

## **Workshops of the Whole: CPUSA Convention 2019**

### **Digest of Table Discussion: Demilitarizing at Home and Abroad, Unity for Peace and International Solidarity**

**“In our clubs and districts, how can we contribute to building support against the threat of nuclear war, imperialist intervention, and US national chauvinism?”**

**What approaches might help win others to the movements for peace, international solidarity, and against US imperialist interventions?**

**How can we help build the broad engagement of those involved in these movements?”**

#### **1. Support specific bills, acts, and legislation**

- We should support the Eleanor Holmes Norton Nuclear Weapons Abolition Act that is repeatedly introduced in congress
- Support SB1039 Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran (Udell, Paul, Durbin)
- Target senators, house reps: repeal 1991 and 2002 War Authorization Acts
- In the House, AUMG Clarification Act (passed June 19)—would not permit Trump to use the 2001 and 2002 Iraq UMF. Unlikely to succeed in Senate.
- New SALT treaties with more general focus; expanding them to other nations
- If we want less nuclear arms in other nations, negotiate a decrease within our own amount of nuclear armaments.
- The question of going to war should be democratically decided. Question: do the voters want all these wars? No!
- In the electoral fight, foreign policy and peace issues should be an emphasis (i.e. Bernie campaign)
- Resolution to end Cuban naval blockades; free Puerto Rico, Guam, Virgin Islands.
- Communist Parties of North America and Caribbean should sign joint statement opposing U.S. imperialism.

#### **2. Work with like-minded groups, form coalitions**

- Build solidarity with other groups and internationally around anti-war issues.
- Outreach to IPJC, UVAW, Veterans for Peace, the VA, JWJ, Labor for Defense, Service Workers Unions, King’s Bay Plowshares (they support delegations to international hot spots).
- Join US Peace Council / UNAC
- Identify other countries with similarities and unite (i.e. Venezuela and other Central American countries with similar fears)
- Work to rebuild “end the war” coalitions; club members are involved, idea is to get labor involved.
- Members in VFP, Cuba/Nicaragua outreach programs, and AFT whose entire membership are dues paying members of US Labor Against the War.
- Red for Ed: unite with those organizations that want to move money away from the military budget
- US Peace Council should be revitalized; also Code Pink
- Look at splits in the right wing around these issues.
- Build on links between us and fraternal parties in other countries on a grassroots level.

- Revive the Peace and Solidarity Commission in the Party leadership.
- Unions may not initiate on these issues but they may support them if asked.

### **3. Be prepared to rapidly begin protesting**

- Organize immediate response to ruling class aggression, attacks, war. Remember how people started demonstrating at airports right after Trump's Muslim Ban was announced. We need the same kind of immediate response if Trump starts bombing Iran.
- Have posters already before attacks, for instant demonstrations on the streets
- Do education on hot issues before such an attack
- Before the Iraq war there were signs of war. We did education in local groups, got E-Board to pass resolution against war, and this allowed massive leafletting of members and prep for participating in anti-war demos.

### **4. Raise awareness about military recruiters, US foreign policy and imperialism**

- Efforts can be made to inform students of their legal rights vis-a-vis selective services and recruitment.
- Military recruiters are predators of our young people. We must confront them. We can join Vets for Peace on this issue.
- Discuss US imperialism and its effects at education outreach, eg. socialist reading groups. Focus on repressive foreign policy; hold sessions on the historical effects of U.S. intervention
- Peace gatherings: discussions, info sessions, talks, public showings/demonstrations. Lots of info is kept secret or unknown: info sharing changes the dominant narrative.
- Have war resisters (vets etc.) speak before other groups
- Invite labor, environmental, and peace leaders to come together.
- Debunk inflated military threats from perceived enemies and foreign powers.
- Connect immigration to U.S. Intervention in conversations (if you don't like immigration, stop supporting US intervention). Communicate self-interest of being anti-imperialist, how imperialism adversely affects US citizens.
- Analyze each generation's unique relationship/experience with war. Cater communication depending on this.

—Winning others over (approaches):

\*Have visitors from those countries or who have experienced the consequences to speak, to build empathy.

\*Church involvement (large reach and push issues well)

\*Visit these countries and experience the effects of intervention and to build solidarity (building relationships)

\*Refugees can be the best people to make the case against imperialism, etc. We should invite them to forums and spread the word broadly.

### **5. Reveal connections between issues and groups**

—Linking issues (environmental health, energy justice, arms production, immigration justice) creates coalitions (environmentalists, workers, Native peoples, anti-police activists)

\*FOR EXAMPLE: In LA during Iraq war the county was getting ready to close Rancho Amigos Rehab Hospital due to “budget shortfall” yet the soldiers injured in the war would need specialized care for gun shot wounds; they would not have a hospital to come to which specialized in that care. We pointed out that the cost of one B-2 bomber would pay for the entire budget shortfall in the LA county Dept. of Health budget. We set up a tent city at the hospital to save the hospital and organized protests on the street with nurses and health care workers and patients (in wheel chairs, on gurneys) with signs that said “Save Rancho” and “No War in Iraq.”

\*In DC, we link issues pertaining to Puerto Rico and Hurricane Maria to anti-privatization, pro-GND, need to strengthen infrastructure

\*We assisted the Bernie organization to oppose military intervention in Venezuela even before it was an object of their original agenda.

\*Stand for Gaza (Denver, 5 May 2019) is a good example of what can be done. Call imperialism what it is, when there’s an opportunity.

—Connect demilitarizations to community impacts to get workers’ support.

\*Nobody wants bases closed for fear of job loss in communities.

\*Remember we said during War in Vietnam that the war comes home to our neighborhoods

\*Economic war can, through trade policies, become military war. Make sure workers know their jobs will be endangered, or they may suffer wage cuts.

—Intersectional linking of policing and military (police as ex-military, supporting militarization of police; policing of schools; ties to domestic violence as well)

—Policing as extension of military model in wake of colonialism in Philippines, and ties to environmental issues and environmental racism

\*Reveal the relationships: militarization—militarized police—militarizing school policing—reflection of prevalence of former military as police, and policing as reflection of imperialist behavior of that military as well as the chauvinism (including environmental) that characterizes the imperialist nature of that militarism.

—Be more unsubtle (but not offensive) about the linkages between racism, imperialism and militarism.

—Point out connections between demilitarization and gun control.

## **6. Send clear messages about the economic impact of militarization**

—Economic investment in human needs produces much greater benefits than expenditures on war (butter vs. guns).

—760 billion in military doesn’t include loans from past military. So, actually, 48% of the budget is for military. People may be swayed by this information.

—Vets for Peace have put out good info on military costs, broken down.

—Publicize the ties between war expenditures and loss of funding for working class initiatives. Roads are for shit, schools are for shit, where's the money going?

\*Emphasize the waste, mismanagement (bake sales for kevlar....)

—Find concrete, specific examples of what the US military expenditures (and banking errors) could have been used to solve.

—Not only a waste of money, but other resources as well: land and space, too. Such a waste!

—Cut the military budget! Appropriate it to other places. Yes, but just cut it. The “possible wars” excuses so much waste.

—We should use military money to combat homelessness, help seniors and disabled children.

—In NYC there is a “Move the Money” resolution to take money from the military and fund human needs. We can support them.

—We have to be clear in our message: tie the wastes of war to the lack of health care, underfunded schools, and broken infrastructure at home.

—Ties to Green New Deal. Cut military as mechanism for funding. Cut back on all facets of this militarism, and especially the waste involved, and help free funds for projects like the GND.

—Boycott corporations that support war.

—Myth of scarcity, that our happiness must be at the cost of others.

—Vision of sharing and solidarity; that we're all people and should care for each other.

Organize, organize! Use social media to build and share this vision

—America is thought of as the war country. People around the world need to have a common vision of peace, separate from US imperialism.

—We don't want boundaries, we want unity!

—Narrative is a powerful tool. We need new narratives, but to work they have to serve the same needs the old narratives fulfilled (but now be more inclusive, less belligerent).

## **7. Membership outreach in connection with these issues**

—Possibility of Military People joining us. Sometimes the critical thinking hasn't started because they had a Germany deployment. Other deployments more likely.

\*Now more US troops are committing suicide than die in combat.

—Organizing scientists and engineers is important, around a vision of a world where they are collectively responsible for the things they create. They need power!

—Scientists do good things but then corporations who own their work cover it up and do awful things.

—Party could use a speaker's bureau