



peace & justice news

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Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control *Upcoming Cost of War Series Events*

■ Global Day of Action on Military Spending – April 15

On this day, people on all continents will join together in joint actions to focus public, political, and media attention on the costs of military spending and the need for new priorities. The Peace & Justice Center and other groups are organizing events throughout the state, focused on drone warfare. To plan an event, contact Colleen at 802-863-2345 x 8 or program@pjcv.org.

■ Medea Benjamin

Medea Benjamin will be speaking at the First Unitarian Universalist Society, 152 Pearl St., Burlington. Medea Benjamin is a political activist, best known for co-founding Code Pink and fair trade advocacy group, Global Exchange. She has been an advocate for social justice for more than 30 years. A former economist and nutritionist with the United Nations and World Health Organization, Benjamin is the author/editor of eight books. Her latest book is called *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, and she has been campaigning to get lethal drones out of the hands of the CIA.

Burlington: 6:30pm – Meet at the corner of Church and Main St., silent procession up Church St. in memory of the victims of drone attacks. Wear black, or black arm

bands will be provided.

7:00pm – Medea Benjamin speaking at the First Unitarian Universalist Society. Free (donations welcome). Lead organizer: Colleen: program@pjcv.org, 863-2345 x8.
Richmond: 4-5pm – Protest/Rally. Meet at the intersection of Main and Jericho Sts. Come dressed in black, holding signs to hand out flyers with information about drones to passers-by. Lead organizer: Guthrie Smith – call the PJC for more information 863-2345 x 8.

Montpelier: 12-1pm – Bake sale in front of the Montpelier Post Office. Bring signs!

Theme: It'll be a great day when schools have all the money they need, and the military holds a bake sale to buy bombs! Organized by Central VT Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Info: Sandy at sandyb@pshift.com
Brattleboro: 10am-2pm. Meet at the

Brattleboro Post Office for music, vigil, and tabling with war tax resistance literature. More information 802-387-2798 or email dhsicken@yahoo.com. Organized by Pioneer Valley War Tax Resistance.
Manchester: Check the PJC website for more information.
Middlebury: Check the PJC website for more information.



Medea Benjamin and Robin Lloyd at the 2013 World Social Forum in Tunisia, holding a WILPF banner.

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PJC MISSION

Our mission is to create a just and peaceful world. To this end, we work on the interconnected issues of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights through education, advocacy, training and non-violent activism, and community organizing, since 1979.

Fair Trade Campaigns and the Global Movement

By Kristen Connors, PJC Intern

2013 marks an exciting new step forward in the world of Fair Trade. Fairtrade International (FLO) and Fair Trade USA (FTUSA), two major Fair Trade organizations, have both launched new campaigns and strategies to take Fair Trade into the future, and to continue to spread the movement around the world! Although the two organizations' strategies differ in both objective and approach, both aim to make significant contributions to strengthening the Fair Trade movement for producers and consumers all over the world.

FLO will launch a campaign for 2013-2015, *Unlocking the Power of Many*, in order to increase its impact on producer livelihoods, to bring more people into the movement, and reap bigger and better benefits for those who belong to Fair Trade organizations. Partnerships between producers will also be enhanced by the simplification of certification standards, and the expansion of certification to include not only compliance with Fair Trade standards, but also for impact and development outcomes. The plan includes four different strategies to harness the "Power of Many," and includes working more closely with smallholders, workers, citizens and companies in the global Fairtrade network. Uncovering the power, creativity, and passion of these people will allow FLO to help grow and strengthen the Fair Trade movement over the next three years. A more detailed description of the campaign can be found at the FLO website, www.fairtrade.net.

As the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals gets closer, FTUSA wants to take a proactive step in helping develop a new framework that can reach beyond the Millennium Development Goals to address issues of sustainable development in the coming years. In September 2013, the UN will hold a General Assembly High-Level meeting to develop a new framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. The new Fair Trade Beyond 2015 campaign, launched in November 2012, aims to take advantage of this small "window of opportunity" before this High-Level meeting to show the UN delegates that the world wants to see a new framework that addresses the root causes of poverty, and highlights the need to reform current trade rules and practices, and presents Fair Trade as a best practices model for development and poverty reduction. Representatives from the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), Fairtrade International (FLO), and the Fair Trade Towns Campaign were the first to sign the campaign declaration.

In the first phase, Fair Trade Beyond 2015 aims to collect signatures from elected officials and civil society organizations all over the world that support the Fair Trade Beyond 2015 Declaration, showing that they support Fair Trade as a necessary alternative to the current trade model. Secondly, all the signatures will be sent to the UN before their High-Level meeting. Anyone may participate in this campaign by asking local elected officials and civil society organizations to sign the declaration. Materials and forms can be easily downloaded at the Fair Trade Towns USA website (www.fairtradetownsusa.org).

With these two new campaigns underway, everyone is once again invited to participate in the Fair Trade movement, whether it is simply choosing to purchase Fair Trade coffee or tea that week, asking the Mayor or Town Manager to support the Fair Trade Beyond 2015 Declaration, or participating in World Fair Trade day events on May 11th. Showing support for Fair Trade is as simple as speaking to your family, friends, or neighbors about the movement, and everyone has something they can contribute in order to strengthen Fair Trade, and improve the lives of families and communities all over the world. ☺

Celebrate World Fair Trade Day!

Join the movement that is giving a voice to small producers around the world. We live in a very unique state with small and large companies showing support and recognizing the need for companies and consumers to take action for a more sustainable economic system that honors the environment, the producers and consumers. Our World Fair Trade celebration is bringing together schools, colleges, parents, activists and many others in our community to celebrate our accomplishments, but more importantly — to connect with new people and new ideas. This is an opportunity to challenge each other into taking action for justice and sustainability for the producers, the environment and all of us as consumers. Join the movement, come and learn how you can get involved!

Saturday, May 11, 11am-1pm, City Hall Park along Main St, Burlington

Enjoy free Ben and Jerry's ice cream. Jeh Kulu performance. Samples from many fair trade vendors!

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■ Matt Kennard Book Tour – May 6-8

Matt Kennard is a British author and free lance journalist, whose articles can be found in the *Guardian*, *Salon*, the *Nation*, and the *New York Times*.

“Since the launch of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars—now the longest wars in American history—the US military has struggled to recruit troops. It has responded, as Matt Kennard’s explosive investigative report makes clear, by

opening its doors to neo-Nazis, white supremacists, gang members, criminals of all stripes, the overweight, and the mentally ill. Based on several years of reporting, *Irregular Army* includes extensive interviews with extremist veterans and leaders of far-right hate groups—who spoke openly of their eagerness to have their followers acquire military training for a coming domestic race war. As a report commissioned by the Department of Defense itself put it, “Effectively, the military has a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ policy pertaining to extremism.”

His book “... makes a...strong case that nothing good lies in the future so long as the American government continues to dissolve its standards of human decency to keep the pipeline filled with new soldiers.” (Daily Beast).

Kennard will be speaking as part of the Peace & Justice Center’s Cost of War Speaker and Film Series about his new book.

May 6th – Middlebury College – more info coming soon

May 7th – More info coming soon

May 8th – Burlington – Fletcher Free Library, Community Room, 7:00pm. 

Drone Strikes

By Andrew Schoerke

The US policy for waging the War On Terror is simple: Find al Qaeda terrorists and kill them. To do this, unmanned combat air systems, commonly known as drones, have become the weapon of choice. To date, the independent Bureau of Investigative Journalism (UK), reports drones have killed 2,629-3,461 people in Pakistan, including 475-891 civilians; 374-1,112 in Yemen, including 72-178 civilians and 58-170 in Somalia, including 11-57 civilians.

By contrast, the CIA believes that drone strikes conducted in Pakistan since May 2010 have killed over 600 militants with no civilian fatalities.

The justification and success of US drone warfare, however, is refuted in a recently completed joint study by Stanford University and New York University which concludes, “First: In the United States, the dominant narrative about the use of drones in Pakistan is of a surgically precise and effective tool that makes the US safer by enabling targeted killing of terrorists, with minimal down-sides or collateral impacts. This narrative is false. Second: US drone strike policies cause considerable and under-accounted-for harm to the daily lives of ordinary civilians, beyond death and physical injury. Drones hover 24 hours a day over communities in northwest Pakistan, striking homes, vehicles, and public

spaces without warning. Their presence terrorizes men, women, and children, giving rise to anxiety and psychological trauma among civilian communities.

Those living under drones have to face the constant worry that a deadly strike may be fired at any moment, and the knowledge that they are powerless to protect themselves. Third: evidence that the strikes have made the US safer overall is ambiguous at best. The strikes have certainly killed alleged combatants and disrupted armed actor networks. However, serious concerns about the efficacy and counter-productive nature of drone strikes have been raised. The number of ‘high-level’ targets killed as a percentage of total casualties is extremely low – estimated at just 2 percent. Furthermore, evidence suggests that US strikes have facilitated recruitment to violent non-state armed groups, and motivated further violent attacks.”

Retired General Stanley McChrystal, former commander of the International Afghanistan Security Force as well as Joint Special Operations Command-Seals – on January 7th said: “the use of drones exacerbates a perception of American arrogance that says, ‘Well we can fly where we want, we can shoot where we want, because we can.’”

In a series titled “Permanent War,” the Washington Post describes the “Disposition Matrix,” a database that is reported to be the “next-generation capture/kill

list.” Developed by the Obama Administration beginning in 2010, the “Disposition Matrix” goes beyond former lists, and creates a blueprint for tracking, capturing, rendering or killing terrorism suspects; it is intended to become a permanent fixture of American policy.

The resources needed to identify, track and locate terrorists have increased exponentially. To continue updating the list the Pentagon will expand its intelligence effort by sending as many as 1,600 new “collectors” around the world to ferret out terror groups. The number of drone bases is also increasing with new ones being located in Djibouti, Niger and Saudi Arabia as well as Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Drone killing is being challenged and will have to answer in court whether it is legal under US as well as international laws to assassinate alleged terrorists in countries that we are not at war with. The unanticipated results of drone war are the metastasized spread of al Qaeda and its progeny that are springing up throughout the Middle East and North Africa coupled with a virulent hatred of the US in many Islamic countries. The Disposition Matrix is evidence that we will remain in a state of permanent war for many years to come.

Schoerke, of Shaftsbury, VT, is a member of Veterans For Peace. 

Commission on the Status of Women

By Peggy Luhrs, *Women's International League for Peace & Freedom*

This year I was fortunate to be among the L2G attendees at the UN Committees on the Status of Women. L2G is the shorthand for *local to global* wherein WILPF chooses local WILPF members to attend the global meeting in March at the United Nations. They also pick a larger number of practicum attendees who are mainly students, grad students or recently out of college or the Peace Corps. We started out together at an orientation conducted by WILPF staff. The week was packed with workshops in three locations outside the UN. That is where I spent most of my time. I did tour the UN with the entire group. But passes to UN sessions were limited and I didn't think I would learn nearly as much listening to the UN

bureaucrats as I would learn from women speaking directly about the problems and issues in their countries. The theme this year was ending violence against women.

The first Sunday provided a program of initiatives from around the world. It opened with girls representing Girl Be Heard. Their presentation was done as song, rap, and dance. It was moving and effective. We were introduced to the women heading up the UN Women's Division. We went on to learn about campaigns against violence going on around the world. One that seemed effective or at least had very effective ads was the Indian campaign against domestic violence called *Ring the Bell* that encourages bystanders, particularly men, to get involved in stopping violence by

ringing the doorbell when they hear abuse. See it here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcL7nxlsV5I&playnext=1&list=PL17CE7B962F802F82&feature=results_main

There was a short but useful workshop on social media campaigns. There were speakers from South Africa talking about men becoming involved in ending violence against women. This clearly was a theme of the day and it is gratifying to see that finally some men are understanding how important it is for them to get involved in creating a saner version of masculinity.

It was stimulating to attend panels with women from Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, and Costa Rica as well as North America and Europe. I learned that Australian women have formed a Security Council Watch group,

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The Invisible Cinema

By Medina Korajkic, *PJC Cost of War Intern*

It seems to me that nominations, awards, and viral YouTube videos have a lot to do with whether or not the majority of America will see problems that are happening right in front of our faces. I recall Jason Russell narrating a 30-minute video about the "Invisible Children" of Northern Uganda and the violent actions of the LRA. Photos, posters, stickers, and buttons, reading "KONY 2012" were plastered everywhere I looked for a week. After only a few days and 95 million hits on YouTube, the passion died. It has now been a year since this movement began, yet it seems like ages ago. Feeling out of the loop? Haven't succumbed to the instant gratification, short attention-span world of viral videos like most of mainstream America? We'll fill you in on what you've been missing when it comes to films that are speaking truth about today's social justice issues.

■ The Invisible War

Fast-forwarding to spring 2013, we are presented with a whole new dilemma, this one being closer to home than we realize. *The Invisible War*, a documentary written and directed by Kirby Dick about veterans of the Armed Forces who suffered sexual assaults by fellow service members, gained a lot of attention after being nominated for an

Academy Award. Though it didn't win the award, the majority of Americans now know that this issue exists through the mere mention of the title during the awards ceremony. Interested in hosting a screening? Call or email Colleen at 802-863-2345 x 8 or program@pjcv.org.

■ The Wounded Platoon

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), one of the most recognized mental illnesses diagnosed in a veteran, is more debilitating than people realize. The effects are not limited to jumping at loud sounds and having nightmares. This movie illustrates the devastating aftermath of three army friends now serving time for a string of murders. PBS's Frontline explores how serious psychiatric disorders of veterans can lead to violent and self-destructive behavior.

■ The Ground Truth

Another approach to veterans dealing with PTSD, this documentary deals with the difficulties of reentering society. The men and women in this film talk about their lives before, during, and after the war, when they realize they can no longer lead a normal life. The military has a tendency to cover up the harsher aspects of serving, which include

serious risk of death and injury, and physically and mentally difficult training exercises, which can drastically alter the psyche. Bullets and bombs are the primary source of physical injury in war. What we fail to discuss, however, is the cause of psychological damage. Before serving, soldiers commented that they never knew if they would be ready to *kill* a person, when the time came. After aggressive training programs and fighting in a war, they have difficulty coming out of a mindset they are trained to live in; a constant state of alertness, self-defense, and detachment. This film does a great job representing the struggles people endure in war and in society.

■ The War Profiteers

In war, things that were once done by the government are now done by companies. The government used to provide food, laundry, housing, construction, and vehicle maintenance, but these are all now done by companies and paid for by our tax dollars. Contractors, such as Halliburton, Parsons Engineering & Construction, DynCorp International, Black Water and CACI, are earning billions of dollars working overseas for the war. Little did we know that \$0.40 out of every dollar goes to contractors, all of which is determined by Congress. This documentary gives us much insight into the way that contractors are working in the war to gain money and how it is being hidden from the public. 

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an idea US women might well emulate as our government tends to have the most sway in defining UN policy. That last sentence tells you why, despite vast agreement among women at the Forum, there was pessimism about achieving a decent agreement on the Arms Trade Agreement.

WILPF leadership including Madeleine Rees, WILPF Secretariat General, held a panel on the trafficking of women in which they emphasized how war and emergency situations, where military personnel ruled, created an accommodating atmosphere for sex trafficking. Earlier in the week WILPF held a panel on the nexus of violence against women and war. There was little disagreement among the women present that we need to sharply curtail, or better yet, end the arms trade, but that is as likely to happen as serious gun control passing in the USA.

I was heartened by the impressive international network WILPF has and how important a tool this could be. I was also struck, as I was in Beijing in 1995, with how much agreement there is among women and how much we face the same problems of violence in the home and from war and war related crises. A few decades of feminist academics telling us that we can't say "women" has not changed the reality of our still incredibly oppressive situation as women. The mostly men ruling the world seem hell-bent on more arms and more wars and ignoring the ecological crisis. Ordinary women can't ignore those realities on the ground and are likely to be most affected by them. The good news is that each time I go to one of these gatherings there are more women from more countries and they keep getting stronger. 



Robin's Nest

Social Forum 2013: Tunisia

By *Robin Lloyd*

Here on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, where the government of Cyprus may collapse thereby threatening the euro currency, or may revive itself, thereby protecting the corrupt oligarchs who used it as the Mediterranean's Cayman Islands; where Italy vacillates in the formation of a new government and where France is spell-bound by charges of greed and corruption against former President Sarkozy; where, in other words, the tottering edifice of European capitalism is succumbing to its excesses; here, on the African shore of the Mediterranean thousand of 'those from below' are gathering from March 26-30 for the first World Social Forum in the Arab world.

It is in Tunisia that the Arab spring began. On December 17, 2010, a young man, whose dream of a better world had been continually thwarted by bureau-

crats, set himself on fire. The fire started by Mohamed Bouazizi has spread around the world. The people gathering here will honor him, and through their solidarity will continue the revolution.

This area of the world, the Maghreb, is one of the most fraught regions of our planet. Climate change is causing the Sahara to sprawl beyond its borders, and is impelling a tsunami of migration, while patriarchal governments focus on diminishing and undermining the abilities of the women and young people who have the insights and energy to attempt real solutions.

The 'indignatos', and Occupiers of all countries, their tents torn down by the authorities, are meeting here. Will their voices be heard? They will make their own news, and they rely on you to disseminate it. Please follow developments at www.fsm2013.org. 



Peace & Justice Center receives threatening phone message

On Friday, March 22nd, the Center received a threatening phone message about our "Making Whiteness Visible" event on April 7th in Essex. Our racial justice program works to combat institutional racism and encourage cultural competency. In the message it is clear that the caller misinterprets the focus of the workshop. This event is intended to help include all people in the fight for racial justice. It will not "single white people out as being the problem," as the caller assumes. It highlights how racism is an injustice we should all be concerned with and that we all are effected by. The caller's says she will be forwarding the information to a "certain neo-Nazi organization" and she ends the call with a spooky and sarcastic "I hope only friendly people show up. Bye-bye." We do not take this threat lightly, it is important that people who attend our events are safe. This is a wake-up call that even extreme racism and intolerance are present in our community. It is important that we all join together to fight for racial justice; we will not be defeated by ignorance or hate.



Racial Justice

Educate a Girl and She Will Change the World

By Morgan Sherry, PJC Racial Justice Intern

It was in the wake of the PJC's involvement with the One Billion Rising campaign (February 2013), a movement dedicated to ending violence against women, that I discovered another campaign with a mission to improve the well being of global women. This campaign is called 10x10 and is a global action campaign that recently produced the film, *Girl Rising*.

10x10 has a simple mission, but essential to the success of young women around the world. Their campaign believes that by educating girls in developing nations, in due time, the world will change for the better. Through the power of storytelling and social issue film making, 10x10 has created the film *Girl Rising*. With the help of former ABC journalists such as Kayce Freed Jennings, and The Documentary Group, this incredible idea was transformed into a spectacular film that tells the personal stories of nine extraordinary girls from nine different countries around the world.

With such different lives to lead, these incredible young women share one very important goal: They want an education.

10x10 partners with policy leaders to influence governments and global institutions to enact and enforce laws that ensure each girl has an equal opportunity to fulfill her full potential. The campaign focuses on the education of women because they feel that educated girls have the ability to dramatically improve the well being of their families, communities, and their countries. Educated young women can, and will help reduce worldwide poverty, child mortality, HIV infection rates, corruption, and change the conditions that lead to terrorism.

The power of an education mixed with the influence of motivated women, is a recipe for success in terms of bettering the lives of women. It is easy to sit



around and wait for others to make change, but we need not wait.

The 10x10 campaign and the producers of *Girl Rising* have three major changes they seek to make in the world: To change minds, lives, and policies. These activists are forming a strong media presence and continuing fundraising in hopes of one day seeing the change they desired. The PJC is hoping to have a screening of this film locally. If you are interested in learning more contact Kyle at 863-2345 x6 or kyle@pjcv.org.

Listening to the Voices of Parents

Conversations On Race Now (CORN) was founded six years ago by Vivian Mason and Susan Linskey as a direct result of attending a weekend seminar by The Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond [organized by the Peace & Justice Center]. As mothers of children of color, their experiences with all aspects of racism and feeling a sense of isolation and silence around race/racism in our culture, drew them together to create a mechanism to create communications.

CORN was born from this desire to have folks engage in talks about their life experiences and share with one another in a safe, supportive, non-threatening environment. The key element of CORN is to provide safety for people of different backgrounds, ages and ethnicity in order to have genuine conversations. Their goal is to bring people together, build community, and become

comfortable talking about race ourselves and with others.

Susan and Vivian provide a structure, respectful guidance and emotional connections. The next CORN event is the second part of a presentation from October, "Voices of Youth" -in a restorative circle. This April 25th event will be the "Listening to Voices of Parents" -in a restorative circle, with audience participation.

The keynote speaker is Robert L. Walsh, noted author, graduate of Colgate and MA from UVM. Bob retired from the USMC as Lt. Colonel, served as a member of the VT House of Representatives, adjunct faculty at UVM, and taught African American Studies at South Burlington H.S. His life experience in these areas has afforded him a wide range of experience related to racism in our state,

country and throughout the military world. His stories as a real life witness express the true nature of what it was like, what we see today and what the vision for our future may hold as we explore undoing racism in our community.

The majority of this event will be hearing from parents in our community as they engage in facilitated dialogue addressing their experiences in relationship to race/racism in their lives. Kiah Ellis, will be the facilitator, he is an undergraduate student, pursuing a history/philosophy degree at UVM, a competitive snowboarder, and was a member of the youth circle in October. This event is free and open to the public.

Listening to the Voices of Parents

(in a restorative circle) Thursday, April 25, 2013
Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, 188 N. Prospect St,
Burlington. 7:15-9:00 pm. More info:
vhm8446@gmail.com.

The Imposition of the Death Penalty

By *Jack Mulderrig, PJC Racial Justice Intern*

In the fall of my sophomore year at college, my roommate and I decided to participate in a civil demonstration, along with members of the Peace & Justice Club. The protest began on Main Street and continued along Church Street until we reached our destination, the Federal Building in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Throughout the march we repeated our mantra, “Free Troy Davis, Free Troy Davis.”

In 1991, Troy Davis, a man of color, was convicted of the 1989 murder of Mark MacPhail, an off-duty Savannah police officer. Davis maintained his innocence throughout the trial and insisted in a conversation with Rhonda Cook of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, “The incident that night was not my fault. I did not have a gun.” Davis was found guilty upon the testimony of witnesses and, in some unknown measure, because Davis had been charged in a previous unrelated shooting. Since the time that the guilty verdict was rendered, in August of 1991, seven out of nine prosecution witnesses at the trial have recanted their testimony. Three of the eyewitnesses have indicated that their testimony had been coerced by the police.

Of the two witnesses that stand by their testimony, one has been called into question due to his inability to initially identify Troy Davis as the shooter. The credibility of the other witness has been undermined because he was also a suspect in the murder of Officer Mark MacPhail. In addition, new witnesses have come forward and have identified another individual as the shooter. Despite conflicting witness testimony and a growing uncertainty of Davis’ guilt, on March 28, 2011, the United States Supreme Court denied defendant Troy’s final appeal. Sadly, after twenty years on death row, Troy Davis was executed by lethal injection, on September 21, 2011. His guilt or innocence remains the source of much concern.

Capital Punishment is an issue unlike any other. The existence of the death penalty has been debated for years.

Many view the death penalty as a cruel and unusual punishment, others question the punishment’s constitutionality and some debate it on the basis of morality and religious conviction. Yet one component of this complex and volatile issue is often not recognized. How does race play a role in the imposition of a death sentence?

According to deathpenalty.org, from 1976 to 2012, 1320 people have been executed in the United States by our criminal justice system. The national average cost incurred by taxpayers for those defendants sentenced to capital punishment is \$2.4 million. Unfortunately, studies suggest that defendants who are people of color are far more likely to receive the death penalty than white defendants. According to the Equal Justice Initiative, as of 2012, more than half of the 3,120 defendants on death row are people of color and 42% of those defendants are African Americans. Close analysis of the cases involving interracial murders up to 2012 in which the people involved were African American and

Caucasian reveals that there have been 276 of these cases, which resulted in an execution. Of the 276 executions, 257 cases had black defendants and white victims and only 19 of these cases, included a white defendant and a black victim.

Wisconsin Senator Russ Feingold stated in 2003, “We simply cannot say we live in a country that offers equal justice to all Americans when racial disparities plague the system by which our society imposes the ultimate punishment”. When considering cases like Troy Davis and his worrisome execution we begin to recognize how someone of color is more likely to be executed, even when evidence presented at trial may seem suspect. These disproportionate statistics show that ethnicity may be a significant factor when juries and judges decide whether or not to impose the death penalty. Statistics indicate that only .89% of all homicide convictions result in a death sentence. An examination of even that small percentage of convictions shows enough empirical data and evidence to question the role which race plays when a defendant is sentenced to death. When racial disparity exists we are all diminished and ultimately equality is merely an illusion. ☹





Nonviolence

Inspiring Workshop: Peace is Possible

By Taylor Dorn, PJC Intern

In February the Peace & Justice Center was honored to host Dr. John Reuwer who presented his three-part *Peace is Possible* workshop series. For the last 30 years, Dr. Reuwer has studied and taught alternative methods of conflict resolution and now serves as a faculty member for the National Peace Academy as well as on the board of Kids4Peace Vermont. These workshops received so much positive feedback that Dr. Reuwer has agreed to come back and teach them a second time in April. Among the attendees of the workshops was Burlington City Mayor Weinberger as well as other Burlington residents and college students who are passionate about ending our culture of violence and promoting a peaceful future.

In the *Peace from A to Z* workshop, the first section of this three part series, Dr. Reuwer covers different types of violence, strategies to manage conflict peacefully, steps to achieving mental peace, and the underlying root causes of violence. Dr. Reuwer claims that we as human beings all have the same basic needs, as is portrayed in Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid, but that it is the strategies we use to satisfy these needs and manage conflict that will determine if we respond with violence or not. The process of conflict management, he explained, starts with a conflict which leads to negotiation, and from there can result in either appeasement, violence, or nonviolent action. Of these, Dr. Reuwer defined violence as "a power which diminishes life, starting with verbal violence which can either be spoken or unspoken."

He further stated that there are three different types of violence, including unintentional violence (accidents, natural disasters, etc.), intentional violence (interpersonal or self directed violence) and questionably intentional violence (psychological abuse, political repression, structural violence, etc.). In comparison, he defines nonviolence as "a power

that enhances life, the positive application of power." Such power is used to manipulate situations in order to fulfill individual needs, and some of the different types of power include physical, financial, authority, knowledge, etc. It is the application of such power in order to satisfy our needs, however, that determines whether we resort to appeasement, violent, or nonviolent action.

Another major aspect of this session was the discussion of self inflicted violence and the importance of mental peace. Dr. Reuwer stressed that we are much more violent with ourselves than with other people, claiming that last year there were twice as many suicides as there were homicides in our country (38,364:16,259). Such violence is the result of personal failure to satisfy our needs in one way or another. Dr. Reuwer stated that our feelings act as stabilizers to maintain a homeostasis of needs balance in order to ensure that we fulfill our needs.

However, our culture and educational system teaches us that only women can have feelings and men cannot express them, as well as instills the notion that individuals are not allowed to have personal needs and must instead fulfill other peoples need requirements and ignore their own. Quoting Dr. Reuwer, there is "no greater recipe to mental illness than to think that you shouldn't take care of or acknowledge your needs and must take care of others instead." Ultimately, Dr. Reuwer stressed that it is necessary to recognize that feelings are clues to guide you towards fulfilling your need requirements and that every individual should develop a nonviolent strategy to get their needs met.

In the second part of the workshop series, *Nonviolent Communication*, Dr. Reuwer discussed how to successfully utilize nonviolent communication as a strategy for fulfilling individual needs during a conflict. He explained that the intent of nonviolent communication is to

create the quality of connection within and between human beings that enhances the quality of life for everyone. He defines nonviolent communication as "a language that serves as a simple model for understanding ourselves and each other." In order to successfully communicate nonviolently, participants must be empathetic of their counterpart's needs and must share their own needs honestly.

Dr. Reuwer expanded upon these requirements of empathy and honesty by distinguishing between four relevant dyads: observation vs. judgments, feelings vs. thoughts, needs vs. strategies, and requests vs. demands. He stressed that in order to successfully navigate these dyads, you must utilize a language that observes the situation as it is without the bias of your own opinion, recognize and share your feelings and needs, and make requests without expectations. Such a request, he explained, would have to be a positive, time-delineated request that respects the opponent's response and then gives total freedom to decline your request. Abiding by these key instructions, differing parties can recognize the others' needs and work peacefully to come to a satisfactory compromising of needs.

In the final installment of the workshop series, *Non-Violent Action*, Dr. Reuwer defined the principles of non-violent action and discussed why it is so much more effective and powerful than resorting to violence. He explained that the main principle of active non-violence is to take action through the application of power that does not harm anyone in the process. Active non-violence, he explained, is much more successful than violence, as studies have found that conflicts are 2.5 times more likely to be successfully resolved with non-violent action than with violence.

There are many reasons why non-violent action is more effective than achieving needs through violent measures. Non-violent action is more consistent with our human morals and as such is easily accepted by a greater number of people. Also, non-violent action is based on a more realistic view of power, one that relies on a pluralistic form of governance rather than a monolithic system. Finally, non-violent action is much more cost

effective, in terms of economic, human, and environmental costs. An American soldier costs \$100,000 to train and deploy, whereas a Christian peacemaker costs \$15,000. Also, non-violent peacekeeping forces have little to no casualties, whereas the military has enormous human casualties. Additionally, there are huge environmental costs associated with the US military, which is the greatest environmental polluter in the world. This workshop made it clear that non-violent action is much more effective than resorting to violence, but Dr. Reuwer stressed that it is essential for us as a global society to start believing in its effectiveness in order for it to be successfully utilized.

Dr. Reuwer expands in greater depth upon many of the themes outlined in this article. To learn more about these issues, the Peace & Justice Center will be hosting Peace from A to Z on April 11, Introduction to Nonviolent Communication on April 18, and Introduction to Nonviolent Action on April 25. Workshops will be held at the Peace & Justice Center, 7-8:30 pm. Please register beforehand. Individual workshops are \$20/session or for all three workshops, the cost is \$50. You can register by calling Kyle Silliman-Smith at 863-2345 x 6 or kyle@pjcv.org.

Nonviolent Communication Seminar

Lead by *John F. Reuwer, MD*

If you wish you could find more peace within yourself, or have more energy and skills to make peace with people you love and people you don't, this seminar is for you. The "language of life" has been used as a description of nonviolent communication, developed by Marshall Rosenberg, and adapted here by Dr. Reuwer.

This highly interactive day will give you the opportunity to develop valuable skills to make life easier and more enjoyable. Areas to be covered include:

1. Definitions of peace – what does peace mean to you?
2. What makes human beings tick - what is alive in us that motivates us to do everything we do – an overview of NVC.
3. Learning to experience the freedom and power that comes from seeing things as they are (before we judge how they should be): transforming "should" energy into living energy.
4. Learning the power of feelings – what they tell us, and how we can transform even negative emotions into energy for positive change.
5. Our beautiful needs – how they define who we are and where we want to go.
6. Learning to make requests of yourself and others in a manner that creates the peace you want.
7. Practicing the language of life. How to carry this into your world to make life easier and more peaceful with anyone you encounter. You will have the opportunity to practice real life situations in a safe environment if desired.

Where: Peace & Justice Center, 60 Lake St, Burlington

When: Saturday April 6, 2013, 9am - 5pm (Bring a brown bag lunch)

Cost: \$90 (full and partial scholarships available, application required)

Register by contacting Kyle: 863-2345 x6 or kyle@pjcv.org

The PJC acts as an incubator for many activist groups through Allied Membership. VTJP is one of those members and their message follows:

Support VTJP with a Donation in 2013

Israel's military occupation of Palestine is in its 46th year, and there is no end in sight...but many Americans are waking up to its savagery and injustice. Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel, the leading advocacy organization in Vermont dedicated to ending the occupation and achieving a just peace, needs donations to fund its community organizing and public outreach programs. Many of you responded to a similar appeal last year. Here is what your donation will make possible:

- **Salaam Shalom: Report on Palestine-Israel.** The only "grassroots" television program in New England dedicated exclusively to reporting on the occupation.
- **Our website** (www.vtjp.org). One of the most extensive in the world on Israel-Palestine.
- **Public engagements** across Vermont by VTJP members.
- **Public forums** with prominent leaders and activists of the anti-

occupation movement. Most recently, we brought Dr. Marc Ellis, a leading scholar on liberation theology and activist, to Burlington.

- **An art exhibition & film series** on the struggle for freedom in occupied Palestine.
- **A public campaign calling on Ben & Jerry's**—yes, our Ben & Jerry's!—to stop selling ice cream in Jewish-only settlements in Occupied Palestine. Details at www.vtjp.org/icecream/
- **Building a more expansive network** with New England-based solidarity organizations.

A donation to VTJP goes a long way, and your contribution is *tax deductible*. To contribute, make out a check to the: Peace and Justice Center, 60 Lake Street #1C, Burlington, VT 05401. **IMPORTANT:** Please write "VTJP" in the memo line of the check. Thank you. 

CALENDAR

April 2013

[7] Sunday

• 12-1 Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter of Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.

• 1 pm Film: *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible* with speaker Sha'an Mouliert. Brownell Library, Essex Jct. More info: Kyle at 863-2345.

[8] Monday

• 6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC.

[11] Thursday

• 5-6:30pm Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

• 7-8:30pm Peace is Possible workshop series: Peace from A to Z. Register with Kyle at 863-2345 x6. \$20/session or \$50/series. Also 4/18 & 4/25.

[15] Monday

• Global Day of Action on Military Spending. Drone vigils statewide. See p. 1

• 7pm *Drone Warfare* with speaker Medea Benjamin. At the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington. Co-sponsored by the UU Social Justice Web committee.

• 7pm Fed Up VT meeting at PJC every Monday. Fed Up VT is a radical grassroots women's rights coalition fighting for economic equality, reproductive rights, and freedom from gender-based violence. fedupvermont@googlegroups.com

[18] Thursday

• 7-8:30pm Peace is Possible series: Nonviolent Communication. See 4/11.

[20] Saturday

• 1 pm Vets For Peace meet the 3rd Sat. of the month at the Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier.

[25] Thursday

• 7-8:30pm Peace is Possible series: Nonviolent Action. See 4/11.

• 7:15-9pm Listening to the Voices of Parents (in a restorative circle). Presented by CORN (Conversations On Race Now). Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, 188 N. Prospect St., Burlington.

May 2013

[5] Sunday

• 12-1 Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.

[6] Monday

• 6:15pm Burlington-Bethlehem-Arad Sister City Committee meeting at Burlington College.

• 7pm Fed Up VT meeting at PJC every Monday. fedupvermont@googlegroups.com

[7] Tuesday

• 6:30 Peace & Popcorn on the first Tuesday of every month. A casual screening of peace and social justice films from the PJC's library, chosen by the group that night. Join us for a good film and good company.

[9] Thursday

• 5-6:30pm Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

[11] Saturday

• 11 am-1pm Fair Trade Day Festival in City Hall Park.

[13] Monday

• 6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC.

[18] Saturday

• 1pm Vets For Peace meet the 3rd Sat. of the month at the Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier.

June 2013

[4] Sunday

• 12-1 Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.

[3] Monday

• 6:15pm Burlington-Bethlehem-Arad Sister City Committee meeting at Burlington College.

• 7pm Fed Up VT mtg at PJC every Monday. fedupvermont@googlegroups.com

[4] Tuesday

• 6:30 Peace & Popcorn on the first Tuesday of every month. A casual screening of peace and social justice films from the PJC's library, chosen by the group that night. Join us for a good film and good company.

[10] Monday

• 6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC.

[13] Thursday

• 5-6:30pm Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

[15] Saturday

• 1pm Vets For Peace meet the 3rd Sat. of the month at the Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier.

Supreme Court Takes Campaign Finance Case

By Teasella Nguyen PJC Intern

On February 19th, 2013, the Supreme Court announced that it will hear a case challenging the per-biennial cycle limit on campaign contributions from individuals. The case of *McCutcheon vs. Federal Election Commission*, argues that the limit on what individuals are allowed to give to candidates (approximately \$46,200 per two-year cycle) and parties and PACs (approximately \$70,800 per two-year cycle) is an unconstitutional violation of the individual donor's free speech rights.

The US Court of Appeals has already ruled in favor of keeping the biennial limits, which have been in place since 1971 and was upheld in the 1976 *Buckley vs. Valeo* case. With the acceptance of this case, the Supreme Court is stepping into a deeper controversial campaign finance case. Just about three years after ruling in *Citizens United vs. FEC* that corporations and unions can spend whatever amount they are pleased on elections.

If the court rules against the two-year limits, this would mark the first time that a court has overturned a part of landmark *Buckley* ruling that deals with campaign contribution limits. It would not be a surprise since Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was replaced by Justice Samuel Alito, a member of the court's conservative bloc who is opposed to campaign regulation.

All campaign finance reformers are calling on the court to maintain the *Buckley* precedent; they fear that any overturning of *Buckley* will lead to the erosion of contribution limits and other campaign finance precedents.

Democracy 21 president Fred Wertheimer said in his statement, "If the Supreme Court reverses its past ruling in *Buckley*, the Court would do extraordinary damage to the nation's ability to prevent the corruption of federal officeholders and government decisions... It would also represent the first time in history that the Court declared a federal contribution limit unconstitutional."

A ruling to overturn the biennial limits would not affect the amount an individual donor could give to a candidate, but with the victory fund, a candidate could potentially solicit a single contribution from one donor of not more than \$3,627,600.

With the expansion of the victory fund, it represents an obvious way of ruling in favor of repealing limits that could affect campaign financing immediately. The greater worry for a lot of finance reformers is how a ruling against limits could affect future cases. ☪

"If the Supreme Court reverses its past ruling in Buckley, the Court would do extraordinary damage to the nation's ability to prevent the corruption of federal officeholders and government decisions..."

Campaign Finance Reform in Vermont

By Jenna Henning, PJC Intern

Elections lie at the foundation of American democracy. As such, it is crucial to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and prevent the appearance of corruption. A serious hindrance to this is the influence of money in politics, or more specifically, campaign contributions. Following the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizen's United* ruling, which allows for unlimited donations by companies and unions to political parties, there is little that states can do with regard to contribution limits. And despite the overwhelming popular support in Vermont to amend corporate personhood and limitless corporate contributions, there is little political clout for legislation of that magnitude.

Instead, the focus seems to be on transparency and accountability in campaign financing, a very fine place to start. The Vermont Legislature has proposed a bill that makes "miscellaneous amendments to campaign finance law." These amendments call for an increased frequency in reporting campaign contributions and expenditures, greater disclaimer information, and a searchable compilation of this information in a database on the Secretary of State's website.

The text of the bill states that candidates, political committees (PAC's), and political parties must file contributions or expenditures of \$500 or more in their campaign finance reports to the Secretary of State: 1) quarterly in the first half of the two-year general election cycle, 2) monthly in the second half of the two year general election cycle, 3) biweekly from the primary to the general election, and 4) two weeks after the general election. This is quite a change from the monthly requirement of the previous statute.

Related to this is the concept of disclosure, which would provide access to the identities of donors as well as the amount of their contribution. By forcing disclosure, voters are better able to see who is influencing their ballot. And the creation of the searchable database on the Secretary of State's website allows for this information to be retrieved as efficiently as possible. This is certainly a key factor because what good is the information if it is not readily available to the public.

The only other suggestion I can make is greater penalties for any violation of the proposed campaign finance law. Without strict application and even stricter enforcement there will not be much in the way of preventing non-disclosure or non-reporting. Transparency in campaign financing is essential to ensuring accountability and public trust in the democratic process.

Hopefully, the bill will pass political muster and pave the way for future legislation aimed at even greater campaign finance reform. ☪

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