White Nationalism: Fight Racism & Anti-Semitism Simultaneously

By Rachel Siegel, PJC Executive Director

There has been a clear uptick in overt White Nationalism in Vermont. Off the top of my head I know of Patriot Front fliers posted in St Albans, Richmond, and Winooski, a large Patriot Front banner dropped off a parking garage in Burlington, and KKK displays in Shelburne. Multiple Synagogues have been marred with graffiti, a Hinesburg High School and a farm in Craftsbury were both defaced, and an immigrant POC-owned market as well as the Pride Center in Burlington have also been marked. The fear and stress of living as a person of color, Jewish, Muslim, queer, an immigrant, and other marginalized folks, is so palpable that people who don’t live those identities can no longer deny it. Marginalized people have always been threatened. The threats are more visible to more people now.

Groups will need to band together to overcome this hatred. One of the problems we’ve seen on the left is the way our groups splinter. We lack the decades-long strategies and finances that conservatives have. Kenyon Farrow, writer, editor, and strategist, said it well when reflecting on Alabama’s anti-abortion bill and the state of things in general:

“I can only think that those liberals (serving as elected officials or otherwise) who keep telling us single-payer healthcare, a green “new deal,” free childcare, free university education, living wages, an end to the prison industrial complex, ending the electoral college and automatic voter enrollment are unreasonable goals seem to conveniently forget that we’re now realizing the fantasies of The Right that began half to three-quarters of a century ago, a course they set and haven’t really veered from, and developed think tanks, media institutions, a court and electoral strategy to get.”

This quote was one of the many things that stirred me at the Anne Braden Anti-Racist Training for white social justice activists in which I was fortunate to participate. It is a semester-long intensive based in Oakland run by the Catalyst Project. It included three in-person sessions, multiple webinars, online meetings, mentorship, fundraising, and many hours of reading and watching videos. It was a profound experience that transformed me. I am still processing and synthesizing the experience – and will be for a long time.

One of the things made very clear to me in the Braden Training was that in order to fight racism and white supremacy...
A Deep, Intentional Pause

In the past few months, we have been getting clear messages to stop all but our most critical external work. Different sources have been urging us to take a break, do some deep assessment, clean things up, and move forward more strategically.

One of the things that moved us toward this decision was a consultation with the incredible Interracial Processing Project, who gave us specific things to work on in order to address the white supremacy culture we are swimming in. IPP’s founders, Jas Wheeler and Mercedes Mack, pointed out that we are running ourselves into the ground and are much less effective than we want to be because of ways that we are manifesting white supremacy culture. They gave us some very specific tasks (clean up the space so new people can find things) and topics to reflect on (understand the subconscious ways white people at the ground and are much less effective than we want to be). These tasks and topics demand the subconscious ways white people at the

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Why I Volunteer at the PJC

By Bill Talentino, PJC Member

When I retired and moved to Vermont over eight years ago, I was keenly aware that I needed to do something to keep busy and engaged. I had been planning to retire for two years, so I had plenty of time to think about what I might do. As a public library director in Massachusetts, I gained first-hand knowledge of the benefits of volunteering. The services of the libraries in which I worked were greatly enhanced by the efforts of volunteers. And the benefits to the individual volunteers seemed to more than equal those of the organizations and communities they served. Volunteering presented meaningful opportunities for socializing, learning, applying acquired knowledge and skills, and contributing to the well-being of others. To me, volunteering exemplified enlightened self-interest. Fortunately, thanks to COTS, ReSource, and the Peace & Justice Center, it has become a focal point of my life.

I have been volunteering at COTS for eight years, ReSource for seven, and PJC for two. COTS was recommended by my wife and friends, who were all familiar with the tremendous impact of the organization on the Burlington community. I became aware of ReSource from my work at COTS. Then, two years ago, I found I had some additional time for volunteering and looked for a third opportunity. The results of the 2016 election had left me feeling discouraged and ineffective. Volunteering at the PJC seemed like a perfect opportunity to confront these feelings and the causes behind them. I was right. PJC’s efforts in pursuit of social, racial, and economic equity and justice are meaningful and rewarding to me, and I enjoy contributing to those efforts, even on a small scale.

For two afternoons a week, I cover the POS (point of sale) desk at the PJC store. Desk volunteers greet and provide customer service to the general public and PJC members who enter the store. Carrying out the desk work and other behind-the-scenes tasks helps to free up the extremely productive yet small PJC staff to carry out a multitude of informational, educational, and administrative responsibilities associated with the center’s mission. Taking our lead from the visitor, desk volunteers look for opportunities to inform or update people on the PJC’s goals and activities. Depending on the visitor’s interest, conversations range from commenting on the weather and discussing where they are from, to commenting on the social, economic, and peace issues supported by the PJC. Our customers range from teens to people my age or older. Visitors represent a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. Interacting with them has been a great learning opportunity for me. As was the case in my career as a public librarian, I learn as much as I offer in my conversations with visitors.

Working with dedicated, talented and open-minded people is always enjoyable and enriching. It has been my good fortune to experience this throughout my library career, and now in my volunteer work at COTS, ReSource, and PJC. The PJC staff values its volunteers. This is reflected in the training and on-going support it provides to them. The staff creates a welcoming, stimulating, and informal environment for volunteers and the public. Volunteers are welcome to attend PJC programs and are invited to monthly volunteer get-togethers. I am particularly grateful for the learning opportunities related to fair trade and privilege.

Ultimately, contributing to an organization devoted to creating a “just and peaceful world” is the biggest reason I like volunteering at PJC. The impact of this Vermont-based, member-driven, non-profit organization is quite impressive. Through its educational and training programs, nonviolent activism, community activities, fair trade store, and lending library, it offers ample opportunities for all to become better informed and more engaged in economic and racial justice, peace and human rights.

Frederick Douglass Readings

Help read Frederick Douglass’s moving Fourth of July speech in a town near you!

In 1852, Frederick Douglass, one of our nation’s greatest orators and abolitionists, was asked to speak at an event commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He declined the invitation and instead made a speech on July 5 to a different audience. In his provocative speech, Douglass said, “This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn.” And he asked, “Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day?”

Douglass’s speech remains emotionally powerful and relevant more than a century and a half after he gave it.

JULY 3, WEDNESDAY
10-11am, Wells River Welcome Center, Wells River
11am-12pm, Quechee Public Library, Quechee
12-1pm, Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Montpelier
6:30-7:30pm Castleton Free Library, Castleton

JULY 4, THURSDAY
10-11am, Hildene: The Lincoln Family Home, Manchester
11am-2pm, Norman Williams Public Library, Woodstock
12-1pm, Kimball Public Library, Randolph
2-3pm, Landgrove Meeting House, Landgrove

JULY 5, FRIDAY
3-4pm, Rokeby Museum, Ferrisburgh
5-6pm, Pettie Memorial Library, Wilmington

JULY 6, SATURDAY
2-3pm, North Hero Public Library, North Hero
5-6pm, Burlington City Hall, Burlington

JULY 7, SUNDAY
10-11am, United Church of Johnson, Johnson

For more information, go to the Vermont Humanities Council website: www.vermonthumanities.org.
The Impact of Racism on White People
By Charlie Kleinfeld, PJC Intern

White supremacy runs through all aspects of society. The United States was founded on it and it is built deep into our social structures. It effects our ways of thinking and of seeing the world. It is a system of oppression against people of color and they are the primary victims of it; however, it impacts all of us, including white people, in unique ways. White supremacy has created the very category of whiteness, constructing this group as a way to view ourselves [I am speaking as a white person] in comparison to others.

Groups that have assimilated into whiteness, including groups which were initially excluded such as the Irish and Ashkenazi Jews, each have their own histories and culture. However, these ethnic identities have been brushed over and left behind in order to weaponize the idea of whiteness against POC.

In addition to this loss of ethnicity, the creation, after WWII, of segregated suburbs to protect and uphold whiteness replaced rich urban histories with bland, cookie-cutter “white utopias.” What was left in the cities after flight took away the tax base was urban decay and POC left to survive with poor public services and little job opportunities.

The suburban lifestyle also puts white people into a mind-set of artificial fear. This is different than the justified fear and terror that many POC feel around police and other agents of violence. Rather, stereotypes taught to us since birth cause many white people to feel an unjustified sense of fear when face-to-face with POC – constantly on guard for a danger that simply isn’t there.

Racism and white supremacy also work to keep working class whites near the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. By providing a scapegoat in immigrants and people of color, the ruling classes were able to establish a ‘racial bribe.’ By placing working class POC at the very bottom of the socio-economic ladder, working class white people seem willing to accept their exploitation so long as it means they never sink to the very bottom – there was always to be somebody below them. As our politicians strip away public services and workers’ rights, poor white people could ally with poor POC but seem instead to resign themselves to the situation so long as this racial caste system remains in place.

Racism and xenophobia together draw a wedge in labor organizing efforts. Organizing for better working conditions and wages is more difficult because working class white people are pitted against working class immigrants who the ruling class say are “taking their jobs.”

Racism is woven in with other systems of oppression. They all seek to uphold and perpetuate each other. If you find yourself suffering from any of these oppressions, as a woman, a trans person, a member of the working class, or somebody in the Global South, then any activism that ignores racism does nothing but help to reinforce and reproduce these other forms of oppression and domination.

White Nationalism continued from page 1...
Statement on Israel, Palestine, and Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions

Approved by Peace & Justice Center Board of Directors, 3/12/2019

Over the years, the Peace & Justice Center (PJC) has raised concerns over the militaristic, anti-democratic tendencies of many countries as well as criticized US foreign policy, military aid, and sales that exacerbate tensions and feed continued violence in the world.

The Israeli-Palestinian situation continues to deteriorate. The Peace & Justice Center is committed to nonviolence and seeks a world in which Palestinians and Israelis live in equality and dignity, and with national self-determination. We are both saddened and angered by the continued violence perpetrated by Hamas and the State of Israel and by United States’ complicity in it all.

In this statement, we focus our concern on the State of Israel. It has the greatest military and institutional power in the region and is in a position to be a force for peaceful change. It is also the most democratic nation in the region, and the PJC is committed to its survival. However, it is distressing to watch Israel adopt more and more policies reminiscent of those formerly found in apartheid-South Africa. Reasserting itself as a “Jewish state” in The Basic Law: The Nation State of the Jewish People (enacted July 19, 2018), it declares that only the Jewish people have the right to national self-determination and that the development of Jewish settlements is a national value (The National, 2018). This legislation, along with others (Adalah.org, Human Rights Watch), enables the Israeli government to legally discriminate against Palestinians.

Israel denies Palestinians due process under the law, destroys Palestinian homes and appropriates their lands to establish more Jewish settlements, collectively punishes Palestinians by destroying homes, mosques, and schools for suspected acts of terror by individuals, and, under an expanded definition of “acts of war,” exempts the State from liability for injuries or damage inflicted on persons in or from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), even if its acts violate international law. These laws also exempt Israeli actions taken in Gaza. Finally, emboldened by substantial United States government support, Israel continues with its disproportionate retaliation against Gaza that has nearly crushed the Arab civilian population and denies access to construction materials, water, electricity, and medical supplies, thereby perpetuating poverty and appalling health conditions (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Those of us, who care about a democratic Israel and believe that it can adopt policies to advance peace with its Arab neighbors, call for increased international pressure aimed at changing its behavior. To this end, the Peace & Justice Center has decided to join the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which works to pressure Israel to comply with international law. BDS, a nonviolent movement started in 2005, calls for:

- Ending Israel’s occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall;
- Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality;
- Respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return peacefully to their homes and properties, as stipulated in UN Resolution 194.

BDS is a global movement composed of unions, academic associations, churches, and grassroots organizations across the world. It is an inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement that is opposed on principle to all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

Boycotting, divesting, and sanctioning (BDS) Israel are neither unique nor isolated policies. The US government, for example, is presently engaged in BDS-like actions aimed at Syria, Iran, Russia, North Korea, Cuba, and Myanmar. In the past, we targeted South Africa (1986-91), North Vietnam (1964-75), Nicaragua (1985-89), Indonesia (1999), and the Palestinian National Authority (2006-07). In all instances, we have pressured governments to act more peacefully and in accordance with human rights principles. This BDS effort aimed at Israel operates within this same tradition.

We recognize that this action will be unpopular in certain circles and that PJC may be attacked for being anti-Semitic because of its stance on Israel. Quite the contrary, it is our commitment to the survival of the state of Israel and to democratic values that calls us to pressure it to live up to its declared ideals.

BDS principles are consistent with PJC’s values and mission statement. Our store purchasing policies and programmatic activities are aligned with these principles. We urge concerned citizens and other organizations to examine their policies and practices as well.

We believe that Israel can and must adopt more humane, just, and peace-making policies.

Sources:
- The National (December 10, 2018) For Arab citizens of Israel, Nation State law is as bad as apartheid. https://www.thenational.ae
- Palestinian National Committee (n.d.), What is BDS. https://bdsmovement.net
The Airport, the F-35s, and Forever Chemicals

By Robin Lloyd

I met Pat Elder at a Conference against Military Bases in Baltimore, MD in January, 2018. Pat has lived most of his life in the deeply polluted Potomac River watershed. He is a man with a mission – and a crucial message for Burlington about military aircraft and deadly chemicals.

His research into contaminants in the waters of the Potomac and of the Chesapeake Bay into which it flows, as well as the tides that raise and lower the waters of the Pentagon Lagoon every day, reveal that they are heavily polluted by contaminants used in war preparations. Since conducting this research, Pat has been on a Nationwide Tour of Military Bases with the Highest Level of PFAS Contamination.

What does this have to do with Burlington, specifically the proposed bedding of 18 nuclear capable F-35s at the Burlington International Airport?

Marguerite Adelman, a WILPF member and a resident of the high decibel sound zone in Winooski, contacted Elder for information he might have on pollution levels at the Burlington Airport. His research identifies serious concerns related to the fire-fighting foam used by the military in training exercises and on-base fires.

The foam isn’t just used in emergencies; it is routinely used to prepare for them. Washing off into our runways, sewers and wells, Per and Poly Fluoro-kyl Substances, or PFAS, are among the deadliest chemicals ever developed. The chemicals in this foam are creating a potential crisis in drinking water contamination around the country, one that has already reached epic proportions. These “forever chemicals” do not break down in the environment. They continue to contaminate ecosystems, drinking water sources, soils, sediment, and even food. They accumulate in domestic animals, wildlife and plants. And they accumulate in our bodies over a lifetime. Predictably, they are closely associated with many forms of cancer, infertility and miscarriages, and immune system, pre-natal, and early childhood developmental disorders.

By the 1970s, both the corporate manufacturers of these PFASs and the Department of Defense knew that the chemicals were toxic and contaminating water supplies. The current EPA acceptable level for PFAS is 70 ppt (parts per trillion).

A troubling report, The Final Site Inspections Report of Fire Fighting Foam Usage at Vermont Air National Guard Burlington Base, was issued in January, 2018 and is available on the military’s website. In the report, PFAS as high as 72,000 ppt were noted. Remember, the EPA’s acceptable level is 70 ppt.

City Councilor Joan Shannon, in a recent request to Director of Aviations Gene Richards, found that the Air Force has been analyzing the extent of the contamination and working on how to clean it up since 2017, according to Col. David Smith, commander of the 158th Fighter Wing of the Air Guard.

The report also shows that, until recently, shallow groundwater intercepted by the groundwater collection trench at Burlington’s National Guard base was pumped to the sewer lift station and ultimately to the Airport Parkway Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in South Burlington.

In general, Air National Guard Base groundwater flows east/northeast toward the Winooski River. Surface water drainage at the air base occurs through numerous streams along the western and northern boundaries of the Burlington airport with predominant drainage northward to the Winooski River.

It is highly significant that the Guard has spent $4,246,000 looking into whether the storm drain system is possibly contaminating our water and reaching residents of Chittenden County. The Air Force has decided on 14 years to fix the problem with the sewer. They might as well have said 14,000 years: the stuff never breaks down in nature. That’s why they are called forever chemicals.

The 2018 report that Elder has deciphered for us raises several questions regarding the testing of wells in the vicinity of the airport and the levels of PFAS in the sewer system. For example, has the sewer sludge been tested? Where is that sludge applied – on farms, in fields? What are the levels of PFAS in the surface water and the Winooski River? And what levels of the contaminant are found in aquatic life?

We must not be complacent about the findings. According to this research, the Burlington area is among the most seriously contaminated places in the country. All of us have a stake in what happens next.
The Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools Bill

By Kiah Morris, Director of Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Vermont Schools

Did you know, the first bill enacted by the legislature this year was Act 1, the Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools bill? This historic law came as a result of comprehensive work conducted by the Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in schools over the span of nearly three years. The coalition is led by a multicultural and multigenerational group including people of color from various racial and ethnic groups, and people of varying gender identities, economic backgrounds and geographical regions of Vermont. The coalition includes elders, students, parents, educators, and organizations.

This effort creates a unique opportunity for our state to not just embrace the concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion but to take tangible action to implement a meaningful cultural change and normalization of anti-bias and antiracist understandings in our youth at the age that it is most needed.

In his book, Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence, educational scholar Dr. Derald Wing Sue discusses his research which suggests, “...that the inability of teachers, trainers, and parents to facilitate a successful dialogue on race has major consequences for persons of color because being unheard and silenced (a) assails their mental health, (b) creates a hostile and invalidating campus, work, or societal climate, (c) perpetuates stereotype threat, (d) creates physical health problems, (e) saturates the broader society with cues that signal devaluation of social group identities, and (f) lowers classroom and work productivity and problem solving abilities. A failure of successful race talk has negative effects on White Americans as well. The inability or reluctance to dialogue openly and honestly with people of color on topics of race and racism leads to a lack of checks and balances to their worldviews. It (a) lowers empathic ability, (b) dims perceptual awareness and accuracy, (c) lessens compassion for others, (d) leads to self-denigration and a sense of failure, and (e) allows many to live in a world of false deception about the nature and operation of racism and their complicity in the perpetuation of silence.”

The data is clear that racial and ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, our indigenous and LGBTQIA youth have markedly worse outcomes than youth in the dominant culture as indicated by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The data proves that our children are having separate and unequal educational experiences – a fact which can no longer stand.

This effort will establish a multi-member advisory board, with majority representation from marginalized communities from the public sector to identify educational standards that fail to recognize the history, contributions, and perspectives of ethnic and socially marginalized groups.

It considers recommendations around improvements in school culture around these issues, policies revision, restorative practices for disciplinary responses, and more. What is most celebratory about this entity within the 20-member board are 11 seats: 8 adults, 2 youth and one college-level faculty with expertise in Ethnic Studies which the coalition has the power to appoint. In addition, the coalition will help support efforts to initiate community-level changes in support of the implementation of this bill across the state.

Ethnic/social equity standards:
- reduce bias, harassment, disproportionate patterns of discipline of students from non-dominant social groups by both other students and school staff.
- improves self-esteem and academic performance of kids from non-dominant groups
- gives a fuller and more accurate representation of history for all students
- helps dismantle structural racism throughout the education system

Over twenty years ago, a report by the Agency of Education showed pervasive racism in Vermont schools. Nothing happened in response. This is what we know: the rise of bias, hatred, and violence against marginalized persons in our state require that our children no longer wait until we are all “ready,” to do the work that is needed today to encourage global citizenship and the elimination of the culture of white supremacy in our schools.

We encourage you to join us in this important work for the soul of our state.

Contact information:
kiah@voicesforvtkids.org
ethnicstudiesvt.org
Voices for Vermont's Children: voicesforvtkids.org

The Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools at the Statehouse. Kiah Morris, second from the right.
**Alliance for Nuclear Accountability**

**From the Code Pink House to the Halls of Congress**

*By Robin Lloyd, US WILPF Co-Chair, Disarm/End Wars Issue Committee*

In May 2019, I travelled with two young women, Alex Rose and Kina Thorpe, staff members from the Peace & Justice Center, to attend the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability (ANA) DC Days, held May 19-22, 2019. We stayed at the Code Pink House in NE Washington, DC, which is not only pink, but orange and red and purple. Activist Paki Wieland is the concierge and host, and she drives people everywhere and gives them whatever medication they need when their feet or heads hurt.

Everyone at the Code Pink House was going to the Venezuela protest on our first day. The next evening it was a drive out to John Bolton’s house to protest his war mongering. Very enticing, but we were there with a mission: to attend an issues training on nuclear weapons and cleanup and waste on Sunday, and to do lobbying on Monday and Tuesday. At times there seemed to be a conflict between two worldviews of how to be an activist: in the streets or in the halls of Congress.

But there we were on Monday, walking the halls of Congress. It was very quiet considering that we were at the center of where the news is made 24 hours a day on MSNBC. Somewhere, a hearing was considering subpoenas against another confidante of Trump. Elsewhere, house committees were weighing Trump’s modernization of the nation’s nuclear arsenal. Since the purpose of the House is to allocate the people’s taxes, and since 53% of those taxes go to the military, does that mean 53% of office space, interns, committee meetings, etc., are devoted to sending money to the military? It’s appalling to think about it that way.

The genius of ANA is that it is made up of people who live in the shadow of the nuclear octopus: near Savannah River (GA) where Trump is trying to expand the production of plutonium ‘pits’; or Rocky Flats, CO or Hanford, WA, now closed but facing unresolved issues around nuclear cleanup; or Livermore, CA and Los Alamos, NM where the bombs are built. These people have lived with the damage and the tragedy of the nuclear fuel cycle for decades. And they know Congress: they know which staffer of which Congressional representative on the subcommittee dealing with, say, the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository, who needs to be told all the facts making Yucca Mountain an impossible site for storage.

I was deeply impressed with the careful planning and organization this poorly-funded nonprofit pulled off this weekend.

We went to a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and there we found Barbara Lee proposing “Repeal of the Authorization for Use of Military Force” (H.R. 1274), and it passed 30 to 21. All Democrats voted for it, and all Republicans voted against it. AUMF was passed after 9/11 and is used as an excuse to go into Somalia and Yemen and other countries.

We were able to see the frail but courageous pushback against the military-industrial-congressional complex. It gives one hope that the new spirit in Congress will shift the battleship of our economy around, slowly, to justice and peace.

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**My Thoughts on DC Days**

*By Kina Thorpe, PJC Educational Program Manager*

I participated in the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability’s (ANA) DC Days program. We spent a day learning about ANA’s key issues (clean up and accountability, nuclear waste, new nuclear reactors, no new bombs, no new bomb plants, and smarter, safer policies) and then had meetings with House and Senate offices to talk about these issues and to ask our lawmakers to take action.

One highlight from our weekend in DC was meeting activists from around the country who are doing work in their communities against nuclear war, weapons, and waste. Some of the people we met included folks from Peace Action and the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Making connections with those who are much deeper into this work than I am was a rewarding part of this experience.

However, I found the weekend in its entirety to be disappointing. One thing that most people know about the peace movement in Vermont is that it’s very old and very white, and the people at DC Days were no different. Though there were some young people and some people of color in attendance (including the amazing women from Georgia Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND)), the group was mainly who you would expect. It became clear to me quickly that it was a weekend built for them.

As a young person of color just getting into this work, the one-day “training” did not feel accessible to me. The information (whether about nuclear weapons or about the structure of DC Days) was presented in a way that was clearly made by and for people who have been doing this work for a long time. That would have been somewhat okay had our fellow attendees and instructors been open to answering questions and to help newbies like Alex and me understand. Instead, I was met with scoffs and questions about whether or not I should bother attending the meetings.
Reflecting on DC Days

By Alex Rose, PJC Volunteer Manager

As the 2019 DC Days approached, I could feel myself getting nervous. I imagined glossy floors, heavy doors, and people in suits walking at the speed of a run. My anxieties of whether or not I had all my facts right about the half-life of plutonium pits, Hardened On-Site Storage (HOSS), and the current bills floating around, manifested into stressing about whether my clothes were business appropriate enough. It could be used as an example in a Psychology 101 class: the clothes were something I could control; what would happen in the offices with high ranking officials was not!

Jam packed with new faces, crash courses, and first times, each DC Day spilled over into the next. Primarily, my job during the lobbying meetings was to take notes. Notetaking made me acutely aware of the roles of each DC Days lobbyist. Each person had their talking points, interwoven with their reason (often very personal) for being there, with only a couple minutes to speak. For Marylia Kelley from Tri Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment (CARES), it was the urgency to put a halt to plutonium pit production. Plutonium pits are the ‘triggers’ located inside a weapon of mass destruction. While at one point, pit production had been slowing down, the new budget request for the National Nuclear Security Administration, shows the desire for expanded production. New plutonium pits imply new weapon designs, which signify death, destruction, and domination, veiled in the rhetoric of ‘national security.’

I am not going to pretend that I know all the ins and outs of plutonium pit production. The lobbyists that I was working with have dedicated their entire lives to this effort. However, one does not need to necessarily know about pit production to know about pit production. Nuclear warfare, and warfare in general, is visceral. When a bomb is dropped, it hits us all. This is what our officials need to hear, they need to stop shutting themselves off from the humanity that connects us.

My biggest takeaway from my time in DC wasn’t particularly revolutionary; it was the realization that there are people behind policies, behind laws, behind weapons of mass destruction. I already knew this, of course, but to see these people in power first hand, people who do not represent the American people and have little regard for transparency and truth, was sobering. Complex feelings arose while sitting at the various meetings. On the one hand, I was filled with excitement as I sat among decision makers, advocating for bills I believe in. On the other hand, the feeling was despair. My moment at the table was fleeting. What will happen when no one is looking? And what about the voices that are being systematically silenced? These were among some of the questions that caused me to kick into gear and not worry so much about the clothes I was wearing and my ‘professionalism.’

Our lives, our existence is at stake.

CALENDAR

July 3-7, Wednesday-Sunday
● Frederick Douglass Readings throughout Vermont. See page 3 for list or visit www.vermonthumanities.org.

July 8, Monday
● 6-7:30pm, Vermonter for Justice in Palestine (VTJP) meeting. PJC. Also 8/12 and 9/9.

July 9, Tuesday
● 12 noon-1pm Toxic Whiteness Discussion Group. PJC. This space is held specifically to process how white supremacy culture is toxic to white people. The hope is that by joining this space, white people will be better able to allow for the emotional needs of people of color to take priority in multi-racial spaces. FREE. Also 8/13 and 9/10.

● 6-8:30pm, PJC board meeting. Also 8/13 and 9/10.

July 10, Wednesday
● 6-7pm, Fair Trade 101: Global Trade & Racism. Plainfield Co-Op, Plainfield. The aim of this presentation is to give some background on the history of global trade and how trade has historically come at the expense of marginalizing people in the Global South. We will examine the Fair Trade Movement is an alternative trading system that ensures small producers Global South are given access to the global market, but also provided with basic human rights.

July 12, Friday
● 6:30-8:30pm, “Black is the Body” book discussion with Dr. Emily Bernard. PJC. Registration is full. To get on the waiting list, email program@pjcvt.org.

July 16, Tuesday
● 6-8pm, POC in VT Affinity Group. PJC. This program is led by people of color, for people of color. It is a monthly gathering for POC to come together to share their experiences and explore their identities. Each month focuses on a different topic as determined by the group. You do not have had to attend previous meetings in order to come. FREE. Also 8/20 and 9/17.

July 20, Saturday
● 10am-12pm, Will Miller Green Mountain Veterans for Peace, Chapter 57 meeting. Hunger Mountain Co-op. Also 8/17 and 9/21

July 27, Saturday
● 2-3pm, Fair Trade Labels. PJC. This presentation breaks down the differences between FT Certifications, FT Membership Organizations, and Direct Trade to help us better understand the Fair Trade Movement. Free. People are encouraged to arrive at 1:30pm to participate in a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

August 6, Tuesday
● 8:15am, Hiroshima Silent Vigil. Corner of South Prospect & Main Streets, Burlington.

August 8, Thursday
● 7pm, Songs for Hope. 74th Anniversary of the US dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Join us singing folk songs and lighting candleboats at Burlington’s Waterfront.

August 18, Sunday
● Afternoon (TBA), Black Beauty. Burlington area TBA. This new program was designed by people of African Ancestry to help others of African Ancestry understand the relationship between the destruction of black beauty and its connection to anti-black racism. The hope is to help people build skills to dismantle internalized oppression within themselves, the black community, and address colorism and texturism.

August 24, Saturday
● 2-3pm, Fair Trade vs Free Trade. PJC. Learn the basic information about globalization and how policies & practices have paved the way for huge companies to profit at the expense of people and the planet. Shows how the Fair Trade movement & principles seek to, at a minimum, counterbalance these atrocities. FREE. People are encouraged to arrive at 1:30pm to participate in a PJC New Volunteer Orientation.

September 11, Wednesday

September 20-27, Friday-Friday
● Climate Action Week. Youth, including Greta Thunburg, have called on adults to join them in a global strike on September 20th, followed by a week of escalated events, actions, and civil disobedience. As we move towards the next Vermont legislative session and a critical federal election, join the global climate movement for these mass, decentralized mobilizations to put climate justice front and center. Please contact zac@350vt.org if you or an organization you work with would like to support organizing efforts.

September 22, Sunday
● 3-4pm, Dr. Emily Bernard — BLACK IS THE BODY: Stories from My Grandmother’s Time, My Mother’s Time, and Mine. Rokeby Museum, Ferrisburgh.

September 29, Sunday
● National Coffee Day. Tasting at the Peace & Justice Store.

October 19, Saturday
● 2-3pm, Cocoa Campaign. PJC. This presentation focuses on the issue of child slavery and human trafficking in the cocoa industry. FREE.

Don’t see anything in your part of Vermont? Please contact program@pjcvt.org to discuss possibilities.
**Summer Reading**

**HOW WE WIN: A GUIDE TO NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION CAMPAIGNING BY GEORGE LAKEY**

Longtime activist George Lakey provides a comprehensive guide to effective community organizing and successful movement building. Drawing from campaigns throughout history, Lakey offers advice for defining specific goals, identifying targets, and avoiding burnout.

**THE POET X BY ELIZABETH ACEVEDO**

The Poet X is a National Book Award-winning young adult novel about fifteen-year-old Xiomara Batista, who finds her voice in her passion for slam poetry. Using her poems as an outlet to express her passions and frustrations, the novel follows Xiomara as she navigates the complexities of family, religion, and love.

**HOW WE GET FREE: BLACK FEMINISM AND THE COMBAHEE RIVER COLLECTIVE BY KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR**

In this collection of essays and interviews edited by activist-scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, founding members of the Combahee River Collective — a path-breaking group of radical black feminists — and contemporary activists reflect on the legacy of its contributions to Black feminism and its impact on today’s struggles.

**I DISSENT: RUTH BADER GINSBURG MAKES HER MARK BY DEBBIE LEVY**

Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has spent a lifetime disagreeing: disagreeing with inequality, arguing against unfair treatment, and standing up for what’s right for people everywhere. This biographical picture book about the Notorious RBG, tells the justice’s story through the lens of her many famous dissents, or disagreements.

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**Denur Crafts**

**By Leah Mitula**

Denur Crafts is a small group of people, living in Kenya, who produce native handicrafts and jewelry. The group started in 1994 with just four women and has been growing ever since, presently with a membership of 40 women.

Members are selected according to a few simple criteria. One has to have skills to work by hand and have the possibility to work from their own home environment. We employ those who need a source of income in order to pay school costs for their children and/or raise the standard of living of their family. Women with children, who find themselves jobless, are given first priority. (Children are not involved in any aspect of our production.)

We are involved in production of handicrafts including jewelry, soapstone carvings, wooden carvings, baskets, and our signature banana fiber mobiles. Using local materials and traditional methods, each member creates their own designs. The work is produced in Nairobi and the surrounding areas. We then market it around the world, including the Peace & Justice Store.

Our vision is to create employment and income for unemployed people in Kenya, especially mothers. We aim to give mothers the means to send their children to school and provide them with an acceptable standard of living.

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**Kenya Cultural Safaris: Ever Trip Sends a Child to School**

There are many tours that will take you on safari to see Kenya’s amazing wildlife — including the Big Five game animals: lion, leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, and Cape buffalo — but only a Kenya Cultural Safari will also let you see firsthand how both traditional and modern Kenyans live. You will experience the warmth and charm of a rural village, see craftspeople at work, see how children learn and play. You’ll visit an elephant orphanage, feed giraffes from your hand, and experience the wonder and majesty of seeing lions, elephants, monkeys, rhinos, zebras, impala, water buffalo, wildebeests, and much more in their wild habitat. You’ll eat delicious local food, and gain insight into the complex mix of cultures in post-colonial Kenya that make it one of the most vibrant economies and fascinating places in all of Africa.

For more information: www.denurcrafts.org.

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**Leave a Lasting Legacy**

You can ensure that your investment in making change in the world lives on by making a bequest or planned gift to the PJC.

Put simply, a planned gift is a contribution that is arranged now and pays out at a future date. Commonly donated through a will or trust, planned gifts are most often granted once the donor has passed away. There are many types of planned gifts, including some that pay an income to the donor during their lifetime, with the remainder going to the non-profit when they pass.

We look forward to helping you make these plans as personally gratifying as possible. Contact Rachel Siegel at rachel@pjcvt.org if you’d like to discuss ways to make a lasting impact. If you have included the Peace & Justice Center in your estate plans, you’re a member of our Legacy Society. Thank you!
June 2015

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