



**EMANCIPATION AUTUMN 2012**

**One Course:  
EMANCIPATION EDUCATION AND ACTION FOR LIBERATION**

*Six Classes...*

**Orientation to Liberatory education (UNSIF) and Life Road Map  
Atlanta's historical Black Radical Tradition  
Liberatory Leadership  
protest Action for building power and Organization  
Emancipatory Education for Liberation**

**Atlanta Campus-Project South**

**Stehanie Guilloud and Emery Wright-directors**

[www.projectsouth.org](http://www.projectsouth.org)

in partnership

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***...These are from 1 page reflection papers written by student participants of the UNSIF course in Atlanta in partnership with PROJECT SOUTH...***

## CLASS ONE:

Universidad Sin Fronteras-Atlanta Campus  
Session 1  
10/15/2012

**Prompt: How does individual experience relate to collective knowledge?**

We are all in different places at different times in our lives. Experiencing many different things. The fact that you went through something. I went through something and they went through something and then sharing these experiences in a groups helps us know each person's experience. I think that we start to formulate similarities in our experience whether is a similar feeling or lesson taught.

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Individual experience relates to collective knowledge by providing a single narrative that adheres to a group specific path. In this line of thinking we find that as a group begins to understand one another, the process of forming a unit, be it functional or not, is activated. Although there can be no assurances that mutual understanding is at a premium, there is still the recognition of individuality. This relates to the confronting of oppression in a way that informs future movement activity and allows each individual to gain value in their importance.

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I think we are the composite of our experiences. People we meet and talk to and hear from and see and experience shape how we see ourselves and the world. Somethings a person can tell a story so vividly and you internalize it and claim it as your own. Not that you take credit for it, but its like a gift they have given you, that stays inside you. It changes you. Telling our own stories in our own words, in our own voice, is powerful in that way. Once you tell it, you are no longer the only one carrying it. Others carry it and can care for it with you. They can protect it with you. I like to process verbally, Through talking or sharing, I am able to learn and process and select and deconstruct and unpack. Sharing my experiences informs who I am. Hearing from others informs how I see the world.

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It's obvious that folks wake up to the world in climax event moments. They are slapped into awareness when they (or we) connect the various moments of awareness into a coherent picture, a larger awareness of society's raw places may be revealed. Some folks become angry at the injustices of society, how raw and unfair things can be, how unlike the platitudes we are taught in our very biased schools life really is. We are that group of aware and angry folk!!

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If collective knowledge represents all that is knowable, then individual experience is like a water molecule in the earth's ocean. The vast possibility and probability of variation between and among particles would seem almost infinite in the context of the earth's oceans. However, like our individual experience, a water molecule can also tell reference and give great insight into understanding the ocean as a whole. When we weave together our individual experiences with the struggle to understand the complex of others' experience we can gain a better appreciation for the purpose and role of the whole.

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Our experiences (whether direct/indirect or chosen/forced) determine who we are and why we do what we do. Oftentimes these are shared experiences and contribute to collective knowledge and ways of being. This represents a source of power, strength and pride for many. However, when that collective knowledge and experience is marginalized, ignored, devalued or distorted, it is detrimental to the collective's well being. I feel as though this has been the case for black people (as well as many others) in the US and abroad.

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Individual experience is the foundation upon which collective knowledge is built. Without an abundance of shared individual experience there is no collective knowledge. As was shown today collective knowledge is in fact simply shared experiences. Whether old or new our entire reality is experienced individually. Every event, every moment is remembered and experienced first and foremost as the experience of a singular individual. Without the interpretation of an individual, events happen and are summarily forgotten. Events become reality again when they are shared. By remembering and sharing our experiences we open the door for others to learn and grow from shared experience. The collective knowledge of an experience is often only that which is shared. Dominant voices define the reality for majority. Without minority voices reaching out to be heard the past becomes a false past and thus an ineffective foundation from which to build a more effective future.

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I was really taken by the sharing of turning points that happened before our lives/births, and also turning points that were somewhat more peripheral to our direct experiences (or first hand experience). I think the legacy of these histories is proof of collectivity becoming individual and the other way around. Many people talked about how experiences changed our "analysis" and our "frame", how we "realized \_\_\_\_\_" or "\_\_\_\_\_ shifted". Not as many people talked about how they felt physically in that moment, or emotionally in that moment. Clearly though, both of these things were sensed and felt in the room as well all shared and listened. Left thinking about what were the shared feelings in those turning points ---> isolation, fear, hope, hopelessness, inspiration? This is part of what creates our collective knowledge.

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Brings in concrete in an abstract space. The lived experiences of people allow for a shared full picture beyond one's experience. It seems as if the larger frame, container of the people cause ripple effects on each other like the movie butterfly effect. I think the individual experiences put together allows for the big picture to be formed. Space for everyone to be present and involved, the collective is then best equipped to have whole information and then move as a collective where all are included. Different perspectives are necessary to learn the best way to...

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I suppose it is precisely what makes collective knowledge, what composes it. I very much believe who we are is very dependent on where we grew up... one theme I found in our story sharing was that while everyone carries loads of pain there was a lot of clarity that resulted after the painful experience, and from that clarity we were moved to action. I don't know why these essay writings are such a challenge for me! I feel like everything I write feels so damn trite to my feelings and thoughts that are inside!

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It is powerful when I listened to the individual experience shared and in some cases how it led to collective actions. Some of the experience shared did happen in different places but had similar objectives being resistance and the ability to step back and think for a moment about our action and why certain things were happening the way they were going on. This means strong sense of awakening and have helped in passing on that knowledge to the rest of the class. If built upon would go a long way in how we help others who we work with remember powerful turning points in their lives.

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My experiences implicate me, move me into the world. Excavating and mining those experience gifts me movements to see myself as a story bigger than just my own personal life, will, or happiness -- I become part of a larger body by knowing how our individual stories become shared, overlapping, oppositional, complementary, contradictory, reflecting mere light or each other. We can't come to truly valuable and actionable shared knowledge without knowing the fine grain of individual lives -- you know really none of our lives are individual, we tell so many stories even when we tell our own. Life is held in the individual and shared

## CLASS TWO:

Universidad Sin Fronteras: One page REFLECTION on October 22, 2012

### WHAT STRUGGLES/FORCES IN ATLANTA DO YOU THINK ARE CRITICAL TO UNDO COLONIAL LEGACIES AND BUILD PEOPLE'S POWER?

First, we would have to change the operation and curriculum of public schools in Atlanta. Next, I would say, we have to address the misdemeanor marijuana charges that are at an all time high in Atlanta. People are being punished for residue, that is not fair. The city hall will need big changes, because it is corrupt. Their only focus for Atlanta in City Hall is business ventures. The Hip Hop that speaks ignorance and blasphemy to the youth shall be abolished. Having to take a drug test to get TANF (Temporary Assistance for Need Families, Food Stamps).

I don't know much about the power elite in Atlanta, either black or white, but on initial observation it seems like there is still a white "Old South" ruling class that is deeply entrenched, and also birthing young urbanites who are coming into their powerful places. A black elite may challenge this and cause them fear, but it will not unseat their power for the benefit of the masses. Poor and working people must do this, including immigrant communities (all immigrants), black people, and poor white people who are working in industries and agriculture. Some colonial legacies to undo are an imposed sense of individualism, capitalist work-ethic, and "bootstraps" mentality. In this way we can move towards increased reliance on both one another and the government. We're made to think that reliance is a negative thing and we have to undo that thinking by supporting each other with our basic necessities (necessities which go beyond what most think of just food and shelter). With the election coming up and the economy as it is, jobs and unemployment are one of the most discussed topics. I'm looking forward to when jobs aren't the end goal but making sure we're all thriving is the goal.

There is a recognition that achieving political office (regardless of intention) does not alter the economic structure. There are many manifestations of this reality—whether education system/prison system/or health care system. Electoral politics is limited when used with the promise of "making things better." It can be useful when used as a voice to build social movement and consciousness. (Story of labor pools as an example)

People who say the issue is class, they can tend to ignore the legacy of racism. Someone can be black and not give thought to collective liberation—in fact, that may be a person more likely to be elected. And so we are left to wrestle a paradox of identity vs. values. No matter who is the leader of a capitalist city, their first and primary oath is to keeping the money rolling in. It just seems less and less possible to do any kind of revisions, without bringing the capitalist robot to its knees. So in Atlanta, I guess this would mean to pull all the rivets out of that machine and that takes growing numbers of individuals building alternatives to the state. And even if we aren't going to use the master's tools to dismantle his house, we might should still take those recycled materials and distribute them.

The struggle that I would undo is education. Not education in the form of status, like "I have a degree and these 35 years of black rule should benefit me." More of an education of awareness. To form a better sense of independence instead of depending on a 'black rule.'

As a result, being in power didn't bring much liberation. So it isn't power we should be focused on.

I believe that having our own institutions that promote our (by our I mean the people not just a few elites) interests are critical to our collective well-being and survival.

The forces that are critical in Atlanta have to reflect the counterpart of the township revolutionaries in South Africa. Forces are the young people who live and grow up with violence all around and schools that are not sanctuaries, but rather blaming, lying institutions that either confuse and dismiss or elevate the exceptional. Forces will be some combination of people who see a South outside the city walls, beyond 285 and who also recognize Atlanta as a hub and a center of potential, growth and new forms of governance.

As a city/capital there should be a call to govern that denounces the broke up ways we look to now. The question about 35 years of Black Rule is ultimately a question of "What is political and economic power?" Is it representative or is it self-determined and how does it create a vision and system for economic power of the many? How does it resist corruption, co-optation, and isolation? How do we vision it, implement it to protect it? If displacement is a mechanism of colonial power, how do we return to take place back (land, influence, body, home, food).

We need a municipal *infrastructure* that serves *people* rather than business. We must find ways, places, and fights to *reclaim and regenerate* resources (like H2O, food, land) and infrastructures (transit, housing, education, community businesses) that support people's lives. Right now, it feels like/seems like corporations are on *lifesupport* using government dollars extracted at higher and higher *human cost* from local and state communities. What would it look like if commerce *served* human life instead?

I wonder if there is strategic use in gaining more allies (*not just* representatives) with hands in actually *implementing* rather than just making policy and business decisions. I think, in terms of elections, about water councils, zoning boards, school principals. What would it look like to start *buying things only from our neighbors*? What would it look like to go on a mass *tax strike*?

Those forces that are most affected by the status quo must be present in the analysis to highlight the contradictions of Atlanta and define the desirable goals/objectives. In other words "what does a liberated Atlanta" look like to those who suffer most. I believe that several forces will have to come together: the role/impact of the "Occupy Movement" should not be dismissed. Other forces would include the immigrant community/working people vanguard supported by students/civil society elements and sectors marginalized by economic pressures must be included.

I think we have to address/confront who has the wealth. Electoral gains do very little if those elected are still controlled and manipulated by corporate funding and wealthy donors who have their own self interest in mind. So I think we should focus on what are the barriers working class people come up against when fighting to gain wealth, or economic security. Then begin to focus on eliminating those barriers. I think our struggle is around economic justice. This is an area we have seen little to no gains in for hundreds of years. Black people still experience the same levels of poverty as they did during the height of Jim Crow. The net worth of Blacks has remained stagnant for over 100 years. I think this is our present day fight.



I think that a critical struggle in Atlanta is people's disaffection in regard to understanding colonial legacies with contemporary faces. At this point, youth are the most likely source of resistance to colonialism and I think that young people, with a strong political understanding of their circumstances, would bring about change. Although this is not a new argument, I feel compelled to make it as many times and as loud as possible because it is important. Also, there are a great many entities working with young people but not all can or are willing to incorporate political education into programming. Therefore I feel a great deal of admiration for those who offer adults liberative spaces because of the potential for knowledge to be passed down. With this in mind, I think that the wider the base for knowledge that liberates, the better the chance for there to be a vehicle to move and build upon people's power. In this case, that vehicle would be a high volume of community youth that understand their collective struggle and power as well.

Forces needed to undo colonialism need to have motion in education, health care, transportation and access to live! As far as education, those who are at the table creating curriculum, erasing barriers to prevent continuation of education, the point of education creating a new formula of knowledge that is whole, self-identifying culturally relevant and begets leaders and community resources. Health care is vital because health-based or related issues are taking tolls on the people in many ways. As far as health and economics, the health is affecting people earlier and the costs of health care are barring people from being able to economically survive.

Transportation is necessary because I see it as a state control mechanism to control population.

Finally access to live means moving on areas that affect people and communities. As far as prisons and the racism in profiling and sentencing long-term. Deeming certain communities illegal. Finally movement around the body control areas. As far as this control over women and power of the state.

I hope that the poor and struggling working people in Atlanta can unite as a force for people's power, standing up for basic human rights for all. Individuals with more money and privileges can be allies of this movement to build communities of localized control. In neighborhoods and then in a broader coalition, the majority of Atlantans can create a new vision of a city economy, government, education, and society, as well as mobilize against the aims of the developers and other corporate forces.

We need grassroots organizations, we need parallel institution building and we need cultural movements that raise up and broadcast the stories and wisdom of people's voices that so often go unheard.

To undo colonial legacy, we need to question the framework we are given for what needs to change and how it could be different. To undo colonial legacies, we need to focus on healing and resilience building in our communities—with honesty towards our strengths *and* our challenges, our internalized oppression—our internalized *colonization*.

To develop concrete campaigns that blow open the prison and police state—to articulate demands to end mass incarceration—this is the place of wedge or leverage. Because to talk about the Prison Industrial Complex, we have to talk about the history of slavery, of convict leasing, of immigration control. We have to confront our *own* ideas of what it means to be "rehabilitated" or "reformed" and when we think its "ok" to shackle or imprison. We also have to talk about violence and *practical* approaches and ways of addressing violence within

communities. That's why organizing around the criminal, legal system is so important. Why organizing formerly incarcerated and families is so important. Why incorporating healing and understandings of trauma and resilience is necessary.

The primary prerequisite for destroying colonial legacy and building the power of the people is an emphatic shift in paradigm. This shift can only be realized by way of education.

A. A necessary quality of a state is that it maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force (the definition of state).

B. The issue of race relations, i.e., the relationship between blacks and whites, is one of a *required* and orderly oppression of blacks by some whites.

C. Whites under the new paradigm assert the privilege and advantage that comes by way of the benefits of slavery and subjection of Afrika and its inhabitants. It is the professed acceptance, particularly within education that will help to bring about the change via the educated Trojan Horse (whites), as well as the educated Blades from without (blacks).

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### **CLASS THREE:**

Universidad Sin Fronteras: One page opinions on October 29, 2012

#### **HOW DO YOU APPLY TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN YOUR WORK/ORGANIZATION?**

Currently I am in the middle of a transition from a role where I was very much perceived as a leader and acting as a leader (in a particular way) to trying to find different roles for myself in different types of work. This has meant that I get the amazing opportunity of stepping back and listening and following and perceiving to a greater extent than I was able when seen as a leader. I think that this is a gift that will allow me to later exhibit stronger leadership skills. Exploration and expansive learning are also a species of leadership that I (and we) could improve on in the organization I am coming from and still a part of. I think opening up the space for exploring the unknown and even unthinkable will bring about new possibilities for me in relationship to the movement(s) I am a part of.

The easiest way for me to apply transformative leadership in my work would be to act on my ideas for the collective to see what ideas can actually make progress. I can also acknowledge others' actions or ideas and help bring light to them for the organization. I could also encourage others to try different ways of strategizing.

My relationship to my own leadership has been evolving and maturing for the past ten years. I undoubtedly learned the most about accountable leadership and what happens when you aren't accountable doing Palestine solidarity and liberation work. That being said, I am starting a new job soon where I will be relying on my supervisor's mentorship and leadership to help me learn how to be a mitigation investigator. I feel certain that my own experience

with leadership (and developing other leaders) will help her (as it is her first time training someone!). But the question most present for me is can one be an accountable leader in an organization that isn't organizing?

Transformative leadership is an everyday practice that allows space for me to assess my own skills, beliefs, practices, and experiences as well as to create space for others to find, assume, and refine their leadership through work. Within Project South there are multiple levels of leadership playing out at all times, and the more we can apply the qualities to each instance of interaction, the more we will advance. Sometimes the muddy perceptions of the term, the people, and the reality of leadership are barriers for me to imagine new ways of engaging and moving with groups. The qualities and practices we talked about today are critical to moving our collective leadership to larger scales of thousands. If we can still be stymied by the behavior of a few, we will fail. There are many lessons and examples to the practices of leadership and we need every tool, guide, analysis, and new vision of group leadership at this moment in history.

Transformative leadership means leaders who change or transform the oppressive nature of the system. In doing so, the very system itself is changed/replaced by the nature of the system, i.e, there is no current system except for by way of oppression (new system = death of old system).

Transformative change must come by way not of political activism (at least not alone) but rather by relay of a critical consciousness actively (by way of meaningful actions) propagating the development of a new paradigm.

As an educator, I stand to help expand my base—not merely by ‘participating’—but by actually and actively willing my critical consciousness among the masses of others and then helping to absorb the reciprocation of that consciousness which will continue to evolve via each humble exchange of wills.

The idea and practice of leadership is very challenging for me. In many spaces, the “traditional” mode of leadership (the top-down approach) is expected. There may be some aspects of “transformative” leadership, but it is often misguided. Leadership is associated with power and power changes people (oftentimes for the worse and not for the better). As a result, I have low expectations for many leaders and the changes they say they will make around a particular issue or in a community. However, transformative leadership gives me hope that things don't have to be this way. I look forward to exploring this further within myself and the spaces I'm in.

As a rule of thumb for self and accountability to a liberation movement in which transformation is necessary, I would want to continue the consistent collective decision-making, evaluations and problem identifying. To insure all voices are heard and the vision is the collective's. Also I would allow for true reflections of the process of engagement and evaluations so the collective is involved with the work and direction. This is to make sure the process remains full and open and doesn't get in a rhythm that begins to leave some out.

As far as broad organization, the same as above. I would continue to ask, create space, and allow for many voices to be involved in the leadership process. I would evaluate the process of decision making to make sure those on the team are making decisions, not just “choices” or “following directions. Also, I would evaluate over time how past decisions were made and if any new leadership developed, showed up or was present to measure the



increase amongst the group for leadership. As with the other characteristics, I would identify opportunities for the group to participate in “intentional” development outside the group so that the development is growing but as a collective, new techniques and opportunities for freshness and to remain current are possible.

This conversation has me thinking about a number of things—the need for facilitation and facilitated collective process, which goes back to the question of decision making. As our comrade Kai says, “people want to make malls; we’re not going to spend our time building more malls.” My point being that the process of collective decision making and accountability and leadership is a long slow build. Especially in these moments of crisis.

What decisions often seem like and do need to be made rapidly. The question of decision making is HUGE and we need more practice. Also this question of transformation as a spiritual experience is so so so critical. Especially when so many of our folks are facing such immense hopelessness, exile, displacement, and isolation. The process of leadership around this problem is the question of how do we exercise our hope muscle versus only bonding and connecting around our shared trauma. We are transforming socially and transforming ourselves over and over again. And that is a spiritual experience, especially when we have experienced so much loss and grief and violence. But holding space for transformation that is authentic and collective (not 1:1) is the question.

I think that this framework is extremely, extremely helpful and I will bring it back to my organization, especially our younger staff. What is beautiful about the Universidad Sin Fronteras is that we are also in community, in movement community together so I think the opportunity to create more sustained dialogue and reflection in our different organization alliances and formations will also be very powerful.

I am currently in an extended transition phase of my life as a community activist, having moved from being an official “leader” in classes I was paid to teach to trying to figure out how I can work most effectively with people whose experiences, knowledge, and skills are often quite different from mine. I am being transformed to some extent by what I am learning from them, including from the people in this class. As a classroom teacher and student advisor, I had a clear sense of the kinds of transformations I was hoping to inspire in my students. To some extent, I still want to help others discover their own abilities to find solutions for important personal and world problems as long as they work with others and learn from the most relevant history. But now I also want to work with others in campaigns to bring about those solutions in ways I did not usually do with my students.

Transformative leadership is to me a process of inviting others around me to dance with me. The dance I evolve is the shared manifestation of the group consciousness. I wish to engage in an evocation of the group as conscious of itself. The dance is the arousal of a higher awareness among us all. I wish to find a space among us where there is no leader. Indeed, I wish to evoke a mood and a mode of action where we discover ourselves as active participants in a dance we mutually create. We are equals, then, in an act of collaboration. We become transformed into a cadre of active participants. We destroy the top down concept of leadership of the individual to construct an evolved concept of group as learner.

Leadership and this definition of transformative leadership are something I think about and strive to apply to my work and in my organization. I think that because, like what Lily said and Jerome said, we are redefining something that we see as a necessary tool in our movements and because we are redefining it and then building structures and organizations

based on that definition, we are in a precarious position of experimenting conceptually and in practice. Although we will certainly make mistakes, we will also make strides in redefining a new aspect in our movements and in life itself. I believe our process of redefining leadership conceptually and practically will contribute to the shift in globally dominant paradigms about how the world works and our human role within that ecosystem.

#### **CLASS FOUR:**

Universidad Sin Fronteras: One page opinions on November 12, 2012

#### **HOW CAN WE BUILD POWER AND ORGANIZATION THROUGH ACTION DURING THE PEOPLE'S HUNDRED DAYS?**

I think that a way to build power through the 100 days of action/the People's 100 days is by continuing the conversation around infrastructure that we learned about today. In this regard the stakeholders could develop two things: their particular point of view or desires and at what level they would be willing to compromise with other aligned groups. In this case the collective message can become united and offer people a chance to be involved in a non-esoteric way. It is somewhat clear that once people begin to organize, the power structure begins to develop strategies to combat whatever gains are made. Therefore a fully developed association that allows for a multi-voiced platform helps. Also, as I learned today, there should be a general understanding of what to do when victory arrives. Thus the need for infrastructure becomes more prevalent.

I think power will be built through the First 100 Days through the actions being decentralized, coordinated, reflected back on the people involved and amplified out to the broader community and world.

I think our actions must be rooted in people's real experiences with oppression, real desires for change, and to build a vision that pushes the boundaries of what is possible for humanity to achieve.

They must also in process break fear, inspire imagination and re-enforce our power as a collective rooted in principles and in our historical traditions.

There are many ways to create power on a national scale. One way is to have multiple actions taking place across the South. If we have people sending letters to each Senator, hold rallies at all capitals in the South. I think if we had southern freedom marches one week in each state across the South. Blast out every action, rally, march, etc. on the Internet, in particular through Social Media. Also send out an email to all members and volunteers participating in the People's 100 Days of Action. Keeping the youth and little kids a part of the 100 Days of Action. We need to confront the oppressors at their doorsteps.

I think we need to keep building power through concrete actions that have clear demands, critiques and vision. I think as organizations, we need to keep coming together to collectivize capacity—like the Southern Movement Assembly.

I think we need to focus less on events and more on confronting specific power bases, whether that's individuals like the Governor or bodies like the city council. I think we need to figure out how to keep a revolutionary, liberatory frame while implementing concrete tactics to win concessions from the state. I think we need to invest in leadership development

on many levels and let that leadership development also shape some of the actions we take/do. Hard to do!

I'd like to see the 100 days of action culminate in something that invites more and more people from the community concerned with different issues—something that brings the many small organizations of Atlanta and Georgia together, again not for an event, but for a strategy, plans, etc. and/or some direct action.

Thanks, Ruben!

I would continue to build with the youth and try to keep them interested in being aware of the state that we live in, and how to build power and focus on the changes that need to be made. We have to reflect on what happened before the election and then see what we can organize around or what issues we need to organize around.

The People's 100 Days is building power by cultivating the capabilities of a constellation of local struggles to act in concert with each other, to see, know and share with each other in greater, expanding, deepening intensities. Thus, in this sense, the People's 100 Days is fundamentally an infrastructure building project that is ongoing. The People's 100 Days is thus at another level of laying and shoring and expanding relational bonds, lines of communication, processes for developing and strong collective analysis and launching concerted actions. Lastly, the People's 100 Days is building power by asserting and enacting the self-determination of southern struggles. Reclaiming and asserting the importance of the South as a site of liberation movement building.

The People's 100 Days is an opportunity to practice the discipline of the line. Actions require risk in public spaces, engaging people, inviting people, moving people through a critical thinking process about their individual commitment and role to act. The 100 days is an opportunity to grow our numbers through that direct invitation and commitment-building. The People's 100 Days is an opportunity to do the education work so that people feel secure, confident and knowledgeable about what they believe is happening and what they know is necessary. The People's 100 Days is an opportunity to research the location of new targets, not the usual targets, but to unearth the new relationships of power so that we can expand out of the 100 Days into a new strategy of decolonizing public space, education, economics, and governance. The more practice we have, the more creative and flexible we will be together. After.

One focus of the People's Hundred Days should be building communication, online and otherwise, so more people across the South and beyond are aware of who is doing what and why and will have ways to connect their own activities and those of their organizations to the process. Continue developing both face-to-face and online activities like the Red Carpet that will make more people comfortable and intrigued enough to take the first step of communicating and then working with us. All who are part of an event should be encouraged to report back and have an easy way to do this, similar to the gathering of these statements from our classes. At each stage, we need to think not only about what to do at the next event but also how to join our imaginations to develop ideas about what should happen after February 14.

To build power for social change, I would quietly bring together more and more social groups to discuss where the world might change to allow freedom and justice for all

people! We must find common goals in that effort. As many come together, we must find a way to attain consensus on common goals. Consensus must be a shared consciousness that transcends any one group.

Organization is essential. I believe that power is most effective when utilized within the classroom. The Mother is sensibly stated as the first teacher of the child. However, the classrooms, today, educate the mothers who educate the children. Therefore it is the teachers who need a transformative paradigm. As such protest must be staged against the sub-optimal, even sub-paid, educators who are indoctrinating the country into the imperialistic, racist, oppressive mentality/lack of consciousness that currently exists.

Otherwise, protests are just adapted to. Their effectiveness is limited. Even the posture of current day western protesters reflects subservience. It is an acting of sorts or an exhibition as opposed to an action through protest.

The multiple events lead to multiple culminations:

- The Southern Movement Assembly, November 6, November 7, the People's Movement Assemblies, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, February 14, February 15 are nested layers and opportunities for entry. The end of each campaign will be the launching of the next.
- This is a welcoming approach: You are arriving, always, right as things are starting to become good, more exciting.
- This is a resilient approach: We can continue shaping the narrative and focus of the campaign at many points.

Actions produce capacity and analysis:

- The main audience are the participants, not the imperial powers of the state or corporations.
- Capacity: Folks experience their own creativity, agency, narrative voice, connection to others. Confront and outlive fear.
- Analysis: Actions produce narratives, videos, photos, synthesis that becomes the content for future organizing, education, recruitment.

## **CLASS FIVE:**

Universidad Sin Fronteras: One page opinions on November 19, 2012

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO CREATE LIBERATORY EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN.

Well, first and foremost not lying to them when they ask difficult questions. The questions that dig deep into the lives we might have been told as children. I have recently developed relationships with a group of kids in my apartment complex and we have already had a conversation about sexuality and that some girls have girlfriends instead of boyfriends. So, thus, I am taking the question literally and my relationship with these kids as well as a few others is grounded in liberatory education!

Anti-oppressive education is the bare minimum requirement within our schools. I actually educate my children to be liberated. I suggest whatever means is necessary, but I provide avenues and multiple perspectives whereby they may devise for reasoning what truly

makes sense based on true knowledge, wisdom, understanding and overstanding. Additionally, I am working to build an alternative school (alternative to nonsense schooling) while working with other “schools of consciousness” in order to learn from them and to provide additional insight/consciousness. It’s all about consciousness building.

I organize to learn and study to sharpen my organizing. My primary aspiration is to amass skills and experiences and tools that allow me to share radically, expansively, and strategically without limit and full of joy. To share—not impose—not insist—to not expect something in return of reciprocity, but to become a living commons. That process began with my mom, an expert in radical sharing and joy and so my tradition begins with her. From there I discovered that the convergence when organized with principle for the purpose of amplifying dignities and facilitating connections can supercharge and explode one person’s capacity to share and the sharing can regenerate, energize and empower both personally and collectively. So I organize and study the encounter as a doorway to liberating processes. Creating spaces for people to build deep relationships with each other to further develop strategies of sharing hope, visions, strategies, stories, all these we have we can give towards the advancement of liberation.

I am finding ways to work with people in this area who appreciate the importance of public education and wish to oppose the schools becoming tools and sources of profit for corporations. I hope we can create enough liberatory spaces within existing school systems to help all students discover the power of decolonized learning. We should at least bring more attention to the barriers to learning so more people will realize the need to liberate education for all students. One aspect of this work is uncovering and spreading knowledge of the history of colonization and decolonization in Atlanta and its schools.

Share and create and get media tools out there so that people can show, declare, express, share, make their selves, their work, their visions, their joy, their grief, their imperatives. Don’t just share one story from what people send. Share it all, make it rich with multiple content, lift it up, reflect self-created, powerful, self-images back.

Hold space through my own gender expressions for people to feel safer sharing their own. Affirming that I see and appreciate their expressions, that it’s good and right and valid to take up space sometimes.

Never lend my own organizing power for a cause that embraces militarism, work for education and work/livelihood opportunities that give young people options beyond corporatism/militarism.

Envisioning and building collective strategies for decolonization in the U. S. South. At this moment, the first decade of the 21st century, developing explicit forms of decolonization for southerners is central to our liberation struggle. In the history of southern liberation struggles and throughout the black radical tradition, we have not collectively experienced explicit forms of decolonization, so this process and its forms will allow us to break new ground in our liberation movement. Because it is a process being used by some of our own brothers and sisters in the Global South, our explicit entry into this struggle will also allow us to fulfill another political responsibility in this movement: Connect with the Global South.

NSBR is the solution. Engage young people across the nation in our dialogue for the National Students Bill of Rights, which is an effort for a youth collaboration from young people across the country to define a vision for education and social justice in the U. S. As young

people, we are voting on these fourteen rights young people came up with on a national scale. The National Student Bill of Rights is a space for young people to voice their opinion on the state of youth in America. Videos, social media, web pages. We have a website on online registration and voting. We have regional and state-wide coordinators connecting and engaging young people throughout this process.

How are we liberating educational spaces for our children?

- We have to break away from a formal system and set up a liberatory education system.
- We must develop curriculum that is liberatory for use in schools, organizations, and communities.
- Identify and expand liberatory thinking and practices at school but at home too.
- We need to organize teachers to be part of liberatory education, not the educational system.
- Start, develop, and expand liberatory language.
- Start a liberatory education at eight years old and younger (generation).

First, staying aware of my own liberatory educational learning will be very important. This way, I will have motivation and a base from which to work. Next, I think that it is very important to be willing to share information with those that are seeking knowledge. Thus making certain that I can easily open up and offer an exchange that is purposeful and mutually meaningful. I can also be a willing source of support and empowerment by rejecting age as a way to determine if a youngster is mature enough to hear points and counterpoints that might be connected to oppressive circumstances. Finally, I can/should be a resource beyond any academic boundaries. My goal is to be available to the community.

Experimenting in creating space in the workplace for young children to experience the world without a lot of structure. Challenging my own assumptions about youth, youth-led spaces, what is needed or wanted from adults. Creating and practicing facilitation methods that encourage curiosity and critical thinking rather than formulaic approaches to life and problems. Busting open the myths and social control mechanisms around gender that reduce our ability to see one another. Creating liberatory frameworks that connect to history and vision. Remembering and imagining new worlds where children are leaders of ideas, spaces, and modes of being. Offering my time and resources to provide children and young people space to play, learn, experience, and share. Continuing to apply discipline and desire to my own leaning.

I wish to liberate my cohort from the ultimate frame of leader-follower. That liberation takes form in the evocation of individual selfhood of each and every person. It must then evolve into a conscious affirmation of the power innate in each of us. We are each able to do much more than we are permitted by our oppressive society. We learn from each other by acknowledging each other's strength. Then we learn to support each other. We learn to share our strengths and our knowledge. We learn to build a society of equals. We learn to build our social mesh. We learn to sing together and dance together and love together as individuals and as a tribe of equals.



At this time my main focus is calling attention to the impact of social justice issues and human rights on my own youths and trying to engage them in dialogue about these local and global issues. On a broader level, raising awareness about the plight of youth in areas of conflict, e.g. Congo, Sudan, Columbia has been the focus of some organizing work. But a main aspect is to call attention to those models of struggle and resistance to oppression by young people even in the most dire situations. For example, the work of young people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti allows other youth to see the role of education as a transformative, potentially life-saving dynamic. Lastly, to encourage them to look at education as a human right and not a privilege and also an opportunity that emerges from the struggle of common people.

(1) Ask questions: Allow space for their knowledge and perspective to come into the arena and know they can question “what is.” (2) Secondly, as follow up, I ask why: Why they think or believe that concept and I place them in the topic and paradigm we are discussing. Having engaged in youth organizing in comparison to other forms of organizing, I know the importance of (3) exposure to new things, cultures, experiences and “others.” As an underliner, through example, I challenge social norms, create opportunities to challenge social constructs. Then debrief and compare. As for working, organizing, and raising smaller children, I like the learn/try/play method of learning. It’s hands-on, best teacher and builds knowledge. This is for youth/young adults as well.

One thing that comes to mind is a question of how we make room for playful self-education of our youth. This question arises for me especially in a context of increased individualism and consumerism at a young age. In order to uplift the learning and experiences of youth, we need to be attune to some of the technological “tools” that can be used to our advantage which, however, are primarily used to placate ourselves and youth from working towards greater liberation. In order to create more liberatory spaces, we need to allow room for youth themselves to creatively and playfully “design” their own “curricula.”