

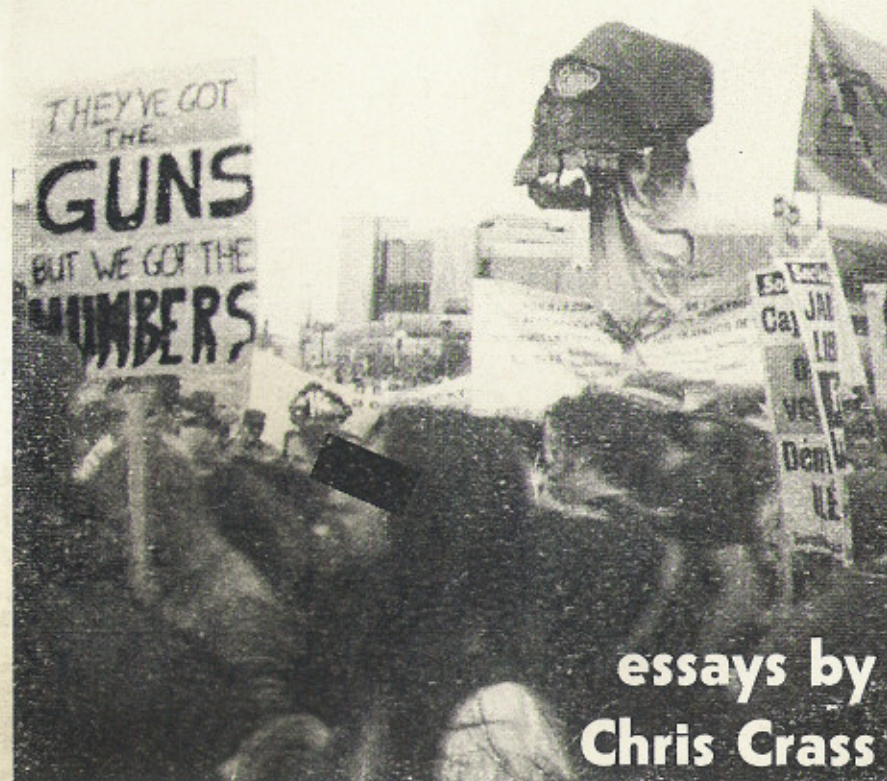
"This collection of essays by a young anarchist probes the issues of white supremacy and sexism as he observes them not only in the society at large but also in our social justice movements and in himself. Rarely, do we find anyone dealing equally with race and gender from an anti-racist, feminist point of view, least of all a young, white male, but this is precisely what Chris Crass does. The essay on African-American lesbian feminist Barbara Smith and the interview with Chicana feminist and veteran movement organizer, Elizabeth Martínez, take the interlocking issues beyond the familiar, progressive rhetoric."

Dr. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
Professor in Ethnic Studies and Women's Studies
California State University, Hayward

Chris Crass is a writer and organizer working to bridge anarchist theory and practice with race, class and gender analysis of power. He has been engaged in anarchist organizing for the past 12 years, spending 8 years with Food Not Bombs. He currently works with the Direct Action Network, Colours of Resistance and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop.

Collective Liberation

on my mind



essays by
Chris Crass

RECOMMENDED READING

When Race Burns Class

Settlers revisited

an interview with author J. Sakai

& "The Continuing Appeal of Anti-Imperialism" by New Afrikan anarchist Kuwasi Balagoon



When Race Burns Class: *Settlers* revisited
Settlers, Mythology of the White Proletariat, was a groundbreaking book for the 1980s North American left. People from all strains of the radical left took notice of its analysis. It was promoted by the Love & Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, the Maoist International Movement and various radical feminist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist organizations.

This short pamphlet includes an interview with author J. Sakai as well as fallen Black Liberation Army fighter Kuwasi Balagoon's review *The Continuing Appeal of Anti-Imperialism*.

\$2.00

Jailbreak out of History

the re-biography of Harriet Tubman



by Butch Lee



Dogpile Press

Jailbreak out of History

This is a major biographical study, which refutes the standard "American" version of Harriet Tubman's life. At a time when violence against women of color is at the center of world politics, uncovering the censored story of one Amazon points to answers that have nothing to do with government programs, police, or patriarchal politics.

This illustrated ninety page pamphlet was written by Butch Lee, who co-authored *Night-Vision, Illuminating War and Class on the Neo-Colonial Terrain*. It is part of a larger work in progress.

\$4.00

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Collective Liberation on My Mind an introduction

The essays collected together in this pamphlet are intended to further debate and discussion about some of the challenges facing the contemporary anarchist/social justice movements. The challenge of developing a critical political analysis and organizing practice based in an understanding of how white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, capitalism and the state interconnect. The challenge of building a movement that is multiracial, anti-racist, feminist, queer liberationist, environmentalist, anti-capitalist and radically democratic. The challenge of putting forward a vision that is rooted in solidarity, ecological sustainability, cooperation and autonomy. The challenge of organizing against oppression, while also working against reproducing oppression in our organizing. The challenge of working for collective liberation. Together we can, forever we must.

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dedicated to my nieces: Chloe, Anastasia and Anju and to the memory of my nephew: Misha

Chris Crass is a writer and organizer working to bridge anarchist theory and practice with race, class and gender analysis of power. He has been engaged in anarchist organizing for the past 12 years, spending 8 years with Food Not Bombs. He currently works with Colours of Resistance and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop.

RECOMMENDED READING



John Brown
May 9, 1800 - Dec. 2 1859

John Brown, May 9, 1800 - Dec. 2 1859; A reprint of this critical look at the righteous struggle of John Brown and his band, who took up arms against the U.S. government to end slavery. Includes a tribute by Nebula and Hugo award winning author Terry Bisson, and a bibliography by anti-imperialist activist Matt Meyer. 24 pages.

\$2.00

My Enemy's Enemy, essays on globalization, fascism and the struggle against capitalism, Anti-Fascist Forum; this booklet contains articles by anti-fascist researchers and political activists from Europe and North America, examining racist and pro-capitalist tendencies within the movement against globalization. They expose the activities of fascists and garden-variety xenophobes, showing that the struggle has to be against capitalism and exclusion, not simply its "neo-liberal" rendition. 118 pages.

\$6.50

My Enemy's Enemy

essays on globalization,
fascism and the
struggle against capitalism



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COLOURS OF RESISTANCE STATEMENT

Colours of Resistance (COR) is a grassroots network of people who actively work to develop multiracial, anti-racist politics in the movement against global capitalism.

We are committed to helping build an anti-racist, anti-imperialist, multiracial, feminist, queer liberationist, and anti-authoritarian movement against global capitalism.

Colours of Resistance is made up mostly of organizers of colour, but we recognize that both white organizers and organizers of colour have roles in our work, and that these roles are distinct from one another.

Colours of Resistance is both a thinktank and an actiontank, linking global issues with those in our own communities, and providing and sharing support, ideas, and strategies across borders. Our collective work includes but is not limited to producing a zine, a website, and published articles, sharing ideas through an email discussion list, and facilitating workshops and events.

While we do use the internet as a networking tool, we believe that real resistance comes from real communities, and are committed to rooting our work in community-based organizing.

Colours of Resistance came together as a response to the disturbing divide between the issues and movements of certain communities - in particular, the alienation of people of colour from the "anti-globalization" protests which caught mainstream public attention at the turn of the 21st century. It is our hope to connect these mass anti-capitalist convergences back to the local struggle.

Visit Colours of Resistance on the internet at <http://www.tao.ca/~colours/>

Email: colours@tao.ca

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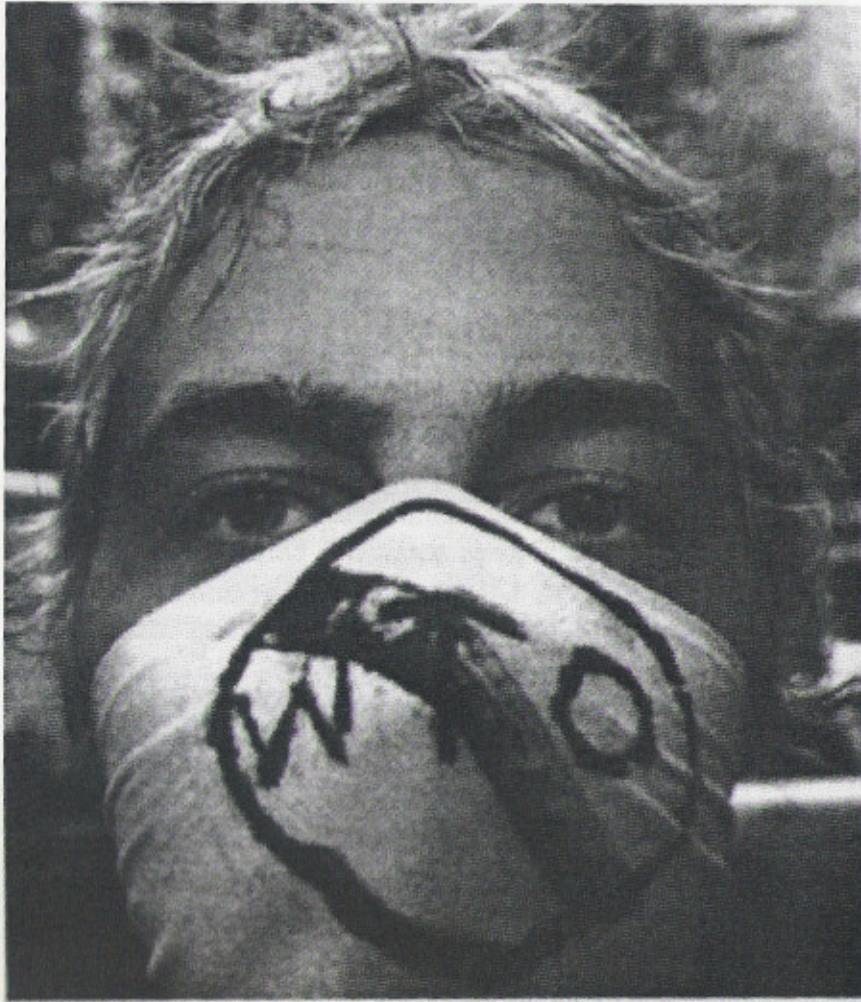
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are serious about being part of a movement. We must be willing to challenge our selves – our behaviors, actions, and thinking – as much as we are willing to challenge the global institutions of capitalism. This is a difficult task indeed. We can find direction by examining what radical people of color have been doing for centuries – organizing a movement for liberation.”

We must be willing to struggle over these complex and difficult questions of theory and practice, but we must do so as we engage in our day-to-day work to transform ourselves in the process of transforming this society. Facing the complexity of reality is one of the most radical acts we can take.

Recommended reading on the Civil Rights movement and organizing:

Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment by Patricia Hill Collins. Routledge, 1990.

I've Got the Light of Freedom: the Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle by Charles M. Payne. University of California Press, 1995.

When and Where I Enter: the Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America by Paula Giddings. Quill, 1984.

Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference by David J. Garrow. Vintage, 1988.

Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Trailblazers and Torchbearers 1941-1965 edited by Vicki L. Crawford, Jacqueline Anne Rouse, and Barbara Woods.

Special thanks to Kerry Levenberg, Clare Bayard, Prof. Laura Head, Johnna Bossuot and Chris Dixon, in particular, for critical feedback on this essay.

heterosexism, capitalism and the state? As a mostly white movement, that means we are mostly speaking to white people, and when white people have spontaneously demonstrated their rage it has usually been directed at communities of color (from lynchings, to rape, to burning down whole towns, to voting overwhelmingly against immigrant rights and affirmative action). White radicals have a responsibility to play leadership roles in challenging white supremacy in white society.

A theory and practice of anti-authoritarian leadership is a subject full of contradictions, tensions, questions, discomforts, confusion, and uncertainties and that's what I like about it. Being honest about contradictions opens up possibilities for understanding, where denial does not. Furthermore, tensions can be a creative force to develop something new, something uncharted, as oppose to strict guidelines that contain and restrict. By tensions I mean looking at what exists between the binary or dualistic frameworks; the gray areas, the both/ and rather than the either/or, where one is multiple. For example, the tension is what exists in the middle, if on one side you had leader and the other side was follower. What exists between these two concepts? What does it mean to be, all at once, a follower, a leader, an individual, a participant in a collective process, someone who is privileged on the basis of race, but oppressed on the basis of gender, someone who has experience and wisdom to share with the group, and also wants to encourage broad participation in discussions, to know that at all times one can be both oppositional to and complicit with oppression? When all of these different positions and ideas are recognized, rather than denied, then something more creative and dynamic can be developed. We must be willing to engage with the tools and concepts of leadership. Anarchists need more tools, more concepts to use in our day-to-day work. In looking for insights and inspiration on organizing that priorities egalitarian practices, I have looked to liberation struggles from communities of color. Many of these struggles are lead by women of color, who are producing many of the most radical and hopeful strategies for social transformation out there.

With that in mind, we should heed the advice of anarchist organizer, Gabriel Sayegh. Sayegh writes in his essay, "Redefining Success: White Contradictions in the Anti-Globalization Movement", "We [white activists] must become active, effective listeners if we

SHUTTING DOWN THE WTO AND OPENING UP A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

The people, quite simply, spoke. A wide fusion of radical environmentalists, labor activists, human rights advocates, and social justice workers made the WTO listen when for five years it had adamantly refused. The terms of the free trade debate have forever been changed; no amount of tear gas or police harassment of demonstrators after the fact changed the bottom line. For one day, a ragtag army of nonviolent global citizens spoke – and the world listened.

– Seattle Weekly 12.02.99.

I had been standing, arms linked, with members of my affinity group by my side in a street blockade for several hours on Tuesday afternoon, when word was passed along that all WTO meetings for the day had been canceled.

The day had started early – 5:30am – my affinity group joined thousands of people at the park to begin actions that truly felt historic. The Longshore workers had shut down the ports up and down the West Coast. Actions against global capital were taking place in dozens of countries on every continent. And we were going to try and shut down the WTO.

We were part of the Cowborg cluster – clusters of affinity groups had been formed to take specific actions to use non-violent direct action to shut down the WTO. The city had been divided up into 13 wedges – pieces of pie (named from A-M) and ours was Key Lime. The Cowborg cluster was one of several clusters in our wedge alone. There were hundreds of affinity groups and dozens of clusters, organizing on such a scale that I had never before participated in, the excitement was intoxicating.

The cowborg cluster had a large cow puppet with BGH (Bovine Growth Hormone) written on its side representing the grotesque use of hormones and chemicals in factory farming. We were to take an intersection and a dozen people



would lock-down while 30-40 of us would protect them with our bodies and hold the intersection as long as we could to help tie up downtown and prevent any movement into the convention center where the WTO ceremonies were to begin. We marched with thousands into the downtown and then moved to our location. We took our intersection and within minutes we could see other intersections occupied as well. Communications people on bicycles zoomed by announcing which intersections had been taken – the hotels are surrounded, clusters are taking their sections everywhere, the police are disoriented and can't keep up with us – we were told.

We danced, we chanted, we sang, we celebrated. A street party had begun several blocks up from us. I went to check it out and soon found myself helping blockade the delegates from China. An organizer began speaking to the delegates in Chinese and there in the street, international talks were taking place between grass-roots activists and representatives from nations around the world about human rights, social and environmental justice.

The cowborg cluster – recognizing our utter (no pun intended) success left our intersection and marched triumphantly around downtown joining other blockades and street parties. Downtown was ours – everywhere you looked, the beautiful faces of activists realizing their dreams shined brightly.

The first announcement came – the morning sessions had been canceled, the opening ceremonies were off.

each of us has to act and engage with the world. The ways that anarchists conceptualize issues of power and politics plays out in the ways that we conceptualize organizing.

Ella Baker talked about and worked from a model of group leadership, of developing the capacities of each person to be a leader to participate in the shaping and making of decisions. She also paid great attention to developing the capacities of people to be organizers, to create a movement based on participation and empowerment. Traditionally, the idea of leadership is based on one person making all of the decisions in an authoritarian manner; a model in which people follow others, often times blindly. Anarchists have been rightfully critical of this model, but our thinking needs to be more complex than this. Furthermore, anarchists are not alone in thinking about these issues. Ella Baker and SNCC, among many others historically, present an approach to organizing concretely struggles with the question of getting from here to there.

Baker's model of organizing and leadership is firmly rooted in a politics of empowerment. She believed that a movement fighting for social transformation must also be transforming the individuals involved. She believed that people grew and developed through collective work to challenge oppression. She wasn't just talking about the ways that people see the world, but also the place they see themselves in the world; from being acted upon by forces of oppression, to acting in the world for social justice. This shift involves learning politics and skills, but also a sense of self and being prepared to act. A leader or organizer in the spirit of Ella Baker is one who actively encourages other people's participation, who works with others to develop skills, confidence, analysis and ability to take action for the long haul. Leadership in the spirit of Ella Baker and SNCC means not prioritizing the ends over the means, because the means lead you to the ends. While they were not anarchists, the theory and practice they developed for egalitarian organizing was far more sophisticated than what most anarchists are working with.

The challenge also for a mostly white movement, is how to bring people together to not only fight against oppression, but to also dismantle their privileges. This is a major reason why we need to develop understandings of organizing and leadership. How do we support and encourage self-organization, while also being committed to dismantling white supremacy, patriarchy,

Or worse still, look at white anarchist men who say that there are no power dynamics because they don't believe in organization anyway and everyone should just 'act'. These ideas must be challenged, as they fail to see the complex reality of race, class and gender, or how power and privilege operate on multiple levels. This must be challenged because while white anarchist men might reject power and denounce privilege in theory, we all still live in a society that grants and denies power and privilege on the basis of race, class and gender. This is why white male anarchists repeatedly say things like, "if women aren't being heard, they should just speak up", or "I'm not the leader, I'm just always doing everything because no one else knows how" (I can't even begin to count how many times I've said something like this over the years).

Helen Luu, an amazing organizer with Colours of Resistance, frames the issue of white privilege as following, "Genuine anti-racist work involves building alliances and working in solidarity with people of colour; it means understanding the ways that unequal power relations manifests itself in all settings (including activist ones) and how it works to oppress some while privileging others; it means looking to people of colour as leaders, and not as mere tokens in order to prove how 'anti-racist' your group is ("We're not racist! Look, we have two Asians in our group!"). It means a whole lot more too, but above all, it means being dedicated to proactively and consciously working to bring down the structure of white supremacy and privilege."

TOWARDS A THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP

In her ground-breaking book, *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins writes, "Black women have not conceptualized our quest for empowerment as one of replacing elite white male authorities with ourselves as benevolent Black female ones. Instead, African American women have overtly rejected theories of power based on domination in order to embrace an alternative vision of power based on a humanist vision of self-actualization, self-definition, and self-determination." This understanding of power, in conjunction with a critical analysis of how oppressive power operates is a solid foundation for our work.

Organizing is about building collective power. In the process of building collective power it is also about developing the power that

I could hardly believe it – we shut down the WTO! We hugged each other, we shouted, we cheered. One of the most powerful organizations on the planet had been brought to a standstill.

We rested and then returned to the blockades for the afternoon. Groups of activists were everywhere holding intersections. We joined a blockade and stood in solidarity with thousands of other activists working to keep the WTO shut down and then again the messages came that the entire day had been canceled – shortly thereafter we heard the concussion grenades and saw the tear gas.

A group of hundreds several blocks down from us were being fired upon with rubber bullets and tear gas. What I saw would continue and get worse. The police were relentless. The defenders of power and privilege had to punish us for what we had accomplished. The next few days were consumed in marches, blockades as well as military action by the police. A state of emergency was declared by the Mayor, the national guard was called in, a curfew was put into effect, a no protest zone was created around downtown and the tear gas was flying everywhere, the pepper spray was indiscriminate, the sound of the concussion grenades and helicopters flying above was a constant – echoing in my mind long after they stopped.

We marched on Wednesday with the Steelworkers and thousands of unionists – alongside grassroots activists from all over the world, organizing around multiple issues and standing in solidarity with one another as a broad movement. We were fired upon by the police and my affinity group was engulfed by tear gas. As we tried to get out of there, I looked back and saw a comrade from our affinity group buckled over on the street completely surrounded by tear gas. We carried each other out of there, each of us in a different state of trauma and pain. We regrouped and made decisions – as we had been throughout all of the actions and police madness – as an affinity group using consensus process (we were not unique in doing this).

Being tear gassed in the streets with thousands of amazing activists brought so many emotions to the forefront – anger and profound sadness seeing people you love squirting lemons in their eyes to get the pain of tear gas out, tears running down their face, an undeniable sense of solidarity with everyone who is struggling in the streets to resist corporate tyranny and standing up to state violence.

As a movement of people we were unstoppable. The lock-downs, the blockades, the marches, the organizing continued until finally the WTO ended in total disarray – the negotiators of corporate power and profit oriented policy were left bankrupt by a movement of people who represented a radical coalition of activists who came from around the world and mounted an unprecedented campaign of non-violent resistance.

ON ORGANIZING

People were amazingly well organized. Every night there was a spokescouncil meeting where all of the affinity groups sent a spokesperson to discuss and agree on strategy for the next day.

Affinity groups are anywhere from 4-20 people and are generally formed because everyone shares something that brings them together – common politics, common activism, common identity (queer, women of color, transgendered, anti-racist white folks, etc.). My affinity group was made up mostly of Food Not Bombers from San Francisco. Each affinity group chooses a spokesperson to go to the spokescouncil meetings. Our affinity group tried to rotate this position. These spokescouncil meetings and others that took place regularly were excellent examples of what we can do – of how we can operate as a strong yet decentralized movement that can come together in massive numbers and still operate as small groups. The organizing demonstrated how effective it is to operate under the principle that we are all leaders, we are all organizers, we are all participants in this struggle.

The actions were creative, the jail solidarity was brilliant. Work groups were formed to do jail support, media, first aid and a lot of other important work. These work groups operated well and allowed people to focus, share common work and utilize skills and resources effectively.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that actions against imperialist globalization and corporate tyranny took place all over the world on November 30th – in the Philippines, England, Italy, Switzerland, India, Australia, South Africa, and beyond. The organizing model utilized – the Global Day of Action – helps develop international solidarity and a decentralized global movement connecting many different issues impacting many different communities.

state, the ways that power operates, processes for empowerment and self-determination, what group development and collective action looks like and how this informs our organizing are all issues being developed. This is not to say that everything a radical of color or white queer says is brilliant, useful or right, or that nothing a white, hetero, male says is of value. Rather, I'm saying that the voices marginalized in larger society are often marginalized in radical movements and that anarchists who champion egalitarianism have a responsibility to do much better than this. Furthermore, marginalized voices are often the most radical and realistic about social change.

Defining anarchism as being in opposition to not only capitalism and the state, but also to white supremacy, patriarchy and heterosexism is a move in this direction.. The next step would be to figure out exactly what that shift in thinking means for the ways that we view and act in the world.

How anarchists talk about power is a big issue. For example, the anarchist punk band Crass put forward a slogan that has been widely used and highly popular, "Destroy Power, Not People". The Black Panther Party put forward a slogan that has also been widely used and highly popular, "All Power to the People". It is not inconsequential that the band Crass was all white people. While both of these slogans utilize the word 'Power', are they both using the word to mean the same thing? Crass talked about oppressive power: the power of the state to go to war, the power of capitalism to devastate the planet and exploit people. The Black Panther Party talked about power in terms of self-determination. The first demand of the Black Panthers 10 point Party platform was, "1. We want freedom. We want power to determine the destiny of our Black community. We believe that Black people will not be free until we are able to determine our destiny." The Black Panthers, Ella Baker, SNCC and many, many others (including many anarchists), have argued that the people are the source of power and that we must organize to build collective power to dismantle oppressive power. It is also useful to distinguish between power over others and power with others.

While this may sound like a debate over semantics, it is actually a debate about the ways that anarchists think about the world and the ways that we act in the world. It is also about the ways that white privilege and male privilege have influenced anarchist politics – to speak of anti-power rather than building power. This goes deep. Look at, for instance, white anarchist men who say that there are no 'power dynamics' within their organizations because no one has or wants power.

My anarchist politics were firmly rooted in a politics of rejection, a refusal to participate in a society based on exploitation, oppression and massive destruction of the environment, animals and people. My politics were summed up by saying, "Fuck all authority". Anarchism is indeed a much more complex body of theory and practice, but this anti-power politic, largely based on rejection, has been a strong undercurrent in anarchist thought – certainly in mine. Much of anarchist thought on issues of power, leadership and organization has been informed by both a brilliant critique of how power operates and of white privilege. One of the most important contributions of anarchist politics has been the analysis of power inequalities and the visions of egalitarian social relationships. One of the biggest shortcomings of anarchism has been, How do we get from here to there? White privilege has been one of the major barriers for anarchists struggling with this question.

The understanding of both power and leadership held by most anarchists has maintained inequalities both within anarchist circles and in our relationships with others. In our rejection of both power and leadership, we frequently work in or create organizations that are breeding grounds for informal hierarchies often defined by race, class and gender. We have frequently also argued for a complete rejection of organization altogether, advocating for spontaneous revolt, which again breeds informal hierarchies with no means of challenging this behavior. Given this situation, anarchism is one of the most white, often male dominated political movements in the United States today. Admitting the realities of white supremacy, patriarchy and heterosexism, I am not trying to isolate the anarchist movement, but rather to argue that we need to examine where we are at if we are to seriously think about where we want to go. As a movement we also need to look to the writings and organizing of anarchists of color, women and queer anarchists for thoughts and leadership about what direction we are already going in and should be going in.

One of the most significant aspects of anarchism is the argument that the ends do not justify the means of organizing. This has generally been thought of in terms of the tactics and organizational structure one uses. While there is a strong tendency in anarchism to lay out a very simplistic, dualistic framework of good/bad, right/wrong to think about these issues, there is also a large body of theory and practice coming overwhelming from anarchists and anti-authoritarians who are women, people of color and/or queer. The multiple roles of the

ON ANARCHIST INVOLVEMENT

While the media obsessed over anarchists who destroyed property – the real story was that anarchists were simply everywhere doing a hundred different things. Anarchists were doing jail support, media work, making meals for thousands, doing dishes, facilitating strategy meetings, leading workshops and discussion groups. Anarchists were doing medical support work, security at the warehouse space, communications between affinity groups and clusters, organizing marches and blockades and lock downs and tripod sits and forming human chains. Anarchists were making puppets, banners, signs, leaflets, press releases, stickers, and costumes (like the lovable sea turtles). Anarchists were starting chants, designing posters and newspapers, playing music, negotiating with the police and jailers to get our comrades out of jail. Anarchists were squatters occupying an empty building and attracting national media to the issues of property, poverty and homelessness. Anarchists were held in solitary confinement for being such effective organizers of mass non-violent civil disobedience that rocked Seattle and ignited the imaginations of the world. Anarchists organized child care!!! And yes anarchists targeted corporate chainstores. Simply put, anarchists significantly contributed to one of the most effective mass actions in recent US history.

ON PROPERTY AND RESISTANCE

As a movement we need to think critically about how our actions and our messages get interpreted by the rest of society. Some of the people who engaged in property destruction were very clear and left messages "anti-sweatshop" that were easily understandable – however, there were also people who genuinely looked like they were just lashing out randomly and thoughtlessly (which might be justifiable, but not necessarily effective in making social change).

However – as a movement we also need to recognize the difference between property destruction and violence. I remember watching – years ago – thousands of people hammering away at the Berlin Wall that stood as such an obvious symbol of political oppression. I did not once think that those who were smashing the wall were violent. It was a jubilant and inspiring moment. Nor do I think that those who were toppling statues of Stalin in Eastern Europe are violent. Again another obvious symbol of oppression. In the United States, under corporate

capitalism, the symbols of oppression are the golden arches of McDonalds and other corporate stores that are destroying the planet and amassing enormous power at our expense. While we need to think strategically about our tactics and be open to debate and dialogue, we also need to put things into perspective. While I advocate non-violent direct action, I understand where others are coming from and hope that we can discuss these issues as a movement that is diverse and vibrant.

The issue of violence is squarely upon the state as it attacked protesters and people in the neighborhoods and demonstrated an uncompromising willingness to aggressively assault non-violent demonstrators.

THE FUTURE

Seattle was truly amazing and it was made possible because of all of the organizing that we do day-to-day, the often unglamorous work that makes social change happen. Our ideas of what is possible have been greatly expanded. I have heard many people say that it will take them a while to process all that has happened, and I feel the same way. Hopefully we can share our ideas and think hard about what we did and what we can do so that our movement will grow. We need to think critically about how we, as organizers and activists, communicate our messages to the broader society. How can we speak radical politics in a way that will not only be understood, but will be appealing to vast numbers of people who are negatively impacted by global capital? There is another question that we must all think about: how to develop an anti-racist, multiracial movement against global capitalism.

Since the days of resistance in Seattle there has been a growing discussion about race and the fact that activists in Seattle – especially with DAN, were predominantly white. An anti-racist analysis of imperialist globalization must include how global capitalism not only impacts people of color in other countries, particularly in the global south, but also in the United States. An understanding of global economics and anti-capitalist politics must be connected to an analysis of white supremacy and patriarchy. The movement in Seattle was truly amazing and now anarchists must seriously think about anti-racist, multiracial, feminist organizing that connects the issues and builds broad coalitions and alliances.

The struggle against global capital opens up enormous possibilities for us to organize for global economic and social justice.

RESISTING PRIVILEGE, RE-DEFINING POWER AND RE-THINKING LEADERSHIP

At the beginning of this essay I mentioned three immediate challenges which present themselves to white activists generally and white anarchists in particular and they were: understanding and dismantling privilege and oppression based on race, class and gender; critically examining our understandings of power; and rethinking our conception of leadership. As a white anarchist, I want to embrace the complexity of these issues, to acknowledge that there are no clear answers, but rather good questions that can challenge us to go further, to break out of what is comfortable and static so that we can open up new possibilities.

First, the challenge of understanding and dismantling privilege and oppression based on race, class and gender. When talking about privilege and how it relates to one's life, it is important to stay focused on the goal of such reflection. It isn't about guilt or confessing to one's sins. Rather, it is about placing oneself in the matrix of domination that shapes our society. Recognizing the complex nature of where one is placed allows for sharper insights into how your position influences you and how you can take part in dismantling the structures of domination altogether. It is also important to recognize how one's place in society shifts and takes on new meaning in different situations, which pushes us to be more and more aware of these dynamics.

For example, white privilege impacts the ways that white radicals conceive of politics and organizing. I've been socialized most of my life to speak my mind, to take my opinions and thoughts seriously. Teachers, parents and adults have looked at kids like me as the "future of this country". Pictures of people who looked like me (white, male and 'assuredly' heterosexual) filled the history books, were the important people on the walls and were celebrated as the smartest and brightest of those who have ever lived. Much of my initial politics was based on rejecting this middle class culture, rejecting this role of being among the "future leaders of this great country". I had the material privilege to do this comfortably, in terms of money and my parents house. I say all of this, not because I feel the need to express some sort of guilt, but rather to place myself in both history and society. In this way, I can analyze how my privilege, my location in the matrix, impacts my view of the world, my understanding of myself and my conception of organizing, resistance and liberation.

do we treat the people making the phone calls, facilitating the meetings, distributing the flyers, raising money, taking time out to listen to the troubles of other organizers, coordinating child-care, cooking all day, patiently answering dozens of questions from new volunteers or potential supporters, or working really hard to make other people in the group or project feel listened to, respected, heard, valued and supported?

Whose names do we remember and whose work do we praise? As organizers we are not just putting together actions; we are helping to build community, helping to build supportive and loving relationships between people, helping to sustain and nourish alternative values of cooperation and liberation in this fiercely competitive and individualistic society.

This was the strength of Ella Baker's work, a strength that I think we can learn enormously from: her attention to group development. Ella Baker stressed the need to not only politicize and mobilize people, but to consciously develop people's capacities to be organizers and leaders in the long haul struggle for a better world. While "each one teach one" strategies and training people in the skills of organizing don't grab headlines in the media, it is this work that builds movement and develops a community of empowerment, solidarity and support that we need in order to transform society. Ella Baker's legacy is one that both inspires and informs our day-to-day efforts. The challenge before us is to make sense of her legacy in relationship to our work today.



BEYOND THE WHITENESS – GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY: THOUGHTS ON MOVEMENT BUILDING AND ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZING

One of the most exciting developments that has come out of the mass actions – in Seattle, Washington DC, Windsor, Canada, Philadelphia and Los Angeles – is the movement-wide discussion about racism, white supremacy and organizing strategies to build a multiracial radical movement for global justice. Elizabeth 'Betita' Martínez's widely distributed essay, "Where Was the Color in Seattle", put forward the question – why, if global capitalism has the greatest negative impact on people of color around the world and in the United States, was the direct action against the WTO so overwhelming white? Her essay helped launch a dialogue in alternative media and in activists groups throughout the United States and beyond.

Among activists of color, the question has generally been, "how can we bring an analysis of global capitalism and global justice to our local organizing efforts?" White activists have responded to Betita's essay by asking themselves, "how can we get people of color to join our groups and movement?" But this isn't the most useful question that we should be asking. The question to struggle with is, "How can we be anti-racist activists dedicated to bringing down white supremacy?" White activists need to work on developing our understanding of white supremacy, how white privilege operates in the activist movement and how we can bring solid anti-racist politics to the work that we do.

The idea that we just need to get more people of color to join our groups is an example of how white activists have internalized white supremacy. It carries the idea that we have all the answers and now they just need to be delivered to people of color. The alternative, of course, would be something like, people of color have been organizing for a long time (500+ years), and we (white activists) have a lot to learn, so maybe we should find ways to form alliances, relationships, and coalitions to work with people of color and be prepared to learn as well as share.

The other major aspect of 'how can we get more people of color to join our group' is the idea that anti-racist consciousness develops through osmosis – i.e. that if white people sit in the same room as people of color, we will begin to understand how white supremacy operates and therefore we won't really need to talk about it. We need to be clear that multiracial doesn't automatically mean anti-racist. The US military is multiracial in composition, but clearly serves the interests of imperialism and white supremacy. Similarly, an anti-racist group of whites can work to end white supremacy. What we are envisioning is a consciously anti-racist and multiracial movement against global capitalism.

It is absolutely true that white people learn about racism through interactions and relationships with people of color. But in terms of how we plan to do this work in activism, our goal cannot be to bring in people of color and expect that they will school us. Organizers of color have enough work already. In our pursuit to get educated, we need to go to more events and actions organized by people of color and show support, listen and learn. We need to read the amazing writers that are out there. We can pay attention to how the system works (when we are in jail, in court, in classrooms, at work and on the street). We can build relationships and learn from each other. But, just as men cannot expect women to educate them about sexism and heteros cannot expect queers to give them the homophobia 101 class whenever it is deemed appropriate, white people have a responsibility to work on racism together and not just wait until a person of color brings it up.

Here's an example of this kind of dynamic. Men in Food Not Bombs (the group I've worked with) would often talk about sexism in terms of how can we get more women taking on more responsibility and create equal power. The conversations would sometimes turn to questions like, How can we check our behavior that is preventing women from taking on responsibility? And, What kind of internal culture do we have and how does it privilege men and keep women down? These conversations about what men should do were very useful – as men should worry less about what women are and aren't doing and think more about what they as men are and aren't doing. The women in the group are just as capable, just as responsible, just as intelligent, once men stop occupying all of the

boosters, teachers, welfare agents, transportation coordinators, canvassers, public speakers, negotiators, lawyers, all while communicating with people who range from illiterate sharecroppers to well-off professionals and while enduring harassment from agents of the law and listening with one ear for threats of violence. Exciting days and major victories are rare". Ella Baker described community organizing as 'spade work', as in the hard work gardening when you prepare the soil for seeds for the next season. It is hard work, but it is what makes it possible for the garden to grow.

Charles Payne warns us repeatedly to look at the everyday work that builds movements and creates social change and to draw from those experiences in order to learn the lessons for our work today. He writes, "Overemphasizing the movement's more dramatic features, we undervalue the patient and sustained effort, the slow, respectful work, that made the dramatic moments possible".

From here, he develops an analysis of how sexism operates in organizing efforts. He explores why it is that in most histories of social movements, the profound impact of women is rarely mentioned. In the Civil Rights movements it was women and young people who were the backbone of the struggle. On this Payne writes, "We know beyond dispute that women were frequently the dominant force in the movement. Their historical invisibility is perhaps the most compelling example of the way our shared images of the movement distort and confuse the historical reality. There is a parallel with the way in which we typically fail to see women's work in other spheres. Arlene Daniels, among others, has noted that what we socially define as 'work' are those activities that are public rather than private and those activities for which we get paid. In the same way, the tendency in the popular imagination and in much scholarship has been to reduce the movement to stirring speeches – given by men – and dramatic demonstrations – led by men. The everyday maintenance of the movement, women's work, overwhelmingly, is effectively devalued, sinking beneath the level of our sight".

As organizers today, it is crucial that we look at our own work and consider what activities we place value on. How do we treat the people making the grand speeches and leading the rallies? And how

people 'dropping out' for a year or two to work for social change. It pushed the proposition that merely bettering the living conditions of the oppressed was insufficient; that has to be done in conjunction with giving those people a voice in the decisions that shape their lives. As SNCC learned to see beyond the lunch counter, the increasingly radical philosophies that emerged within the organization directly and indirectly encouraged a generation of scholars and activists to reconsider the ways that social inequality is generated and sustained."

One model of organizing in SNCC was the Freedom School used in Mississippi. The Freedom Schools prioritized political education informed by daily reality to connect day-to-day experiences with an institutional analysis. The Freedom Schools focused on building leadership and training organizers. SNCC envisioned the schools to operate as "parallel institutions" or what many anarchists refer to today as "counter-institutions". Charlie Cobb, who first proposed the creation of the Freedom Schools said that the schools were to be "an educational experience for students which will make it possible for them to challenge the myths of our society, to perceive more clearly its realities and to find alternatives and ultimately, new directions for action". Curriculum at the schools ranged from "Introducing the Power Structure", to critiques of materialism in "Material Things and Soul Things". There were classes on non-violence and direct action as well as classes on economics and how the power structure manipulates the fears of poor whites. The lessons learned from the Freedom Schools can help us to envision programs that educate as well as train people to take action.

Ella Baker devoted her time, energy and wisdom to SNCC, which came to embody those principles of participatory democracy and grassroots community organizing that she had helped to develop throughout her lifetime as a radical organizer. Both Baker and SNCC struggled to create collective leadership, to engage in activism that empowered others to become active, to generate change from the bottom up and to experiment with expanding democratic decision making into everyday life.

The history and experiences of SNCC offer much to organizers today, in terms of how we go about our work and how we envision our goals. One organizer from SNCC, Bob Zellner, described being an organizer as similar to a juggling act, "Organizers had to be morale

space and learn to share power. Men worrying less about appeasing women and more about ending sexism is what must happen.

This is how we need to think about racism. Too often I hear white activists talk about why more people of color aren't in the group – as opposed to whether or not we really have an understanding of how deeply racism impacts the issues we're working on and whether or not there are organizations and activists of color already working on these issues so that we can form working relationships.

White supremacy is a system of power. The definition of white supremacy that I use comes from Sharon Martinas and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop. White supremacy is a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege. White supremacy operates through racial oppression against people of color: slavery, genocide, anti-immigration, driving while Black, etc. Along with white privilege to white people: not being thought of as a criminal every time you walk into a store, for example. All the while, white supremacy maintains real power for the ruling class who control the major institutions of society.

The impact white supremacy has on white folks is rarely looked at, especially in relationship to activism and organizing. White privilege means that white people don't have to think about racism. White privilege means that white people can think of themselves as normal and generalize universally that what they experience is the standard. White privilege is a major barrier to activism and has historically undermined radical multiracial and anti-racist movement building. An example is white radicals organizing actions that involve possible arrest without thinking about how people of color have a very different relationship to the police – i.e. police brutality is a daily reality in communities of color and people of color are treated different at the hands of police generally speaking. White privilege often leads to white activists thinking that their way of organizing is the only way to organize and that their tactics are the most radical tactics.

In the political punk zine *HeartAttack*, activist Helen Luu wrote about the whiteness of the protests in Seattle as well as the left/anarchist movement generally. Luu looked at how middle class white

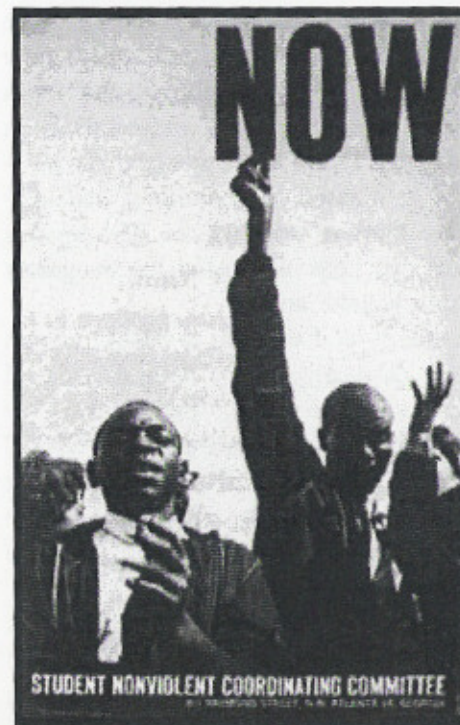
activists often have the privilege to choose issues and to choose tactics and stated that they generally have less to lose by engaging in activism. People of color, on the other hand, generally have to focus their activism on survival issues – like police brutality, housing, welfare rights, environmental toxins next door – that impact their lives and communities in concrete ways. Luu argues that we need to rethink the way that we define activism and I would argue that white radicals need to seriously examine how we talk about issues and tactics, in terms of what is deemed militant and what issues are described as radical, in relationship to how white supremacy operates.

White privilege undermines solidarity in the way that white activists can be “blinded by the white”. By this, I mean white activists often fail to comprehend the implications of communities of color organizing and building their capacities to fight to get toxins out of their neighborhood, for improved public transportation, for accountable public schools, for an end to police violence, for an end to INS deportation. The system of white supremacy defines white people as human, and people of color as inferior, subhuman, marginal – undeserving of services, let alone basic human rights. The racially coded public discussions of social policies illustrate the contempt white society has for people of color: fear of ‘brown bodies’ crossing ‘white borders’ with ‘illegitimate and illegal brown babies’ sucking up ‘white tax dollars’ in ‘Black controlled welfare departments’ of ‘inner cities where welfare queen mothers raise the next generation of juvenile crime delinquents’.

The discussion around organizing and anti-racism was taken up by Jason Wade and Steve Stewart, in their article, “The Battle for our Lives” from the anarchist journal, the *Arsenal*. They argue that activists/organizers must develop analysis that connects sweatshop labor in Indonesia to sweatshop labor in the United States and demonstrate that global capitalism creates misery in the third world and misery in the United States as well. They write, “We need to take the momentum from the anti-global capitalism struggles and connect them with struggles against police brutality, for health care, against welfare cutbacks, for better access to education, struggles that grow from our neighborhoods and build a serious revolutionary critique, vision and movement to redistribute power back to our everyday lives.” They argue, “We have to struggle around these ‘everyday life’ issues if we hope to build a more multiracial movement.”

Rides, another direct action tactic that dramatically protested segregation. It’s organizers started the “jail no bail” strategy of filling the jails and refusing to pay bail until segregation was ended. SNCC also played a principle role in Freedom Summer in Mississippi. That campaign followed their strategy of grassroots community organizing that took them into some of the most formidable areas of the South.

Ella Baker has been referred to as both the midwife who helped deliver SNCC and the founder who helped articulate the base principles from which the group developed. For instance, SNCC was committed to group-centered leadership, to mass direct action, to organizing in the tradition of developing people’s capacity to work on their own behalf, and to community building that was participatory and involved local people in decision-making with the goal of developing local leaders. In looking to the lessons of Ella Baker’s organizing strategies, it is useful to look at SNCC to see how these concepts were experimented with and applied. From the examples of SNCC, we can draw both insights and inspiration for the work that we are doing today.



Charles Payne writes in his book, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*: “SNCC may have the firmest claim to being called the birthing organization [as in inspiring and helping shape other organizations]. SNCC initiated the mass-based, disruptive political style we associate with the sixties, and it provided philosophical and organizational models and hands-on training for people who would become leaders in the student power movement, anti-war movement, and the feminist movement. SNCC forced the civil rights movement to enter the most dangerous areas of the South. It pioneered the idea of young

STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND THE ORGANIZING TRADITION

In 1960, a massive resurgence of Civil Rights activism and direct action took place amongst students who initiated the sit-in movement, which swept through the South like wildfire. Thousands of students participated in desegregation actions in which Black and some white students would sit at segregated lunch counters requesting to be served and refusing to leave. The sit-ins were dramatic; they brought the tensions of racial apartheid to the surface and often ended with white violence against the sit-in protesters. The sit-in movement erupted out of previously existing autonomous groups and/or networks that had been forming. They were largely uncoordinated beyond the local level and there were no visible public leaders – it was a self-organized movement. Within a year and a half sit-ins had taken place in over one hundred cities in twenty states and involved an estimated seventy thousand demonstrators with three thousand six hundred arrests. Ella Baker immediately realized the potential of this newly developing student movement and went to work organizing a conference to be held in Raleigh, North Carolina in April of 1960.

The conference brought together student activists and organizers from around the South who had participated in the sit-in movement. There were two hundred delegates out of which one hundred twenty were student activists representing fifty-six colleges and high schools from twelve Southern states and the District of Columbia. As the conference was organized by Baker and she was the acting executive director of SCLC, the leadership of SCLC hoped that the students would become a youth wing of the adult organization. However, Baker, who delivered one of the keynote speeches at the conference, urged the students to remain autonomous, form their own organization and set their own goals that would reflect their militancy and passion for social change.

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee was born out of the Raleigh conference. SNCC (pronounced Snick) was run by the students themselves along with two adult advisors: Ella Baker and Howard Zinn. It would become one of the most important organizations of the 60s. They played a major role in the Freedom

With this in mind, white activists need to think about anti-racist organizing in at least a couple of ways. One, white privilege is the flipside of racial oppression and each must be challenged if we are to move towards equality. Two, when people of color oppose racism they are also re-affirming their humanity in a social order that denies this and that is why struggles around racism have been such catalysts for revolutionary social change as they challenge the very foundation of this society – white supremacy. White radicals need to think about ways of talking about and organizing against white privilege – in the predominately white sectors of the movement and in general white society. It's also important for white radicals to remember that organizing against racism is also about freeing our own humanity from the grip of the slave society.

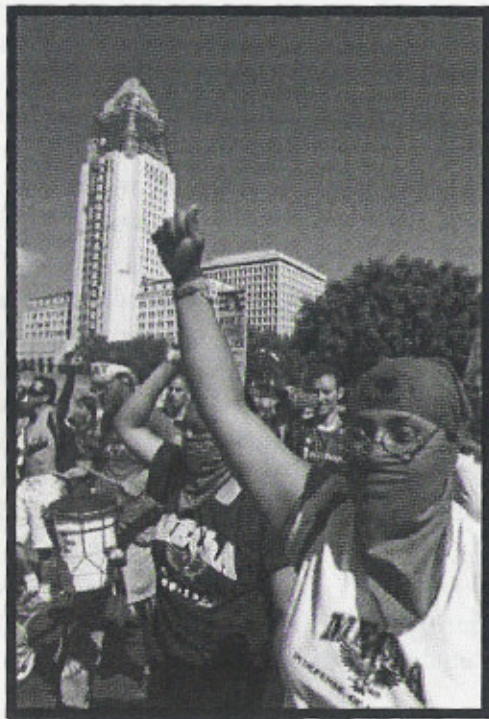
White radicals also need to think about how we go about forming working relationships with people of color. Gloria Anzaldúa, queer Chicana author/activist, writes about how white activists often talk about helping other people – helping the people at Big Mountain, the farm workers, indigenous communities working to keep toxins out of their neighborhoods, political prisoners, etc. Anzaldúa writes, as they (white folks) learn our histories and understand our struggles, “They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead”. This is a major distinction – no white savior coming to make it all better, but rather white allies working in solidarity with people of color in a way that respects leadership and builds trust and respect.

White activists finding ways to show solidarity and act as allies with people of color is critical. It's not about helping other people with their issues or acting from a sense of guilt, but rather taking responsibility for racial injustice and recognizing how we are impacted by the issues. As Black feminist author/activist Barbara Smith says, “In political struggles there wouldn't be any ‘your’ and ‘my’ issues, if we saw each form of oppression as integrally linked to the others.”

This is an exciting time with great possibilities. We need to be ready to make mistakes, make hard decisions and experiment with anti-racist organizing that really does aim at challenging white supremacy while confronting global capitalism.

In doing our work, it is important to have vision and hold on to it. When I think about and imagine the kind of movement of which I want to be a part, it is: multiracial and anti-racist – absolutely dedicated to self-determination for all oppressed people and ending white supremacy; feminist with a commitment to develop new social relationships based on equality and bring down the social structures based on domination; queer liberationist with a commitment to challenging heterosexism and creating freedom to safely define our own sexualities and genders; multigenerational and full of energy, wisdom and a desire to make healthy communities for all of us to care for and learn from each other; anti-capitalist with a deep analysis of how the system deforms and dehumanizes us joined with a vision of a new order based on social cooperation and ecological sustainability; and democratic with a passion for collective liberation and empowerment, along with an eye for organizing strategies that have direct action, collective action and solidarity building at their core.

Together we can, forever we must.



Once the campaign came to an end in 1956, with a major victory against segregation on the city buses, In Friendship put forward a proposal to the local leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. and others. Ella Baker, Bayard Rustin and Stanley Levinson approached Dr. King with the idea of an organizational structure to help network and build a Southern movement against segregation. They believed that Montgomery had shown that “the center of gravity had shifted from the courts to community action” and that now was the time to strike. In 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was founded. The SCLC was intended to be a network of local leaders and communities coordinating their actions and providing assistance to one another. The SCLC was also formed around the strategy of getting more clergy members to involve themselves and their church communities in the Civil Rights struggle. SCLC started with sixty-five affiliates throughout the South. The leader of the SCLC was Martin Luther King, Jr., but it was Ella Baker who opened and ran the group’s office in Atlanta, and she used her connections throughout the South to lay the groundwork for the organization. The two principal strategies of SCLC, laid out at the group’s founding conference, were building voter power in the Black community and mass direct action against segregation. Baker spent two and a half years as the acting executive director of SCLC. She ran the Atlanta office and traveled throughout the South building support for the organization. The first project was the Crusade for Citizenship, which aimed at doubling the number of Black votes in the South within a year. With hardly any resources and little support from the other leaders of SCLC, over thirteen thousand people came together in over 22 cities to plan and initiate the campaign.

During her two and half years of organizing with SCLC, her relationship with the leadership began to wane. While Miss Baker continued her work building a bottom up, grassroots powered organization, others in SCLC consolidated their adherence to the strategy of the charismatic leader-centered group style that formed around King. In addition to this, she was never officially made the executive director during her tenure as ‘acting’ executive director. Baker said that she was never made official because she was neither a minister nor a man. The failure to recognize and respect women’s leadership was a major weakness in the SCLC and in other formations of the Civil Rights movement.

Baker described good leadership as group-centered leadership. Group-centered leadership means that leaders form in groups and are committed to building collective power and struggling for collective goals. This is different than leader-centered groups, in which the group is dedicated to the goals and power of that leader.

Baker's commitment to participatory democracy led her to resign as the national director of branches of the NAACP in 1946. She moved to New York to care for her niece and became the local branch director and immediately began the process of taking the organization to the grassroots; out of the offices and into the streets.

After the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education verdict declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, Baker and the local branch started campaigning against segregation in the New York school system. Additionally, after the court decision, Baker and several other organizers formed the group In Friendship, which provided financial assistance to local leaders in the South who were suffering reprisals for their organizing. In Friendship believed that the time had come for a mass mobilization against the legally sanctioned racial apartheid of Jim Crow society in the South. When the Montgomery Bus Boycott campaign generated local mass participation, national support and international media, In Friendship thought they might have found the spark that they were looking for. The group established contact with the Montgomery Improvement Association who was leading the campaign and began taking notes as well as offering support and advice.



Ella Baker

CONFRONTING THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION AND WORKING TO BUILD A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE

Going to Los Angeles for the Democratic Nation Convention was an amazing experience. The actions and events themselves were generally speaking, very powerful. More than the actions themselves, the questions about organizing, tactics, strategy, anti-racist practice and movement building have been profoundly challenging as well as exciting.

I had a lot of mixed feelings going down to LA from San Francisco. I grew up about half an hour from LA, in a suburb called Whittier. While living in LA, I went to lots of rallies and marches in the city – from anti-vivisection/animal liberation protests, to large actions against the Gulf War, to demonstrations against police brutality. I grew up with a lot of the organizers who were working with Rise Up!/LA Direct Action Network. I was looking forward to working with friends, but I was also excited to be part of a mass mobilization in the streets of LA.

I was also very interested to see how the organizing was happening in LA. My political focus over the past year has been anti-racist organizing in the movements against global capitalism. I'm a co-trainer with Sharon Martinas in the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop in SF. Sharon and I were part of an anti-racist organizing study group which examined how white supremacy is a system that creates and maintains ruling class power through racial oppression against communities of color and white privilege in white communities. Our studies included reading Robert Allen's *Reluctant Reformers* to get a sense of how white supremacy has divided and undermined progressive social change movements historically. From white abolitionists who segregated themselves from Black Abolitionists, to the Labor movement that championed anti-Asian immigration legislation and excluded people of color from American Federation of Labor unions. Our studies also looked at anti-racist white organizing over the past 30 years; from Students for a Democratic Society; to anti-imperialists supporting national

liberation struggles led by people of color; to various anarchist projects of the 90's.

The historical study and reflection in the study group helped prepare Sharon and I to initiate a new project on anti-racism and the struggle against imperialist globalization. Our project, which is a workshop, was directly inspired by Elizabeth 'Betita' Martinez's widely distributed essay "Where Was the Color in Seattle".

Our workshop is called "Beyond the Whiteness – Challenging White Supremacy in the Movements against Global Capitalism". The first series was 4 parts, 3 hours each. There was about a hundred pages of readings, role-plays, small group discussions and presentations. The workshop is focused on white radicals, but participation from organizers of color is welcomed. In order to bring down white supremacy, white folks need to be able to recognize and challenge white privilege. White privilege is the major barrier to multiracial, anti-racist movement building and so we believe that white radicals have a responsibility to take it on. In the workshop, we define white privilege as, "an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of: 1. preferential prejudice for and treatment of white people based solely on their skin color and/or ancestral origin from Europe; and 2. Exemption from racial and/or national oppression based on skin color and/or ancestral origin from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Arab world." The workshop also focuses on working in solidarity with radicals of color to end racial oppression and work for collective liberation.

I knew that Rise Up!/LA DAN consisted predominately of organizers of color and that anti-racism was a major focus of their work. LA is also home to one of the most multiracial anarchist communities that I know of in the United States. I knew that I would learn a lot and I was excited to get involved.

The week of actions around the DNC were packed. There were 3-6 marches and actions everyday. Each day was organized under a different theme. Monday, August 14th was "Human Needs Not Corporate Greed", with a march in solidarity with the U'wa of Columbia against Occidental Petroleum (which is the source of Gore's family fortune). Tuesday was "An Injury to One is an Injury

themselves who create change; that not only does direct action challenge injustice in society, but that ultimately individuals confront the oppression in their own heads and begin the process of self-transformation and self-actualization.

She also believed that as people organize, they will learn from their mistakes and successes and become stronger people in the process: people who believe in themselves and feel a sense of their own power to affect the world around them and make history. If there was a shortage of food due to economic injustice, she would help people to provide food for themselves but she would also help organize folks to protest the economic conditions that deny people food. If the school system isn't providing a satisfactory education, then the community must come together to demand changes and to also provide alternatives ways of learning (i.e. after school programs, study groups, tutoring programs, free schools, homeschooling, etc.). For Baker, direct action was about achieving immediate goals, but it was also deeply connected to developing a sense of power in the people involved. It is this sense of power that would change people far beyond winning the immediate goals and help build a sustainable movement with long-term commitment and vision. It would also hopefully impact people's perceptions of themselves in relationship to the world and open up greater possibilities for happiness and satisfaction.

Ms. Baker had an innovative understanding of leadership, an idea which she thought of in multiple ways: as facilitator, creating processes and methods for others to express themselves and make decisions; as coordinator, creating events, situations and dynamics that build and strengthen collective efforts; and as teacher/educator, working with others to develop their own sense of power, capacity to organize and analyze, visions of liberation and ability to act in the world for justice. Miss Baker believed that good leadership created opportunities for others to realize and expand their own talents, skills and potential to be leaders themselves. This did not mean that she didn't challenge people or struggle with people over political questions and strategies. Rather, this meant that she struggled with people over these questions to help develop principled and strategic leadership capable of organizing for social transformation.

they themselves are the only protection they have against violence and injustice. If they only had ten members in the NAACP at any given point, those ten members could be in touch with twenty-five members in the next little town, with fifty in the next and throughout the state as a result of the organization of state conferences and they, or course, could be linked up with the national. People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but themselves”.

Baker’s organizational style actively worked to keep people informed and empowered, with the goal of people organizing themselves. Baker argued that strong people do not need a strong leader; rather they need an organization that can provide mutual aid and solidarity. Those views on organizing were very different than those of the national NAACP. In fact, Baker became critical of the national NAACP’s failure to support the development of self-sufficient local groups, as it failed to help “local leaders develop their own leadership potential”. In response to the unsupportive stance of the national NAACP, Baker began organizing regional gatherings to bring people together and help develop local leadership and organizing skills.

Baker worked to organize and support regional gatherings to both develop people’s skills and build communities of support and resistance. This is an example of Baker’s commitment to bottom up organizing that values the work of developing relationships between people and building trust, respect and power on a grassroots level. She believed in participatory democracy, not just in theory or on paper, but in the messy and complex world of practice: where mistakes are made, decision-making is tough, and the process of growth is slow.

In her essay, “Ella Baker and the Origins of ‘Participatory Democracy’”, Carol Mueller breaks down Miss Baker’s conception of participatory democracy into three parts: (1) an appeal for grassroots involvement of people throughout society in the decisions that control their lives; (2) the minimization of hierarchy and the associated emphasis on expertise and professionalism as a basis for leadership; and (3) a call for direct action as an answer to fear, alienation and intellectual detachment.

The call for direct action was one of Baker’s main strategies for creating meaningful social change. She argued that it is the people

to All” which had a youth march, a women’s liberation march and a queer liberation march. Wednesday was focused on the prison industrial complex and police brutality under the theme “Stop Criminalizing Our Communities”. Thursday’s theme was “Global Economic and Environmental Justice”, 15,000 marched through LA’s garment district, protesting sweatshops and demanding immigrant rights.

The Convergence Space was a four story warehouse that provided space for meetings, cooking, banner and puppet making, a room for child care, a medical area, a very welcoming info area with tons of good literature, and an elaborate hydraulic (non-fluoridated) water filter system that kept us hydrated in the blistering heat. The Convergence Space itself was a brilliant example of anarchism in action. Meetings for the tactical, medical, communications, security and media teams took place alongside training workshops in non-violent direct action, legal, media messaging and anti-racism. Next to signs announcing the next spokescouncil meeting were enlarged photos of civil disobedience actions from the LA Civil Rights movement and Justice For Janitors. This is smart for two reasons. One, it helps create a more welcoming and empowered space for people of color. Two, it pushes white radicals to remember the struggles of people of color for justice.

There was a strong commitment to anti-oppression organizing at the Space. When you first walked in, next to the welcoming table, there was a large sign that listed LA-DAN’s principles of anti-oppression organizing. They read as following:

“1. Power and privilege play out in our group dynamics and we must continually struggle with how we challenge power and privilege in our practice.

“2. We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression affect each one of us.

“3. Until we are clearly committed to anti-oppression practice all forms of oppression will continue to divide our movements and weaken our power.

"4. Developing an anti-oppression practice is life long work and requires a life long commitment. No single workshop is sufficient for learning to change one's behavior. We are all vulnerable to being oppressive and we need to continuously struggle with these issues.

"5. Dialogue and discussion are necessary and we need to learn how to listen non-defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppression practice. Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address oppression head on."

I quote these principles at length, because I believe that LA was a major jump forward in terms of organizing and that the lessons are critical. The Convergence Space was located in a predominately Central American immigrant community. Organizers went door to door throughout the neighborhood to hand out literature in both English and Spanish. Organizers explained what the Convergence Space was, what the actions against the DNC were about. Additionally, people in the community were informed about how they could participate. This kind of work takes time, patience and dedication to building a people's movement and it should be recognized and remembered.

The actions that took place throughout the week were mostly marches. From the first march for Mumia to the last march for immigrant rights, they generally ended at the Staples Center where the Democrats were meeting. Many of the marches connected local issues and struggles with national and international issues and struggles. Like the march and civil disobedience action at the Ramparts police station. Ramparts is currently under federal investigation as a result of police brutality scandals. The march and action had demands that were specific to LA, but the connection to police violence (particularly against communities of color) throughout the United States was made clear.

The actions were also organized with the context of a certain strategy. The strategy was about building the local activist community in Los Angeles, as well as the larger movement for social change. The organizing actively worked to bring together a much more diverse movement on the streets of LA than in Seattle or in Washington, DC. The focus on community organizing and local issues put into

This essay argues that anarchists need to follow the advice of Pauline Hwang, an organizer with Colours of Resistance, who writes, "Organize from the bottom up, and follow the lead of women and people of colour who are organizing at the grassroots level." With that in mind, there are three immediate challenges which present themselves to white activists generally and white anarchists in particular: understanding and dismantling privilege and oppression based on race, class and gender; critically examining our understandings of power; and rethinking our conception of leadership. With those challenges before us, let us now look to some of the most dynamic organizers of the twentieth century for both insights and inspiration in doing this work.

ELLA BAKER, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Ella Baker, who was born in North Carolina in 1905, was politicized and radicalized by the poverty of the Great Depression. She participated in self-help programs throughout the 30s and developed an understanding and respect for the process by which people take control over their own lives while also protesting injustices.

In the late 1930s, Ms. Baker became a field organizer for the NAACP. She would travel throughout the South and lecture, network and organize with any one person or group of people she could find. She would stay with local branches and help organize membership drives. She would assist local groups that were having either internal or external problems. However, her overall goal of organizing was to bring the NAACP to the grassroots. As an organizer, Baker believed very strongly in the abilities and the knowledge of local people to address their own issues. She believed that the national organization should serve as a system of support to offer assistance and resources to local campaigns and projects. She believed that organizations needed to serve the grassroots that made the organization strong.

In the early 1940's she became the assistant field secretary for the NAACP and by 1943, she was named the national director of branches. Baker describes her years of organizing with the NAACP and what she tried to accomplish as follows: "My basic sense of it has always been to get people to understand that in the long run,

actions are connected to a history of resistance over 500 years old, they have served this generation, particularly white activists, as a catalyst for both organizing and reflection on that organizing. In particular, they have created openings for broader movement debate and dialogue. Writings by radicals of color critiquing the whiteness of these actions and the ways in which racism operates within social change movements have presented clear challenges to white radicals working for social change. These challenges and the issues that they bring up are opportunities for growth and learning that white radicals have a responsibility to take seriously and engage with. The questions, possibilities and challenges coming out of the mass mobilizations become concrete when they are connected to the day-to-day work that makes the mass actions possible.

The critique developed by Elizabeth Betita Martinez in her essay, "Where was the Color in Seattle" needs to be examined for what lessons it has for organizers involved with Food Not Bombs and anti-poverty organizing, Earth First! and environmental action, union organizing and economic justice, alternative media like micro powered radio, Independent Media Centers and activist 'zines everywhere, working for immigrant rights and housing, teaching in public schools and free skools, running community gardening and radical art programs, Reclaiming the Streets, working to dismantle the prison industrial complex and support political prisoners, and so on. When the critical analysis and lessons developed out of the mass mobilizations are applied to the local work that we, as white radicals are doing, then new possibilities and potential is found.

While there are numerous challenges and complex questions to be struggling with, the goal of this essay is to look at issues of organizing, power and leadership in relationship to anarchist practice. Anarchism as a political theory and organizing strategy has been overwhelmingly white and therefore influenced and shaped by white privilege. White privilege is the flipside of racial oppression and each must be challenged in the struggle against white supremacy. Additionally, the voices dominating the anarchist movement for well over 100 years have been male and this too has shaped much of anarchist thought and action.

the context of global capitalism was one part of the strategy, and the other was tactics. The marches in LA mostly had legal permits. There were action guidelines for the marches which emphasized non-violence and refraining from property destruction.

There was an enormous amount of controversy about tactics. There were arguments about violence vs. non-violence, what the role of property destruction is or isn't and what is radical and what is reformist. However, most of these debates lacked analysis of strategy, or a sense of goals. Mostly white activists argued with each other about who is more revolutionary and who is more ethically correct. The debate often looked like this – those who denounce property destruction are reformist, those who encourage property destruction are violent and morally questionable. Neither of these positions is grounded in strategic thinking. While these debates are perhaps interesting over beer or coffee, they are not the most useful when organizing with thousands of people (or even four). Our debates over tactics should be framed by goals.

The tactics utilized in LA had thought behind them, "How can we bring a radical and diverse movement to the streets during the DNC?" LA organizers repeatedly explained that confrontation with the police has different consequences depending on who you are. For undocumented immigrants who get arrested in a march, the punishment involves the INS, detention and/or deportation. For people who have a criminal record, the punishment could include another strike in a '3 strikes and your out' state or longer jail time. The number of people who have prior records with the police jumps disproportionately in communities of color (i.e. Driving While Black or Brown). For people who are transgendered, the LAPD deny you the ability to define your own gender and sexuality and tell you what gender they think you are and put you in jail accordingly. Furthermore, for people of color, the experience with the police is different from what largely middle class white activists experience. Police violence is a major way that racial oppression impacts communities of color. White people, generally speaking, are not assumed by police to be criminals when walking into a store or when driving in a 'nice' neighborhood – this is how white privilege operates. White radicals who don't challenge their white privilege, will not be able to see what is profoundly radical about communities of color mobilized,

regardless of whether or not the march is legal. For example, one of the Latino organizers of the permitted march against the Ramparts police station, has had his house raided by the police for his work and he expected more heat from them for this march (legal or not). In Los Angeles it wasn't just about how to bring out immigrants, trans and queers, and people of color into the actions. In many instances, these were the people actively involved in the organizing.

Helen Luu, an anti-global capitalism organizer, explained how she sees white privilege operating in the movement. "The clearest example may be the (usually sole) focus on direct action, which almost always also means direct police confrontation. While I do support direct action, I think that the emphasis on this method alone often works to exclude people of colour because what is not being taken into account is the relationship between the racist (in)justice system and people of colour. The white standpoint used in organizing also works to marginalize the activism that people of colour are involved with because other forms of activism are looked down upon as not being radical enough. Who gets to decide what is 'radical' anyway?" She explains further that, "People in positions of privilege (white, male, straight, etc.) have to know when to step back and acknowledge that they can learn a lot from marginalized groups, that these groups don't just need to be 'taught'. Genuine solidarity is something that is essential if we want to further this movement. We have to support each others' work."

This debate on the streets of LA demonstrated several things to me. One, the role of anti-racist white radicals in multiracial organizing. In LA, there should have been more white organizers who actively worked to explain to other white activists why certain tactics had been chosen. I talked with a lot of white activists who understood the strategy once it was explained. The responsibility to explain this should not fall on the shoulders of already overworked organizers of color, who already spend too much time explaining racism to white people. Two, the need for more movement-wide discussions about strategy, vision and goals. What do we hope to accomplish, using what tactics, in what situations? Connecting tactics to goals is useful, as it helps us think about how we want to get from this world of injustice to a future of collective liberation. It can also help us move from attacking each other's beliefs and focus on

LOOKING TO THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM LESSONS FROM THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THOUGHTS ON ANARCHIST ORGANIZING

When thinking about organizing, about the possibilities for movement building, about the potential of challenging injustice and fundamentally altering the relationships of power in this society – my mind turns to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 60's. More specifically, my attention focuses in on Ella Baker and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee who initiated some of the most exciting work that I've ever come across. Today, when I read and hear so many debates, dialogues, and discussions about movement building and "Where do we go from here?", I again look to the insights and inspiration of Ms. Baker and SNCC.

The Black liberation struggle and movements for Civil Rights have shaped the history of the United States. From slave revolts to Ida B. Wells international anti-lynching campaign, to the 50,000 women in the National Association of Colored Women at the beginning of the century, to the struggle today against the prison industrial complex: these legacies of resistance are at the heart of liberation struggles in this country. For white organizers, it is key to study these legacies from the understanding that when people of color oppose racism they are also re-affirming their humanity. In a social order built on white supremacy, people of color organizing for justice and dignity challenges the very foundation of this society. This is why struggles against racism have repeatedly been catalysts for revolutionary social change. The challenge for me, as a white organizer, is to apply the insights and inspiration from these legacies to the work that I'm currently engaged in. The mass actions against global capitalism in the last two years have heavily influenced the local work that I'm involved.

The mass mobilizations in North America opposing corporate power and global capitalism – including Seattle, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and in Quebec – have opened up important conversations about strategy, about racism in white progressive movements and the goals of organizing. While these mass

and developed forms of resistance to race, class and gender oppression? Check out books like Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: the Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. Read *Words of Fire: an anthology of African American Feminist Thought* edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall. Check out the book, *Women in the Civil Rights Movement*, that simply rocks as it contains essays on activism, resistance and community building that offer so many important insights and lessons for our work today. We need to read books like, *Reluctant Reformers* by Robert Allen on racism and social reform movements in the US, to understand how white supremacy has lead white activists to undermine the activism of people of color and how those dynamics continue to get played out. Additionally there are so many amazing activists and organizations out there that we can learn from and work in solidarity with.

Chicana lesbian feminist writer and activist, Gloria Anzaldua, wrote in her book, *Borderlands: La Frontera*, "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads." This is why it is crucial that white people consciously, critically and consistently work to undermine internalized white supremacy that prevents many of us from seeing people of color as fully human. Additionally, white activists need to know about the resistance and organizing of people of color so that we can imagine new ways of resisting and organizing in a way that works for collective liberation.

Here are some more books that can help us develop the radical analysis that we need in order to turn injustice into justice. David R. Roediger's *Black on White: Black Writers on What it Means to Be White*. Elizabeth 'Betita' Martinez's *De Colores Means All Of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century*. *Red Dirt: Growing Up Okie* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Michael Omi and Howard Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1990s*. Barbara Smith's *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom*. William Upski Wimsatt's *No More Prisons. State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance*, edited by M. Annette Jaimes. Charles Payne's *I've Got the Light of Freedom: the Mississippi Freedom Movement and the Organizing Tradition*. There are many more excellent books out there.

The analysis that we learn and the creative and thoughtful ways that we apply this analysis to our work will lead to important developments in the struggle against white supremacy and the entire monster of domination, which white supremacy is part of.

organizing and winning. It's also important that we set our own goals. In LA, the media constantly referred to our goals in the context of numbers of people at marches (if there was less than 10,000 we failed). In the absence of our own goals, the corporate media decides them for us. We can't fall into that trap. When we set our own goals, then we can have a basis to evaluate our own successes and mistakes. Then we can also discuss our tactics in relationship to how they help us achieve our goals.

The goals that I thought a lot about in LA, and continue to think about are as following:

"1. to develop our ability to critique existing society, developing our analysis of white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, capitalism and authoritarianism.

"2. to develop our ability to create and hold onto vision, a vision of a radically transformed society based on cooperation, justice and ecological sustainability.

"3. To develop our sense of power (challenging both the ways that we are privileged and the ways that we are oppressed) in order to shape history and make our visions a reality.

"4. To actively participate in the building of radical multiracial, anti-racist, feminist, queer liberationist, anti-capitalist movements dedicated to solidarity and self-determination.

"5. To work for collective liberation, remembering that my liberation is interdependent with your liberation.

"6. Have a damn good time."

Through our goals we can develop strategies that go beyond immediate actions or campaigns. Where do we want this movement to be in a year, or five or ten? What can we do to move in that direction? Here's an example. Pauline Hwang is an organizer in Montreal, Canada. She has been working against global capitalism and wants to see a stronger multiracial movement. The summit to negotiate the Free Trade Area of the Americas will be taking place in Quebec City, Canada in April 2001. Pauline helped start a loose network of activists called Colours of Resistance that is beginning to create space to discuss, research and analyze global capitalism and its

particular impact on communities of color. The group's first event will focus on immigration. The network's focus is primarily on organizing within communities of color. What is needed is white radicals doing anti-racist work with white activists and predominately white groups. This is also part of the strategy of Colours of Resistance, as both racial oppression and white privilege must be dismantled.

The organizing that took place in Los Angeles was not flawless, but it did grapple with major questions of movement building and resistance. My hope is that we learn from those experiences and continue struggling with these questions in our day to day work. Looking for the important questions and lessons is most times better than thinking we have all the answers.



An excellent book that has lots of nuts and bolts organizing ideas is *Organizing For Social Change: a manual for activists in the 1990's* by Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall and Steve Max. For more information about the Direct Action Network check out www.directactionnetwork.org

concessions or wages of whiteness you receive – then your humanity will be horribly distorted and hope will be lost. I also believe that the hope Baldwin speaks of, is a hope for a new humanity that works for equality and liberation. So what does this mean for us white folks – what do we do and how do we organize?

In her book, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, Patricia Hill Collins writes, “Suppressing the knowledge produced by any oppressed group makes it easier for dominant groups to rule because the seeming absence of an independent consciousness in the oppressed can be taken to mean that subordinate groups willingly collaborate in their own victimization.” White folks need to read and study the knowledge produced by people of color. Furthermore, in fighting against a system of domination – the works of queers, women, working class whites, labor organizers and radicals of all colors must be read and we must learn and develop an analysis that connects all of this to an understanding of how power operates in ways that both oppress and liberate. Collins quotes a student of hers, Patricia L. Dickenson, who writes, “it is a fundamental contention of mine that in a social context which denies and deforms a persons capacity to realize herself, the problem of self-consciousness is not simply a problem of thought, but also a problem of practice... the demand to end a deficient consciousness must be joined to a demand to eliminate the conditions which caused it.” While we are developing an analysis of race, class, gender, age and sexual identity – we must also work to end inequalities based on race, class and gender in the structures of our society. This means that we need to bring an understanding of race, class and gender to the work that we do – around environmentalism, sweatshop labor, affordable housing, police brutality, child care, imperialist globalization, poverty and militarism.

One way that we can do this is by shifting the center of our analysis. How does environmentalism impact working class Latino/as? The environmental justice movement that organizes against toxic waste dumps in poor communities (among many, many other things) offers answers to this question. How does immigration impact Asian American women? The group Asian Immigrant Women Advocates have been doing amazing work around this and books like *Dragon Ladies: Asian American Feminist Breathe Fire* and *State of Asian America: activism and resistance in the 1990's*, edited by Karin Aguilar-San Juan. How have Black women organized

confronted by white people, then as bell hooks suggests, new identities can be shaped and we can work to define our own reality.

Audre Lorde, Black lesbian feminist superstar, said "it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others – for their use and to our detriment." While whiteness does carry many privileges and benefits in a white supremacist system, it also comes with a heavy price. James Baldwin, another superstar of radical thought, compared whiteness to a factory and he encouraged white people to get out.

In his essay, "On Being White and Other Lies", James Baldwin writes about the price of being white, "But this cowardice, this necessity of justifying a totally false identity and of justifying what must be called a genocidal history, has placed everyone now living into the hands of the most ignorant and powerful people the world has ever seen: and how did they get that way? By deciding that they were white. By opting for safety instead of life. By persuading themselves that a Black child's life meant nothing compared with a white child's life. By abandoning their children to the things white men could buy. By informing their children that Black women, Black men and Black children had no human integrity that those who call themselves white were bound to respect. And in this debasement and definition of Black people, they debased and defamed themselves."

Booker T. Washington once said, 'When you hold me down in this ditch, you too remain in the same ditch'. The ditch is a society based on race, class and gender hierarchies. A society that devours the planet and threatens ecological disaster. A society so full of fear and hatred that queer youth commit suicide. A society that demonizes and punishes whole segments of the population because they are poor, regardless of how the economy creates and needs poverty. This is a society where rape and countless other forms of more subtle sexualized violence are regular occurrences. The list of damage is enormous, and so too is the daily impact of our humanity cut off because of all of this damage – this is how white people have debased and defamed themselves, as Baldwin wrote.

Baldwin also wrote, "as long as you think you are white, there is no hope for you". No hope for you? No hope for what? I believe that Baldwin is saying, is that as long as you identify with a system that is based on domination – regardless of what privileges,

TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE: ELIZABETH 'BETITA' MARTINEZ AND THE INSTITUTE FOR MULTIRACIAL JUSTICE

"Elizabeth 'Betita' Martinez is a national and international treasure. Her life and work provide a model of internationalism and solidarity, as well as local organizing. 'Think globally, act locally' was her practice long before the slogan was created. From work for decolonization at the United Nations, to the Civil Rights Movement, to pioneering the women's liberation movement, to local organizing in New Mexico and California, to top-rate journalism and political theory, Betita continues to blaze trails and create



Elizabeth Betita Martinez

priceless legacies, mentoring countless social activists, young and old, male and female, people of all colors, gay and straight, always with astonishing patience and intelligence." This is how Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz describes her friend of 30 years. Dunbar-Ortiz has been involved in radical politics and activism since the sixties. She founded one of the first groups of the Women's Liberation Movement, Cell 16 and helped edit their journal, *No More Fun and Games*. She is the author of *Red Dirt: Growing Up Okie* and she's a regular reader at the Anarchist Cafe nights in San Francisco.

Elizabeth 'Betita' Martinez lives in the Mission District of San Francisco, where she is involved in many different projects and campaigns. Her main project is the Institute for MultiRacial Justice, which she co-founded in 1997. She serves as the co-chair of the Institute and edits the Institute's publication, *Shades of Power*.

The Institute aims to "serve as a resource center that will strengthen the struggle against White Supremacy by combating the tactics of divide-and-control and advancing solidarity among people of color" (from the group's Mission Statement).

The Institute serves as a clearinghouse of information about joint work done by communities of color locally, regionally and eventually on a national basis. The Institute provides educational materials to help build greater understanding and respect between people of color. Working to build solidarity between communities of color, the Institute holds educational forums on topics and issues that are not only important to communities of color, but that have divided people of color. Forum topics have included immigrant rights and bilingual education and the these events bring together organizers from various groups to have a dialogue about the issues. These forums and other work done by the Institute try to provide a site for people from different communities of color to meet with each other and find ways to support one another.

In October of 99, Martinez and the Institute put together the Shades of Power Festival: Alliance Building With Film and Video. The festival's program stated, "the movies show how different peoples of color in the U.S. have related and worked together in common struggles for social justice. A few of the videos focus on a single group whose struggle continues today and needs support from other people of color." The festival featured movies about Ethnic Studies student strikes in 69-69, the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party, Angela Davis, June Jordan, Yuri Kochiyama, the Japanese Internment Camps during WWII, housing struggles by Latinos, Filipinos, African-Americans, repression and resistance at the U.S. Mexico border, labor organizing and environmental justice campaigns. In all, about 20 films were viewed. Between movies, there were four discussion panels with organizers from various groups on gentrification in San Francisco, immigrant rights and environmental justice. Hundreds of people went to the festival.

The other main project of the Institute is publishing *Shades of Power*. It is published as a step in the direction of creating an anti-racist, anti-capitalist ideological climate. *Shades of Power* is full of articles on organizing around environmental justice issues, police brutality, violence in public schools, workers' rights, immigration and incarceration – to name a few. All of the articles focus on pro-active campaigns and positive activism with special attention paid to alliance building among people of color.

Shades of Power helps the Institute work towards their long-term goals. According to their mission statement, the Institute is "committed to linking the struggle of Third World unity with struggles to build a new society free of class relations, sexism, homophobia, environmental abuse, and the other diseases of our times".

placed white standards as the mark by which they are judged (in terms of beauty, in terms of culture, in terms of language and in terms of intelligence). Black feminist theorist, bell hooks, writes, "oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subjects, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, telling their story." Shaping history and defining a new reality is a strategy that must be embraced by white folks who desperately want to see the end of racism. Racism will always exist so long as whiteness exists, as white identity has been developed through the process of slavery, genocide and cultural annihilation. White identity was fused together as a way of dealing with massive injustice – to be white is to be human and all others are subhuman, savages, beasts of burden to be worked, raped, beaten and robbed – they deserve what they get and little else can be expected of them anyway. White identity has mutated and evolved over the years, but its core belief in being better, of being above others is deeply intact. When white people complain that Mexicans are taking their jobs; when white people complain that Asian Americans are taking over their country; when white people complain that Blacks are ruining their neighborhood – this concept of ownership, of entitlement is all based on the notion that this is a white society that is suppose to benefit white people.

W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the great intellectuals of American society, wrote that white people are rewarded for their support of a system that largely does not benefit them – in terms of how much power and wealth is concentrated into the hands of the few. He called this reward, the "psychological wages of whiteness". The ability of white people to think of themselves as better than Black folks, regardless of how poor they are, how many hours they have to work, how their labor makes someone else rich. "I might be poor, but at least I'm not a nigger" is how white identity helps shape a horribly disfigured humanity of hierarchy and punishment in the service of power and wealth. If white people are to work for an end to racial injustice then we must come to understand how the psychological wages of whiteness have (mis)shaped our identity and (de)formed our consciousness. Until white people confront their internalized superiority, the dynamics of racism will be reproduced unconsciously. Becoming conscious of how race operates, one will still make many mistakes and reproduce racism, but at least we can work to undo this and undermine this dynamic. Furthermore, when the internalized impact of white supremacy – of (un)consciously believing that white people are simple better – is



The debate over language is truly about control, not communication. In his amazing book, *The Coming White Minority: California, Multiculturalism and America's Future*, Dale Maharidge writes, "The truth ignored in the debate [over bilingual education] was this: only three out of ten of the 1.4 million California students with limited English proficiency were enrolled in a bilingual education class. Due to a shortfall of 20,000 qualified teachers, 70 percent of these students were already taking English only classes. The failure of many of them had nothing to do with bilingual education." Maharidge writes further that "Prop 227 [English Only] is just one more way that the third world work force will be kept in place, providing a pool of janitors and dishwashers..." The struggle to make English the official language in California is about delegitimizing another people's language and culture and reinforcing inferiority. Simultaneously, English and 'white' culture is reinscribed as superior. This is why many who opposed English Only used the slogan, "English Only means White Only". My thoughts as a small child that Spanish was a dirty language where drawn from society and reinforced. I use this example, because it demonstrates how white supremacy operates. As a small child I learned that my 'language', my 'culture', my 'history' was all central, all important. I didn't need someone to tell me that white people were better or superior, it was indoctrinated in my surroundings in a way that it need not be spoken.

It is important for white people to look at their experiences and deconstruct them, look into events and find their meaning. One of the crucial ways that people of color resist white supremacy is by confronting internalized racism, by coming to terms with a society that has systematically devalued their humanity, covered up their history, brutalized their memory of themselves as a people and then

Working with women's groups is a special focus of the Institute, "because women have often taken the lead in building alliances among people of color". Organizing with youth is also a major focus of the Institute with the goal of developing autonomous youth initiatives. The Institute was active in the youth led campaign against Proposition 21 in California. Prop 21, the juvenile crime initiative, makes it easier to prosecute children as adults, broadly defines gangs and gang membership to include most aspects of hip-hop culture and criminalizes it and plays on social fears of crime committed by young people of color – regardless of the fact that violent youth crime has declined significantly in the last few years. When youth organizations like Third Eye Movement, Homey Network and the Critical Resistance Youth Task Force mobilized and organized thousands of young people, the Institute offered support and solidarity. As Roxanne stated earlier, Betita is a mentor to countless activists and organizers. Her years of experience, her firm dedication to radical social change and her wisdom and insights into organizing have influenced and inspired many who are active today, especially young women of color organizers.

In addition to the Institute, Martinez is also involved with many different organizations in the Bay Area, such as the Women of Color Resource Center and Media Alliance. Betita is also the author of the book *De Colores Means All Of Us: Latina Views of a Multi-Colored Century*, published by South End Press in 1998.

Betita's book, *De Colores Means All Of Us*, which hit the shelves last year is a chronicle of organizing and alliance building throughout her years of work. The book is a collection of essays that range from discussions on attacks against immigrant rights and affirmative action to contemporary struggles for Ethnic Studies led by Latina/o youth. Betita's book is full of essays that develop a radical Chicana perspective and analysis on society, race relations, history, dynamics between men and women in past and present activism and on the future of building a multiracial, anti-racist, queer liberationist, feminist, anti-capitalist movement. The essays are packed with stories, examples of past activism, models of past and present organizing and inspiration to implement lessons in the book into our organizing efforts.

Elizabeth Martinez traces her political consciousness back to her childhood. Her father had moved from Mexico into the US and after quite a few years of financial hardship ended up working in Washington DC as a secretary in the Mexican Embassy. She remembers growing up with stories of the Mexican Revolution, Zapata and US imperialism. Also,

Martinez grew up in a middle-class white suburb of DC and was the only person of color in school, which made her painfully aware of racism and white supremacy. After World War II, Martinez went to work at the United Nations as a researcher on colonialism/decolonization efforts and strategies. During the McCarthy Era, her section chief and other co-workers at the UN were fired for having past or present connections with Communism. In 1959, three months after the Cuban Revolution claimed victory, Martinez went to Cuba to witness a successful anti-colonial, socialist struggle. This trip to Cuba had a profound impact on her. In addition to Cuba, Martinez later traveled to the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Vietnam (during the war) and China to witness and observe how people were implementing socialism.

When the sit-in movement swept across the South in 1960, a new and exciting form of direct action organizing was taking shape which soon led to the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. SNCC was one of the most important organizations of the 1960's as it successfully experimented with various forms of community organizing, direct action tactics, radically democratic decision-making and an egalitarian vision that inspired and influenced countless other groups and projects in that 60's and into today. While SNCC, along with the Southern Civil Rights Movement, is generally remembered as a Black led struggle with the involvement of whites – Betita was one of two Chicanas working full-time for SNCC; Maria Varela was also a SNCC organizer. Martinez originally served as the director of SNCC's office in New York. Betita edited the photo history book, *The Movement*, which not only raised funds for SNCC, but also brought graphic images of the Civil Rights movement into homes across the United States. Martinez was an organizer with SNCC in 1964 during the Mississippi Summer project (often referred to as Freedom Summer).

In 1968, a year of revolution and repression around the world, she moved to New Mexico to work in the land grant movement of Chicanos/as struggling to recover lands lost when the US took over half of Mexico with the 1846-48 war. There she launched an important movement newspaper, *El Grito del Norte (The Cry of the North)*, and continued publishing it for 5 years along with other activism. *El Grito* reported on international activism and sought to show connections between different struggles. At the Chicano Communications Center, which she co-founded in Albuquerque, she edited the bilingual pictorial volume *500 Years of Chicano History* at a time when almost no books existed on the subject. The pictorial became the basis of her educational video *Viva La Causa!* which has been

WHITE SUPREMACY ON MY MIND: LEARNING TO UNDERMINE RACISM

Growing up in California and coming of political age in the 90's, race has been a central factor in my development as a person and as a radical. California elections have been the battle ground upon which fights over immigrant rights, bilingual education, affirmative action, criminal justice, labor rights and queer marriage have been fought. The explosion of rage in Los Angeles after the Rodney King verdict clearing four white cops of all charges in the internationally witnessed beating of King was to have a profound impact on my way of seeing the world. I rarely ever thought about what it meant to be white, I was just a person. The ability of whiteness to be so universalized, to be the norm, to be the standard and all others being just that, others. I grew up in the post-Civil Rights era, where racism has operated in a way that rarely even speaks directly about race.

I remember as a small child listening to other children speak Spanish and I assumed that it was because they were not smart enough to speak English or if they were bilingual, then I assumed that Spanish was some sort of silly gibberish. This would have been a childish mistake or misunderstanding on my part, but as a white person, I assumed that my language was THE language and that it was the true form of speech and this thinking was not childish, it was the institutionalized logic of white supremacy, which was reinforced all around me.

In 1986, California voters passed a proposition that declared English as the official language of California. In 1998, voters in California passed a proposition that ended bilingual education in California. Prop 227 was known as the "English Only" measure. California was once part of Mexico. As white settlers moved westward, the idea of Manifest Destiny was developed which simply stated that all of the land towards the West was for citizens of the United States – white people. The US war of aggression against Mexico resulted in a huge land grab. However, in the Treaty of Guadeloupe signed in 1848, the rights of Mexicans living inside the newly created US border were to be respected and language was one of them. The Treaty of 1848 stated that the United States must respect the culture and language of the people formerly of Mexico.

increasingly banding together in grassroots coalitions to fight the system and to bring about fundamental political change. Feminists of color who consistently make the links between issues are building a movement whose politics have the revolutionary potential to free us all."

I went and heard Smith speak at the Metropolitan Community Church. She was in San Francisco receiving an award from Women Against Rape who were celebrating their 25th anniversary. She spoke, as she writes, with a profound understanding of inequality and injustice and a passion for 'working for liberation and having a damn good time'. As a white male, who grew up middle-class in the suburbs by Orange County, a bastion of white racism and homophobic conservatism, and as an anarchist organizer for social justice, Smith's words are both profoundly challenging and incredibly inspiring. Over the years, a Black feminist analysis has challenged my anarchist politics, which far too often place the state at the center of oppressive power, as many in the marxist tradition place class. Black feminism challenges this kind of hierarchy and forces the debate open to race, gender and sexuality. When one begins to look at power inequality in general, it becomes possible to understand how and why an anarchist organizer would campaign to defeat anti-immigrant propositions at the ballot box, or why anarchists have organized to pass living-wage ordinances through their local city governments. Smith's writings are a challenge to the idea that gender balance in meetings is just about equal numbers of men to women or that to have a multiracial group means having a couple of Asian Americans and a Black person in a predominately white group. Smith's writings help us understand that to be anti-racist, feminist, and pro-queer, is to build the organization, campaign and/or agenda around these principles and do the hard work to realize these politics. It's not about guilt, it's about responsibility and responsible organizing that furthers the possibility for collective liberation rather than individual advancement on the boot straps of white supremacy, patriarchy and class privilege. It's not about divisiveness or infighting, it's about doing work that matters – work that is truly revolutionary in its vision, integrity and commitment. This is also truly hard and difficult work and that is why it is so important to have writers like Barbara Smith who inspire us and encourage us. Her writings and ideas should be read and heard by everyone who works and longs for a better world – a better world for all of us.

shown at film festivals and classrooms across the country. In all of this activism, she worked with and trained many young Chicanas/os.

In the late 60's when the Women's Liberation Movement exploded across the country with feminist groups, publications, protest actions, manifestos and speakers everywhere, Elizabeth Martinez was in New Mexico helping shape the newly developing movement. In her essay, "History Makes Us, We Make History" from the anthology, *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices From Women's Liberation*, Betita talks about developing a Chicana feminism that confronts race, class and gender inequality. In that essay she writes about the whiteness of the Women's Liberation Movement and the sexism in the Chicano Movement and the need to struggle against all forms of oppression. During this time, Betita was made an honorary member of WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell).

Since 1976 she has been living in the Bay Area. Betita became deeply involved in leftist party building politics for 10 years. In 1982 she ran for Governor of California on the Peace and Freedom Party ticket; the first Chicana on the ballot for that office. She has also taught courses in Ethnic Studies and Women Studies at Hayward State University. Martinez has traveled all across the United States speaking on colleges and in classrooms about race, class, gender issues and organizing. She has teamed up with longtime activist Elena Featherston, also a co-founder of the Institute, and they have done joint speaking tours called "Black and Brown – Get Down", which aim at building alliances between people of color. She has consistently been a mentor over the years to new and long-time activists and organizers helping transfer skills, knowledge and experience in an effort to build our movements. In addition to editing *Shades of Power*, she is also a regular contributor to *Z Magazine* and other publications.

The Institute for MultiRacial Justice is just the latest project in a long list of efforts to make the world a better place. Like her other projects, the Institute works to develop long-range goals and vision to guide activists from one struggle to the next. As we move from one crisis to the next – from welfare reform, to the ending of affirmative action, to the bombing of Kosovo, to Mumia's execution – we become worn-down and burned-out. Betita reminds us that we must remember that we are part of a movement, we are part of something much bigger than ourselves and we are not alone in the struggle. She reminds us that while we confront budget cuts in Ethnic Studies programs or new attacks against the civil rights of homeless people, that we must hold onto our goals – solidarity, community, revolution,

egalitarianism, a new world. She reminds us that as activists, as organizers, we have a responsibility to teach and train others – that we have a responsibility to actively build a new world.

Martinez also has much to say to us about how we build movements for social change. After the massive resistance to the World Trade Organization in Seattle, Martinez wrote the widely distributed and highly influential essay, “Where Was the Color in Seattle? Looking for reasons why the Great Battle was so white”. She writes, “Understanding the reasons for the low level of color, and what can be learned from it, is crucial if we are to make Seattle’s promise of a new, international movement against imperialist globalization come true.” Through interviews and observations she writes about the lessons that organizers – people of color and white – must learn. We must connect the issues of imperialist globalization to local community issues. White radicals need to develop and put forward an analysis of corporate domination that understands racial oppression in the Third World and in the United States. She writes that radicals of color need to be networking and connecting their work with a global framework. White radicals need to go beyond their familiar circles and form coalitions with people of color with an understanding of how white activists in the past have betrayed people of color. White radicals need a strong race, class and gender analysis and it should be central to their political worldview. It must be remembered that white radicals have a responsibility to develop anti-racist politics and actively confront white privilege. As radicals of color organize in communities of color, white radicals interested in movement building must strengthen the anti-racist politics of predominately white groups and activist communities.

Martinez also has much to say in her writings about the day-today organizing work that we engage in. She stresses that we must take education and training folks seriously. If we are to become a participatory, radically democratic, feminist, multi-racial, anti-capitalist, queer liberationist, internationalist movement – then we need to work at it. We need to teach each other skills, tactics, and political analysis so that we can all be leaders in a movement for our collective liberation.

Martinez and other radicals of her generation have much to teach the younger generation of today. It is critical that we listen, learn and develop relationships based on common respect.

For more information about the Institute for MultiRacial Justice or to receive *Shades of Power* write: 522 Valencia St. 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94110. or email i4mrj@aol.com. For an inspiring read pick-up *De Colores Means All Of Us*.

Barbara Smith has contributed substantially to making Black lesbianism visible in the Black community, the predominately white feminist and queer movements and the left generally. Her essay, “Homophobia, Why Bring It Up” written in 1983 for the *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin* argued for the inclusion of lesbians and gays in school curricula and the need for homophobia to be taken seriously. In her essay, “Where’s the Revolution” written in 1993, she writes: “...supposedly progressive heterosexuals of all races do so little to support lesbian and gay freedom. Although homophobia may be mentioned when heterosexual leftists make lists of oppression, they do virtually no risk-taking work to connect with our movement or to challenge attacks against lesbians and gays who live in their midst. Many straight activists whose politics are otherwise righteous simply refuse to acknowledge how dangerous heterosexism is, and that they have a responsibility to end it.” Smith argues that “With so many heterosexuals studiously avoiding opportunities to become enlightened about lesbian and gay culture and struggle, it’s not surprising that nearly twenty-five years after Stonewall so few heterosexuals get it.”

When confronting sexism, racism and homophobia in progressive groups and communities, the usual response is denial: “but I’m not a sexist”, “I’m not racist”. This denial prevents discussion about what we are going to do, how can we acknowledge our positions and work pro-actively. The politics of race, class and gender demonstrate the complexity of power and privilege, that one can be simultaneously oppressed and privileged. With this understanding, it is not about attaching blame and guilt, but rather coming to terms with who and what we are and acting responsibly to work for our collective liberation. Without coming to terms with these issues, we will continue to reproduce inequality, be unable to form broad coalitions, and ultimately fail to achieve our goals of radical social change. Until our movements move beyond the notion of “these are my issues” and “those are your issues” and recognize the larger connections and need to work on “our issues” we will undermine the potential of our efforts. Smith writes, “Real political power, however, lies in the hands of the majority of people in this country who do not benefit from this system: people of color, women, lesbians, gays, workers, elders and the differently abled. Often inspired by the multi-issued leadership of radical women of color, oppressed groups are

experiencing it, second by literal second, how much more exhausted we are to see it constantly in your eyes. The degree to which it is hard or uncomfortable for you to have the issue raised is the degree to which you know inside of yourself that you aren't dealing with the issue, the degree to which you are hiding from the oppression that undermines Third World women's lives... Let me make quite clear... White women don't work on racism to do a favor for someone else, solely to benefit Third World women. You have to comprehend how racism distorts and lessons your own lives as white women... Until you understand this, no fundamental change will come about".

Throughout the 70's and 80's women of color feminists worked to define a feminism that was explicitly anti-racist and radical. In anthologies like *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, women of color articulated a politics growing from their daily experience of race, class and gender inequality and oppression. Smith writes, "Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, working class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women – as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual white women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement."

In another essay in the book, originally written in the 1990's for the lesbian journal, *Sinister Wisdom*, Smith writes, "Racism is not primarily a set of negative attitudes or behaviors on the part of individual whites. These negative attitudes and behaviors are grievous and sometimes fatal, but they are in fact symptoms of a system whose purpose is not merely to make people of color feel badly, but to maintain white power and control". Throughout much of her writings, Smith demands that progressive and radical whites face racism and take action. In another essay in the book, "The NEA is the Least Of It", she writes: "racism within these movements [the feminist, gay and lesbian, and other social change movements] is an indication of how thoroughly institutionalized racism is in this country's power structure, and that it inevitably manifests itself in every sector of US life. When whites in these movements demonstrate a consistent commitment to speaking out and organizing offensives against racist violence, police brutality, homelessness, economic exploitation and unequal access to quality education and health care, people of color can begin to take their antiracist actions seriously."

READING BARBARA SMITH'S "THE TRUTH THAT NEVER HURTS: WRITINGS ON RACE, GENDER AND FREEDOM"

"While the Right is united by their racism, sexism, and homophobia in their goal to dominate all of us, we are divided by our own racism, sexism, and homophobia."

– Suzanna Pharr

"It is not our differences which separate women, but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences"

– Audre Lorde

Barbara Smith has been an activist, organizer and writer for the past three decades, and with the recent publication of, *The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom*, we finally have a book length collection of her groundbreaking ideas, politics and analysis. Throughout her writings on Women's Studies, the contemporary queer movement, police brutality, Black lesbian and gay history, Smith relentless pursues the question of how can we build organizations and a progressive movement that includes the majority of society that feels the heel of oppression on their neck. How do we build strong coalitions working for radical social change that are multiracial, anti-racist, multigenerational, feminist, pro-queer and class conscious? But Smith isn't just writing about why we need to all come together. This collection presents crucial writings that address the complex and painful factors that have kept us apart and how inequality is reproduced in our movements. How can we organize against oppression without recreating oppression in the process of our organizing? How can we have critical dialogues about race, class, gender and sexuality and the ways that they shape our organizing and our politics, while we are working to challenge the larger structures of power and privilege in society? These are questions that she examines and begins to answer.

As a Black feminist lesbian socialist, who has consistently challenged racism and classism in the feminist movement, sexism and homophobia in the Black community, sexism and racism in the



Barbara Smith

queer movement, these issues have never lived in the realm of theory alone. Barbara Smith has been a leading figure in the struggle to “build analysis, practice, and movements that accurately address the specific ways that racism, capitalism, and all the major systems of oppression interconnect in the United States.” She has helped develop the politics of intersectionality, that looks at the ways that race interacts with gender and sexuality connects with class and how these structures of oppression and privilege have shaped and influenced people’s lives. From this understanding, a politics that seriously

addresses multiple issues, multiple struggles and brings people together in broad based coalitions can be built. For example, doing organizing against poverty should include an understanding of how racism has structured the class system and why so many people of color are poor. This organizing should also have an analysis of the ways that sexism impacts women and why so many women raising children without the father around are in poverty. The politics of intersectionality play out when one begins to look at the how different factors impact white men, Latino’s, Black men and white women, Asian American women and Black women – how race and gender impact Latina mothers and her children living in poverty. The challenge then is how to build coalitions and common agendas and organize to improve the situation for everyone.

Barbara Smith became active politically during the Civil Rights movement. She became active in the Women’s Liberation Movement and was one of the first to articulate a self-defined Black feminist politics. She was a member of the Combahee River Collective, formed in 1973, which was the Boston chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization. As a member of the Collective, Smith helped write, “The Black Feminist Statement” which has been widely circulated and deeply influential in the feminist movement and beyond. The statement declared that their Black feminist collective

came together in response to the sexism of the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements and the racism of the predominately white feminist movement. The statement also declared that as Black women, they are situated in a unique position to understand the way multiple systems of power operated as race, class and gender connected in their very lives. Smith co-edited (with Gloria T. Hull and Patricia B. Scott) the first Black women’s studies anthology, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, the *Reader’s Companion to US Women’s History* (with Wilma Mankiller, Gwendolyn Mink, Marysa Navarro and Gloria Steinem) and *Conditions: Five, The Black Women’s Issue* (with Lorraine Bethal). She edited, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* and co-authored *Yours In Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism* (with Elly Bulkin and Minnie Bruce Pratt). Her writings have appeared in numerous publications such as *Sojourner: the Women’s Forum*, *Ms.*, *Gay Community News*, *The Black Scholar* and *the Nation*.

In 1977, she wrote “Towards a Black Feminist Criticism” which argued for a Black women’s literary criticism that made a “primary commitment to exploring how both sexual and racial politics and Black and female identity are inextricable elements in Black women’s writing” and that “she [the critic] would also work from the assumption that Black women writers constitute an identifiable literary tradition”. Written at a point in time when many doubted that such a Black women’s literary tradition even existed, Smith’s essay was a catalyst that sparked interest and challenged people’s thinking.

In 1974, Barbara Smith became the first woman of color to be appointed to the Modern Language Association’s Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession, which was instrumental in developing the new field of Women’s Studies in the US. She used her position to bring a focus on women of color into Women’s Studies and to challenge the racism of the white dominated field. She and other women of color struggled to bring a discussion of race and racism, as well as class, into Women’s Studies. At the closing session of the first annual National Women’s Studies Association conference in 1979, she delivered her speech, “Racism and Women’s Studies”, which is included in “The Truth That Never Hurts”. She announced to the conference: “For those of you who are tired of hearing about racism, imagine how much more tired we are of constantly