

Greens Say 'No to NATO' While War Parties Give Standing Ovations to NATO

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Greens are political activists and can be found in every movement for economic, racial and environmental justice as well as peace. They do not organize as Greens but as people who are part of the popular movement. The article below about the week of protests against NATO highlights Greens who participated, often as organizers with other peace and justice activists. There were many more Greens at these events than are mentioned. I apologize to those who are omitted.

Last week was one of contrast over the issue of war and militarism as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came to Washington, DC. "[No to NATO](#)" protests began on March 30 and continued until the meeting of NATO foreign ministers on April 4. While people were opposing NATO's aggressive militarism, the two Wall Street and war parties were giving the NATO General Secretary standing ovations.

Many Greens, working with other peace and anti-imperialist activists, helped to organize the week of actions and many other Greens participated. The Green Party showed itself to be the alternative to the two-winged War Party of the Democrats and Republicans, a party that stands for an end to militarism and imperialism.

The protests began on March 30, 2019, with a mass rally and march across the street from the White House in Lafayette Park. The event was organized by the [United National Antiwar Coalition](#) (UNAC) whose national co-coordinator is Joe Lombardo, a Green Party member from Albany, NY. Lombardo, an antiwar organizer since the Vietnam War era, immediately announced a response to NATO when their meeting was made public. Lombardo framed the protest as stopping wars abroad and at home emphasizing the wars at home when the April 4 date was chosen by NATO. It was important to highlight militarized police and police abuse in communities of color, especially on the anniversary the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. being [killed by the government in 1968](#) and his important speech, [Beyond Vietnam](#), which called for an end to war given one year before his murder.



Ajamu Baraka (center) and the Black Alliance for Peace (BAP) at No to NATO protest on March 30, 2019, in Washington, DC. On left Paul Pumphrey of the Maryland Green Party and Friends of the Congo, to the right of, Ajamu Baraka, YahNé Ndgo formerly of the Pennsylvania Greens currently a traveling Green and Asantewaa Mawusi Nkrumah-Ture of the Pennsylvania Greens active in BAP and the Poor People's Economic and Human Rights Campaign Campaign.

Ajamu Baraka, the former Green Party vice presidential candidate who is the national organizer of [Black Alliance for Peace](#) (BAP), was also involved in organizing the week of

events. BAP had a large presence at the events and on the evening of April 4 held a [commemoration of BAPs founding two years ago](#). Baraka emphasized that the working class, black and white, should not be risking their lives to defend western capitalism. Baraka called for an end to US imperialism around the world with a special emphasis on Venezuela, which is now being threatened by the United States that is conducting an economic war against it.

The 2012 vice presidential nominee also participated in the events. Cheri Honkala (pictured in the featured image holding the banner) leads the [Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign](#) (PPEHRC). She decried the mass spending on militarism when there are many unmet human needs including poverty, homelessness, and economic insecurity. At the NATO protests, PPEHRC announced the Poor People's Army that will advocate for a shift in spending from weapons and war to housing, healthcare, ending poverty and free education from pre-K through college.

These views were consistent with those expressed by Howie Hawkins, who just announced an [exploratory committee for the Green presidential nomination](#). He scheduled his announcement so he could be in Washington, DC to be part of the NATO protests. Hawkins joined in calling for the end of NATO and at least a 50% cut in federal spending on the military. At a rally at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, Hawkins called for an Economic Bill of Rights that would confront the triple evils identified by King — racism, militarism, and capitalism — in the context of an ecosocialist Green New Deal. Hawkins was the first person to run a campaign calling for a Green New Deal when he ran for governor of New York in 2010.

Video by Tony Ndege of the North Carolina Green Party and a co-chair of the Green Party of the United States.

Pat Elder, a Green from Maryland who ran against Steny Hoyer in 2018 and a leader with World Beyond War, helped to organize a Peace Festival on April 3 and the protests at the State Department and Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial on the 4th. Pat's work with Civilian Exposure focuses on how the military poisons the environment. He described how [NATO poisons the Earth](#) by using chemicals at military bases that cause genetic mutations.



Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese along with Jan Weinberg take the street outside the State Department by sitting-in when ordered to move by the police. On the right is Tighe Barry of the Statehood-Green Party, on the left is Medea Benjamin of CODE PINK who is Green-friendly. Also photographed Ariel Gold of CODE PINK.

[Popular Resistance](#), which I co-direct with Margaret Flowers, MD, also helped to organize the week of events through the newly organized Peace Congress, which formed out of the successful [campaign to stop the Trump military parade](#). The [Peace Congress worked for unity around the NATO protests](#) to ensure the multiple peace groups involved in the planning worked together to form a cohesive peace force against NATO.

Flowers, a 2016 Green Party US Senate candidate and co-chair of the Green Party of the United States, said, "We need a strong unified peace movement at this time of never-ending war and record-setting military budgets. The United States is a fading empire that continues to cause chaos and destruction around the world. It is time for the transformation of US foreign policy from war and domination to diplomacy and cooperation with other countries."

Tom Violet and Diane Moxley, Greens from New Jersey along with independent Jan Weinberg were also at the week of actions. They are all members of the Peace Congress and are organizing a New Jersey Peace Congress meeting this June.

The Green Party has long been an anti-militarist party whose [platform calls for peace and disarmament](#). This includes the abolishment of nuclear and chemical weapons, a no-first-strike policy and a major reduction in military spending as well as a prohibition on arms sales to foreign governments. Peace is one of the [four pillars on which the Green Party is built](#).

Greens who were involved in organizing the 'No To NATO' protests are one example of many that demonstrate that Greens are leading organizers of political movements for economic, racial and environmental justice as well as peace. Greens who run for office bring those views into elections and impact the priorities of the nation. The Green Party strives to be the political party of the popular movement for transformational change.

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