Counter-recruitment Inside Out

Counter-recruitment strategies in perspective from practice and analysis.

National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth

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Introduction

As U.S. Military budgets continue to increase, so does that share that the Pentagon allots for military recruitment efforts, the majority of which is taking place in the nation's 26,000 plus public secondary schools. Military recruiters gain "ownership" of these schools by increasing their access to campuses during school hours, and even becoming physical fitness instructors.

The influence they obtain in this way is essential to win the confidence of youths, who can then be steered into signing enlistment contracts with the military. Counter-recruitment activism has experienced different stages of access and varying reactions over the last dozen years from school districts, teachers, parents and students, after its peak moment in 2005. NNOMY is now at a crossroads that requires the development of new strategies that accommodate and challenge the views and attitudes of a tech-focused generation Z, where the idea of perpetual war and conflict has been largely normalized through the influence of public media forms that are increasingly compliant to the militarized ethos of the Pentagon and its influences upon the American society.

This document, *Counter-recruitment Inside Out*, is a compilation of articles authored during the last 12 years by activists and researchers, offering an analysis of counter-recruitment practices. It also seeks strategies for improving its effectiveness in persuading the youth to take a harder look at military enlistment, and to develop a more informed view of the motivations behind their government's wars. With the advent of militarized gaming and the increase of movie and television militainment influencing young minds and legitimizing state violence, counter-recruiters need to develop more nuanced methods of directing young people towards alternatives to militarization.

Counter-recruitment Inside Out, is also a resource for counter-recruitment activists to take into account the observations made in the past about their practice, by CR activists and researchers, as they update their strategic planning to confront the increasing forcefulness of the Trump Administration, as well as the bellicose foreign policy objectives being developed by the Pentagon and the U.S. State Department.

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A Strategic Blind Spot for Progressives

Rick Jahnkow -

Many advocates of progressive social change in this country are asking important questions about possible directions to follow after the 2008 election. For the peace movement, this question is particularly challenging because, while there is good reason to celebrate the defeat of the Republican Party and the election of the first African American president, there is also a real danger that Obama's victory will undercut anti-war protest if he doesn't move quickly to end the Bush administration's two wars.

Many liberals might feel overly confident about the degree of change that is coming and decide that the new administration deserves to be given breathing space. It would then become much harder to mobilize opposition if Obama made good on his promise to shift the emphasis on military action from Iraq to Afghanistan.

Max Elbaum comments on this likely problem in the November 30, 2008, issue of War Times/Tiempo de Guerras:

> On the positive side, conditions are more favorable than before to spread and consolidate sentiment that has gained ground as the public's "common sense" . . . At the same time, this new set of circumstances is likely to make it difficult for the antiwar movement to demonstrate significant clout and turn sentiment into mass action when acting on its own.

He goes on to predict that anti-war demonstrations would be smaller than in the past and that "new rounds of antiwar education and organizing constituency-by-constituency will be required before the streets can again be filled."

Cross-constituency organizing may be the peace movement's best hope for avoiding severe irrelevancy in the near future. Unfortunately, it also has always been a difficult challenge for the peace movement, in part because its membership has traditionally come from a disproportionately white, college-educated, professional-class base. To stimulate anti-war activism beyond this relatively privileged

demographic, Elbaum and others have correctly urged the peace movement to broaden its scope and find ways to actively support other social movements, especially those whose constituencies are greatly victimized by the economic and discriminatory aspects of war and militarism. It's not just a politically correct strategy, it's a necessary one if the peace movement wants to become a more relevant, effective and sustainable force.

In addition to reaching out to other movements, there is another level of strategic thinking that is badly needed and is key to all grass-roots movement building, yet it has generally been ignored by the peace movement and most other progressive organizations. Essentially, it boils down to this: Peace and other progressive movement organizations in the U.S. are usually quick to engage in activities to mobilize people, such as electoral campaigns, legislative lobbying, and street protests. But most of them have a blind spot when it comes to understanding and affecting the basic long-term factors, like the educational system, that shape the general public's perception of issues and its willingness to embrace change.

Failure to include this level of strategic thinking makes it difficult for a movement to develop a proactive plan to grow its base and relegates it to relying on unpredictable events, usually crises, to build public support. Over time, this approach severely limits a movement's effectiveness and sustainability, and it also creates an opening for those on the opposing side of an issue to proactively step in with a long-term strategy that will give them the upper hand.

The Impact of Basic Education on Social Change

Most people think that individuals form their political opinions as adults. But actually, the cultural views and beliefs that shape political choices are set at a much younger age through the process of socialization. Institutions responsible for this process include the family, religious organizations, mass media, peer groups and others.

One of the most important institutions of socialization is the educational system. It exerts an extremely powerful influence because of the large amount of time that young people spend in the school environment during their peak formative years, and because enormous pressure is placed on students to internalize the lessons and information imparted there. Much of that information is designed to cultivate a particular perspective on history and human relationships, including biases that are later relevant when children grow up and become part of the political consensus on which governments depend. Some of them also carry the early lessons they've learned into careers with the media and other influential institutions, making socialization a circular process.

Given the central role that schools have in shaping the perspectives and behavior of young people – and thus the political consensus of the country — it is understandable why religious conservatives have traditionally put a high priority on influencing school board elections and school curricula, especially with regard to such issues as sex education and the teaching of evolution. Their goal has been to ensure

that their particular value system is reflected in learning content, and thus exert an influence over the social and political environment. Corporations have been pursuing a similar strategy by using partnerships and monopolistic product contracts with schools that permit them to promote consumerism and establish early brand loyalty among young people.

Despite the general rightward drift that this ongoing effort by conservative forces can stimulate, there has been no equal, corresponding effort by progressive organizations to provide a counter-balance. It is not surprising, then, that past gains around issues like reproductive rights, racial tolerance and economic justice in this country are sometimes reversed or require continuous struggle.

Selling Militarism, K-12

There is another entity investing itself in schools that presents an even greater threat to progressive social change movements and therefore deserves their serious attention: the U.S. military.

In 1978, after the Pentagon had been forced by the anti-Vietnam War movement to give up conscription, an interesting statement was made by Thomas Carr, the Pentagon's then-Director of Defense Education. Carr said that in the future, with the involvement of a large proportion of young people with military service, the military would "become a major instrument for youth socialization – assuming a large portion of the role once dominated by the family, the church, the school and civilian work setting."

It's important to understand the context for Carr's statement. At the time, he was in a good position to know something about the Pentagon's plans for coping with the serious challenges it faced in the post-Vietnam climate. The popularity of the military as a career was at a low point, and the government could no longer simply draft cannon fodder for its wars. To restore its image and fill its ranks, the military was about to mount aggressive recruiting and mass marketing campaigns designed to popularize the idea of soldiering.

Eventually, with significant increases in recruitment funding and the help of some of the most experienced advertising firms, the effort to reach out to and influence young people grew steadily in sophistication and scope. As it did, Thomas Carr's prediction began to come true without even requiring a large number of young people to actually join the military.

The effort to militarize youth has advanced so far that today, some 30 years later, military training programs are indoctrinating half a million students who attend daily Jr. ROTC classes in approximately 3000 secondary schools. Many of these campuses include rifle ranges where students learn to shoot with pellet guns, in stark contrast to zero-tolerance for weapons policies. A few districts have gone so far as to begin converting some of their public high schools into actual military academies (Chicago leads the nation with six).

The lessons students are taught in Jr. ROTC emphasize treating each other according to military ranks,

studying "followership," and learning obedience to all authority. After reading many of the Jr. ROTC textbooks, I can attest that they also provide a heavy dose of edited history and selective civics lessons, spun with a conservative military bias. Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, is mentioned as a civil rights advocate, but nothing is said about his uncompromising opposition to all violence and war. And students are told the U.S. went to war with Spain in 1898 to free Cuba from Spanish rule, ignoring the fact that our goal was to bring Cuba into our own exploitive sphere of influence and take over as ruler of the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico.

At lower grade levels, programs like the Young Marines are teaching thousands of children in elementary and middle schools to march and follow commands. Militaristic grooming is also aided by an expanding network of military/school partnerships, through which groups of children are sometimes taken on field trips to military bases and ships.

Because of legislative intervention by the U.S. Congress and an affirming decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, secondary schools and colleges have been forced to give military recruiters access to students and campuses, thereby eroding local educational autonomy and the important principle of civilian rule. But even when it's not mandatory, most secondary schools have been willing to grant special access privileges to the military. For example, approximately 14,000 high schools now use the military's enlistment screening test, the ASVAB, as their method of vocational aptitude testing. Schools have a right to block recruiter access to the highly personal information gathered via the ASVAB, but according to Dept. of Defense statistics, they fail to do so for 90% of the 600,000 students who take the test each year.

These are a few examples of how youths have been the target of militarism inside our public school system, but outside the school environment there are equally alarming patterns. For instance, the military is now licensing large department store chains, like Sears, to mass-market clothing with official military logos. The Army has spent millions developing and distributing free computer gaming software, and now it is experimenting with a $12-million virtual warfare simulator near Philadelphia. Essentially a recruiting device the size of three basketball courts, this "Army Experience Center" is open to members of the public as young as age 13.

Dangerous Parallels

One San Diego Indymedia writer, Rocky Neptun, has recently looked at similarities between the militarization of education in Nazi Germany and the trend in U.S. schools. Considering the type of lessons taught by Jr. ROTC and the exposure it gives students to weapons training, it's startling to read comments that Neptun found from German General Hellmuth Stellrecht, like the following taken from a 1937 lecture (emphasis added):

> All that has been learned serves, from a military point of view, nothing but to get close to the enemy and to bring arms into effect. The entire education and training remains without

value if it does not lead to the full effect of the weapon against the enemy. All training therefore culminates in training in shooting. It cannot be emphasized enough and because shooting is a matter of practice one cannot start too early. *In the course of years we want to achieve that a gun feels just as natural in the hands of a German boy as a pen.* It is a strange state of mind in a nation if, through years many hours every day are spent in practicing penmanship and grammatical writing but not a single hour in practice-shooting. Liberalism put the following slogan above school doors: "knowledge is power". We, on the other hand, have found . . . that the power of a nation, in the last analysis, always rests on its arms and on those who know how to handle them.

He who cannot give orders to himself, must get used to obeying the orders of others and to feel the obligation [to do so] so strongly that even at the most dangerous moment it does not fail. It is a fine thing when a man of 20 learns to obey unconditionally but it is much better when the boy of ten starts to put his own wishes aside, to renounce, to give in, and to serve the will of the community.

Interestingly, as the director of military education during the Nazi regime, Stellrecht would have been the counterpart of Director of Defense Education Carr, who 40 years later predicted that the U.S. military would take over "a large portion of the role once dominated by the family, the church, the school and civilian work setting."

Given the part that militarized education played in the Nazi effort to socialize and manipulate German youth for the Third Reich, one would think that any remotely similar approach would be quickly rejected here. It was, after all, early leaders of this country who repeatedly spoke against allowing the military establishment to extend its influence into civilian affairs, because military values, they understood, directly conflicted with democratic values. Samuel Adams, for example, warned in 1768 that "where military power is introduced, military maxims are propagated and adopted which are inconsistent with and must soon eradicate every idea of civil government."

Unfortunately, while the process of youth militarization in the U.S. has now been visibly detectable for three decades, there has been no serious national debate on the issue. A small number of grass-roots organizations have been working since the 1980s to contest the military's growing presence in schools, and current U.S. wars have stimulated heightened awareness of aggressive recruiting, but the overall trend of school and youth militarization is getting relatively little national attention. Even the U.S. peace movement has failed to make it a primary focus for protest.

The Window is Open — For Now

When the U.S. war in Vietnam finally came to an end, many of us who had been protesting the war could not imagine that such a thing would ever happen again. No one, we assumed, would fall for the same pattern of government lying to justify a war, and the government's fear of the so-called Vietnam Syndrome would discourage military aggression in the future. As later events proved, those of us who

believed this were obviously mistaken, in part because we underestimated what it would take to bring about genuine change to the U.S.

When many people shifted their attention to other issues after the Vietnam War, or simply dropped out of political activism, the conservative forces that had lost ground during the upheaval of the 1960s and '70s, including the Pentagon, adopted a relatively quiet, values-based strategy to gradually rebuild their influence and political power. The result was resurgent militarism, along with 28 years of destructive policies under Presidents Reagan through Bush #2.

The challenge for us today is to not repeat the mistake of being lulled by a momentary promise of change. We have to recognize that history will keep recurring if we don't move beyond the short-term strategies of the past. Yes, we need to be ready to protest when legislators and the Obama administration don't live up to our expectations, but we also need to give a high priority to addressing the socialization process that underlies the social and political climate. Toward that end, one of the most important immediate goals to pursue is the demilitarization of our schools.

This article is from Draft NOtices, *the newsletter of the Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft* *(http://www.comdsd.org/)*

Source: *https://nnomy.org/index.php/en/resources/blog/436-a-strategic-blind-spot-for-progressives.html*

Student or Soldier: Youth Take the Lead in Countering Recruitment

Kevin Ramirez and Steve Morse -

2005 has been a pivotal year for counter-recruiters as the Army, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve and Air National Guard all missed their recruiting goals by thousands, effectively bringing about the worst year in recruiting since 1979!

Last year also saw an explosion of interest and membership in the movement to end the war in Iraq, particularly among those most at risk of being recruited in that war: American youth aged 18-22. Despite the barrage of war-promoting video games, fashion, music, and pop culture aimed at youth, young adults can't ignore the daily news of their peers dying in war. This forces them to put themselves in their peers' combat boots and wonder, "would I ever sign up for this?" The growing answer among high school and college students seems to be a resounding 'NO"!

The strength of our movement last year was put to the test in many ways. Parents and other adults such as veterans, educators and activists have for years been working to demilitarize high schools; they organized Opt Out Week to distribute flyers about the No Child Left Behind Act (The No Child Left Behind Act, Bush's education law, contains a paragraph that requires school districts to make student contact information available to military recruiters unless the student or parent "opts out" in writing) and have directed pressure on school boards to adopt policies that restrict recruiting and advocate for more "truth" in recruiting. Policy changes at high schools regarding military recruiters are happening in states such as Maine, Maryland, Ohio. Likewise, the struggle to remove JROTC units from high schools has garnered more interest as the war in Iraq drags on, as more former JROTC cadets return home from Iraq in body bags, and more people begin to realize the direct link between JROTC and military recruitment.

On college campuses, the counter-recruitment efforts differ significantly from the high school model and center mainly around organizing actions and protests to recruiter visits to the school, ROTC

recruitment and training, and organizing opposition to the military's discriminatory policy against homosexuals known as "don't ask, don't tell".

One of the largest and fastest growing counter-recruitment groups on college campuses today is the Campus Antiwar Network (CAN). They recently co-organized a very successful counter-recruitment regional conference in the San Francisco Bay Area, and were recently building relationships abroad at the International Peace Conference that took place in London, England.

CAN is largely responsible, all across the country, for organizing anti-war and counter-recruitment conferences and events, building chapters on college campuses, and picketing and protesting military recruiters at their schools. Recruiters have been forced to leave schools early, visits have been cancelled, sit-ins have been organized, with the end goal being to shut them down. This has become a tense subject among college administrators as highly visible and at-times confrontational protests have occurred and conflict among student counter- recruiters, military recruiters, and campus police continues to draw negative media attention to the school. These types of counter-recruitment actions are increasingly being viewed by the military, and by educational institutions, as potential "threats", and students are being threatened as a result. Luckily, as successful as CAN is in organizing protests, they are equally as effective at organizing support campaigns for students facing disciplinary actions by the school.

A similar effort taking place in the high schools is the group Youth Against War and Racism (YAWR), with several chapters in Washington State, Minnesota and Massachussetts. YAWR recently called for and organized a student walkout on November 2, culminating in thousands of high school and college students walking out of their classes to protest the war in Iraq at the nearest military recruitment center. With groups and actions like this, high school and college students are bulldozing their way to the forefront of the counter-recruitment movement. Countless stories in the media detail students leading protests at their schools against military recruitment for a needless war. March and April have also seen large numbers of students walking out of school all across the US to join huge demonstrations opposing repressive legislation against undocumented immigrants

Unfortunately, some of these actions have led to severe campus repression and police misconduct, landing some student counter-recruiters in hot water in places like Holyoke Community College (Massachusetts), Kent State University (Ohio) George Mason University and Hampton University (both in Virginia) among others. Fortunately, in each of these cases, students have vigorously organized protests and defense campaigns for those students singled out for retaliation.

As 2006 rolls along, we must kick it up another notch! The Army's pool of new recruits in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) has dropped significantly and there are predictions that it will be even tougher to recruit young people. What we need to do is keep on pluggin' away, and not be discouraged, or afraid of just how effective this work is. Counter-recruitment information empowers people every day, so we

must be patient and work in small steps. It's important that we utilize all tools at our disposal and embrace a diverse range of strategies. All anti-war and counter- recruitment groups must support each other and particularly students who have faced repression for their counter-recruitment activities. As recruiters continue to make promises and guarantees to young recruits about college money, job training, and traveling the world, there must continue to be a presence in the schools to make sure that students understand that the only real thing the military can guarantee you today is war. The choice has been presented: student or soldier. It's hopeful that more youth are deci- ding to be students, and not soldiers.

Note: ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) and JROTC are quite different programs.

ROTC gives college money to students who do a relatively small amount of military training during college and commit to four years of active duty as an officer.

JROTC (Junior ROTC) is a high school program that includes regular drills with uniforms and weapons on campus. It doesn't require a commitment to joining the military and purports to build character among youth, but the military privately acknowledges that it is a key aspect of military recruitment. JROTC, in contrast to ROTC, is focused on working class youth who rarely become officers. Each, however, is the main way that militarism is institutionalized in the respective educational institutions.

Source: https://www.wri-irg.org/en/story/2006/student-or-soldier-youth-take-lead-countering-recruitment

Five Years of Counter Recruitment in Chicago

Nick Kreitman -

Reviewing Five Years of Counter Recruiting in Chicago

Counter recruitment is shorthand for a strategy by the peace movement to make the military withdraw from the occupation in Iraq and other countries through impacting the enlistment levels of willing soldiers. Countering military recruitment involves dissuading people who might interact with the recruiters from doing so and removing the public presence of military recruitment altogether.

Over the past five years of counter recruitment in Chicago there have been roughly four areas of struggle; confronting the military presence inside high schools, the military recruitment at public events, recruitment at universities and confronting military recruitment centers directly. Unfortunately there have been few moments to pause and allow ourselves to review our accomplishments and setbacks. Hopefully those engaged in counter recruitment and those who want to know more will be helped by this work which looks to outline some of the questions that need to be asked in order to help benchmark our progress.

Before discussing the individual arenas where counter recruiters have acted in Chicago, we have to acknowledge the fact that there will probably never be reliable statistics published on our efforts. Most likely the military will never keep statistics on counter recruitment, and if some government agency did receive a budget to track counter recruitment there would be a number of serious issues about reliability. This dearth of information on the regional and national levels however, does not prevent us from collecting information and drawing conclusions about our efforts at the city level. Although the need to collect data of more quantity and quality from actions is universal to the social justice movement, it is particularly necessary in our case because such data could help us choose between a number of possible strategies towards ending the war.

Counter Recruitment in High Schools

Countering recruitment in Chicago area high schools is generally done through students and by outside groups like the American Friends Service Committee. My experience has been that student led efforts at counter recruitment are few and far between and unfortunately are rarely communicated to the larger world. Large personal and social obstacles facing those who speak out against recruiters are part of the reason there are so few student led efforts at confronting high school military recruiters. Military personnel command respect in spheres private and public; we treat them as heroes. The recruiters attempt to use this universal respect as a wedge to advance their agenda, for students who disagree with the war this exploitation of social respect poses a problem. Like it or not, students confronting military recruiters are found by their peers guilty until proven innocent of being iconoclasts and misfits. Such an exclusion of political discourse is unhealthy, but one has to remember that its purpose is to serve as a social control mechanism. In America you don't need a Gestapo or a KGB if you can get people to hum along with murderous policies.

Another often overlooked issue recruitment is the physical presence of military recruiters. Even as a football jock I was not always immune to the boasting and physical intimidation of military recruiters at my school; for average sized high school students it is even more intimidating to confront such imposing authority figures. Recruiters know that one's physical presence in a space is just as important as the verbal message and frequently use it to their advantage, walking up to people who disagree with them nose to nose, circling, and basically exploiting opportunities to intimidate those who are not completely confident with their message of peace. Though it's a pretty childish way to win arguments, it greatly increases the stress on potential counter recruiters and raises the personal investment needed to confront the military. The only effective way to counter such disparities in physical presence is thorough preparation; enough to build an unshakable confidence in the counter recruiter. A confident organizer that can win space from a recruiter then can either rap on about how the military lies to students or about the Iraq War, or inject humor into the situation to deescalate and to further dissolve the bravado and bullshit of the recruiters.

One of the biggest obstacles faced by students is the lack of a clear message to counter recruitment and the consequent lack of thorough preparation and training. I knew many students who would help me engage in counter recruitment but wouldn't take individual initiative because they weren't prepared to argue with a professional salesman for the military. Unfortunately, most of the literature around counter recruitment sends mixed messages because it is written by liberals arguing against the military with their hands tied behind their backs. The literature offered debunks military enlistment myths but does not include more general criticism of why we oppose military recruitment. This has served to distract and add another layer of complication for potential counter recruiters. Understanding a substantive critique of the occupation should be a much higher priority for counter recruitment than memorizing specifics about military enlistment contracts. A clear and cogent message about the goal to end

enlistment and end the occupation can help resolve issues about confidence and presentation when confronting military recruiters.

Another problem when straying from a debate on the merits of the Iraq occupation is the lack of alternative opportunities facing many students who are interested in the military. When emphasizing a career based approach to counter recruitment, one quickly realizes that there are few alternatives to military recruitment for those who don't have the resources available for post secondary education. Viewing the compensation offered by the military without regard to the potential consequences or moral decision making, it compares pretty well for those with few occupational skills. An obvious corollary to this discussion is how our movement can generate employment and also leverage more employment from local institutions without compromising our values. Such questions come to the forefront when counter recruiters begin to engage in career counseling with high schoolers during counter recruitment sessions. I have seen first hand however how easily these discussions with military recruits fall apart, both because of the lack of a focused message about why we really oppose military recruitment and because of the inability of the counter recruiters to role play a career counselor.

How We Can Be More Effective in High Schools

What is necessary is an explicit opposition to military recruitment on the grounds that our military engages in occupations of nations around the world. Military recruiters almost uniformly recoil when engaged in arguments about the Iraq war; they even did in the good old days of the war when I was in high school and counter recruiting five years ago. Our literature and training however lacks such a critical edge, and instead students are burdened with calling our respected military personnel as liars to their face. Its much more inviting for a student to question the logic of the war and to oppose recruiters on that level then walk up to a soldier and call him a bald faced liar. Though we do need to call recruiters out on their lies; whether soldiers get 3,000 or 15,000 dollars for college is irrelevant to our ultimate goal of counter recruitment, namely the end of neo-imperialism and occupation.

When military recruiters enter into a high school, or are embedded into it, they might be ignored by students, but rarely are they confronted by students without some organizational support. SDS or CAN must embrace the rather fleeting high school counter recruiters that usually burn out before even being plugged into a city wide network. Whichever group that steps up to the plate must actively search for these high schoolers and must be able to provide trainings to these organizers on the Iraq War to make them more confident and effective when confronting military recruiters. A first step would be to connect to other groups who are actively engaging high school students like the American Friends Service Committee, CAWI, etc. Accessing contacts through social networking websites like facebook and myspace is key to expanding our own networks of who we know in high schools and are interested in opposing military recruitment.

Outreaching to students at events like concerts and shows has to be changed as well. Instead of sitting behind tables of pamphlets we have to be as enthusiastic and social as the recruiters we oppose. We should look to get commitments from people specifically for counter recruiting when we canvass events and already have a follow up meeting planned that contacts can attend for more information and training. Making sure canvassers at events are adequately prepared beforehand to deal with contacts helps the awkwardness of connecting with people out of the blue. Preparation includes not only having appropriate materials for potential counter recruiters that explain our strategy and why we oppose the occupation but also having an organized system to arrange contact information. Half of the battle is entering contact data into a useable form and making the effort at follow up.

Our movement's goal should be to have high schoolers lead counter recruitment at high schools. Students listen to their peers much more so than older folks coming into high schools no matter how polished they are. We need to be aware that our strategy requires us to identify and access social networks of students who can be mobilized to confront military recruitment in high schools. Part of this is learning how to effectively organize data obtained from social networking websites like myspace, part of this is better data collection like finding out friend relations from contacts, and part of it is maintaining relationships with people who are in different social networks.

The most egregious oversight our movement has made in counter recruitment is failing to acknowledge the importance of our relationship with the Iraq Veteran's Against the War. Military veterans are the single greatest resource to counter recruitment. Every high school student engaged in counter recruitment needs to meet someone from the IVAW. Nothing steels someone's convictions like a personal interaction with someone who has been through what one's fighting against. The IVAW is an autonomous organization with an agenda to organize veterans and active duty personnel but it has also tried to engage in counter recruiting through campaigns like "Talk to a Recruiter." We have to articulate our movement's needs to the IVAW and clearly state how they can help us further our objectives of ending further recruitment by the military.

Creating more social exposure for members of the IVAW should be a priority. We need to be organizing networking events like parties, shows, trainings and conferences where veterans can interact with high school students leading counter recruitment efforts. They need to learn from first hand sources why they are opposing the war. So far our movement has not associated social networking goals with political goals. Changing our perception about the importance of building relationships through social spheres is necessary to build a much broader movement. Cosponsored events would be mutually beneficial, especially since there are so many veterans in the Chicago area who oppose the war but are unaware of the IVAW and may only need an introduction from a friend at party to get involved.

Military Recruitment at Public Events

Chicago is a city of public celebration. From block parties, to music festivals, to ethnic celebrations, to

the Taste of Chicago, the military takes advantage of dozens of opportunities to recruit more soldiers. Many of the same groups that have taken a leading role in counter recruitment in high schools have taken similar roles at counter recruitment at Chicago's festivals. Two of the events with the best attendance by counter recruiters have been the Taste of Chicago and the annual Air and Water show. Several similar issues arise when counter recruitment is taken outside the context of the high school and into public space. Counter recruiters are still primarily targeting military age men and women but also have a broader audience of other attendees at the festival. Problems of accessibility for counter recruiters are still frequent however, only a few years ago at the Taste of Chicago the Chicago Police decided that the counter recruiters needed to leave the premises, leading to a number of arrests and a fiery response (a burning President Bush delievered in a wheel chair). The best defense against such bare knuckle oppression is usually having a contingency plan to deal with police harassment that includes legal support, if not a planned response that might deescalate the situation and allow for the counter recruitment to continue.

The importance of maintaining a clear message is elevated when addressing the general public. When groups engage in Direct Action to remove recruiters they remove their focus from the people in public who are being recruited and instead place their focus solely on the recruiters. It's a calculation that most groups have not considered when using direct action to literally shut down the recruiter. Direct Action attempts to dislodge recruiters in public spaces through tactics like locking down on recruiter equipment has had mixed results. Sometimes it has lead to the frustration and departure of the recruiters but often it has lead to significant court fees and a less than supportive crowd response. The same factors for successful interactions in high schools are still true when the audience is the general public. Having confidence in and a broad knowledge of the argument against recruitment (our war in Iraq is wrong and you shouldn't fight in it) is the only way people can be comfortable enough to be effective counter recruiters.

One of the biggest obstacles to communicating our message about the Iraq War and military enlistment to people is the distraction of the debate around first amendment rights of the military. In actuality the first amendment is not a justification for protecting the speech of an organization engaged in unlawful violence but it's a debate that prevents a lot of people from becoming participants rather than supportive spectators of our work. Not enough attention has been paid to issues around the clarity of our message to our audience, who is the general public that would otherwise only interact with the recruiters. If at all possible it would be best to avoid unnecessary harassment from the police in order to maintain our focus on defeating the message of the military and its recruitment drive for war. Ultimately the military recruiters stay wherever they feel they will be the most productive. The military perceives hostility by the most sustained threats to its message, not necessarily privileging a few incidents of physical resistance that can bankrupt the resources and energy of the individuals and groups responsible. Transforming the recruitment experience into an explicit defense of the Iraq War powerfully takes away from the message of the recruiters and allows us to organize a much broader

audience.

Similar to counter recruitment at high schools, we need to be more meticulous about collecting contact information. Appropriate organization of the data is crucial and in my experience has consistently been neglected by counter recruitment efforts. Part of the high turnover of people engaged in counter recruitment is a result of the failure of consistent follow up and because of the often sporadic nature of direct action approaches to counter recruitment. Unfortunately, conflict with the law and the potential for stress and legal consequences deters a lot of organizers from dedicating time to counter recruitment. Re-envisioning counter recruitment as an opportunity to canvass against the war and build relationships with people lowers the necessary personal investments from the counter recruiters and would encourage new and more consistent participation. Sometimes conflict with the law is inevitable and anyone engaged in counter recruitment needs to understand that organizing for change always incurs risks of financial and personal risks but we need to evaluate necessity of actions that lead to escalations of force.

Counter Recruitment in the University Setting

Military Recruitment at public universities, as in high schools, is explicitly endorsed by the No Child Left Behind Act. While Obama's presidency and the Democratic control of Congress hopefully will mean a slight reprieve from the full court press by the military, we can expect that NCLB will continue on and that the legal enforcement of the military's right to recruit in public schools will continue. Humor and attempts at detournment (using created pretenses to radically alter the context of a message from an institution) have been common in counter recruitment at the post-secondary level. Since college students are under much less scrutiny and college campuses are much more physically open institutions than high schools, more options are available for counter recruitment at colleges.

The military however acknowledges that there are less potential recruiters who are in four year institutions and only occasionally recruits on campuses in the Chicago area. More frequently the military or other agencies look for recruits at colleges to fill specialized programs like ROTC, combat nursing or intelligence analysis. Military recruitment at private universities and colleges is near non-existent except for the occasional job fair appearance recruiting for these specialized occupations. Not surprisingly the military recruits more frequently at the community colleges in the suburbs and within the CCC system.

Military recruitment efforts at universities and colleges should also be treated as opportunities to engage in a debate over the occupation and to canvass the public about opposition to the war. Such efforts do not always need to be somber affairs as humor can help deescalate awkwardness and tension between the public and the counter recruiters making conversations more comfortable and more productive. The main concern however should be maintaining the clarity of our message against the war and against recruitment while still incorporating humor. Ideally humor and communicating a clear

message to an audience are mutually beneficial but sometimes the creation of a spectacle is privileged over the overarching goal of building popular opposition to the war and specifically recruitment.

One of the most overlooked resources available to counter recruiters at the post-secondary level is the ability to use students from multiple campuses to focus on a single campus. If SDS or CAN could create a network that has the capacity to be mobilized to counter recruitment efforts the military would be hard pressed to justify spending any money recruiting at universities in Chicago. Realistically it would take around a semester's worth of effort to create a cell text communication system that could alert people interested in counter recruitment about recruitment at universities. The biggest investment would be getting schedules of recruiters from universities and widely distributing the information since the actual text networking technology would take a week or two to create.

Organizing Against Military Recruitment Centers

Chicago's counter recruitment effort has had the least success confronting physical military recruitment centers, even though there has been a significant investment of resources and energy in opposing them. Military recruitment offices in Chicago have been expanding in our communities and on our campuses, even with military high schools opening on the physical campuses of existing high schools like Senn High School on the North Side. One recruitment office that has been protested since its inception has been the one recently opened in the "Superdorm" downtown, the world's largest dorm with students from more than four schools.

Protesting physical institutions is problematic because the protests do not significantly affect recruitment. While organizing protests at recruitment centers expends hours of energy on behalf of organizers, the recruiters usually aren't in the office when protesters are outside, and even when they are they can do most of their work over the phone or on their computers for the short duration of the protest. Recruiters are not particularly affected by the limited press around recruitment center protests. Serious escalations of force to close the recruitment centers have been sporadic and those organizing towards such goals don't have the resources immediately available to sustain such high intensity campaigns.

Some recruitment centers have become targets of opportunity for protests and are often visited by crowds from unrelated protests. To my knowledge, one of the few longer term campaigns against a recruitment center was Columbia College SDS's attempt to create a weekly drum circle around the recruitment center at the Superdorm downtown. Although such events do not represent an immediate threat to the operation of the recruitment center they are further opportunities to engage the surrounding community on the occupation.

The first question we have to ask ourselves when confronting physical spaces dedicated to recruitment is about the goal of our confrontation. Are we protesting in front of the recruitment center in order to shut it down or are we there to communicate to the community around the center, or both. If our goal is

to use protests to actually shut down recruitment centers we have failed. Dislodging institutions like the ROTC from the University of Illinois Chicago campus, or the superdorm may not be immediately accomplishable. Confrontation at this point is likely unproductive because we don't have the social resources to sustain the confrontation and to use its momentum. My limited experience around the superdorm organizing was that the organizers that dedicated their time to organizing for a confrontation over the superdorm were overwhelmed with obligations from the campaign with not enough effort was expended recruiting new participation. Unfortunately it's a trade-off constantly faced in organizing. For Chicago, the onus should be on expanding the networks of contacts outside of the "activist" communities and being more selective about confrontations to increase our success. Participation in the movement is not limited to engaging in work around active campaigns and just as much relies on personal development and an expansion of relationships with people and communities.

Alternatively, our confrontation could be based on communication with the community around the center. Logically tactics with less legal consequences would be used, like dance parties, drum circles etc. and less emphasis would be placed on organizing for sit-ins or occupations of buildings. The strategy of using confrontation selectively and in a less escalatory manner to expand our movement's interactions with the community and even with potential recruits would help build the resources necessary for more sustainable direct action. Essential is treating every public action around recruitment as an opportunity to find new participants in the movements and to canvass support for ending the occupation and radically challenging authority in our country.

On the Bicycle Bomber and Property Destruction Against Military Recruiters

No discussion about counter recruitment would be intellectually honest without citing the influence of advocates of property destruction. Public justification outside of the relatively anonymous communiqués and manifestos for property destruction has been sparse and incomplete at best. Many have led themselves to believe that the feelings around property destruction are held only by a disgruntled minority and carried out by an even more extreme fringe, but the reality is that there is a significant number within the counter recruitment movement who believe that property destruction targeting recruiters is not only legitimate but necessary immediately. Examples of attacks on recruitment stations are becoming more frequent and also more intense. Recently a New York City recruitment station was the target of an explosive device, later glorified on stickers by a number of insurrectionist anarchists as the bicycle bomber. Incidents are geographically widespread but are not limited to individual solo actors. With increasing regularity recruitment stations in Washington D.C. have been targeted by the revived tactic of the black bloc and have been physically attacked.

However, one would be hard-pressed to find an example of a recruitment station closed because of a physical assault post 9-11. What has been the pattern without exception has been escalated security around attacked stations, with the confrontation quickly ending and the station reopening. One of the few exceptions to the trend has been the persistent work around DC, including DC SDS chapters. When

the sacrifices asked and risks taken are calculated however, many of physical confrontations are not worthwhile.

What has been lost to the counter recruitment advocates of property destruction is the breakdown of the parallel between the 1960's counter recruitment and our contemporary efforts. During the 1960's there were massive social resources available with which to literally launch guerilla warfare against military recruiters. The website www.historyisaweapon.com details the dozens of attacks against military facilities on campuses that eventually succeeded in the military's withdrawal. The key difference is that those engaging in the actions had communities to fall back on and to be protected within. There were many more opportunities to hide one's identity because of the vibrant nature of the counter culture. The movement was at a popular height and that shared sense of community helped to protect members from intimidation by authority. Investigations were much harder pressed to find records from of communes and crash pads then from corporate employers or apartment management companies.

We need to focus on bringing in more people into the counter recruitment movement and creating a community than can marshal the resources for sustained direct action campaigns. Our goal is to end military recruitment and we have to be prepared to use any means necessary to end the occupation in Iraq. "By any means necessary" means that we have to be able to determine the most expedient ends to that goal. Redirecting effort towards canvassing and communicating to others over the individual work around direct action would yield multiplied benefits because of the greater number of participants contributing.

Those considering property destruction need to examine the true sacrifices in time and energy of their actions. While causing property destruction may seem like a small commitment from the individual, the planning to make sure one is not caught is significant, and the consequences if caught can make such actions totally consuming of their actor. If actions are to be taken its only logical that they can be envisioned as part of an immediate effort at the removal of the recruitment center and that there are the resources available to sustain the resistance against the center and win the campaign.

On Our Movement's Fragmented Understanding of Economics

"Theory" about economics from the self-identified left is usually detached from how contemporary economies actually function. Participation in and identification with the movement is lopsidedly left brain. Our general lack of goals concerning the transformation of the economy, outside vague concepts like worker cooperatives and living wages, negatively impacts our ability to build organizations that have enough resources to effectively engage in counter recruiting.

The 900 pound gorilla in the room for counter recruiters is that there are few options available to those with no job skills, few job skills, or with too little social capital find a position. Taken at a morally

neutral face value; with pay, housing, and the promise of job training, the military offers a compelling opportunity for young people to survive. Counter recruiters often have the unenviable job of playing the five minutes or less career consoler to potential recruits who are in even less enviable occupations and are looking for a way out and up.

Our central contradiction is that none of the major peace organizations, or even most organizations on the "left", are engaged in building career paths for individuals being counseled away from military enlistment. Without these career paths open in other occupations, counter recruitment will always be an uphill battle and we will continue with mixed success. Chicago needs a coalition to step forward and tackle the lack of clear career paths for youth that do not involve taking on tens of thousands of debt in student loans. We are on the literal cusp of a green technology and manufacturing revolution but our internal discourse about the Chicago economy is pathetically unsophisticated and out of touch. Research and dedicated effort to identifying opportunities for entrepreneurship and effective engagement with existing companies embodying our core values is long overdue.

In Chicago the Daley family has built a political behemoth because of its ability to manipulate the local economy. The jobs provided by municipal and state governments and their contractors have lifted many out of poverty. Imagine an opposition, not based upon political cronyism and dynasty, but based upon creating equal opportunity for economic security and personal expression. Image a movement that could demonstrate that the values of solidarity and innovation are both competitive in a world economy but necessary to create the resources to save the planet. Some are working towards such an economy with their heads in the sand about America's foreign policy and the stranglehold it places on our potential economic boom.

As long as there are desperate people there will be soldiers in desperate occupations. We need practitioners who organize for an end to the occupation but also who create the infrastructure necessary for a sustained fight against recruitment and against capitalism. Without clear alternatives to the military we will not be able to realize our goal of short circuiting enlistment to the levels necessary to end American imperialism. What is working to our advantage is the potential to realize the collateral benefits from engaging in creating a solidarity economy and counter recruitment. The social networks identified and mobilized for each effort can be incorporated into the mobilization for the other. Each opportunity to engage the public during counter recruitment is an opportunity to begin an extended dialogue about changing the fundamental forces driving our economy. America's occupation in Iraq is a symptom of the domestic deterioration that we have allowed to happen but is now a self fulfilling prophecy for destruction. Our only solution from this point forward is to resolve our economic crisis at home as part of our fight against the occupation.

Source: https://nnomy.org/index.php/en/resources/blog/448-five-years-of-counter-recruitment-in-chicago

Notes Toward More Powerful Organizing: Pitfalls and Potential in Counter-recruitment Organizing

Matt Guynn -

It's not necessary to go to Washington for a protest to significantly engage key issues related to the War on Terrorism. Try going to a local coffee shop or any other public place where you can strike up a conversation with youth or young adults about the choices and paths that the young people in your community see in front of them.

I tried this recently, when I began talking with a camouflage-fatigued young man next to me in the airport. He was in his third year in the US Army, about to be shipped to Iraq next week. "Why did you join?" "My town (in central Oregon) was boring." The refrain from young people in many communities across the United States is that there is nothing to do: Nowhere to get a job (or a job that anyone wants). Little help available for education. Few paths toward a life of meaning and wellbeing. Too little accompaniment, mentorship or assistance.

Military recruiters walk onto this scene offering what seem to be easy steps toward job training, adventure, education, and personal fulfillment – toward goals that are often held by young people across the country. Lacking non-military options for accomplishing life goals, and promised the sky by their recruiters, young men and women from across the country are shipping out to Ft. Bragg and Ft. Benning and from there to Karbala and Baghdad.

In January 2008, the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth reports ninety-seven distinct groups across the United States and Puerto Rico that are working to resist military recruitment and generate positive alternatives for youth, commonly called the "counter-recruitment," "truth-in-recruiting," or "positive alternatives to the military" movement.

Counter-recuitment Inside Out: Counter-recruitment strategies in perspective from practice and analysis

I write as a participant-observer in the counter-recruitment movement, in my role as coordinator of peace witness for On Earth Peace, a Church of the Brethren peace education and action agency. Since early 2005, On Earth Peace has specifically committed itself to capacity-building for the counter-recruitment movement. Capacity-building means that we invite and support organizers to get involved, *and* that we create opportunities for organizers to grow and reflect on their work so they can do it more effectively. We support and nurture organizers through one-on-one support calls, providing general orientation to the movement and strategy consultation, and most importantly, through regular national networking calls which incorporate theological reflection, reflection on lessons learned, and training in strategy perspectives.

I have a concern that counter-recruitment activists learn from our experience in order to grow and accomplish the large tasks that stand before us. Operating out of habit (activist habit, cultural habit), often limits our ability to powerfully address the vexing social problems before us. I see the counter-recruitment movement's long-term potential to be the transformation of communities into vibrant places where people can find support, salary, and meaning.

This article provides brief overviews of the mechanisms recruiters use to get access to young people, groups of people involved and some core approaches of the movement, in addition to identifying some pitfalls and potentials related to counter-recruitment organizing. It points toward a broader framework for nonviolent social transformation with regard to counter-recruitment organizing, moving up a level from a focus on specific resistance tactics and toward a broader perspective which holds a vision for community change.

In its most effective role, the counter-recruitment movement can both *resist* militarism and military recruitment and *build* alternative paths for young people who might be drawn to the military. When less effective, movement organizers remain trapped in their group's age or racial/ethnic groups of origin, or get stuck vilifying their opponents, or, lacking the commitment or skills to engage underlying issues, remain at a surface level, decrying symptoms and failing to make a case for addressing underlying conditions.

Two older gentlemen were in the crowd at an evening Bible study in a community congregation in the Puerto Rican mountain community where I was speaking. One was a veteran from the Korean War, the other a veteran of Vietnam. As we described On Earth Peace's work with ministries to support veterans returning from war and with young people considering the military, they became active and engaged in the conversation. "I didn't know any other alternative at the time." "It was the clearest path for a young man from the mountains." "The effects of war have lasted forever."

Counter-recuitment Inside Out: Counter-recruitment strategies in perspective from practice and analysis

Two days before, two younger men, had participated in a workshop we had led at another congregation nearer the Puerto Rican coast. Francisco (name has been changed), in his thirties, shared that after a brief stint with a corporation hadn't panned out, and seeing few other options for work and salary on the horizon, he had signed up for the US Army. After four years in Guantanamo and Iraq, including active combat tours, he withdrew from the service, staying home after a weekend pass, and seeking assistance to renounce his military commitment from his church denomination's office in Washington, DC.

The second, a younger friend of his, José (name changed), in his mid-twenties, was the highest elected official in his congregation. José was drawn to the military by their promises of scholarships and job training. He had been promised a food service position. But after Francisco's experience in the armed forces, Francisco helped José, whom he knew through the church community, to see the realities underlying the enlistment contract that he was promised. Francisco's accompaniment led to José withdrawing from the Delayed Enlistment Program. Francisco worked with José and his recruiters to ensure that his withdrawal was processed completely and helped him interpret the choice he was making.

These men and many young women and men like them exist in real contexts of economic opportunity or lack thereof, availability or lack of educational access, job training, travel, adventure, honor, a salary. Keeping the specific conditions at the forefront helps to maintain awareness of some of the terrain through which counter-recruitment organizing navigates. Young men and women, discouraged because of lack of opportunity or clear paths for success, are drawn toward a military recruiting machine, which seems to be the biggest job provider in many communities.

I offer these anecdotes to help ground the discussion in the real experiences of veterans and young people attracted to the military. It is these individuals and their communities whom any counter-recruitment movement needs to support and serve; these are the real people that the counter-recruitment movement needs to connect with in order to accomplish its promise.

Too often the movement remains fixated on the military's entry points, resisting the five main mechanisms that the recruiters use (Table 1), while failing to step up to the challenge of addressing the underlying conditions that create success for recruiters.

Table 1. Five Key Mechanisms of Military Recruitment.	
From *Before You Enlist And After You Say No, AFSC'S Counter-recruitment Training Manual,* Hannah Strange and Daniel Hunter, Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 2006), 74-75.	
School Visits	• Depending on the school system, recruiters can come to schools anywhere from once a year to every day.

	• Recruiters staff tables in cafeterias, run extracurricular activities, make classroom presentations, host assemblies, get recruiting vans to come to school and set up interactive displays.
JROTC Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps	• Established by Congress in 1916 to develop citizenship and responsibility in young people • According to Department of Defense testimony before Congress, approximately 40 percent of those who graduate from JROTC eventually join the military.
ASVAB Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery	• ASVAB is the admissions and placement test for the U.S. military. Though designed to help place new military recruits in their military jobs, it is administered in high schools (often mandatory) as career placement testing. • The military uses ASVAB to do targeted recruitment of students in the 11th or 12th grade who meet minimum standards. • Recruiters consider the ASVAB to be a helpful tool in streamlining the recruitment process. By using school time, they find qualified recruits, saving themselves time and money.
JAMRS Joint Advertising Market Research & Studies	• Central database of personal information of 30 million U.S. residents who are 16-25 years of age. • Provides recruiters with young people's names, addresses, email addresses, cell phone numbers, ethnicities, social security numbers and areas of study. • Designed to "help bolster the effectiveness of all the Services' recruiting and retention efforts." (www.jamrs.org) • Conducts market research on attitudes towards enlistment.

These mechanisms of recruitment are being responded to by a wide variety of citizens and community members. Here are examples of some of the groups involved:

- Impacted/ recruited youth of many racial and ethnic backgrounds, urban and rural, from California to Connecticut, who resist the recruiters that are a daily presence in their schools, either by ignoring them or with active rebellion such as walkouts, or organizing their fellow students to "opt out" of military data collection;
- Parents of middle and high school students who encourage their children to think twice about what recruiters promise;
- Members of the military who refuse to fight by withdrawing after partial service or by renouncing their enlistment, then often speak out or counsel other young people considering service;
- Conscientious objectors from the World War Two, Korea, and Vietnam eras who continue decades of persistent effort to bring a word of peace in their communities through outreach

about conscientious objection and current military recruitment myths and facts;
- Church folk and other people of faith and conscience across the country concerned about the future of youth in their communities, who reach out to youth in terms of either moral formation as conscientious objectors or as mentors and allies for young people finding the life they dream about;
- College students who are directly impacted by recruitment and attempting to shut recruiters out of their own campuses, or who are reaching out to high school youth in their communities to assist with resisting recruiters and generating alternatives; and
- Parent-Teacher Associations and others concerned about recruiters' presence in school hallways and cafeterias, who limit recruiter access to their children by taking action at the school, district, or city council level.

The counter-recruitment movement has been a channel for many people dissatisfied with the George W. Bush administration's approach to the War on Terrorism and specifically the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has captured the imagination of both long-time peace activists who are using it as a new expression of long-standing concerns about peace and militarism, as well as connecting with the felt needs of impacted youth and communities who may not identify as peace activists but are resisting recruitment as a way to protect their communities.

Pitfalls, potentials and a broader strategy

Whether movement activists have been involved longer-term or are just starting, there are several key pitfalls into which the counter-recruitment movement sometimes falls. (Incidentally, these pitfalls are also common in broader progressive and peace movement organizing.) Each pitfall has an attendant potential which could help the movement grow and increase its effectiveness. Please review these several pitfalls and potentials in chart form, before moving to the broader discussion of them in the context of nonviolent methodology.

Table 2. Pitfalls and Potentials of Counter-recruitment Organizing

PITFALL	POTENTIALS
Isolate within own age, class, or culture groups	Form intergenerational, multi-racial and multi-class coalitions
Focus activity within current activist circles	Activate multiple social sectors (education, government, youth, religious communities, nonprofit, business, women and minority groups)
Present a largely "anti" or "negative" message which focuses	Frame concern as a problem that various segments of the community

mostly on raising awareness about the evils of system	can join together to solve. For example, "Access to jobs and educational opportunities." "Meaningful and well-paid employment without having to go to war." "Positive life paths for every young person in our community."
Focus only on resisting immediate symptoms (for example, NLCB/ Opt Out, School Visits, ASVAB, JROTC, JAMRS)	Use symptoms or surface issues as entry points for engaging long-term needs of communities (economic opportunity, hopeful future, education and job training), engaging the underlying issues of poverty, racism, and justice

Examining these specific pitfalls and potentials presented in brief form above comes in the context of moving from a reactive activism of protest toward a proactive activism which accepts the challenge to work at the roots of social problems. What follows are several reflections and recommendations related to making counter-recruitment organizing more effective and powerful.

1) Accept the challenge to move beyond habit and reflex to discipline and focus. The counter-recruitment movement runs the risk of falling short of its potential by staying safe in habitual patterns and "anti/negative" practices rather than growing to address root community needs and act for significant and long-term social transformation. Growing toward effective organizing will require discipline, focus, strategy, and continual personal and spiritual growth. It will benefit from learning from and further honing the tools and methodologies for nonviolent struggle that have been developed in the past.

Don't get me wrong: It is *normal* to work with folks who look, talk or think like us. It's *normal* to see clearly the critique of society (which generates righteous indignation and anger), rather than focusing on lifting up a catalyzing vision that will engage broader sectors of society in your initiative. It's *normal* to want to stop the bad things we see (recruiter presence in schools, for example). All these "pitfalls" are normal and to be expected. They just won't help develop a broad base in order to activate communities for proactive social change and long-term impacts.

2) Create a frame that elicits support and engagement from your community. A proactive nonviolent strategy involves an initial framing of the problem in a way that various sectors of the community can join your initiative and effort. This means creating a "frame" or a statement of the problem that the community is experiencing and/or the goal to achieve, in a way that invokes the

interest and participation of people far beyond current "activist" circles[2].

Many counter-recruitment activities publicly lead out with a focus on resistance against military recruiters. Sample ways of describing the goal or purpose of activities in this vein, for example, might include, "Shutting down the recruiting center," or "Ending JROTC."

Organizing which is primarily anti/negative organizing can feel personally cathartic or satisfying. But it is a tempting misstep to see the recruiters and recruitment activities themselves as the central problem. So you shut down the recruiting center for a day. Then what? So you end the JROTC program in your school system. How have you helped the young people it was serving to meet their needs via alternative routes? Recruiters and their practices are a symptom of underlying needs produced by economic injustice, racism, and lack of opportunity.

If activists experiment with this perspective that military recruiters are not themselves the problem, but rather a symptom of underlying conditions (for example, poverty, racism, community stagnation, lack of support for young people), we are led along the track to framing the problem in different ways. For example, "access to jobs and educational opportunities," or "meaningful and well-paid employment without having to go to war," or "helping our youth get a good education without having to kill or be killed."

This "positive alternatives for young people" approach is already strongly present in the counter-recruitment movement. Pamphlets and print resources are now proliferating which point toward scholarship programs and vocational discernment[3]. But these print resources are only one tactic within a comprehensive initiative to help young people find their preferred futures without going into the military, and are not sufficient by themselves. They need to be integrated into a broader framing of the core problem, which leads to specific initiatives to accompany and assist young people to actually get where they want to go.

Beginning from a frame such as "access to jobs and educational opportunities," leads activists down a path that is very different from negative campaigns that are focused personally on recruiters or school administrators. It will require activists to help foment the process of producing significant solutions to shared community problems.

3) Use a campaign approach rather than scatter-shot activities. What is the sequence of steps or strategy that your group believes will address these problems and accomplish your goals?

Using a disciplined nonviolent approach means laying out a set of plans to accomplish a specific goal,

rather than planning a variety of one-time events which simply make statements. Campaigns identify clear goals and focus resources of activists on attaining those outcomes.

This contrasts with either an approach focused on protests and rallies or planning a series of events which are on the topic but not focused on specific outcomes. For example, counter-recruitment activities fall into this trap by doing leafleting in isolation from a specific goal to impact a certain number of youths' vocational choices, or by (only) setting up an "alternatives" tabling presence whenever recruiters are in the schools[4].

4) Build cross-class, cross-racial, and intergenerational coalitions. Counter-recruitment, like much peace movement organizing, regularly stumbles over ingrained habits of race and class separation which replicates mainstream society's divisions and separations. Concretely, this means that activists work primarily or only with those already in their existing groups and/or do not accept the challenge to reach beyond social circles circumscribed by habit, rhetoric, and existing relationship. This limits effectiveness and can prevent organizers from winning. Addressing social problems effectively requires engaging the creativity, perspective, and energy of many impacted groups, not just acting on behalf of those groups.

I write as white middle-class person to other white middle-class activists. It can be tempting to reach out first or primarily to those most like us. It's easiest and most natural to speak our preferred language (rhetoric or tone of voice), on our terms, with those who already are open to our kind of language.

However, counter-recruitment organizing by (middle class) white folk will founder on the shoals of rhetoric unless bridges can be built to those directly impacted by and attracted to military recruiters' sales pitches. By doing so, community solutions can be generated to address underlying conditions.

No matter what the race or class of a group, youth and adult allies need each other in order to develop the most powerful campaigns. Frankly, each group has access that any serious campaign will need. Youth have access to school hallways, access to impacted/recruited youth, and are often motivated by a personal stake in the issue; adult allies may offer stronger access (initially at least) to decision-making structures and information about other sectors of the community.

In my opinion, this is part of the promise that counter-recruitment organizing offers to the broader "anti-war" peace movement: In order to thrive in counter-recruitment efforts, (white and middle class) counter-recruiters are going to have to make common cause across race and class and generational lines. White anti-war activists too often avoid this kind of coalition-building by remaining in the somewhat abstract realm of proclamation and righteous statements rather than connecting with groups

where the issues touch the ground.

5) Move beyond the "activist ghetto" to tap broader constituencies. Parallel to the challenges of moving outside of race/class/age demographics is the challenge of mobilizing people from social clusters and institutions beyond the initiating activist group.

In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolence methodology, there are six categories of leadership in any community that are available to be tapped to help address and solve pressing social problems: Religious leaders, government, progressive and voluntary organizations, women's and minority groups, youth organizations, and education. Each of these categories will have a perspective and possible insights into addressing a clearly framed issue.
Effective campaigns tap and mobilize these categories of leadership to solve a shared problem (the frame concept, mentioned above) rather than only gathering a few of the righteous to rail against the purveyors of wrongdoing.

Not Just This movement: Maximizing the Power of the Human Race

While the experiments and realities I have discussed to this point are already in play in school board meetings and high school hallways and cafeterias, there is a much larger context to our efforts to maximize the power and impact of counter-recruitment organizing. Positive, strategic and active engagement on the issue of military recruitment and positive alternatives for youth is a contribution toward humanity's capacity to face its problems boldly and without slaughtering our opponents (physically or psychically).

Wherever one lives on the globe, by living at this point in human history, we get to be part of an immense and centuries-long experiment: learning how to transform oppressive social situations without recourse to killing. This experiment has been one of the human race's biggest learning edges in the last two centuries.

Social movements that have advanced the nonviolence experiment include but extend far beyond this list: The Indian independence movement and Badshah Khan's nonviolent warriors in Pakistan; the South African freedom struggle; the abolitionists, women's suffrage, labor, civil rights, and gay rights movements in the United States; the toppling of dictatorships in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and Yugoslavia's Otpor youth movement in 1998-2000; the People Power movement in the Philippines; Wangari Maathai's ecological "Greenbelt" in Kenya; and indigenous resistance to colonialism and empire in North, Central, and South America.

In a time when so many humans are war-weary and might be open to alternatives, it is time to step up to the plate in terms of learning to rise above violence itself, and to rise above vilifying or destroying our opponents, which is a form of dehumanization that psychologically or spiritually steps down the same path that leads to war.

By experimenting with nonviolence as a creative and active discipline, we are contributing to the extension of the human race's ability to address its own problems without resort to violence. For this reason, it matters how we plan our counter-recruitment campaigns, the slogans we create, and what relationships we build to advance our cause. We are acting for our own schools, communities, and futures, and we are helping to raise the bar for how well we as a human race can solve our problems.

References

1 http://www.nnomy.org/joomla/index.php

2. For further information on establishing frames for nonviolent campaigns, see *The Leaders Manual - A Structured Guide & Introduction to Kingian Nonviolence: The Philosophy and Methodology,* **by Bernard LaFayette, Jr., and David C. Jehnsen (Galena, OH: Institute for Human Rights and Responsibilities),** www.kingiannonviolence.info**.**

3. See for example, "It's My Life! A Guides for Alternatives after High School," a national-level publication by the American Friends Service Committee (available via www.afsc.org) . Many guides exist for different states or regions, from tri-fold pamphlets to extended guidebooks.

4. Those interested in campaign approaches are commended to the brief essay, "Campaigning for Social Change: Beyond Just Protesting for It!" by Daniel Hunter, included in *Before you Enlist and After You Say No*, pp. 204-209.

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Moving Beyond Slogans Possibilities for a More Connected and Humanizing "Counter-recruitment" Pedagogy in Highly Militarized Urban Schools

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WE ARRIVED AT MADISON HIGH SCHOOL1 EARLY, before the morning rush. There were about ten of us activists—some retired individuals, a few educators and also a few undergraduate and graduate students. Armed with pamphlets and informational materials we took our positions on the sidewalk, in front of the main entrance, waiting to catch students before they entered the campus. Our mission was to warn, inform and educate them about the realities of military service and war. Madison was an urban school in Los Angeles serving predominantly low-income Latin@ students. The school did not have a performing arts department or wellresourced sports programs but it did have a large and growing Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) program. A few days prior to this event we were warned by one of our teacher allies that the school was expecting a visit from military recruiters. We wanted to be present, on the same day, to provide a counter-perspective and make sure that students heard the other side of the story. As it approached 8:00 a.m., the rush of students overwhelmed us while we frantically passed out flyers and cautioned as many of them as we could to beware of the half truths and misinformation spread by military recruiters.

During this action, one of our leaders was confronted by the vice principal who asked her to step away from the entrance of the school. Our leader, in turn, insisted that the sidewalk was public space and it was her right to be there. This was the extent in which we were able to engage with students at Madison High School. The vice principal at this particular site had a history of denying counter-recruitment activists access to the school campus while at the same time inviting and welcoming recruiters on a regular basis. On some campuses, we encountered a warmer welcome and were allowed to be present at career fairs and set up informational booths. On rare occasions we were invited to speak in classrooms, at assemblies and other school events.

Our actions and campaigns were coordinated through a local community organization that was dedicated to the project of demilitarizing schools. Post 9/11 and with the advent of the "Global War on

Terror," schools serving predominantly low-income students of color had become increasingly militarized spaces (Ayers, 2006; Mariscal, 2005) through policies such as the section §9528 of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)2 that gave military recruiters unprecedented access to these school campuses and to students' private information (Furumoto, 2005; Holm, 2007; Schroeder, 2004). Also contributing to the militarization of urban schools was the increased funding and prevalence of Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) programs in conjunction with the lack of enrichment programs within these schools (Ayers, 2006; Berlowitz & Long, 2003; Galaviz, Palafox, Meiners, & Quinn, 2011). Although the rapid expansion of JROTC programs began in the mid 1990's, this trend continued in the decade post 9/11. In 2012, according to the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY) website, there were "3429 JROTC units and over half a million cadets in addition to an unknown number of students in the Middle School Cadet Corps (MSCC) across the country" (Abajian, 2013, p. 26). The increased militarization of schools over the past decade was taking place within the context of an increasingly militarized culture within the United States (Giroux, 2004; Turse, 2008) where patriotism and war were constantly promoted through the aggressive advertising and public relations campaigns of the military (Saltman & Gabbard, 2003), such as the Army Strong campaign,3 and affirmed through mainstream media outlets.

As a response to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the increasing militarization of schools, certain community organizations and anti-war activists began launching counterrecruitment campaigns to educate and inform students and communities about the realities of military service and "recruit" students away from the military. For example, groups such as the Coalition Against Militarism in Schools (CAMS), Project on Youth And Non-Military Opportunities (YANO), New York Core Of Radical Educators (NYCORE), American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and others began providing counter-recruitment workshops and working with communities to form action plans against military recruitment within schools around the country. Although these counter-recruitment efforts have had some successes, military recruitment in urban schools is still a persistent and growing problem particularly as the economy has taken a downward shift, unemployment has been on the rise and we continue to find ourselves in a perpetual state of war.

How we joined the movement:

It was within the context of increased militarization of schools post 9/11 that we4 became involved in different counter-recruitment efforts. We were drawn to counter-recruitment activism for several reasons. I, Maricela, grew up in South Central Los Angeles, attended Jefferson High School and was enlisted in the Navy after graduation. I understood the draw of the military for high school students who were promised college funding and a better future. In fact, that is the very reason why I joined the military. I wanted to fund my college education through the G.I. Bill, which proved to be more complicated than I initially thought. After serving in the military for four years I left the service before the invasion of Iraq. Eventually I returned to school, completed my Bachelor's degree and matriculated into a Master's program. Unable to successfully utilize my G.I. Bill benefits, I funded my education through federal and state financial aid as well as student loans.

Maricela, became actively involved in the counter-recruitment movement because of my experiences in the military. When I was stationed in Diego Garcia I witnessed the unjust labor practices of military contractors on the island. The military, through its private contractors, hired Filipin@ immigrants who

were paid very low wages and worked under very oppressive conditions. This reminded me of my own family and the oppressive ways that they were treated within the United States as immigrant and low-wage laborers. I didn't want to be complicit with an institution that oppressed anyone in any part of the world. Furthermore, my personal experiences as a female soldier and a victim of sexual abuse within the United States military shaped my critical stance towards the practices and policies of the military and drew me into counter-recruitment activism. Hence, my commitment to the counter-recruitment movement extended beyond the anti-war movement and included a commitment to countering the oppression of labor, women and disenfranchised communities. I

 Suzie, was born in Aleppo, Syria. My elementary and a portion of my secondary education took place in a highly militarized schooling system where I took part in drill and ceremony exercises on a daily basis and wore military fatigues to school. My personal experiences as a young student in the Middle East as well as my experiences as an educator within a militarized urban school in Los Angeles shaped my interest in counter-recruitment. As a teacher, it pained me to see my students aggressively recruited into the United States military to fight and risk their lives in what I believed to be unjust wars against communities of people that I closely identified with as a Middle Easterner. My maternal grandmother as well as some of my relatives had worked and lived in Iraq for many years.

Suzie, came to realize that counter-recruitment was the most effective method of countering the war agenda and the militarization of schools in the United States. My commitment to counter-militarism work also shaped my dissertation research, which was a yearlong ethnographic case study of militarism and military recruitment in an urban school in Southern California. Our positionalities as individuals from different communities touched by war and militarism not only drew us to counter-recruitment work but also gave us unique perspectives and lenses through which we saw this line of activism.

What is counter-recruitment?

In our experience, counter-recruitment was a fundamentally pedagogical project that consisted of informing or teaching students and communities about the realities of military service often concealed by recruiters, the aggressive advertising campaign of the military and the corporations involved in the war industry. The primary objective of counter-recruitment campaigns in which we participated was "recruiting" students away from military careers.

Through our activism, in collaboration with several community-based organizations within the Los Angeles area, we observed that one of the most prevalent counter-recruitment actions that anti-war activists participated in was flyering or leafleting in front of school campuses. During these actions groups of volunteers would pass out flyers such as Demilitarizing Schools and Presenting Alternatives5 and What Every Girl Should Know about the U.S. Military6 to students. Other counter-recruitment activities included setting up informational booths at career fairs, making classroom or conference presentations, and occasionally having classroom showings of the film "Arlington West"7 followed by a question and answer session with students. Our objective for this paper was critically examining these counter-recruitment campaigns and actions and highlighting the more humanizing approaches in which we participated.

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The praxis of methodological reflection:

After several years of involvement in counter-recruitment we wanted to take a step back and reflect on our experiences within this movement by taking a critical look at the messaging, the curriculum (the explicit as well as the hidden) and the helpfulness of these efforts in shaping student decisions regarding enlistment. We wanted to engage in what Freire (1970/1993) defines as "praxis"—a thoughtful and reflective engagement in the world in order to change it. We adapted this concept of praxis in our methodology. Our reflective process began through a series of informal conversations that we had regarding our involvement in counter-recruitment activism and through the writing of reflective memos.

Additionally we had a formal conversation or mutual interview about our experiences in the movement. This interview/conversation was recorded and transcribed. We also used flyers, pamphlets, PowerPoint presentations, students' digital story projects as well as the transcripts of two interviews from a yearlong qualitative case study on militarism in one of the schools where we had held our counter-recruitment actions. We then employed a grounded theory approach to identify and analyze the emerging themes from all these sources (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The school sites and all individuals referred to in this paper were given pseudonyms with the exception of the authors. Through this reflective process we were able to articulate and analyze the range of our experiences within the counter-recruitment movement.

Counter-recruitment falling short of a humanizing approach:

Through our counter-recruitment actions, we met dedicated and loving people who truly cared about students and the communities affected by militarism and war. However, we felt that certain counter-recruitment approaches that were employed were not the most helpful methods in veering students away from military careers and building critical consciousness regarding militarism for a number of reasons.

One of these reasons was that counter-recruitment activities often employed what Freire (1970/1993) calls the "banking" approach where the educational project becomes "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher [or the activist in this case] is the depositor" instead of dialoging and building knowledge collectively (p.72). I, Maricela, perceived that counter-recruitment activists often acted as depositors of knowledge who would go into schools and tell students: "Don't join the service for these reasons..." In my experience flyering in front of school campuses was an example of the "banking" approach to teaching because it was "unidirectional." The teaching and the instructing was carried out by counterrecruiters and received by students. It did not draw upon students' prior knowledge or lived experiences. Additionally, it did not create a space for students to share their questions and perspectives, engage dialogically and build knowledge collectively with the activists. As such, it wasn't the most effective way of reaching students. In fact counter-recruitment actions employed similar approaches to that of military recruiters. As I, Maricela, stated in our mutual interview: "It was the same techniques and tactics as recruiters but a different ideology" (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010). Freire (1970/1993) similarly articulated: "[substituting] monologue, slogans and communiqués for dialogue is to attempt to liberate the oppressed with the instruments of domestication" (p. 65).

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Although the pamphlets and flyers that we distributed were informative, it was difficult to gage whether they were relevant and useful for the students who received them. In my dissertation research, I, Suzie spoke with parents and students who similarly communicated a lack of effectiveness of the flyering method. For instance, Ms. Hernandez, an active parent volunteer, stated:

> When the children are released to go home, they [the counter-recruitment activists] hand out their pamphlets and they hand out their information, you know. But a lot of the kids throw them in the trash. They don't take the time to look at the information that's given to them. (interview, Ms. Hernandez, June 3, 2010)

Juana, Ms. Hernandez's daughter, who was a student within the same school, confirmed this in a separate conversation. Juana understood what the activists were promoting (i.e. problematic aspects of military service). However she did not read any of the materials that were given to her.

The flyering method was not a great way of engaging students because it did not draw upon students' interests and concerns and it did not create a space for critical dialogue. Also, students' lack of interest in the counter-recruitment literature could have been attributed to the wordiness of the flyers—as some of the activists had vocalized their own frustrations with this issue. Regardless of its problematic aspects, flyering was often the only action that activists were allowed to take at certain school campuses.

On rare occasions, activists were invited to make large group presentations at school events. However, these too were often "one-directional" and did not allow for sufficient dialogue and engagement with students. Also, the question and answer sessions after large group presentations were not long enough to generate real discussions and critical analysis of military service. For instance I, Maricela was invited to speak to 1,000 youth at an event within a high school. I was given only five minutes to speak and didn't have the opportunity to interact with students. Also, I was censored with the information that I was allowed to give. The teacher who invited me to speak at the school event asked me to not mention Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that many soldiers suffer due to military sexual trauma or combat. I was asked to focus on presenting alternatives to the military rather than critiquing military service. The principal had made this the condition under which I could make my presentation. This was because there was a strong relationship that this specific school and community had with the Navy and the principal did not want to make waves. I felt disempowered through this process because I couldn't communicate to students the whole picture of what it meant to join the military and why I was informing them of alternatives in the first place.

Although sharing about my personal experiences within the military, during large group presentations, was healing and empowering for me at first, I eventually began to feel disconnected from the students with whom I was sharing my experiences. I desired to cultivate a space where students could ask questions and share their thoughts regarding what the military meant to them. However, the large group presentations did not offer me such a space. During these types of actions, we both felt a sense of separation from the students that we were supposed to "help" and also from the communities that were the victims of U.S. military interventionism.

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Informational and promotional booths set up by counter-recruitment activists from different organizations, at career fairs, allowed for more interactions with students. However, these interactions were also brief and there was little room to engage in critical conversations with students. Sometimes activists would have a follow-up meeting with individual students who had signed for early enlistment and needed assistance in getting out of their contracts. Also, follow-up meetings were requested by students who needed the assistance of adult advocates in stopping harassment by military recruiters or addressing a violation of school policies by recruiters. Activists would then take up these complaints to the appropriate school, district or military authorities on behalf of students and parents. In addition to these types of interactions, activists and students were able to connect during fundraising events for counter-recruitment projects or the "Arlington West" film-showings at community centers.

Opportunities for community building between activists and students through the aforementioned types of actions and counter-recruitment activities were limited. Even though the objective of counter-recruitment efforts was raising consciousness among communities and students, the means by which counter-recruitment was carried out did not allow for dialogue and community building and hence was not liberatory.

Also, within this framework, activists were often perceived as the "knowledgeable" outsiders who had the duty and mission of informing students about the "truth" regarding military service. I, Maricela, remember being told by different community organizations that I was "saving the lives of these students." However, I did not feel comfortable with these complements because "saving lives" was a term that I associated with missionary endeavors. I didn't want to save anybody. I'm not a missionary! As a counter-recruitment activist, I felt that I was a missionary going into schools to save people's lives. Of course I didn't want students to join the service but that wasn't my choice to make. It was something that students had to decide for themselves.

Furthermore , Suzie, felt that counter-recruiters often came from a different community than that of the students and hence might have lacked a deep understanding and knowledge of the communities in which they carried out their counter-recruitment actions. There was often a cultural and socio-economic disconnect between counter-recruiters and students. Many of the counter-recruitment activists that we organized with were retired individuals who were predominantly white and came from wealthy and highly educated backgrounds. The onedirectional, "banking approach" often employed in counter-recruitment could not have produced a better understanding of students and the realities that they faced. Also, activists did not have the opportunity to build credibility with students. We felt the unidirectional process of asking or often telling students to not join the military was alienating for students and activists alike.

In our experience, what mattered was not only the nature of the activity in which students were involved but also the positioning and the personal experiences of the adults working with them. For instance I, Suzie, felt that some of the most effective counter-recruitment workshops were the ones where Maricela shared with students her personal experiences within the military. As a veteran and as someone who came from the same (or a similar) community I observed that Maricela had instant credibility with the students with whom she shared her story. I noticed that students would often stay after the presentations and have long conversations with her, which was not the case with the other activists. Although there were many well-meaning individuals who spoke of the ills of joining the

military, their words did carry the same weight as Maricela's words.

Another problematic aspect of counter-recruitment actions was that activists would often focus entirely on the ways in which the military was not providing soldiers with what they were promised. The discourses of counter-recruitment presentations and film discussions were United States centered and were not conducive to developing empathy for the "other." I, Suzie, felt that counter-recruitment presentations, actions and workshops lacked something essential—a critique of militarized practices, of the United States intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan and of war itself. In my experience military service was often presented as a disembodied enterprise or affair that seemed to be a bad career move for financial or practical reasons. I recall counter-recruiters telling students to not join the military because it wasn't a lucrative career.

Activists would often frame the problematic aspects of joining the military in terms of the inaccessibility of the G.I. Bill and the low employability of individuals after completing their tour of duty. I, Suzie, remember occasional mentions of the ways in which the military was a hostile place for women and LGBTQ soldiers and the fact that sexual abuse was rampant in the military. However, in my experience, counter-recruiters did not draw attention to what the United States military was doing in other countries. I felt that counter-recruitment actions were mostly focused on the ways in which the military wasn't keeping its promises to the soldiers. It seemed very utilitarian, disconnected and lacking empathy. In our mutual interview I, Suzie, problematized this approach by asking:

> What if the military was, in fact, paying good wages and soldiers were able to easily access the G.I. Bill benefits? Would that make it acceptable to encourage students to join the military and risk their lives to fight in an unjust war? Also, who were the people that the military was fighting? Who would the soldiers be asked to kill? (interview, Suzie, February 28, 2010)

Counter-recruitment efforts did not allow for a critique of United States interventionism in the world, even though students would often raise critical questions relating to U.S. military actions in other countries. I, Suzie, recall students asking: "Isn't it also wrong, what we're doing in Iraq?" In my experience, when students would raise concerns about military actions overseas, their comments were simply acknowledged but not taken up by activists and they did not lead to further discussions. When I asked one of the leaders of CAMS why she did not address students' questions about the atrocities committed overseas by the United States military, the leader responded by stating that what was most effective and important was focusing on "the here and now." This same leader advocated the change of the name of the organization from the Coalition Against Militarism in our Schools to the Coalition of Alternatives to Militarism in Schools (keeping the same acronym). The reason for this change was that she did not want the organization to come across as too critical of the military but rather as a more neutral organization that simply offered "alternatives"—undermining the critical and anti-war positioning of the organization.

Another limitation of counter-recruitment efforts was that students were being asked to not join the military without being offered any alternatives in terms of career counseling, job training and college funding. We felt that it wasn't enough to ask students to not join the military—we also needed to offer them alternatives. I, Maricela, felt that it was difficult to tell students to not pursue an easily accessible career when they had financial difficulties. I felt that telling students to "not join the military" might

deter them initially when they hear an inspiring talk in an auditorium or watch a movie. However, after time passes and they are faced with the realities of their lives such as poverty, the lack of resources and the presence of violence in their neighborhoods, they might decide to join regardless of knowing the problematic aspects of a military career. Although many students were already aware of the problematic aspects of military service, at the end of the day, they were still faced with the daily challenges that drew them to military service in the first place.

As a response to this need we became involved in a project where a counter-recruitment leader was compiling an informational booklet on alternative careers through the collaboration and support of two organizations: CAMS and AFSC. Although we, activists, had a consensus about promoting "green" jobs or social justice oriented jobs in the informational booklet, there was a disagreement among us about including Transportation Security Administration (TSA) or police internships as alternatives to the military. We felt conflicted about this issue. On the one hand the TSA and the police were not the same as the military, on the other hand some of us viewed these paths as extensions of the military-industrial complex. There was a definite lack of consensus on the conceptualization of militarism. Perhaps, including the TSA and the police was the pragmatic approach to the issue of offering alternatives. After all wouldn't it be better to have critically conscious people working within the TSA and the police force? At the same time, the lack of reflection and critical analysis of militarism, war and demonization of "others" within counter-recruitment circles did not necessarily mean that they would promote a critically conscious engagement within these highly militarized professions but rather a utilitarian approach to upward mobility. Furthermore, these militarized careers were already being promoted within low-income communities of color and they did not need more promotion and exposure by counter-recruitment activists. These were the reasons why some of us viewed this as a problematic approach for a collective of activists who purported to be against militarism in all its forms.

Also, from our reflections, we came to the conclusion that counter-recruitment was a reactionary movement rather than a proactive movement. Activists organized in reaction to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They were not as concerned with addressing the core-issues that students faced daily and the reasons why they were drawn into the military in the first place. I, Maricela, felt that counter-recruitment activists would frequent schools during times of war but they would leave once the wars ended. For me, counter-recruitment activism was something that needed to encompass more than the anti-war agenda. I wanted activists to show care for students by engaging with them about the struggles and challenges that they faced daily in their communities. I felt that addressing the needs of students was the most effective approach to diminishing the attractiveness of a military career.

Digital storytelling: A different approach to counter-recruitment

As we became more involved in the counter-recruitment movement we felt the need for a different approach that built empathy, connectedness, community, reflection and a critical analysis both on the part of students and activists. We wanted a different model where students were treated as active agents in charge of their own lives. Within this framework, activists were not the sole proprietors of knowledge but they were co-constructors of knowledge with students. As Freire (1970/1993) articulated: "Those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly…To confirm this commitment but to consider oneself the proprietor of revolutionary

wisdom—which must then be given to (or imposed on the people)—is to retain the old ways"(pp. 60-61). We wanted to employ a liberatory and humanizing knowledge making, by engaging students in a reflective process about their own concrete realities. This is what Freire defined as a problem posing education which "entails at the outset that the teacher-student contradiction to be resolved" (p. 79). Through a dialogical engagement "[t]he teaher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself [/herself] taught in dialogue with the students" (p. 80). This is the process through which teachers as well as students can gain critical consciousness that in turn could lead them to action and also further reflection.

Using this framework for critical reflection and action I, Maricela, wanted to employ a different approach to counter-recruitment. In collaboration with Mr. Vivaldi, a high school teacher, and with the assistance of the AFSC and the Women of Color Resource Center, I used the techniques of the Center for Digital Storytelling to organize a project within a classroom in Greater Los Angeles where students were engaged in producing their own digital stories. According to the Center for Digital Storytelling, digital stories are "short, first-person videonarratives created by combining recorded voice, still and moving images, and music or other sounds" (Center for Digital Storytelling, 2011). This project took place within a continuation school and within a class that was predominantly male students.

I, Maricela, became interested in the digital storytelling project because I had participated in it myself and was inspired by the final product. Also, the making of my own digital story was a healing process for me as this was the first time that I was able to tell my story.

When I first presented my ideas to Mr. Vivaldi's class I asked students whether they were interested in taking part in the project. I wanted students to be invested in this endeavor by deciding for themselves whether this was something in which they wanted to invest their time. During the presentation, I shared the following words with the students: "I never thought I had a voice…this helped me find my own voice, share what I was feeling and put it in words and pictures" (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010). After a class discussion, students collectively voted and decided that they wanted to participate in the project.

From my perspective the purpose for this project was creating a space where students were able to share their stories with their peers and engage in a reflective process that would lead to critical analysis and action. I chose the medium of digital storytelling for a number of reasons. As I stated in our mutual interview:

> One of the things that I've always been attracted to is how people tell stories in different cultures and looking back into my own indigenous roots the whole concept of storytelling is really important because it brings the community together. Digital storytelling was a way for me to hear students' stories and voices and the ways that they processed the information we provide them. (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010)

I was drawn to storytelling because it employed an indigenous form of knowledge-making that fostered connectedness and community building.

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According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002) storytelling has had "a rich and continuing tradition in the African American (Bell, 1987, 1992, 1996; Berkeley Art Center, 1982; Lawrence, 1992), Chicana/o (Delgado, 1995, 1996); Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Olivas, 1990; Paredes, 1977), and Native American (Deloria, 1969; Williams, 1997) communities" (p.156). Drawing from these traditions Solórzano and Yosso (2002) conceptualize counterstorytelling as a pedagogical tool that serves the purposes of not only building community among those who are at the margins and challenging normalized and privileged narratives but also imagining possibilities for a better world—beyond the confines of lived realities.

Using this framework, I employed digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool for creating counterstories within this classroom. Digital-storytelling was an alternative way to engage students with issues that were relevant to their lives –including but not limited to military enlistment. I wasn't interested in simply telling students to not join the service but rather using a more engaging and grounded approach that employed a "problem posing" pedagogy. I wanted to raise questions that made students think and decide for themselves whether or not they wanted to pursue a military career. My position was that of a facilitator and someone who provided the structure through which students were able to reflect on their own life experiences and choices and come up with their own analysis.

I felt very strongly about not imposing my own beliefs and ideas on students. As I stated in our mutual interview:

> I don't think I am empowering them [students]. I am providing them with the skills and the tools to empower themselves. I think that that's something really important for me to emphasize in counter-recruitment. I think that many people who do counter-recruitment work think that their purpose is to go to classrooms and empower students. I don't want to do that! I don't feel that I have control to empower anybody. I think that I can provide students the tools to empower themselves. And not all students are going to feel empowered by this process. But I think that it's important to provide them with these skills so that later on in life they can figure out what they want to do. (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010)

The employment of a dialogical approach was not a neutral act but a political one—as is all teaching. Enabling students to find their voices through the construction of their digital stories or digital "counter-stories" and fostering a space for critical dialogue, collaboration and artistic expression was a radically anti-militaristic approach to counter-recruitment. I, Maricela, realized this when I stated in our mutual interview that: "documenting one's story and sharing it within a caring community was an empowering act" (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010).

Digital storytelling was a more humanizing approach than traditional counter-recruitment methods because it brought student voices to the fore and gave them the space to build community and have real and meaningful discussions about their struggles, hopes and aspirations. Although the focus of the project was not counter-recruitment it nevertheless gave students the space to reflect and question military enlistment as well as other issues that they were facing within their communities such as poverty, police brutality, racial profiling, gang injunctions that targeted men of color and other issues.

For example Jose's digital story began with a video clip where Bill O'Reilly stated that "the situation in

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[the inner city of] Los Angeles, California is hopeless" with a triple take of him saying the word "hopeless." The video then progressed to a clip with white words appearing on a black screen stating: "Based on True Life Events in the Everyday Poverty Life in Los Angeles" (digital story, Jose, 2009). This clip was followed by scenes from Jose's neighborhood including fast food joints, gang graffiti, trash, the police and an old car with multiple bullet holes. However, he also interjected these scenes with those of hopeful places in his life such as his school, his house and also beautiful murals in his neighborhood. He ended his presentation with a message of "keeping hope alive." Although Jose was aware of the issues in his neighborhood, unlike Mr. O'Reilly, he was able to see the beauty and the hope in his community as well. He was able to portray the beauty in his life through artistic images and his own musical composition that accompanied the scenes from his neighborhood. Jose had to learn new technological skills as well as script writing and musical composition in order for him to produce his digital story. Also, he was able to engage in a critical analysis of the portrayals of his community in the media.

Another example was Steven's digital story which was entitled "Violence in the Community." Steven showed scenes of police brutality and racial profiling in his community. His analysis focused on the ways in which certain types of violence were sanctioned such as police violence and economic violence propagated by banks and corporations on different communities, while other actions were criminalized by the police. He also included domestic violence in his analysis and made a call for stopping all forms of violence. Similar to Steven, many students grounded their analysis in their everyday experiences within their communities. Using their experiences as a reference point they were able to broaden their analysis to include larger critiques that addressed societal inequalities and violence within the United States and abroad.

Luis' story began with scenes from his childhood. His story was entitled "Eyes" and his narrative began by the following words: "Every day I dream of waking up as I was before. Every day I see my father giving us a great example as a man and a hero. My mother, every morning telling us she loves us… taking my brother, my sister and also my cousins to school" (digital story, Luis, 2009). Luis employed a poetic form of narration as he walked his audience through scenes from his daily life. He showed pictures of his parents feeding him as child, walking him to school and going to work. He also included pictures of his classroom, classmates and teachers. His digital story was a tribute to his parents, his family and his school community and the ways that they had supported, nurtured and encouraged him throughout his live. His narrative, similar to Jose's was about hope as well as suffering. He touched upon issues such as youth incarceration and poverty by using images of hands in handcuffs and fences with barbwire. He also addressed the subject of spirituality and the ways in which his faith had provided him with a refuge and had brought peace and joy to his life. He ended his story by stating that he was thankful for his "Life, Pain and Happiness" because all of these things had made him into who he was.

Many of the digital stories addressed issues of poverty, police violence, gang violence and domestic violence. Some digital stories also included a discussion of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, Sergio's digital story was entitled "Violence." He conducted a survey asking his classmates about their definition of violence. Within this project, Sergio was able to make connections between issues of gang violence, police violence and also the violence of the war in Iraq. Sergio's digital story was among other stories that prompted a class discussion on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For

instance, Joe was an English Language Learner from Hong Kong. His digital story was primarily focused on the Iraq war and the ways that the United States media desensitized us to the violence of war. As an immigrant, Joe was particularly struck with the ways in which the United States media demonized different communities outside of the United States. Through digital storytelling, students were able to engage in critical analysis of issues such as poverty and violence in their communities and find the connections between these issues and the wars that the United States was waging in the Middle East.

The digital storytelling project not only provided a reflective space for critical analysis but also gave students the opportunity to gain technological and literacy skills. Students engaged in a collective process of writing drafts for their narratives, listening and giving feedback to each other and producing a "mini-movie" about their lives. The process enabled students to not only gain important skills but also empowered them to make more informed decisions.

Over the course of three months of working on the production of the digital stories I, Maricela, was able to see a significant shift within the classroom and specifically in the ways that students interacted with each other. I articulated this in our mutual interview:

> It was amazing to see how students communicated with each other. By the time our workshop was over there was a lot of trust within the group and the students felt comfortable to share more about themselves. I think that was the most important thing! In the end it was youth finding their own voices and the direction they wanted to go to while also gaining skills in technology. For some students this was the first time that they used PowerPoint or wrote a script. (interview, Maricela, February 28, 2010)

Digital storytelling provided a radically different approach than the ones commonly used by counter-recruitment activists. It was a more empowering approach that provided a space for reflection and community building. Also, it was a contextualized method of teaching the counterrecruitment curriculum by engaging students in issues relevant to their lives and giving them valuable technological, analytical and literacy tools.

Discussion:

This reflective process enabled us to critically analyze our own engagement in the counter-recruitment movement and highlight the more humanizing approaches in which we participated. Through our own experiences as well as through conversations with other activists, parents and students we found that what was more "successful" or meaningful was creating spaces for critical consciousness raising and community building through alternative approaches. In the hope of employing a more meaningful and humanizing approach to counter-recruitment I, Maricela, organized the digital storytelling project within Mr. Vivaldi's class. Digital storytelling was a pedagogical tool for creating counter-stories (Yosso, 2006), raising critical consciousness (Freire, 1970/1993) and building community.

Through the digital storytelling project students were able to have open conversations about different issues concerning their lives. They were also given a space to engage critically with topics such as war, poverty, violence and immigration and at the same time develop valuable academic skills and

participate in a creative process.

This project contrasted sharply with the prevalent counter-recruitment actions employed by anti-war or counter-recruitment activist, which often consisted of "one-directional" activities that involved telling students not to join the military. Also, the prevalent counter-recruitment actions utilized critiques that were solely focused on exposing the broken promises of the military in providing upward mobility and personal gain for soldiers. These approaches neglected to address the everyday realities of students in urban communities, the atrocities of U.S. military actions in the world and the demonization of "others" that is required in war. Although well-intentioned, these actions were not effective in providing a systemic analysis, building critical consciousness and empowering students to walk away from military enlistment.

As military recruiters are paid, full-time employees that have the backing of the extremely well funded advertising campaign of the military, volunteer counter-recruitment activists with meager budgets cannot and should not compete using the same approaches as recruiters. If the counter-recruitment were to be a meaningful movement, then it must not simply focus on deterring students from pursuing a specific career path but rather problematizing militarism in all its forms and manifestations and giving students the tools for critical analysis. Counter-recruitment activists need to set themselves apart from military recruiters, not only through the content of their message but also through their very approach—employing a pedagogy that produces "critical consciousness", community building and connectedness which are in stark contrast to militarism.

As economically disadvantaged students of color are increasingly drawn into the military to not only fight "foreigners" overseas but also their own communities within and at the borders of the United States, it is imperative that counter-recruitment employ more liberatory pedagogical approaches. Moving beyond a "banking" approach, counter-recruitment activists can draw upon the personal interests, stories and experiences of students and engage in building solidarity with communities that are victims of militarism and war both locally and globally.

Source: http://journal.jctonline.org/index.php/jct/article/download/484/pdf

Bringing Truth to the Youth: The Counter-Recruitment Movement, Then and Now

Emily Yates -

Back when we started, recruiters were just blatantly lying to the kids," said Susan Quinlan, the co-founder and volunteer coordinator of the peace and justice group, <u>Better Alternatives for Youth–Peace (BAY-Peace)</u>. For 12 years, she's been bringing teams of youth into Oakland, California, schools to inform students about deceptive military recruiting practices. In that time, she has seen the recruitment climate in schools change drastically -- and not necessarily for the better.

"It used to be that recruiters would make promises to the kids that were patently untrue, like offering benefits that wouldn't materialize, for example, so our job was to go in and say, 'No, that's not true,'" Quinlan said. Then over the years, as the wars grew increasingly unpopular and recruitment dropped, the military beefed up the benefits and incentives to more closely match its promises. Many student activists saw that as a victory, she said, and as a result, the work lost urgency.

"The recruiters are still being dishonest," she said, "but it's become less obvious. And they haven't gone away. Now, recruitment is back up where it was before we started, and we're losing our funding."

Divestment from Truth

BAY-Peace's accomplishments include a <u>Youth Manifesto Campaign</u> that established a student privacy policy throughout the entire Oakland Unified School District. Yet, this unique organization is about to lose the support of the city whose youth it serves. And it's not the only one -- on a national level, the counter-recruitment movement is suffering from low funds and low participation, even as recruiters target younger children and wars rage on.

Rick Jahnkow remembers a time when the military did not have any official presence in schools. But in 1973, the draft ended, the "all-volunteer" force began, and a new era of military recruitment strode

through American classroom doors. Right behind it, hustling to keep up, came the counter-recruitment movement. Nearly 50 years later, the race to reach the youth has become a marathon, and the Department of Defense has continuously stepped up its game.

"Since the end of conscription, military recruiting began to evolve based on the assumption that they couldn't open up a tap and have bodies come pouring out anymore," said Jahnkow, a former activist in the Vietnam War-era draft-resistance movement and current program coordinator of the San Diego-based [Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities (Project YANO)](). "Recruitment had marketing and strategists," he explained. "That was how it evolved. As a response, counter-recruitment evolved as well."

Evolution doesn't always mean progress, however. Although activists keep moving toward the goal of bringing transparency to the military's messaging, the once-thriving movement's pace has slowed to a crawl. With funding and public involvement in a lull, the question haunting the minds of counter-recruiters like Quinlan and Jahnkow is, "What's next?"

Perpetual War -- Fighting and Recruitment

The two competing sides, military and counter-recruitment, are as closely matched in strength as a bull and a Corgi, but counter-recruiters still attempt to make up in grit, creativity and adaptability for what they lack in resources, numbers and establishment backing. They've avoided being entirely consumed by the military's superior staying power in schools because the counter-recruitment movement is fueled by the one factor that reliably hinders recruitment -- war.

"We now have a movement that's distinguished itself as specifically counter-recruitment, and it has ebbed and flowed during active wartime," said Seth Kershner, co-author of the 2015 book *Counter-Recruitment and the Campaign to Demilitarize Public Schools*. "When the war dies down, so does counter-recruitment. The big change in the movement now is that everyone doing full-time counter-recruitment is doing it on a volunteer basis. Since public interest in war has changed, funding has diminished."

The United States has been actively waging two controversial wars for 15 years, but now even progressive support for counter-recruitment is drying up, Kershner said.

The movement has gone through cycles, Jahnkow said, and the current state of "perpetual war-fighting," as he and Kershner both call it, has made Americans less sensitive to aggressive military recruitment tactics. Counter-recruiters have had to use several alternative strategies to communicate with youth, due to the unlimited resources and access to schools that military recruiters enjoy in this climate. As well as visiting high schools and talking with students about the realities of military service, counter-recruiters work diligently to promote non-military alternatives for students and to push legislation regulating the presence of recruiters on campuses.

Counter-recuitment Inside Out: Counter-recruitment strategies in perspective from practice and analysis

"Pervasive Penetration"

In the decades since recruitment in schools began, the practice has grown considerably.

"This 'new American militarism' … is a response to the challenge of annually recruiting more than 240,000 new volunteers into the military," Kershner said. "The result has been the pervasive penetration of the nation's schools by military recruiters and a massive propaganda effort to shape public consciousness and culture."

This appropriately named "pervasive penetration" takes many forms -- not only does the military have a recruitment budget of over $1.4 billion, but federal policies like the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act and its 2015 successor, the Every Child Succeeds Act, actually tie schools' funding to a requirement to turn over students' information to military recruiters unless parents specifically "opt out." There's also the massive Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program, whose goal is to channel students into the military after graduation.

Fed up with having their privacy invaded and their curriculum militarized, students in Oakland, San Diego and Santa Barbara, California, have used both the hands-on and legislative approaches to counter-recruitment in an effort to keep the military out of their places of learning. Student activists in those cities successfully ousted JROTC from the Santa Barbara campus and won policy changes to restrict military access to students' information and recruiters' access to schools.

"The legislative approach takes longer, but victories are much easier to see," Kershner said. "In Massachusetts, for example, a veteran and a high school student led a coalition to pass a state bill that regulates ASVAB [Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery] testing in schools. In New Hampshire, the ASVAB used to be mandatory, and now it isn't. These legislative victories are important to see as progress -- and motivation to keep working."

Military Curriculum

Ideally, organizations would focus on high schools, but would also have the numbers and interest to work with middle and elementary schools, Kershner said. In 2010, the most recent year for which data are available, he reported that the Department of Defense was administering more than a dozen different programs and spending close to $50 million on K–12 outreach, targeting students pursuing the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

"Twenty years ago, there was hardly anything that sophisticated," Kershner said. "Now we have these programs, as well as the growth of military-style charter schools all over the country. It used to just be in Chicago, but now there are more like two dozen public schools putting students in uniforms every day."

Despite (or perhaps, because of) the increased military presence in schools, he said counter-recruitment groups have had difficulty with their own access.

"It's interesting to note that there is a legal precedent for counter-recruiters to have equal access … there are more and more groups that want to be involved in counter-recruiting, but they have great difficulty getting into schools," Kershner said. "Districts will just reflexively refuse, but … by allowing recruiters in, schools are creating a public forum, and opposing views are allowed to be present."

New responses to youth-targeted militarism are regularly being developed, Jahnkow said, often using technological advances to "present information in a distilled way." From designing computer games in the 1980s to developing apps in the 2010s, he and his colleagues in the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY) are constantly tracking the best ways to inform students.

Students and Veterans as Powerful Voices

Throughout the decades, word-of-mouth has continued to be a crucial way to spread the word about the realities of recruitment, according to Jahnkow.

"If we stand near schools on the corner handing out leaflets to the kids, they'll bring them into school and start talking about them with their friends," he said. He believes the second most effective messengers for the counter-recruitment movement are students themselves, especially those supported by organizations like NNOMY, [BAY-Peace](#) or [Project YANO](#), with whose help San Diego students effectively organized to rid their schools of the JROTC program.

But the most powerful voice is that of military veterans, Jahnkow emphasized. "Veterans expose contradictions," he said. "When we get students to question what they're told about the military, to think critically, we're helping them to evolve."

In *Counter-Recruitment*, Kershner interviews a veteran named Yvette, who "relishes the chance to talk with the military recruiters she meets in schools and to challenge the stories they tell students":

> She always introduces herself as a veteran when approaching a recruiter and takes care to be cordial, not confrontational. She shares the pamphlets … photocopied flyers with titles like Know Before You Go and What Every Girl Should Know About the U.S. Military. The response from recruiters varies wildly. "I've had lots of recruiters say, 'Yeah, they need to know that information'," [Yvette said.] "But then a lot of recruiters look at me like I'm the scum of the earth."

This pushback from recruiters, as well as the need to relive painful experiences, can be "an occupational hazard of counter-recruitment" to veterans, who are already prone to post-traumatic stress that can be triggered by confrontations, Kershner said. "If you have war trauma, activism can be very draining."

"In 2009, half of our conference attendees were youth activists," he said. "Youth are not as interested now. Most of the people doing counter-recruitment are older folks, and they've reported difficulty relating to teens. They wish they had more youth and veterans to work with."

Counter-recuitment Inside Out: Counter-recruitment strategies in perspective from practice and analysis

June Brumer is one of the "older folks" who has been counter-recruiting for decades, first as a member of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, and currently with Grandmothers Against War. Based in Oakland, she's been visiting classrooms and career fairs with veterans since the 1990s. As grandmothers, it's not too difficult for members of her group to get into schools ("white hair is helpful," she smiled), but it's not the grandmothers who capture the students' attention.

"The veteran who speaks to the kids makes the biggest impact," she said. "The kids want to hear about the veterans' experience, and they want to ask questions … although over the years, the kids' reaction has changed to 'What war?'"

But these days, Brumer said, it's hard to find enough veterans to participate.

Even veterans committed to the cause are often unable to keep up the work, Kershner said. Ever since the so-called "end" of the Iraq war (in quotes because there are still around 3,600 U.S. troops in Iraq on any given day), he said both veteran and youth interest in counter-recruitment has dropped.

Hart Viges, an Iraq veteran in Austin, Texas, spends many of his days talking with high school students about his military experience. He has been doing counter-recruitment work for nearly 10 years and sees it as a major part of the long-term struggle against militarism. He finds the work he does with the direct-outreach group Sustainable Options for Youth to be healing, if also exhausting.

"To me, every action is significant," he said. "It's the slow grind to the long game. Every time I leave a school, there is a feeling of accomplishment that replenishes the soul."

"Plant a Seed, Sow a Harvest"

It's the long game that matters, Jahnkow believes.

"When it comes to planning and strategy, the military is all about that, and when we don't do that, we shoot ourselves in the foot," he said. "The movement does see the big picture, but until many more people who are actively involved in working on various issues pay attention to [long-term strategy], they're going to keep having to put out fires."

He added, "You might be concerned about Palestine, women's right to choose, etc., but if seeds are being planted by the military at this point for people in elementary and high school, you're going to keep having your movement depressed."

The metaphor of planting seeds is a familiar one, Kershner said. "'Plant a seed, sow a harvest' -- this is recruiters' language. Counter-recruiters need to be using this language, too." To be most effective, he said, activists should work with teachers' unions, as individual control over their curriculum is being lost to the Department of Defense and JROTC programs.

The movement also needs to be training the next generation of activists, Kershner asserted. "Veterans, especially members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, can help by sharing their recruitment stories," he

said. "Counter-recruiters can reach out to educators' journals and conferences."

He suggested Americans should be concerned about the privacy violations schools flirt with when they mandate ASVAB testing and release of students' scores to recruiters, noting that privacy "isn't just a left-wing issue."

"People aren't aware that recruiters can wander around schools at all times," he said. "No other group has that kind of access, not even college recruiters. And there are documented cases of sexual assault by military recruiters. It really underlines the need for more regulation."

With the military firmly implanted within the educational system, the future looks like a bumpy one for the counter-recruitment movement, unless organizations like BAY-Peace and are able to find funding and volunteers to continue their work. There's literature to be researched and printed, classrooms to visit, career fairs to attend, school boards and city councils to petition -- all this requires more time, energy and money.

However, counter-recruitment activists aren't giving up anytime soon. Brumer, who's now in her sixth decade of organizing for peace, has some advice for those who are interested in getting involved.

"Bring it down to you, what you can do," she said. "There's a saying in the Talmud: 'If you save one life, you save the world.' So I feel like if I keep one kid out of the military, I've done my job."

Source: http://nnomy.org/index.php/en/all-content/article-archive/item/715-bringing-truth-to-the-youth-the-counter-recruitment-movement-then-and-now.html

Henry Giroux on the Militarization of Public Pedagogy

Seth Kershner -

Critique is Not Enough

As a counterpoint to the current hand-wringing over public education in the U.S., it may be helpful to remember that we will spend a comparatively small amount of time during our lives as students in the classroom. That the focus thus far has been on teachers and tests should not surprise us, however. These are tangible, and measurable, aspects of education. It happens to be much harder to reform – or even to keep track of – the educational force of culture. What does that force look like? As C. Wright Mills put it in his famous BBC address, "The Cultural Apparatus," we base our understanding of the world around us not only on schools but also on "the observation posts, the interpretation centers" and "presentation depots" of the mass media and entertainment industry (Mills 406). "Taken as a whole," Mills continued, "the cultural apparatus is the lens of mankind through which men see; the medium by which they interpret and report what they see" (Mills 406). The media's overpowering influence in our lives and the fact that we never actually confront pristine reality (only a mediated version thereof), raises the question: Could the cultural apparatus be the most influential teacher we ever have?

Mills, of course, was speaking more than half-a-century ago. In search of a more contemporary take on the matter, I spoke with Henry Giroux, a former professor at Penn State and currently the Global Television Network Chair of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada. Professor Giroux is author or co-author of more than 50 books, including *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex* (Paradigm, 2007) and his newest work, *Youth in Revolt: Reclaiming a Democratic Future* (Paradigm, 2013). Professor Giroux calls the educational influence of mass culture "public pedagogy" and has over the years used the examples of Disney films and popular television shows like *Mad Men* to expose and critique the embedded pedagogy of popular

culture. As he remarked in our interview, "The most powerful educational force in the US is not the schools, it's outside the schools."

I talked with Henry last February about public pedagogy, the promotion of pro-military values in schools, and organized efforts by students themselves to resist these trends.

SK: I just got back from San Diego, where my colleague and I spoke with young people who had been student activists in their high school. These kids and their peers had become radicalized after their principal cut back on their college-prep curriculum to make way for a JROTC unit.[1] These students – many of whom were Latino and from economically disadvantaged backgrounds – could no longer take AP Spanish, but they could learn marksmanship on the campus's JROTC firing range.

HG: This is an important issue and symptomatic of a much larger problem. Public schools are not simply being corporatized, they are also subjected increasingly to a militarizing logic that disciplines the bodies of young people, especially low income and poor minorities, and shapes their desires and identities in the service of military values and social relations. For a lot of these young people, there are only a few choices here: you can be unemployed and hopefully be able to participate in some way in the social safety net, you can take a low-income job, you can end up in prison or you can go into the military. And it seems to me that increasingly the military is becoming the best option of all of those. So you have a whole generation which – by virtue of this massive inequality – really has very limited choices. But also you have these institutions that are basically there to socialize kids, telling them the only way to succeed is to join the military-industrial complex, and that there really are no other options, at least for them. Moreover, as these young people are subject to the warring logics of a militarized society, a society in which life itself is increasingly absorbed into a war machine, it becomes difficult for them to imagine a social order that can be otherwise, one that is organized around democratic values.

SK: Like this program I've been following: it's called STARBASE. This is a Defense Department program that every year reaches around 70,000 students in over one-thousand schools – the majority of them in fifth grade. Pitched as a way to supplement school curriculum in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields, there's an insidious element of military marketing at work: soldiers "mentor" students enrolled in this program and most of the instruction takes place at military installations. As part of the program students are given plenty of time to horse around on "cool" military hardware.

HG: It's mind-blowing. I think what we often forget – and this is something that you and others like yourself are trying to make clear – is that when you talk about the militarization of American society

you're not just talking about increasing the military budget or arming the police with military-style weapons and so forth. You're also talking about the militarization of a culture in which military values and relationships permeate every aspect of what C. Wright Mills called the cultural apparatus – schools, fashion, movies and screen culture. Violence becomes the only shared relationship that we have to each other, the only mediating form through which people can now solve problems. More insidiously, it defines our sense of identity and personal liberation through violence both as a mediating force and as a source of pleasure and entertainment. It's one of the reasons why the majority of people in the U.S. support state-sanctioned torture. How do you explain that? It's really a culture that's become so saturated in this military/violent mindset that it has lost any sense of critical thought and ethical responsibility and has little understanding of what a democratic society might look like.

SK: Militarism in the schools is of course just one aspect of a larger culture of militarism in the U.S. And this gets at your notion of public pedagogy, doesn't it?

HG: I may be terribly wrong but I think the central issue here is that first of all you have to realize that the educational force of the culture represents the most important pedagogical force at work in the United States, Canada, and in many other countries. This is not to suggest that schools are not involved in the process of teaching and learning. But I think we commit a grave mistake when we assume that schools are the only place where learning goes on. I would be willing to argue – and I have argued – that the most powerful educational force in the US is not the schools, it's outside the schools. Young people are awash in a public pedagogy that is distributed across numerous sites that extend from movies and the Internet, readily amplified through a range of digital apparatuses that include cell phones, computers and other electronic registers of the new and expanded cultural flows.   When schools fail to make a connection between knowledge and everyday life – between knowledge and these ever expanding cultural apparatuses – they fail to understand, interrogate, and question the educational forces that are having an enormous influence on children. The ongoing commercial carpet-bombing of kids through a range of ever expanding technologies–that make possible new social networks and information flows–is aggressively commodifying every aspect of their lives. Not to address this and make it pedagogically problematic, not to interrogate the massive violence kids are exposed to through screen culture and the new digital technologies is to do an enormous disservice to the way in which young people are being educated by the wider culture.

SK: But young people are resisting, in various ways. You were obviously inspired to write your latest book because you believe youth have a role to play in fighting and changing the system.

HG: As someone from the generation of the '60s, I'm enormously inspired by what they're doing. Right now they may be the only chance that we have. Consider their courage: the bravery of these

young kids in Occupy Wall Street fighting against state-sanctioned violence in the form of police pepper spray, police dragging them off to jail and arresting them en masse. They've become a model for what it is to stand up to this one percent that has turned the US into an authoritarian society. I think that what these kids are doing is not only producing a new language to talk about inequality and power relations in the US but they're actually trying to create public spaces where new forms of social relationships inspired by democratic and cooperative values are really becoming meaningful. These young people are rethinking the very nature of politics and asking serious questions about what democracy is and why it no longer exists in many capitalist countries across the globe. They have been written out of the discourses of justice, equality, and democracy and are not only resisting how neoliberalism has made them expendable, but they are also arguing for a collective future very different from the one that is on display in the current political and economic systems in which they feel trapped. That's important.

But they face enormous challenges. They don't have access to the dominant media. They're trying to use new media to create new modes of communication. They're trying to understand what democratic processes might mean in terms of sustaining collective struggles, and all of this takes time. I think that rather than saying that Occupy Wall Street has died, we can say that they're in the process of understanding what the long march through alternative institutions might mean.

As conditions get worse in the U.S. this movement will grow and take on an international significance. Hopefully they'll join with young people in other countries to figure out how to address the biggest problem that the global community faces – politics is local and power is global. Nation-states can't control the flow of capital; it's outside the boundaries of nation-states. So, we need a politics that's global to be able to deal with that.

SK: In reflecting on my own research I've seen examples of school administrators treating student activists in two distinctly different ways. In my area, Western Massachusetts, for example, there are high school students who are very heavily involved in organizing around issues of ecology and sustainability. They lobby for locally grown foods to be served in the cafeteria, install small garden plots for community members, school officials give them land on school property to grow vegetables, and so on. But then you have the students in San Diego that I mentioned before. Because they were fighting against the military presence in their schools they were seen as agitators. School administrators and police would conduct video surveillance of the students' marches, and one of their leaders was prevented from taking part in the graduation ceremony with the rest of his class. What might explain the differential response here?

HG: As long as these modes of resistance don't challenge relations of power, that's fine with school

officials and others in a position of authority. As long as they're focused on students finding a happy spot in themselves, positive thinking, that's fine. But as soon as they start talking about power, militarization, inequality, racism – all those things that point to deep structural problems—student resistance and dissent is viewed as exceeding its possibilities and limits. Just look at what happened in places like Arizona, where these racist educators and politicians succeeded in banning ethnic studies. When young people protested against their history, culture, and forms of witnessing being excluded from the curriculum, they were labeled as criminals, communists, and agitators.

What is most important in terms of these youth movements is that you have a lot of young people making connections, saying "Look you can't talk about the rise in tuition unless you talk about the attack on the social state and social protections. You can't talk about what's happening in education unless you talk about the rise of the punishing state." In a place like California where more is spent on prisons than on education clearly those connections are what give force to a generation of students who are simply refusing to isolate these issues. It no longer makes sense to say that these are spoiled kids who don't want to spend much for their education. These young people are developing a conversation about society at large, calling into question its most fundamentally oppressive economic, political, and educational structures.

Also, young people are recognizing that they're not going to find their voice in the Democratic Party or in the existing labor unions. What they really need to fight for are new mass and collective organizations that can call the entirety of society into question and mobilize so as to develop the policies and institutions that make a new and radically democratic society possible.

SK: Here's a paradox for you: How do you teach social change or resistance to authority within public schools – institutions that many have criticized for being authoritarian and resistant to change?

HG: You can't do it if you believe these institutions are so authoritarian that there's simply no room for resistance. That's a mistake. Power is never so overwhelming that there's no room for resistance. Power and the forms it takes are always contradictory in different ways and there is always some room for resistance. What needs to be understood is the intensity of dominant power in different contexts and how it can be named, understood, and fought.   The issue here is to seize upon the contradictions at work in these institutions and to develop them in ways that make a difference. During the sixties, the term for this was the long march through institutions and the reference had little to do with reform but with massive restructuring of the instruments of democracy.

And we also need to impose a certain kind of responsibility upon adults in the schools – whether they be social workers, university professors, or high school teachers. Clearly it's not enough to say they

operate under terrible burdens that make them voiceless. I understand those structural conditions but it doesn't mean they shouldn't resist either. That means they not only have to promote particular kinds of pedagogies in their classrooms but they also have to join social movements that give them the force of a collective voice that can bear down on these problems and create change.

The greatest battle that we're facing in the U.S. today is around the question of consciousness.   If people don't have an understanding of the nature of the problems they face they're going to succumb to the right-wing educational populist machine. This is a challenge that the Left has never taken seriously because it really doesn't understand that at the center of politics is the question of pedagogy. Pedagogy is not marginal, it is not something that can be reduced to a method, limited to what happens in high schools, or to what college professors say in their classes. Pedagogy is fundamental not only to the struggle over culture but also, if not more importantly, the struggle over meaning and identity. It's a struggle for consciousness, a struggle over the gist of agency, if not the future itself – a struggle to convince people that society is more than what it is, that the future doesn't simply have to mimic the present.

SK: What would this look like in practice? One encouraging experiment I had the privilege of observing up close is taking place at the Emiliano Zapata Street Academy in Oakland. There, in an "alternative high school" within the Oakland Unified School District, student interns working with a group called BAY-Peace lead youth in interactive workshops on topics relevant to their lives: street violence, the school-to-prison pipeline, military recruiters in their schools, and so on.

HG: I think two things have to go on here, and you just mentioned one of them. We've got to talk about alternative institutions. There has to be some way to build institutions that provide a different model of education. On the Left, we had this in the '20s and '30s: socialists had Sunday schools, they had camps; they found alternative ways to educate a generation of young people to give them a different understanding of history, of struggle. We need to reclaim that legacy, update it for the twenty-first century, and join the fight over the creation of new modes of thinking, acting, and engaging ourselves and our relations to others.

On the second level is what Rudi Dutschke called what I referred to earlier as the "long march through the institutions." It's a model that makes a tactical claim to having one foot in and one foot out. You can't turn these established institutions over to the Right. You can't simply dismiss them by saying they're nothing more than hegemonic institutions that oppress people. That's a retreat from politics. You have to fight within these institutions. Not only that, you have to create new public spheres.

SK: Henry, we've covered a lot of territory. Is there anything we haven't addressed that you would like

to bring up before closing?

HG: We need both a language of critique and a language of hope. Critique is essential to what we do but it can never become so overwhelming that all we become are critics and nothing else. It is counterproductive for the left to engage in declarations of powerlessness, without creating as Jacques Rancière argues "new objects, forms, and spaces that thwart official expectations." What we need to do is theorize, understand and fight for a society that is very different from the one in which we now live. That means taking seriously the question of pedagogy as central to any notion of viable progressive politics; it means working collectively with others to build social movements that address a broader language of our society – questions of inequality and power (basically the two most important issues we can talk about now.) And I think that we need to find ways to support young people because the most damage that's going to be done is going to be heaped upon the next generations. So what we're really fighting for is not just democracy; we're fighting for the future. And so critique is not enough; we need a language of critique and we need a language of possibility to be able to go forward with this.

Source: http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/09/27/teaching-and-learning-with-henry-giroux/

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