DISMANTLING RACISM: A RESOURCE BOOK

FOR SOCIAL CHANGE GROUPS

WESTERN STATES CENTER, 2003
PO Box 40305
Portland, OR 97240
503-228-8866

dis-man-tle
1. to take apart
2. to deprive or strip of apparatus, trappings, equipment, etc.

racism
1. a system of advantage for white people
2. the systematic oppression of people of color
3. a belief in the supremacy of white people and the institutional power to enforce that belief

The Dismantling Racism Project

The Dismantling Racism Project is part of Western States' RACE (Research and Action for Change and Equity) Program. Through training, strategizing and technical assistance, the Dismantling Racism Project is one strategy intended to increase the breadth and depth of racial justice work in the region through supporting organizations to build a shared analysis of race and racism, to engage in anti-racist organizational development and to move racial justice organizing campaigns. The DR Project strengthens the capacity of individuals and organizations doing racial justice work in the West by developing anti-racist leaders; providing training and support to organizations, and creating resources for use throughout the region.

The Dismantling Racism Resource Book

This resource book is a compilation of materials designed to supplement a Dismantling Racism workshop. These resources originate from a variety of sources and build on the work of many people and organizations, including (but not limited to) Kenneth Jones, Tema Okun, Andrea Ayvazian, Beverly Daniel-Tatum, Joan Olsson, James Williams, Peace Development Fund, The Exchange Project, Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Lillie Allen Institute, and David Rogers and Moira Bowman of the Western States Center. This resource book is never complete. The pages you see here change regularly based on the feedback and critical thinking or workshop participants and others who use them. Resources developed by Western States Center are also available on our website at www.westernstatescenter.org.

Contents

The Context of Dismantling Racism Work **4**
A Philosophy of Reform 5
Diversity Training: Good for Business but Insufficient for Social Change 6
Dismantling Racism Training Assumptions 9

Developing a Shared Language and Analysis **10**
Not Vanishing 11
A History: The Construction of Race and Racism 12
The Common Elements of Oppression / Terms and Definitions 26
Models for Understanding how racism works 37

From Internalized Racist Oppression to Empowerment **40**
The Impact of Internalized Racist Oppression on our Community 41
Poems: Martín Espada 42
Ladder of Empowerment 44

From Internalized White Supremacy to Anti-Racist White Ally **48**
The Impact of Internalized White Supremacy in our Community 49
White People's Resistance 50
For the white person who wants to be my friend 53
Characteristics of Anti-Racist white allies 54

Anti-Racist Organizational Development **56**
Anti-Racist Organizational Development – 4 stages 57
Assessing Organizational Racism 65
Change Teams 68
Caucuses 73

Moving Racial Justice Organizing **76**
Racing the Northwest: The Organizing Challenge in a Changing Region 79
Moving Racial Justice: Are you ready? 90
Criteria Worksheet 104
Naming and Framing Racism 107
Building Alliances Across Race: Principles 112
Organizations Holding Elected or Community Leaders of Color Accountable 115

Resources: Videos and Recommended Reading **117**

The Context of Dismantling Racism Work

A Philosophy of Reform

Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is not struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.

Frederick Douglass
Letter to an abolitionist associate, 1849

Diversity Training: Good for Business but Insufficient for Social Change

By David Rogers
Western States Center
Trainer/Organizer

In the past ten to fifteen years, diversity training has become a boom industry, as government agencies, corporations, and non-profits attempt to manage race and racial attitudes in the workplace. Organizations employ diversity training for reasons ranging from protection against liability to a more liberal notion that "in diversity there is strength." The belief that workplace diversity can bring increased productivity, new ideas, and therefore higher profits, appeals particularly to corporations. Although diversity training may make good business sense, the model falls terribly short of the comprehensive racial justice approach required for progressive social change.

Diversity vs. Racial Justice

The difference between diversity training and the racial justice approach embedded in Western States Center's Dismantling Racism Project begins with the definition of racism. Diversity training sees racism primarily as the result of individual action: personal prejudice or stereotyping, and intentional acts of discrimination by individuals. A racial justice definition includes these beliefs and acts, but considers individual acts of prejudice only one dimension of racism. More importantly, racism is defined as a set of societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices Ñ regardless of intention Ñ that subordinate and oppress one race for the benefit of another.

The case of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed black man shot 41 times by four white New York City Police officers (all of whom were acquitted), illustrates the difference between these two views. While a diversity approach might pursue sensitivity training for the officers, a racial justice perspective would hold the entire criminal justice system accountable and demand systemic change.

Multi-Culturalism

In diversity training's prejudice reduction model, individual attitudes and beliefs are the focus of change. With the goal of harmony and efficiency in the multi-racial workplace, diversity training emphasizes awareness and appreciation of the contributions of different cultures.

What too often gets lost in the muddy waters of multi-cultural awareness is any analysis of power and the ways racist attitudes and organizational culture operate. How do white people gain advantages from racism? What is the daily impact of racist oppression on people of color? Why do white people regularly dominate meetings? Is the white way of doing things still assumed to be the preferred mode of operations?

While white staff may develop a greater appreciation for people of color through diversity training, it can avoid these questions and leave the dominant organizational culture intact. Multi-cultural awareness often assumes a level playing field - despite real power imbalances between white people and people of color.

Who's Got the Power?

In contrast, the racial justice approach of Western States' Dismantling Racism (DR) Project analyzes race in an institutional and cultural context, not as a problem to be solved by individual enlightenment. It develops an understanding of power, who has it, and how it gets used. As practiced with progressive groups around the region, the goal of the DR Project is to build a shared analysis of how racism is perpetuated by organizational structures, processes, norms and expectations (in addition to individual behavior and attitudes).

Jean Hardisty, in *Mobilizing Resentment*, calls for programs like the DR Project to "move white people beyond tolerance and inclusion, to envision actual power-sharing and learning to take leadership from people of color. . . . "

The DR Project assumes that white people and people of color have different work to do. White people need to understand how their privilege operates, how they perpetuate racism, and how they can become allies to people of color. For people of color, the process of empowerment involves struggling with the impact of internalized racist oppression. The Project attempts to develop models that value and build leadership in people of color while holding white people accountable for their racism. Diversity training can ask white people to change their consciousness while leaving their dominance intact; a racial justice approach requires an organizational transformation of power relations.

Who's at the Table?

The organizational change sought through diversity training assumes that appreciating and increasing human variety is important and necessary. The end goal is peaceful integration of people of color, rather than a strong shared analysis of racism and anti-oppression practices. This approach often leads to tokenization. *People of color are like the raisins in my oatmeal; it just takes a few to make the dish more rich.*

The diversity model's focus on who is sitting around the table can unreasonably assume individuals are speaking "for their people." Paul Kivel, in *Uprooting Racism*, warns of the dangers of tokenization: "We don't want to become complacent and believe that we understand the need of a community through hearing from a few 'representatives.'"

A racial justice analysis does not ask individuals to speak for the interests of an entire constituency. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of paying as much attention to who is not in the room as who is. In working with predominantly white organizations, the DR Project helps them struggle with how to address the interests of those not directly included.

Diversification or integration is not always the best thing for an organization. Take an all white organization, for example. A diversity approach would combine prejudice reduction with some organizational development, perhaps resulting in revisions of the personnel policies, job descriptions, and hiring practices. Yet, very little else about the organization would have changed. Even if the organization is successful in bringing people of color on board it would be a shallow victory. Take a snapshot of the organization from year to year; you'll see a few people of color in each photo, but the faces will be different each year. People of color might get hired but they won't stay very long because they are being asked to fit into the existing dominant culture.

A DR approach with such an organization won't start with the premise or suggestion that the organization must recruit people of color. Certain groundwork needs to be done before that is a viable or advisable goal. The organization might begin with a "white privilege training" rather than a diversity training. The goal is to create an organizational culture with a deep and shared understanding of racism where white people are committed to holding themselves accountable, and where naming racism and other oppression when it occurs is encouraged and not avoided. Without these qualities in place, people of color may find a harsh reality beneath the welcoming organizational veneer.

Taking Action

Working for social change, it is not enough to develop a diverse, culturally competent staff, board, and membership. In the context of the horrid history and current institutional and societal practice of racism and injustice, a friendly workplace is not enough. DR education and practices are designed not only to understand racism in its complexities, but to work actively against it.

Skillful racial justice work also creates a basis for understanding systemic inequality and oppression based on other identities such as classism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. This approach is essential for building bridges between those who are marginalized. Nothing less is required if we want a broad, strong, and cohesive movement for progressive social change.

Assumptions

- Growing up in the USA, we have absorbed considerable misinformation, specifically negative information, about people who are 'different' from us and our families. Because racism, sexism, classism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia (as well as other forms of oppression) are so widespread, we have been imprinted with negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes about groups of people we barely know. This began to happen when we were young, when we couldn't distinguish truth from stereotype, before we could recognize misinformation or object. Now that we are older, we all have responsibility for looking at what we have learned and making a commitment to dismantle oppression in our lives.

- Dismantling racism, sexism, homophobia and unlearning the oppressive attitudes we have learned is a lifelong journey. Most of us have been struggling with these issues, some for years and years already. None of us are beginners and none of us have perfect clarity. This work is a journey; there is no endpoint. The greatest commitment we can make is to keep paying attention to how these issues affect us and those around us.

- Individuals and organizations can and do grow and change. But significant change comes slowly and requires work. The changes that happen quickly are usually cosmetic and temporary. Change on issues of justice, equity and fairness come after resistance, denial and pain have all been worked through. Progress on oppression and equity issues never happens when we're looking the other way; it takes our focused attention and commitment.

- We cannot dismantle racism in a society that exploits people for private profit. If we want to dismantle racism, then we must be about building a movement for social and economic justice and change.

- While single individuals can inspire change, individuals working together as an organized whole, in groups, communities and organizations make change happen.

Created by **change**work, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, 919-490-4448

Developing a Shared Language and Analysis

I Walk in the History of My People

In the scars of my knees you can see
children torn from their families
bludgeoned into government schools
You can see through the pins in my bones
that we are prisoners of a long war
My knee is so badly wounded no one will look at it
The pus of the past oozes from every pore
This infection has gone on for at least 300 years
Our sacred beliefs have been made into pencils
names of cities gas stations
My knee is wounded so badly that I limp constantly
Anger is my crutch I hold myself upright with it
My knee is wounded
See
How I Am Still Walking

-- Chrystos

Chrystos is a self-educated writer as well as an artist who designs the covers of her own books. Her work as a Native land, treaty rights and lesbian activist has been widely recognized and the political aspect is an essential part of her writing.

A History: The Construction of Race and Racism

Dismantling Racism Project
Western States Center

Defining Ethnicity & Nationality

(These terms are often confused with race)

Ethnicity refers to particular groups of people that share some common ancestry, traditions, language, or dialect.

Before the world was made up of distinct nation-states or countries, certain pieces of land were associated with ethnic groups. Some examples are:

- Anglos and Saxons – England
- Maori – New Zealand
- Mayan – Southern Mexico/Central America
- Greeks – Greece
- Masai – the Great Rift Valley of East Africa
- Pueblo– New Mexico

As some countries were made up mostly one ethnic group, people began to conclude that *nationality* (the country which a person is a citizen of) was the same as *ethnicity*, i.e. a person from Denmark is a Dane or Danish. But more often the name of the country doesn't refer to the ethnic origins of its citizens. A person from Spain would be thought of as "Spanish", although their ethnicity could be Basque, Catalan, Gallego or Gitano. Many countries like Spain are actually made up of diverse ethnic groups. The United States is a perfect example of this reality.

Many people like to make *ethnic* distinctions as well as *national* distinctions to hold on to their ethnic culture and identity.

- Italian-American – (Ethnicity is Italian and nationality is US American)
- Mexican-American
- Chinese-American – (Ethnicity is Chinese and nationality is US American)

Of course, ethnicity becomes more confusing in the process of immigration and assimilation. As an example, we know in the case of China there are many, many ethnicities and that diversity gets lost often in how people identify their ethnic identity to non-Chinese people here in the U.S. So although a Chinese-American's specific ethnicity may be Han, Manchu, Yi or another of the over 50 ethnicities in China, here in the United States those differences get subsumed as being "Chinese."

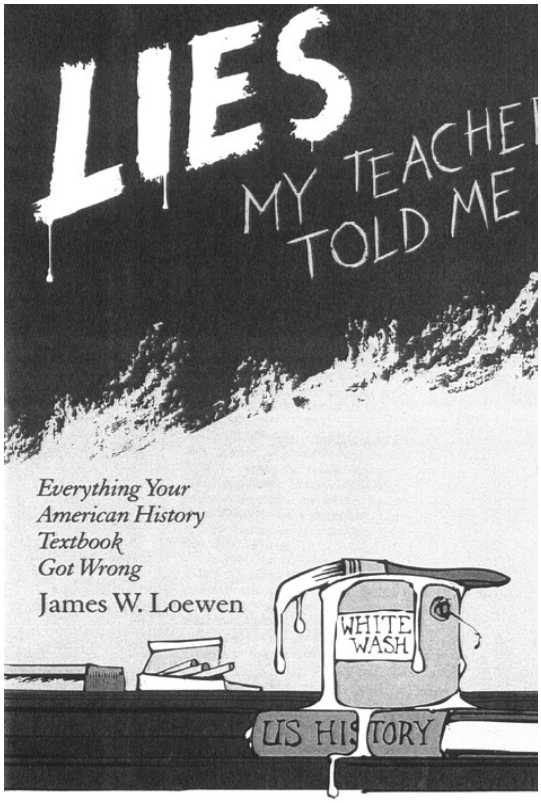
What is this thing called Race?

Race is a false classification of people that is not based on any real or accurate biological or scientific truth. In other words, the distinction we make between races, has nothing to do with scientific truth.

Race is a political construction. A political construction is something created by people; that is not a natural development; is constructed or created for a political purpose.

The concept of race was created as a classification of human beings with the purpose of giving power to white people and to legitimize the dominance of white people over non-white people.

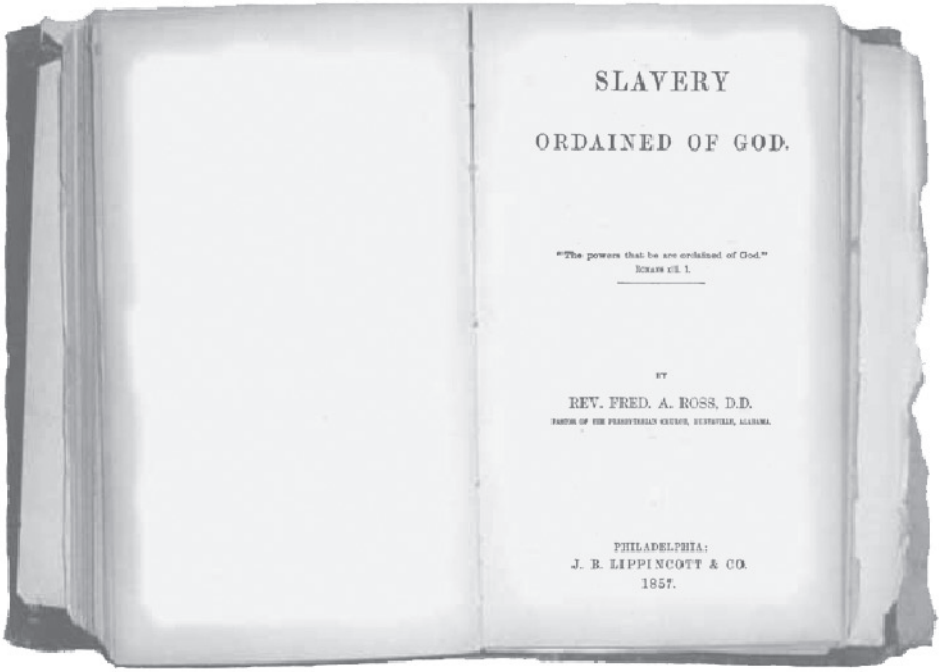
Now we are going to take some time to prove these points by looking at the history of the development of race and racism. The history of the construction of racism is very long so this is not a comprehensive history lesson. We will provide a broad overview of how various aspects of white society were involved in the construction of race and racism: religion, science, medicine, philosophy, government, etc. We will also be jumping around a bit in time, but will always try and make time periods clear.



Historical Constructs

Religion as a justification for racism:

During the reformation (16th Century [1500s] & 17th Century [1600s]), a key question among Christian religious hierarchy was whether Blacks and "Indians" had souls and/or were human. In this time period, Europeans were exposed more frequently to Africans and the indigenous people of North and South America, and the church vacillated between opinions. The Catholic and the Protestant churches arrived at different answers to the question at different times, which created significant differences between the two systems of slavery. The Catholic Church was the first to admit Blacks and Indians had souls, which meant in many Catholic colonies it was against the law to kill a slave without reason. The Protestant-Calvinist Church wanted to separate and distinguish themselves from Catholicism, and therefore was much slower in recognizing the humanity of Africans and Indians.


SLAVERY

ORDAINED OF GOD.

"The powers that be are ordained of God."
ROMANS xiii. 1.

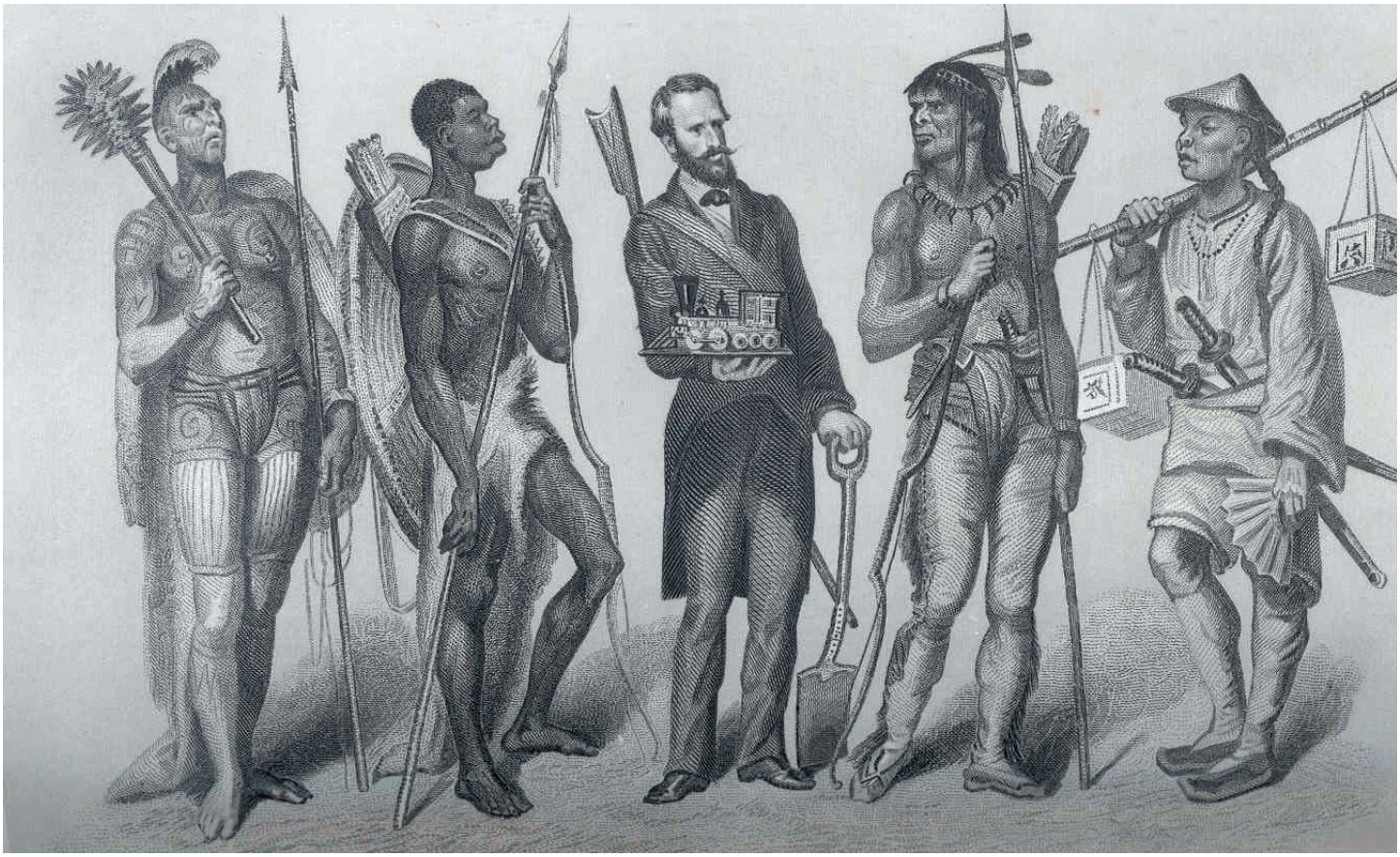
BY

REV. FRED. A. ROSS, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1857.

Slavery Ordained of God – 1857 – an example of many articles using religion to justify slavery

With the increasing importance of slavery, religion was used as a means to justify racist divisions, classifying people of color as 'pagan and soulless'. However, "As substantial numbers of people of color were converted to Christianity, and as religion itself lost much of its power as a legitimizing agent, justifications for the brutality of slavery changed." The slave-based economy in the south necessitated a racist exploitative system, which led to the development of biological, zoological and botanical theories to 'explain human difference and to justify slavery.'[1]



"The Races of Man" From Herbert W. Morris. Present Conflict of Science with the Christian Religion; or, Modern Skepticism Met on Its Own Ground . Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co. 1876.

Social Science/Pseudo-Science

Context

In 19th Century (1800s) Europe, science and social sciences developed as never before. Associations of scientists were created, universities held conferences and debates, and dialogue between researchers increased dramatically. In England, in the early 1800s, the Ethnographic and Anthropological Societies were first established. Not only did the amount of "scholars and thinkers" multiply, they were in increasingly in conversation with each other and focusing on similar themes, such as what happens when races meet and mix. Africa, Asia, Australia and the South Pacific were rapidly being colonized as European Americans were engaged in their colonial expansion, which brought them into brutal contact with Native Americans. As a result of colonization, native people around the world were disappearing. The most extreme cases, found in Tasmania (an island south of Australia) in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Tasmanians were literally wiped the off the face of the earth, while the Maori population of New Zealand was reduced by more than half in a period of a few decades. Their extinction was in large part due to disease. European thinkers were fascinated by this, particularly due to the lack of understanding of the role of germs, viruses and bacteria.[2]

Science as a justification for racism:

During the 19th century, Darwin published On the Origin of the Species (1859), his book documenting the process of evolution. Darwin believed in a natural order to the development of species; the weak die off and the strong survive. Although evolutionary theory is not racist, philosophers and social scientists, used Darwin's theory in pseudo-scientific ways to justify genocide and racism. This thinking was later called "Social Darwinism" and had brutal implications.

In 1838 JC Prichard, a famous anthropologist, lectured on the "Extinction of Human Races" He said it was obvious that "the savage races" could not be saved. It was the law of nature.[3]

In 1864, W. Winwood Reade, an esteemed member of both London's geographical and anthropological societies published his book called Savage Africa. He ended the book with a prediction on the future of the black race.

> *"England and France will rule Africa. Africans will dig the ditches and water the deserts. It will be hard work and the Africans will probably become extinct. "We must learn to look at the result with composure. It illustrates the beneficent law of nature, that the weak must be devoured by the strong."* [4]

It should be noted that there were many examples of this type of thinking. Prichard and Reade were all highly regarded thinkers. Around the world, native peoples in Africa, Asia and the Americas were dying and disappearing. The predominant scholars didn't think this was due to the unlawful seizure of land, which undermined their lives, culture and means of survival, while spreading disease and death. This genocide was "justified" by the laws of nature, i.e. survival of the fittest. European and European American colonization of native land throughout the world in this period created the very real consequence of extermination. This provided motivation for allegedly "scientific research", which in turn provided exterminators with an alibi by declaring the extermination naturally inevitable.[5]

Pseudo-Scientific Attempts to categorize the races:

Throughout the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, people used different terms to explain racial differences. The classification shown below was used for well over a hundred years. The classification lacks any obvious logic and defies scientific precepts. Two of the words - Mongoloid and Caucazoid have linguistic bases that refer to geographic areas. But the last word- Negroid - refers to color. "These were not based on genetic differences, but rather on European and European American stereotypes of cultural differences and (mis)measures of physiological characteristics."[6]

In 1866, Frederick Farrar lectured on the "Aptitude of Races" which he divided into 3 groups.[7]

- **Savage** *(All Africans, indigenous people, people of color with the exception of the Chinese)*
- **Semi-Civilized** *(e.g. Chinese – who were once civilized but now their society was in arrested development)*
- **Civilized** *(European, Aryan and Semitic peoples)*

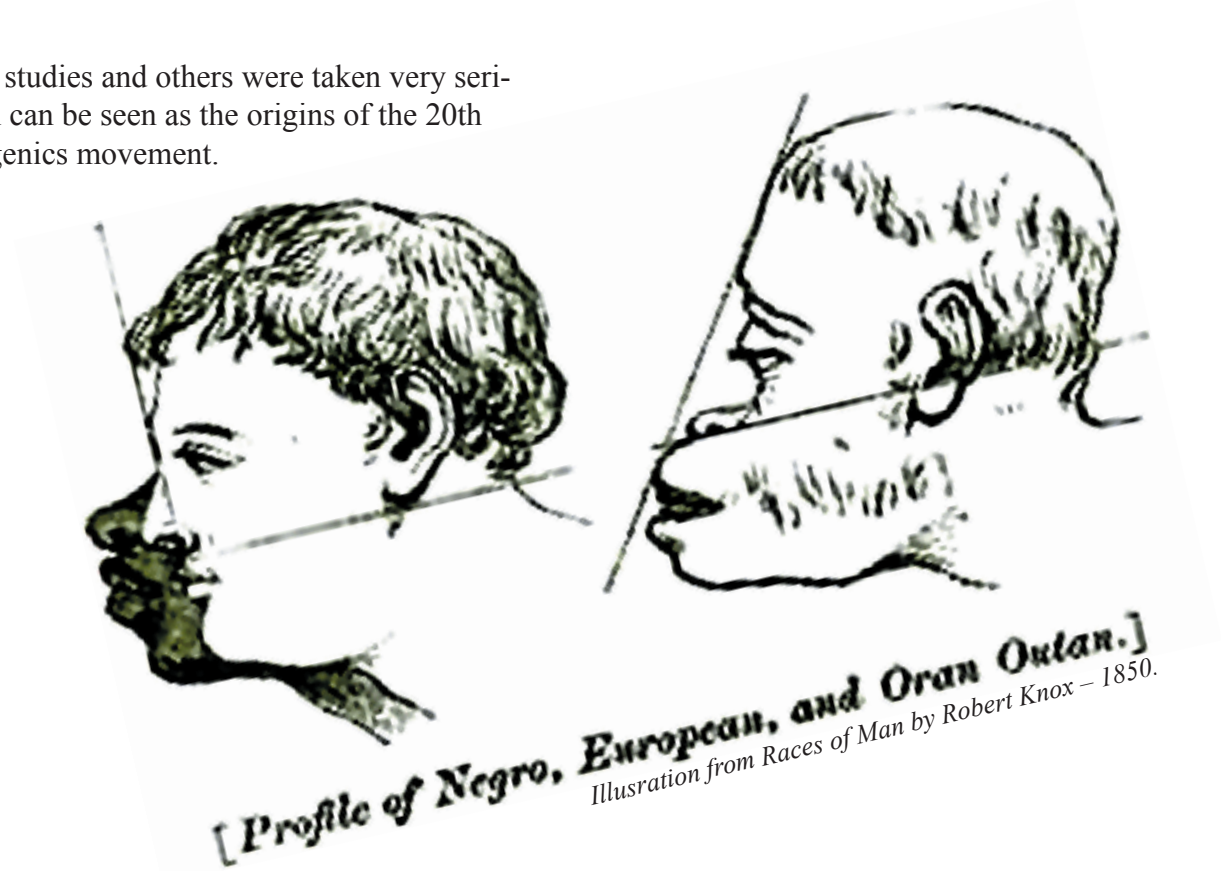
Medicine

In 1850, Robert Knox in The Races of Man: A Fragment took popular prejudices and formed them into "scientific conviction" that race and intelligence are linked and hereditary. Robert Knox was a famous English anatomist. Knox concluded that people of color were intellectually inferior, not because of brain size but rather because of brain texture and lack of nerve endings. Later it was found that his conclusion was based on the autopsy of only one man of color.

Knox's studies and others were taken very seriously, which can be seen as the origins of the 20th Century Eugenics movement.

The Races of Man: a Fragment. By Robert Knox

All we know is that since the beginning of history, the dark races have been the slaves of those lighter skinned. What is that due to? 'I feel disposed to think that there must be a physical and consequentially, a psychological inferiority in the dark races generally.' This is perhaps not due to lack of size in the brain but rather a lack of quality in it.[8]



Illusration from Races of Man by Robert Knox – 1850.

Eugenics

Eugenics is an effort to breed better human beings by encouraging the reproduction of people with "good" genes and discouraging those with "bad" genes. Eugenicists effectively lobbied for social legislation to keep racial and ethnic groups separate, to restrict immigration from Asia, Africa and southern and eastern Europe, and to sterilize people considered "genetically unfit.

Elements of the American eugenics movement were models for the Nazis, whose radical adaptation of eugenics culminated in the Holocaust.

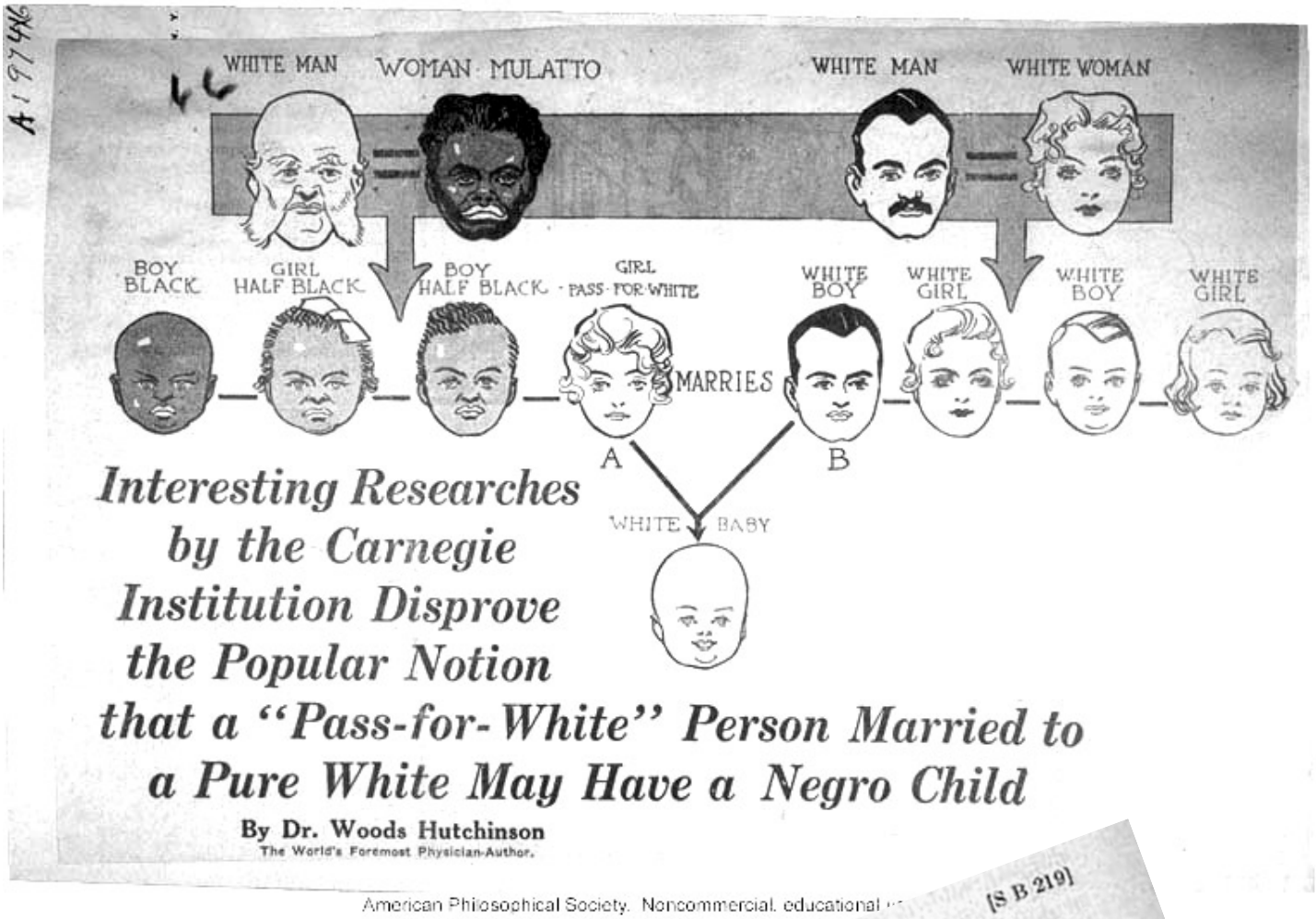
The United States took Eugenics and ran with it, making it part of mainstream society. By 1928, 376 separate college courses, which enrolled 20,000 students focused on Eugenics. And an analysis of high school text books from 1914 to 1948 indicates that the majority presented Eugenics as legitimate.[9]

19th century magazine cover editorializing against Chinese immigration.

Over 600 separate pieces of anti-Asian legislation were passed limiting Asians from citizenship.

Immigration: Between the 19th & 20th Centuries over 600 separate pieces of anti-Asian legislation were passed limiting Asians from citizenship. Non-citizens had almost no rights. Whites could kill Asians with impunity because they could not testify in court.[10]

Inter-racial marriage : Eugenics provided a new set of arguments to support existing restrictions on inter-racial marriage. By 1915, 28 states made a marriage between "negroes", asians, "indians" latinos and a white person illegal. 6 states included such prohibitions in their constitutions. Virginia's Racial



Inter-racial Marriage was forbidden in many states and an object of scientific concern.

Integrity Act of 1924 stands out among these laws.[11] This law included racial registration certificates as well as defining what "white" was. Within ten years similar laws were found in Nazi Germany sorting citizens by their percentage of jewish blood. Virginia's Racial Integrity Act was not successfully challenged and struck from the books until 1967. It took Alabama until November 2000 to strike a law banning inter-racial marriage.

[S B 219]

CHAP. 371.—An ACT to preserve racial integrity.

Approved March 20, 1924.

1. Be it enacted by the general assembly of Virginia, That the State registrar of vital statistics may, as soon as practicable after the taking effect of this act, prepare a form whereon the racial composition of any individual, as Caucasian, Negro, Mongolian, American Indian, Asiatic Indian, Malay, or any mixture thereof, or any other non-Caucasic strains, and if there be any mixture, then, the racial composition of the parents and other ancestors, in so far as ascertainable, so as to show in what generation such mixture occurred, may be certified by such individual, which form shall be known as a registration certificate. The State registrar may supply to each local registrar a sufficient number of such forms for the purpose of this act; each local registrar may, personally or by deputy, as soon as possible after receiving said forms, have made thereon in duplicate a certificate of the racial composition, as aforesaid, of each person resident in his district, who so desires, born before June 14, 1912, which certificate shall be made over the signature of said person, or in the case of children under fourteen years of age, over the signature of a parent, guardian, or other person standing in loco parentis. One of said certificates for each person thus registering in every district shall be forwarded to the State registrar for his files; the other shall be kept on file by the local registrar.

Virginia's Racial Integrity Act passed in 1924. It required registation certificates that classified people by race and defined what "white" was. It remained on the books until 1967. The Nuremburg Laws of Nazi Germany that defined "Jewishness" by percentage were similar to this act.

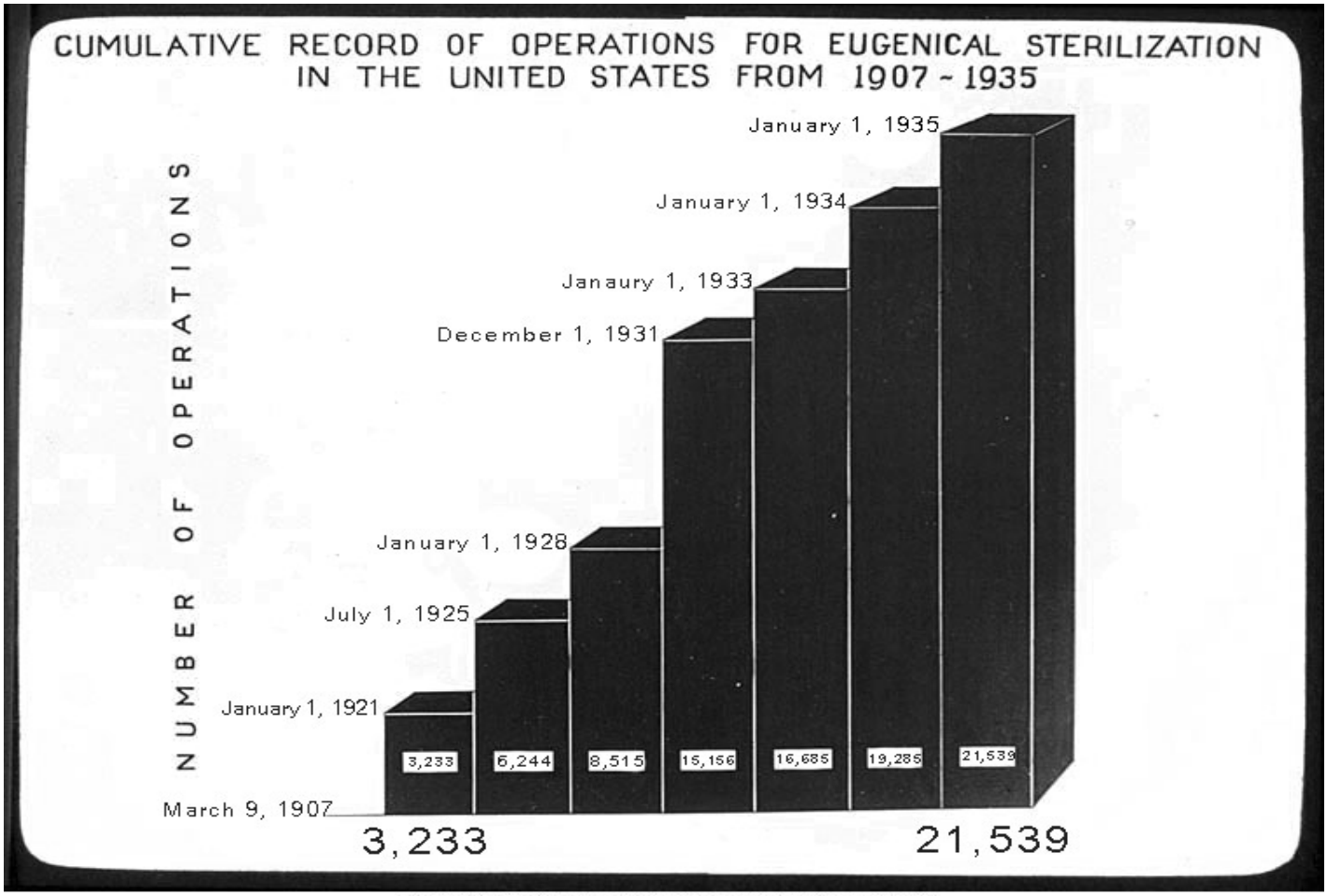


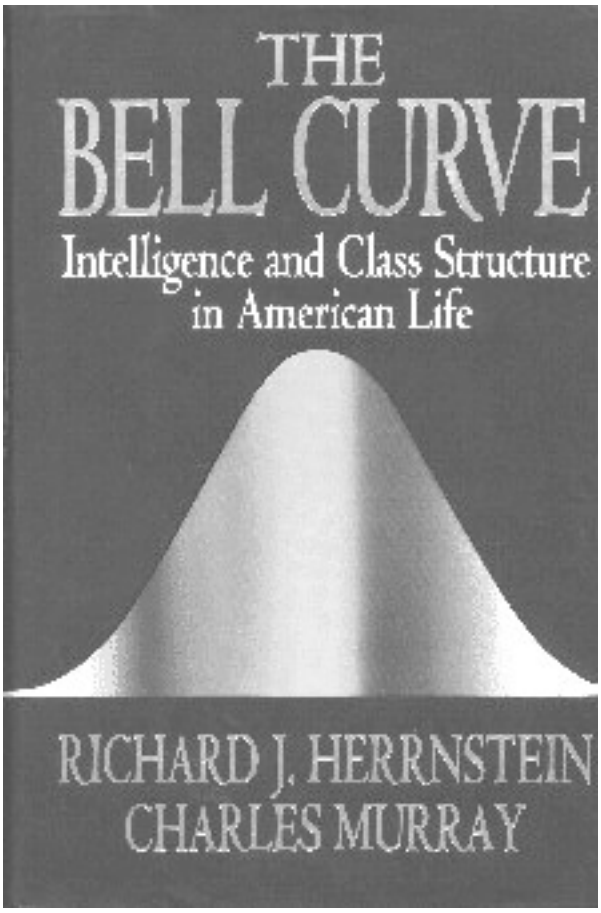
Chart illustrated the rapid growth of eugenical sterilization in the early 20th century.

Sterilization: Eugenics also promoted sterilization. A man by the name of Harry Laughlin promoted the model sterilization law in Virginia in 1914.

The Model Eugenical Sterilization law proposed the sterilization of the "socially inadequate" - people supported in institutions or "maintained wholly or in part by public expense." The law encompassed the "feeble minded, insane, criminalistic, epileptic, inebriate, diseased, blind, deaf, deformed and dependent" including "orphans, tramps, the homeless and paupers." By 1914, 12 states passed sterilization laws.[12]

Clearly, Eugenics in its conception and implementation involved an intersection of oppressions: sexism, classism, and abelism, but what constitutes the most successful and widespread eugenics program in the history of the United States (and the most unknown) targeted Puerto Rican women.

The US Government, the medical community, and local government of Puerto Rico sterilized 1/3 of Puerto Rican women from the 1930s to 1965. This was done by a massive campaign of public mis-education and promotion, manipulation, and subsidizing the operation. Part of this was the result of racist and ignorant fears about over population as well as US industries wanting to encourage the development of a cheap workforce of Puerto Rican women freed from childcare for employment.[13] This is an incredibly sad story which is also incredibly well documented. Note, Puerto Rican women, particularly in government housing projects, were also the guinea pigs for testing the contraceptive pill in 1956. These pills were 20 times stronger than pills on the market by the 1980s.



The Bell Curve provided pseudo-scientific cover for attacks on the poor and on people of color by declaring that poverty and other social inequities were biologically determined.

Current pseudo-science

Current day pseudo-science continues to be popular and influence policy-makers - It is important to point out in this history lesson that similar racist "scholarship" is unfortunately alive and well today.

Charles Murray and Richard Hernstein in The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life. - 1990s Bestseller. In the Bell Curve they say:

- The high rates of poverty that afflict certain segments of the population are determined more by intelligence than by socioeconomic background.
- They call the poor the Cognitive Underclass
- They argue that the expanding inequities of our society, wealth distribution, success in school, access to good jobs are biologically determined.
- The Bell Curve naturalizes and excuses these inequities and turns them into the inescapable symptoms of biological class fate. Associating "cognitive underclass" with every form of "frowned upon" social behavior from crime to teenage motherhood.[14]

Policy Impact

- Charles Murray worked for the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, which supplied many of Mayor Gulliani's policies.
- This thinking justifies harsh welfare reform policies, the criminalization of poverty - 2 million people are in jail in the U.S. (1/4 of the world's 8 million total)
- Argues that poverty is caused by genetic inferiority.
- Restricts immigration, particularly of people of color.
- Conservatives pushing welfare reform are pushing welfare mothers to be temporarily sterilized with Norplant.

Norplant, a temporary sterilization drug, employed racist stereotyping in their advertising – adopting the conservative message that welfare mothers should be temporarily sterilized.

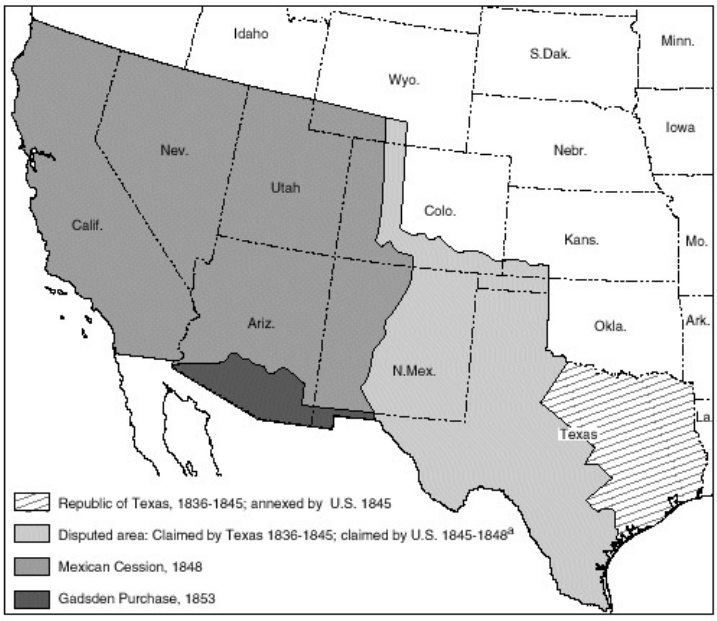
Manifest Destiny

Manifest destiny refers to the belief prevalent in 1800's and much of the 1900's that it was the God-given destiny of white US American's to control and dominate the continent.

The acquisition of the southwest

In 1830, the Mexican government outlawed slavery and prohibited further immigration into Texas. White US Americans were outraged and continued to move into Texas and in 1836 fought against Mexican rule and eventually won.

1830, the same year Mexico outlawed slavery, the Indian Removal Act was passed by US Congress that essentially allowed the seizing and removal of Indians from their ancestral and sacred lands, slaughtering thousands in the process.



The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo annexed California, New Mexico, Nevada and parts of Colorado, Arizona and Utah.

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME OF YOUR OWN ❋ EASY PAYMENTS

PERFECT TITLE ❋ POSSESSION WITHIN THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED IRRIGABLE — GRAZING — AGRICULTURAL DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.
Colorado	5,211.21	$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 350,000 ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Hoopa. Owigam. COLORADO: Ignacio. IDAHO: Lapwai. KANSAS: Horton. Nadeau. MINNESOTA: Onigam. MONTANA: Crow Agency. NEBRASKA: Macy. Santee. Winnebago. NORTH DAKOTA: Fort Totten. Fort Yates. OKLAHOMA: Anadarko. Cantonment. Colony. Darlington. Muskogee. Pawnee. OKLAHOMA—Con. Sac and Fox Agency. Shawnee. Wyandotte. OREGON: Klamath Agency. Pendleton. Roseburg. Siletz. SOUTH DAKOTA: Cheyenne Agency. Crow Creek. Greenwood. Lower Brule. Pine Ridge. Rosebud. Sisseton. WASHINGTON: Fort Simcoe. Fort Spokane. Tekoa. Tulalip. WISCONSIN: Oneida.

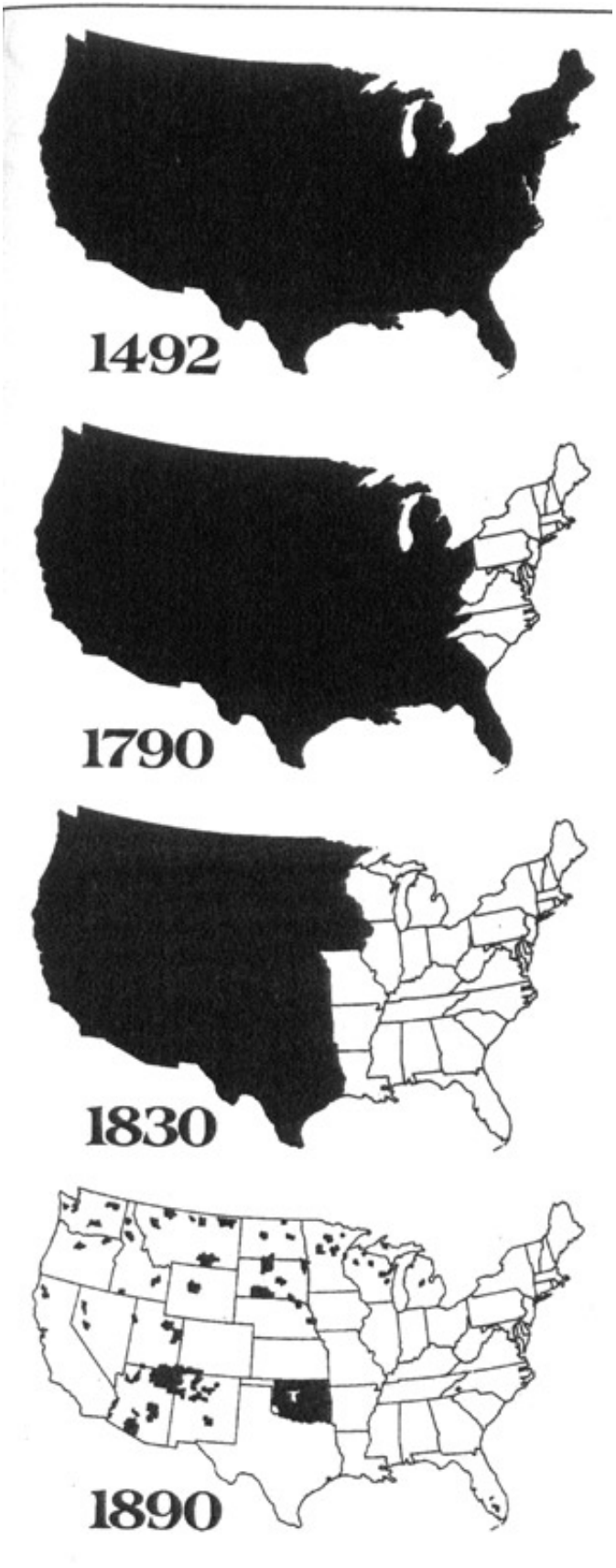
WALTER L. FISHER, Secretary of the Interior. ROBERT G. VALENTINE, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

A flyer advertising stolen (expropriated) land for sale to whites.

In 1845, Texas was annexed by the U.S., which lead to continued border skirmishes with Mexico. The US military soon invaded Mexico resulting in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which Mexico ceded all of California, New Mexico, Nevada and parts of Colorado, Arizona, and Utah. Mexicans have a saying. We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us. When the Treaty was signed Mexican property was simply taken.

One American Congressman wrote at the time:

"This continent was intended by providence as a vast theater on which to work out the grand experiment of republican government, under the auspices of the Anglo-Saxon Race." [15]



These maps show the amount of land that Native Americans controlled over the passage of time – detailing the massive scale of expropriation justified by "Manifest Destiny."

This thing Called white

The term white emerged as a classification of people during the 1700s in the British colonies of North America. Europeans were immigrating to "the New World" for many reasons, some seeking prosperity while many people were escaping persecution, particularly religious and ethnic conflict. As Europeans arrived in America, groups such as Germans, Dutch, English, French etc. were brought into close proximity, most of them for the first time.

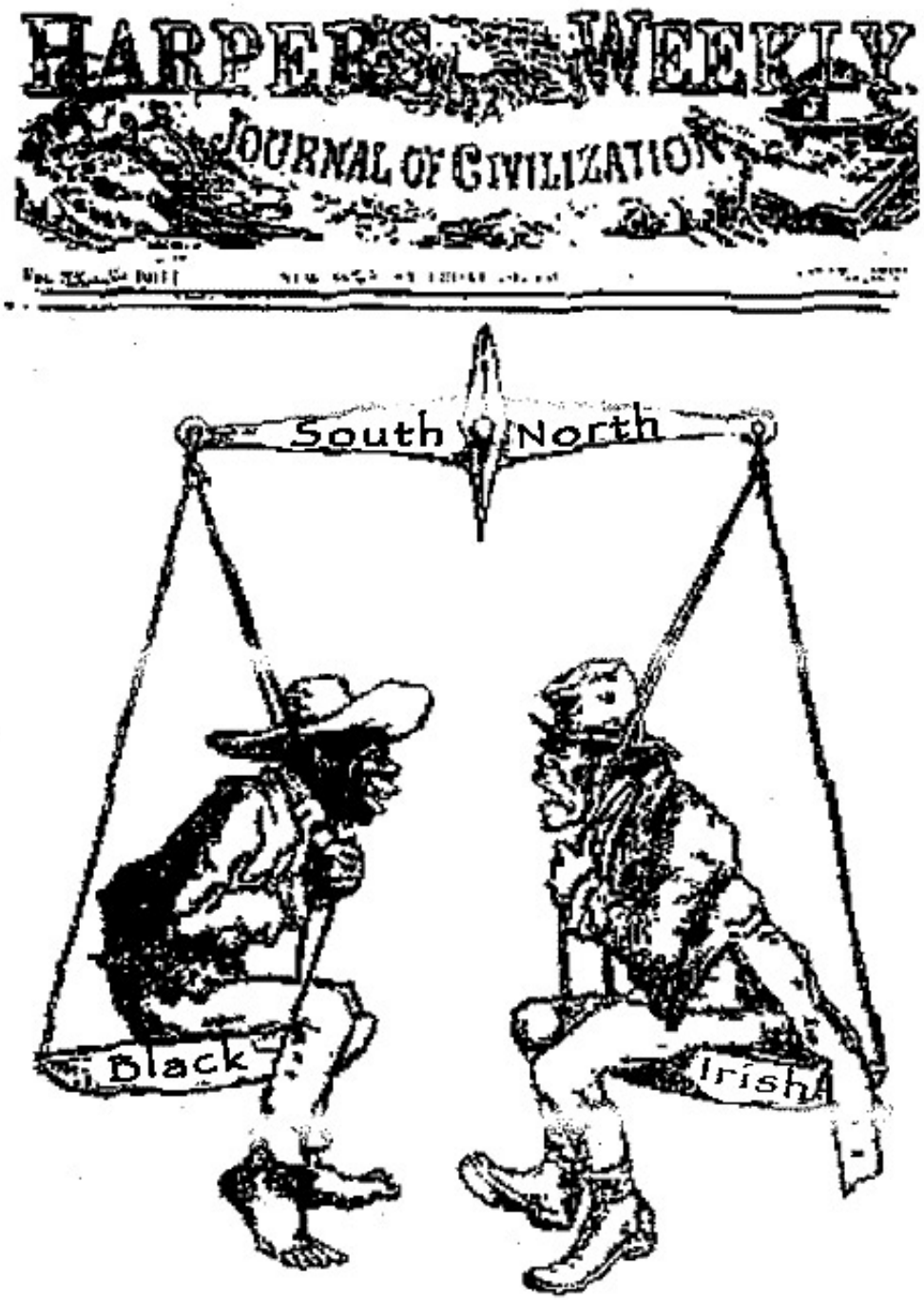
In the colonies, the European settlers in power were under considerable stress, attempting to maintain control of their African Slaves and their white indentured servants, while trying to protect themselves from the perceived threat from Native Americans. At this time, poor white indentured servants were building alliances and relationships with African slaves due to their similar state of oppression.

"Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white."

The term white was defined as anyone without a drop on African or Indian blood. The category white was created as a political construct that was used as an organizing tool to unite Europeans in order to consolidate strength, increasing their ability to maintain control and dominance over the Native Americans and African slaves, which in many places outnumbered Europeans. "Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white."[16]

White is an artificial construct because the definition of white changes due to time and geography.

- Not everybody has been considered white at the same time. Irish, Jews, Italians for example went through a process of becoming white. This was a process of assimilation that required certain cultural losses in order to gain white privilege and power.
- Some people who may have been considered white where they once lived (South America for example) when they moved to the U.S. were then considered latino by white society.
- But just because race and whiteness are constructed, doesn't mean that it doesn't fundamentally affect our world in real ways.



For a large part of the 19th century, the Irish were not considered white. In the process of assimilation, the majority of Irish adopted pro-slavery, anti=black political positions.

The term People of Color

People of color' is not a term that refers to a real biological or scientific distinction between people. People of color in the U.S. share the common experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. Unfortunately, one of the ways racism operates is to keep people of color divided. Many people only think about their specific ethnic or racial group when discussing oppression or the need to build political power. By using the term people of color, we begin to push people to think more broadly. We need to build relationships with other groups of color. The term people of color has movement-building potential.

Endnotes

1 Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice by Paul Kivel - (page 127) New Society Publishers, Philadelphia and British Columbia; 1996

2 Exterminate All the Brutes: One Man's Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide by Sven Lindqvist - (Chapter 4) The New Press, New York; 1996

3 Ibid. Ch. 4

4 Ibid. Ch. 4

5 Ibid. Ch. 4

6 Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice by Paul Kivel - (page 18) New Society Publishers, Philadelphia and British Columbia; 1996

7 Exterminate All the Brutes by Sven Lindqvist - (Chapter 4) The New Press, New York; 1996

8 Ibid. Chapter 4

9 http://vector.cshl.org/eugenics/ - website for Image Archive for the American Eugenics Movement managed by DNA LEARNING CENTER, COLD SPRING HARBOR LABORATORY, 1 Bungtown Road, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724

10 Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice by Paul Kivel - (page 133) New Society Publishers, Philadelphia and British Columbia; 1996

11 http://vector.cshl.org/eugenics/ - website for Image Archive for the American Eugenics Movement managed by DNA LEARNING CENTER, COLD SPRING HARBOR LABORATORY, 1 Bungtown Road, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724

12 http://vector.cshl.org/eugenics/ - website for Image Archive for the American Eugenics Movement managed by DNA LEARNING CENTER, COLD SPRING HARBOR LABORATORY, 1 Bungtown Road, Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724

13 http://clem.mscd.edu/~princer/puertorico.htm a website that holds an article by Sara Hoerlein called "Female Sterilization in Puerto Rico."

14 The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence, and the future of America - Edited by Steven Fraser -- Basic Books, New York; 1995

15 Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice by Paul Kivel - (page 142) New Society Publishers, Philadelphia and British Columbia; 1996

16 Ibid. (page 17)

This curriculum was developed by David Rogers and Moira Bowman for use in the Western States Center's Dismantling Racism Program. Many thanks for the support of Darci Van Duzer and RuthAlice Anderson.

Western States Center
P.O. Box 40305
Portland, OR 97240
(503) 228-8866
www.westernstatescenter.org

The Common Elements of Oppression

By Suzanne Pharr

Text from *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* Chardon Press, 1988

It is virtually impossible to view one oppression, such as sexism or homophobia, in isolation because they are all connected: sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, ableism, anti-Semitism, ageism. They are linked by a common origin-economic power and control—and by common methods of limiting, controlling and destroying lives. There is no hierarchy of oppressions. Each is terrible and destructive. To eliminate one oppression successfully, a movement has to include work to eliminate them all or else success will always be limited and incomplete.

To understand the connection among the oppressions, we must examine their common elements. The first is a *defined norm*, a standard of rightness and often righteousness wherein all others are judged in relation to it. This norm must be backed up with institutional power, economic power, and both institutional and individual violence. It is the combination of these three elements that makes complete power and control possible. In the United States, that norm is male, white, heterosexual, Christian, temporarily able-bodied, youthful, and has access to wealth and resources. It is important to remember that an established norm does not necessarily represent a majority in terms of number; it represents those who have ability to exert power and control over others.

It is also important to remember that this group has to have *institutional* power. For instance, I often hear people say that they know people of color simply do not have institutional power to back up their hatred or bigotry or prejudice and therefore cannot be deemed racist. In the same way, women do not have the power to institutionalize their prejudice against men, so there is no such things as "reverse sexism." How do we know this? We simply have to take a look at the representation of women and people of color in our institutions. Take, for example, the U.S. Congress. What percentage of its members are people of color or women? Or look at the criminal justice system which carries out the laws the white males who predominate in Congress create: how many in that system are people of color? And then when we look at the percentage of each race that is incarcerated, that is affected by these laws, we see that a disproportionate number are people of color. We see the same lack of representation in financial institutions, in the leadership of churches and synagogues, in the military.

In our schools, the primary literature and history taught are about the exploits of white men, shown through the white man's eyes. Black history, for instance, is still relegated to one month, whereas "American history" is taught all year around. Another major institution, the media, remains controlled and dominated by white men and their images of themselves.

In order for these institutions to be controlled by a single group of people, there must be *economic power*. Earlier I discussed the necessity to maintain racism and sexism so that people of color and women will continue to provide a large pool of unpaid or low-paid labor. Once economic control is in the hands of the few, all others can be controlled through perpetuation of the *myth of scarcity* which suggests that our resources are limited and blames the poor for using up too much of what little there is to go around. It is this myth that is called forth, for instance,

when those in power talk about immigration through our southern borders (immigrants who also happen to be people of color). The warning is clear: if you let those people in, they will take your jobs, ruin your schools which are already in economic struggle, destroy the few neighborhoods that are good for people to live in. People are pitted against one another along race and class lines. Meanwhile, those who have economic power continue to make obscenely excessive profits, often by taking their companies out of the country into economically depressed countries occupied by people of color where work can be bought for minuscule wages and profits are enormous. It is not the poor or working class population that is consuming and/or destroying the world's resources; it is those who make enormous profits from the exploration of those resources, the top 10 percent of the population.

That economic power ensures control of institutions. Let's go back to the example of the Congress. How much does it cost to run a campaign to be elected to the House or Senate? One does not find poor people there, for in order to spend the hundreds of thousands of dollars that campaigns cost, one has to be either personally rich or well connected to those who are rich. And the latter means being in debt, one way or another, to the rich. Hence, when a congressperson speaks or votes, who does he (or occasionally she) speak for? Those without access to wealth and resources or those who pay the campaign bills? Or look at the criminal justice system. It is not by chance that crimes against property are dealt with more seriously than crimes against persons. Or that police response to calls from well-to-do neighborhoods is more efficient than to poor neighborhoods. Schools in poor neighborhoods in most instances lack good facilities and resources; and a media that is controlled by advertising does not present an impartial, truthseeking vision of the world. Both schools and the media present what is in the best interest of the prevailing norm.

The maintenance of societal and individual power and control requires the use of *violence and the threat of violence*. Institutional violence is sanctioned through the criminal justice system and the threat of the military-for quelling individual or group uprisings. One of the places we can most readily see the interplay of institutional and individual violence is in the white man's dealings with the Native American population. Since the white man first "discovered" this country, which was occupied by large societies of Indians who maintained their own culture, religion, politics, education, economy and justice, the prevailing norm has been to lay claim to land resources for those who have the power to establish control by might and thus ensure their superior economic position. This "might" brings with it a sense of superiority and often of divine right. The Native Americans were driven from their land and eventually placed (some would say incarcerated) on reservations. By defending their lands and their lives, they became the "enemy". Consequently, we now have a popular culture whose teaching of history represents the Native American as a cruel savage and through hundreds of films shows the white man as civilized and good in pursuing his destiny and the Native American as bad in protecting his life and culture. Institutional racism is so complete that now great numbers of Native Americans, having lost their land and having had their culture assaulted, live in poverty and in isolation from the benefits of mainstream culture. And on the personal level, racism is so overt that television stations still run cowboy-and-Indian movies, and parents buy their children cowboy-and-Indian outfits so that they can act out genocide in their play.

For gay men and lesbians this interplay of institutional and personal violence comes through both written and unwritten laws. In the 25 states that still have sodomy laws, there is an increase in tolerance for violence against lesbians and gay men, whether it is police harassment or the lack of police protection when gay and lesbian people are assaulted. The fact that courts in many states deny custody to gay and lesbian parents and that schools, either through written or unwritten policy, do not hire openly gay and lesbian teachers creates a climate in which it is permissible to act out physical violence toward lesbian and gay people.

And as I discussed in an earlier chapter, for all groups it is not just the physical violence that controls us but the ever constant *threat of violence*. For women, it is not just the rape and battering or the threat of these abuses but also that one's life is limited by the knowledge that one quite likely will not be honored in court. The violence is constantly nurtured by institutions that do not respect those different from the norm. Thus, the threat of violence exists at every level.

There are other ways the defined norm manages to maintain its power and control other than through institutional power, economic power and violence. One way the defined norm is kept an essentially closed group is by a particular system known as *lack of prior claim*. At its simplest, this means that if you weren't there when the original document (the Constitution, for instance) was written or when the organization was first created, then you have no right to inclusion. Since those who wrote the Constitution were white male property owners who did not believe in the complete humanity of either women or blacks, then these two groups have had to battle for inclusion. If women and people of color were not in business (because of the social and cultural restrictions on them) when the first male business organizations were formed, then they now have to fight for inclusion. The curious thing about lack of prior claim is that it was simply the circumstances of the moment that put the original people there in every case, yet when those who were initially excluded begin asking for or demanding inclusion, they are seen as disruptive people, as trouble-makers, as women who participated in the suffrage movement and the black men and women who formed the civil rights movement. For simply asking for one's due, one was vilified and abused. This is an effective technique, making those struggling for their rights the ones in the wrong. Popular movements are invalidated and minimized, their participants cast as enemies of the people, and social change is obstructed by those holding power who cast themselves as defenders of tradition and order.

Those who seek their rights, who seek inclusion, who seek to control their own lives instead of having their lives controlled, are the people who fall outside the norm. They are defined in relation to the norm and are found lacking. They are *the Other*. If they are not part of the norm, they are seen as abnormal, deviant, inferior, marginalized, not "right", even if they as a group (such as women) are a majority of the population. They are not considered fully human. By those identified as the Norm, the Other is unknown, difficult to comprehend, whereas the Other always knows and understands those who hold power; one has to in order to survive. As in the television series "Upstairs, Downstairs," the servants always knew the inner workings of the ruling families' lives while the upstairs residents who had economic control knew little of the downstairs workers' lives. In slavery, the slave had to know the complexity, the inner workings of the slaveowners' lives in order to protect him/herself from them.
The Other's existence, everyday life, and achievements are kept unknown through *invisibility*. When we do not see the differently abled, the aged, gay men and lesbians, and people of color on

televisions, in movies, in educational books, etc., there is reinforcement of the idea that the Norm is the majority and others either do not exist or do not count. Or when there is false information and *distortion* of events through selective presentation or the re-writing of history, we see only the negative aspects or failures of a particular group. For instance, it has been a major task of the civil rights movement and the women's movement to write blacks and women back into history and to correct the distorted versions of their history that have been presented over centuries.

This distortion and lack of knowledge of the Other expresses itself in *stereotyping*, that subtle and effective way of limiting lives. It is through stereotyping that people are denied their individual characteristics and behavior and are dehumanized. The dehumanizing process is necessary to feed the oppressor's sense of being justified and to alleviate the feeling of guilt. If one stereotypes all gay men as child molesters and gives them the daily humiliations of pejorative names, such as "faggot" or "cocksucker", then a school administration can feel justified, even righteous, in not hiring them, and young heterosexual males can feel self-righteous when physically attacking them on the streets. In stereotyping, the actions of the few dictate the classification of the entire group while the norm is rarely stereotyped. Because of the belief that groups outside the norm think and behave in unified stereotypical ways, people who hold power will often ask a person of color, "What do your people think about this idea (or thing)?" When do we ever ask a white man, "What do the white men in his country (or organization) think about this?" They are expected to have and to express individual judgements and opinions.

Stereotyping contributes to another common element of oppressions: *blaming the victim* for the oppression. In order for oppression to be thoroughly successful, it is necessary to involve the victim in it. The victim lives in an environment of negative images (stereotypes) and messages, backed up by violence, victim-hating and blaming, all of which leads to low self-esteem and self-blame in the victim. The oppression thus becomes internalized. The goal of this environment is to lead the victim to be complicit with her/his victimization: to think that it is deserved and should not be resisted.

Some of the best work feminists have done is to change attitudes from blaming the victim to blaming the abuser-a very slow change that is still incomplete. It is no longer automatically the norm to blame victims of battering, rape and incest for having somehow been responsible for the harm done them; instead, people are more inclined to stop supporting male dominance by protecting the abuser. However, we have yet to examine thoroughly the blame we put on victims of racism, homophobia and anti-Semitism. People are condemned for being who they are, for their essence as humans. When we are clear of those oppressions, we will understand that the issue is not one's racial, ethnic, religious or sexual identity-one should have the inalienable right to be who one is-but the problem is racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia and the power they support and protect.

Blaming the victim for their oppression diverts attention from the true abuser or the cause of the victimization. For example, a commonly held belief is that people are poor because they are unwilling to work. The belief is supported by the stereotypes that poor people are lazy, abuse welfare, etc. What goes unnoted is the necessity for poverty in an economic system in which wealth is held and controlled by the few. If the poor are in poverty because they deserve it, then

the rich need not feel any guilt or compunction about their concentrated wealth. In fact, they can feel deserving and superior.

Blaming the victim leads to the victim feeling complicit with the oppression, of deserving it. As one takes in the negative messages and stereotypes, there is a weakening of self-esteem, self-pride and group pride. When the victim of the oppression is led to believe the negative views of the oppressor, this phenomenon is called *internalized oppression*. It takes the form of self-hatred, which can express itself in depression, despair, and self-abuse. It is no surprise, therefore, that the incidence of suicide is high among gay men and lesbians, for they live in a world in which messages of hatred and disgust are unrelenting. Nor is it surprising that the differently abled come to think there is no hope for their independence or for them to receive basic human services, for they are taught that the problem is with them, not society. Any difference from the norm is seen as a deficiency, as bad.

Sometimes the internalized oppression is acted out as *horizontal hostility*. If one has learned self-hatred because of one's membership in a "minority" group, then that disrespect and hatred can easily be extended to the entire group so that one does not see hope or promise for the whole. It is safer to express hostility toward other oppressed peoples than toward the oppressor. Hence, we see people destroying their own neighborhoods, displaying violence and crime toward their own people, or in groups showing distrust of their own kind while respecting the power of those who make up the norm. Sometimes the internalized oppression leads people to be reluctant to associate with others in their group. Instead, their identity is with those in power. Hence, a major part of every social change movement has been an effort to increase the pride and self-esteem of the oppressed group, to bond people together for the common good.
A major component of every oppression is *isolation*. Victims of oppressions are either isolated as individuals or as a "minority" group. Take, for example, those who experience rape or incest or battering. Prior to the women's movement and the speak-outs that broke the silence on these issues, women who had experienced abuse were isolated from one another, thought they were alone in experiencing it, and thought, as society dictated, that they were to blame for the abuse. It was through women coming together in the anti-violence movement that we learned that indeed there was something larger going on, that violence was happening to millions of women; out of that coming together grew an analysis of male power and control that led to a movement to end violence against women. Another example: before the civil rights movement, there were black citizens in the South who were isolated because of their lack of access to resources, in this case, to education and literacy. Because they could not read, they could not pass the tests that allowed them to vote. The Citizenship Schools that began on St. Johns Island, South Carolina, taught blacks to read the Constitution so that they could pass the test; in reading the Constitution, they learned that they too had rights. These schools spread across the South; people came together out of their isolation, and a civil rights movement was born.

In order to break down the power and control exercised by the few, it is clear that people of all oppressed groups must come together to form a movement that speaks for everyone's rights. People will gain their human rights, justice, and inclusion through group effort, not through isolated individual work. However, those who hold power oppose group organizing efforts and use many strategies to destroy such efforts: invalidation, minimization, intimidation, infiltration, etc.

Two of the more subtle ways that society blocks solidarity within groups from ever occurring are the tactics of *assimilation and tokenism*. There are extraordinary pressures for members of any "minority" group to assimilate, to drop one's own culture and differences and become a mirror of the dominant culture. This process requires turning one's back on one's past and one's people. Assimilation supports the myth of the melting pot in which all immigrants were poured in, mixed a bit, and then emerged as part of the dominant culture: white, heterosexual, and Christian.

Assimilation is a first requirement of those who are chosen as tokens in the workplace of the dominant culture. "She's a Jew but she doesn't act like a Jew." "He's black but he's just like us." Tokenism is the method of limited access that gives false hope to those left behind and blames them for "not making it." "If these two or three black women or disabled people can make it, then what is wrong with you that you can't?" Tokenism is a form of co-optation. It takes the brightest and best of the most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model.

The tokenized person receives pressure from both sides. From those in power there is the pressure to be separate from one's group (race, for instance) while also acting as a representative of the entire group. "We tried hiring a person color but it just didn't work out." (Therefore people of color can't succeed here.) The tokenized person is expected to become a team player, which means that identifying racist activity within the organization or working on behalf of one's community is seen as disloyalty. The pressure from one's community, on the other hand, is to fight for that community's concerns, in other words, to help from the inside. Of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support. It is a "no win" situation, filled with frustration and alienation.

At the heart of this strategy, which gets played out at every level of society, is an individualized approach to success. The example of Horatio Alger and the notion of "pulling oneself up by the bootstraps" still lives. Daily news reports do not show successful organizing efforts; in fact, the media minimize even undeniably successful ones as was the case with the reporting of the 1989 Gay and Lesbian March on Washington. The media reported the march to have 200,000 in attendance when it was announced by Jesse Jackson from the stage that police and march organizers were reporting over 500,000 there. Instead of reporting group efforts, the media concentrated on "human interest" stories, following the lead of people such as Ronald Reagan who give accounts of individuals who beat the odds and succeed. They become "models" for others in their circumstances to follow. But what good are models when closed systems do not permit general success?

Group organizing, even among progressive people, often gets replaced by an emphasis on *individual solutions*. Hence, instead of seeking ways to develop an economic system that emphasizes cooperation and shared wealth, people encourage entrepreneurship and small business enterprises. Union organizing is under siege in an effort to keep labor costs low and profits high. In the women's movement, more women choose individual therapy rather than starting or joining consciousness raising groups. In the area of health, communities do major

organizing, for example, to raise enormous funds to provide a liver transplant for an individual child but do not work together to change the medical system so that all who need them can get organ transplants. The emphasis upon individual solutions is counter to movement making, to broad social change. The emphasis upon individual achievement feeds right into blaming those who don't succeed for their failure. It separates people rather than bringing them together to make change.

We must find ways to build coalition, to make broad social changes for all of us. There are many more people who are considered the Other (though called, ironically, the minority) than those who are defined as the Norm. We must become allies in a movement that works against power and control by the few and for shared power and resources for the many. To do this work, we will have to build a program that provides an analysis of the oppressions, their connections, and together we must seek ways to change those systems that limit our lives.

Terms and Definitions

DEFINED NORM

Definition: a standard of being or behavior which is backed up with institutional and economic power as well as institutional and individual violence. For example, in the United States there exists a defined norm which takes its form as the white, heterosexual male, of the middle or upper classes, temporarily able-bodied, and of a Christian (usually Protestant) background.

Example: Heterosexuality is a defined norm. Those who do not fit into this norm are denied civil rights such as fair employment and housing and the economic benefits of marriage. Bisexual, lesbian, and gay people suffer a high rate of hate crimes against them.	*Example*: Whiteness is a defined norm. Those who are not white face greater challenges than those who are. Most of the "standard" examples given of people our society portray this "standard" as overwhelmingly white.

INSTITUTIONAL POWER

Definition: majority status at the upper levels of the major institutions that comprise a society.

Example: In the US white men (presumably heterosexual) hold the majority of top positions in federal and state governments, financial institutions, the legal system, military, etc. A quick look at the history of the presidency reveals who holds the greatest institutional power in this society.	*Example*: Most sports teams are owned by white men, even when the majority of the players are not white. This includes holding entire cities economically hostage for new stadiums and arenas.

ECONOMIC POWER

Definition: the control of economic resources through laws and policies that reinforce the status quo.

Example: Recent prohibitions of new Native American owned and run gambling casinos by state and federal government after the first casinos showed themselves to be quite profitable.	*Example*: Redlining - lines are drawn which divide neighborhoods by race and class with the result that insurance and mortgage rates are highest in neighborhoods in which people have the least economic resources.

MYTH OF SCARCITY

Definition: the idea that resources are limited in such a way that those not in power are to blame for economic problems.

Example: Targeting of immigrants from Mexico as the cause of the decline of the middle class in CA, despite the fact that the cheap labor performed by immigrants is essential to the economy of the state and that tax laws have increasingly favored the wealthy at the expense of the middle class.	*Example*: The threat of cutting social security with the promise of lowering taxes. By many people's standards, this is unethical. It also is based on a myth of scarcity. The wealthiest people receive the highest tax breaks, but some members of congress prefer to blame the elderly and disabled for the high tax rates of middle income Americans.

VIOLENCE/THREAT OF VIOLENCE

Definition: the sanctioning of violence either through direct threat or through lack of protection.

Example: As Asian American communities started to profit in California in the nineteenth century, their farms and businesses were burned down, and they were physically assaulted with little recourse to justice.	*Example*: Recent statistics indicate that one in three women are targets of sexualized violence in their lifetime. Most women live with the understanding and fear that they may be targets of rape.

THE OTHER

Definition: those who are not part of the defined norm

Example: Aristotle believed that women were simply a weaker version of men, and Freud defined women in terms of lack (lacking the phallus). Although women are not a minority, this culture sees them as the Other in relation to a male norm. Cast from the norm, women in western society have often been viewed as mysterious and as something to be discovered.	*Example*: The historical development of views toward people of color offer evidence that the Other is not simply a chance of relations between different groups of people, but rather a carefully and consciously constructed set of power relations based on discernible differences.

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

Definition: the devaluing of ones own identity and culture according to societal norms.

Example: Rates of suicide are high among BGLT youth in part because they have grown up in a culture that has taught them that their identity is not valued.	*Example*: Women often do not pursue full medical care because they feel they do not deserve good medical care.

INVISIBILITY

Definition: ignoring or denying the existence, histories and achievements of certain groups of people.

Example: Most Americans, regardless of race or ethnicity, are taught history in such a way that they do not know what various communities of color and what white women were doing over the course of US history. The absence of visibility gives the impression that aside from a few exceptional people, they were not "doing" anything worth discussing.	*Example*: Many people believe they do not know anyone who is gay. Yet many trans, lesbian, bisexual and gay people do not reveal their identities to family and friends and co-workers out of fear of rejection or discrimination.

HORIZONTAL HOSTILITY

Definition: acting out toward other members of the target group; safer than confronting oppressive forces.

Example: Gang violence within communities of color.	*Example*: Discouraging people of one's cultural group from succeeding in the larger society with the accusation of selling out.

DISTORTION	
Definition: the selective presentation and false representation of the lives and histories of particular groups of people.	
Example: The continued dissemination of information regarding sexual abuse of children that tells us that gay men sexually assault boys. Statistically speaking, crimes against children are perpetrated by heterosexual men.	*Example*: After the Civil War, many racist portrayals of black people were created by white people who feared black equality. Among them was the new myth of the black male rapist of white women, which was used to justify hundreds of lynchings. Ironically, white men had systematically raped black women in slavery, often as a means of reproduction of laborers.

STEREOTYPING	
Definition: defining people through beliefs about a group of which they are a part; usually a product of ignorance about the diversity among individuals within any given group.	
Example: The stereotype that bisexual people are promiscuous. This stereotype erases the humanity and diversity of bisexual people and disregards the processes by which individuals of all sexual orientations go about choosing a way of life appropriate to their values.	*Example*: Stereotyping Jewish people as stingy. Both selfish and giving people can be found among every group. In many Jewish communities today, the obligation to "tikkun olam", to heal and transform the world, guides individual and community involvement.

BLAMING THE VICTIM	
Definition: assigning blame to the targets of oppression for the oppression itself and for its manifestations.	
Example: A rapist saying that a woman "asked for it". Historically, women of color have been especially vulnerable to these accusations because part of racist devaluation has been to sexualize women of color in order to inflate the purity of white women.	*Example*: In situations of violence against people who are bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender, the charge is often made by attackers that the targets of violence were flaunting their sexuality or not acting the way their gender should. Consider that few, if any, heterosexual couples are attacked for holding hands in public (unless they are interracial).

TOKENISM	
Definition: a limited number of people (pick one and only one) from non-dominant groups are chosen for prestigious positions in order to deflect criticism of oppression.	
Example: Recruiting a person of color on an otherwise white board of directors with no intention of actually serving the needs of people of color.	*Example*: Appointing a woman to a high faculty position at a university with the intention of preventing the need to hire other women faculty.

ISOLATION	
Definition: a necessary component of oppression that frames injustice in terms of individuals rather than recognizing commonalties between members of a group or between groups.	
Example: People with disabilities at community, state, and national levels are organizing to break isolation. This movement gained momentum in the early 1980's and got the American Disabilities Act passed in 1990.	*Example*: BGLT youth have often been isolated because adult BGLT organizations fear being accused of "converting" youths. However, BGLT youth organizations are on the rise, often with the leadership of young people themselves.

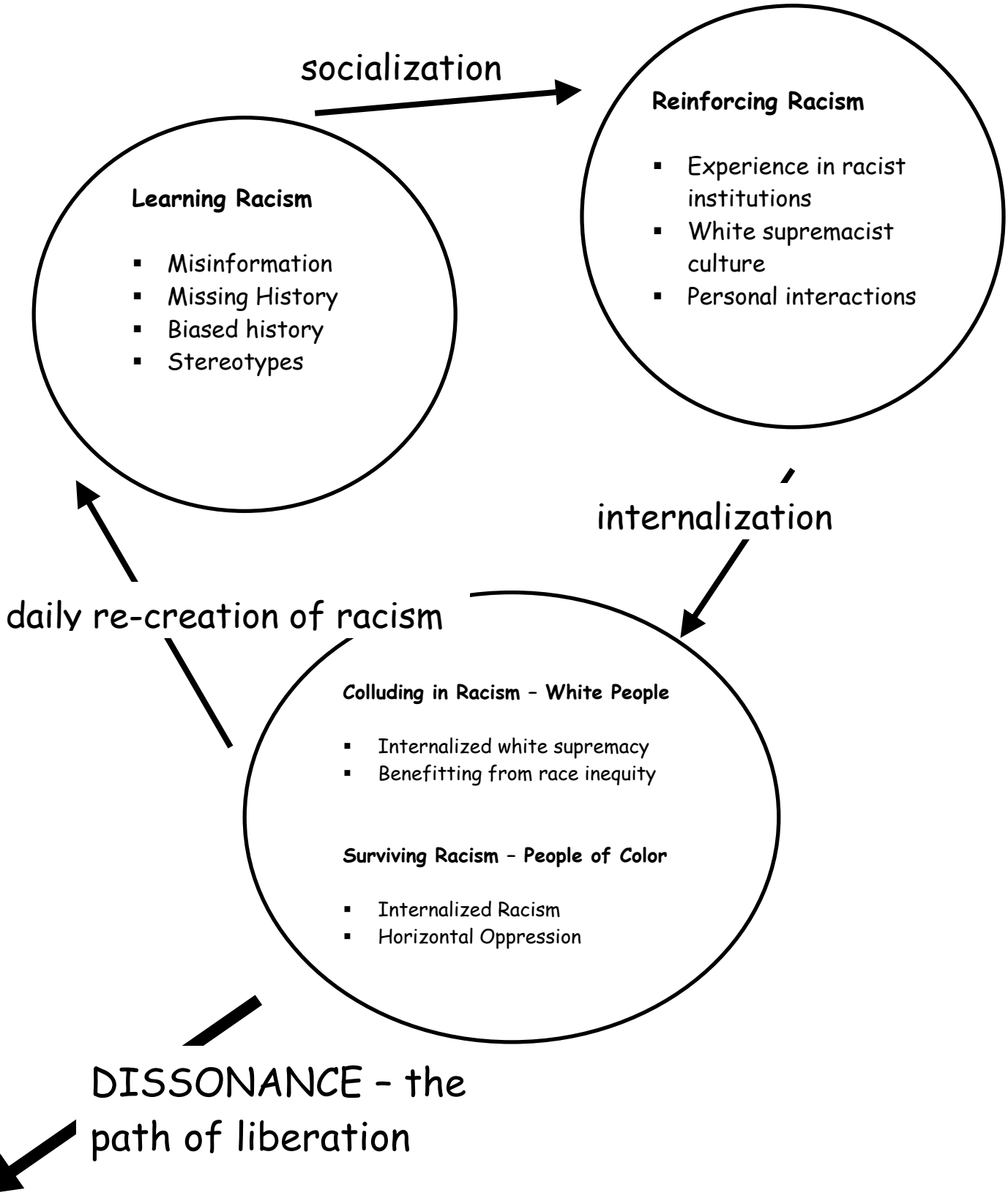
INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS	
Definition: seeking to create change at an individual level rather then at the level of social change.	
Example: Welcoming individual BGLT people into congregational life without examining how heterosexism operates within one's denomination and society.	*Example*: Giving spare change to homeless people without organizing as a community to address poverty at local, national and global levels.

ASSIMILATION	
Definition: taking on the appearance and values of the dominant culture. It is important to recognize that assimilation occurs under varying conditions: sometimes it is forced, other times it is desired, and its success is usually mitigated by recognizable difference such as skin color.	
Example: Native American people have experienced forced assimilation through the taking of their children to white run schools to unlearn their culture—this is considered cultural genocide.	*Example*: In the nineteenth century many African American people desired to assimilate (while others did not), but were only allowed a limited assimilation due to the racism of the dominant culture.

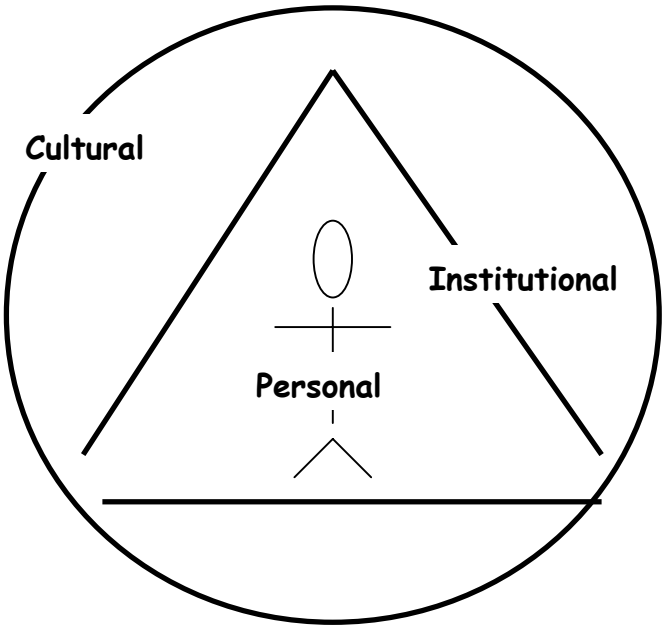
Defined terms are taken from Suzanne Pharr's "The Common Elements of Oppression" in The Welcoming Congregation, 1995 ed. Used by permission.

HOW RACISM WORKS

Cycle of Racist Oppression



Three Expressions of Racism



Personal: The way in which we perpetuate racism on an individual basis. Examples: calling someone a racist name, making a racist assumption.

Cultural: The norms, values, or standards assumed by the dominant society which perpetuate racism. Examples: thin, blond, white women as the basis for our society's standard of beauty; women on welfare are assumed to be black or brown and are portrayed as irresponsible while white collar fraud in the business community is costing the US $200 billion a year, requiring people to speak English as a way of deliberately destroying community and culture.

Institutional: The way in which institutions – Housing, Government, Education, Media, Business, Health Care, Criminal Justice, Religion – perpetuate racism. Examples: people of color under-represented and misrepresented on television, racially biased standardized tests used to determine who will be admitted to higher education programs and institutions, historic and ongoing breaking of treaties with indigenous American Indian communities, reliance on low-paying immigrant labor by farms and factories.

Created by **change**work, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, 919-490-4448

The Four Faces of Racism

Constructed Racist Oppression

- is an historical construction and systemic (not just personal or individual)
- penetrates every aspect of our personal, institutional, and social life
- includes prejudice against people of color in attitudes, feelings, and behaviors
- includes exclusion, discrimination, suspicion, fear or hatred of people of color
- has personal, cultural, and institutional manifestations
- people of color seen only as a member of a group, not as an individuals with full personhood
- low expectations by white people for children and adults of color
- fewer options and choices open to people of color

Internalized Racist Oppression *Experienced by People of Color*

- internalized negative messages
- lowered self-esteem, sense of inferiority, wrongness
- limited choices: " act in (white)' or 'act out(disrupt)'
- limited imagination of possibility, expectations, potential (limited by oppression and prejudice)
- cycles through generations

Granted White Privilege *Experienced by White People*

- "an invisible, weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, code books, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (Peggy McIntosh)
- options, possibilities, "the existence of abundant choice" (Joan Olsson)
- "to be white in America is not to have to think about it" (Robert Terry)
- seen as an individual; what we do never reflects on the white race
- can judge racism from own worldview without penalty
- live in a world where personal worth, rightness, and personhood are continually validated
- although hurt by racism, can live just fine without ever having to deal with it

Internalized White Supremacy *Experienced by White People*

- my world view is the only world view
- the standards and norms I live by are the univeral standards and norms
- my achievements have to do with me, not with my membership in the white group
- assumption that who I am is OK, inflated sense of self, illusion of superiority (Kay Hagan)
- I have the right to be comfortable and if I am not comfortable, then someone else is to blame
- I can feel that I personally earned, through work and merit, any/all of my success
- equates individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism against people of color
- I have many choices, as I should; everyone else has those same choices
- I am not respnsible for what happened before, nor do I have to know anything about it

Adapted from Joan Olsson, Cultural Bridges

From Internalized Racist Oppression to Empowerment

Internalized Racist Oppression

The Impact of Internalized Racist Oppression on our Community

Internalized Racist Oppression (IRO) is the internalization by people of color of the images, stereotypes, prejudices, and myths promoted by the racist system about people of color in this coutry. Our thoughts and feelings about ourselves, people of our own racial group, or other people of color are based on the racist messages we receive from the broader system.

For many people of color in our communities, IRO manifests itself as:

- Self-Doubt
- Inferiority Complex
- Self-Hate
- Powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Apathy
- Addictive Behavior
- Abusive and Violent Relationships
- Conflict between people of color communities

The Process of Oppression

When one looks at the history of oppression of people of color in this country, though there are many differences, there are also many similarities that people of color have faced in the process of oppression. All of these methods are still being used in the continuing process of oppression.

- Violence and the Threat of Violence
- Change in Behavior
- Destruction of Culture
- Division, Separation, Isolation

Beloved Spic

- Valley Stream, Long Island 1973
by Martín Espada

Here in the new white neighborhood,
the neighbors kept it pressed
inside dictionaries and Bibles
like a leaf, chewed it for digestion
after a heavy dinner,
laughed when it hopped
from their mouths like a secret,
whispered it as carefully as the answer
to a test question in school,
bellowed it in barrooms
when the alcohol made them want to sing

So I saw it
spraypainted on my locker and told no one,
found it scripted in the icing on a cake,
touched it stinging like the tooth slammed
into a faucet, so I kept my mouth closed,
pushed it away crushed on the coach's lip
with a spot of dried egg,
watched it spiral into the ear
of a dissapointed girl who never sat beside me again,
heard it in my head when I punched a lamp,
mesmerized by the slash oozing
between my knuckles,
and it was beloved
until the day we staked our lawn
with a sign that read: For Sale.

Martín Espada is a Puerto Rican Poet born in Brooklyn, NY in 1957. He is author of several books of poems and essays like *Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover's Hands, Trumpets from the Islands of their Evictions,* and *City of Coughing and Dead Radiators.* Espada is well known critic of the colonization of Puerto Rico and supporter of the movement for Puerto Rican independence.

Revolutionary Spanish Lesson

Whenever my name
is mispronounced,
I want to buy a toy pistol,
put on dark sunglasses,
push my beret to an angle,
comb my beard to a point,
hijack a busload
of republican tourists
from Wisconsin,
force them to chant
anti-American slogans
in Spanish,
and wait
for the bilingual SWAT team
to helicopter overhead,
begging me
to be reasonable

Lección revolucionaria de español

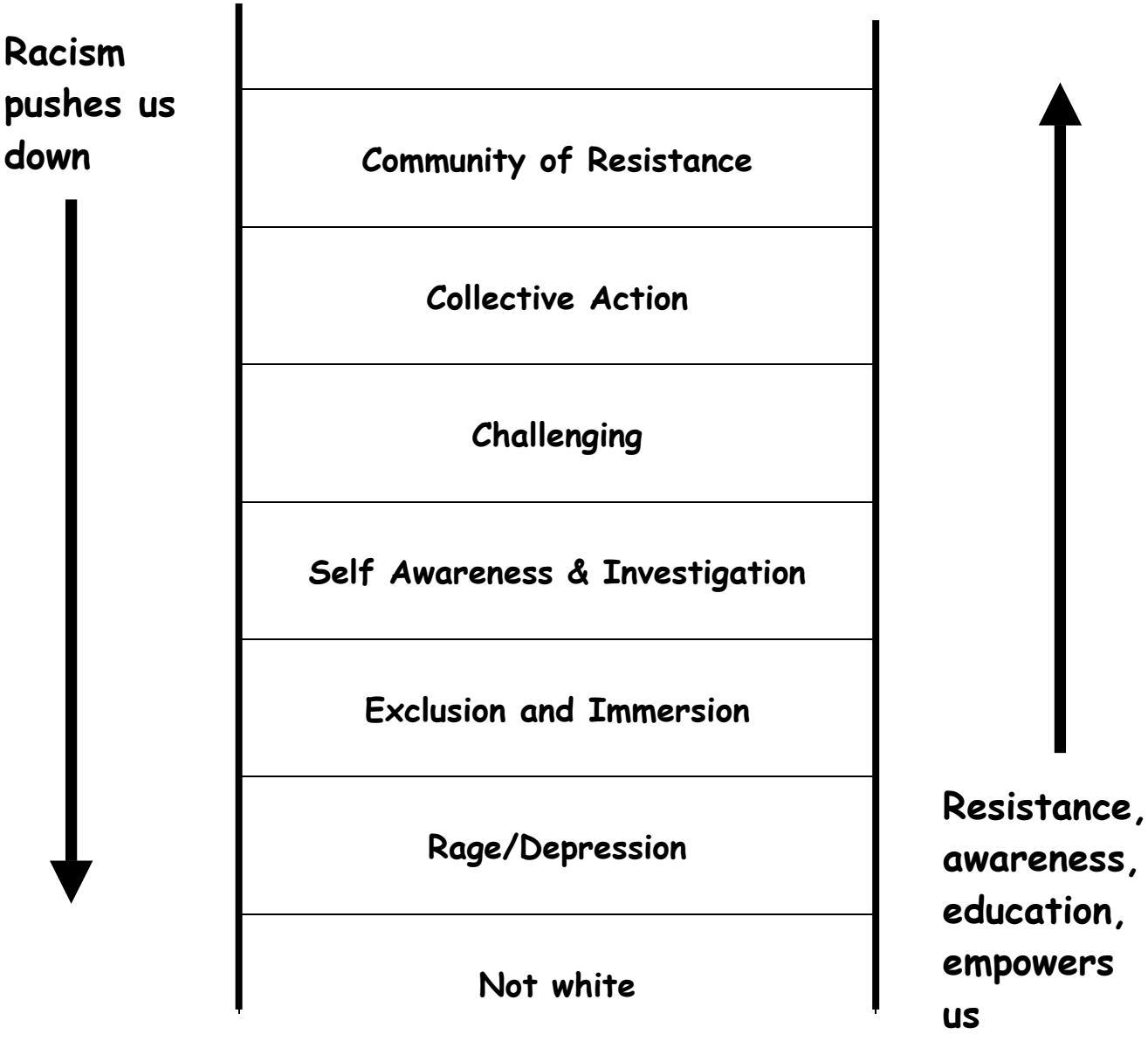
Cada vez que pronuncian
mal mi nombre,
quiero comprar una pistola de juguete,
ponerme gafas oscuras,
inclinar mi boina,
peinar mi barba hasta que apunte,
secuestrar una guagua
llena de turistas Republicanos
de Wisconsin
forzarlos a corear
consignas anti-Americanas
en español,
y esparar
las fuerzas de choque bilingues
sobrevolando en un helicóptero,
rogándome
que sea razonable

Martín Espada is a Puerto Rican Poet born in Brooklyn, NY in 1957. He is author of several books of poems and essays like *Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover's Hands, Trumpets from the Islands of their Evictions,* and *City of Coughing and Dead Radiators.* Espada is well known critic of the colonization of Puerto Rico and supporter of the movement for Puerto Rican independence.

Ladder of Empowerment – People of Color

change*work* - 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, 919.490.4448

Empowerment



Internalized Racist Oppression

THE LADDER OF EMPOWERMENT

The Ladder of Empowerment is designed to highlight the impact of internalized racism on people of color while outlining an approach to empowerment. Empowerment is not a state but a process. It is a journey that all people of color must take in order to heal and protect ourselves from the devastating impact of racism.

The Ladder of Empowerment takes us through various stages in both identity development and the process of empowerment. It is important to remember that all of these stages exist at the same time in all people of color. Critical questions for us to ask are which stage currently dominates our life and in what direction are we heading. The racist system is always pushing us to stay in the lower stages. Our job is to find ways to work with the people around us to help ourselves and others move through the process and become more empowered.

Stages Of Development

1. Not White

The empowerment process begins when a person of color realizes that they are not white. This usually happens when that person is a child or has just moved to the U.S.. We begin to understand that we are part of a group and not considered white. It is in this stage that we realize that all of the racist stereotypes, images, and prejudices that we are hearing and have heard are about us.

This realization can cause a psychological crisis in people of color. The crisis can take the following forms:

- People of color decide to try to become white. Changing one's physical features to look white is a way to deny that they are not white.
- People try to be as good as whites. This person uses whites as a model of humanity. So whatever whites have, they must have. Whatever whites do, they must do.
- This stage can cause depression and confusion.
- Some people of color get angry or mad at the realization of racism and that they are not white. This anger can help catapult people to the next stage.

2. Rage/Depression

Rage is the stage where people of color are often consumed by anger at white people for their racism. Rage is a reaction to the brutal oppression people of color have endured for hundreds of years. Rage can take the form of people of color attacking whites or other antagonistic behavior. Some people of color actually think that rage is empowerment. But in reality, it is the opposite. Rage isn't empowerment because it usually is not driven by the desire to strategically and constructively dismantle racism. Rage is reactionary.

The other side of this stage can often be depression. People of color can react to the realization of the previous stage by being overwhelmed with the immensity of the oppression they will have to endure. Depression can also be the result of identity conflict.

3. Exclusion and Immersion

In this stage, people of color use our rage productively by directing it to temporarily exclude whites from our social lives and immerse ourselves in our culture. This is a necessary stage of development for people of color. Exclusion gives us time and space to deal with our problems. Immersion can be healing time when we learn about the culture that was taken away from us. Some people of color mistake excluding whites from our circle or immersing ourselves in our culture as empowerment. We think that by only having "us" around we have reached our ultimate goal. Some of these people remain in this stage for years. For other people of color, this exclusion and immersion can push them to the next stage. We want to learn more about ourselves, our people and our history.

4. Self Awareness & Investigation

In the previous stage, people of color begin to develop an awareness of ourselves, our culture, and our history. In this stage awareness is not enough; we want a much deeper level of knowledge. We need to understand our place in history and in the world. It is particularly useful and important to investigate and study the history and culture of other people of color and that of white people. This gives us a better perspective about ourselves, and helps us prevent the wedges that racism so often constructs between groups in order to divide and conquer us.

5. Challenging

With all the knowledge and awareness that we have gained through this process, now it is time for action. We need to work with other people of color and whites and learn how to challenge each other and to be challenged. One of the impacts of internalized racism is that it makes challenging racism difficult. Part of our empowerment is learning to resist and challenge despite the internal and external barriers. If we can not do this, we could fall backward into one of the previous stages like rage or exclusion.

6. Collective Action

It is not enough to challenge racist moments individually, although that is incredibly important. Here we work together to build an organization or institution. The process of empowerment becomes a collective process. People of color must be working with other people of color and white allies to stay truly empowered. The goal is to be a part of a community of resistance.

7. Community of Resistance

A Community of Resistance is

- Organizing for collective Power to work for social justice and transformation.
- Building a community that can heal the remnants of racism and internalized racist oppression.
- Building a community or organization that can help members learn to think critically about the community, country and world.
- Developing a culture and specific projects that promote leadership development to help people of color realize their potential.
- People of color can never truly be empowered until we develop formal and informal systems of **accountability** with our community. We must be able to hold each other responsible for our actions lovingly and effectively.

From Internalized White Sumpremacy to Anti-Racist White Ally

Internalized White Supremacy

The Impact of Internalized White Supremacy in our Community

- Internalized white supremacy affects white people and the dominant white culture in many ways. Some of these include:
- Resistance to change
- Paternalism
- Ignorance and misinformation
- Scapegoating/blaming/labeling
- Self-righteous anger
- Continued oppression
- Resistance to acknowledging/correcting past
- Individualism

White People's Resistance

The following three pages are adapted from Paul Kivel's Uprooting Racism, 1996, pp. 40-46. We've noted original authors when Kivel utilized other's work.

Tactics of Resistance

Tactic	*What it is*	*What is sounds like*
Denial	Denial of existence of oppression; denial of responsibility for it	Discrimination is a thing of the past. It's a level playing field. It's not my fault; I'm not responsible
Minimization	Playing down the damage	Racism isn't a big problem anymore It's not that bad
Blame	Justifying the oppression, blaming the victims of oppression for it	Look at the way they act. If they weren't so angry. . . Women are too emotional
Lack of Intent	Claims the damage is unintential	I didn't mean it like that. It was only a joke.
It's over now	The oppression happened in the past and is no longer an issue	Slavery was over a long time ago. Feminism has gone too far.
Competing victimization	Claiming that targets of oppression have so much power that society is threatened.	Women really have all the power. We just want our rights too. They're taking away our jobs. White people are under attack.

Sources of Resistance

(adapted from Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, and Thomas *Educating for a Change*, 1991, p. 134)

Our identity and relation to power: we may feel guilt or anxiety for being a white person when racism is the issue or a man when sexism is the issue. We may be afraid to speak out because we'll be seen as a troublemeaker and become isolated from the dominant group.

Our discomfort with the content and the perspective: the implications of what we're learning may be very threatening to us if we are white.

Our discomfort with the process: those of us used to doing things a certain way may get impatient or frustrated when the process is unfamiliar, slow, or confusing. We may assume that the way we respond to the process is the way everyone responds to the process, whether or not that is true. Some of us feel we have a 'right' to be included, while others never expect to be fully included.

Our fear about losing: taking in and/or acting on the information presented may mean loss – of family, or friends, or a job. A white person who opens up to how racism is playing out in their family or community may risk losing important relationships if they decided to speak or act.

Our fear of critical thinking: many of us tend to hear critical thinking as criticism. For example, the suggestion that we could do better on race issues in our organizations is heard as criticism that we're doing a bad job. This can be particularily difficult when we have a lot of personal investment in the organization or community.

Distancing Behaviors

(adapted from Edler's unpublished paper *Distancing behaviors among white group dealing with racism*)

The behavior	*What it is*
Definitions	Requiring clear definitions of racism (or sexism, etc.) before committing to analysis or action (when clear definitions of religion, politics, morals, etc. are not required in similar situations)
Where are the others?	A demand that people of color be present for white people to understand themselves or commit to analysis or action (when we don't demand the presence of poor people or politicians to analyze or act on poverty or politics)
This 'ism' isn't the only problem	The suggestion that there is little reason to concentrate on a particular 'ism' when there are others just as serious
The distinguished lecturer	A tendency to talk about the problem without taking any action; a competition over who has the best analysis;
The instant solution	The proposal that 'love' is the solution, or 'changing the schools' is the solution , or a focus on one strategy which makes good sense but remains centered in how things should be rather than how they are
Find the racist	When one or a few white people target another white person for inappropriate comments or ideas, leaving those doing the 'accusing' feeling righteous but actually closing down any opportunity for meaningful discussion
Target the expert	Asking people of color to answer questions and represent all people of color with their answers
Geography	Claiming the real problems are 'in the South,' or somewhere else; or claiming, for example, that racism isn't a problem for you because there were not people of color in your community growing up.

For the white person who wants to know how to be my friend

The first thing you do is to forget that i'm Black.
Second, you must never forget that i'm Black.

You should be able to dig Aretha,
but don't play her every time i come over.
And if you decide to play Beethoven - - don't tell me
his life story. They made us take music appreciation too.

Eat soul food if you like it, but don't expect me
to locate your resaurants
or cook it for you.

And if some Black person insults you,
mugs you, rapes your sister, rapes you,
rips your house or is just being an ass- -
please, do not aplogize to me
for wanting to do them bodily harm
It makes me wonder if you're foolish.

And even if you really believe Blacks are better lovers than
whites - - don't tell me. I start thinking of charging stud fees.

In other words - - if you really want to be my friend - - *don't*
make a labor of it. I'm lazy. Remember.

Pat Parker
From *Movements in Black*

Pat Parker, Black lesbian poet, feminist medical administrator, mother of two daughters, progressive activist, died of breast cancer in 1989.

Characteristics of Anti-Racist White Allies

Attitudes and Behaviors

Adapted from *10 attitudes and behaviors which help us become Strong Anti-Racist Allies*, developed by Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges Program

- All white people are racist. I am a racist.
- I will never know what it is like to be a person of color in this country. While it is important to build empathy, I need to acknowledge that I cannot know what it is really like.
- I expect to be uncomfortable as a white anti-racist ally. Discomfort offers an opportunity for reflection and deeper understanding, which leads to change, which can be scary, but necessary and fulfilling. Because white supremacist culture allows white people to remain comfortable, I will need to actively seek situations that will provide me the opportunity to change and grow.
- I can love myself even though I am racist because I have made a commitment to fight my own racism and racism in the larger society. I expect to make mistakes, learn from them, and am compassionate to myself and others as I make this journey.
- Despite my best intentions I will still act out racism and people of color may have reason to be angry with me. I will not die from anger or criticism; in fact I will grow and become stronger.
- When people of color criticize what I say or do, I will accept it as useful information to help me in my learning without always having to explain to them why I said what I said or did what I did. I realize that sometimes my explanations leave the impression that the criticism is not heard and blocks further communication. I always keep the right to act on the criticism in whatever way seems most appropriate once I have had time to reflect.
- I do not expect or want to be 'absolved' for my racism by people of color. I am centered in my own commitment to fight racism, without needing that commitment to be acknowledged by others.
- I am always open to questioning my assumptions, even when I act on them because I must act. I realize that I will always have more to learn about how my commitment to fighting racism can be more effective.
- I am part of an active anti-racist, freedom movement which began long before I came and will carry on long after I am gone. I am proud to contribute to that movement and to be building a support community of white anti-racist allies.

Moving From Concern to Action

Adapted from work by Andrea Azvazian, James Edler, University of Maryland, and Judy H. Katz, author of White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racist Training.

- Have I intentionally and aggressively sought to educate myself further on issues of racism by talking with others, viewing films/videos, finding reading material, attending lectures, joining a study group or other activities?
- Have I spent some time reflecting on my own childhood and upbringing and analyzing where, how and when I was receiving racist messages?
- Have I spent some time recently looking at my own attitudes and behaviors as an adult to determine how I am contributing to or combating racism?
- Have I eliminated my use of language, light and dark imagery and other terms or phrases that might be degrading or hurtful to others?
- Have I openly disagreed with a racist comment, joke, reference, or action among those around me?
- Have I made a clear promise to myself that I will interrupt racist comments, actions, etc. that occur around me – even when this involves some personal risk?
- Have I grown in my awareness of racism in TV programs, advertising, and news coverage?
- Have I objected to those in charge about racism in TV programs, advertising, and news coverage?
- Have I taken steps to organize discussion groups or a workshop aimed at unlearning racism with friends, family members, colleagues, or members of my house of worship?
- Have I organized to support political candidates committed to racial justice and to oppose political candidates who are not?
- Have I contributed financially to an organization, fund, or project that actively confronts the problems of racism?
- Do my personal buying habits support stores and companies that demonstrate a commitment to racial justice both in the U.S. and in other countries?
- Have I organized to support multi-cultural anti-racist curriculum in local schools?
- Do I see myself as a resource person for referrals – directing white people to individuals, organizations and resources who assist others in dismantling racism?
- Have I made a contract with myself to keep paying attention to the issue of racism over weeks, months, and years?

Anti-Racist Organizational Development

The process of Dismantling Racism is not just about individuals changing our behavior and ways of thinking. This important individual work must in turn trigger a commitment to dismantling racism in organizations in order to position us to move effective and accountable racial justice organizing.

Organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization's own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

There is no cookie cutter approach to anti-racist organizational development. The road to anti-racist organizational development is necessarily impacted by the size, structure, mission, constituency and geographic location of an organization. Some organizations may need to commit to transforming their organization in to a multi-cultural anti-racist organization. Other predominantly white organizations may decide that it is most appropriate to evolve toward being an anti-racist white ally organization that can work in alliance with organizations of color. People of color organizations may decide to engage in organizational development to address internalized racist oppression within the organization in order to strengthen their ability to build power for communities of color.

This section of the Dismantling Racism Resource Book is designed to provide tools to help organizations begin the discussion of their anti-racist organizational transformation. If we build a shared and strong analysis of race and racism within our organizations then we will be able to select the tools and processes to achieve anti-racist organizational transformation most appropriate to our organization.

FOR ORGANIZATIONS STRIVING TO BECOME MULTI-CULTURAL ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATIONS

Anti-Racist Organizational Development

Adapted by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun based on work done by the Exchange Project of the Peace Development Fund, Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program, and the original concept by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman.

change*work*
1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, 919.490.4448

The goals of this exercise are to give you time to begin to analyze your organization in terms of the organization's anti-racist vision. This is an evaluation tool.

This evaluation is designed for organizations that are either all white or which include both white people and people of color.

Because racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S., it is also present in progressive, social change groups. The structures and cultures of non-profits and grassroots organizations reproduce white privilege and racial oppression found in the wider society. But organizations, like individuals evolve, change and grow. Groups can transform themselves into anti-racist groups.

We are presenting four states of organizational development. Most organizations have characteristics from each of the states. No organization fits any stages precisely, although you will find that one stage may be dominant. Whatever the dominant characteristics of your organization, it is impossible for an organization at the All White Club stage to move directly into becoming an Anti-Racist Organization. Any transition requires moving through the elements of one stage to the next.

In order to use this assessment, read through the written descriptions and the chart of characteristics and think about how your organization reflects the various states. Then fill out the worksheet that follows.

The All White Club

All White Clubs are non-profits that, without trying, find themselves with an all white organization.

These are not groups that have intentionally excluded people of color. In fact, many times they have developed recruitment plans to get more people of color involved in their group. However, when people of color join the group, they are essentially asked to fit into the existing culture. Many leave after a frustrating period of trying to be heard. After years of trying, the Club cannot figure out why they do not have more people of color in their group; they begin to blame people of color for not being interested in the group's important issue or work, or they just give up. They do not understand that without analyzing and changing the organizational culture, norms, and power relations, they will always be an all white club. While they are good people, they have no analysis of racism or of power relations and no accountability to people or communities of color.

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization is committed to eliminating discrimination in hiring and promotion.

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization sets clear affirmative action goals, clear and unambiguous job qualifications and criteria, a percentage of people of color who need to be in a candidate pool for a new job, and a bias-reduced interview process. Staff and board are encouraged to reduce and/or eliminate their prejudice and the organization may conduct prejudice reduction workshops toward this end. There may be one or two people of color in leadership positions. For people of color, coming into the organization feels like little more than tokenism.

The Affirmative Action of 'Token' Organization is still basically a white club except it now includes structural and legal means to bring people of color in.

The Multi-Cultural Organization

The Multi-Cultural Organization reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and products or services.

It actively recruits and welcomes people of color and celebrates having a diverse staff and board. It is committed to reducing prejudice within the group and offers programs that help members learn more about the diverse cultures that make up the organization. White people in the organization tend to feel good about the commitment to diversity. Like the previous two, however, people of color are still asked to join the dominant culture and fit in.

An interesting point to consider is that most multi-national corporations are at this stage, while most non-profits, even social change non-profits, are still predominantly in one of the first two stages. Multi-national corporations recognize that their financial success is tied to their customer base and their customer base is racially diverse. So, for example, in states where there are active English-only campaigns, the banks are offering ATM machines in English and Spanish. This is not to say we should model ourselves after multi-national corporations, but it is worth thinking about how they are further ahead than most of us in thinking about the implications of a changing demographics for their organization.

The Anti-Racist Organization

Based on an analysis of the history of racism and power in this country, this organization supports the development of anti-racist white allies and empowered people of color through the organization's culture, norms, policies and procedures.

The Anti-Racist Organization integrates this commitment into the program, helping white people work together and challenge each other around issues of racism, share power with people of color, take leadership from and be accountable to people of color, feel comfortable with being uncomfortable while understanding that we are all learning all the time. The Anti-Racist Organization helps people of color become more empowered through taking leadership, sharing in the power, transforming the organizational norms and culture, challenging white allies and other people of color, sharing in decisions about how the organizations resources will be spent, what work gets done as well as how it gets done, the setting of priorities, and allowing people of color to make the same mistakes as white people. The organization does this by forming white and people of color caucuses, providing training and encouraging discussions about racism, white privilege, power, and accountability, setting clear standards for inclusion at all levels of the organization, reviewing the mission, vision, policies, procedures, board agreements, etc. to insure that the commitment to end racism is a consistent theme, helping people to understand the links between the oppressions, and devoting organizational time and resources to building relationships across race and other barriers.

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Decision Making	▪ made by white people (often men) ▪ made in private in ways that people can't see or really know	▪ made by white people ▪ decisions made in private and often in unclear ways	▪ made by diverse group of board and staff ▪ token attempts to involve those targeted by mission in decision-making	▪ made by diverse group ▪ people of color are in significant leadership positions ▪ everyone in the organization understands how power is distributed and how decisions are made
Budget	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people (often men)	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people	▪ developed, controlled and understood by people of color and white people at all levels of the organization
Money From	▪ select foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated white donors ▪ often a small number of very large donors	▪ foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors	▪ foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors ▪ some donations from people of color and lower-income people	▪ comes from the community most affected by the problem(s) being addressed ▪ supplemented by foundation grants and donations from allies (those concerned but not directly affected)
Accountable to	▪ funders ▪ a few white people on board or staff	▪ funders ▪ board ▪ staff	▪ funders ▪ board and staff ▪ token attempts to report to those targeted by mission	▪ communities targeted in mission

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Power and Pay	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid very well ▪ people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions paying low wages ▪ few if any benefits, and little job security ▪ people at bottom have very little power	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well ▪ people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions that pay less well ▪ few, if any benefits for anyone ▪ sometimes 1 or 2 people of color in token positions of power, with high turnover or low levels of real authority ▪ people at bottom have very little power	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well ▪ people of color in administrative or service positions that pay less well ▪ 1 or 2 people in positions of power, particularly if their work style emulates those of white people in power ▪ training to upgrade skills is offered ▪ people of color may not be at equal levels of power with white people, but a level of respect is present	▪ people of color in decision-making position that pay a decent wage comparable to the wages of white people in the organization ▪ administrative and service positions perceived as stepping stone to positions of more power (if desired) and those positions reflect some decision-making power and authority ▪ training and other mentoring help provided
Located	▪ in white community ▪ decorations reflect a predominantly white culture	▪ in white community ▪ decorations reflect some cultural diversity	▪ physically accessible to people of color ▪ decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism	▪ physically accessible to community served ▪ decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism and power sharing
Members	▪ white people, with token number of people of color (if any) ▪ members have no real decision-making power	▪ white people and people of color, with only a token ability to participate in decision-making ▪ people of color are only aware of the organization because it is providing a direct service	▪ from diverse communities ▪ token encouragement to participate in decision-making	▪ from range of communities targeted by mission ▪ encouraged to participate in decision-making ▪ provided training to enhance skills and abilities to be successful in the organization and their communities

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Culture	▪ top down, paternalistic ▪ often secretive ▪ success measured by how much is accomplished ▪ little if any attention paid to process, or how work gets done ▪ little if any leadership or staff development ▪ no discussion of power analysis or oppression issues ▪ conflict is avoided at all costs ▪ people who raise issues that make people uncomfortable are considered troublemakers or hard to work with ▪ leaders assume " we are all the same"	▪ still top down although inclusivity is stressed ▪ those in power assume their standards and ways of doing things are neutral, most desirable and form the basis for what is considered "qualified" ▪ people expected to be highly motivated self-starters requiring little supervision ▪ some training may be provided ▪ no power analysis ▪ conflict avoided ▪ emphasis on people getting along ▪ discussion of race limited to prejudice reduction	▪ organization looks inclusive with a visibly diverse board and staff ▪ actively celebrates diversity ▪ focuses on reducing prejudice but is uncomfortable naming racism ▪ continues to assume dominant culture ways of doing things most desirable ▪ assume a level playing field ▪ emphasize belief in equality but still no power analysis ▪ workaholism desired and rewarded ▪ still uncomfortable with conflict	▪ organization actively recruits and mentors people of color ▪ celebrates diversity ▪ has a power analysis about racism and other oppression issues ▪ a diversity of work styles encouraged with active reflection about balancing what gets done and how it gets done ▪ a willingness to name racism and address conflict ▪ resources devoted to developing shared goals, teamwork, and sharing skills and knowledge (mentoring)
Programs	▪ not about building power for communities of color ▪ designed to help people who have little or no participation in decision-making ▪ emphasis is on serving or "helping" those in need	▪ intent is to be inclusive ▪ little analysis about root causes of issues/problems ▪ people in programs appreciated until they speak out or organize for power ▪ designed to help low-income people who have little or no participation in the decision-making	▪ designed to build power until people speak up and out ▪ some attempt to understand issue/problem in relation to big picture ▪ some participation by those served in program planning ▪ constituency may have only token representation in the organization.	▪ designed to build and share power ▪ designed to help people analyze and address root causes ▪ people most affected by issues/problems centrally involved in program planning ▪ opportunities for constituents to move into leadership roles in the organization

Stages of Anti-Racist Organizational Development: Worksheet

List of characteristics my organization shares from the following stages:

The Club

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization

The Multicultural Organization

The Anti-Racist or Liberation Organization

My organization's dominant stage is _____

Things I noticed:

Some goals for the future in terms of our organization's anti-racist development might include:

Assessing Organizational Racism

Western States Center Views, Winter 2001

"We don't really have a problem with racism in our community because most of our population is white."

When it comes to race and racism, many social change organizations have trouble walking their talk (and for some, even talking the talk gets short shrift). Predominantly white organizations may think that racism is not their issue until more people of color join. Or they may think that the extent of their work around race is to get more people of color to join.

The Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center believes that racism is everyone's problem, whether or not people of color are involved in your organization. Primarily white organizations can and should become anti-racist, even if their racial composition does not change. Becoming a multicultural organization is not a necessary goal of antiracist work.

The fact is, racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S.: social change groups are not exempt. The structures and cultures of community-based, grassroots groups reproduce the white privilege and racial oppression of the wider society. Whatever your social change mission, it's bound to fall short as long as racism continues to flourish and maintain the status quo.

Fortunately, organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization's own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

This Organizational Assessment — an excerpt of a longer self-evaluation tool used by the Dismantling Racism Project — offers a place to start. This sampling of questions is designed to help you examine and change the ways your organization replicates larger racist patterns.
Grab a snack and something to drink, get a pen and a pad of paper. Better yet, gather a few other people from your organization and work through these questions together. As you read each question, take a moment to answer it for your organization before reading the additional commentary.

Finally, remember: this is a starting place. The fundamental evolution needed to become actively antiracist is a long, slow, deep process. But organizations that have made the commitment are living proof that it can be done. The changes they've made confirm that the hard work of transformation is worth every minute.

Who makes decisions in your organization?

• Does your organization have a goal to dismantle racism? Is this goal reflected in your decision making process?
• Is there a shared analysis of who has decision making power and who does not? Does everyone know how decisions are made?

• Is there a deliberate plan to develop the leadership of people of color staff members and to share decision- making authority?
• Is your organization accountable to people of color organizations and communities who are affected by but not part of the organization?

Anti-racist organizations develop the leadership of staff and members so that power can be shared in a meaningful and accountable way. In an anti-racist multi-racial organization, decision-making power is shared across race. A white anti-racist organization must create a decision-making process that is accountable to organizations and communities of color; this task is essential, complicated and requires constant attention.

Who has control and influence over financial resources?

• Who develops the budget? Who does the fundraising?
• When the budget or fundraising plan reflects work to be done in support of people of color communities, do these communities have input on where the money comes from and how it is going to be spent?
• Does your organization advocate with funders to support the work of people of color organizations directly?

In an anti-racist multi-racial organization the budget and fundraising plan are understood by people of color as well as white people at all levels of the organization. Budgeting and fundraising in a white antiracist organization must ensure accountability around racism.

What kind of education about racism and oppression is provided through the organization?

• Are people of color supported in seeking information around issues of internalized racist oppression and self-empowerment either within the organization or from outside the organization?
• Are white people supported in seeking information around issues of white privilege and supremacy either within the organization or from outside the organization?
• Are there regular trainings and discussions at the member, staff and board level about dismantling racism and accountability?

An anti-racist organization will provide training and encourage discussion about racism, white privilege, power and accountability with board, staff and members. People of color within an organization will have specific opportunities to understand and dismantle internalized racist oppression, while white people are charged with understanding and dismantling white privilege.

What is the culture of your organization?

• What are the values and norms, stated or unstated?
• Are people of color welcomed in the organization only in so far as they assimilate into the existing organizational culture?
• Is white culture treated as the norm? Do the art, holiday activities, and food reflect people of color cultures?
• Is discussion of racism and oppression normal and encouraged or seen to distract from “the real work?" Do people in leadership positions participate in and support discussion of power and oppression issues?

• Are there people of color who consistently do not participate in meetings and discussion? If so, is there active reflection on why, and how to encourage more balanced participation?

These questions reveal whether the day-to-day experience of the organization reflects the lives and cultures of people of color. Groups committed to addressing racism and oppression must examine the ways that we communicate, the space in which we work, and the activities we share.

How does your organization work in alliance with people of color organizations?

• Does your organization provide support and resources for members, staff, and board members of color to develop leadership through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?
• Does your organization seek input and guidance from people of color organizations and community leaders of color in its strategic planning and decision making?
• Does your organization advocate for the participation of people of color organizations when working in coalition with other groups?
• Does your organization provide support and resources for white members, staff, and board to develop as anti-racist white allies through working with organizations or campaigns led by people of color?

An anti-racist organization will work in alliance with people of color organizations. However, the structure of an alliance is fundamental to the success of anti-racist work. Primarily white organizations often come to the table with greater staff capacity and financial resources than people of color organizations. This imbalance of power often undermines the leadership of organizations of color when working in alliance.

This Assessment Tool was developed by the Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center, drawing heavily from Dismantling Racism curriculum designed by **change***work, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707, (919) 490-4448.*

Change Teams

What is a Change Team?

Many organizations have found that anti-racist organizational development is most successful when an organization has a Change Team. A Change Team is a working committee whose overarching goal is to provide leadership and momentum around anti-racist organizational development.

Who should be on the Change Team?

Each organization needs to decide how to build a Change Team that can support meaningful change in your organization. Many Change Teams are comprised of staff and board members working together. In most cases it is important to have participation on the Change Team from your membership or constituency as well.

Job Description for Change Team Members (*Adapted from James Williams: Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges Workbook.)*

Change team members are people who:

- really want to see positive change in their communities;
- bring enthusiasm and commitment to the process. They are role models and cheerleaders;
- have a certain degree of skill in helping make change happens;
- have some degree of leadership in their organization or community;
- are willing to see themselves as change agents;
- but understand that they can't do it alone. They must build a group or organization of people who will take over leadership of the process and in turn develop new leaders.

Their job is to develop a group of people who will work together to reach their goals. This involves working with others to:

- assess the present situation, define problems, and set goals for solving them;

- identify the values the group or organization brings to this work, i.e. making sure people are clear about how they want be with each other as they work toward these goals;
- develop a strategy to accomplish their goals.
- insure that the strategy is carried out.
- evaluate and make changes in the strategy as needed.
- make sure that all contributions are appreciated and that everyone has a chance to grow change throughout the process.

What is the Job of a Change Team? (Developed by changework, 1705 Wallace Street, Durham NC 27707 .919.490.4448)

1. To lead and organize the process towards becoming an anti-racist social change organization
    - Help move people into actively supporting (or at least avoid resisting) the changes necessary to move the organization towards that vision
    - Help to resolve conflict
    - Avoid becoming 'morality police' by including others in the work of the change team
2. To lead and organize a process to evaluate the organization as it is now
3. To lead a process to help the organization envision what it would look like as an anti-racist social change organization
4. Lead a process to establish specific, clear, and meaningful goals for reaching the vision
5. Build community and move the organization to collective action
    - Help the organization think about how to integrate and/or educate those in the organization who have not been through a DR training
    - Be in open communication with all members of the organization
6. Insure the integration of the work of the change team with program work
7. Think like an organizer in helping the organizer in helping the organization move toward its goals
    - work with members of the organization to think strategically about have to reach the goals of the organization

How Can the Change Team Do Its Job? (Adapted by Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program from Judy H. Katz, White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training)

1. Identify the problem that you want to address.
    - Who else sees this as a problem?
    - Is it widely felt?

2. Identify who has the power in your organization to solve the problem.
    - What is their self-interest?
    - Do you expect them to support you or oppose you?

3. State the specific goal or goals that will move your organization toward solving the problem.
    - These goals need to be tangible. In other words, 'eliminate racism' is not a tangible goal while 'get the board to adopt by-laws specifying percentages based on race, gender, income, sexual identity, etc.' is.
    - Talk about how this goal (or goals) is (are) in line with your organization's values and mission.

4. Identify who needs to be involved in helping to shape these goals.
    - Avoid setting the goals by yourself; involve a larger group whose participation in setting the goals will raise their stake in achieving them.

5. Identify who in the organization shares a desire to reach these goals.
    - How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?
    - What is their self-interest?

6. Identify who in the organization is threatened by or opposed to these goals.
    - How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization?
    - What is their self-interest?

7. Identify any additional risks or barriers you face.

8. Identify your strengths and resources.

9. Identify the specific strategy steps the change team will take to meet the goals.
    - How will you involve allies and address challenges from those who are threatened or opposed?
    - How will you include those who might otherwise oppose you?
    - Who should be recruited onto the change team?
    - Who will coordinate the efforts?
    - When and how will people meet to work on these goals?
    - Develop a timeline.

10. Build in evaluation and reflection.
    - At what points will you revise your strategy?
    - How will you build change team morale and relationships?

Change Team Check-Up (*Adapted from Andrea Ayvazian: Dismantling Racism: Workbook for Social Change Groups*.)

Use this checklist about once every two or three months to make sure your change team is staying on track:

1. When did the change team last meet? Do you have plans to meet in the future?

2. Who is leading the change team? Is there someone who takes responsibility for making sure the team is meeting and getting work done? Has this responsibility changed hands, or has one person pretty much been responsible? How is this leadership pattern good or bad for the change team?

3. How would you describe the morale of the change team?

4. What are some of the strengths of the change team?

5. Where is the change team getting stuck?

6. Is the change team meeting resistance from others in the organization or community? If so, why and what can you do about it? When you look at your reasons, are you stuck in blaming others, in other words are you requiring other

people to change before anything can get done? Or are you taking responsibility for addressing the problems that come up?

7. Is the change team finding the kind of support it needs in the organization or community? If not, why not and what can you do about it? Are you truly encouraging new people into the organization or community? Are you making them welcome and giving them a chance to grow?

8. Are you making time in your meetings for personal sharing and reflection? Or are your meetings all business and no fun?

9. Are you accomplishing your goals? If so, are you taking time to pat yourselves on the back and enjoy your success? If not, are you taking time to rethink your strategies?

Caucuses

What are Caucuses?

All people of color and white people are affected by racism and have to work together to end racism. However, how we are affected by racism and the work we have to do is different. Caucuses are times when people of color and white people within an organization meet separately in order to do our different work. Many organizations have gender caucuses or other types of caucuses as well.

What are some reasons to have Caucuses?

People of Color can caucus in order to:

- check in and assess an organization's progress in anti-racist organizational development or racial justice organizing
- provide a safe space for people of color to talk about and address experieces of racism within the organization and in the larger world
- talk about racism and how it affects people of color without having to explain it to white people
- gain tools to talk about racism
- create an alternative power base for people of color within the organization
- build relationships
- create a plan of action
- provide a space to address how internalized racism can hold people of color and racial justice work back
- look at barriers such as anger

White people can caucus in order to:

- work through guilt and other barriers that hold white people back from being an ally and doing racial justice work
- ask questions and explore ideas that help white people learn about racism without having to learn at the expense of people of color
- hold each other accountable for actions and behavior
- build relationships
- check in and assess an organization's progress in anti-racist organizational development or racial justice organizing
- gain tools to talk about racism, white supremacy and privilege
- remind white people that work needs to be done to address racism every day

Tips for Successful Caucusing

- Successful caucusing is often based on having a clarity of purpose. Caucuses are the place to identify and talk about issues or concerns about racism, but are not always the appropriate place to solve those issues. When issues or concerns are raised it is important for the caucus to identify which organizational structures or processes should address those issues. In the case where the issue is a result of a lack of organizational structure or process, the caucus will need to identify how to give direction toward the development of that structure or process.

- One of the goals of caucusing is to create a space for building relationships between people of color and between white people that will strengthen dismantling racism work. Successful caucuses will pay attention to creating activities and time that will support relationship building.

- It is critical that there is a clear communication structure that provides a way for caucuses to communicate with one another. Caucuses do not necessarily have to come together after meeting separately in order to "report back." However, there needs to be a conduit through which appropriate information is shared. In many organizations, this is one role of the change team.

- Confidentiality is crucial to successful caucuses. Confidentiality means that personal information, stories or concerns that are shared by individuals within a caucus are not shared outside the caucus. Individual sharing may lead to group proposals, ideas or plans of action that will be shared through the appropriate channels. Caucuses must take the time to be clear and reach consensus about what is being shared and what is not.

- In some cases it is important to have an outside facilitator for caucuses. The power dynamics within organizations often make it difficult for staff, board members or leaders to facilitate a caucus effectively.

- Some organizations have caucuses on a regularly scheduled frequent basis while others may hold caucuses infrequently or in relation to other events such as board retreats. The regularity or frequency of caucuses is often based on the logistics of bringing people together. It is important for an organization to

integrate caucusing, whether frequent or infrequent, in to the organizational workplan so that caucus members have a sense of timeline for getting together.

- Just as any other committee or working group, caucuses may need to be staffed. It is crucial that people of color caucuses receive equitable staff time and resources as compared to white caucuses. It is a common barrier to successful caucusing in predominantly white organizations that the white caucus has more staff and resources than the people of color caucus. This racist practice will undermine the caucus process.

- Caucus agenda's need to be developed with intention. People of color caucuses and white caucuses will often have very different agendas. But, an organization that is seeking to use caucuses as part of a process of anti-racist organizational development must think clearly about how the caucus agendas create movement toward organizational goals. Again, it is often useful for the Change Team to have a role in developing caucus agendas.

Moving Racial Justice Organizing: shifting the utility of dismantling racism work

Dismantling racism training has been historically thought of and practiced with a focus on personal and organizational transformation. This work has tried to examine the internal workings of an organization to make them more anti-racist or anti-oppressive. But, in addition to this important individual and organizational work, we also need to move racial justice organizing in our programs and campaigns. Dismantling Racism training and political education can be a tool to prepare us to take on racial justice organizing or to strengthen the racial justice organizing that we are already doing.

Dismantling Racism work can:

1. Build a commitment among leadership and membership to a shared race analysis and a racial justice campaign. This can happen through annual Dismantling Racism workshops for staff and board. Additionally, organizations can include political education about race and racism as part of their leadership development.

Example

- Two statewide coalitions, United Vision for Idaho and Idaho Women's Network, used dismantling racism training of their staff and board to develop a shared commitment and useful skills for effective alliance building with communities of color. The dismantling racism training supported their allied work with Latino organizations who were fighting for farmworker minimum wage legislation. The legislation passed in 2001.

2. Build a base and surface leaders to move racial justice work. Some organizations have used Dismantling Racism trainings to bring in new members or find new leaders.

Example

- The Racial Justice Committee of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) organized a series of Dismantling Racism workshops for their members and partially open to the public. PLAN used those workshops to identify people with a strong race analysis as well as energy and desire to put their analysis into action. The workshops became a tool for identifying leadership that strengthened their Racial Justice Committee.

3. Blunt actual and potential racist wedge issues. Right-wing political strategists and mainstream politicians increasingly use racial issues as wedges to enhance their voting power among constituencies fearful of change, or, in some cases, to further a blatant white supremacist agenda. The repeal of affirmative action in Washington State and the institution of "English-only" laws in Utah and Alaska are recent examples. While resisted by communities of color, proponents had fairly easy work in mobilizing support of the white electoral supermajority in these states.

- Dismantling Racism work can direct predominantly white organizations to take a stand and work as allies in defeating racist attacks at the ballot box.
- Progressive organizations can use Dismantling Racism to guard against division in their membership as they oppose these racist initiatives.
- Dismantling Racism education can also prevent divisions when the opposition uses racist wedge strategies to defeat a progressive campaign.

Moving Racial Justice: What is it?

Moving a racial justice agenda involves. . .

exposing social, political and economic inequities based on race, naming racism as the problem and organizing to eliminate the inequities.

Key components of moving a racial justice agenda include:

- **Developing an analysis of institutional racism and white supremacy**
- **Raising public awareness of racial inequities and injustices by naming a framing race**
- **Moving organizing campaigns to eliminate institutional racism**
- **Building power for organizations/communities of color and anti-racist white ally organizations**

RACING THE NORTHWEST:
The Organizing Challenge in a Changing Region*

By Tarso Luís Ramos, Western States Center

When most people speak of race the "West," they're usually referring to California or the Southwest. But the West includes more than land grabbed from Mexico; there's also the Northwest, an area that includes inland states as well as Washington and Oregon.

It's an area that usually figures outside discussions on race. There is a widely held perception both within and outside the Northwest that, as one of the whitest parts of the country (about 16% people of color overall), racial justice issues here are somehow less pressing. My experience living and working in the region for the last 17 years is that just the opposite is true.

Whether it's hate group activity (the Northwest has long been hailed as a "white homeland" by the far right); police violence (the Portland, Oregon, Police Department uses deadly force at a higher rate than the NYPD); gentrification and displacement (Seattle's last black neighborhood is in the final stages of colonization; or a host of other issues, race looms large in the Northwest. The need for racial justice organizing is especially intense here precisely because communities of color are smaller, diverse, isolated from each other and more effectively marginalized by the dominant community.

The Great White North(west)

The Northwest is known for its live and let live ethos and the Pacific Northwest—Oregon and Washington—has long been considered a liberal stronghold. But consider this: bigots and white supremacists from this region head not only for the hills but also to t*he Hill*—Capitol, that is. Washington's Jack Metcalf led the anti-Indian movement as an activist, state legislator and, ultimately, a federal Representative. His contemporary, Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Wash.) fought tribal treaty rights as state Attorney General and then used his Senate position to propose that Congress eliminate tribal sovereignty altogether.

Idaho's infamous former U.S. representative, Helen Chenoweth, courted militia groups and defended the racist hiring practices of local Forest Service offices by declaring that "the warm-climate community (i.e. Latinos and African-Americans) just hasn't found the colder climate that attractive." Even "liberal" politicians can be found championing racist causes. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) recently joined with his Republican counterpart, Sen. Gordon Smith, in attempting to revive a farm labor system denounced by one of its former administrators as a form of "legalized slavery." And, as many organizers will point out, our elected bigots are even more colorful at the state and local levels.

* A version of this article appeared in the summer 2002 issue of "The Ark," the journal of the National Organizers Alliance.

The Northwest's conservative racial politics and white electoral supermajorities have made the region attractive to right-wing groups seeking to mainstream their racist agendas. A decade of Christian Right campaigns against "special rights" (i.e. civil rights protections) for lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people helped soften the ground for a more recent round of racialized attacks. In just the past four years English-only ballot initiatives were passed in Alaska and Utah; Washington voters repealed state-based affirmative action programs, perceived by many as "special rights" for black people; and state legislatures across the region have offered up a barrage of racist bills, from attacks on bilingual education to English-only laws.

Idaho, Oregon and Washington are among the fastest growing states in the country and most of that population growth represents migration from other U.S. cities. In the 1990s, high-tech industries drove a booming economy and high-wage jobs at the likes of Microsoft, Intel and Hewlett-Packard lured many thousands to what became known as the *Silicon Forest*. The "quality of life" here—natural beauty, recreational opportunities, "livable" cities, and, it seems, *whiteness*—is also a significant pull factor for businesses and people fleeing big cities (especially in California) with large and growing communities of color.

It must come as a disturbing surprise to many of these new arrivals that the Great White Northwest looks increasingly like the places they fled. While it will be a long time before people of color are a majority in Washington (never mind Wyoming), communities of color overall are outpacing white growth by about five to one. Across the region, Latin@s are the fastest growing racial group; in Oregon, the community expanded by 140% in just the last decade. The African-American and Native communities are generally holding steady and, especially in the Pacific Northwest, the Asian population (particularly Southeast Asian) is rapidly increasing. By 2025 people of color will make up about 25% of the region's population, as compared to 16% in 2000.

Race in the Region

After leading the successful campaign to dismantle affirmative action in California, businessman Ward Connerly supported a second such effort in Washington. Of any state in the Northwest, Washington would seem the most likely to reject such cynical race baiting. Washington has among the largest populations of color in the region (above 20%) and a history of electing people of color to prominent positions. Norm Rice, an African-American, was elected mayor of Seattle, King County Executive Ron Sims is also black, and Chinese-American Governor Gary Locke is now in his second term. Still, the 1998 anti-affirmative action campaign passed 60/40 at the ballot box.

While this was an electoral campaign, it surfaced many of the chronic challenges racial justice organizers face in the Northwest. These include:

- **The rest of the country takes a pass** Some of us expected substantial support from national organizations and donors. We got squat. The Northwest simply doesn't register or rate in the minds of most racial justice supporters outside the region. Of note here, as well, is that the chapters of national civil rights organizations are typically small and weak, if they exist at all.

- **Lack of infrastructure** People of color-led organizations (progressive or otherwise) lacked the experience to lead a statewide voter organizing campaign. In this context, the inevitable tensions between community and electoral organizing approaches became racialized, with a white-led "no" campaign (that built its approach around *gender*) and various poc-led community education and voter registration efforts.

- **A culture of activism and advocacy** Few community organizations in the Northwest are engaged in base building of any scale. Most organizations are home grown and few organizers have apprenticed in a successful organizing model. Advocacy and activism often pass for organizing. While present in some areas, the national organizing networks have not had the impact on organizing culture here that they've had in the Midwest or other places around the country.

- **Absence of multi-racial people of color organizing** In a region where the small, diverse and isolated nature of communities of color would seem to make alliance-building a strategic priority, there are in fact few *people of color* organizing projects.

- **Working the white masses** Very few predominantly white social justice groups weighed in during the affirmative action ballot fight. The demographic realities of the region mean that, to be successful, most campaigns (unless they're strictly local) will need a strategy for working with white organizations and developing messages for a white audience. While this is true to varying degrees in most parts of the country, building effective alliances from positions of strength is a particular challenge for racial justice organizers in the Northwest.

Despite the difficulties, racial justice organizers in the Northwest are fighting and winning important victories. I spoke with organizers from several states and communities about how the racial realities of the region have shaped their approaches to making change in the Northwest.

Against White Supremacy—Up South

If the rest of the country and the world thinks about racial justice struggles in the Northwest, chances are they think of white supremacists: Aryan Nations, Militia of Montana, Posse Comitatus, The Order, neo-Nazi skinheads, and various anti-Indian groups. Loretta Ross, who for many years organized against the Klan and other bigots down South with the Center for Democratic Renewal, only half-jokingly refers to the Northwest as *up South*. But unlike the South, whites in the Northwest have never been made to answer for white supremacy, which has reigned here since the end of the Indian Wars.

As director of the Seattle-based Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity, Eric Ward fights organized bigots in a six-state region that stretches from Washington to Wyoming. Ward was trained by human rights organizers who cut their teeth in the South, but the racial realities of the Northwest have given rise to a different organizing approach.

"In the South there's a large black community that would be sympathetic to taking on the Klan. That doesn't exist here in the Northwest," says Ward. "And so you have to engage a constituency that, because of white privilege and societal bigotry, doesn't often see its interest in taking on the

white nationalist movement." (White nationalism is a social movement whose members believe the U.S. is a white nation but that whites have lost control of the state. While some are members of white supremacist groups, the majority are not.)

The Coalition has built a network of local human rights groups that: provide support to hate crime victims; pressure local school boards to adopt culturally relevant curricula; maneuver to block white nationalist efforts at mainstreaming themselves; and work on issues ranging from attacks on abortion clinics to anti-immigrant organizing. "While people of color are ultimately affected most by the growth of the white nationalist movement, it's middle class whites who are being recruited. We're out here competing for this same constituency," said Ward.

Since its founding in 1987, the Coalition has evolved into something uncommon: a people-of-color-run group that organizes rural whites. Ward and other racial justice organizers note the importance of whites learning to take leadership from people of color, particularly on issues of race. Challenging anywhere, this work takes on a particular character in rural towns in states like Wyoming and Idaho. "We're often interacting with people who have never dealt with a person of color in a leadership position," Ward says. "Some have never met a person of color. We deal with what I'd call common, normalized racism and stereotypes all the time." But, says Ward, the real challenge comes from, "larger, well-resourced organizations that are simply not as supportive of people of color leading a large white constituency as they are of white people leading large people-of-color constituencies."

Ward concedes that people of color in this country are more likely to die as a result of institutionalized racism than at the hands of violent bigots. "So, as people of color organizers, we tend to believe that it's not a priority to fight white nationalism and we tend to let white people off the hook for this work, as well."

But in dismissing the movement as marginal "extremists" we overlook its influence on mainstreamed, institutionalized racism. After all, it's a short walk from David Duke's 1980s attacks on affirmative action as "reverse discrimination" to the current mainstream attacks. He asks, "If we believe that *our* progressive social movements can fundamentally restructure society, why would we think that reactionary social movements cannot?"

Enlarging Indian Country

This whole region was once Indian Country. Five hundred years after colonization began, Native Americans struggle to shed an invisibility that aids and abets continuing genocide. "It's a little bit better in Montana," says Indian People's Action director Janet Robideau, "because the Indian vote is significant." Montana's population is about 8% Native American and there are seven reservations spread across the state. Tribal governments have won a certain level of political clout, but the half of Montana's Indians who live off-reservation have had no organized voice for their communities.

"Everyone assumed that our issues were on sovereignty and fishing and water," explains Robideau, who organizes urban Indians in Montana. "It's not that we don't care about those

things—we care deeply about whether our people remain as sovereign nations. But we're also trying to deal with the fact that our kids are getting kicked out of the school system and harassed by law enforcement, and we can't get jobs."

Northern Cheyenne and Sioux, Robideau grew up on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation amidst vicious racism. She recalls signs in local stores that read "No Dogs and No Indians Allowed," and an incident where white parents pelted her school bus with eggs and tomatoes after a basketball game, "because our team was good." "These days most people aren't quite as blatant," she says. "But people who don't dare say anything to an African-American, Asian or Latina feel quite comfortable saying those types of things to Native Americans."

In 1992, Robideau was organizing nursing homes for the Montana Coalition for Nursing Home Reform. When they stalled in negotiations, the coalition brought the Reverend Jesse Jackson to town for a rally that attracted a big Montana crowd (2000) including hundreds of Indian People from Missoula. "I was amazed," Robideau said. "I thought there were maybe thirty of us who lived here! I found out that there were actually closer to 1800 at the time. When I saw all those Indian people at the rally, I thought 'We have to unite our voice.'"

Robideau set out to do just that, but had trouble raising money for the project. Having seen a number of Indian groups start up only to flounder and disappear a year later, she was cautious. She took a job with Montana People's Action, a predominantly white statewide community group organizing low-and moderate-income residents on such issues as health access and living wages. There, Robideau proposed organizing an urban Indian chapter, got the green light in 1996 and spent a full year lining up funding. Indian People's Action (IPA) started up the following year.

IPA was established as a direct-action organization committed to leadership development in the context of issue campaigns. Its mission is to "address the issues of institutionalized racism and change those by setting policies that are going to ensure fair and equitable treatment of Indian people." Says Robideau, "We need to change those systems that set our people up to fail." The group draws members from all across the vast state, keeping her on the road a good deal of the time.

Urban Indians weren't sure what to make of Robideau's organizing at first. Accustomed to being courted for their votes, many assumed that was her motive and would ask, "Is it election time again?" Culturally, the most difficult part of direct action organizing in Indian Country has been the issue of dues. "I would go to a house and visit and talk about IPA and how we together can change things, and that the organization needed to be supported, and people often took offense," remembers Robideau. "In our culture, it was the equivalent of offering to help someone, and then asking them for payment."

Ultimately, what got new members over that hurdle was IPA's campaign on racism in public schools. "I'd tell people, 'Look, our grandparents went through this; our parents went through this; we went through this; our children are going through this in the public school system and if we don't change it our grandchildren will experience it. That," she says, "is what really resonated with members, so they were willing to pay the dues."

Of the many problems Indians face in schools is denial of their very existence. "We had kids graduating from school who didn't know that there are seven reservations and thirteen tribes in the state," says Robideau. IPA joined with other groups to craft the Indian Education for All Act. "Our portion of that says that public education curriculum will be culturally relevant, include Montana's Indian history and be taught by culturally competent instructors." With lots of hard work, the Act passed in 1999.

The organization has branched out into other problem areas such as job discrimination and police harassment. In 2000, IPA ran a campaign against racial profiling by the Missoula police department. Robideau recounts that youth were targeted by police as gang members because of their clothes and for daring to congregate in public and that driving while Indian was treated like a moving violation. IPA turned out 100 Indians for an accountability session with the Missoula chief of police and pressed a series of demands. "From that," says Robideau, "they now have a mandatory dismantling racism training program for all law enforcement and emergency personnel *that we designed* and is Native American-specific."

Despite the group's name, there are white members of IPA. "Our very first members realized that if we were an Indians-only group, sooner or later that would work against us," says Robideau. "Besides, we also wanted to build bridges of understanding. A white person could say the exact same thing as me to a white audience and somehow it would take hold where I wouldn't be heard. We understood that and said the goal is to have more people understand what we endure and help us change it. But a lot of times where there are white people involved in organizations like ours, they do the speaking and the Indian people are in the background. So IPA has a hard-and-fast rule that only Indian people will speak publicly for the organization."

Robideau says this arrangement has been successful, and that the rare threat of division within the base has been between tribes. "One of the greatest tragedies for us as people of color is that we allow outsiders to come in and agitate us and turn us against each other," she says. Asked whether IPA has built relationships with other communities of color in the state, Robideau points out that Indians and whites account for 98.7% of Montana's population. There are small communities scattered around—Latin@s in Billings, African-Americans in Great Falls and Hmong in Missoula. Amazingly, Robideau says, "We have people who say, 'Why is all the attention going to the Hmong community? You pay more attention to the Hmong than you do to me!' That's divide-and-conquer and we add to it when we allow people to turn us against each other."

Looking back on IPA's accomplishments in its first five years, Robideau notes that before IPA, "there was no urban Indian voice. Everybody knew where the tribes stood on issues but nobody even recognized us as being part of the community as Indian people, or that we had issues." She adds, "What's really changed in terms of the climate in Montana is that we're organizing. Indian people are saying 'we have lived with this for generations and it's time that it changed.'"

Robideau recounts the conversations she had as a child with her grandfather, Alec Blackhorse, about racism. "I would say, 'Why do these people do that? We need to fight back.' And he said, 'No. You have to feel sorry for them. They don't know any better. You have to say a prayer for

them.' So I took what he said for years and then I said, 'OK, I'm going to pray for them. And then I'm going to kick the crap out of them! I'm tired of this!'"

Building Power in Portland

In Portland, Oregon—the whitest city of its size in the country—Sisters in Action for Power runs direct action organizing campaigns with a largely African-American membership of young women and girls. Last year, Sisters forced the metropolitan transportation agency (Tri-Met) to create a new low-fare youth pass for middle and high school members who lacked access to yellow bus service. The campaign saw young black girls testifying before the city council and storming the office of Tri-Met's general manager to demand accountability to transit-dependent communities.

Portland, seen as a national leader in urban planning, calls itself "the city that works" and claims a culture of community input on city projects. It's a town in which liberal advocacy groups work to make change by educating "enlightened policy makers" on the issues. "Diversity" is duly celebrated and confrontation is, well, impolite. Sisters' director, Amara Pérez, found that government agencies, elected officials and even some community leaders were upset and stunned at such direct and persistent confrontation by people of color.

"Especially in our early days, there were community leaders who saw our model of doing direct action as very foreign and unfamiliar, which was cause for suspicion," remembers Pérez. "The culture here is very much about relationships with individual people. Deals get made behind closed doors, but it's not about building power for communities of color. Then you add sexism on top of it—the fact that we're a women-and-girls organization *and* we do this kind of work. If men were running the organization it would be really different.

"It's a very strange thing, the racial dynamic in the Northwest," she continues. "There's a culture of assimilation which is different from the East Coast or where I grew up in Florida. Part of it is about what it's meant for people of color to survive here—about not openly advocating on 'people of color issues,' because doing that would somehow reinforce this marginality you're trying to get rid of. Building power and taking on the system goes against the culture here."

The fear is not entirely unwarranted. Oregon was colonized, in part, by white flight from the South following the Civil War. Exclusion laws forbade blacks to live in the state during that conflict, and in the 1920s Oregon had the highest rate of Klan membership in the Union. Chinese immigrants were largely run out on the rails they had laid, and there was no significant African-American community until World War II shipyard jobs brought blacks to Portland during the same war that confined Japanese citizens to concentration camps. Portland's communities of color have been extremely small and vulnerable and are, with some exceptions, *recent*. Most African-Americans families have been in Portland for two or three generations at most and two out of three Latin@s have arrived in just the last decade. Blacks account for about 7% of Portland's residents, with Asians and Latin@s each at about 6% and Native Americans making up less than one percent of city dwellers.

Portland has seen periods of sustained activism, including civil rights lunch-counter sit-ins, anti-war mobilizations and sometimes-militant campaigns for educational equity. Even so, Pérez has been surprised to find that among many of the people Sisters meets on the doors, "there isn't any successful organizing effort about shifting power in this city that they view as part of their history and see as an example of how you make change. In the South or in larger cities you have that as a backdrop." Still, she notes a difference in attitudes between many acknowledged "community leaders" and community members: "The people we door-knock are more fearless. They have less buy-in about not rocking the boat."

Change is coming, if slowly. Pérez says that early on leaders warned Sisters that their organizing might taint the girls and even hurt their ability to get decent jobs. Since the successful transportation equity campaign, "we now have mothers bringing their daughters to us. We go to the bank and the women-of-color tellers tell us, 'You guys are the best.' People are like, 'You brought Tri-Met down to their knees!' They're just so inspired by that."

Still, engaging with the rest of the local social justice movement can be alienating. Says Pérez, "We get requests all the time to attend local actions and rallies. We're often the only people of color organization at these events and sometimes feel that we become the exotic touch. At a recent May Day march I almost lost it at how many white people were lining up to take pictures of our members.

"The girls end up feeling like, 'How come it's only white people who do this work?' That makes it really hard for them to see themselves as part of this larger movement. Sisters has traveled to the state capitol for events organized by Oregon's farm worker union, and Pérez adds that she has taken some members to the South, "just so that they can see black people organizing for power."

The Art of Uniting Forces

"Racism is real thick here," says Ramón Ramírez, president of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), Oregon's farm worker union. Raised in the large Latin@ community of East Los Angeles, Ramírez experienced serious culture shock upon arriving in the pale Northwest as a teenager thirty years ago. As a student in Olympia, Washington, he sought out other people of color and quickly formed an organization, "just to survive."

Ramírez soon became active in the United Farm Workers' grape boycott and, some years after relocating to Oregon, helped to found PCUN. He remembers, "When I first arrived I lived about two miles away from the headquarters of the Posse Comitatus for the state of Oregon. We'd go into restaurants and find their literature." He says that racism is not quite as blatant today as it was 30 years ago, but that the semi-open racists of the past are now in positions of power. "They're in our police departments, city councils, legislature."

Since its founding in 1985, PCUN has become one of the strongest people-of-color-led organizing forces in the Northwest. In just the last five years, PCUN has had a series of major victories—both defensive and offensive. They signed the first collective bargaining agreements

for farm workers in Oregon's history and beat back policy attacks ranging from "driving while brown," to Proposition 187-style anti-immigrant legislation and renewal of the 1940s-era "Bracero" program of indentured servitude for farm workers.

Just this February, PCUN forced NORPAC, Oregon's grower-owned food processing cooperative, to the negotiating table, the fruit of a ten-year boycott campaign involving thousands of people. In the final phases of the boycott, PCUN organized dozens of campus groups across the United States to target Sodexho (the largest food services company in the U.S. and a major NORPAC customer), leading Sodexho to threaten cancellation of its contract unless NORPAC negotiated. Ramírez calls the victory PCUN's largest to date and says, "It shows how a small organization can go up against a corporate giant and bring it down and force it to change its policies."

Creating the conditions for successful organizing within Oregon's Latin@ immigrant community has required more than union organizing. "We can't just struggle on an economic front," says Ramírez. "We've had to provide ESL, literacy, and citizenship classes—and then build electoral power with those who could become citizens. We've had to get involved in a lot of other issues—fighting for immigrant rights, building a women's organization so that they could develop into leaders..." And to engage on these multiple fronts, PCUN has had to cultivate a network of organizations that complement the work of the union. An affiliated community development corporation builds and manages hundreds of housing units for farm workers—creating a "liberated zone" where organizing can take place in safety. A social service agency meets a range of basic needs and helps to coordinate Latinos Unidos Siempre, the youth arm of the movement. There is a voter organizing project and a statewide immigrant rights coalition, CAUSA, that organizes against policy attacks at the state and federal levels.

Accustomed to going it alone during its early years, PCUN focused on building its own power base. The union's independent power—in the year 2000 they mobilized over 3,000 people, mostly Latin@s, for an amnesty rally at the state capitol—has been an important factor in its ability to enter into coalitions with white groups from a position of relative strength. "Coalition building is no substitute for organizing," says Ramírez.

Ramírez attributes PCUN's success to its clear vision, adaptability and strategy of uniting various forces for movement building—all of which has been critical in its work with predominantly white social justice groups. According to Ramirez, people-of-color organizations in the Northwest have to do "double organizing." He explains, "We have to organize our own community, but in addition to that we have to build a larger movement because we're small in numbers. We've had to do a lot of work with our white allies, trying to educate them and trying to get them to make our work part of their own work."

Viva la CAUSA

PCUN has built its most effective collaborations with white social justice groups through a statewide immigrant rights coalition created on the heels of California's 1994 anti-immigrant Proposition 187. When right-wing activists in Oregon laid plans for a similar ballot campaign,

PCUN joined forces with several other groups and formed CAUSA to educate and organize on immigrant rights. But, pro-immigrant forces had no experience in ballot initiative organizing, so for strategic advice they turned to Oregon's LGBT community, which had prevailed against the odds over a series of homophobic ballot initiatives. "That's why we became really interested in working with them," says Ramírez, "even at the risk of our coalition coming apart. Our community is pretty homophobic because of the Church influence and macho attitudes. But we took that risk and came up with a really successful strategy."
CAUSA invited the predominantly white Rural Organizing Project (ROP), a veteran in the anti-queer ballot fights, to join their coalition. "Our members had an understanding of the extreme right and we had worked with members on understanding institutionalized racism with a focus on how race plays out in rural communities," recalls Kelley Weigel, former co-director of ROP.

As a member of the CAUSA directorate, the Rural Organizing Project gave PCUN access to its own members. CAUSA gave workshops and speeches at ROP conventions and, with ROP's network, CAUSA was quickly able to establish an activist network that stretched beyond the farm worker union's base in the Willamette Valley to cover most of the state. Although the anti-immigrant forces failed to qualify their ballot initiatives, this statewide network would prove critical in defeating their attacks in the legislature and a later effort to reinstate the Bracero program.

The program was co-sponsored Oregon's Republican Senator, Gordon Smith – a grower with a frozen food packaging business – and the state's other Senator, liberal Democrat Ron Wyden. "CAUSA wanted to make sure that wherever Ron Wyden went, someone asked the question of why he was supporting that guest worker bill," says Weigel. "By combining our networks, we were able to confront Wyden at every appearance." The pressure forced Wyden to back down and, ultimately, the Oregon campaign helped to block Smith's Bracero bill from becoming federal law.

Successes like these helped to cement the PCUN-ROP relationship. "What made partnership even stronger were all these attacks that kept coming down," says Ramírez. "187 was defeated, but it was introduced again and we had to fight it again. We defeated English-only, attacks on affirmative action, rollbacks on farm worker minimum wage…CAUSA has been on a roll with over 25 major victories."

Both Ramírez and Weigel say the relationship has been strong and mostly smooth—in part because of a shared commitment to anti-racist work and in part due to clear lines of accountability. "It would have been inappropriate for ROP to continue working on the guestworker issue if it did not have the leadership and guidance of CAUSA," says Weigel. Ramírez has seen his share of "predominantly white organizations that try to dictate what the needs of our community are" and coalitions where the involvement of groups of color was "an afterthought." By contrast, he says that accountability in PCUN's relationship with ROP has been "a two-way street."

Participation in CAUSA has solidified ROP's commitment to racial justice, especially among member groups in communities with a significant Latin@ presence. Still, Weigel is realistic about the impact of the collaboration: "Some of our groups are indifferent and a few are even hostile to our immigrant rights work. I know that there are people within ROP who would still

say really racist things but also understand why they shouldn't support a guest worker policy," she observes. "The same could be said for people within CAUSA's membership around gay/lesbian issues. They've put out there that homophobia is not acceptable, but it's still is there to deal with."

"It's all about the art of uniting forces," concludes Ramírez. "Our community isn't going to do it on its own. It's going to have to rely on developing a network of supporters and allies who just can't just say any more 'I support your rights,' but really have to play an active role.

Tarso Luís Ramos directs the Research and Action for Change and Equity (RACE) Program of Western States Center. Amara Pérez, Janet Robideau, Eric Ward, and Kelley Weigel are all graduates of the Center's leadership training program. Ramón Ramírez serves as President of the Center's board of directors.

Moving Racial Justice: Are you ready?

Assessing Your Organization's Readiness and Capacity to Move a Racial Justice Agenda

Not every organization is ready to take on racial justice work even if they are eager to do so. The following assessment is designed to raise critical issues as organizations and organizers think about their capacity to move a racial justice agenda. These assessments are designed to identify potential barriers to taking on a racial justice focus and outline the preparatory work that may be needed to effectively engage in and sustain racial justice work for organizations of color, white organizations and multi-racial organizations.

Read through the questions designed for your organization based on the descriptions of people of color, white and multi-racial organizations found at the beginning of each assessment. Allow these questions to help you identify barriers, challenges and opportunities for moving racial justice through organizing.

These assessments may be effective exercises for Change Teams who are engaged strategic planning or developing a workplan.

Organizations of Color *(We are referring to organizations that are primarily or entirely comprised of people of color, whether of various racial groups or mostly one.)*

Organizations run by people of color and devoted to building the power of people of color through organizing are essential elements of an effective racial justice movement. People of color must develop independent autonomous institutions that they control, although that does not exclude the possibility of working in alliance with white allies.

The assessment for organizations of color differs from that for white and multi-racial organizations. Although some of the assessment questions listed for white and multi-racial organizations may be useful and relevant for organizations of color, this section will focus on the unique context of organizations of color.

Historically, organizations of color at the forefront of racial justice struggles have faced severe obstacles. These include the difficulty of sustaining financial stability, dealing with the erratic support of – and sometimes betrayal by – white liberal and progressive organizations and defending themselves from the repressive strategies of the police, the courts, local, state and federal governments and non-governmental bodies. This history informs the approaches organizations of color may take to sustain their work over time.

Do you have intentional and effective approaches to developing leadership throughout your organization?

In order to sustain and build the work, organizations need to be intentional about leadership development. Building power for organizations of color means building a strong base of members and leaders. Concentrating leadership in the hands of a few weakens the work and makes it easier for opponents to hurt the organization by discrediting one or two individuals.

Is there a shared analysis and language about race and racism within the organization?

Does your organization have an analysis of institutional racism and white supremacy? Some groups of color mistakenly seek to address racial inequities by facilitating the assimilation of people of color into dominant racist institutions, while many people of color have internalized some of the myths about the end of institutional racism and the existence of "equal opportunity."

Does your organization intentionally work to educate its membership and the community about the realities of racism?

What is your approach if you want to target the systemic racism of an institution (school board, police department, city hall, etc.) that is headed by a person of color? Without an analysis of institutionalized racism, it may be difficult for your organization to challenge institutions headed by people of color due to fears of discrediting people of color public officials.

Does your group have a strategy for dealing with people of color groups and leaders who are recognized by the power structure but who oppose your analysis and methods?

Racism continues to try and divide people of color in order to conquer us. Does your group have an analysis and strategy to deal with tokenized and mainstreamed people of color who will attack your credibility, including and especially people who are recognized by some as "community leaders?"

Are you intentionally building alliances with other organizations and communities of color?

To what extent does the organization's analysis of racism affirm the shared experiences of various groups of color both within the organization and in relationship to other communities?

One of the ways racism operates in the U.S. is that it divides to conquer, driving wedges between various ethnic groups and communities of color. It is critical for organizations to proactively build alliances among people of color. We cannot ignore real differences and tensions, but should consciously and constructively try to mend problems and create collaboration. If people of color are divided, our work for racial justice is jeopardized.

Does your organization have a strategic approach to weighing the costs and benefits of entering coalitions, particularly with white organizations?

Organizations of color, need to be careful about coalition work with white organizations. Although such coalitions are often necessary – especially given the demographic realities of the West –there are many potential pitfalls. White organizations are often larger and better resourced, creating significant power imbalances. Few white organizations "get" racism at a deep level and have a track record of fighting racism in appropriate ways. How can organizations of color collaborate while maintaining an appropriate level of leadership, keeping their focus and avoiding getting usurped? What type of internal strength do you need to build before entering new collaborations? How can you assess the capacity of predominantly white organizations to be effective anti-racist allies to your organization?

How is your organization prepared to deal with racist attacks?

If your work is effective, you will most likely be targeted at some point, if not also constantly, in a million smaller ways. Many established organizations develop "risk management" plans to deal with all kinds of potential crises. People of color organizations should consider adding to these usual disaster possibilities (fire, embezzlement, financial crisis, etc.) some of the liabilities that come with building power for people of color in a deeply racist society: media misinformation and mischaracterization, harassing lawsuits (SLAPP suits), challenges to your nonprofit status, infiltration by government agents, etc.

White Organizations: *(By "white organizations" we mean organizations that are almost entirely made-up of white people among staff, leadership, constituency and membership. A few people of color could be part of the organization even in meaningful ways, but the organization is dominated by white people.)*

White organizations need to be incredibly thoughtful about their role in racial justice organizing. It is necessary that white organizations become active allies in struggles for racial justice, but ultimately, white organizations need to be taking leadership from and be accountable to people of color organizations and communities in the work as much as possible. The following are questions that will help identify whether white organizations are ready to take on a new or expanded commitment to engage in racial justice work.

Who is currently committed and interested in taking racial justice work on?

As an organizer or leader are you the primary one pushing the agenda? Is there a shared commitment among leaders and people who hold power and influence within the organization? How thoughtful and deep is the commitment? Are people committed enough to expend real resources for the work? Do people understand that this will involve internal work, possibly internal resistance and tension, and may impact external relationships? Are people going to back off at the first sign of trouble? The fiftieth?

If there is not a shared commitment among a critical mass of people with power in the organization who also share a sense of the potential barriers and problems that could arise, the organization is not ready. More internal education and more effort building a base of support for taking on a racial justice focus must happen.

What is motivating people within the organization to take on racial justice work?

Are people interested in the work out of a sense of solidarity with people of color, political thinking which prioritizes the work, a sense of guilt, or opportunism? Seriously thinking about these questions can help get a sense of how deep the commitment is as well as identifying potential major pitfalls.

When is adding a race analysis to your campaign work opportunistic? - *some examples*

- When this is done to garner money or to generate #s or information for a grant
- When spokespeople of color are used without any depth of relationship:

- The spokesperson of color isn't rooted in the community and has no depth of relationship to the community of color
- The organization is engaging that spokesperson without any interest in engaging the community itself

- When adding a race analysis shines the spotlight on a community that puts them in jeopardy, diverts their energy and focus, puts them in a situation they don't want to be in, and wasn't asked for

What is and has been your organization's relationships with people of color organizations and communities of color?

White or predominantly white organizations that have no relationship with people of color or organizations and communities of color are not ready to move a racial justice campaign. Nor are they ready if the relationships they do have with people of color are not particularly deep or lack a level of meaningful trust. In this context, white organizations should be beginning to develop alliances with organizations and communities of color by educating themselves about relevant issues and building relationships.

In regions or places where people of color organizations are few and communities of color are isolated, white and predominantly white organizations must act creatively to seek avenues of accountability in their racial justice work. This may mean building relationships with key organizations of color and leaders outside their community, town, city, or state. Regional organizations can be useful in helping to identify possible alliances that can hold white and predominantly white organizations accountable and that can potentially strengthen and support isolated organizations of color.

Have organizations of color identified a need for support on an issue or campaign?

How would you know if people of color have identified a need for support on an issue or campaign? This is related to your organization's level of relationship with people and communities of color. Is your organization answering this question based on common knowledge, media reports, or a specific request for your support?

Is there a shared and sharp analysis of race and racism among the organization's leadership and membership?

There does not need to be a shared analysis of race and racism among the entire organization in order to begin racial justice work (although that would be better), but if there is little shared language and analysis problems will result. Is there enough of a shared analysis among leadership that the work won't be compromised? Note that the actual process of engaging in campaign work can create opportunities for membership education if you plan for it.

Dismantling racism training and political education are effective methods of developing shared organizational analysis. An organization that is really struggling to find a language to talk about race and racism in their own organization and in their organizing work may not be ready to move a racial justice campaign.

Do you expect some resistance to taking on more explicit racial justice work?

Any type of change often comes with some level of resistance. From whom is the resistance likely to come and why? Resistance should be expected and can be worked through. Membership and constituency education can help avoid resistance as well as surface inevitable resistance in a structured setting where it can be productively discussed and challenged.

Common Points of Resistance among white organizations

Fear of POC coming into the organization

If the majority of membership or leadership of an organization is fearful of people of color coming in to the organization, then that organization is definitely not in a good position to seriously take on a racial justice focus. Rather the organization should most likely focus on internal dismantling racism education. If, however, this fear is isolated to just part of the membership or leadership than it may be possible to move forward with a racial justice organizing campaign while doing intentional internal dismantling racism education.

The research phase of an organization's campaign may provide an opportunity to provide some of the internal education needed to dismantle racist fears. Empirical and anecdotal data may move white members and leaders to begin to focus on issues rather than their own racist beliefs.

People feeling unprepared and inexperienced at working with a race analysis
Organizations can build on the work and expertise of other organizations and institutions that have experience working with a race analysis. This can be an impetus for building alliances or coalitions that bring organizations with a strong history of racial justice work together with less experienced organizations.

Relying on tried and true organizing strategies – while still being flexible - may provide and opportunity to overcome assumptions that racial justice organizing is a whole different ballgame than familiar organizing strategies. While we don't want to deny that moving a racial justice campaign may have unique strategies and challenges, sometimes the feeling of not being equipped does not represent a lack of capacity to move a racial justice agenda.

Fear of wedging membership, wanting to avoid "divisive" issues (Alinsky organizing rule)
If we avoid issues of race because we think it is divisive, we are avoiding some of the most critical issues. Too many progressive organizations have sat out key racial justice fights for fear of wedging their membership, with the effect of strengthening the racist right wing.

It's better to strengthen your constituencies' understanding of and commitment to racial justice than to avoid the issues of race and racism. Building a strong and shared analysis of oppression is key to undermining this "cardinal organizing rule." Sometimes confronting points of disagreement can move an organization past seemingly huge barriers to a whole new level of work.

Is the organization prepared not to tokenize the few people of color who are part of the organization?

Tokenism is the act of placing a limited number of people (pick one and only one) from a non-dominant group for a prestigious position in order to deflect criticism of oppression. Tokenism is a form of co-optation. Sometimes it takes "the best and brightest of the most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model. Tokenism is a method of limiting access that gives false hope to those left behind and lames them for "not making it." "If these two or three black women can make it, then what is wrong with you that you can't?"

Sometimes tokenism is unconcerned with credentials or expertise. Under pressure to stop the displacement of Southeast Asians caused by urban "redevelopment," the mayor

appoints a Vietnamese businessman to head a task force on the problem. The businessman has no expertise on housing or displacement but hopes to benefit from the redevelopment. By appointing this "token," the mayor hopes to create the appearance of concern for, or even accountability to, the community.

Typically the tokenized person receives pressure from "both sides." From those in power, there is the pressure to be separate from one's race (for instance) while also acting as a representative of the entire group. The tokenized person is expected to become a team player, which means that identifying racist activity within the organization or working on behalf of one's community is seen as disloyalty. The pressure from one's community, on the other hand, is to fight for that community's concerns, in other words, to help from the inside. Of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support. It is a "no win" situation, filled with frustration and alienation.

Example: Recruiting a person of color on an otherwise white board of directors with no intention of actually changing programs in order to serve the needs of people of color.

Adapted from Suzanne Pharr's "Common Elements of Oppression"

When predominantly white organizations take on racial justice work, the few people of color in the organizations are often put into uncomfortable positions within the organization. People of color may want to take the opportunity to caucus in order to build a strong network of support as they enter a racial justice campaign. The caucus may allow people of color to assess whether the organization is tokenizing them in order to put a "colored face" to the campaign while marginalizing people of color from meaningful positions of leadership in the campaign. The caucus may also allow people of color an opportunity to address the impact of internalized racism on members and leaders as active participants in moving a racial justice agenda.

Why is your organization primarily white?

This is an incredibly useful question to reflect on before proceeding. In thinking about this question, it is crucial to "step out of the box" and seriously test your basic assumptions.

- Is it because of demographics: few people of color in your area? Has your organization allowed demographics to be an excuse for not doing the work?
- Is it because your organization has historically framed issues in ways that aren't relevant for people of color?
- Have there been specific incidents where the organization has tried to build relationships with and include people of color but it didn't work? Why?

Multi-Racial Organization: *(We are referring to organizations that are composed of people of color and white people. A multi-racial organization, as opposed to a "white organization" for the purposes of this assessment, has equity in leadership and power between people of color and white people.)*

Multi-racial organizations devoted to building alliances across race and building the power of people of color through organizing are essential elements of an effective racial justice movement.

Similar to organizations of color, multi-racial organizations at the forefront of racial justice struggles have faced severe obstacles. These include the difficulty of sustaining financial stability, dealing with the erratic support of – and sometimes betrayal by – white liberal and progressive organizations and defending themselves from the repressive strategies of the police, the courts, local, state and federal governments and non-governmental bodies. Multi-racial membership organizations are also at risk for being wedged apart by racist attacks. This history informs the approaches multi-racial organizations may take to sustain their work over time.

Multi-racial organizations need to be incredibly thoughtful about their role in racial justice organizing. It is necessary that multi-racial organizations become active allies in struggles for racial justice, but ultimately, multi-racial organizations need to be taking leadership from and be accountable to people of color within their organization as well as other communities and organizations of color. The following are questions that will help identify whether multi-racial organizations are ready to take on a new or expanded commitment to engage in racial justice work.

Who is currently committed and interested in taking racial justice work on?

As an organizer or leader, are you the primary one pushing the agenda? Is there a shared commitment among white and people of color leaders within the organization? How thoughtful and deep is the commitment? Are people committed enough to expend real resources for the work? Do people understand that this will involve internal work, possibly internal resistance and tension, and may impact external relationships? Are people going to back off at the first sign of trouble? The fiftieth?

If there is not a shared commitment among a critical mass of people with power in the organization who also share a sense of the potential barriers and problems that could arise, the organization is not ready. More internal education and more effort building a base of support for taking on a racial justice focus must happen.

Do you have intentional and effective approaches to developing leadership throughout your organization?

In order to sustain and build the work, organizations need to be intentional about leadership development. Building power for communities of color means building a strong base of people of color and anti-racist white allies as members and leaders. Concentrating leadership in the hands of a few weakens the work and makes it easier for opponents to hurt the organization by discrediting one or two individuals.

Is there a shared analysis and language about race and racism within the organization?

Does your organization have an analysis of institutional racism and white supremacy? Some multi-racial organizations mistakenly seek to address racial inequities by facilitating the assimilation of people of color into dominant racist institutions. Other multi-racial organizations fall into the trap of using a "color-blind" or "love sees no color" analysis to mage diversity within the organization.
Does your organization intentionally work to educate its membership and the community about the realities of racism?

What is your approach if you want to target the systemic racism of an institution (school board, police department, city hall, etc.) that is headed by a person of color? Without an analysis of institutionalized racism, it may be difficult for your organization to challenge institutions headed by people of color due to fears of discrediting people of color public officials.

Are you intentionally building alliances with other organizations and communities of color?

To what extent does the organization's analysis of racism affirm the shared experiences of various groups of color both within the organization and in relationship to other communities?

One of the ways racism operates in the U.S. is that it divides to conquer, driving wedges between various ethnic groups and communities of color. It is critical for organizations to proactively build alliances among people of color. We cannot ignore real differences and tensions, but should consciously and constructively try to mend problems and create collaboration. If people of color are divided, our work for racial justice is jeopardized.

Are there people of color organizations or institutions who have identified a need for support on your potential campaign or would ally themselves on the campaign?

Although your organization is multi-racial, does your membership of color reflect the community most impacted by your potential campaign? It is important to reflect on whether your organization needs to look outside itself for additional sources of accountability in order to move forward.

How would you know if people of color organizations or institutions have identified a need for support on an issue or campaign? This is related to your organization's level of relationship with people and communities of color. Is your organization answering this question based on common knowledge, media reports, or a specific request for your support?

Does your organization have a strategic approach to weighing the costs and benefits of entering coalitions, particularly with white organizations?

Multi-racial organizations need to be careful about coalition work with white organizations. Although such coalitions are often necessary – especially given the demographic realities of the West –there are many potential pitfalls. White organizations are often larger and better resourced, creating significant power imbalances. Few white organizations "get" racism at a deep level and have a track record of fighting racism in appropriate ways. How can multi-racial organizations collaborate with predominantly white organizations without tipping the balance of multi-racial equity in leadership within their own organization? What type of internal strength do you need to build before entering new collaborations in order to support leaders of color in your own organization? How can you assess the capacity of predominantly white organizations to be effective anti-racist allies to your organization?

Do you expect some resistance to taking on more explicit racial justice work?

Any type of change often comes with some level of resistance. From whom is the resistance likely to come and why? Resistance should be expected and can be worked through. Membership and constituency education can help avoid resistance as well as surface inevitable resistance in a structured setting where it can be productively discussed and challenged.

Common Points of Resistance among white people

Fear of more POC coming into the organization

If the white membership or leadership of an organization is fearful of more POC coming in to the organization, then that organization is definitely not in a good position to seriously take on a racial justice focus. Rather the organization should most likely focus on internal dismantling racism education. If, however, this fear is isolated to just part of the membership or leadership than it may be possible to move forward with a racial justice organizing campaign while doing intentional internal dismantling racism education.

The research phase of an organization's campaign may provide an opportunity to provide some of the internal education needed to dismantle racist fears. Empirical and anecdotal data may move white members and leaders to begin to focus on issues rather than their own racist beliefs.

People feeling unprepared and inexperienced at working with a race analysis

Organizations can build on the work and expertise of other organizations and institutions that have experience working with a race analysis. This can be an impetus for building alliances or coalitions that bring organizations with a strong history of racial justice work together with less experienced organizations.

Relying on tried and true organizing strategies – while still being flexible - may provide and opportunity to overcome assumptions that racial justice organizing is a whole different ballgame than familiar organizing strategies. While we don't want to deny that moving a racial justice campaign may have unique strategies and challenges, sometimes the feeling of not being equipped does not represent a lack of capacity to move a racial justice agenda.

Fear of wedging membership, wanting to avoid "divisive" issues, Alinsky organizing rule

If we avoid issues of race because we think it is divisive, we are avoiding some of the most critical issues. Too many progressive organizations have sat out key racial justice fights for fear of wedging their membership, with the effect of strengthening the racist right- wing.

It's better to strengthen your constituencies' understanding of and commitment to racial justice than to avoid the issues of race and racism. Building a strong and shared analysis of oppression is key to undermining this "cardinal organizing rule." Sometimes confronting points of disagreement can move an organization past seemingly huge barriers to a whole new level of work.

Is the organization prepared not to tokenize the people of color who are part of the organization?

Tokenism is the act of placing a limited number of people (pick one and only one) from a non-dominant group for a prestigious position in order to deflect criticism of oppression. Tokenism is a form of co-optation. Sometimes it takes "the best and brightest of the most assimilated, rewards them with position and money (though rarely genuine leadership and power), and then uses them as a model of what is necessary to succeed, even though there are often no more openings for others who may follow their model. Tokenism is a method of limiting access that gives false hope to those left behind and blames them for "not making it." "If these two or three black women can make it, then what is wrong with you that you can't?"

Sometimes tokenism is unconcerned with credentials or expertise. Under pressure to stop the displacement of Southeast Asians caused by urban "redevelopment," the mayor appoints a Vietnamese businessman to head a task force on the problem. The businessman has no expertise on housing or displacement but hopes to benefit from the redevelopment. By appointing this "token," the mayor hopes to create the appearance of concern for, or even accountability to, the community.

Typically the tokenized person receives pressure from "both sides." From those in power, there is the pressure to be separate from one's race (for instance) while also acting as a representative of the entire group. The tokenized person is expected to become a team player, which means that identifying racist activity within the organization or working on behalf of one's community is seen as disloyalty. The pressure from one's community, on the other hand, is to fight for that community's concerns, in other words, to help from the inside. Of course, it is virtually impossible to work from the inside because the tokenized person is isolated and lacks support. It is a "no win" situation, filled with frustration and alienation.

Example: Recruiting a person of color on an otherwise white board of directors with no intention of actually changing programs in order to serve the needs of people of color.

Adapted from Suzanne Pharr's " Common Elements of Oppression"

As a multi-racial organization takes on racial justice work, people of color could be put into uncomfortable positions within the organization. People of color may want to take the opportunity to caucus in order to build a strong network of support as they enter a racial justice campaign. The caucus may allow people of color to assess whether the organization is tokenizing them in order to put a "colored face" to the campaign while marginalizing people of color from meaningful positions of leadership in the campaign. The caucus may also allow people of color an opportunity to address the impact of internalized racism on members and leaders as active participants in moving a racial justice agenda.

How is your organization prepared to deal with racist attacks?

If your work is effective, you will most likely be targeted at some point, if not also constantly, in a million smaller ways. Many established organizations develop "risk management" plans to deal with all kinds of potential crises. People of color and multi-racial organizations should consider adding to these usual disaster possibilities (fire, embezzlement, financial crisis, etc.) some of the liabilities that come with building power for people of color in a deeply racist society: media misinformation and mischaracterization, harassing lawsuits (SLAPP suits), challenges to your nonprofit status, infiltration by government agents, etc.

Criteria Worksheet: picking an issue for a racial justice organizing campaign

Describe ISSUE: _____

Criteria regarding racial justice focus

Criteria	Yes	No	How or Why?
People of color are disproportionately impacted.			
Could be framed as a racial justice issue.			
Is widely and deeply felt by communities and organizations of color.			
Affects more than one community of color or offers opportunities to build relationships and alliances between communities of color.			
Surfaces a clearly discriminatory or oppressive practice / policy regarding the treatment of people of color.			

Can be supported by strong research data and facts			
Challenges traditional racial division of labor and societal roles.			
Suggests alternatives to racist institutional practices.			

Criteria for a solid organizing campaign

Criteria	**Yes**	**No**	**How or Why?**
Is winnable. Or, can build toward a winning issue.			
Is led by people most affected by the issue or will develop a base of people affected by the issue.			
Is widely and deeply felt.			
Can be easily explained.			
Builds momentum for additional organizing campaigns.			
Focuses on institutional change. And alters power relationships			
Has a clear focus on who has the power to make the institutional change. (Target)			

Builds the capacity of the organization.			
Organization can raise money on it.			

Criteria drawn from: Midwest Academy, Center for Third World Organizing and Western States Center.

Moving Racial Justice: Naming and Framing Racism

We believe that in order to truly advance racial justice in a long-term and sustainable way, organizations must name and frame racism explicitly in their organizing.

What does it mean "to name & frame racism?"

To name & frame racism is to explicitly and publicly use language and analysis that describes an issue as a matter of racial justice. In other words, you are addressing an issue for which racism is one of the root causes, and you clearly explain how people of color are disproportionately impacted by the issue. This framing has to be done intentionally and consistently with your members and the public, even if that is not the only frame put on the issue.

Unless we clearly talk about and educate people about the existence of racism as a current and critical social justice issue, we will lose the culture war. In other words, we will allow racist institutions to perpetuate the myth throughout society that racism is no longer relevant, undermining our ability to dismantle it.

Naming and framing race and racism is about proactively creating opportunities within your organizing to do political education about racism.

In order to create a successful racial justice frame, we suggest the following:

- Develop a clear description of the racial inequity you want to address through your organizing and integrate it prominently in your messages to members, the media, and the public.
- Research the details of the disproportionate impact (inequity) on people of color in order to back your messaging up with strong facts.
- Look for opportunities in your framing to challenge the traditional racial divisions of labor and roles in our society.
- Try to provide a clear suggestions of how institutional racist practices can change.

- Of course, in order to do the above things, you need to pick an organizing issue that lends itself to naming and framing racism.

Why is it important to name & frame racism in our organizing and program work?

1. In order to advance racial justice, it has become necessary to argue the existence of societal racism.

Before the civil rights movement, more or less everyone in the United States agreed that there was an institutionalized system of racial inequality. People debated whether this system was <u>just</u>, not whether it existed. Since the mid-'60s, when sweeping federal laws were passed that largely instituted "equality under the law," there has been a steadily increasing denial of the existence of racism, or at least of institutionalized racism. White people increasingly believe that, while individual acts of meanness based on racial prejudice persist, racism as a system that oppresses all people of color is a problem of the past. Judging by the print in today's newspapers, the country's race problems seemingly have more to do with so-called reverse discrimination against white people and cultural defects of at least some peoples of color. Therefore, to advance racial justice, it is increasingly necessary to first argue and prove the <u>existence</u> of institutional racism.

2. Naming & framing racism reclaims our right to define our own reality.

One way racism and other forms of oppression are perpetuated within the dominant society is by institutions renaming and re-framing our reality. **By calling out and naming racism for what it is, we are engaging in a fundamental and critical form of resistance, reclaiming truth and reality.** How damaging is it when the media, schools, legislatures and other institutions call racist myths truth?

Example: Politicians and mainstream media have defined welfare reform as a way to protect hardworking taxpayers from mostly single, mostly women of color, mostly mothers of several children who are "abusing" the system. This definition of reality has been used to blame families in poverty for their lack of resources. When, instead, we choose to define this lack of resources as a result of racist, sexist and profit-driven institutions we take a first step toward creating real solutions. [*Note: it was only once welfare rights organizers began desegregating*

the welfare system – winning access for poor people of color who had been excluded – that the welfare system became a target. And, it's only in the last few years, as the system has been largely dismantled, that the "typical" recipient of assistance is now a women of color.]

3. We cannot defeat (or at least contain) racism unless we name it for what it is.

It is not enough to work for reforms and policy initiatives that may positively impact people of color or move forward racial justice if we are not explicit about racism as a root cause of the problem. We must not only attack institutional racism but also the racist culture and beliefs that support and propagate racism. Ultimately, **if we are not educating and advocating for people and institutions to think and act in anti-racist ways, then we are NOT addressing the root causes and are allowing for inevitable rollbacks of any of our victories**. We aren't going to end racism by tricking racists and racist institutions.

Example: If we are working on an issue that is fundamentally about racial justice but our key frame for the issue is about economic efficiency - "it would save the city money" - we may be able to convince people it is the right thing to do today, but those same people could do away with the policy in a heartbeat based on some other argument tomorrow. Or those people could vote for a completely racist initiative on the same ballot because of the economic efficiency argument. We must move people politically, not just stick with what is expedient. Of course, this makes our work harder.

4. By naming & framing racism you can take the "mask" off of coded language and denial.

In organizing we're often taught to find broadly popular, "common denominator" issues and to avoid divisive ones. But when the issue is about racism, people generally respond to "coded" messages and ideas about race, even if that's not how you frame your messages or demands. Trying to make the issues about something else can make your arguments irrelevant to decision-makers and the public. By naming and framing racism, you may have a better chance of influencing your target audiences. If you name and frame the issue of racism, people can no longer be in denial and base their actions on myths that justify those actions.

Example: Washington voters overturned that state's affirmative action laws in 1998. Voters were able to justify their positions in a variety of ways, including that they were *supporting* civil rights! The ballot title was "Washington Civil Rights Initiative" and the case was not effectively made through mainstream media, etc. that institutional racism persists and that affirmative action is a necessary, if only partial, remedy. The *No on 200* campaign targeted white women voters who were seen as possibly going either way on the issue, and designed messages that pointed out the benefits to them of affirmative action. But research has shown that affirmative action is widely perceived by whites across gender as a *race* issue, with Black men seen as the primary beneficiaries. By trying to make the issue about gender, the campaign seems to have missed the mark, failing to convince a majority of white women voters to reject the repeal of affirmative action.

5. Naming & framing racism can help us connect with our constituency, particularly people of color.

By naming racism and calling it out the way it is, you are more likely to connect with your constituency, if your constituency is people of color, because you are speaking to their *reality*. Amilcar Cabral, a revolutionary fighting Portuguese colonizers in Guineau-Bissau in Africa, said that leaders must always tell the truth as a matter of integrity and as a necessary means to keep trust with the marginalized, the oppressed – their constituents. It's hard to motivate people to engage in struggle when you're not naming things the way they are. Calling the problem economic mismanagement, when your members (or would-be members) know that the problem is racism, perpetuates the racist myths about the problem and will inevitably alienate parts of your constituency. Tell it like it is and people will know you are speaking the truth and develop trust in your organization, rather than become skeptical of a message that doesn't speak to their reality.

6. Naming & framing racism can prepare us for post-campaign work.

What happens if your campaign loses when you decided, for short-term gain, to avoid naming and framing racism? Now you've failed to win your demands AND you've also failed to educate anyone about the problem of institutionalized racism that you were fighting. If you frame and name racism, you have created a context in which the post-fight still positions you to work with your constituency. And, hopefully, you have developed a higher level of consciousness about

institutionalized racism with the public and your membership. If you are fighting a defensive battle against a racist initiative and lose, then unless you have named and framed around race, racism has now been further institutionalized *and* that reality is invisible! How do you now draw attention to the fact that racism has won a major victory, when the fight was never framed around racism?

Are you are Naming & Framing racism well?

- Did you frame it as a racial justice issue?
- Did people involved with the campaign see the work as a racial justice issue?
- Did anyone outside of the campaign learn anything about racial inequity and racism?

Building Alliances Across Race: Principles

This handout is part of a larger curriculum set developed by the Dismantling Racism Project of Western States Center.

Background:

In much of the West, communities of color have not yet built enough political power to move their agendas entirely on their own. In this context, communities of color and primarily white organizations, who would like to think of themselves as anti-racist allies, must build effective alliances in order to successfully move racial justice organizing, particularly at a statewide level. People often talk about building coalitions and alliances in a very idealistic way, but this is not easy work. Building alliances across difference, especially race, can be riddled with potential pitfalls and conflict. This work is incredibly important and requires a great deal thoughtfulness - much more than good intentions. These principles were designed to help groups proactively think about how to build effective, working relationships in an organizing context across racial differences. *(These principles do not address strategic questions of when it is effective to build alliances.)*

We encourage you to use these as a working tool. Sit down with the people you intend to work with early in your process. Review these principles and discuss how they might relate to your collective endeavors.

PRINCIPLES:

1. **Have a clearly stated organizational commitment to multi-racial, racial justice organizing.** It is not enough for individual members of an organization to have a moral or personal commitment. This commitment must be supported by the organization's time and resources.

2. When primarily white organizations are building alliances with people of color, **white organizations must have a commitment to becoming anti-racist.** In practical terms, anti-racism means much more than a superficial commitment to "diversity." To be anti-racist involves, among other things, a willingness to critique and change organizational culture, practices, and structures that oppress and exclude people of color. This work requires an openness to changing how you do things. It is not always easy.

3. **Organizations of color must have a commitment to struggle with their white ally organizations.** This means that even if white people and

organizations make mistakes, if they are showing a sincere effort to change and struggle, then give them a chance. This means making an effort to name their racism and mistakes, to hold them accountable, and provide opportunities for growth.

4. **Do not assume that the self-interests of organizations in the alliance are the same.** To build healthy alliances, it is critical to take the time to understand why people are coming together across difference to work on a particular issue. With this approach, you are more likely to find a unifying strategy.

5. **Have the political will to use anti-racist practices even under enormous pressure.** This may mean taking the time to be more inclusive despite a sense of urgency to move quickly. This may mean rejecting a source of funding for work that might conflict with your anti-racist goals.

6. **Decision-making must be above-board and transparent.** It will not work if some people or groups make decisions behind the scenes.

7. **There should be equity in agreements on how resources and power are shared within the alliance.** Equity does not always mean equal. For example, a one group, one vote approach may seem equal, but could undermine accountable power relationships. For example, if an alliance is being built around supporting a particular community, naturally representatives of that community should be providing more leadership within the alliance.

8. **There should be recognition of the valuable contributions organizations of color bring to the alliance.** Often times, white organizations may be larger and better resourced (more staff & money) than groups of color. With such imbalances, white organizations can believe they are contributing more to the work, often ignoring contributions that groups of color may bring like issue and community-related knowledge or a base of volunteers.

9. **Rather than avoiding conflict and disagreement, embrace it as an opportunity to learn**. Conflict does not need to be a bad thing. If it is approached the right way, it can ultimately make the work stronger. This requires people and organizations to not get defensive or be dismissive, but instead to be self-reflective. Actively listen to people's concerns or frustrations and critically think about why the disagreement exists.

10. **Defining the work of the collaboration needs to be a shared process**.

11. **Meetings should be held in an environment that is comfortable and accessible for participants from all organizations**. Are there people who are not able to participate in meetings because of lack of childcare or transportation? Is the meeting space culturally offensive or inappropriate or is it welcoming and comfortable?

12. **Create space and opportunity for social and personal relationships to develop as well as political relationships**. Political work becomes stronger if people are not all about business. Creating space to get to know each other in personal ways will make the work more rewarding as well as potentially helping to prevent conflict.

13. **Principles and practices should be mutually reinforcing and consistent**. It is not enough to say you believe in the value of these principles; you must practice them. Walk the talk to be successful.

Racial Justice Organizing: Organizations Holding Elected or Community Leaders of Color Accountable

When organizations target leaders of color through organizing campaigns it is important to take the time to think and talk through strategies and tactics from an anti-racist perspective.

The dynamics of racism can create intense and often oppressive situations within our organizations when responding to the problems of holding leaders of color accountable. For example: white progressives and liberals can respond to problematic leaders of color by either failing to criticize them or failing to hold them accountable at all (perhaps for fear of being called racist) or to attacking and criticizing them in an over-the-top or in a needlessly tough manner. Additionally, people of color may have a perspective of misplaced loyalty or an intense sense of betrayal in these situations. We must be conscious of our own individual thought process as well as what is driving our organizational response so we don't reproduce racism in the moment.

This handout is a set of questions that can be helpful in making such a conversation happen. We do not offer answers to these questions because the complexity of individual campaigns and contexts means each situation will be different. But we do believe that organizations committed to racial justice organizing, through careful consideration, can and should be able to target elected or community leaders of color in a principled way.

Questions to consider:

1. Do you have the same expectations of the person of color in power compared to white people in similar positions that you deal with? How are these expectations the same or different? Asking this question and examining your response is a good start.

2. How are you talking about the leader of color? Be aware of racialized language or the use of stereotypes. Are people using the term "sell-out?" Is it appropriate for white people within your ranks to call a person of color a "sell-out," or does doing so hold that person to different standards? That critique is usually more appropriate and authentic coming from a person of color.

3. Check the facts. It is important that strategies, messages, and opinions regarding a person you are trying to hold accountable are based on facts, not on feelings, impressions, or hearsay. What do you know about the person's voting record or positions? Do you have tools that you use with all campaign targets in terms of developing a campaign, doing a power analysis, and campaign research? Is there consistency in the use of these tools?

4. If your organization is multi-racial with some white leadership, or primarily white, you must prepare for the possibility of people questioning or suggesting your approach is racist. This shouldn't prevent you from trying to hold someone accountable, but it is something you should account for in your tactics. Here are some examples:

    - In regard to messaging that critiques the legislator or leader: Are there ways to craft messages that suggest you hold that person accountable to similar values and in similar ways as others?

    - If your organization has had an intentional conversation about this, your spokespeople can be prepared to take the allegation of racism head on. They could do this, for example, with an acknowledgement that sometimes leaders of color are unfortunately treated with a different standard, which is something your membership has talked about. However, in this case it is simply about the issue of ….(fill in your key critiques).

5. There is also a question of who is your organizational face; who will be publicly voicing the criticism of the leader you are holding accountable? Is it tokenistic to intentionally want your spokesperson to be a person of color, in order to prevent suggestions that your organization's position is racially motivated? Does having a spokesperson of color realistically represent your constituency? At the same time, is there is undue pressure internally on a leader of color to play that role, even if they are uncomfortable with that role?

6. As your campaign develops, are there opportunities to reflect on these questions again? Do you provide opportunities for your staff, members and leaders to debrief the racialized aspects of the campaign?

Videos for Loan

The Dismantling Racism Project at Western States Center has many videos for loan to organizations, change teams and caucuses. More detailed descriptions of video content can be found on our website at www.westernstatescenter.org.

COLOR ADJUSTMENT, Directed by Marlon Riggs (1991) 87 minutes

In **Color Adjustment**, Marlon Riggs carries his landmark studies of prejudice into the Television Age. He traces 40 years of race relations through the lens of prime time entertainment, scrutinizing television's racial myths and stereotypes.

ETHNIC NOTIONS, Directed by Marlon Riggs (1987) 56 minutes

Ethnic Notions is Marlon Riggs' Emmy-winning documentary that takes viewers on a disturbing voyage through American history, tracing for the first time the deep-rooted stereotypes which have fueled anti-black prejudice. Through these images we begin to understand the evolution of racial consciousness in America.

TONGUES UNTIED, Directed by Marlon Riggs (1989) 55 minutes

Tongues Untied is Marlon Riggs' acclaimed exploration of giving voice to the experiences of being black and gay. Using poetry, personal testimony, music and performance, **Tongues Untied** describes the homophobia and racism confronting black gay men. Riggs illuminates the violent oppression that tries to silence black gay experience. He also illuminates the rich cultures that are created when black gay men break the silence and recognize each other as brothers.

BLACK IS. . . BLACK AIN"T, Directed by Marlon Riggs (1995) 87 minutes

Black Is...Black Ain't, jumps into the middle of explosive debates over black identity. It is a film every African American should see, ponder and discuss. White Americans have always stereotyped African Americans. But the rigid definitions of "blackness" which African Americans impose on each other, Riggs claims, have also been devastating. Is there an essential black identity? Is there a litmus test defining the real black man and true black women?

TRUE COLORS, Primetime Live – ABC News with Diane Sawyer
(9/26/91)

This Primetime Investigation report shows video footage of how two men, differing only in their skin color, were treated differently over two and a half weeks in St. Louis, MO. This video documents the racism picked up by hidden cameras as these men approached the same exact businesses while looking for jobs, apartments, cars, etc.

LOCAL COLOR, Reported by Jon Tuttle 1 hour

This documentary explores Oregon's and especially Portland's history as its racist laws and attitudes have fluctuated over the past eighty years. It documents the black businesses

that thrived in Portland, before WWI, and how it gradually became one of the worst places, outside of the South, to be black in the United States.

WHITE SHAMANS AND PLASTIC MEDICINE MEN, Produced by Native Voices Public Television 28 minutes

White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men is a thoughtful critique of the appropriation of Native American culture and spirituality by white new age people who make a living and lifestyle from using and selling indigenous spiritual ritual and symbols.

FEAR AND LEARNING AT HOOVER ELEMENTARY, Directed by Laura Angelica Simón (1997) 1 hour

Fear and Learning is a rich video that explores the ramification of the passage of Proposition 187, a ballot measure passed in California in 1996 which denies public education and health care to undocumented immigrants. Based on her experience as a teacher at Hoover Elementary School in Los Angeles, Simón interviews teachers, students and parents to examine both the individual and community impacts of social policy that perpetrates racism through stereotypes, exclusion and denial of resources.

CONSCIENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION, Produced by Frank Abe is association with the Independent Television Service (2001) 1 hour

During World War II, Japanese American's were put in concentration camps in the U.S. Draft age men from the camps were subsequently drafted to serve in the U.S. military. Many young men resisted the draft on the basis that they and their families were unconstitutionally incarcerated. ***Conscience and the Constitution*** tells the story of the draft resisters from the concentration camps, to the largest draft resistance trial in U.S. history, to incarceration in a federal penitentiary to present day struggles to uncover this history.

IN THE LIGHT OF REVERENCE, Directed by Christopher McLeod, (2001) 73 minutes

Across the U.S., Native Americans are struggling to protect their sacred places. Religious freedom, so valued in America, is not guaranteed to those who practice land-based religion. ***In the Light of Reverence*** tells the story of three indigenous communities and the lands they struggle to protect: the Lakota of the Great Plains, the Hopi of the Four Corners area, and the Wintu of northern California.

KE KULANA HE MAHU: REMBERING A SENSE OF PLACE, Directed by Kathryn Xian and Brent Anbe, (2001) 67 minutes

The award-winning documentary film, "Ke Kulana He Mahu," takes us on a historical journey as scholars and oral traditionalists illustrate what life and culture was like in the Hawaiian Islands for the Mahu (transgendered individuals). The journey also leads the audience through present day culture and society to see first hand how colonization and modernization have affected the spirits of Hawai'i's people.

RACE – THE POWER OF AN ILLUSION, Produced by California Newsreel
(2003) 56 minutes per episode

Race - The Power of an Illusion questions the very idea of race as biology, suggesting that a belief in race is no more sound than believing that the sun revolves around the earth. Yet race still matters. Just because race doesn't exist in biology doesn't mean it isn't very real, helping shape life chances and opportunities.

EPISODE 1- The Difference Between Us (56 min.) examines the contemporary science - including genetics - that challenges our common sense assumptions that human beings can be bundled into three or four fundamentally different groups according to their physical traits.

EPISODE 2- The Story We Tell (56 min.) uncovers the roots of the race concept in North America, the 19th century science that legitimated it, and how it came to be held so fiercely in the western imagination. The episode is an eye-opening tale of how race served to rationalize, even justify, American social inequalities as "natural."

EPISODE 3- The House We Live In (56 min.) asks, If race is notbiology, what is it? This episode uncovers how race resides not innature but in politics, economics and culture. It reveals how oursocial institutions "make" race by disproportionately channeling resources, power, status and wealth to white people.

Recommended Dismantling Racism Reading

"Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?" and other Conversations about Race
By Beverly Daniel Tatum
Aunt Lute Books, 1999

In straightforward language, professor/ psychologist Tatum explains the development of racial identity. To illustrate her point she uses anecdotes about her sons, excerpts from research interviews, and essays written by her students.

Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work For Racial Justice
By Paul Kivel
New Society Publishers, 1996

Kivel has a long history of working as a white man to educate others to work against sexism, racism and other oppressions. In Dismantling Racism, Kivel lays out how white people can move from caring about racism to acting to end racism. It is a great introduction to general theories of oppression.

Bridging the Class Divide and other Lessons for Grassroots Organizing
by Linda Stout
Beacon Press, 1996

In ***Bridging the Class Divide***, Stout weaves the story of her life and her struggles with class oppression with the development of a grassroots organizing method modeled by the Peidmont Peace Project. Grassroots or community organizers will be constantly challenged to reassess our own strategies and models. Although Stout focuses on eradicating barriers of classism, her book and the Piedmont Peace Project grapple with the intersections of race, class, gender and sexual orientation as they occur within an organizing context.