At the start of my internship with TRC, the world many of us had known our whole lives had radically shifted. The Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum across the world after the wrongful death of George Floyd at the hands of the police. Amidst a global pandemic, peaceful protesters took to the streets to support the BLM movement. Some were physically assaulted by the police. Global news channels expose police brutality in the United States for what it truly is - systemic racism. Yet little legislative action follows to address racism nor the broken institution of policing in America.

I joined TRC as a communications intern several months into COVID-19 when social justice movements began gaining traction across the country. During this revolutionary time, TRC allowed students and aspiring activists to take part in societal progress.
This internship experience has opened my eyes to how deep the culture of militarism runs in our society. ‘Militarism’ was a word I had only understood in the context of a history class, and felt it was irrelevant to the modern-day. Now I know militarism knows no bounds and can even be found in rural Western Massachusetts. Did you know that Northampton is home to L3Harris, one of the top ten defense companies in the world? Have you ever considered military recruiters’ true agenda when they recruit in high schools? Children are signing their lives away before they are even of age to vote. In 2015, over 50% of the United States’ discretionary funding was allocated for the military. Redistributing even a small percentage of those billions of dollars towards education, health care, social resources, or renewable energy would produce domestic jobs. This would be a win-win situation, as it would positively impact both people and the planet.

Abolition Reform

ALLISON CARTER
PABLO FERNANDEZ

My mom is a social worker on Cape Cod. Many of the families she works with are migrants who constantly live in fear of being deported and/or separated from their families. These parents work 50+ hours a week to provide for their children and send them to school with the hope their futures with be safer and more prosperous than their own. Becoming a legal citizen is expensive and time-consuming. An unrealistic reality for individuals who have limited resources and force cultural and language barriers at every step. It is heartbreaking to see families destroyed and children left traumatized for life when ICE deports their family members. Migrants are essential to our economy and society. Common misperception feeds into policies and political rhetoric that wrongfully perpetuates fear and promotes xenophobia. Being employed at a nonprofit that works to ensure communities in Western MA are safe for everyone is inspiring.
The root of many issues TRC works to mitigate involve human rights violations. This year has challenged us all in countless ways. Despite all of the news stories that leave us all feeling drained, there is a glimmer of hope. The Black Lives Matter movement has gained international attention, people across the world have displayed their support in the form of peaceful protests and rallies. Those in power who promote discrimination or disregard injustices are being publicly criticized and actions have been taken to remove many of these figures. We are living through history, and each of us has the chance to come out on the correct side of it.

What will you do?

I dream of a future where more people are open-minded and curious yet critical of what information they chose to believe or reject. To hold ourselves and our governments accountable we need to objectively assess what is happening in our communities, states, and nation. In this theoretical world, people would reject the notion that the status quo is set in-store or morally correct because there is a history behind it. By engaging in conversations on social ills that perpetuate our modern society with your friends and family, you are lending a hand in solving the problem and ceasing the cycle of oppression.
Alicia Purdy, the friendly local graphic design wizard, has worked her magic on our workaday old logo design to make something far more beautiful and flexible for different sizes and media. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you Alicia! The Dandelion has always been an important symbol to us of natural, colorful, grass-roots resistance against all forms of oppression and pesticides. With help from volunteers like Alicia, that symbol is clearer and more distinctive than ever. We also have some of these lovely designs available on things like t-shirts in the Store section of our website. Let’s all keep spreading those seeds of Resistance!

-from TRC's Communications Team
37TH MLK DAY CELEBRATION
Uniting the Beloved Community

On January 18th, 2021 for the FIRST time ever, The Resistance Center for Peace and Justice celebrated its annual MLK Day Celebration virtually.

We started our day with Steve Strimer for a guided virtual tour of significant historical sites across Florence with focuses on local African American and abolitionist history.

We then gathered in conversation with keynote speaker Tanisha Arena, Executive Director of Arise for Social Justice, and special guest, State Senator Adam Gomez, featuring music by I-SHEA and Kevin Sharpe.
This year our own interns lead a workshop. Only the weapon of love: Kingian non-violence through a 21st century lens: This workshop will use the words of Dr. King to examine the Black Lives Matter movement of this past summer and the riot at the Capitol this month.

We concluded our day with various workshops led by local activist. The workshops covered a variety of topics that were important to the community at large.

Check out our blog for more information about the event: https://www.theresistancecenter.org/blog
Demilitarization Committee

The Demilitarization Team embraces a critical perspective on the ills of the military-industrial complex and how it functions with impunity in our communities and around the globe. We meet virtually on Tuesdays from 5pm-6pm, alternating between biweekly official team meetings and an optional co-working hour. Our primary focus is currently on researching and disseminating information about L3Harris, one of the largest weapons contractors in the world, which has a branch here in Northampton, and re-envisioning alternatives for our community to survive and thrive without profiting off war. In addition to a series of webinars about L3Harris we also have regular standouts in front of their branch on Prince St. Coalition building and supporting other groups who are passionate about demilitarization and social justice is important to us.

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Chelsea at chelseacfaria@gmail.com, Clerk of the Demilitarization Committee.

Youth Committee Update

The Resistance Center’s Youth Committee has the honor of supervising five outstanding undergraduate interns this semester. Our interns are integral to our work; they bring indispensable energy and insight to TRC’s campaigns. This semester, we have three interns from UMass Amherst, one from Smith College, and one from Mount Holyoke college. Our most senior intern, Cordelia, has worked for TRC for over two years!

One highlight of this semester was a thought-provoking social justice seminar facilitated by interns Pablo and Allison. In our social justice seminars, interns contextualize TRC’s campaigns in a broader historical and social context. Last month, Pablo and Allison led us in a conversation about the movement for police abolition, and compared it to attempts at police reform. We explored structural racism in policing, and we visioned a world without police violence.

If you or someone you know may be interested in an internship at The Resistance Center, send a resume to contact@theresistancecenter.org!
Dear friends and supporters,

This year has been a whirlwind. With a shoestring budget, The Resistance Center for Peace and Justice has managed to make progress towards peace and justice in the valley. Our community has grown in so many beautiful ways, and we have also grappled with uncertainty as a young organization weathering a global pandemic. It feels bittersweet to share with you that I am moving on from my role as Program Director at TRC. Right now, we are in the process of restructuring to ensure we can sustain our critical organizing and coalition building.

I have been humbled to serve in this role, following in the footsteps of decades of peace activists in the valley. While my time on TRC’s staff comes to a close, I know our work is nowhere close to done. I look forward to continuing to organize with our Demilitarization Committee as we address the military industrial complex in Western Mass. With constant increases to the military budget, we know this work is more important now than ever before.

The valley has a rich history of peace activism. From resistance to nuclear weapons to addressing military recruitment in high schools, our community ensures issues of war and violence are a priority. It fills me with hope knowing we will continue to do this work together. Thank you to everyone who welcomed me into this community, and to everyone who has supported me during this transition. This is in no way a goodbye.

Testimonials about working with Miranda Groux

It has been an absolute joy to work with Miranda. She’s a relentlessly critical thinker, and she brings a willingness to learn and an open spirit to all of her interactions. Miranda’s personality has helped shape the culture at TRC in wonderful ways. She’s also been a tremendous asset to the TRC’s work! One wonders how she managed to stay on top of so many different realms of work, while still answering all of her emails so promptly! We’ll miss her so, and we very much wish her well. What a formidable individual!

Board Member
Myra Lam

Miranda’s determination and fortitude have carried TRC through this past year. As a mentor she has been patient and dedicated, and her leadership inspired me to stay on at TRC after graduating college and become a board member. Miranda is a compassionate, hardworking person who cares deeply about fighting for a more just world. I wish her all the best in her upcoming endeavors!

Intern and Board Member
Elise Ghitman

We first hired Miranda just to work on 1 program, countering military recruitment in schools. She adapted to that remarkably well, and quickly, but at the time we had no idea how much more of all the TRC Work she would soon be taking on. Nor did we have any idea how long she’d be able to carry so much, or how gracefully. Miranda’s seemingly tireless work for peace and justice speaks volumes for her simple, basic goodness and humanity. I look forward to seeing how much more she’ll do to save our world in the future!

Board Member
Avery J

Miranda has been an amazing supervisor and a rock for all the interns! Her enthusiasm for the work is infectious and her determination to give everyone a voice in the organization’s direction has surely shaped TRC’s culture for good. We’ll all miss her dearly and will look out for all the great things she does moving forward.

Intern
Cordelia Bellinson