

**Broome Co. Peace Action**  
**Minutes of the meeting on Tue., Jan. 13, 2009**  
**Unitarian Universalist Congregation , Binghamton NY**

**Present: Board Members:** Tarik Abdelazim, Herb Bix, Len Bjorkman, Ann Clune, Jim Clune, Pat Creighton, Dave Duncan, George Haeseler, Alan Jones, Susan McAnanama, Doris Reed, Larry Roberts, Jack Sexton

**Members at large:** George McAnanama

President Tarik Abdelazim called the meeting to order at 8:35 p.m., following a general community discussion which began at 7 p.m., which was preceded by a covered-dish supper at 6 p.m.

1) The **minutes** of the Dec. 9 meeting were approved.

2) Pat distributed the **treasurer's report**; it was accepted as presented. The balances are: BCPA – \$3,379.87; BCNWRC – \$993.10; STPMF -- \$9,111.24.

3) Other regular reports will be made next month, due to the brevity of this meeting.

4) Binghamton Political Initiative at BU.

MSP to give them \$100 as co-sponsors of a talk by Leslie Gill about the "Killer Coke Campaign," in which labor leaders and activities in Columbia are being targeted for violence and death threats with alleged complicity of Coca-cola.

**5) Resolution on United Nations Reform**

George moved, with a second, the following resolution to be presented to the PANYS annual meeting in Rochester on Feb. 7.

*WHEREAS – The need for an international organization is mandatory for the settlement of disputes between nations non-violently and,*

*WHEREAS – The United Nations, though having this stated as its mission in its charter, lacks the moral authority and the power to perform this function because of its undemocratic structure and its inability to enforce its resolutions and,*

*WHEREAS - This failure could be mostly remedied were it to eliminate the privileged five permanent seats on the Security Council with their accompanying veto power and to establish a mechanism whereby member-States were required to contribute troops proportionate to their populations to serve when needed under a UN unified command, be it therefore resolved that,*

*The Board of national Peace Action appoint a standing committee on UN reform to be charged with:*

- *Developing a petition (see sample below) calling for the elimination of the privileged permanent seats in the Security Council and the establishment of a mechanism to militarily enforce UN resolutions after all other means have been exhausted*
- *Seeking sponsorship of this petition from the peace and justice community*
- *Recruiting at least one member of the United Nations to circulate this petition among the other members for their signature*

#### *Sample Petition*

*We the undersigned representatives of UN member-States demand that: 1) all necessary steps be taken to democratically restructure the United Nations by eliminating the five privileged permanent seats on the Security Council, with their accompanying veto power; 2) a mechanism be established to militarily enforce UN resolutions after all other means have been exhausted.*

*Country of Member State*

*Authorized Signature of Representative*

During the discussion George pointed out that this will be discussed and probably changed at both the State and National levels; therefore the particular wording is not so important as beginning the process of having a resolution to restructure the UN. By consensus several changes were made and it was **passed** in the following form;

#### *Resolution on UN Reform*

*WHEREAS-The need for an international organization is mandatory for the peaceful settlement of disputes between nations and for the preservation of a cooperative international order based on the rule of law, and*

*WHEREAS-The United Nations has been deprived of the moral authority and the power to perform the peace function stipulated in its Charter because of flaws built into its very structure, which often prevent it from enforcing its resolutions, and,*

*WHEREAS-This failure could be largely remedied were it to eliminate the exceptional powers of the five veto-bearing permanent members on the Security Council and establish a mechanism whereby member-States were required to contribute policing forces proportionate to their populations to serve, when needed, under a UN unified command, be it therefore resolved that,*

*The Board of national Peace Action appoint a standing committee on UN reform to be charged with:*

*\*Developing a petition (see sample below) calling for the elimination of the grant (in Article 27) of exceptional powers to the five permanent members of the Security Council and the establishment of a mechanism to enforce UN resolutions.*

*\*Seeking sponsorship of this petition from the peace and justice community*

*\*Recruiting at least one member of the United Nations to circulate this petition among the other members for their signature.*

*Sample Petition:*

*We the undersigned representatives of UN member-states demand that all necessary steps be taken to democratically restructure the United Nations by eliminating the veto privilege of the five permanent members which allow them to use force unilaterally in contravention of the norms of the Charter; and that a new collective security mechanism, more in keeping with the Charter's pacifist norms, be established to enforce UN resolutions.*

*Country of Member State*

*Authorized Signature of Representative*

George and Sue will attend the PANYS meeting and will present our resolution. George also stated that he firmly believes that the UN must have a military capacity and that he will advocate that wording at the meeting.

**5) Annual Membership contribution to PANYS**

**MSP** to contribute \$300 for 2008.

The amount for 2009 will be discussed at the Feb., following the report of the PANYS annual meeting.

**MSP** to adopt the following, as presented by George along with committee members Pat Creighton and Stu Naismith:

***Resolution to establish the Broome County War Tax Resistance Fund***

***Purpose:*** *To receive and disperse money which taxpayers have withheld in symbolic protest of war and want, instead, to fund local human needs.*

***Sponsorship:*** *As a sponsor, Broome County Peace Action agrees to administer and publicize the Broome County War Tax Resistance Fund (BCWTRF). BCPA does not advocate war tax resistance because it believes that individuals should make this decision without any coercion.*

***Checking Account:*** *BCPA has established a separate checking account to which checks can be written and from which money can be dispersed. The BCPA Treasurer manages the account and keeps the BCPA Board apprised of the account's activity. All contributions must be unconditional and are nonrefundable.*

***Standing Committee:*** *BCPA has delegated the responsibility for administering and publicizing the fund to a standing committee of the Board, called the Broome County War Tax Resistance Fund Committee (BCWTRFC). Members of*

*this committee are appointed by the Board. Its chairperson is elected by the members of the committee. The committee makes recommendations to the Board for the dispersal of funds. It purchases and maintains a supply of WTR literature. It recruits additional sponsoring and endorsing organizations. It publicizes the existence and purpose of the fund.*

**Endorsing organizations and additional sponsors:** *BCPA welcomes additional sponsoring or endorsing organizations. Endorsing organizations need only participate by allowing their name to be listed as a supporter of the fund. Sponsoring organizations are expected to actively help administer and publicize the fund and are entitled to representation on the BCWTRFC.*

**Publicity:** *The BCWTRC will publicize the funds existence and its purpose by writing articles, arranging speaking engagements, distributing literature, using e-mail distribution lists, and promoting the submission of letters to the editor in the local newspaper. It will stress that small symbolic contributions are more popular, though larger contributions will be accepted. (i.e. \$10.40 as a symbol of the IRS 1040 form, or \$200 as a symbol of the \$200 billion to be spent in 2008 on the Iraq and Afghanistan war and occupation.)*

**Relationship to the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC):** *BCPA agrees to serve as the "Area Contact" for the NWTRCC and, in so doing, agrees to:*

- 1. Provide its name, address and telephone number for the NWTRCC Network List*
- 2. Respond to requests for information by referring the matter to the BCWTRFC, which will provide information from its own experience, suggest the names of others to contact who might be more knowledgeable, or supply basic WTR materials from a stock it will keep on hand.*
- 3. Evaluate the complexity of concerns and refer questions for counseling to WTR counselors, the NWTRCC office, or to lawyers, CPA's or other professionals as appropriate.*
- 4. Keep track of WTR activities in its area and pass that info on to the NWTRCC office.*

6) MSP that BCWTRC be given an annual budget of \$100 to carry out its activities.

With the passage of these two motions George, Pat and Stu agreed to serve as members of the BCWTRC. They do anticipate making occasional reports to the Board, rather than regular monthly reports.

#### **7) Funding request from BU Grad Students for trip to New Orleans**

It was decided that this does not fall within our purpose. But since it is a worthwhile project, we will encourage them to post this on Peacenet, and let people know how they can contribute. Tarik will follow up with them.

#### **8) Statement on the Gaza crisis**

Jim presented the following statement from the recently formed "Citizens for a Just Peace" which describes itself as a Coalition from Communities in Upstate New York. They have had one meeting in Ithaca on Jan. 8 and will have another on Jan. 15. The statement is intended as a letter to the House and Senate and the media.

*We come together as citizens concerned for the people of the Middle East, and particularly those affected by the violence in Gaza. While we acknowledge that both Hamas and Israel have targeted civilians, and we affirm that the targeting of civilians is unacceptable, we also want to emphasize that the Israeli response to the missiles fired into Israel from Gaza is grossly disproportionate. We insist that the US acknowledge the findings of Amnesty International and other human rights groups that Israel's blockade of Gaza has brought unnecessary suffering upon its civilian population, and that the military actions taken by Israel in recent weeks have included the unacceptable targeting of civilians as evidenced by the bombing of the UN school, the Islamic University, medical relief centers and the deadly attack on a UN convoy delivering humanitarian aid.*

*We call on our representatives in Congress, and the Obama administration soon to take office, to look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with fresh eyes. We support an immediate cease-fire and join other groups internationally in calling for a peace conference to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the most just and pragmatic way possible. We support the need to include Hamas, as well as other groups that represent the Palestinians, in talks and efforts toward a permanent end of the violence in the area.*

*The Obama campaign promised change. One very important change that will benefit the people of Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the people of the US and the world, will be to include the Palestinian people with the Israeli people as worthy of our caring and support. Nothing short of a settlement that is just and workable for both will be effective.*

*We find it unacceptable for our representatives in Congress to continue to support Israel unconditionally, especially in the light of its recent actions. This strategy has not and cannot lead to security for Israel, which we strongly seek, or justice for the Palestinians, without which there can be no peace. We insist on accountability and adherence to international law for all the parties involved. This conflict has a long and painful history, and we differ in the ways in which we understand that history.*

*We call on our representatives to embrace the complexity and seriousness of the task of immediately stopping the violence so that a peaceful solution to this conflict can be achieved.*

Jim also presented a statement from Voices for Creative Nonviolence:

*We at Voices call for:*

- 1) an immediate end to Israel's military offensive into Gaza;*
- 2) the withdrawal of all of Israel's military forces from Gaza;*
- 3) the opening of all border crossings into and out of Gaza to allow for the immediate delivery of all necessary humanitarian and medical supplies, including medical personnel;*
- 4) the suspension of all U.S. assistance to Israel until such time as Israel ends its military offensive against Gaza; and,*
- 5) the immediate end to the use of violence against populations in Israel and in the Occupied Territories of Palestine.*

*We recognize that these steps are only initial steps to address the immediate crisis and that much work remains to be done to achieve a just resolution of the conflict in Israel – Palestine.*

Following some discussion relating to whether something definite about Hamas rockets and Israeli's various attacks needed to be added, and whether the Citizens statement adequately reflects our views, and how relevant either is in light of the rapidly changing conditions, it was decided to postpone further discussion until the Feb. meeting.

(Len distributed some copies of the National Peace Action email of today calling for supporting Dennis Kucinich's letter about an immediate cease-fire. This can be found at:

[http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/161/t/288/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=26411](http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/161/t/288/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=26411) )

The meeting adjourned with cheers at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Len Bjorkman, Secretary