what we’re doing.”

Cvar is part of the network of “human dignity groups” supported by Rural Organizing Project (ROP). Director Marcy Westerling says, “So many people have been inspired by this moment in time. From the non-election of Bush, to the corporate scandals and budget cuts, to the roll-back of civil rights – people have been pushed too far.” Reaching beyond the greener fringes of the state, anti-war opposition has emerged in central and eastern Oregon towns like Klamath Falls, Baker City and John Day. To inspire a longer-term definition of victory, ROP poses the question: “Is it enough to say ‘Don’t Bomb Iraq’? Where do you want to be ten years from now?”

“It’s about what kind of community we want,” says John Jones, a leader with Human Rights Advocates of Coos County. “A community of fear or what Martin Luther King, Jr. called a community of the beloved?” For Jones the focus is “much bigger than this war. We need to make connections between militarism and racism and the tax cuts and spending priorities that favor the rich at the expense of our local communities.”

The platform for this year’s annual ROP gathering is “economic fairness at home, civil liberties for all, and funding for human needs, not global war.”

### Support the Poor, No More War

More peace activism needs to focus on a fuller range of issues, according to organizers with



Credit: SYPP

Seattle Young People’s Project (SYPP). For that reason, Duwan Tyson says he doesn’t consider himself part of the peace movement. “It’s white, middle class, and not effective based on where we are today,” he says. Seventeen-year-old Shale Maulana says, “The anti-war movement is not representative of or accountable to people of color. If people understood this war as racist, that it sabotages people of color domestically, they would be doing more to build institutional support for schools, health care, and other community needs.”

While SYPP organizers have a critique of the larger peace movement, they direct their energies towards connecting with youth of color. “I’m focused on my community,” Tyson says, “cats who are skipping school, hustlers, thieves, people who’ve been historically overlooked. We talk about the reasons they’re flunking out. We break it down to what’s happening in *their* lives. We say *this* is real and what’s happening 8,000 miles away is real. And it’s perpetrated by the same people.”

SYPP members table at high schools alongside military recruiters. They do teach-ins on how the U.S. military targets youth of color with promises that are later broken, how it reinforces the status quo, how it promotes, in Tyson’s words, “the ideal that you need to fight and kill to be a man.” They have organized actions at the federal building to protest the diversion of resources from domestic needs to the war. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Tyson pumped up a rally of 10,000 with a call to “support the poor, no more war.”

Interns Alonso Alvarado and Megan Wilbert of SYPP’s *Youth Undoing Institutional Racism* project

*“According to a recent Gallup Poll, 78% of white Americans supported invading Iraq, but only 29% of blacks. One reason for such a great disparity might be that while blacks represent 12% of the population, they make up at least 25% of the Army.”*

— *The Nation*, 4/28/03

continued on page 20

continued from page 5

## ANTI-WAR RESOURCES

### IRAQ WAR ONLY

Win Without War:

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

US Labor Against War:

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

The Human Face of War:

[www.afsc.org/human-face](http://www.afsc.org/human-face)

### INTERNET ACTIVISM

Move On: Democracy in Action:

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

True Majority:

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

Voice4Change:

[www.voice4change.org](http://www.voice4change.org)

Thomas: Legislative Information:

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

### NEWS & COMMENTARY

Common Dreams:

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

Alternet: [www.alternet.org](http://www.alternet.org)

Independent Media Center:

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

UK Guardian:

[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

Democracy Now:

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

Z magazine: [www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org)

The Nation: [www.thenation.com](http://www.thenation.com)

### PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

United for Peace and Justice:

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

The Nonviolent Activist (War

Resisters League):

[www.warresisters.org/nva.htm](http://www.warresisters.org/nva.htm)

Veterans for Peace:

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

Gandhian Institute:

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

Fourth Freedom:

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

## Resisting the “War on Terror”

At the heart of SYPP’s organizing is a one-on-one approach. “It’s not about handing out fliers and getting people to come to meetings,” says Tyson. SYPP creates cultural events and artwork that “speaks to the soul.” Maulana says, “We need to do community-building and organizing, not just activism. It’s about talking to people, human relations, and building positive institutions, not just criticizing negative ones.”

### Jews for Global Justice

Young people of color aren’t the only ones who question the depth of political commitment in the current anti-war movement. “There’s a real wariness on the part of Jews to be part of these large mobilizations,” says Staci Cotler of Jews for Global Justice (JFGJ). “Many feel such Israel- and Jew-bashing that they don’t want to come. They don’t want to have to defend Israel. They feel targeted.”

JFGJ is an all-volunteer Portland group linked philosophically with other Jewish pro-Palestinian organizations around the world. Concerned about the climate after September 11<sup>th</sup>, founders believed that “Jews had a strategic role to play in speaking out against anti-Arab harassment.” Cotler describes the group as “holding a far-left pole, working with Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims.”

During Ramadan, members of the group brought dates and other traditional foods to local mosques to break fast with Muslim worshippers. Cotler says, “A lot of the women had never met a Jewish person.” An Afghani woman approached Cotler, saying, “I’ve heard so many negative things about your people. I need to talk to you. I know it’s not all true.”

JFGJ has provided a consistent Jewish voice against racial profiling, anti-immigrant actions and anti-Muslim targeting in Portland. They marched with Palestinians in one of the large mobilizations. “People have each other’s backs in ways that can only happen in a smaller city,” Cotler says, comparing her experience to that of friends doing Jewish-Muslim solidarity work in New York and San Francisco. “We have a pretty deep level of trust where we’ve been able to talk through issues that could separate us.”

While deeper relationships with Muslims and Arabs may separate JFGJ from more conservative

segments of the Jewish community, their common concerns are reinforced when anti-Semitism finds expression in the peace movement. Alongside justified criticism of Israeli and U.S. policies, classic Jew-hating slogans have appeared with alarming frequency on the left as well as the right. While JFGJ strongly opposes right-wing Israeli government policies, Cotler sees Israeli Jews and Jews in general being scapegoated for the larger problems in the Middle East.

Not only do some on the left reinforce these stereotypes, but the “big tent” of the broader anti-war movement includes some people with an explicitly anti-Jewish agenda. Cotler reports that neo-Nazis with swastikas have participated in some of the large peace rallies, and have approached Women in Black vigils to join in their criticism of Israel.

It puts a fine point on the question of who is today’s peace movement. “Who do we want on our side?” asks Cotler. “Neo-Nazis?” JFGJ is doing anti-Semitism training for activists in Portland to help them address Middle East issues without falling into anti-Jewish sentiment. The work, while important, is small-scale. It leaves Cotler wanting more: “I wish we were building the opportunity to have 30,000 people turn out for a truly politicized message.”

### Organizing the Cities

Organizations like Jews for Global Justice, SYPP, and ROP can provide the structure, relationships, analysis and skills training required to turn anti-war energy into a sustained movement for change within their own constituencies. But what about the rest of the masses who are currently energized by opposition to the war? Largely unorganized, the tens of thousands of people turning out to protest the war in urban centers are connected by little more than shared dismay and a willingness to take action.

With the attack on Iraq on the horizon, organizers in Seattle decided to try something different. Longtime activist Howard Gale describes the challenges of mass Puget Sound mobilizations following the 1999 anti-WTO “Battle in Seattle.” Since then, he says, “Every demonstration was a confrontation. It was hard to get beyond the same cluster of 1,000 or 1,500 demonstrators.” Factionalism characterized

meetings where hundreds of people spent hours arguing about slogans.

Gale and others proposed a new coalition based on several points of agreement, non-violence chief among them. Nearly forty groups joined right away. "Because people gathered around a central principal, it was easier to get things off the ground," Gale says. Rather than tying their name to the war on Iraq, they chose Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War (SNOW) "as an investment in the future."

While interested in large mobilizations, SNOW recognized that rallies could not define success. "If we turn out every American onto the street, it would not stop this war," Gale says. "Everybody agreed a next step is needed."

### A Ceremony of Commitment

After several fairly typical mobilizations last fall, SNOW decided to hold an event before the holidays conceived as a "Ceremony of Commitment." Choosing a large indoor location, they organized a December 8<sup>th</sup> program that included reports on peace activism around the state. Speakers addressed the domestic impact of a war economy, the attack on immigrant rights, and the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.

After this first hour, the 1,500 participants broke out into zip code clusters coordinated by fifty volunteer facilitators. Each neighborhood was asked to come back to the larger group committing to organize at least one visibility action and one community-building event before the holidays.

The result: over 60 neighborhood groups engaged in ongoing activism. This new infrastructure helped boost attendance at anti-war rallies from perhaps 10,000 in October, 2002 to over 40,000 in February, 2003.

More important, however, is the more meaningful organizing created by the decentralized network of

community activism. "The neighborhood model started as something different to try," says Gale, "but now we realize it provides ongoing structure."

Supported by donated office space and seven volunteer liaisons connected to seven neighborhoods each, SNOW groups are also linked by a web site that profiles each neighborhood's efforts and provides tool kits for an array of actions. The site receives over 2,000 hits per day.

The typical neighborhood action now includes gathering with signs or banners in a public space, followed by spirited discussion and a planning meeting in a nearby coffeehouse or restaurant. "Having that kind of community connection protects against dispersing," Gale says.

Gale points to the two major obstacles peace activists face when prevention efforts fail to stop a war. People, especially those new to the movement, feel defeated. "We lost. It's fruitless. Why bother." And they face pressure to stand behind the troops, the President, the flag—or get called a traitor. The neighborhood groups provide support to work through those feelings and stay committed to continued resistance.

SNOW, SYPP, ROP, Jews for Global Justice and the Idaho Peace Coalition illustrate the opportunities for long-haul organizing emerging from the tremendous groundswell of opposition to the Bush Administration's war on Iraq and the larger "war on terror."

"No movement will be built on slogans," Gale says. "You have to have personal contact, personal motivation and organization."



*Holly Pruett is editor of Views and the co-founder of Coffee Table Activism, a weekly one-hour action model focused on resistance to the "war on terror" at home and abroad. ([www.coffeetableactivism.net](http://www.coffeetableactivism.net))*

**JEWES FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE • (503) 299-4772 [globaljusticejews@yahoo.com](mailto:globaljusticejews@yahoo.com)**

**RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT • (503) 543-8417 [www.rop.org](http://www.rop.org)**

**SEATTLE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECT • (206) 860-9606 [www.sypp.org](http://www.sypp.org)**

**SEATTLE NON-VIOLENT OPPONENTS OF WAR • (206) 789-2684 [www.snowcoalition.org](http://www.snowcoalition.org)**

**IDAHO PEACE COALITION <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/idahopeacecoalition>**

#### **FAITH-BASED PEACE/JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS**

Fellowship of Reconciliation:  
[www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)

National Council of Churches:  
[www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org)

Muslim Public Affairs Council:  
[www.mpac.org](http://www.mpac.org)

Tikkun: [www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom:  
[www.btvshalom.org](http://www.btvshalom.org)

Sojourners Magazine:  
[www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net)

American Friends Service Committee: [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

#### **FOREIGN POLICY AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF**

Foreign Policy in Focus:  
[www.fpiif.org](http://www.fpiif.org)

Global Exchange:  
[www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

Mercy Corps:  
[www.mercycorps.org](http://www.mercycorps.org)

Center for Economic and Social Rights: [www.cesr.org](http://www.cesr.org)

Open Democracy: [www.open-democracy.net/home/index.jsp](http://www.open-democracy.net/home/index.jsp)

#### **CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee:  
[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)

American Civil Liberties Union:  
[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

People for the American Way:  
[www.pfaw.org](http://www.pfaw.org)

Human Rights Watch:  
[www.humanrightswatch.org](http://www.humanrightswatch.org)

Bill of Rights Defense Committee:  
[www.bordc.org](http://www.bordc.org)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: [www.unhchr.ch/udhr](http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr)