What Nonviolence Means to Me
By Rachel Siegel

Before I worked at PJC, I had focused much of my activist work on anti-war efforts, economic justice (through job training for women and healthcare access), and social justice issues (especially feminist, queer and racial justice issues). I had protested the G8 summits and NAFTA; participated in UVM’s shantytown; been to DC numerous times for large-scale protests against US military involvement throughout the world, queer rights, and climate justice; and helped start a grassroots abortion fund.

The part of PJC’s work that I knew the least about was nonviolence. While the efforts I participated in were all done nonviolently, I didn’t know much of the theory or practice in and of itself. I associated the term mostly with Gandhi’s work in India and with civil disobedience in the Civil Rights era here in the US. I have come to understand it more broadly and want to share what I mean when I use the term now.

Violence can be overt like physical, sexual, police, and military violence. But there are many other forms as well: interpersonal, institutional, etc. When I struggle with perfectionism, depression, or shame, those are forms of violence against myself. When the ad industry trains girls (and boys too, but with less fatal results) that their bodies exist to please others and will never be good enough, that is violence. When corporations extract fossil fuels from the earth, making water undrinkable and communities unsustainable, that is violence.

While non-violence means freedom from war and physical assault, nonviolence is much more. Nonviolence exists when we are in harmony within ourselves, in our homes, and in relation to the natural world. Sometimes referred to as active nonviolence, it is not a static place at which we can arrive. It is a process of learning, loving, giving. The “satyagraha” or “truth force” that Gandhi based his nonviolent practice on and that MLK referred to as “agape” is that which inspires us to do good – our highest selves. For some it is a spiritual connection, for others an actualization of their values. It is not just the absense of violence, it is a force unto itself.

Nonviolence does not mean a conflict-free life. Conflict is neutral. It can be an opportunity to engage with people, learn about each other, and become closer. It is when we engage in conflict destructively that it becomes violent. This is why we focus on Conflict Engagement rather than Conflict Resolution in our workshops. It isn’t always possible to resolve our differences, but we can always increase our ability to engage nonviolently.

And what about anger and fighting?
We are delighted to be growing our pool of facilitators statewide to support our educational programs. These folks include Hal Colston, Denise Dunbar, Traci Griffith, Emily Bernard, Judy Yarnall, Ginny Sassaman, Nathan Suter, Francine Serwili-Ngunga, Kathy Johnson, Kari Bohlen, Julie Drogin, Alyssa Chen, Rachel Wilson, Olivia LaPierre, Ida Meno, and Zymora Davinchi. Thank you all! Here are reflections some have shared:

Infinite Culcleasure (Burlington)
I do facilitation work with the Peace & Justice Center for the rare experience of both giving and receiving knowledge, wisdom and understanding from community members who represent many different backgrounds and experiences. Facilitating workshops with PJC is among the most meaningful work I’ve done, and a memorable shared experience that is always worth the tensions that arise when we are faced with difficult conversations. I love it.

Jade Walker (Plainfield)
As a mother of a toddler and an educator in the public school system I am always looking to connect with others around how are we making anti-racist parenting and teaching part of our daily lives. As a white person it is my responsibility to act in solidarity to end white supremacy and build this consciousness in our Vermont communities. But this work is too big for any one of us alone so I am grateful for the opportunity to facilitate and come together for these workshops.

Isaiah Hines (South Burlington)
In short, I am a kid who regularly talks with adults about race and racism. I feel that I can offer a unique perspective as a PJC facilitator because of my age and my experiences as a youth of color living in Vermont. I know how important and helpful it was for me that my parents talked to me about racism and I want to help other parents initiate these difficult conversations. I feel that facilitating is a great way for me to ensure that adults in my community are engaging in anti-racist parenting.

Beverly Little Thunder (Huntington)
I believe that we all have to work for peace and justice in the world. Most of the workshops that PJC offers address both those issues as well as educating white people on racism. As a POC, it’s important to let other POC know that there is a way to work with white people that is not demeaning and disparaging.

Kesha Medina (Craftsbury)
As a young woman of color it is incredibly important for me to break down the barriers of communication that prevent dialogue around racism. Facilitating for the PJC is exciting because it creates a platform for community members to learn more about the systems we have in place that perpetuate racism as well as generating a network of people who are trying to change their minds and the minds of their peers about race and racism.

Netdahe Stoddard (Hardwick)
I’ve been an activist my whole life and organized my first public protest at age 11 when we walked out of grade school in Lyndonville nearly 30 years ago to stop the first war on Iraq. I lead PJC programs because I believe racism is the key element used to oppress poor people, so the best work I feel I can do toward building a healthier world and future is to fight racism. No one is born hateful and all poor people are harmed by white supremacy, so this is a battle for hearts and minds just waiting to be won.
Meet Marina Kisyova de Geus

I am from Plovdiv, Bulgaria and this year I was named one of the Community Solutions Fellows. The Community Solutions Program (CSP) is a year-long professional development program for people who are working to improve their communities by addressing issues related to the environment, tolerance and conflict resolution, transparency and accountability, and women and gender. The program provides substantive hands-on experience in the United States for 90 people from 53 countries through tailored practicums and the Community Leadership Institute. The PJC is hosting my fellowship for four months.

Back in Bulgaria, I have established a non-profit organization through which I have set-up the Club-Academy ‘Ekaterina Karavelova’ to empower women in rural areas. The Academy is named after one of the prominent Bulgarian women who pioneered the women’s movement in the country. She was an active member of the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom and delivered one of the memorable speeches at the 1926 WILPF conference in Dublin. The Academy offers free trainings for women in rural areas on personal and professional development with the ultimate goal to create local advocacy clubs where women can act on issues that affect their communities. Currently the Academy has ongoing trainings in the Southwest of Bulgaria, which is the poorest region in Europe.

I am looking forward to sharing with you my experiences with the PJC in the next newsletter. If you are interested in hearing more about my work, feel free to come by the PJC or email me at info@pjcvt.org.

Note from Rachel Siegel: We are excited that Marina is with us this fall. One of the things she is doing for her fellowship at PJC is researching the feasibility of starting a nonviolent street team in the Burlington area. This would be a trained community group who could respond to conflict as an alternative to the police. If you have any ideas to share about a Peace Team or want to meet Marina for any reason, she is here through November and can be reached at info@pjcvt.org.

Nonviolence continued from page 1

Are they inherently violent? When we “fight fascism” are we causing harm or harnessing passion for positive change? Can one “fight for peace?” I believe we can and that we have to. Perhaps you have a different understanding of the word “fight.” There is room for disagreement.

When my kids read or hear about current events and get outraged, I support them. When they say they want to hang up a picture of an individual and throw darts at it, I ask them if they want to harbor that violence in themselves? Does it move them closer to their values or away from them?

Oppression and bias are forms of violence that are programmed into us by our culture which uphold and perpetuate what Bell Hooks refers to as “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.” As we actively resist and unlearn this information, we can become closer to a nonviolent life. We can move toward satyagraha. I sometimes respond to things I dislike with violence. It is not always my nature to respond to hatred with love but it is my value. When I feel hate or resentment, those feelings are in my body and are toxic if I don’t move through them to positive action. While passive resistance is a strategy employed in some nonviolent actions, nonviolence as a whole is anything but passive. It takes tremendous conviction, commitment, strength, and practice.

This is just a small summary of some aspects of nonviolence. There is of course nonviolent campaign-building strategies that employ strikes, marches, sit-ins, petitions, and so much more for long term movement-building and change-making. We know, from the research of Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, that between 1900 and 2006, campaigns of nonviolent resistance were more than twice as effective as their violent counterparts [“Why Civil Resistance Works,” 2011]. That element of nonviolence is beyond the scope of this article, but I highly recommend that you look up Dr. Chenoweth on YouTube or in print.

Some describe the concept of nonviolence as audacious. If I am thought of as foolish for striving for something so bold as peace, I’ll wear that label as a badge! Many of you know much more than I do. Please, share your thoughts with me. Do you have a favorite book, blog, podcast? Please let us know and we can share it with the community.
Robin’s Nest

Ban Nukes, Don’t Threaten Them!

By Robin Lloyd

Last night I had the strangest dream I ever dreamed before.
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war.
I dreamed I saw a mighty room –
All filled with women and men.
And the paper they were signing said
They’d never fight again.
And the people in the streets
were dancing round and round...

That’s what happened at a ceremony at the United Nations on Sept 20 as 50 nations stepped forward to sign a treaty prohibiting the use, production, or transportation of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, we in Burlington celebrated on Church Street with balloons, peace music, and free cake, asking passersby to sign a petition sponsored by Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF):
I call upon the President, with the support of the Senate, to lead the way to negotiate the total elimination of nuclear weapons. You can sign on to it here: https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-the-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty.

So, would this Treaty put an end to war? Not quite. But a gosh darn good step.

Some ask how such a law can be respected when it comes from the United Nations, an institution remote from most North American people’s awareness (except once a year when heads of state meet to cause traffic jams in Manhattan). In addition, no nuclear nations are among the signers, so what is the mandate of this treaty?

International Coalition Against Nuclear Weapons (ICANW), the major civil society organization that has lobbied for the treaty, says, regarding the treaty, that:

• Its purpose is to build a strong international norm against nuclear weapons.
• It will stigmatize nuclear weapons, magnifying domestic and international pressures on nuclear-armed states to make progress on disarmament.
• It will allow states to express their absolute rejection of nuclear weapons, through a legal instrument that does not legitimize the retention of nuclear weapons by five states.
• It will prohibit reliance on the nuclear weapons of other states, and will thus force states in nuclear alliances to review their positions.

In short, it’s a tool for the non nuclear nations – with humanity on their side – to claim, to insist, on the right to disarmament, as agreed to in the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 where even the nuclear nations pledged to work for total and complete disarmament.

None of the nine nuclear nations are willing to touch the treaty with a ten foot pole. France, the UK and the US stated “We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to this treaty.”

“There is nothing I want more for my family than a world with no nuclear weapons,” US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said, “but we have to be realistic.” The ‘realism’ of the nuclear nations is to spend billions of taxpayers’ dollars in modernizing their arsenals. But making something more modern is not always the best idea. Modernizing nuclear weapons is more about making sure that nuclear weapons are usable than it is about investing in real security, and usable means more destabilization.

Already a groundswell of affirmation is disturbing the super powers’ status quo. New York-based Amalgamated Bank used the day of the signature of the Treaty to publish its investment policy around weapons – including nuclear weapons. The bank’s Vice President Robert Mante wrote on its website how Amalgamated doesn’t invest in weapons. This is the first time Amalgamated has made public its investment position around weapons including nuclear weapons.

The anti-nuclear website and think tank Don’t Bank on the Bomb identifies both financial institutions that invest heavily in companies involved in nuclear weapon programs, and those that have policies limiting or prohibiting such investments.

In many of these countries, modernization is being done by private companies. Don’t Bank on the Bomb’s Hall of Shame has identified 90 financial institutions that have made an estimated $498 billion available to 27 nuclear weapon-producing companies since January, 2013. Now, buoyed with the moral energy of this treaty, we can put pressure on the financial network of support behind the nuclear industry.

It may take some time before humanity is able to dance in the streets, but look at the track record. Biological weapons were banned in 1972, chemical weapons in 1993, landmines in 1997, cluster bombs in 2008. Our time will come!

Robin Lloyd is a co-founder of the PJC and a member of Burlington WILPF. This event was sponsored by the World Beyond War Coalition.

Robin Lloyd, Becca Camp-Allen, John Reuwer, Alex Rose, Harper Oliver, Marguerite Adelman, and Jean Hopkins
Evidence points to benefits of $15 minimum wage

By Nathan Suter (PJC Board member) and the Raise the Wage Coalition

With Vermont considering joining the other states and cities that are raising their minimum wages to $15 an hour, legislators are beginning to look at the likely impact. Experience to date and the best economic analysis indicate that a gradually phased-in $15 wage would deliver extensive benefits for one in three working Vermonters, beginning to reverse decades of pay inequality.

Vermont workers would benefit broadly from a phased-in $15 minimum wage, which would raise pay by an average of $2,000 a year for more than three in ten working Vermonters. Of the 87,000 workers receiving raises, 87% are adults, 56% are women, 59% work full time, and one in five are parents. And on average they provide 63% of their total family income.1

As for the economic impact, studies conducted for New York and California show that a gradually phased-in $15 minimum wage would generate billions in new consumer spending that would boost business sales and offset a significant portion of the higher cost for employers.

More than 100 economists have endorsed raising the minimum wage to $15 by 2024,2 explaining that it would help reverse decades of growing wage inequality and that the benefits would far outweigh the costs.

Research on past minimum wage increases in Vermont and other US states finds little negative impact on employment or hours. The latest is a sophisticated new study of all US state and federal minimum wage increases between 1979 and 2016, which shows they boosted pay without costing jobs. Another leading study3 compared job growth in all neighboring US counties with varying minimum wages – including Vermont’s counties bordering New Hampshire where the minimum wage is much lower – and found no evidence that higher wages hurt jobs.

In Seattle, analysis by University of California economists found that as of 2016, employment in the restaurant industry (the sector most affected) had not been hurt. Although a second University of Washington study suggested that the minimum wage might be costing jobs, it has been criticized by leading economists as deeply flawed – for example, by misinterpreting the reduction in the number of low-paying jobs as the result of rising pay in Seattle. Those weren’t lost jobs, they either became higher paying jobs, or reflect Seattle’s booming job market – driving wages higher. A forthcoming study of Chicago’s minimum wage, which is phasing up to $13, also finds no evidence of slowed job growth.

As for concerns that some Vermont workers could lose certain public benefits under a wage increase (commonly referred to as the “benefits cliff”), it’s important to put them in context. Because the vast majority of Vermonters lifted by a $15 minimum wage are single adults without children, they qualify for few public benefits. While they’ll pay more in taxes and may see limited reductions in some benefits, they will net substantially better. Of 87,000 workers getting raises, parents of an estimated 7,000 low-income children4 who receive childcare subsidies could be at risk of losing significant benefits as their pay rises. There’s a real issue here – but it has to do with problems in how child care benefits eligibility is defined, not whether low-income working parents should be denied a long overdue pay raise. The Legislature’s Joint Fiscal Office has outlined sensible reforms that would address the problem by raising the eligibility threshold for childcare subsidies. And the cost of increased eligibility could be more than covered by savings in other states benefits, especially Medicaid, as workers transition to higher wages.

Too many Vermonters struggle with flat paychecks and rising living costs. That’s why voters and a broad array of community, social service, faith and business organizations5 have joined the Raise the Wage Coalition led by Rights & Democracy. The myth that minimum wage workers are mostly high school students couldn’t be further from the truth in Vermont, where the average minimum wage worker is 38 years old and over half are women who are earning the majority, if not all, of their household income. Hardworking Vermonters deserve fair pay to support themselves and their families, and raising their wages will benefit us all through increased local spending, happier healthier workers, and more secure families. We are all in this together.

SOURCES

5) https://raisethewagevt.wordpress.com/coalition-members/

For a full list of sources, please go to this article at www.pjjcvt.org/blog

Nathan Suter is an organizational development consultant and social entrepreneur with a background in nonprofit management and community organizations. He is a member of the board of the Peace & Justice Center and is the Center’s liaison to the Vermont’s Raise the Wage Coalition.
peace & justice store

Show Love • Buy Local • Buy Fair • Buy Less

Butternut Mountain Farm

Butternut Mountain Farm is a Vermont company known around the world for producing award-winning organic maple products, each carefully formulated and selected to ensure the highest quality. These Kisii soapstone owls know that Butternut Mountain’s selection of maple products are a wise choice.

Maple Landmark Ornaments

Maple Landmark crafts wooden toys, games, and gifts right here in Middlebury, Vermont. They design their toys to provide the best in hands-on learning and exploration. Maple Landmark follows the American standards of product safety, employee safety, and environmental protection.

Solmate Socks

Solmate Socks is run from the Socklady’s home in central Vermont, surrounded and inspired by woods, gardens, and hills of the countryside. Her colorful complex patterns are knit in Vermont at a family-owned knitting mill, hand finished and mismatched with care. Life is too short for matching socks, especially when you can wear these fun and beautiful socks! Solmate donates to charity groups across the US, including family services organizations, refugee centers and homeless shelters.

Our Favorite Coffee

Vermont Coffee Company is a small-town roaster in Middlebury, Vermont, serving local and regional makers with coffee -- roasting one day and shipping the next! The Vermont Coffee Company uses only 100% certified organic, fair trade coffees, with a self-developed roasting style that creates Big, Bold Coffee!
Amor a la Vida

Flat Alpaca Scarf
Alpaca Infinity Scarf
Alpaca Blanket
Alpaca Poncho

Kisii Stone from Kenya

Kisii stone (soapstone) is named after the Kisii people of Kenya. Working with the Tabaka cooperative, artisans are brought out of poverty and provided with a fair income and health insurance. The cooperative sets aside 15% of its income to help orphans, widows, the handicapped and elderly, and HIV/AIDS victims.

Amor a la Vida works to provide economic sustainability for textile artisans throughout the Imbabura Province of Ecuador where work is scarce. Their mission is to maintain the Quechua culture, and contribute to education and inspiration of school children. Amor a la Vida supports several other community projects including a new school!

Kamibashi String Doll Gang

These fabulous keychains are fun and full of personality! Each String Doll has their own special power that is always positive and helpful. They are fun for the whole family and make the perfect gift for any occasion.

Staff Favorites: Champ & Bernie

The Kamibashi String Doll Artists are based in small villages in the mountains outside of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. Crafting String Dolls is the main occupation for most of the artisans, which means a reliable income and improved living standards for their families and communities in their economically developing regions.

New Winter Wear
From Andes Gifts!

Champ!

40 NEW STYLES!
Life in the Clouds

By Alexis Lathem

Communities in one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots look to permaculture and ecotourism to save their forests from development.

Pucará is only a two hour bus ride from Otavalo, in Ecuador’s northern Sierra, but it feels like another world. With its elevations in the clouds, and its wet, mossy forests rich in flora and fauna, the western slopes of the Andes are so unlike the altiplano to the east, with its adobe villages, llamas, and tassels of Spanish broom.

The bus dropped us off in Pucará (Poo-Kah-RAH), population 300: a church, a newly-built community center and ball court, and a small store. My husband and I had come to the Intag region of northern Ecuador to learn about its model ecopueblo projects in community-based sustainable agriculture and ecotourism, created with the assistance of the Interamerican Center for the Arts, Sustainability, and Action (InterAmerican CASA), an NGO sponsored by the Peace & Justice Center and founded by Vermonter Peter Shear.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has identified the Alto Chocó cloud forest as one of the world’s ten biodiversity hotspots; there are more species of birds – with 30 species of hummingbirds alone – and more endemic species than almost anywhere else on earth, including the rare and endangered Andean spectacled bear, South America’s only bear, and a species of bird, the club-winged manakin, that sings through its wings.

The Inteños I spoke with are proud to be living in one of the world’s most biodiverse regions, and have embraced the ecopueblo concept as an economic alternative to mining and cattle ranching. The community has so far blocked attempts by mining companies to extract copper from the mineral-rich region, although mining companies have concessions to thousands of acres in the region. And as more and more clearings appear in the forest canopy, they are aware of the ecological pressures coming from agricultural expansion. Images of their endangered, spectacled bear appear everywhere as an emblem of their commitment to conservation.

In its perpetual mist, the cloud forest is a hanging garden of rare orchids, ferns and epiphytes. To this northerner, blue lupine and chamomile were among the only familiar flora in a fairy tale forest, inhabited by creatures with names like owl-eyed butterfly, glass-winged butterfly, and violet purple cornet, a species of hummingbird; with giant tree ferns, walking palm trees, leaves called elephant ears the size of beach umbrellas, and strangler figs – upside down trees that begin in the forest canopy, twisting their ropy branches down the trunks of other trees. Hiding in the forest are two-toed sloths, brown-headed spider monkeys, the elusive jaguar, and the raccoon-faced, infamous spectacled bear.

Central to the community vision of a viable economic alternative to mining is sustainable farming. The model permaculture project in the community is the Finca La Fe, a ten-hectare farm owned by Peter Shear. The house and farm rely on rainwater collected in swales and barrels, a gravity fed irrigation system, a biodigester, solar showers, and composting toilets. Designed in concentric rings, with the house and kitchen garden at the center, circled by a food forest, then a reforestation timber forest, and finally, a wild forest that is habitat for native wildlife. The farm produces banana, citrus, pineapple, mango, avocado, coffee, sugarcane, yucca, and hardwoods. On the steeper slopes, Inca terraces of sugarcane prevent erosion. Rainwater catchments feed into a tilapia pond. Nitrogen-fixing trees provide shade and nutrients for shade-loving coffee.

Shear is teaching permaculture methods to local campesinos as well as to Peace Corps volunteers. Through his NGO, he has brought in teams of volunteers who are building a model ecopueblo, one house at a time, with rainwater catchments, solar hot water heaters, community organic gardens, and native forest restoration and aquaculture projects. A fierce resistance to destructive resource extraction is growing in the Intag.

InterAmerican CASA will arrange volunteer opportunities, service learning for student groups, Spanish language classes, homestays, hiking, bird-watching, and visits to pre-Columbian ruins with native guides. Intag Spanish School offers individualized Spanish language instruction with licensed teachers for $6 an hour.

For more information, go to casaintag.org. For information on community resistance to mining in the region, go to Decoin.org.

Alexis Lathem has been a regular contributor to PJNews. Her poetry collection, Alphabet of Bones, is available at the PJC store.
Angela’s Persistent Resistance

By Elizabeth Corronel, PJC Racial Justice Intern

Using a series of interviews, university speeches, and lifelong activist work, Freedom is a Constant Struggle by Angela Davis gives valuable insight into the power, influence, and interconnectedness of collective freedom movements from around the world. Davis addresses key issues that rise through worldwide movements that may seem unrelated but are deeply connected. She focuses on the US mass incarceration system, the US military involvement in non-Western countries, the occupation of Palestine, long existing and continuing racist structures and systems within the US that oppress the black community, and the massive corruption that is capitalism. At the same time, Davis highlights the progressive, collaborative movements and social mobilization that has occurred in response to oppression by those in power who manipulate and exploit the bottom 99%, especially people of color. Davis’s existence and work serve as an inspiration for the next generation of women of color, like myself, to be inspired and empowered to follow her lead. She’s a woman who stands up for herself and for those around her who experience painful oppression, and continuously challenges the systems that cause injustices.

Angela Davis is fearless in her work, showcasing the at times traumatic and extremely difficult side of activism, especially as a woman of color. Davis elaborates on the risks, threats, and sacrifices it takes to unconditionally stand behind what you believe in. Davis is a woman who decided to dedicate her life and voice to justice, equality, and freedom for all, while supporting intersectional thinking and actions to widen the perspective of the world. She realistically empowers women and girls to believe in their great potential to change the world, despite being socialized into ideologies and practices of patriarchy, capitalism, and white supremacy. When reviewing earlier work of Davis and seeing the same wisdom and fight she maintains today, it is easy to see Davis’s contagious spark that radiates and leaves young women of color like me to affirm in themselves, “If Angela Davis can do it, why can’t I?”

Reflection of Bryan Stevenson’s Just Mercy

By Rob Persons, PJC Peacework Intern

For years I have had some degree of awareness that the Criminal “Justice” System in the United States is anything but just. People of Color are disproportionately taken out of society and forced into bondage and indentured servitude systematically. I knew this to be true, but the implications of this truth had not really sunk in to my white suburban reality. It was not until I read Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson that I learned the true barbaric nature of the America’s industry of imprisonment.

In 1972, the prison population in the US was 200,000. Today it is over 2.2 million, of which 40% are African American despite being only 13% of the country’s population. This disproportionate reality works to sustain the system of racial terror and oppression that the United States has not been a day without.

With each personal story, courtroom battle, and denial of justice in combination with Stevenson’s personal reflections as he took on the system, I found myself in tears at least once a chapter.

What became clear to me from reading this book is that the European and American genocide of people of color is far from over. With each social justice victory that is achieved in our country, a new wave of fear grips white communities who respond violently.

As a white man involved in social justice work, I have come to accept that my perceptions of issues facing our country have limits. This can be difficult for me and other men and white people to accept. These limits can be found consistently in our complacency or even support of the modern system of slavery and government-sourced murder also known as the “criminal justice system.”

Just Mercy is a book that I will remember for the rest of my life. Bryan Stevenson’s writing is clear and easy to follow, even as he details complex legal issues and heart wrenching tragedy. His tireless efforts inspire more than words can describe as he searches for just mercy in a system that offers the opposite. I am an Environmental Studies major in college, so naturally climate change had been the most pressing issue in my mind that society needs to address; but after reading Stevenson’s work I have realized that our system of mass incarceration is at a similar crisis point, or worse, and MUST be addressed now. With Donald Trump and the Democratic and Republican parties continuously undermining the power of the American people, we must show that 300 million citizens are stronger than the few political elites, and find just mercy for those who our culture has humiliated and locked away.
October 8, Sunday
3-4pm, Banana Industry Presentation at the PJC. Learn about the oppressive banana industry. This talk is designed to educate, brainstorm solutions, and create tangible action steps. Arrive at 2pm to join the New Volunteer Orientation.

October 12, Thursday
9-2:30pm, Poverty in an Unequal Economy and what we can do about it at Main Street Landing Gallery, 60 Lake St, Burlington, led by Equity Solutions. Sliding scale $5-$100 for individuals, $100 for people participating from an institution. Equity Solutions is a cross-class team of experienced facilitators and consultants. Host sponsorship from Main Street Landing.

October 12, 19, 26, Thursdays
4-6pm, Building Empathy and Addressing Racial Oppression at St. Michael’s College, Colchester. This program gives participants the opportunity to build skills and knowledge to engage in undoing racism. The sessions focus on racism within self, community, and taking action. $75 for general public, $60 for members. Free for people under 25. Supported by Civil Rights Alliance through MOVE at St. Mike’s.

October 13, Friday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Discussion Group at PJC. This space is held specifically for white people to process how white supremacy culture is toxic to them. The hope is that by jioning 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.

October 14, Saturday
John Brown Day Celebration and Anti-Racism Symposium. Woodstock Social Justice Initiative is hosting a daylong event with workshops, performances and more. Woodstock Union High School. $10-20 sliding fee includes breakfast. More info wsji.wordpress.com

October 17, Tuesday
4-6pm Peace Team Focus Group at PJC. Join this discussion on the possible creation of a collective whose purpose is to de-escalate conflict and violence. Marina Kisyova will facilitate. She is working with the PJC through a State Dept grant for the Fall.. This event is for young people, up to the age of 25. Free and includes dinner! RSVP to info@pjcvt.org.

Oct 17, 19, Nov 2, 7, Tuesdays & Thursdays
6:30-8:30pm, Privilege and Accountability for Aspiring Allies at Shelburne Town Meeting Room. This workshop is designed for participants to increase their skills as aspiring allies who can more effectively build support for and with colleagues, neighbors, and other community members to address oppression. Participants will explore their own identities and practice skills to take action in addressing microaggressions and interrupting oppression in real time.

October 28, Saturday
12-1pm, Cocoa Campaign: Fair and Ethical Chocolate for Kids at the PJC. This presentation is adapted for kids seven year old and up. It is designed to educate, brainstorm solutions and create tangible action steps. Arrive at 11:30 to join the New Volunteer Orientation.

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

4:30-6pm PJC Annual Meeting at PJC. Overviews of our work, voting on board members, and time for you to offer input into the work we do. The meeting is informal and a great way to get to know more about what we do and who is involved. RSVP to program@pjcvt.org.

November 4, Saturday
10-11am, Cocoa Campaign: Fair and Ethical Chocolate at the PJC. We focus on the issue of child slavery and human trafficking. Designed to educate, brainstorm solutions and create tangible action steps.

1-4pm, Nonviolent Action for Youth. We will spend most of the time practicing a method of active nonviolent interpersonal de-escalation so that people can leave the program with a skill to use with friends, family members, and other people that you are close to and/or want to build a close connection with. At the Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier.

November 8, Wednesday
4:30-9:30pm Bluebird Barbecue will be donating 10% of the entire evening’s sales to Peace & Justice Center. Make your reservation at bluebirdbbq.com or 802-448-3070.

November 9, Thursday
4-5pm Free Trade vs Fair Trade Presentation at St Michael’s College, Colchester with Junto and Civil Rights Alliance through MOVE. Learn basic information about globalization and how policies and practices have paved the way for huge companies to profit at the expense of people and the planet. This program shows how the Fair Trade movement and principles seek to, at a minimum, counterbalance these atrocities.

7pm Palestine: Long Road to Freedom. Reflections on Resistance to Occupation & Colonialism. Steve Salaita is a scholar, political commentator, and activist. Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series. Davis Center, UVM. See article on page 11.

November 10, Friday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Discussion at PJC. See Oct. 13.
## CALENDAR

### November 12, Sunday
3-4pm, White Fragility Talk at the PJC. White Fragility is a state in which even a small amount of racial stress becomes intolerable for a white person. Recognizing and naming it can be a helpful way to stay engaged in discussions about racism and in ongoing racial justice work, even when it is uncomfortable. **Arrive at 2:30pm to join the New Volunteer Orientation.**

### November 16, Thursday
7pm, “The Ghost of Lord Balfour” at the Kellogg Hubbard Library, Montpelier. See article in next column.

### November 20, Monday
5:30-11:30pm, Benefit Bake at American Flatbread, Burlington.

### November 27 & 29, Monday & Wednesday
6:30-8pm, Nonviolent Engagement in Conflict at PJC. Addressing conflict nonviolently can be a positive and effective way to grow and change individually, deepen relationships, and support social justice in all aspects of our lives.

### December 8, Friday
12-1pm, Toxic Whiteness Discussion at PJC. See Oct. 13.

### December 10, Sunday
3-4pm, 3-4pm, Free Trade vs. Fair Trade Presentation at the PJC. Participate in International Human Rights day by attending this educational event. **Arrive at 2:30pm to join the New Volunteer Orientation. See Nov. 9 for description.**

### December 14, Thursday
7pm Screening of “John Lewis: Get in the Way” at Big Picture Theater, Waitsfield with sponsorship from VT PBS. The first biographical documentary about John Lewis. An inspiring portrait of one man cast into extraordinary times and his unhesitating dedication to seeking justice for the marginalized and ignored. The film spans more than half a century, tracing Lewis’ journey of courage, confrontations and hard-won triumphs.

### December 16, Saturday
3-6pm, Nonviolent Activism 101 at PJC. Participants will learn aspects of Kingian Nonviolence, build knowledge of successful nonviolent campaigns, explore how their own identities impact this work and engage in role play. This program is designed to help unlock meaningful ways to work towards social justice and peace without perpetuating cycles of violence.

**Events Still in Planning Stages:**
- A statewide event with high school students doing social justice work. Location: Richmond or Waterbury.
- How to Talk with Kids about Racism 3 part discussion group. Location: White River Jct. area.

Please contact us for further details.

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### PJC Allied Group: VTJP

#### The Ghost of Lord Balfour

**By Kathy Shapiro and Mark Hage, members of Vermonters for Justice in Palestine**

For Israelis and Palestinians, 2017 is a year of anniversaries which Israel calls a “Jubilee Year.” For Palestinians these events were a series of disasters. November marks 100 years since the signing of the Balfour Declaration, which allied the world’s strongest military imperial power of the time with international Zionism, a political movement with scant support among European Jews, committed to establishing a sovereign Jewish-majority state in all of Palestine. Despite the clause within it that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine,” members of which represented more than 92% of the population, the rights, property, and lives of indigenous Palestinians have been under brutal assault ever since.

In 1947, the UN “created” the State of Israel with Resolution 181. Israel was allocated 56% of Mandate Palestine at a time when Jews constituted less than 1/3 of the population and owned less than 7% of the land. 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled and the rest detained in camps under military law for 19 years.

The 1967 Six-Day War was the beginning of a brutal, illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. More than 650,000 Israelis are now living illegally in Jewish-only settlements on this stolen land and 4.5 million Palestinians are denied fundamental civil and human rights, including access to their lands, water, freedom of movement and indefinite, illegal, administrative detention at the will of Israeli security forces. It also meant for Israelis, “the Reunification of Jerusalem.” The result for Palestinians is the ongoing destruction of East Jerusalem Palestinian neighborhoods and countless home demolitions or takeovers by violent, armed religious Jewish settlers. The history and present consequences of these events will be explored in three talks during November, sponsored by Vermonters for Justice in Palestine (vtjp.org).

- November 9, 7pm Steven Salaita: Palestine: Long Road to Freedom at UVM;
- November 16, 7pm “The Ghost of Lord Balfour” at the Kellogg Hubbard Library;
- The Montpelier Senior Activity Center will present a second part of this presentation later in November/December.

### Used Calendars Wanted

The PJC will reuse your calendars by making origami boxes out of the beautiful pictures.

A little writing on the back of the pictures doesn’t matter. These boxes are offered to shoppers for their treasures.