



**Compilation of notes  
EMANCIPATION AUTUMN Course  
2012**

*the course EMANCIPATION EDUCATION & ACTION For LIBERATION took place at the Atlanta Campus of University Sin Fronteras between October 15 and Nov 19, 2012 and these are the notes taken from the actual class dynamics...*

**CLASS ONE: Life Road Map and UNSIF Orientation**

**SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN LESSONS FROM THIS SERIES OF COURSES**

**1. Introduction and Life Maps (October 15)**

- How have individual experiences related to knowledge for organizing?
- People describing “their moment” of awareness shed light on the combination of our experiences.
- The impact on social relationships of the commonality of individuals’ development
- The benefits of sharing with a supportive elder
- Someone else’s reactions to our stories reflecting back to one’s self
- Learning about the role of rape in the fighting in the Congo
- “Workers of the world, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains!”
- Feeling light coming from each of us as crisscrossing beacons
- Everyone seemed special and powerful.
- Discovering the similarities across cultural groups
- Thinking more carefully about what I hold dear
- Realizing that this is a good group to be in
- This kind of education is energetic and liberating.
- It is a privilege to build liberation together through dialogue.

## 2. Power: Atlanta under Thirty-Five (Plus) Years of Black Rule (October 22)

- There have been many divisions in Atlanta, with some people coming and others leaving.
- For many, building a family has been more important than building a community.
- We need to pay attention to the strategies of the individuals representing us.
- Atlanta has become a symbol for and signal of apartheid in the context of twenty-first century capitalism.
- Having a black mayor or President can give us a false sense of independence.
- There can be a variety of good and bad conclusions about what political power for some black people has meant, including its having given some a false sense of security.
- Black rule (with a “Black Massa”) for over thirty-five years has included many missed opportunities.
- Much of the history has shown how power can corrupt.
- Political power is limited if it does not include economic power.
- There have been forms of black power in Atlanta for over a hundred years, since black businessmen on Auburn Avenue began moving in tandem with white elites, and the problems that have often accompanied access to power for some black individuals continue today.
- It has been possible to live an entire life in cities with black mayors (Cleveland, Detroit, Little Rock, Atlanta). For each administration, it has been important to decide who was really running the show.
- This history raises the question of whether we can have serious change without a mass movement.
- The problems that have come in part because of ignorance of history show how important it is to understand history, including developments such as the missing children of Atlanta.
- We have experienced some advances, but our institutions are still colonized.
- The people of Atlanta have not had a clear enough sense of liberation.
- There has been some upward mobility but not for all of the working poor.

## 3. Transformative Leadership (October 29)

- Leaders can be seen as equivalent to root doctors.
- Leaders need to pay attention to when changing conditions require new

strategies.

- At times there have been too many leaders and at times not enough.
- By realizing how colonized the standard idea of leadership has been, we can decide to rethink what leadership should involve.
- Leaders without a base cannot have true success.
- Leaders come out of their experiences in struggles.
- There are different kinds of transformative leadership.
- We are, in one way or another, all leaders.

#### 4. Action and Power (November 12)

- Since nation-states affect movements, we have a stake in their existence and nature.
- Power is divided by too much emphasis on “isms.”
- Reactionary forces gain power when they preempt us.
- The discipline of the line
- The need for the liberation of education
- The problems with “push” and “pull” models of leadership
- Protests can lead to the power to build.
- We need to learn from both the strengths and weaknesses of past and present movements.
- The biggest enemy of liberatory power is FEAR, which gives power to the people’s enemies.
- We need to keep seeking and carrying out actions that will free people of their fear.

#### 5. Emancipatory Education (November 19)

- Emancipatory education is an active process.
- The activities of Project South involve emancipatory education.
- The focus need to be on how to enable everyone to learn about liberation.
- We need to reject the standard criteria for who should and should not receive certain kinds of education.
- We’re all learning a complicated dance.
- We need to be clear about what we need to be liberated from.
- We are all learners and all teachers.
- Being with all of this group involves breaking out of the box of a standard classroom.
- There is something powerful rooted in people’s experiences and definitions of liberation.
- We each have different kinds of knowledge which we need to share with

each other.

- To achieve liberation, we first have to decide what we need.
- We need to think about how our own work connects to liberation.
- Colonial education is so mean-spirited that individuals' educational successes can make the colonial institutions even more powerful.
- The way Jenice carried out this class illustrated how liberatory education works.
- We need to consider the roots of education.
- Liberatory education requires breaking down old boxes and sharing knowledge.
- Emancipating education is a long-term project, but liberating language can help speed it up.
- The imparting of knowledge is not the same thing as true education.

#### RUBEN SOLIS ON THE UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS

- The classes in Atlanta during the Liberation Summer Semester marked the beginning of this university and its methodology and served as an experiment in what might and might not work.
- We still need to answer many questions about how to proceed successfully.
- You cannot teach liberation. Only sharing each other's knowledge can lead to individuals becoming liberated.
- Some students from the first course helped plan the second one.
- Twenty-nine people participated last summer and about thirty-five this time.
- Project South and everyone who participated gave the university the kind of thriving environment it needed.
- We wanted Jenice to return so she could illustrate the model of liberatory education.
- We also learned from the Southern Movement Alliance and the People's Hundred Days.
- Our university is not static.
- We have been looking at the South and the United States from fresh angles.
- We have seen how effective the round-table process can be in creating collective, non-competitive sharing of knowledge that does not rely on who knows more or who has been trained in what field.
- We have picked up all of the knowledge each of us brought to the class.
- Next year, we'll need to pay attention to a number of problematic political events and developments that we will arise. The next course will come at

- an important moment in history.
- We need volunteers for planning and carrying out future classes. Ruben will be in Atlanta from January to May to participate in this.
  - Atlanta is becoming the flagship campus, a crossroads of struggle, race, and nationality.
  - Listen to what the process tells you that you should be doing.
  - There is a course going on right now in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Nine people in Detroit are starting a campus. Plans for classes are also developing in San Antonio, Tucson, and El Paso.
  - The Liberation Spring semester will flow into the Freedom Summer and then the Emancipation Autumn semesters, as we reflect more on the freedom movement in the South, study blues and hip-hop cultures, and reproduce the decolonization process in other contexts.
  - There will be a board meeting for the University in Atlanta in March.
  - Each person who attended a course will receive a certificate of completion.
  - Possible improvements for the program: union participation; t-shirts and bok bags with the logo; taking more advantage of the inter-generational connections, including possibly an oral history program; rethinking the indigenous experiences distorted by Thanksgiving celebrations.
  - We need to keep our attention on fighting epistemicide.

## **CLASS TWO: Atlanta's Radical Black Tradition in Liberation**

KEY POINTS FROM A UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS CLASS ON OCTOBER 22, 2012

### INTRODUCTION BY EMERY WRIGHT

- ☒ Tonight we are focusing on the more recent history of colonization and decolonization in Atlanta, considering way in which it involved a struggle between The Atlanta Way and People Power.
- ☒ To do this effectively, we need to follow the lead of the African American novelist Toni Morrison who noticed that because slave narratives (oral histories and memoirs of ex-slaves who had somehow escaped the South) were written to convince white northerners to oppose slavery, they sometimes avoided a direct description of the worst horrors experienced by enslaved people. Careful reading, however, can uncover Aveiled@ references, subtle clues to the full story. To understand the full story of slavery, we therefore have to Alift the veil@ and expose as much as possible, what really was happening.
- ☒ To figure out how we can decolonize Atlanta and Georgia, we need to lift the veils that are hiding both the ugliest and the most encouraging truths about oppression and resistance.

- ☒ Part of this process requires thinking about the South as an internal colony, serving as a source of raw materials for northern industries, who then sold us their manufactured products for a profit.

#### INDIVIDUAL SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHAT TRUTHS ABOUT ATLANTA NEED TO BE EXPOSED BY LIFTING THE VEILS THAT HIDE THEM

- ☒ The roles of Atlanta youth and other unsung heroes, especially women, in the Civil Rights Movement
- ☒ Medical experimentation here, including using poor people to test birth control products
- ☒ Experiments by the CDC (Center for Disease Control) on young black boys
- ☒ The full story of reactions to the missing and murdered children in late 1970s and early 1980s, including safety tactics developed by communities to protect their children
- ☒ New thoughts about the black men who were boys during the days of the murders who are currently diagnosed as being Aparanoid@ without considering the possible impact of the trauma of having to fear for their lives when they were children
- ☒ The closing of mental hospitals
- ☒ Mining pathologies to make money for pharmaceutical companies and other health care industries
- ☒ The various roles of public transportation in Atlanta at different points, from trollies (on which black people were attacked during the riot by white people in 1906) to freeways
- ☒ The history of homeless people here, including when officials in charge of the Olympics forced them to hide in alleys so no visitors would know they existed; the influence of business authorities on how the homeless are treated; and current attacks on downtown shelters
- ☒ The history of public housing coming first to Atlanta and being fully destroyed here first
- ☒ The full story of the original colonizers of Georgia (as a lesson for our youth), including the truths about how DeSoto and James Oglethorpe actually dealt with the people already living here and with enslaved people
- ☒ The lies behind the indoctrinating propaganda on and at Stone Mountain, particularly the use of a light show to romanticize three leaders of the Confederacy who fought a war to preserve slavery
- ☒ The varied influences on black youths, such as sports, entertainment, praising individuals with a lot of money, and different forms of tribal communities/zones for them
  
- ☒ The inside story of the closures and consolidations of schools, Amendment One (to enable the Governor to allow the creation of specific charter schools already turned down by local school districts), and other strategies that are making it harder for public education to guarantee that all students receive a quality education
- ☒ The ways in which both local and national (and probably international) corporations and corporate leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council), the Koch Brothers, Bill Gates, and other members of the .01% are seeking and sometimes managing to take control of local public services, particularly in the educational-industrial, the health-industrial, and the prison-industrial complexes.

- ☒ The impact of drugs at different points in the history of Atlanta, particularly the crack epidemic
- ☒ Similarities and differences between the causes and results of the current economic bust in Atlanta and that in Houston in the 1980s, including their role as regional hubs and ways in which business and government leaders policed information to maintain a positive but false facade
- ☒ Histories of radical resistance, including the use of violence for self-defense, as in the Black Liberation Movement and slave revolts
- ☒ History of and current circumstances for Latinos in the Atlanta area, including when local officials encouraged Mexicans to come here to work in 1996 so the construction for the Olympics would be ready in time; and how those same workers were pressured to leave after the Olympics
- ☒ The political structure of Atlanta, including the role of black officials
- ☒ The history of changes in the neighborhoods of Atlanta
- ☒ Who is encouraging and who is benefiting from the increasing use of surveillance video, similar to that in London, especially for different levels of police and military forces involved in law enforcement
- ☒ History of the demolishing of housing in different areas in Atlanta
- ☒ The ways different forces have tried to restrict the collective strengths of local communities
- ☒ Discovery of small and large spaces throughout Atlanta, such as the Atlanta University Center, that can serve as centers for dialogue and resources for activism
- ☒ The history of Atlanta as a center of intellectual pursuit and support of mass struggle, including the local role of leaders such as W. E. B. DuBois, and local colleges and universities, particularly those that are part of the Atlanta University Center

#### INDIVIDUAL SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW AND DO TO DECOLONIZE ATLANTA

- ☒ Expose fake notions of freedom that are supported by schools, such as when they tell students to do assignments that downplay the full impact of the slave trade.
- ☒ Learn from similarities and differences between the histories of the U. S. South and of South Africa, including how neo-colonialism in Atlanta has coopted resistance.
- ☒ Find approaches to decolonization beyond just electing black people to office by learning how the city too busy [making money] to hate@ has affected the education, prisons, and health care systems. Discover and learn from any victories that have occurred.
- ☒ Pay attention to how business interests have benefited from and encouraged continuing colonization.
- ☒ Figure out what the techniques of colonizing have been and are at this point, including how business interests at Atlantic Station opposed the presence of people they labeled Aundesirable elements.@
- ☒ Uncover what resources are in Atlanta that other people (colonizers and neo-colonizers) want, particularly in neighborhoods that have been or will be attacked by gentrification. How can we take advantage of and reuse these and other resources, even in small areas?
- ☒ Figure out the patterns that have been connected to the role of Atlanta as a hub for

different kinds of people coming and going, especially those leaving rural areas to try to live in a city.

- ☒ What has been the role of Atlanta as a colonial capital? What rural resources have been taken to create wealth for a minority of Atlantans?
- ☒ What has been the role of Atlanta in the context of imperialism?
- ☒ What beyond railroads [which, since the mid-nineteenth century, have spread from Atlanta in all directions] has made Atlanta a central point?
- ☒ How can we make Atlanta a fulcrum/a strategic point for activism?
- ☒ How can decolonization work when it is not so clear-cut as forcing colonizers to leave so the original landowners can once again control their own lives and resources?
- ☒ What kinds of multiracial solidarity do we need to create?
- ☒ What are the similarities and differences between past and present Atlanta?
- ☒ Think about the roles for youth in making positive changes.
- ☒ We need to oppose the power of the alliance between the white Chamber of Commerce and the black bourgeoisie, including its role in the prison-industrial complex which, in Georgia, has come to mean Aone strike, you=re out.@
- ☒
- ☒ PRESENTATION BY EMERY WRIGHT ON EXAMPLES OF COLONIZATION IN ATLANTA
- ☒ One of the techniques of the ruling class in Atlanta to enforce social control has been by spreading mythical propoganda about Athe Atlanta Way:@
  - ☒ Atlantans choose compromise over confrontation.
  - ☒ Atlantans are too busy [making money] to hate.
  - ☒ Atlantans welcome [some] people with [a facade of] southern hospitality
  - ☒ Atlanta is always good for businesses.
  - ☒ Atlantans do not riot [except when they do].
  - ☒ Black and white Atlantans always find ways to work together for the benefit of both.
  - ☒ AWhite flight,@ when white people have left neighborhoods because Atoo many@ black people were moving in, had nothing to do with racism.
- ☒ AThe Atlanta Way@ was first used as an expression after white Atlantans rioted in 1906, attacking and killing many black people. Some white and black leaders came together and agreed, in effect, that Athe Atlanta Way@ would mean that some powerful white people would support some of the changes sought by the wealthiest and most influential black leaders in exchange for the black leaders promising not to support armed or any other kind of radical resistance.
- ☒ Colonization also affected the HCBUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), including those at the Atlanta University Center when influential educators imposed a patronizing, limited form of education on people of color inside and outside of the United States.
  - ☒ Thomas Jesse Jones was a Welsh-American who after teaching black students at Hampton Institute in Virginia, supported only a patronizing form of vocational education for people of color. As the Educational Director of the Phelps Stokes fund, he helped establish these kinds of schools for black Americans, Native Americans, and Africans. Rather than respecting the knowledge and skills of the students, the teachers at his schools, some of which still exist, assumed that the students needed to learn basic Acivilized@ practices such as brushing their



teeth.

- ☒ We can learn from attempts to fight back against this version of colonization.
- ☒ There has long been a medical system of apartheid as when antebellum medical students were encouraged to study in Atlanta where they could experiment on live subjects (slaves).
- ☒ The transportation systems of Atlanta, especially railroads and highways, have been organized from the start to make it easy to ship raw materials from different parts of the Southeast to the North and then bring manufactured goods back into the South.
  - ☒ More recently, some of the highways, particularly I-75 and I-20, have become key corridors for the drug traffic.
  - ☒ Around 1970, there were plans to destroy much of Auburn Avenue, the traditional cultural and economic center for African Americans, to expand the interstate system, but the opposition grew so strong that this never happened.
- ☒ The election of Maynard Jackson as the first black mayor of Atlanta in 1973 signified for some the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement for black Atlantans and for others (at least in hindsight) the founding of a political machine that tended to benefit elite black leaders the most, especially once the expansion of the airport offered more patronage opportunities (business contracts in exchange for political support).
  - ☒ Video on the Maynard Jackson years showing his pledge, "Never shall I let you down;" the extent of white anxiety because of such a change; and the realization of Ethel Mae Matthews, Atlanta leader of the Welfare Rights Organization and the Peoplestown Advisory Council, that Atlanta had become an excellent place for only some black people. When Jackson spent a weekend with a family living in a housing project, the media presence overwhelmed his hostess.
- ☒ The airport became a cash cow for the black elite in Atlanta.
- ☒ In 2008, Kasim Reed defeated the candidate from the old Jackson political machine, but Reed has recently been enjoying his power over business contracts for the airport.
- ☒ There were many demographic changes between the 2000 and the 2010 censuses. In 2010, 44% of the population of Fulton County were listed as black (up 11%) and 41.6% as white (up 2%).
- ☒
- ☒ REPORTS ON THE RESULTS OF THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF BLACK RULE IN ATLANTA
- ☒ There have been close relationships between veterans of the SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) and the ANC (the African National Congress in South Africa)
- ☒ The black leaders have thought of themselves as representing the people.
- ☒ There have been various influential caucuses and associations and some movement veterans have been put in positions with some power.
- ☒ Group One: There has been a balance between a sense of empowerment and the limitations of being able to evaluate what is right and wrong in actions.
- ☒ Group Two: There has been a disconnection between the leaders and the people, who have received only small pieces of the pie. The gains have not been collective. There are some haves and more have-nots in Atlanta.
- ☒ Group Three: There has been an increase in the separation between educated and non-educated blacks in Atlanta, along with higher rates of poverty.
- ☒

- ☒ ONE PAGE QUESTION: What struggles/forces in Atlanta do you think are critical to being able to undo colonial legacies AND to build people=s power?
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- ☒ FUTURE CLASSES: October 29 (Leadership); no class on November 5: November 12 (Action); November 19 (Synthesis)
- ☒
- ☒ This summation of the main points made at a class for the Liberation Summer of the Universidad Sin Fronteras is selective, to some extent organized by topic rather than in the order in which they were stated, and often paraphrased. I encourage anyone in the class to suggest additions or corrections.

### **CLASS THREE: Leadership for Liberation**

KEY POINTS FROM A UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS CLASS ON OCTOBER 29, 2012

Main Focus: LEADERSHIP

PRESENTATION BY GLORY KILANKO

- We talk about leadership without thinking about what we should look for. Different interpretations of history have involved different depictions of ideal leadership, whether assuming that great individuals were the most influential or that it was a mass movement or a combination of the two.
- Leadership can be individual or collective. The tactics used by different leaders can vary.
- Today, leaders need to consider the impact of globalization and electronic organization. There is a difference between just being articulate and actually helping make things happen.
- Transformative leadership will get us from one place to another. Transformation is a spiritual experience connected to how you attach yourself to the struggle you are committed to, laying a platform to enable you to continue the struggle.
- It sends a powerful message when someone risks their own life to make way for others.
- Leaders have to listen to and relate to all kinds of people. Bottom-up leadership is better than top-down because he who wears the shoes knows where they pinch. We can't develop a solution without first walking with people to learn their pain, to understand why they think as they do. Outside "experts" can be helpful only if they first listen to the people in a community and then help them come up with solutions to their problem.
- We need to learn from social history and events around the world to see how change can happen, to think globally and act locally.

PRESENTATION BY JEROME SCOTT

Five points of leadership:

1. Leaders solve problems like root doctors do. They get to the roots of a problem before

trying to figure out a solution.

2. Leaders develop new leaders through political education and practice. This education is most effective when it develops in collectives so discussions of problems can lead to more rounded, more effective answers. Political education needs to be related to the work a group is involved in rather than involving abstract political education in order for the group to be able to develop realistic actions.

3. Leaders come out of and prove themselves in the crucible of social struggle. Can they take actions by themselves? What are the sources of their credibility? How can they earn the right to be heard?

4. The old model that leaders have been rugged individuals with all the knowledge is a distortion of history that the people in power want us to believe. Leaders cannot exist without a base to which they are responsible and which they are always expanding. Leadership is accountable to its base through collective assessment, decision-making, and evaluation. It is important for everyone in a group to know and trust each other.

5. Leaders are independent thinkers who are clear, visionary, and strategic. They have a firm grasp of history and of the current moment while they are struggling day-to-day for fundamental systemic social change for the long haul. Leaders look for key qualities in the collective. The idea that leaders all have the same salesman personality is a false image. There are ways for different types of people to lead, including quiet people who talk at the right time.

We need to redefine the words we use, moving beyond the definitions imposed on us, especially when the mass media have coopted our terms (as in Chevrolet "becoming "a revolution").

#### PRESENTATION BY GLORY KILANKO

The most important qualities of transformative leadership:

1. Leaders have a base and are always expanding it. A leader without a constituency is not actually a leader. We cannot win if we do not have a diverse base; our strength is in our numbers. We need to move out of our comfort zone to learn how other people feel without becoming judgmental.

2. The old sense of leaders being necessary to keep order no longer applies. As visionaries who think independently, clearly, and strategically, leaders can act ahead of the oppressors and develop ways to confuse them. They need to understand the community well enough to be able to detect when tensions have developed, to take the temperature of the room, and always to be ready to make a strategic switch in actions. They do not call endless meetings at all times at great expense.

3. Leaders use a collective process for decision-making and evaluation. They have to understand their group's mission and know why they are doing what they are doing, what changes they want to bring about. Leaders are capable of self-evaluation. Rather than becoming angry and defensive when criticized, they are open to understanding the criticism as an educational opportunity.

4. Leaders develop new leaders, seeking opportunities to assign tasks to others. They take generative actions such as encouraging individuals who raised a significant issue at one meeting to speak at other meetings.

5. Leaders solve problems.

6. Leaders come out of and prove themselves in social struggles where they are engaged as participants. Their work speaks for them.

An example of Glory's experience in a trade union struggle in support of university staff workers:

When trying to understand problems they were facing in the union, they realized that these problems were related to the willingness of the head of the union to accept favors from the managers. He was separating himself from the membership and may have even been responsible for which union activists were being singled out for negative treatment by the university. The people supporting an active role for the members arranged to change the approach to negotiations. They said that all issues relating to welfare matters would be negotiated by Glory because they could trust her not to sell them out. She promised that she would not negotiate anything without first reporting to the workers anything the managers said to her and then reporting back to the managers the workers' responses.

This example illustrates the importance of developing strategies that fit specific circumstances. One leader's weakness required a new strategy to prevent the union president from negotiating by himself. This had the added result of putting more people becoming leaders.

Leaders should ask a group to consider the following questions, remembering that it is better to teach people to fish than to give them fish to eat:

1. What is/are the problem(s)?
2. What do you think we should do?
3. How can we do that?
4. Who should do what?

#### INDIVIDUALS' COMMENTS ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

- Leaders can polarize people by demanding that followers do certain things or first stepping forward and then pulling back. Too often people follow leaders in a way that is muddled.
- It is important to be part of a process and not feel in total charge, to have a controlled ego. How can one learn how to be an effective collective member, leading only when needed, instead of encouraging competition as is done in schools?
- Leadership involves the ability to implement something after learning relevant lessons from history.
- Leaders create spaces where people can deal with existing challenges. They facilitate the formation of a collaborative space.
- Some political leaders have not been very effective. How can we educate political leaders?
- Root doctors are traditionally mentors who learned from their own mentors.
- Some people can talk beautifully but cannot work well with people.
- Sometimes leaders disappoint us with their behavior, as when Stokely Carmichael accepted the attention of female groupies. People can find it harder to grow when they are put on pedestals.
- The idea of leadership too often involves the concept of a supreme leader with

special qualities. We should not assume that some people are natural leaders and others natural followers.

- It can be difficult to delegate responsibilities in ways that will allow new leaders to develop.
- Ego can be a problem when leaders stick to their personal goals.
- The need of a combination of qualities shows the complexity of leadership.
- There are different ways to inspire and motivate people.
- A collective can become capable of taking leadership, becoming neither an individual leader or a rudderless group but instead a leadership cadre.
- After World War I, a man who began to plant trees to restore destroyed forests inspired so many people to help in the process that his goal was reached.
- Leaders should open a space to allow fires of energy to blossom.
- Neoliberals pretend to be nice but aren't. They claim to represent the oppressed but actually are seeking to benefit corporations. Be wary of people who call themselves liberals.
- Organizers of the "We All Count" campaign asked who was missing from the table, who else mattered, and how they could reach them.
- We need a better word for "leaders" to refer to those who can bring people into becoming participants in a movement.
- We need to be critical of leaders' strengths and weaknesses, to hold them accountable, as Malcolm X did with Elijah Muhammad.
- Qualifications other than ego make a person a special leader.
- Collective decision making can occur in spite of tensions when leaders know things others do not know.

LES : Transformative leaders understand that transformation can happen only when we get there together. A flip-side to transformative leadership is when would-be leaders expect people to do what they do to receive a reward or in order to avoid a punishment or an alleged guarantee of failure.

ONE PAGE QUESTION: What struggles/forces in Atlanta do you think are critical to being able to undo colonial legacies AND to build people's power?

AN INTERACTIVE WEBPAGE FOR THE CLASS IS BEING DEVELOPED.

FUTURE CLASSES: October 29 (Leadership); no class on November 5; November 12 (Action); November 19 (Synthesis)

## **CLASS FOUR: PROTEST ACTION for Liberation**

KEY POINTS FROM THE UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS CLASS ON NOVEMBER 12, 2012

Main Focus: ACTION

### THOUGHTS FROM THE CLASS ABOUT THE ELECTION

- I am concerned about a backlash from the Republicans
- We need to own the story of the South instead of allowing the media to get away with presenting a distorted version of our region.
- Corporate media have reframed what happened, such as in their distorted version of the significance of the "new demography;" we need to state what it actually means.
- While the circumstances for public education would have been even worse with a Romney Administration, Obama and Arne Duncan have been more problematic than helpful. Some progressive educational leaders around the country have started writing statements about how we might assert concerns for education more effectively. (See especially Bill Ayers' "Letter to President Obama.")
- I did vote, but I did not believe it was going to matter much, especially because people seem to have been too comfortable with Obama. We need a paradigm shift that will allow new ideas.
- I am glad Obama won. We need to stay humble but still raise our issues.
- I am relieved that we can now be on a path both with and against Obama. The role of black and brown voters has created space for a new conversation about how to achieve more black and brown unity.
- I am elated by Obama's victory but also appalled by the ugliness of some of the racism online.

### PRESENTATION BY RUBEN SOLIS

#### The Background of the Universidad Sin Fronteras

- The idea of a university which could help create liberation and revolution developed in 2010 when I was working on a history of the Southwest Workers' Union. In 2011, we established a board and developed the basic aspects of the core curriculum.
- The core areas of study for this university are colonialism and liberation; the economic history of capitalism and globalization; and development of selves and organizations, including overcoming forms of internalized oppression.
- Rather than just interpreting the world, we seek to change it. The approach and the content of the pedagogy needs to be emancipatory (liberatory) in a fashion that will create leadership.
- Rather than being competitive and turning classes into contests over who knows the most, we seek to share knowledge. Synthesizing all of our knowledge can make it belong to each of us.
- Out of disciplined discussions, our knowledge will grow.

#### Action

- Radical activists of the 1960s tended to follow a "pull model" of organizing, seeking to convince the masses that their leaders knew what was good for them, so

they should join them as activists.

- In the 1980s, as a right-wing revolt grew and groups often focused on identity politics, activists followed a "pushing model," aiming to stimulate the masses to become leaders.
- Since about 1999, activists have realized that because the existing models of organizing were not sustainable, they needed to let things in the movement for social change develop naturally until a true level was established. They were ready to try then a "propulsion model" of oxygenating people's knowledge and ideas to enable them to move forward together like a rocket, without expecting the leaders to arrive first at the goal in order to serve as gatekeepers. This is the approach we are following now.
- We now face three basic questions: What is power? What is organization? 3. How do we build power and organization through protest actions?

### Power

- The group's reactions to proclaiming "All Power to the People:" an expression of what I want to be more a part of; a good goal; feeling connected to history and to the movements of the past; however it's said, it has a strong message; when Gwen Patton called it out, we felt part of a wider movement; saying it stimulates an electric charge; it also means "All People with Power."
- Look at the question of power, including the power of the state, and consider who can empower the masses and how.
- There is both individual and group power. Calling for power for everyone requires a militancy which releases repressed tensions and stimulates a new feeling of a militant self.
- Militancy is different from activism in the sense of supporting an action. Organizing makes something happen. Militancy involves a stronger stance.
- We need to move beyond protesting and take action, recognizing that there is a connection between protest actions and building power. We need to expose people to the question of power. Education and propagandizing can be part of action.
- The group's definitions of power: the ability to distinguish between what is negative power (from above) and positive power (from us, with a new vision); ending the electoral college; making things happen in new ways, thinking of new ways to be; the ability to access and use resources; the capacity to create, produce, and shape through expanding power and connecting it to desire and the ability to shape and inform desires; to make something work; strength, a perception of strength, faith in strength, birth; welcoming people into being powerful, feeling the fuel of propulsion; being able to control things.
- We have scattered definitions of power because we don't consider it as an issue often enough.
- We need power because the state has imposed power over us. The state (the ruling class and the government) becomes a controlling power through the superstructure and its institutions, including cultural hegemony (See the summation of Antonio Gramsci's ideas about cultural domination in the handout.)
- We say we need more capacity, but we need to say for what. What should the actions end up doing?
- When many people have been knocking at the door of the movement, we've

been too busy to welcome them. We have, ironically, been too busy organizing to organize them. How do we transmit the reality of this problem and change it?

- Authority is power, especially in the context of racialized capitalism. Most of us have experienced being under constant attack from authorities. What do we build to counter that power over us?
- What is an organization without power? One that people do not listen to enough.
- We can develop capacity and then, if effect, hand it over to the state by keeping our focus exclusively on reform rather than radical change. How do we maintain and reproduce the successes we have?
- We had the power to elect Obama, but we are still in a colonized power, especially in the South. We need organization to hold the power of the vote and do more.
- Organization holds power to make change, especially when it involves a common commitment to implementing a vision, no matter how long it takes. This requires adapting to changing contexts, as when Nelson Mandela and other South Africans turned their prison into a university.

### Organization

- The group's thoughts about organization: multiple ways to organize, ranging from thinking to the use of violence; the will of the people taking over; Bayard Rustin welcoming people to join him and making clear what needed to be done; a set of people united by a common purpose and committed to making it happen; people working together; conditions allowing organizing to develop include goal-setting, flexibility, working on many layers, bringing about actions, and having access to an infrastructure; flexibility with an optimal balance of infrastructure; moving beyond focusing on holding on to power, as when the Occupy Movement pointed to ways to organize other than with a 501(c)(3) structure; historical awareness; self-conscious flexibility that constantly looks out for the need to change because of changing conditions; intentional use of power that can be productive.
- We need to go even deeper into what organization means, including awareness of different approaches to it and the importance of both a common purpose and the energy that can carry out that purpose. We need to be aware of the appropriate roles for an organization.
- There can be activism that does not involve building an organization.
- There are many different kinds of organizations, some more policy-oriented and some more focused on grassroots militancy. A 501(c)(3) is not necessarily a movement organization.
- We are sometimes too competitive and chauvinistic about building our own organization as if we were trying to be King of the Hill.
- What kind of movement can create a sense of new birth?
- Who are our temporary allies, traveling along us as friends but not full allies?
- The biggest enemy of building power in an organization is FEAR, the greatest weapon of colonialism. This is why we need to state strongly "All power to the people" in a manner that goes beyond kindness.
- Use public protests to help people lose their fear, giving them a context in which they can learn that they are capable of acting in spite of their fear. The tasks of



organizing protests require a discipline that can conquer fear. Protesting is the best way to lose fear. When the garment workers striking in San Antonio first encountered the media, they ran away; later, they ran to the media with a clear sense of what they wanted to say.

- Leaders can help people lose their fear by finding opportunities to show their strength. If a manager threatens to call the police, let him or her do just that and then tell the people what they will happen when the police arrive. When the police do as the leader predicted,, the people will feel stronger.
- The media will choose whom to question unless a media committee knows how to gain their attention and what they want to tell them, such as that the workers have no power and need collective bargaining.
- How can we impact power visually, audibly, and in other ways? We need to go beyond pulling or pushing to create new knowledge and new language.
- We need to stop wasting time talking to each other in a picket-line rather than keeping the line disciplined and reaching out to passing people to seek to dialogue with them.
- Plan what specific actions are appropriate for a particular demonstration, including what the group wants, whom they want to reach, and how people should dress. Avoid using the same slogans too much; develop ones that are most appropriate for a particular demonstration.
- Building self-determination is another way to remove fear. People from Lowndes County participated in the marches for the right to vote in spite of the dangers because they were determined to demand their rights in spite of the fear they felt.
- We need critical content, the capacity to think critically, to consider why we are doing what we are doing at any moment. When the demonstrations were organized against the World Trade Organization in 1999, civil disobedience seemed to be the main strategy. They did not have a plan for what would happen after they shut down the WTO. How can we build power without letting it be coopted? For example, something needs to be done about the South African state killing miners and leaving people in impoverished townships.
- We are now in a new moment. At first, Obama being a re-elected President was our goal; now re-elected President Obama is our adversary.

## REPORTS FROM SMALL GROUPS ON WHAT HAPPENED DURING KEY ORGANIZING EVENTS, WHY, AND WITH WHAT RESULTS

### The Battle of Seattle

WHAT: The first massive and profound convergence with its particular focus. Tens of thousands of people used direct action and mass protest to shut down the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle in 1999. Among the groups involved were environmentalists, anarchists, labor unions, and many others.

WHY: They were inspired by the Zapatistas in Mexico who had begun battling the forces of neoliberalism in 1994. White workers and their unions participated in reaction to their loss of privileges and stability.

RESULTS: In spite of strong police repression, the demonstrators closed down the WTO meeting and even defeated the police in one battle on the streets. Many more people began

paying attention to the problems around the world being caused by globalization under the direction of the WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and similar agencies. Top level government and corporate officials became so frightened by the power of the convergence that they reshaped and built up the police forces across the country, just as the formation of SWAT teams had occurred after the urban rebellions of the 1960s. The power when so many different organizing groups came together inspired the first World Social Forum in Brazil in 2001.

#### The U. S. Social Forum

WHAT: Gatherings in Atlanta in 2007 and Detroit in 2010 of 20,000 grassroots activists representing a wide variety of concerns: families of incarcerated people, LGBT activists, labor activists, peace activists, environmentalists, indigenous peoples, and many other groups. Preparations included regional social forums in North Carolina and at the Texas/Mexico border in 2006.

WHY: The impact of the annual World Social Forums inspired organizers from Project South and other groups to call for a similar forum in the United States where varied groups could share knowledge in small meetings and plenary sessions, draw up resolutions about future actions, and carry out many forms of networking.

RESULTS: The People's Movement Assembly (PMA) became a central method for involving more people in decision-making. Because of the purposely decentralized leadership for the Social Forums, many of the people who attended had to make decisions, such as how to get members of their organization to the meeting, what to do there, etc. This process led to their learning how to take leadership roles. Many groups were nourished by the Social Forum; some, such as domestic workers, formed new organizations. The Southern Movement Assembly in Lowndes County, Alabama last September was part of this series of meetings. We need to retell the history of all of these interactions and do more to measure the impact of what happened at and because of them.

#### The Migrant Mega Marches

WHAT: A combination of marches and one-day strikes across the nation that included a total of over five million documented and undocumented migrants and supporters in white shirts, began in the spring of 2006 and culminated on May 1. For the most part, there were many more activists than organizers.

WHY: To gain recognition of the presence of so many migrants, the hard work they do, and their right to be in the United States; to gain power.

RESULTS: These events brought widespread attention to the abuse of the rights of migrants. They also brought back the old idea of May Day as a time to honor working people, labor unions, and strikes, thus turning the narrative back against the power structure. They received good coverage in the Spanish-speaking media. In spite of such widespread mobilization across the country, however, the euphoria of the moment dissipated and only 100 or so signed up to join organizations. Their numbers frightened the power structure and led to a major backlash, including many more ICE (U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raids, the passage of discriminatory laws like HB187, and widespread demeaning of hard-working people who come to the United States to support their families.

#### The Occupy Movement

WHAT: Starting with "Occupy Wall Street," a demonstration in a park in the Wall Street area of New York City on September 17, 2011, people opposed to the power of the super wealthy and their organizations began sitting and sleeping ("occupying") in central areas of financial

power around the nation.

**WHY:** The organizers wanted to call attention to and oppose the steady increase of the uneven distribution of wealth, as well as the excessive power and failed programs of neoliberal leaders and organizations.

**RESULTS:** The results have been contradictory. The New York City Occupiers spread awareness of the wealth and power of the top 1% of the nation. The police brutality and mass arrests spurred more militancy. The people involved have been disproportionately but not exclusively young white males. There was little or no formal communication between the leaders and the people who happened to show up. The 501(c)(3) and labor organizations felt outdone and sometimes angry as it grew. The anarchist tendencies sparked energy but also led to a lack of enough organization or accountability. More recently, some Occupiers have been focusing on supporting the homeless and opposing the unfair foreclosures of the homes of poor people.

#### SUMMATION BY RUBEN

- Large events sometimes oxygenate small groups that can then grow.
- We need to be flexible, analyzing each moment to determine what needs to be done.
- At the time of the demonstrations in Seattle, the labor movement had power, but blacks and browns did not. That changed later.
- The Occupy Movement involved a shifting of power from Wall Street.
- Power can be coopted and the rules can change, so we need to be precise about what power is, what constitutes it.
- Protest can change things quantitatively and qualitatively, including the power of civil liberties/civil rights.
- The creation of a movement culture puts power into the narrative.
- The liberation of education will involve more change than just reforms. The new role of teachers will be as part of the people, in a similar manner of liberating social welfare caseworkers who had been so angry because of their working conditions that they treated their clients badly.
- It is easier to change the world if we develop a transformation in policy by first changing our interpretation of the world.
- Power for the people is in opposition to more police in the neighborhoods.
- Now that the election is over, we must continue to build power.

**ONE PAGE QUESTION:** What should we do to build power and organization through action during the People's Hundred Days?

**DIRECTIONS FOR THE INTERACTIVE WEB PAGE FOR THE CLASS ARE NOW AVAILABLE.**

**FUTURE CLASS:** The class on November 19 will meet from 6:00 to 9:00, allowing an extra hour to develop a synthesis for this course. During the first two hours, Jenice View, an educator in Washington, D. C., will be leading the class.

This summation of the main points made at a class for the Liberation Summer of the Universidad Sin Fronteras is selective, to some extent organized by topic rather than in the order in which they were stated, and often paraphrased. I encourage anyone in the class to suggest additions or corrections.

## **CLASS FIVE: EMANCIPATORY EDUCATION for Liberation**

KEY POINTS FROM THE UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS CLASS ON  
NOVEMBER 19, 2012

Main Focuses: LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY AND  
SYNTHESIS

### PRESENTATIONS BY JENICE VIEW

- She is visiting from Washington, D. C. where she teaches emancipatory education.
- She organized tonight's class so it can illustrate the interactive aspects of liberatory pedagogy.
- Each small group will receive a quote about education with the name of its author. They should discuss and report back on how the quote relates to formal education systems, to the liberation of education, and to organizers. What kind of education does it represent? Colonial or liberatory? Liberating self through knowledge or setting us apart? Formal or informal? To what future?
- Next, each small group will read a statement about a particular approach to education from the past or today that reveals a particular purpose of education and strategies used. The groups will discuss and report back on what the documents teach about ideas on education. The group will then consider the commonalities and differences between the approaches of the groups.
- For the last task, the group will develop a list of things from which we need to be liberated.
- We need to keep thinking about what kind of educational passport will offer the knowledge and wisdom to liberate ourselves and to break the status quo. What future do we seek?
- Authentic self-determination will allow people to use, as they see fit, the light which education has provided them.
- Pay attention to what you are most proud of now.
- If you wish, you may use the sheet entitled "Debriefing the Pedagogy and

the Content” as a guide for thinking more about different approaches to education and what you have learned about them.

## GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE QUOTES ABOUT EDUCATION

1. Malcolm X: “Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

- It suggests that we need to liberate ourselves on a daily basis, that we are dependent on our own perspective and actions.

2. Carter G. Woodson: [What was his quote?]

- It takes education to break the status quo.
- The significant result is not so much the knowledge itself as what an educated people can do with the light education has provided them.

3. Ella Baker: “In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed....It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system.”

- The educational system requires radical change.
- For these changes to be meaningful, we have to explore what will meet our needs.

4. Gloria Anzaldua: “ I change myself, I change the world.”

- How we react to a quote may be affected by what we know or think about the author of the quote.
- At first this quote might not seem correct, but then it seems that she was saying that if the world is created by experience, changing experiences can lead to changed perspectives on the world.
- We need to release ourselves from our oppression.

5. Jaime Escalante, “The day someone quits school he is condemning himself to a future of poverty.”

- We disagree with the statement because leaving school should not lead to a life of poverty.
- It is American government and society that are quitting education and students, not the students who are quitting education.
- Schooling is not the same thing as education.
- We want students to be productively and critically engaged in school and elsewhere.

## GROUP DISCUSSION OF EDUCATIONAL STATEMENTS

1. Frederick Douglass and Eugenio Maria de Hostas

- They focused on education for liberation from colonial oppression and

education.

- The “owners” of slaves held powerful control over access to education.
- Unity between anti-colonialists in the Americas influenced people in Cuba.
- In Puerto Rico, education was seen as an important part of nation-building.
- Their strategies included piecing together bits of “stolen” self-education.
- Legal training was important for supporters of the anti-colonial movement.
- Douglass discovered that the more he learned, the more disappointed he became and that he needed to teach white people about the harsh aspects of slavery.

## 2. Booker T. Washington

- In his autobiography, Washington told about how “Yankee women” had helped him gain some education but also a strong work ethic, even when cleaning a room.

## 3. Cuba

- At the time of the success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, only 36% of the people were literate.
- Believing that education was an important tool for nation-building that should involve everyone, they developed a literacy campaign that was so successful that the literacy rate rose to 97% of the people and 100% of the youth.
- They dedicated 10% of their budget to education, funded a teacher for every fifteen students, and developed medical schools which would eventually draw students from around the world.

## 4. Malcolm X

- He was trying to free his mind so he could think outside of the box and be truly emancipated.

## 5. Freedom Schools during the voting rights campaign in Mississippi in the 1960s

- The schools encouraged people of all ages who had been denied effective education to join classes in political education to help them bring about social change.
- They used the personal stories of marginalized black people as part of the curriculum.

## 6. Sandinistas (revolutionaries in Nicaragua)

- They believed popular education needed to teach anti-colonial values and how to confront power, for their revolution to succeed.
- Bourgeois education is a trap since the more education individuals gain,

the more they are empowering the system.

- Events in Nicaragua influenced the Grenada Revolution, where they tried to overthrow the British system of education.

#### 7. Nicaragua

- Education after their revolution was based on the Cuban model.
- They stressed technical courses in universities so they would have more skilled people to help build the nation.
- People could organize their own popular education cooperatives with access to curricula materials from the government.

#### 8. Advanced Placement Preparation on the History of Reconstruction

- The AP exam imposes on students acceptance of the theory of steady progress in U. S. history, even though so many of the liberatory aspects of Radical Reconstruction were overturned.
- Their approach shows the difference between formal education driven by accumulation of knowledge and self-education driven by a desire for transformation.

### Historical Purposes of Education Uncovered by These Statements

1. Political education, such as in Mississippi during the campaign for the right to vote
2. Sharing and learning from people's stories and experiences, including tales with roots in the past or across an ocean
3. Liberation from oppression
4. Nation-building assisted by literacy and technical education for everyone, young and old
5. Learning an appropriate set of values
6. Confronting power
7. Emancipation and liberation of body and mind for self and others

### Strategies of Education in These Groups

1. Learning from people's own stories and experiences
2. "Stealing" education when it had been officially denied to some
3. Using legal training
4. Connections to anti-colonial movements
5. Seeking government expenditures to support education
6. Popular education cooperatives
7. Relying on policy makers and "experts" such as "Yankee" teachers of ex-slaves

### Conclusions about This Information

- There are a number of consistent patterns and cycles across different contexts and within different nations and time periods.
- Some of the strategies differed, but the general purposes tended to be consistent.
- We need to ask what extent do existing organizations and formation live up to their names and missions.
- Home-schooling can be more family-centered than standard public education, especially for black families.
- The National Student Bill of Rights covers many or all of the issues.
- Talking about something without taking any actions does not change anything and is therefore not liberatory.

### THE GROUP'S CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT WE NEED TO BE LIBERATED FROM IN 2013

1. Commodification of the commons (the privatization of what should be available to all)
2. Capitalism and the profit motive
3. Individualism and competition
4. Belief in a social hierarchy which divides people into superior and inferior categories because of race, ethnicity, or any other category
5. War and militarism
6. The state and its violence
7. The Prison-Industrial Complex and emphasis on punishment
8. Medical orthodoxy
9. The colonial mode of pedagogy and its false versions of history
10. Gender and sexuality oppression and violence