

Vermont Movement News

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—From The Editor's Desk—
Welcome to Vermont
Movement News!

Starting a newspaper was never my goal. I wish I could say it was part of a master plan. This past year I have watched movements in Vermont struggle to communicate with the public and construct their own narrative of events. I realized that a newspaper for excluded voices in Vermont was critically needed. Coincidentally, it happens that a team with the right skills was coming together to meet this need.

This past fall, I was the Liberty Union Party candidate for Congress. We have the rare fortune in Vermont to have reasonable ballot access laws. A handful of intrepid candidates stood up to the political establishment. Despite being on the ballot, Vermont's corporate media blacked out our message. I wrote nine press releases, but was only published once by VTdigger. Candidate debates required one or two minute soundbites.

Aside from a couple debates, we were invisible to the corporate media. This media didn't fail just the candidates. They failed to play the

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#BlackLivesMatter — Anti-Racism Protests Continue

By Marina Brown

Protests against racist police violence continue months after the shooting of the black teenager Michael Brown, fueled by more murder of



Image - @deray

black men by police. Since Michael Brown was shot on August 9, 2014 there have been multiple black men shot by police. In the Ferguson area this includes Kajieme Powell and Vonderrit Myers. It is estimated that in the US a black man is killed by police, security or vigilantes every 28 hours. Like police many of these vigilantes are able to hide their crimes behind various laws that grant them immunity.

Vermont is not exempt from this national pattern of racist police terror. In a recent Vermont court case, two black men allege that they were strip searched and sexually assaulted by the police on a public highway. According to data on the ACLU of VT's blog blacks are twice as likely to be stopped by police than whites. Hispanic people are five times more likely to be stopped than whites.

Missouri has a very long history of racism and racist terror. The Dred-Scott case, which resulted in the infamous legal opinion "[a black man] had no rights which the white man was bound to respect" was filed in St Louis. It is no accident that two of John Browns anti-slavery raids happened in Missouri.

In 2012 St Louis was rated the most racist city in America by Gawker. Highly organized KKK groups continue to exist in Missouri and have threatened to kill protestors including members of Anonymous.

St Louis is home to the Council of Conservative Citizens, which

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— From the Editor's Desk —

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essential role of journalism to inform voters of their choices at the ballot box.

The sole article dedicated to Liberty Union in Seven Days was a hack job by Kevin J. Kelley. After being interviewed, we thought we were finally breaking through. We were mistaken! He didn't entertain our point of view for a moment. Instead, he told voters (in the middle of the election!) that Liberty Union always loses. He incorrectly told the public we refuse to raise funds, which conceivably hurt our ability to raise funds. Everything regular people complain about politicians doing, we were criticized for not doing. I believe these attacks come from a place of fear.

It's not just independent candidates that get blocked from a mass audience by the corporate media. Teachers from South Burlington were attacked when they went out on strike after eight months without a contract.

Instead of reminding people that schools are not widget factories, thanks to unions defending the teaching profession, the corporate media and Governor Shumlin attacked their right to collective bargaining. In typical right-wing fashion, they skipped the political context and focused on the immediate disruption.

Similarly, the corporate media gave only perfunctory coverage to a lively demonstration against a proposed fracked-gas pipeline through Addison County and under Lake Champlain. Hundreds protested outside the statehouse and sixty four were arrested for occupying the Governor's office.

Vermonters spoke eloquently about the right to land, clean water, and a stable climate. But in the corporate media, phony messages from Vermont Gas about job creation and lower energy bills dominate the debate.

Environmentalism is acceptable if the message helps advertisers sell "green" products. But if the message is about stopping a politically influential polluter, the story is suppressed.

The most glaring example of media bias came after the elections. The governor's race was much tighter than expected. Despite overwhelmingly friendly media, Peter Shumlin had a hard time getting people to vote for him.

The progressive majority that had supported him in the past just couldn't hold their noses for an anti-union, pipeline loving governor who refused to tell us how he would fund healthcare reform. In the myopic two-party world of the corporate media, this somehow got misinterpreted as a rejection of single payer health care.

Starting the day after the election, the media continuously hammered Shumlin and the public with their

anti-healthcare message before he finally cracked. On December 17, Peter Shumlin announced it would be too expensive to fund Green Mountain Health Care.

"Too expensive for whom?" Nobody in the media even asked. The problem with corporate media is systemic. They depend on advertisers for profit. Their advertisers are capitalists. As a class, they enjoy a closer relationship with politicians. They are many times wealthier than the average Vermonter and thus have different priorities. Most fundamental of all, they have a different relationship to production.

Their wealth comes from owning property. We must sell our labor to survive. This shapes their attitude on taxes, banking regulations, workers rights, environmental protections, police conduct, and just about every other issue.

News outlets are owned by corporate conglomerates, beholden to create an environment that is friendly to advertising, and will not upset the sensibilities of their paying customers.

The desire for a cozy relationship with capitalists and politicians is deeply rooted in the subconscious of the corporate journalist. Rather than probing for the plain truth to empower the public, corporate journalists provide friendly coverage in exchange for interviews and access.

Vermont Movement News dares to propose a different model. We practice citizen journalism. We are committed to fairly presenting complex stories in their full social, economic, and political contexts. Unlike the corporate media, we have to be honest about the values that drive our reporting.

We intend to provide a reliable platform for a variety of progressive activists and movements that otherwise suffer from media neglect. We will not credit politicians when grassroots struggles achieve victories. We will also analyze movements that get stonewalled. Our goal is to get these stories to people who don't normally seek them out.

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Vermont Movement News Published Semi-Monthly I

Matthew Andrews — Editor

Sue Morris — Copy Editor

Laura Potter-deGrey — Production Editor

Marina Brown — Production Manager

From the Editor's Desk

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That's why a print edition is so important. We hope that single-issue movements will begin to see their common interests with other progressive struggles and find the wisdom to support a newspaper that will unite and benefit everyone.

The work of assembling and distributing a newspaper is a social activity that connects people and helps build movements. Online tools are helpful, but the experiences and relationships we have in the real world cannot be replaced.

The remaining challenge is to raise the funds necessary to make

Vermont Movement News a reality. We need \$2,500 just to publish six issues in 2015. Much more will be necessary for postage, promotions, and other expenses.

Vermont Movement News Needs Your Help

Please pledge your support at our *Indiegogo* webpage
<http://igg.me/at/VTMovementNews>
by Saturday, January 24th.

There you can subscribe, buy ad space, get a **Vermont Movement News** t-shirt, or become an underwriter. Just choose the "perk" you want for your contribution.

You can also send a check or money order to our fiscal sponsor, **Liberty Union**, and send it to

Boots Wardinski
629 Saxie Welch Trail
S. Ryegate, Vermont 05069.



Kip Andersen, co-director of Cowspiracy, with Heidi White at the Climate March in New York

Vermont's Vegan Community Comes Together

By Heidi White

Vermont Vegans is a brand new organization dedicated to promoting the Vegan Ethic in Vermont. This organization started when Marilyn Brault-Binaghi and I decided that instead of waiting for the Vegan Community we longed for to appear, we would just form it ourselves.

We envisioned an organization where compassionate pioneers come together to promote a vegan ethic to advance policies and lifestyles that pose the least amount of harm to animals and ecosystems, advocates for the most effective and simplest measure one can take to help mitigate climate change, optimizes the physical and spiritual health of human beings, and promotes a truly peaceful, sustainable, and

equitable way of living.

We are working to partner with vegan and animal advocacy groups and companies all over the state to unify and bring more energy into these movements.

Pingala Cafe in Burlington has been a particularly strong ally and enthusiastically agreed to host our inaugural meeting as well as provide free, delicious vegan fair to attendees.

The meeting took place on August 24, 2014 with a crowd of around 30 or so passionate pioneers. Marilyn and I opened the meeting with our ideas for a vegan community for Vermonters. We introduced ourselves around the circle on Pingala's front patio and everyone shared information on their personal veg journey as well as

offering ideas for what they wanted to see Vermont Vegans accomplish. We agreed we want this to be a group that conducts itself positively, professionally, and respectfully in public.

We are more than aware of the negative connotations that have been ascribed to the terms "vegan" and "animal rights activist" and we will strive to be positive ambassadors for the vegan movement. That said, we all acknowledged that being vegan in a non-vegan world is not easy.

We see suffering and oppression every minute of every day, in places and circumstances where it is invisible to the majority. To be a vegan is to bear witness; to take on the heartache and suffering of others, much

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Vermont's Vegan Community Comes Together

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of which manifests in sadness, anger, depression, and sometimes even hopelessness.

But the animals and the planet need us and we need to go on for ourselves and for them. So Vermont Vegans will also be a safe place where vegans can come to vent those frustrated, burned-out energies through a positive, understanding, and nonjudgmental outlet so they can go back into the world reinvigorated with the full love and support of their very own vegan community.

There were many great ideas bandied about for future events. We plan to have potlucks, film screenings, and parties, and create activism opportunities to help spread awareness about animal cruelty and speciesism. Attendees included plant-based food educators, animal rights and welfare activists, farmers, attorneys, healthcare providers, entrepreneurs, — all walks of life! Marilyn and I shared our vision for an organizational structure with officers (president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary) and felt our future objectives would be best executed through the formation of two committees: one

focused on activism and advocacy, the other on social events. We asked folks to consider if they'd be interested in working on a committee or filling a role as an officer, and that we would stage elections during the next meeting. We established that meetings would be bimonthly and also stressed the importance of setting official bylaws to help govern the group as soon as possible. Many stayed until well after the meeting to chat and get to know one another. All in all, it was a wonderful gathering. We are so glad to have seen all who were able to attend and grateful for the support of those who wanted to make it but couldn't, due to scheduling conflicts.

Our main focus for the meeting was to promote our first major event: screening the brand new and groundbreaking documentary, *Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret*. The film was only a couple weeks old at the time of the inaugural meeting and Marilyn and I had just seen it after I received a digital copy from the filmmakers for donating to their IndieGoGo campaign. Eager to share this amazing film with others, we signed to host a crowd-funded screening. We

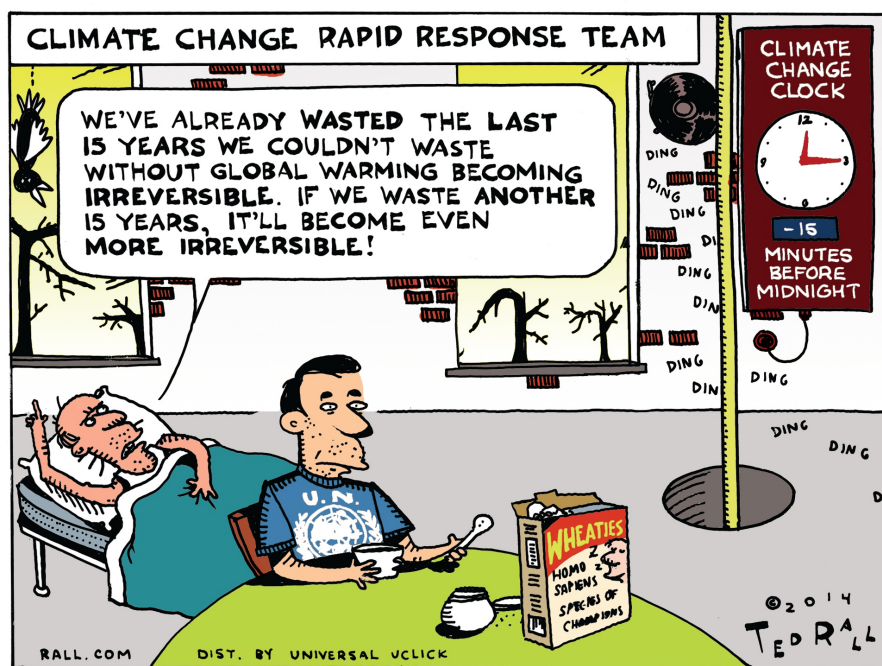
had to meet a threshold of 85 sales to make the screening happen. With the help of everyone working together and promoting like crazy, we were able to sell 115 tickets before the show. A week before the screening, I joined The People's Climate March, the world's largest ever climate-change demonstration, in New York City on September 21st. After joining with the vegan contingent there, I met Kip Andersen, one of the codirectors of the film. He was excited when I told him Vermont Vegans would be screening the film in Burlington. He knew about Vermont's reputation as a progressive leader on environmental issues.

The *Cowspiracy* screening at the Roxy Cinema in downtown Burlington was a huge success. Attendees were moved and awed by the message and wanted to know how they could keep spreading the word and sharing this film. Marilyn reported to me later that we had at least one confirmed attendee who became vegan as a result of seeing the screening.

In November we were overwhelmed with gratitude for the amazing success of the Vermont Gentle Thanksgiving Potluck. Over 70 attendees came to partake in amazing shared food and community. We cannot even begin to express our joy over this event. You all made it possible. We cannot wait for next year and what we hope will be a wonderful tradition for many years to come! A huge "Thank You" to the Unitarian Universalist Church in Burlington and their Animal Ministry for being such gracious hosts!

I'm so glad we're making it happen with all of you! If you are able, please join us at our next meeting on January 18, 5:00pm at Pingala Cafe. Please take a look at our blog - <http://vermontvegans.wordpress.com/> - for more details.

Vegans and veg-curious alike are welcome. We look forward to seeing you!



#BlackLivesMatter

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promotes racism and "white rights".
The CCC was created by the
segregationist Lester Maddox who
once proclaimed "Segregation
Forever." It continues his legacy to
the present day.

As well as the KKK,
Missouri is home to many neo-Nazi
groups and "identity churches" that
preach racist doctrines. Given this
history it is not surprising that many
police in Ferguson, Missouri have
ties to organized racism.

Many media organizations
have reported on the KKK raising
money for Darren Wilson. He has
apparently received about \$500,000
in donations.

Organized around the social
media tag - **#BlackLivesMatter** -
protests have spread worldwide

including London where thousands
of people protested police racism in
the US and in the UK. The rally
targeted the US embassy where
there was a candlelight vigil.

Delhi, Paris, and Tokyo
hosted **#BlackLivesMatter** protests.
There were **#BlackLivesMatter**
signs at a climate rally in Lima, Peru
as well.

In the US, protests have
included rarely seen militant tactics
including blocking major highways.
Choreographed civil disobedience
with police permission is the norm.
Militant tactics are a major step
where people fear draconian
punishments for trivial violations.
Palestinians fighting the Israeli
occupation shared effective tear gas
measures with Ferguson, MO,
protestors. This illustrates the link

between the struggle of black people
fighting racism in the US and
Palestinians fighting the occupation.

Neither the Israeli Defense
Force (IDF) nor US police have
much regard for the lives of black
people or Palestinians. All people of
color and poor people face profiling
and brutality by police enforcers. In
order to defeat capitalism,
imperialism and white supremacy
we must link our respective
struggles to create a strong united
front. To do this we must combat
the prejudices that divide us.

As a people united we can
bring forth a more just society out of
the ashes of racism and exploitation.

Defying Apocalypse

By Brian Tokar

*Brian Tokar is currently the director of
the Institute for Social Ecology (ISE)
and an instructor in environmental
studies at the University of Vermont.*

Today it often feels we are
hopelessly mired in apocalyptic
thinking in our social movements and in
popular culture. From Hollywood
blockbusters to art house dystopias, and
from hip-hop lyrics to "serious"
literature, images of irreversible climate
chaos, interminable warfare, and total
societal collapse seem increasingly
inescapable. Apocalyptic visions appear
equally-pervasive in current radical
discourse, from Derrick Jensen's
popular "end of civilization" treatises
from the US west coast to the more
contemplative but perhaps equally
despairing works of Paul Kingsnorth
and the rest of the UK Dark Mountain
group.

For some, such outlooks are
simply the logical conclusion of even a
 cursory examination of current climate
science. If we don't stop burning fossil
fuels in the next few years, "a prospect
that seems unimaginable in the current
political context, "we could face global
warming of 4-6 degrees Centigrade by
the end of this century, resulting in the
collapse of the relatively stable patterns
of weather and climate that have helped
sustain human life on earth for
thousands, and likely tens of thousands
of years. Absent any semblance of a
meaningful global agreement to curtail
climate pollution, how can we possibly
 fend off utter catastrophe?

For some youthful radicals, the
prospect of a civilizational collapse is
 invigorating: the more dire a future we
face, the greater the urgency of
revolutionary action and the more
inviting the challenge. But for most

people, facing the unthinkable is merely
a path to despair and disengagement. If
apocalypse is inevitable, why bother
with activism at all? More people will
prefer to just dig in, refocusing their
energies toward the private sphere and
the pleasures (or struggles) of everyday
life. One recent study suggests that
broad scientific literacy only correlates
strongly with climate awareness in
relatively progressive-minded circles;
for most people, it appears far more
important to fit in with the inclinations
of one's own social group than to
embrace any particular understanding of
the truth.

A recent book, *Catastrophism:
The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and
Rebirth*, by four North American
activist-scholars, describes in some
detail how apocalyptic thinking has
historically been a dead end for the left,

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Is the Vermont Constitution being violated?

Originally published December 18, 2014 in
The Vermont Journal/The Shopper

Secretary of State Jim Condos admitted, in a legally official email to me, that the vote counters were tired and that's why my official vote count for U.S. Congress was about 800 votes less than the number reported election night.

The same thing occurred to two other candidates for U.S. Congress. That amounts to about 2,400 votes, which is also the amount that the VT Secretary of State claims Governor Shumlin received in excess of Scott Milne.

The curious thing is, Jim Condos also claims that there were far fewer votes for Representative to U.S. Congress than for Governor.

Can you legally cut and paste votes from one office to a different office?

In all their exhaustion up in Montpelier, were ballot votes for U.S. Congress shifted to Governor Shumlin, accounting for the mysteriously missing 2,400 votes total that Cris Ericson (me), Matthew Andrews, and Jerry Trudell had deducted from their vote counts for Representative to Congress after Jim Condos suddenly stopped counting at 96%, then took four days to come up

with the "new" vote count, which took a total of about 2,400 votes away from Cris Ericson, Matthew Andrews, and Jerry Trudell?

Consider a forensic accounting of the arithmetic trick that Jim Condos pulled, stopping the vote count at 96%, waiting four days, then reducing the vote count for three candidates for federal office, and then mysteriously taking that amount and stating Governor Shumlin had just that many more votes than Scott Milne; but if you were trying to pull this hat trick in a presidential election, how many years in federal prison would you risk?

By the Constitution of the State of Vermont, I ask for an official recount conducted by the General Assembly, even if they have shirked their official name and fancy calling themselves the State Legislature, because the Constitution of the State of Vermont clearly states that the vote count is to occur "at the opening of the General Assembly" not beforehand, and that means in January 2015; so the votes counted during Nov. 4th all the way to the new count on Nov. 8th should be voided and rescinded as a violation of the Constitution of the State of Vermont. AS ESTABLISHED JULY 9, 1793, AND AMENDED THROUGH

DECEMBER 14, 2010

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/const2.htm>

§ 47. [ELECTION OF GOVERNOR, LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR AND TREASURER]

The voters of each town shall, on the day of election for choosing Representatives to attend the General Assembly, bring in their votes for Governor, with the name fairly written, to the Constable, who shall seal them up, and write on them, Votes for Governor, and deliver them to the Representatives chosen to attend the General Assembly; and at the opening of the General Assembly, there shall be a committee appointed out of the Senate and House of Representatives, who, after being duly sworn to the faithful discharge of their trust, shall proceed to receive, sort, and count the votes for Governor, and declare the person who has the major part of the votes, to be Governor for the two years ensuing. The Lieutenant-Governor and the Treasurer shall be chosen in the manner above directed.

The votes for Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Treasurer, of the State, shall be sorted and counted, and the result declared, by a committee appointed by the Senate and House of Representatives.

If, at any time, there shall be no election, of Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or Treasurer, of the State, the Senate and House of Representatives shall by a joint ballot, elect to fill the office, not filled as aforesaid, one of the three candidates for such office (if there be so many) for whom the greatest number of votes shall have been returned.

Ms. Cris Ericson
Chester, Vermont

Do you have documents relating to corporate, police or government crimes or corruption ?

Share them safely at
VTLeaks.org

VTLeaks.org is an *anonymous* whistleblower website that cannot be traced back to you.

Information uploaded is evaluated, then forwarded to appropriate news organizations for further investigation.

<http://VTLeaks.org>

Defying Apocalypse

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a chronic enabler for the right, and an outlook that radical movements embrace at their peril. "The politics of fear," they argue, "play to the strengths of the right, not the left," and best serve those interests that are "against equality and for war, hierarchy and state violence."

In contrast, as social movement historian Richard Flacks has shown, people will willingly disrupt the patterns of their daily lives to engage in the project of "making history" once they have a tangible sense that a better way is possible. This, for Flacks, is among the historic roles of democratic popular movements: to further the idea "that people are capable of and ought to be making their own history, that the making of history ought to be integrated with everyday life, that [prevailing] social arrangements - can and must be replaced by frameworks that permit routine access and participation by all in the decisions that affect their lives."

We now know that events over the next few years and the decades that follow will determine whether the destabilization of the climate will be disruptive and difficult, or catastrophic and extreme. We know the world has the technical and financial means to end the world's dependence on fossil fuels and transform our energy systems. We also know it's possible to enjoy a significantly higher quality of life at much lower levels of personal consumption than we are daily being sold. This is largely because we now live under an inherently wasteful economic system that eschews any limits to its expansion and growth, a capitalist system that produces in opulent excess, even as a couple of billion people lack the means to satisfy their most basic human needs.

A large portion of the system's productive capacity mainly serves

conspicuous consumption and advertising, or warfare and militarism. In the US, 40 percent of the food produced goes to waste every year. In this period of widespread economic stagnation, the expansion of US infrastructure to extract and distribute fossil fuels is expanding at its fastest pace since the economic boom years of the 1950s. This even as scientists affirm that at least three-quarters of known fossil fuel reserves need to remain in the ground to avoid utter climate chaos. At current oil prices, technologies for tapping "unconventional" sources of oil and gas, such as hydrofracking, horizontal drilling, deepwater drilling, and oil extraction from tar sands - once seen as hypothetically possible but economically prohibitive - have become central to the fossil fuel industry's plans for the future. Fortunately, communities around the world that face the most immediate consequences of "extreme energy" extraction are organizing, helping spark a wider, reinvigorated global opposition.

The future of humanity, and indeed much of life on earth, now depends on the flourishing of those communities of resistance. From people facing threats from fracking or new oil and gas pipelines, to indigenous and other land-based peoples engaged in long-term struggles against accelerated resource extraction - as well as urban communities that are highly vulnerable to temperature extremes and other environmental health threats - the call for climate justice is a potentially unifying message. In other settings, people are reclaiming the potential for localizing food systems and creating community-owned energy alternatives. With proposed top-down solutions faltering - from climate diplomacy to corporate-owned solar and wind farms - the longstanding historical promise of a movement of movements may be our best hope for redeeming the

future. In the 1970s and early eighties, a very decentralized grassroots antinuclear movement in Europe and the US prevented the construction of hundreds more nuclear power plants, often embracing a prefigurative politics of community-based direct action rooted in an internal praxis of direct democracy. Many groups called not only for an end to nuclear power, but also offered a vision of a new social order, rooted in solar-powered communities poised to reclaim their political future as well as their energy future. Efforts to redesign buildings and public spaces, and to "green" entire cities, were among that movement's important offshoots, as was the emergence of Green politics on both sides of the Atlantic. Some activists drew inspiration from the writings of Murray Bookchin and other social ecologists who explored the social and political roots of environmental problems and offered reconstructive visions of a fundamentally transformed society rooted in popular power and confederated direct democracies.

Clearly, today there is no single blueprint for social transformation, but rather a renewed culture of resistance and a search for new dynamic processes of social and ecological renewal. Peace studies scholar Randall Amster correctly states that our utopian projects "are properly viewed as ongoing experiments and not finished products." In the early 1960s (well before the wide acceptance of non-sexist language), the future studies pioneer Frederick Polak wrote, "if Western man [sic] now stops thinking and dreaming the materials of new images of the future and attempts to shut himself up in the present, out of longing for security and for fear of the future, his civilization will come to an end. He has no choice but to dream or to die, condemning the whole of

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Defying Apocalypse

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Western society to die with him. This is equally true across boundaries of gender and social status, and is no longer limited to the West. While some may still cheer the proverbial "end of civilization," a livable future for everyone depends on a far more challenging, but also far more hopeful project of ecological and social renewal.

*This commentary appeared in the "Apocalypse Now?" issue of the **Occupied Times** of London, as well as the newly revised and expanded edition of **Toward Climate Justice**.*

Historical Events

January 11, 1912 - Bread and Roses strike, Lawrence MA.

January 13, 1914 - IWW organizer Joe Hill falsely arrested for murder.

January 15, 1929 - Martin Luther King Jr. is born.

January 16, 1920 - Palmer Raids detainees win legal representation rights at deportation hearings.

January 25, 1787 - Shays' Rebellion, MA. Farmers revolt against debt imprisonment.

January 29, 1834 - The first time American troops were used to suppress a labor dispute.

February 4, 1869 - William D. "Big Bill" Haywood is born.
1913 - Rosa Parks is born.

February 7, 1818 - Frederick Douglass born into slavery.

Upcoming Actions and Events

January 8 - **United for All People, All Care: Rally at the Statehouse!**
10:00am, Statehouse, 115 State Street, Montpelier

January 11 - **Liberty Union Party Meeting**, 1:00pm
Brattleboro Co-op, 2 Main Street, Brattleboro

January 18, 5:00pm - **Vermont Vegans Meeting**
Pingala Cafe, One Mill Street, Suite 138, Burlington

January 19, 6:00-7:30 pm - **#BlackLivesMatter Rally**
Burlington City Hall
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 27, 6:00pm - **People's Cafe: Militarization of the Police**, hosted by Occupy Central Vermont
Bagitos, 28 Main Street, Montpelier

February 8, 1:00pm - **Liberty Union Party Meeting**
Brattleboro Co-op, 2 Main Street, Brattleboro

February 20

Deadline for events to be listed in the **Vermont Movement News** Calendar

February 24, 6:00pm - **People's Cafe: Black History Month**, hosted by Occupy Central Vermont
Bagitos, 28 Main Street, Montpelier

Black Lives Matter - Vermont

Demonstration at 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Monday, January 19
Burlington City Hall

149 Church St, Burlington, Vermont 05401

<https://www.facebook.com/events/766046116778074/>