The Path That Led Me Here

By Lydia Bates, PJC intern 2014

Before the Peace & Justice Center, I had always had an interest in justice and equality but had largely kept my focus on international human rights. Working at the PJC was my first taste of grassroots social justice work and I loved it! I could apply my research knowledge while also garnering new skills from colleagues and community members alike. The impact we were having and discussion platforms we were creating reflected real progress.

During the second semester of senior year at UVM, I was their Cost of War: Focus on Drones Intern. Much of my time was spent compiling research on the international and domestic usage of drones for warfare and surveillance into easily accessible formats. The culmination of my work at PJC came in the form of a presentation and film screening in Montpelier.

Needless to say, as a political science major who had spent the majority of her time with books and computer screens, I was nervous. Kyle (PJC Program Director) and my parents helped me remember that I was speaking to a receptive Vermont audience, and everything went fine.

Following graduation from UVM, I was accepted into American University’s Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs Master’s program in Washington, DC. The transition from undergrad to grad was difficult, but once I figured out how to balance the workload, things began to click. For the first year, my studies remained largely focused on international conflicts and human rights transgressions. Post-Bosnian War reconciliation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were some of the topics I favored in my work. I picked up a nightly restaurant job, as well as an internship for a non-profit called Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain (ADHRB).

My time at ADHRB was interesting, informative and gratifying. As an advocacy intern, I focused predominately on researching human rights offenses committed in Bahrain and across the greater Gulf Region. After a bit of time, I found my niche researching women’s rights, specifically monitoring Bahrain and Saudi Arabia’s adherence to the articles of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). I spent a significant amount of time compiling my own research and firsthand accounts of violations for exhaustive reports and complaints to be read at the Human Rights Council in Geneva.
From the Director

Together, We Are a Force!

We are growing. In response to the fear-mongering and injustices, we are banding together and building movements to resist and rebuild. Since the elections last fall, with you, our members, the Peace & Justice Center has taken on many unplanned activities. We have responded to an increased interest in our educational programming in racial justice and nonviolence and to urgent calls for legislative coalition work. Our online community calendar has tripled the number of events listed as it did a year ago. Our enews is packed with information about what we are doing as well as what other activist groups, organizations, and individuals are doing. We have responded to calls for action to mobilize for mass marches and rallies in DC and throughout Vermont.

People are being hurt. We are under threat. The planet is threatened. This is real. But also, our ability to organize is real and organizing is what we are doing! Because so many of you believe in the collective power we hold, and have contributed financially, we have been able to increase our staffing.

This summer, we welcomed Luca Long to our staff as a temporary store clerk and organizational ambassador. The store is one way that we educate people about international trade and the ways we can most positively impact the communities and individuals who are producing and creating things we buy. It is also a way that we let folks know about the work of our organization as a whole. At its best, it is an entry way for new folks to get involved. Having an additional committed activist in the store during busy summer hours increases our ability to fully utilize the store as one of our programs for economic justice.

We also welcomed Kina Thorpe as a Program Assistant. Increasing our programming staff enables us to continue to say “yes” to the requests we are getting to support others, and to bring our work for social justice and nonviolence further afield. Having Kina on board will enable our Program Director, Kyle, to delve deeper into new content and material to bring to our educational programs and to participate in more coalitions, partnerships, and community events statewide.

In order to continue to expand, we are excited to be starting our 2nd Annual New Donor Drive. We will be competing to see who amongst us can find the most new donors in the month of July. Be in touch if you want to join us – the top three participants will get a prize. Each of us individually can only do so much but together, we are a force!

If you are among those who don’t know how to respond to current events because you feel crushed by your schedule and the number of commitments you already have (I am especially thinking about my middle-aged peers with school-aged kids and perhaps aging parents), be kind to yourself and your loved ones. Bringing love to the world is critical. Other folks need to lean in and get more involved. If this is you, and you don’t know what effort to support, there are countless small huddles and larger organizations throughout the state that would love your energy. I think for most of us, we need to lean in and do more work at times, and slow down and do less at other times. Life is not static.

If you have not connected to the Peace & Justice Center online, here are some ways to do so:
- like us on Facebook
- follow us on Twitter
- sign up for our bi-weekly enews
- utilize our online public calendar

You can find links to all of this on our website pjcvt.org. If you have an event that you’d like publicized through these avenues, please let us know. In addition to our own campaigns and programs, a large part of our work is as an organizing hub to support other activist individuals and groups.
Switzerland.

One of the most memorable parts of my time at ADHRB was when Bahraini human rights defender, Nabeel Rajab, was released from prison. In that moment I could see all my work finally coming to fruition. Despite the size of the organization, we had achieved something tangible and internationally recognized. That feeling was similar to the one I felt following my presentation in Montpelier. In both instances the organizations I had been working with had reached people in a meaningful way and had fostered necessary conversations.

Following my time at ADHRB, but while still in grad school, I got an internship in the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research working on Democracy, Human Rights, and War Crimes. For the position, I needed to secure a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information security clearance, which meant a lot of time and paperwork. I was cleared and began in the spring of my final semester at AU. Again, I quickly became interested in topics relating to women, this time focusing predominately on gender-based violence in conflict. However, in this portion of the international political arena the reception was not the same. Too often I felt that my research was failing on deaf ears, or at least wasn’t reaching the ones that wanted to hear it. I suppose such challenges are commonplace in institutions as large and bureaucratic as the State Department but that wasn’t the setting for me. I was missing the feeling of accomplishment that made PJC and ADHRB so gratifying.

After the completion of my internship and graduation from AU, I bartended in DC for several months and applied for other work while watching the tumultuous political climate develop during the 2016 presidential campaign. When I realized that the next four years sat in the tiny hands of a disconnected narcissist, my applications switched from internationally focused organizations to domestic ones. I applied to nonprofits for women’s reproductive health, LGBTQ rights, and prison reform.

After a spot-on suggestion from my research - policy - action

Path continued from page 1

Developing My Voice

By Isaiah Hines, PJC intern 2016

In the fall of 2015, the South Burlington school board began their discussion of the Rebel name. When the board voted to keep the moniker, I was deeply disappointed and I knew I had to take action. So, soon after the decision, I worked with a friend to establish a racial justice and diversity club at my school that we now call the Student Diversity Union. Through this group, I became heavily involved with organizing, advocacy, and activism. However, the lack of resources in my community relating to this type of work quickly became apparent.

My search for the resources I needed to make my group successful brought me to the Peace & Justice Center. They generously offered their guidance, instruction, and mentorship and made sure we felt supported in our community. Inspired by the PJC’s incredible work, I applied for an internship at the Center the following summer. This was certainly one of the most educational and meaningful experiences I have had.

Using resources provided by them, I was able to turn the Student Diversity Union into an effective organizing hub at my high school as well as begin a racial justice mentorship group in our middle school. I also credit the PJC with providing me the tools and skills I needed to get appointed to the student representative seat on the South Burlington School Board. I have stayed involved in the organization and most recently I was hired to work for them as a program facilitator.

The PJC is one of the only groups in the area actively and specifically addressing racial injustice. While they do much more than this, including their impressive fair trade programs and nonviolence training, for me, as a young person of color, their racial justice program is meaningful in a direct and personal way.

The work that PJC does has great merit. Their ability to work across communities of seemingly disparate groups is remarkable. Knowing that I am personally at greater risk than most of my peers of being stopped by police while driving, of being arrested, of being incarcerated, and indeed, of being killed by police, makes it exquisitely meaningful that the Peace & Justice Center is working with law enforcement to increase accountability and to work against bias.

The PJC has been monumental in helping me develop my voice and they have greatly uplifted my efforts.

Isaiah’s work paid off and, in no small part because of him, the Rebel name is being retired. There continues to be great backlash from people who don’t understand how harmful the name is and Isaiah has remained stalwart in his ability to face the negativity and criticism with dignity, strength, and clarity. Isaiah will be entering Columbia University in the fall.
How Do You Foster Peace – A Listening Project

By Adrienne Kinne, President, Will Miller Green Mountain Veterans for Peace

The Listening Project originated with a member of our Veterans For Peace chapter posing the question, “How do you foster peace?” to community members as we awaited the start of a parade in Montpelier last year. Over the next months, members of the Randolph Area Peace and Justice Coalition did the same (e.g., at a documentary screening, a local fair, and a road race). The conversations this question elicited were varied in terms of length, focus, and openness. Some were not sure what we meant, so we would expound by asking “in your life, in your community, in the world,” and that helped further the conversation. A very few shared that they were not prepared to answer in that moment. Not one person became angry or combative. We have written op-eds outlining our experiences for local papers.

During the Building a World Beyond War Conference, that PJC helped organize in April, we hosted our first Listening Project workshop. We talked about the question, the responses, and our previous experiences. We then used the opportunity to ask the question again and discuss next steps.

Here is a list of responses to the question, “How do you foster peace?”

- Teach our young children how to problem solve, model conflict resolution: When I was a teacher, we had a peace table where kids in conflict had a facilitated discussion and were awarded Ambassador of Peace medals;
- Learn how to be a better listener and engage in conflict resolution;
- Massage therapy – relaxation;
- Start courage circles; create space for people to share after reading a group poem;
- Live simply, bike versus car which relies on war and fossil fuels, less disposable products (no mug, no coffee);
- Meditation, self-compassion;
- Forgiveness, non-aggression;
- Journey to make peace with myself, hard to serve others unless I make that peace with myself;
- Inform people about peace: invited family to join me on the Women’s March;
- Live by the hermetic principles and Jung’s concept that “What we resist persists.” Use a word gives it more energy – say what we want to see;
- Retired and joined the Y – suddenly out of my comfort zone and with a different group of people, asked them about themselves and listened, write op-eds;
- Remember inconvenient victims of Agent Orange;
- Practice non-violent communication;
- Practice patience;
- Engage in conversation with Trump supporters coming from a place of curiosity as a method of non-aggression. Find they have the same fears we do;
- Listen to hear or be changed, rather than to change others.

The conversation continued with participants sharing, reflecting, honoring silence and interactions alike. As our time began to draw to a close, it also shifted. How can we do this in our communities? What are the next steps? Does fostering peace transpose into fostering justice? How do you foster peace and justice?

The beauty of the Listening Project is its simplicity. This is a question that anyone can ask anyone else, anywhere. We carried clipboards and a sign and engaged people in conversation. We have also taken this project to the classroom, asking a teacher to use this question as a student activity, and compiled student responses into a chapbook. Our groups look forward to continuing the project through the summer, and invite others to join us or take this project and make it their own in their community as they see fit.

If you would like more information, contact Adrienne at wmgmvfp@gmail.com.
New Faces at the PJC

Kina Thorpe, Program Assistant

Kina grew up in Barre VT and joined the Peace & Justice Center team as the Program Assistant in June, 2017 after graduating from Champlain College. With her, she brings a passion for social justice that she cultivated through participating in and organizing various educational and activist events. Some of Kina’s other joys include theater, writing, and watching documentaries. She is excited to start her “first real job” and we look forward to learning and serving together. Both her upbeat attitude and her serious drive for justice are infectious.

Luca Long, Summer Store Clerk and Organizational Ambassador

I’m Luca (they/them & she/her) and I’ve lived in the Burlington area for six years. While here, I’ve spent my time working with a number of local nonprofits such as Outright Vermont, Planned Parenthood, and Migrant Justice, and organizing to implement Restorative Justice practice at Burlington High School. My interests lie in building united working class movements against white supremacy and militarized police while engaging in queer and trans resistance.

I’m excited to have the opportunity through the Peace & Justice Center to connect with folks from around New England about the ways exploitation occurs under capitalism and to continue to build networks with local organizers and nonprofits around regional and national issues of race, class, and gender.

Your Bill of Rights in a Time of Resistance

By Andy Simon, PJC member

“Am I free to leave?” You have been stopped by police while driving down a public highway. The officer has checked your license and registration but is still behind your car with blue lights flashing. Another cruiser arrives without explanation. You are certainly within your rights to know the answer to this question, “Am I free to leave?” But do you have the chutzpah to ask? And do you feel that you can challenge the officers without endangering your own life? Have you recorded the encounter on your phone? Do you know the name of the officer who stopped you? Do they have the right to take your phone from you?

Last month, a group of us spent two evenings at the PJC with Robert Appel, former Defender General of Vermont and former Executive Director of the state’s Human Rights Commission, currently in private law practice. The stated topic was “Know Your Rights” but the discussion – woven loosely around a review of the US Bill of Rights and Vermont’s Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants – wandered freely, structured more by questions, stories and case histories than by the little copy of the Constitution that we each received, courtesy of the ACLU of VT.

Robert’s opening question to the group – “How many of you have been arrested?” – highlighted the diversity of experience around the table, from teenage pranks to principled civil disobedience to DWB (Driving While Black or Brown). We all came with different tales to tell of encounters with the law and with different things we wanted to know. One young man was particularly worried by this question: “Don’t I have a right to say “F*#k you” to a cop?”

Along with our handy hip pocket copy of the Constitution, we left the sessions with handouts on “Know Your Rights When Encountering Law Enforcement” and a much better understanding of the limits of standing your ground when police, ICE, or FBI agents arrive at your door or your car window. We learned that insisting on your Constitutional rights is much more effective in a court of law than face to face with an armed and perhaps jottery officer of the law. And further that a full 98% of cases get settled out of court with plea bargains or other deals. Consider this: if even 5% of defendants insisted on a “speedy and public” trial (their right guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment), the judicial system would grind to a halt incapable to handle the volume of cases.

Four hours was too short a time to cover the ambitious topics proposed for this workshop. Robert did a masterful, nimble job of moving from legal details to storytelling to fielding a host of thorny questions. We were left, at the end, with the thorniest of these: how do we use a better knowledge of our Constitution-grounded rights to build power in a movement for social/economic/climate justice? How do we use that same knowledge to be more effective allies?

If this workshop is offered again, I suggest that you seize the opportunity. I may do it again just to have another chance to answer those nagging questions. In the meantime, check out “13th” – an important film by Ava Duvernay (director of “Selma”) about mass incarceration in the US.
Questions for the General

By Robin Lloyd

It’s not often that you might get the chance to chat with the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Thus, when some of us in the greater Burlington peace community learned that Chairman General Joseph Dunford was going to be the commencement speaker at nearby St Michael’s College, we were eager to arrange an audience.

To prepare, we researched his biography. Dunford is arguably the most powerful military man in the world. Sure, the president is his boss, but he gets to advise the president on how to use his great power. Personally, I thought about my dear departed Pax Christi friends, Marmete Hayes and Sister Miriam Ward, who taught for many years at St Mike’s. They certainly would have supported an effort to speak with the General and would have brought some pointed questions with them.

Dunford is a graduate of St Michael’s College, a Catholic school with the only Peace Studies minor in the state. One course, called “Approaches to Peace,” introduces students to the issues involved in challenging human society’s acceptance of war. Overall, the focus is on the roots and causes of war; methods of conflict resolution and arms reduction; eliminating structural violence; religious inspiration for peace-making; and non-violence as a method and way of life. Students also take Christian Social Ethics, an examination of the interactions of Christianity with various social systems, resources of Christianity for social justice, and critical and constructive views of Christianity in the modern world.

In comments he made to St Mike’s students in 2015, he claimed that because of our presence there, “we haven’t been attacked from Afghanistan since 9/11.”

“Are we trying to prevent another attack against the United States? We did that,” he claimed. “Transition to legitimate Afghan governance? We’ve done that. Develop capable Afghan security forces? We’re continuing to do that, and also providing a stabilizing influence in the region. We’ve done that.”

All that, really? A May suicide attack in the diplomatic section of Kabul, which killed 90 people and injured many more, provides deadly evidence that stability is a long way off.

As Chair of the Joint Chiefs, reappointed by Trump in May, Dunford is currently recommending another “surge,” following the model of the failed surges of Bush and Obama.

One of my recommendations for the general would be to watch “War Machine.” It’s a new political satire on Netflix, with Brad Pitt as a general modeled on Stanley McChrystal, who also demanded a surge when he was commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan in 2012. Unable to distinguish his dreams of victory from reality on the ground, he accomplished little but destroyed his own reputation.

So, where will another surge get us, General Dunford? Who are we fighting, and why? Also, isn’t it time to put some other arrows in your quiver, like talking with the enemy? 😊

Can THE BOMB be banned?

Historic negotiations – held June 15 to July 7, 2017 – will hopefully lead to an international agreement prohibiting nuclear weapons at an urgent time in international tensions. Over 130 governments participated in the first round of negotiations in March, 2017. The Women’s March to Ban the Bomb intends to raise public awareness of the negotiations, highlight women’s leadership in the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, and promote feminist peace through disarmament.

At the time of press, we did not have info on the results.

More info: www.womenbanthebomb.org./
Growing up poor in rural Vermont, I always knew that my family had less than some of my friends and the families on TV. I built assumptions based on my experiences and observations. The store clerk looked at me differently when I paid for my candy with food stamps — there must be something wrong with needing Welfare. I felt a prick of envy when I overheard a schoolmate complaining about her family trip to the Caribbean — she must not have any problems if a tropical vacation was a nuisance.

I struggled with anger and powerlessness around wealth and class until I learned about the facts of inequality in the US. Connecting my life to a bigger context helped me understand how to engage in changemaking. All of us are part of an unfair system, with inequitable access to power, opportunity, and life chances. Our experiences, and their impact on our lives, are different, but we’re all in it together.

Class and income inequality are back in the national conversation for the first time in decades. Most of us want a just world where everyone’s needs are met, but the divisions and barriers are daunting. Understanding how class shapes our individual and national stories is important for shifting our assumptions so that we can work together for change. We need to talk about what the US economic system looks like, and why; how race, gender, ability, and other identities work with class to traumatize and limit opportunity for some, and give extra opportunity to others; how our class experiences shape our interactions with each other; and where we each stand in local, national, and global contexts. And we need to come together, as people of conscience, and use this reflection to envision and create an equitable future.

I’m now a trainer with Equity Solutions, a collective that works with agencies, organizations, and schools to start the conversation about class. Our cross-class team addresses inequality through the lens of a wide range of occupations, incomes, backgrounds, and identities. In this work and in our lives, we’ve seen stigma, assumptions, and structural barriers harm people, and block them from benefiting from opportunities and resources. In response, we have developed strategies and techniques to overcome these obstacles.

Equity Solutions provides everything from 3-hour workshops to multi-year strategic processes. Our trainings and consulting are engaging and multifaceted, using art and performance, brainstorming and problem-solving, academic models and local wisdom, and creativity. We collaborate toward solutions in a way that is connected and compassionate. Everyone has something to learn and something to teach.

We work for a future where everyone has a voice in the decisions that affect their lives, fair compensation, dignity, and access to the food, shelter, health care, and support that allow families and communities to thrive.

The Peace & Justice Center is co-sponsoring a full-day Equity Solutions training, on Thursday, October 12, from 9am to 2:30pm at Main Street Landing, Burlington.

It starts with us, all of us! Won’t you join us? 🌍
Books Briefly: Navigating Change in Uncertain Times

By Greg Guma, PJC member & former PJC Coordinator

We’re in uncharted territory. On some days, as the West’s domination of world affairs winds down, you can feel the wheels of history turning. A multi-polar world seems to be emerging. But so far it looks as polarized, unstable, and dangerous as the one it replaces.

The Trump presidency is meanwhile turning out to be even more surreal than the campaign. If you doubt that the foreign policy establishment is concerned, Richard Haass offers a comprehensive, “insider’s” corrective in A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order (2017, Penguin, 352 pages). The message from Haass, who heads the Council on Foreign Relations, is that global rules and institutions that have kept the world relatively stable since World War II are at serious risk of being abandoned.

Written during the recent presidential race, Haass makes a convincing case for growing global instability. But he sidesteps a direct critique of Trump, calling instead for continued active engagement (defining it as a “sovereign obligation”) over narrow nationalism. It’s a sobering survey that reflects the priorities of the internationalists who have controlled US foreign policy for most of last 70 years.

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Unprecedented. We hear the word so often that it’s becoming a cliché. But have we been here before? And is what we’re experiencing a surge of authoritarianism or something else? In The Anatomy of Fascism (Vintage, 2004, 321 pages), Robert O. Paxton illustrates the differences between the two—isms, and how modern anxieties—from immigration and economic insecurity to urban “decadence” and national decline—create conditions for mass-based, populist nationalist movements. Fortunately, not many have taken power, or lasted for long.

Written before the recent surge of nationalist propaganda, hate crimes and “strongman” regimes in places like Turkey, Hungary, the Philippines, and the US, Paxton’s concise study outlines how fascists gain and exercise power. It also identifies the obvious warning signs: political deadlock in the face of domestic crisis, threatened conservatives desperate for tough allies and ready to abandon the rule of law, and charismatic leaders ready to “mobilize passions” through race-tinged demagoguery.

On the other hand, he also advises that most real capitalists, even if they view democracy as a nuisance, would prefer an authoritarian to a fascist. The former usually wants a passive, disengaged public. But fascists, who have such contempt for people and reason that they don’t bother to justify their excesses, tend to get people excited and engaged. And not just their blame-shifting supporters.

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European powers ruled 84% of the land and 100% of the seas in 1914, and the US was the world’s largest economy. What a difference a century has made. Now, three of the four biggest economies are China, India, and Japan. In Easternization: Asia’s Rise and America’s Decline from Obama to Trump and Beyond (Other Press, 2016, 307 pages), Gideon Rachman makes a persuasive case that China is poised to dominate the next century. But he also reveals why no “Eastern alliance” is apt to replace the crumbling “West.”

As a top financial commentator for the UK’s Financial Times, Rachman has hobnobbed with ministers and business leaders worldwide, and brings some revealing encounters into his analysis and forecasts. The main issue, he explains, is whether the US and China can avoid the Thucydides Trap—the type of rivalry between an established and rising power that can lead to war. It has happened in 12 out of 16 cases since 1500.

Location could be a decisive factor, explains Tim Marshall in Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything about the World (Scribner, 2015, 305 pages). For Russia, the largest country in the world, it has made power difficult to defend and provoked leaders like Putin to compensate by pushing outward. For China, in contrast, geographical features have often provided security, and now set the stage for it to become a two-ocean power (Pacific and Indian) and claim most of the South China Sea.

Marshall’s book is well-organized, fast-paced, and reads like a travelogue, observing history, politics, and environmental dynamics from a high altitude. The maps in the paperback could be better and the text certainly does not explain “everything,” but this is an engaging refresher and does illustrate why, despite having a great location, even America is constrained by geography’s rule.

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Long before the digital age, the US government used scientists and psychics to locate hostages and penetrate secret military bases. Sometimes it even worked. This is just one of the mind-blowing revelations in Phenomena: The Secret History of the US Government’s Investigations into Extrasensory Perception and Psychokinesis (Little Brown, 2017, 527 pages). For decades, such research was publicly ridiculed as fantasy. But Annie Jacobsen has assembled the facts, from once-classified documents, former officials, and government psychics who explored this frontier.

The difficulty with paranormal abilities was often reliability. Even when
Vendor Spotlight: UPAVIM

By Kristen Connors

This issue of the Peace & Justice News highlights Unidas Para Vivir Mejor (United for a Better Life)—known as UPAVIM, an organization founded in 1989 in La Esperanze, Guatemala. UPAVIM works with women to build a better life for themselves, their families, and their community. La Esperanza is a “squatter community” just south of Guatemala City that was established in 1984 through the internal migration of over 40,000 people trying to escape the brutal 42-year Civil War. UPAVIM was founded through an international partnership between La Esperanza and a faith-based organization called “Sister Parish” in Bemidji, Minnesota. The partnership helped establish a dental clinic and post-natal health clinic in the community. The clinics continue to operate supported by the sales of the products made by the women in the cooperative, “Upavimas,” as well as donations from outside sources.

Today, UPAVIM offers vital support services to the entire community including a school, health clinic, bakery, and soymilk factory. Most of the community members access these services for free or for a very small fee. Upavimas are in charge of developing and implementing the social programs the group provides to the community. It is an empowering role for them. Their website offers many stories and statements including one from a woman named Reyna who says, “It is my home. I have been in UPAVIM for 17 years. UPAVIM looked after my children while I worked and they still do. UPAVIM helped me in every way. There are still so many women living with discrimination and violence, and they need UPAVIM.” (www.upavim.org/meet-reyna/) To learn more details about each empowerment project, feel free to visit their website at www.upavimcrafts.org.

People who come into the PJC store can find a variety of products made by Upavimas including a wide range of toys and clothes for babies and children, worry dolls, jewelry, kitchenware, and home goods like pot holders, measuring spoons, and aprons. Upavimas create their products with a variety of brightly colored, recycled fabrics and materials that will guarantee you stand out in a crowd. Got a new baby in your life? We have booties, blankets, mobiles, rattles, and other toys in a variety of colors that have been flying off the shelves. Their Worry Dolls continue to be a hot button item in any season. They are the perfect gift for a loved one of any age, and the folklore surrounding worry dolls says that they will carry away your worries while you dream at night.

Lastly, in 2012, the director of UPAVIM, Angela Mercedes Bailon, visited the Peace & Justice Center as well as area high schools and colleges and spoke about Fair Trade and its impact in her own community in Guatemala City. As a parting gift, the Peace & Justice Center received a customized wall hanging that is on display in our community space. Stop by sometime and see it!
CALENDAR

July 11, Tuesday
5:30-7pm, What to the Negro is the 4th of July? Burlington City Hall. Read Frederick Douglass’ famous 1852 speech. Douglass castigated the US for decades of slavery and injustice. Statewide public readings in many other locations. Sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council.

July 13, Thursday
12-1pm, Fair Trade vs. Free Trade presentation at the PJC. Learn about globalization and how policies and practices allow companies to profit at the expense of people and the planet. Learn how Fair Trade seeks to counterbalance these atrocities. Arrive at 11:30am to join a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

July 22, Saturday
3:30-4:30pm, Banana Presentation at the PJC. Learn about the oppressive banana industry. This talk is designed to educate, brainstorm solutions, and create tangible action steps. Arrive at 3pm to join the PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

July 25, Tuesday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Drop-in Discussion Group at PJC. This space is held specifically for white people to process how white supremacy culture is toxic to them. The hope is that by having a separate space to process toxic whiteness, white people will be better able to allow for the emotional needs of people of color to take priority in multi-racial spaces.

August 6, Sunday
7pm, Songs for Hope: a walk and vigil to remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Burlington. Gather at Church & Pearl St for group singing; and walk to the waterfront for remembrance speakers, a short storytelling event of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, and a traditional candleboat ceremony. A collaboration of PJC and WILPF.

August 10, Thursday
12-1pm, Free Trade Agreements presentation at the PJC. Explore how these policies intended to ease trade and boost economies, in combination with corporate greed and developmental inequity, have led to a devastating effect on the Global South. Arrive at 11:30am to join a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

August 22, Tuesday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Discussion at PJC. See 7/25.

August 26, Saturday
3:30-4:30pm, White Fragility Talk at the PJC. White Fragility is a state in which even a small amount of racial stress becomes intolerable for a white person. Recognizing and naming it can be a helpful way to stay engaged in discussions about racism and in ongoing racial justice work, even when it is uncomfortable. Arrive at 3pm to join a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

September 14, Thursday
12-1pm, Understanding Fair Trade Labels breaks down the differences between Fair Trade Certifications, Fair Trade Membership Organizations, and Direct Trade. Arrive at 11:30am to join a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

September 16-24, Saturday-Sunday
Statewide events in partnership with Campaign Nonviolence’s Week of Action for a culture of peace and nonviolence free from war, poverty, racism, environmental destruction and the epidemic of violence. See pjcvt.org for updated info.

September 23, Saturday
3:30-4:30pm, Cocoa Campaign presentation at PJC. We focus on the issue of child slavery and human trafficking. Designed to educate, brainstorm solutions, and create tangible action steps. Arrive at 3pm to join a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

September 26, Tuesday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Discussion at PJC. See 7/25.

Sept 28 and Oct 5, Thursdays
6-8pm, Mindfulness for Activists at CVU High School, Hinesburg. We focus on the need for self-care as activists and on ways to utilize mindfulness for nonviolent social justice and peace work. Emphasis is on developing skills in meditation, deep listening, and what Gandhi called “soul force.” Register through CVU’s Access Program. $35. Discounts available.

October 12, Thursday
9am-2:30pm, Poverty in an Unequal Economy. Join Equity Solutions and PJC for a deeper understanding of the root causes of poverty and economic inequality, so that we are ready to implement innovative and equitable responses in our work and communities. Get ready for storytelling, interactive activities, lightbulbs to go off, and a renewed energy towards a “we are all in this together” approach. Sliding scale fee. Main Street Landing, Burlington.

October 29, Sunday
3-4:30pm, Prospective Facilitator Gathering at the PJC. Learn about becoming a paid facilitator of our educational programs on non-violence, racial justice, fair trade and anti-war. People from around the state are needed. You can join us via video or phone conference. Light refreshments. To register, call 863-2345 x6 or email program@pjcvt.org.

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We are currently scheduling educational programs this summer including “How to Talk with Kids About Racism” and “Building Empathy and Addressing Racial Oppression” but do not have the details secured. You can get up-to-date information by joining our e-news. You can also keep an eye on our online calendar, website and/or facebook page. We hope you will!
From the thick cloud of confusion, fear, and resentment that the Trump administration has cast over progressive values, inspiration causes hope to emerge from the mist in strong waves of defiance. Such waves were created in Amy Goodman’s “Covering the Movements Changing America” tour stop in Burlington on April 27, 2017. The packed house at First Unitarian Universalist Society took a collective breath of fresh air as the two hours of rebellious commentary gave us a break from the seemingly endless attacks on justice that have been emitted from the White House since Trump’s inauguration.

In a time where progressive victories are being retracted and fear is used as a tool for war, Goodman’s call to microphones for peace brings light to a future which over the past few months has looked increasingly troubled. “The media could be the greatest force for peace on earth, but instead it is too often wielded as a tool for war. We need to take it back,” said Goodman.

Over the past 20 years, Goodman, the Democracy Now! news host, has been one of the key voices in independent media and in the fight to hold world governments and corporations accountable for their threats to freedom and justice. Every weekday, the Democracy Now! broadcast highlights injustice while offering solace in the passion and hope that radiates from the activists and advocates featured. After witnessing the fearful reaction on the UVM campus on November 9th, a shockwave of doubt was cast. What would happen to the momentum produced by events such as the 2015 Supreme Court decision Obergefell v. Hodges legalizing same-sex marriage, the 2015 Paris agreement on climate change action, and Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign that drew the status-quo into question on a national scale. Despite the regressive election of Donald Trump, Goodman’s speech on independent media as a tool for progress shined a light that cut through the clouds of Trump’s America, a reminder that the future is created through the actions (or lack thereof) of today.

This speech was both an inspiration and reaffirmation of my growing desire to speak out, act out, and show solidarity against an institutionalized system based in racism that no longer tries to mask its reality. Living in Vermont, a state known for being one of the nation’s most progressive, and seeing the outcomes of Trump’s presidency, has been a stern reminder of the length of the federal government’s arm into people’s lives. In March, leading activists Cesar Alexis Carrillo Sanchez, Zully Palacios Rodriguez, and Jose Enrique “Kike” Balcazar Sanchez of the non-profit Migrant Justice were detained by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in March. Though Kike and Zully were released, Alex continued to be held and finally was deported. The administration’s targeting of Mexican and Latin immigrants made these community leaders targets. Goodman focused heavily on the unjust and dehumanizing federal initiative to eliminate political organizers while instilling fear in those whose legal status may be up in the air.

“For every one person picked up, millions are terrorized,” Goodman said.

As Trump continues to monger fear against Muslims in the US and abroad for their connection to terrorism, the tragic hypocrisy of the United States’ racist and imperialist agenda is revealed as federal agencies terrorize communities of people fearing separation from their families and livelihoods. So what do we do when the institutions that are allegedly fighting terrorism become the terrorists themselves?

The key to rallying for peace is to oppose calls for war. Yet so often in this country we are encouraged by the media to support calls by fear mongers like Trump to set bans on immigrants and refugees, to allow for people to be stopped and detained based on the color of their skin, to invade other countries based on the actions of non-state actors, and to defy the principles of liberty and justice. “It is not a mainstream media; it is an extreme media beating the drum of war,” Goodman explained. In these turbulent times, Amy Goodman reminds us that we must stand together for a future of peace.

Check out the full speech at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=esQpd4ws7iI
Democracy Now!’s website: www.democracynow.org
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