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Summer Soul-stice
This summer, RESIST looks into the power of creative inspiration

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Summer Inspiration

We asked two RESIST grantees: "What books, music, artwork has inspired you or fueled your work this summer?"

Ashley Zimmerman, executive director of Muslim Consultative Network, New York, New New York: We at the Muslim Consultative Network are reading and rereading the report, “Mapping Muslims: NYPD Spying and its Impact on American Muslims.” Long before the PRISM revelation, the Muslim community of New York has had to deal with the surveillance of its community. This report demonstrates the impact of the surveillance program and should serve as a warning regarding the effects of the degradation of the right to privacy in our country.

Yul-san Liem, co-director of the Justice Committee, New York, New York: I wouldn’t say that representations of culture inspire me to engage with activist work. Instead, injustices committed in the past, those taking place in the present, and events that jeopardize our future as a people, inspire me to organize. Culture rekindles my connection with other activists.

Octavia’s Brood

Social justice and science fiction get together

A group of social justice activists and lovers of acclaimed science fiction writer Octavia Butler recently launched a project to write and edit an anthology of science fiction stories, written by activists who have been inspired by Butler’s work. We talked to one of the editors of the book, Adrienne Marie Brown.

How did this project start?

It started because co-editor Walidah Iamarisha and I are nerds, lovers of Octavia, and simultaneously found ourselves applying the lessons and questions from our science/speculative fiction to our work in social justice. Mutual admiration - we didn’t know each other. She was editing the “Visionary Fiction” issue of Left Turn magazine, and I was developing “Octavia Butler and Emergent Strategy” scholarship through the Allied Media Conference. We sort of made an audacious commitment through the internet and here we are.

What does imaginary/science fiction have to do with social movements, justice, and organizing?

When we put our hearts, minds, and bodies into social justice work, really it is an act of imagination - we are longing for something we haven’t experienced yet. But it is easy to get locked into negotiating for the small changes, falling into comfort with the systems that exist. Imaginary/speculative fiction is just a format for exercising that muscle of vision and scenario projections. So we can use strategies with a visionary awareness of where we need to get to.

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A Summer of Hope
A special note from a longtime RESIST supporter

By Henry Rosemont

As the left must struggle to maintain the remnants of victories it won three-quarters of a century ago against increasing reactionary pressure from "Tea Party" types, their moneyed masters and running dog political servants, it becomes harder to keep one’s spine stiffened to keep up the good fight, especially for those of us whose spines are becoming bent with age. Of course organizing must remain the key for fundamental change, but it is heartening when we hear of persons on their own speaking out against injustice even when it places their freedom, reputation, or worse at some risk. I have personally been able to stand a little straighter again this summer by the moral work of Edward Snowden, the defense of Snowden’s actions by Daniel Ellsberg, and the heroic stand of Wendy Davis against the forces of darkness in Texas masquerading as politically responsible officials. I hope others will read of the efforts of these three, then read again the original Call to RESIST Illegitimate Authority, and be similarly re-encouraged.

Henry Rosemont, Jr ("Hank" to his comrades) has been an anti-war and civil rights activist for over 50 years. He joined RESIST shortly after it was founded, and served on its Board from 1970 to 2003. Now retired from full-time professorial work, he is a Visiting Scholar of Religious Studies at Brown University.

Summer Art, Activism, and Action
Unraveling and Turning: A Climate Cabaret

On Saturday, June 15, around 350 people gathered on the State House lawn and in the Representatives’ Chamber to watch a variety of acts unified by the theme of climate change. From circus, to dance, to climate-themed skits, Vermonters came together with a common vision— the idea that through art we can begin to understand the struggles we face in the future and motivate ourselves to take compassionate action to protect the natural world.

The Climate Cabaret helped fill the need for emotional understanding of the loss, fear, and opportunities inherent in the reality of climate change. The acts helped strengthen the connection that comes from our shared experience of Tropical Storm Irene and other climate disasters.

The event drew a varied crowd. The aerial circus rig grabbed the attention of people passing by on the street, many of whom joined the 350Vermont supporters, artists, activists, environmentalists, children, and others who formed the group of spectators.

Left: Children stake doves to represent healing and protecting a place they value.
Center: Dancers from the Moving Light Dance Company in Berlin perform a piece choreographed by Christine Harris. “I don’t think I would have created a dance piece about climate change independently,” she told the Times Argus, “although this opportunity for creation has inspired me in a familiar way. On my first visit to Vermont I was inspired to create a dance piece on a clearcut piece of land. In some ways this has brought me back to why I am here.”

Right: Shannon McKenna from The New England Center for Circus Arts performs an aerial silk routine that evoked the power of water while newscasts from Tropical Storm Irene play in the background.
The RESIST Summer Reading List
We asked the RESIST's board of directors what books they are reading this summer...

Cynthia Bargar: *The Life of Poetry* by Muriel Rukeyser

Judy Hatcher: *Racism Without Racists* by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

Ragini Shah: *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson

Nisha Purushotham: *Whole Child/Whole Parent* by Polly Berrien Berends


Kay Mathew: *Freedom Summer* by Bruce Watson, *Life* by Keith Richards, *Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel


Carol Schachet: *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver and *Winning the Story Wars: Why those who tell (and live) the best stories will rule the future* by Jonah Sach

Marc Miller: *Paris, France* by Gertrude Stein

Gregory Pehrson: *Wobblies and Zapatistas* by Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubacic and *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* by Lewis Gordon
Not Your Average Summer Internship

What do RESIST interns have to say about working at RESIST this summer?

Yue Yu, Development Intern: Especially coming from China, I have been inspired by the passionate, militant, provocative, and progressive nature of our grantees; for example, the Occupy Homes movement where civilians link arms and stage a sit in to save homes from foreclosure. This type of radical action gives me hope for the future.

Molly McCallum, Communications Intern: Since working at RESIST I have been inspired by the many groups we fund fighting the Prison Industrial Complex. While I have always been aware of the gaping flaws in our prison system, not until the recent large hunger strikes protesting the cruel, inhumane, and torturous conditions of incarceration did I truly understand the urgency of this issue.

Jack Wicker, Grants Intern: Obviously before coming to RESIST, I was aware of the gravity of the struggle to improve society. But through my work here, I have been shocked by the incredible number of extremely diverse people struggling for equality and justice. What inspires me is the overwhelming number of people around this country willing to organize and fight for a better tomorrow.

RESIST Summer Movie Guide

By Molly McCallum

1. Elysium: The film sees society divided along socio-economic fault lines. The poor are left suffering on a ruined Earth, dying from a curable plague, while the wealthy enjoy the luxurious space station, Elysium.

2. Fruitvale Station: The film is based on the true story of 22-year-old Oscar Grant who was inexplicably shot and killed by the Bay Area Rapid Transit police on New Year’s Day. This is the familiar story of racial discrimination and profiling. It is especially compelling due to the current media focus on the George Zimmerman trial and his killing of Trayvon Martin.

3. Call me Kuchu: A documentary that follows the story of Uganda’s first openly gay man and his fight to stop a bill that would make homosexuality illegal.

4. Wadj: This film is not only the first to be shot entirely in Saudi Arabia with an all Saudi cast but is also the first Saudi film directed by a woman. Following the story of a young girl who wants a bike, this film challenges the societal norms for women in Saudi Arabia.

5. Laurence Anyways: This French Canadian drama follows the relationship between trans woman and her lover.

6. Gideon’s Army: This documentary follows three young, overworked and underpaid public defenders in the Deep South.

7. Gasland Part II: This followup to the Oscar nominated documentary Gasland examines the dangers of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, that is now being practiced worldwide to extract natural gas.

8. Snowpiercer: In this dark Korean science-fiction film, an attempted solution to global warming fails, and the earth is encompassed in a new ice age. The survivors of the human race are confined to a perpetually running train with staunch class divisions and a segregated society that eventually leads to a revolt.

9. Dallas Buyers Club: Based on a true story, this film follows the battle of Ron Woodroof with the medical establishment and pharmaceutical companies after being diagnosed with HIV in the late 1980’s.

10. Israel: A Home Movie: Director Arik Bernstein put together amateur home movies from the 1930’s to the 1970’s documenting everything from the Zionist optimism at the birth of Israel and the actual tragic result of a country in constant war.

Molly McCallum is a student at Boston College and a RESIST 2013 summer intern.

Octavia’s Brood

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How/why is Octavia’s work so inspirational to you all? Who is involved? What do you hope readers and activists will get out of it?

Her work is fearless, imaginative - she touches on everything and it all feels like case studies in alternative modes of leadership. We need that fearlessness in our vision, and we need case studies of how our visions will actually become reality, how they will play out in authentic relationships and tangible scenarios. It’s for people who are obsessed with the future, scared of apocalypse, wrestling with burnout and longing for new ways of being about social justice. And sci-fi lovers, and social justice lovers. We hope people will feel inspired, will see themselves in these futures and alternate realities, will feel needed by the future.
RESIST Five to Nine

Ever want to know what the RESIST staff does when not in the office? Here we answer a few questions on what we are up to this summer.

Miabi Chatterji, Interim Co-Director of Grantmaking and Finance

When not reading grant applications of course, what are you reading these days?

Robin Hobbs's Farseer and Tawny Man series are some of the best books I've read. They are set in a fictional but highly realistic set of warring societies and grapple with politics, ethics amongst people in power (and the regular people who often have to work amongst them) and our bond with animals. The Tawny Man series explores some really interesting aspects of gender identity. Plus they are fun!

What music are you listening this summer?

Imagine Dragons, the Las Vegas rock band, and Santigold, whose beats are awesome; she'll make you get up and shimmy. I also like to add a word when I sing along to that pop song from this past year, making it "I'm Glad you Came [Out]."

We know all RESIST grantees inspire you, but is there one that has inspired you in a different way recently?

Family Farm Defenders is a really cool project that I knew nothing about previous to their application to RESIST. They are dreaming big about farm and food justice.

What are you reading online right now?

The Debt Resisters' Operation Manual! It was put together by Strike Debt and Occupy Wall Street and is an excellent tool.

Ravi Khanna, Director of Development

What books are you reading this summer?

I just ordered a copy of The Wandering Falcon by Pakistani writer Jamil Ahmed. It is short stories about the remote tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It's an area of the world that has always fascinated me. I remember as a young boy listening to storytellers tell of legends of Pushtan warriors and wanting to live in that area and time.

What about music?

I don't get to listen to much music. I am addicted to news and analysis. I listen to it on the radio, at home at night, and visit a number of international news sites and follow links to articles posted by friends on their Facebook pages.

Which RESIST grantees have inspired you recently?

There are so many RESIST grantees that inspire me. I am most inspired by groups of immigrant workers, who barely have a foot in this country, taking on the unjust and exploitative farm to table food industry.

Any travel plans this summer?

No travel plans for the summer, but I'm planning to travel with my family to a family reunion this winter in India.

Yafreisy Mejia, Co-Director of Grantmaking and Accounting

Like Miabi, when not reading grant applications, what are you reading these days?

I'm reading The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander. At RESIST we get a good number of groups doing work around incarceration, death penalty work and prisoners' rights, and while The New Jim Crow does not talk about other ways poor people of color are being locked up, such as in detention centers, it offers some interesting, albeit not new, perspectives around this issue.

What music are you listening these days?

I'm currently obsessed with one of Bob Marley's albums. I especially like the singles "Rat Race" and "So Much Trouble in the World." And with Dominican roots, I'm loving Miriam Cruz's songs. They're not overtly political, but in a country with so many incidents of "femicides" some of her lyrics are pushing back on some of the gender norms and general violence against women.

We know all RESIST grantees inspire you, but is there one that has inspired you in a different way recently?

As the Grants Co-Director for Eastern Regions - I LOVE all our groups! But I'm particularly inspired by Youth Organizing Institute in North Carolina, the diversity represented among the youth is incredible and they are engaging in some pretty kick-ass work. Recently, they've joined with other groups in the state on Moral Mondays to put pressure on the Governor and stop a range of repressive legislation.

Going anywhere over the summer that might be interesting?

Tulum, Mexico! It will be my first eco-tour and am so looking forward to it. There's an art to doing nothing and I plan to hone that in, along with some zip lining and exploring ruins and Cenotes!

Saif Rahman, Director of Communications

What are you reading this summer?

I'm reading the Hunger Games trilogy! It is a really fascinating way to look at war, imperialism, violence, and class, through the eyes of young people in a future dystopian version of the United States.

Listening to anything fun?

The new Daft Punk album - not because it has anything to do with politics - just because its fun and great to dance to!

We know all RESIST grantees inspire you, but is there one that has inspired you in a different way recently?

Providence Student Union has truly amazed me with their exceptionally creative direct actions recently - check out our March/April Newsletter.

Going anywhere over the summer that might be interesting?

Finally visiting the Tenement Museum in New York City which is all about the buildings in which the entire families of working class immigrants lived when they first immigrated to the United States.
A Summer Field Trip
Youth Organizing Institute takes a trip through radical history

On July 11, 2013, along with our partner organizations, we brought over 50 high school students to Greensboro, North Carolina, for a field trip. We went to the International Civil Rights Museum to see where the Sit-In Movement started and went on a grassroots peoples tour of the city with the Beloved Community Center. Bringing over 50 youth together to talk about race, history, and the school-to-prison-pipeline will help lay the foundation for a growing youth network in NC.

Support grassroots social justice organizing today.
Your contribution to RESIST supports hundreds of progressive groups across the country. Please send what you can, as often as you can. The groups we fund count on us, and we count on you.

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Donations are tax-deductible.
Meet RESIST

RESIST awards grants six times a year to some of the most effective grassroots groups across the United States who are organizing for social, economic, and environmental justice. Here are a few grant recipients from our most recent allocation cycle in June of 2013.

For more information, visit the RESIST website at www.resistinc.org

Neighbor to Neighbor – Lynn
112 Exchange Street, Lynn, MA 01901, www.n2nma.org

Neighbor to Neighbor – Lynn formed to organize poor people of color in Lynn to fight for the change they wanted to see. In particular, parents wanted to organize around city-wide school issues and to hold schools accountable.

A $4,000 grant from RESIST will support parents in demanding an anti-racist discipline policy based on principles of transformative justice, ensure interpretation and translation services for families that need them, and in conducting city wide “Know Your Rights” workshops for parents.

New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 66433, Albuquerque, NM 87193, www.nmrcrc.org

As people of religious faith and conviction, New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (NMRCRC) supports reproductive justice for every person.

A $4,000 grant from RESIST will help NMRCRC mobilize people of faith to shape public policies, laws, and resources that make reproductive health care affordable and accessible across New Mexico. NMRCRC has been hard at work shaping legislation and policy in New Mexico to value women’s rights, such as pregnant-parent educational rights and protecting the custody rights of survivors of sexual assault and rape.

Occupy Our Homes – Atlanta
60 Walton Street, Atlanta, GA 30303, www.occupyourhomesatl.org

Occupy our Homes-Atlanta’s approach is to build community through direct democracy and a culture of resistance through non-violent direct action as a way to fight for placing human need above corporate greed.

A grant from RESIST for $4,000 will enable Occupy Our Homes – Atlanta to continue pressuring predatory lenders through direct action, as well as member leadership development in a state with few legal protections against foreclosures and evictions.

Trans Youth Support Network
P.O. Box 7625, Minneapolis, MN 55407, www.transyouthsupportnetwork.org

Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN) was founded as a community response to a series of incidents of violence targeting young transwomen of color. Their work is shaped directly by trans youth.

A $4,000 grant from RESIST will help TYSN promote racial, social, and economic justice for trans youth, with the freedom to self-define gender identity and expression. TYSN works to hold institutions that affect trans youth’s lives accountable and develop youth leadership.