

»Adjoa Florência Jones de Almeida

## radical social change

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### *Searching for a New Foundation*

*Radical: Of or from the root; going to the foundation or source of something; fundamental.*—Webster's New World Dictionary

AS I MOVE INTO MY MID-30S I SOMETIMES WONDER IF I WILL EVER see “revolution.” Of course, as I’ve gotten older, my idea of what true revolution might look like has become increasingly more complex and multilayered. While I’m not sure if I believe that revolution is something we can arrive at—like runners crossing over the finish line at an Olympic race—I do still believe in radical social change. These days I’ve been drawing most of my inspiration from what I see happening in Latin America—in Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Ecuador, to name a few. When it comes to mass-based social change movements, the US is in dire need of some “aid” from the Third World.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, it is precisely where people have the least access to foundation funding that they’ve been able to do the most in terms of developing mass-based movements for radical social change.

What do I mean by radical change? If we think of our world as a garden, then radical change is when we are able to pull out the weeds that choke our existence by their roots—preventing them from being born again. Of course, one woman’s weed is another one’s medicine, so it’s important that we seek to fully understand and define the nature of our oppression. What chokes our existence is not *just* about money. It is about the kind of values, culture, and everyday interactions created by capitalism, heterosexism, imperialism, racism, sexism, and other systems of oppression. Recognizing the need to pull up oppressive reality by its roots, Malcolm X stood apart from activists of his day by pushing African Americans toward more radical action. Malcolm advocated our right to bring about freedom, justice, and equality “by any means necessary.” Some might argue that social justice groups operating under the current 501(c)(3) system are doing nothing more than accessing needed funds from powerful foundations in order to achieve their ends. But I don’t think Malcolm had in mind what is hap-

pening to social justice movements in the US today. We as activists are no longer accountable to our constituents or members because we don't depend on them for our existence. Instead, we've become primarily accountable to public and private foundations as we try to prove to them that we are still relevant and efficient and thus worthy of continued funding.

What has happened to the great civil rights and Black power movements of the 1960s and 70s? Where are the mass movements of today within this country? The short answer—they got funded. While it may be overly simplistic to say so, it is important to recognize how limited social justice groups and organizations have become as they've been incorporated into the non-profit model. I remember when the Sista II Sista (SIIS) Collective, which I was a part of for nine years, began researching the possibility of becoming a 501(c)(3). "If there's all this money out there available to groups like ours," we thought, "we should go for it." We knew our vision for radical, transformative personal and social change, led by young women of color would not necessarily be well-received by most foundations. But we convinced ourselves that we would be able to take their money while still holding on to our autonomy. However, after years of doing the 501(c)(3) thing, we began to feel trapped and tried to figure out ways of going back to being an all-volunteer organization.

We began to understand that there is a very thin line between "milking the system" and being milked by the system. During our infinite number of meetings (e.g., Collective, Staff, Squads, Petals)<sup>2</sup>, we would ask ourselves, "In the process of working day and night to meet our budgets so that we can guarantee the salaries of those that work within our organization, what has happened to our radical vision for social change?" This radical vision may still be reflected in our mission statements, in the posters and quotes with which we decorate our work spaces; but how are these ideals manifested in our actual day to day lives and in the work we are doing? For example, many of us believe there is a need to do away with the vicious capitalist order that we live under in this country. However, we depend on and report to foundations whose monies are a direct product of the massive profit of global corporations. They give us an insignificant percentage of the profits they make at the expense of millions of people struggling against the same oppression we claim to fight against in our statements of purpose.

In theory, foundation funding provides us with the ability to do the work—it is supposed to facilitate what we do. But funding also shapes and dictates our work by forcing us to conceptualize our communities as victims. We are forced to talk about our members as being "disadvantaged" and "at risk," and to highlight what we are doing to prevent them from getting pregnant or taking drugs—even when this is not, in essence, how we see them or the priority for our work. This is not to say that no one benefits from our work—of course, many do. But if

what we want is to bring about a fundamental change to the way our societies are structured, then what are we really achieving? The means we have chosen are deforming our end; if we're not careful, what we create won't be what we had originally envisioned at all.

And what have we envisioned? Perhaps the real problem is that we don't spend enough time imagining what we want and then doing the work to sustain that vision. That is one of the fundamental ways the corporate-capitalist system tames us: by robbing us of our time and flooding us in a sea of bureaucratic red tape, which we are told is a necessary evil for guaranteeing our organization's existence. We don't have time to stop and collectively reflect on the implications of this—why are we so concerned with saving organizations if they are not fully able to truly address the root of the problems we face? Often we know that something feels off, but we feel stuck because we don't have time to imagine how we might do it differently. We are too busy being told to market ourselves by pimping our communities' poverty in proposals, selling "results" in reports and accounting for our finances in financial reviews.

In essence, our organizations have become mini-corporations, because on some level, we have internalized the idea that power—the ability to create change—equals money. The current non-profit structure is based on a corporate model, just as most of us organize our economic lives along corporate structures that are totally integrated within a larger dominant capitalist order: through our bank accounts, consumption patterns, and the taxes we pay. Because of this, it becomes harder and harder to entertain the possibility of restructuring our lives in a radically different way. After all, capitalism is not only around us in the society we live in—it is also within us in terms of what we value, how we live, and what we believe is possible.

It is true that many progressive social justice non-profits are able to hire experienced community organizers as staff and provide important and fulfilling jobs to many low-income, young people of color. While this is incredibly important, if non-profit jobs are the only spaces where our communities are engaged in fighting for social justice and creating alternatives to oppressive systems, then we will never be able to engage in radical social change. Would the Zapatistas in Chiapas or the Landless People's Movement members in Brasil have been able to develop their radical autonomous societies if they had been paid to attend meetings and to occupy land? If these mass movements had been their jobs, it would have been very easy to stop them by merely threatening to pull their paychecks. In this country, our activism is held hostage to our jobs—we are completely dependent on a salary structure, and many of us spend over half of our staff hours struggling to raise salaries instead of creating real threats and alternatives to the institutional oppression faced by our communities. Meanwhile the imaginative and

spiritual perspective that would allow us to question the “givens” dictated by neoliberalism begins to erode.

In his brilliant book *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, Robin D. G. Kelley begins with a wonderful passage in which he talks about his mother and the importance she placed on imagination and inner vision:

My mother has a tendency to dream out loud. I think it has something to do with her regular morning meditation. In the quiet darkness of her bedroom her third eye opens onto a new world, a beautiful light-filled place as peaceful as her state of mind....Her other two eyes never let her forget where we lived. The cops, drug dealers, social workers, the rusty tap water, roaches and rodents, the urine-scented hallways, and the piles of garbage were constant reminders that our world began and ended in a battered Harlem/Washington Heights tenement apartment....Yet she would not allow us to live as victims. Instead, we were a family of caretakers who inherited this earth....My mother taught us that the Marvelous was free....She simply wanted us to live through our third eyes, to see life as possibility.<sup>3</sup>

Kelley’s description of his mother reminds me of my own mother, who has also always used the spiritual realm as fertile ground for the imagination—which, she taught me, allows us to visualize and manifest the kind of world we want.

Among activist circles on the Left, there is often a silent, sometimes condescending disapproval of talk about faith. In part, this is due to the association of religion with fundamentalism, the Christian Right, and the integral role played by Christianity in the colonization of the Americas, Africa, and parts of Asia. It is important to recognize the Catholic Church’s role in the devastation and enslavement of African and Indigenous communities. It is important to look at religious fundamentalist movements (whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish) and their use of religious texts to promote fear, ego, and repression. However, there is a difference between spirituality and religion. I would define spirituality as a feeling or sense of something larger and more powerful than our existence, while most religions have become mere institutions. At the same time, it is important to recognize how the two are often intertwined and the role faith has played in fueling movements of resistance.

Faith and spirituality can provide us with a new foundation for our work, by shifting our perspective of what is possible. Spirituality provides people with an alternative lens to the deterministic vision of reality which equates power to money and which constantly tries to tell us that there is no alternative to the oppressive reality we live in. Most movements that have achieved seemingly impossible revolutionary change (the Haitian revolution, Gandhi’s nonviolent revolution in India, the antiapartheid movement in South Africa, the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, to name a few examples) have done so by applying a spiritual understanding of the world to their struggle.

Inspiration and imagination is critical to radical thought. As Kelley reminds us, “Progressive social movements do not simply produce statistics and narratives of oppression; rather, the best ones do what great poetry always does: transport us to another place, compel us to re-live horrors and, more importantly, enable us to imagine a new society.”<sup>4</sup>

So I’m constantly in search of inspiration—some spark of brilliance from past and present that can guide me and others in imagining, through spiritual eyes, the kind of future we want to struggle toward. One of SIIS’s ongoing sources of inspiration has been Ella Baker, who was among those who pioneered the concept of egoless shared leadership. Baker was one of the most influential organizers of the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 60s, but she is often forgotten because of her style as a “behind-the-scenes organizer.” Although she worked alongside some of the movement’s “superstars” including Thurgood Marshall, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., she was not interested in making a name for herself. Baker was also deeply influenced by her mother’s faith in terms of how she approached her commitment to social justice. Her mother was deeply involved in the Black Baptist women’s missionary movement of the early 1900s, and Baker applied the religious fervor and ideals of that faith into her activism. As Barbara Ransby notes, “For Ella Baker the ultimate triumph of a leader was his or her ability to suppress ego and ambition and to embrace humility and a spirit of collectivism.”<sup>5</sup>

Another source of inspiration for me has been learning about the her[his]torical legacies of struggle in Brasil, which is my country of birth. Marginalized communities within Brasil (and in most other parts of the Third World) have reinvented (and are reinventing) social reality in the face of unimaginable odds by tapping into the power of spirit. During Brasil’s 500 years of slavery, there was tremendous creative resistance fueled by a spiritual understanding of the world. The independent maroon state of Palmares emerged as a parallel society within Brasil, with over 20,000 inhabitants during the height of slavery.<sup>6</sup> It was founded by a group of runaway slaves during the 1600s with everything stacked against them, and survived for almost a century by resisting through armed struggle and by drawing strength from African spiritual traditions. Likewise, in 1835, Muslim African slaves used their Islamic faith as a central organizing tool in planning one of the largest attempted revolts in Brasil’s history.

Another powerful example from Bahia, Brasil, is that of Canudos. After the official abolition of slavery in 1888, a popular Christian messianic leader, Antônio Conselheiro, helped to establish Canudos as an autonomous community. Founded in 1893, it was organized as a communal structure with no individual landholders, no “bosses,” and no police. At its height, Canudos is said to have had anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 residents, including many ex-slaves, Indigenous peoples,

and landless agrarian workers who left oppressive job conditions working for large landholders to join this new horizontally structured society. This community survived a series of state and federally sponsored attacks until it was completely wiped out in 1897. The attacks on these remarkable, imaginative communities are clear indicators of the radical threat that they posed to the status quo.

Conselheiro's socialist interpretation of the Bible re-emerges within other movements in Latin America through links to liberation theology. This radical strand of the Catholic Church broke rank with the Vatican-based hierarchy during the 1960s and 70s and has been influential in various popular-based movements throughout Latin America. Under this new interpretation of Catholicism, local priests and nuns see their calling as that of serving the local struggles for justice in their communities. The life of Jesus is taken as an example of a man who not only spoke about God's love but, more important, lived in a way that reflected God's love. The sins of humanity are interpreted as the dehumanizing oppression which human beings impose on one another. Jesus is seen as a revolutionary who fought against sin/oppression by rejecting the cult of greed and materialism.

Liberation theology has also been critical to one of Brasil's largest current social movements: the Landless Workers Movement (MST, or Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra). In the late 1970s, the MST gained momentum during the height of Brasil's military dictatorship and during a period that became known as the "Brazilian Miracle." While the modernization of the nation reached new heights, rural farm workers and sharecroppers increasingly found themselves displaced by the mechanization of agriculture.<sup>7</sup> This led to increased protests and many deaths amongst rural communities across Brasil. In 1979, the MST was formed by landless farmworkers who occupied a piece of land in the Encruzilhada Natalino (in the state of Rio Grande do Sul) with the support of church organizations also based in the liberation theology movement.

During the 1980s and 90s the MST grew tremendously and continues today in advancing a radical, participatory, socialist vision for land reform in Brasil. Today more than 300,000 families have won land titles to over 15 million acres after MST land takeovers. MST communities have spread throughout the country and can be found in 23 of Brasil's 27 states.<sup>8</sup> What is most powerful about this movement is that it has gone beyond the question of land to address the more fundamental question of how to structure the societies that are being created within the settlements and encampments in a manner that reflects their vision of justice. This means that much of their work is about restructuring social relations, including how decisions are made, as they create their own model for schools, community safety, gender equity, economic cooperatives, and other essential frameworks for everyday life.

After attending the Second Latin American Congress of Rural Organizations that took place in Brasil in 1997, US sociologist James Petras reported on

some of the lessons and obstacles shared by participants in his article "The New Revolutionary Peasantry."<sup>9</sup> According to Petras, there were close to 350 delegates from every country in Latin America with the exception of Uruguay and El Salvador. At one of the plenary sessions, the Brazilian Catholic priest Fray Beto asked the delegates how many had been influenced by religious teachings. Noting that "over 90 percent raised their hands," Petras suggests that "popular religiosity, the fusion of Biblical lessons, and religious values has had a direct effect in stimulating the new generation of peasant leaders, along with Marxism, traditional communitarian values, and modern feminism and nationalist ideas."<sup>10</sup> Across these movements there is an emphasis on integrity, faith in humans to transform their realities, humility, non-materialism, commitment, and sacrifice. While there are differences in how these elements are understood, these kinds of values are explicitly linked to the idea of divine love, which is seen as holding radical power that can transform any situation, no matter how hopeless it may seem. Love has the power to create miracles for those who believe. Whatever our traditions or beliefs may be, we can be strengthened by recognizing the radical principle of believing and living out our vision. In this way, we might discover ways to more fully integrate our personal and spiritual lives with the social justice work to which we are committed.

During this same conference, the rise of NGOs was cited by many of the movements represented as one of the leading obstacles to their work. One Brazilian activist described the failure of the women of the MST to develop a common strategy at a Latin American Meeting for Peasant Women. According to her, the meeting failed

because of the manipulative behavior of the NGO professional women, who wanted to control the agenda and limit it exclusively to international cooperation and to confine the struggle to exclusively feminist issues, which meant no support for agrarian reform, anti-imperialism and anti-neo-liberalism.... These feminist NGO professionals are authoritarian and with a colonialist mentality; they have nobody behind them except their wealthy outside backers.<sup>11</sup>

This comment holds some important lessons for us in the US. For example, it illustrates how the non-profit sector promotes the separation between feminist discourses from a broader class (and race) analysis. Because non-profits are funded in large part by corporations (with foundations as mere intermediaries), they can't afford to seriously question capitalism, so class issues are always relegated to the background.

An Ecuadorian peasant leader had this to say about NGOs: "I have no objection to overseas NGOs funding our land reform movement if that's what they're willing to do. What is offensive is their setting down their priorities and funding professionals from our country to come in and undermine our struggles."<sup>12</sup> In

my experience in New York, I've also witnessed non-profits run by professionals (lawyers, academics, college graduates, and other "experts") who come into a community and completely undermine local struggles that have been led for years by local nonprofessional activists by competing for funding and monopolizing resources. Because they speak the language of corporate non-profits, they get the money—regardless of what their relationship is to those communities.

The struggle for revolutionary change in this country has been derailed not only due to institutionalization of social justice movements, but also because of our inability to quiet our egos. Individual leaders and organizations are constantly playing the "fame game"—reinventing the wheel and promoting their own names instead of focusing on what is truly needed to bring about change. Sometimes what is needed is not so "sexy." Sometimes the most radical thing we can do is to follow the lead of others. Social change is only radical if it promotes struggle and growth at every level—for the society at large, in our intimate and everyday relationships, and internally within ourselves.

It's interesting to note the central role of horizontal, consensus-based, shared leadership in all the emerging revolutionary movements in Latin America. They are expanding the concept of what we traditionally think of as "political work." There, the process of working for change and social justice is intimately linked to how people live their daily lives. That is what I think many of us at Sista II Sista cherish about the collective work that we are trying to do, even while understanding and acknowledging the many contradictions and challenges—it is thorough and integral, and it challenges us to try to model our vision for a different world. So often we are confronted by the lack of integrity and hypocrisy of those who do not practice what they preach. We are so trapped into hierarchical, corporate, non-profit models that we are unable to structure ourselves differently, even when our missions advocate empowerment and self-determination for oppressed communities. When we begin to have the courage to imagine alternatives to the molds we find ourselves in, then we begin to practice what we preach. Our commitment becomes much more about the process we use to engage with our communities than about the work (my outcome, what I'm able to produce)—*this* is truly radical.

After college, I returned to my home country of Brasil for a year and a half to learn more about the social justice education movements emerging from Afro-Brasilian communities in Salvador, Bahia. This was one of the most powerful experiences of my life and truly inspired me to struggle for both personal and a larger collective transformation, *at the same time*. One of the communities I worked with is based in the neighborhood of Massaranduba-Mangueira, which was built over a flooded area used as a dumping ground for the city's garbage. The houses were built on stilts over garbage and water, and the city's government never took responsibility for these conditions. However, over the years most of

the streets have been filled in with dirt and concrete because the residents took on the task of doing it themselves through the local residents' association (*associação de moradores*). For communities such as this one, which are totally ignored by the state, social justice is very concretely tied to the struggle for sewage systems, education, water, health care, and housing, to name a few.

In the 1980s, the residents' association—which is completely maintained and supported by community residents—decided to create a school for their children. According to Brasil's constitution, all school-aged children are guaranteed the right to an education. But in practice, this has not applied to poor communities of color, where the only schools available are organized by residents' themselves with no support or funding from government. This community's school, like many others in Brasil, grew out of the residents' association movement. One of the association's founders is a trained Catholic priest who left the church because of his radical interpretation of the Bible and Jesus's life. He, with a group of women from the neighborhood, started a local community school that teaches first through fourth grades. The school's name—Community School: Educate to Liberate—aptly reflects its mission.

One of the teachers and organizers, Ana Rosa da Silva, challenged the school's coordination team (made up of directors, teachers, principal, cleaning lady, and lunch cook, who all receive the same salary) to reflect on issues of race and identity, not only in the classrooms but in their personal, day-to-day lives. The other teachers were not comfortable with their own identity but had reached out to her because the children kept bringing up questions about whether or not they were Black. The teachers asked Ana Rosa to take responsibility for bringing Afro-Brazilian themes into all of their classrooms. There was even the possibility of some extra funding for her to do so. She refused because, in her words, "I refuse to earn [money] to work dealing with the question of Black [people].... For me it's a conflict because I feel that the work I do is a matter of life.... It's a question that I work on 24 hours a day inside myself."<sup>13</sup> Instead she proposed that the students, teachers, and coordinators all join a study/discussion group to learn and explore together the significance of an Afro-Brazilian identity within their lives—they all did.

What does it mean for us to be paid to do something that is, for us, a matter of life? Ana Rosa's words have always stayed with me and have inspired me to struggle to find ways of separating my activism from my paid work by trying instead to bring my activism into how I live my life. Ella Baker also saw the importance of separating what was for her a spiritual commitment to the struggle from activism as a professional career. Barbara Ransby, in her essay about the roots of Ella Baker's political passions, recounts that Baker often dreamed of one day writing her autobiography. Although she never did, she knew what she wanted it to be titled: "Making a Life, Not Making a Living."<sup>14</sup>

There is a very rich legacy to remember and study from the religious Left coming out of not only the Christian tradition, but also the Yoruba/Nagô, Muslim, and Indigenous spiritual traditions, among others. Even today, many emerging social movements struggling for radical social change continue to do the impossible because of their faith-based commitment to the practice of spiritual and material liberation. This approach to social justice is reflected throughout Latin America, not only in large-scale revolutions but also in day-to-day cultural and educational practices. If we look at different practices of spiritual development and discipline, there is a direct relationship between them and the power of the political movements that emerged from them. Both faith and political struggle require deep commitment from those involved—it is a way of living, a chosen path and a prayer.

While we can't ignore the pressures and demands of the material world around us, we *can* shift the perspective that dictates our reality. If what we want is a radical transformation of the societies we live in, we must begin to push the boundaries of the material world by allowing our spirit to move us—even when what we see in front of us is a concrete wall. If we approach our work as a spiritual challenge, then we are no longer enslaved by the concept of money and we are fueled instead by our faith and commitment to bring about radical social change; which is actually much more than just “social”—it is also personal and political, *and* about money and privilege, *and* about sexuality, race, and gender, *and* about the relationship between our minds, bodies, and spirit.

### notes

- 1 For more about our need for social movement “aid” from the Third World, see Refugio Collective, “Rethinking Solidarity,” *Left Turn*, May/June 2006, 9–11.
- 2 The SIIS Collective comprises both staff and non-staff members and is responsible for making all major decisions by consensus. All staff members receive the same salary and are responsible for coordinating specific work areas—also known as Petals. In addition, staff members are also asked to volunteer their time as general members. SIIS's young women members who have gone through a cycle of SIIS's Freedom School (one of the main programs for incoming young women) become members of SIIS Squads, which help to coordinate the different Petals within the organization. Squad members are also invited to join the Collective when they feel ready.
- 3 Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 1–2.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 9.
- 5 Barbara Ransby, “Behind-the-Scenes View of a Behind-the-Scenes Organizer: The Roots of Ella Baker's Political Passions,” in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*, ed. Bettye Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 54.
- 6 Thomas do Bom-Fim Espíndola, *A Geografia Alagoana ou descrição física, política e histórica da província das Alagoas* (1871; repr., Maceió, Brasil: Edições Catavento, 2001).
- 7 MST, “Quem somos” [Who we are], <http://www.mst.org.br/historico/sumario.html>.
- 8 MST presentation at New York University School of Law, November 2004.

- 9 James Petras, "The New Revolutionary Peasant: The Growth of Peasant-Led Opposition to Neoliberalism," *Z Magazine*, October 1998, 1-7, <http://www.zmag.org/zmag/articles/petrasoct98.htm>.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Adjoa Florência Jones de Almeida, "Unveiling the Mirror: Afro-Brazilian Identity and the Emergence of a Community School Movement," *Comparative Education Review* 47, no. 1 (February 2003).
- 14 Ransby, "Behind-the-Scenes View," 55.

»Stephanie Guilloud & William Cordery,  
Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty  
and Genocide

## **fundraising is not a dirty word**

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### *Community-Based Economic Strategies for the Long Haul*

WHEN YOU CONVENE ORGANIZERS, NON-PROFIT STAFF MEMBERS, and activists together, fundraising is rarely the center of passionate debate. Though an important component of most organizing efforts in the United States, fundraising is usually perceived by activists as our nasty compromise within an evil capitalist structure. As long as we relegate fundraising to a dirty chore better handled by grant writers and development directors than organizers, we miss an opportunity to create stepping stones toward community-based economies.

In fundraising, there is foundation income and grassroots income. For the purpose of this essay, grassroots income is defined as all income generated from individuals, fee-for-service, and non-foundation sources. One of the staunchest critiques of the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) is that non-profits have become over dependent on foundation funds as their primary source of income. We cringe about questionable investment policies or association with the elite, so foundations ostensibly provide a nice buffer between social movement work and finance capitalism. But relationships with foundations, like all things in capitalism, come at a cost. Relying on foundations removes an accountability mechanism from our work. In this current political moment in the US, the non-profit structure is the primary model used to organize, launch campaigns, and respond to attacks. Though grassroots fundraising does not completely free us from the limitations of the NPIC, it is a method that can increase and strengthen out accountability to the communities most affected by injustice.

### **grassroots fundraising as an organizing strategy**

Project South is a scrappy organization located in Atlanta, Georgia, focused on movement building for racial and economic justice. More than just a necessity, fundraising is a crucial element to our organizational purpose and direction.

Grassroots fundraising is a strategy to maintain a firm connection to our base and to initiate community-based economic structures. We define *organizing* as building relationships and institutions to sustain community power, and it follows that fundraising *is* organizing. Project South doesn't hire fundraisers to fundraise; we hire organizers to fundraise. While our model may not work for everyone, we believe that part of building community power is creating a community economy in line with our principles and analysis.

Project South works to tie local and immediate struggles to the systemic root causes of oppression. Using popular education models, we partner with grassroots organizations and communities to step back and focus on the patterns of social movements, government politics, and economic trends. We create spaces to develop leadership, strengthen analysis, and plan strategies for more effective organizing. We believe in movement building, and we believe in community power. We connect grassroots fundraising to our central program goals for two reasons: foundation dependency limits effectiveness and to create a community-based economic model while building a base of allies and community members to whom we are ultimately accountable.

### fickle foundations

Project South's experience has shown foundations as a whole to be fairly unreliable. With the media and financial institutions regularly declaring economic scarcity, non-profits are willing to meet foundations' programming and even political mandates. Our work becomes compartmentalized products, desired or undesired by the foundation market, rated by trends or political relationships rather than depth of work. How often do we hear that "youth work is hot right now"? Funders determine funding trends, and non-profits develop programs to bend to these requests rather than assess real needs and realistic goals. If we change our "product" to meet foundation mandates, our organizations might receive additional funding and fiscal security. But more often than not, we have also compromised our vision and betrayed the communities that built us to address specific needs, concerns, and perspectives.

Competition does not enhance movement-building work. Weeding out the "weak" to create three or four perfect organizations does not meet the many and complicated needs of diverse communities. Competing for resources with our partner non-profits aggravates the tendency toward turf wars and territorialism. Small organizations located in the US South face these dynamics. The South has fewer regionally based foundations than anywhere else in the US. The foundations we do have are small and fund small organizations. The only option for small organizations like Project South is to appeal to national foundations and

compete at a national level. We are told time and again that resources for the South are limited and shrinking, and on a particularly bad day, a grant even disappears in the middle of a three-year award. Struggling community-based organizations are at an extreme disadvantage.

As an organization that works with many other grassroots groups to define and implement strategies that connect to long-term movement building, we see common barriers. Bound to yearlong grant cycles, foundation-funded organizations are discouraged from taking the long view and forget to expect the slow push to real change. Organizers working to connect local issues to broad transformation strive to build relationships and examine root causes of inequities. Though short-term projects and goals may move us along in the right direction, developing leaders and carving out integrated, multi-issue strategies does not happen in a year.

So, we still need money. How are we going to get it?

### community-based economics

Fundamentally, economies are about the give and take of resources. In a community-based economy, resources flow from and return to that same community. Connecting organizing and fundraising allows those affected by the work of an organization to determine its course. Project South receives 40 percent of its income from grassroots fundraising. Our goal is to increase that percentage every year through publication sales, fee-for-service, community collaborations, and membership.

Publishing our curriculum is a simple example of providing needed resources and generating grassroots income. Community members (low-income people of color, students, and community organizers) request accessible education tools about globalization. Project South researches the historical dynamics and develops interactive, popularly based exercises to explore the effects of corporate globalization on our communities. We sell that tool kit for \$15. The community receives a needed resource, and the organization receives income to sustain itself and our program work.

Another basic method used by Project South to support the community while sustaining our organization is serious collaboration with other organizations. We plan, coordinate, and share costs of community events with other groups in the area. All the organizations expand their base and visibility, the events are at cost or free, and there is a give and take for community members who may donate or pay a few bucks for raffle tickets. On the surface, these events may look similar to traditional fundraising parties, but there is an important difference. The folks attending, performing, and soaking up the politics are the same

folks (youth, low-income organizers, community members) who participate in the organizing projects. We don't throw parties to raise money but to develop a culture of economic give and take that places value on community, collaboration, and resource sharing.

### **building a base**

Project South also works to integrate fundraising goals and strategy with our overall efforts around base building. Just as we are intentional in ensuring that our leadership positions reflect those most affected, and that our programs address the institutionalized marginalization of so many communities, so must we integrate our fundraising efforts along these same lines. We believe it is better to be dissolved by the community than floated by foundations. Members who contribute to an organization will stop contributing when the work is no longer valuable. Tangible ways used by Project South to do this include hiring from within affected communities (staff, consultants, caterers, performers, researchers, tech support) and creating a membership base that participates in the give and take of all kinds of resources. Some provide financial resources, others provide cultural support, and still others provide links to organizations or people in the community.

Regardless of individual contribution levels, we need to ask the same hard questions about our membership as we do of our leadership and staff. Do they reflect the communities most affected? Are we building intergenerational, multi-racial, multigendered membership? Simple structures can help ensure a base that is truly reflective of the broader community's composition. For example, Project South offers annual membership on a sliding scale: \$25 if you earn a full-time, living wage; \$10 if you are employed part time or at minimum wage; and \$1 if you are incarcerated or unemployed. The system of value goes both ways. We express value and acknowledgement of all levels of work, and members express their support of the organization's work. Paying attention to who values us and who we value keeps our organization focused on those building a stronger movement for long-term change.

Grassroots fundraising through income-generating projects and base-building work also provides a solid structure to determine the effectiveness of our organizations. Program work with income-generating elements (like registration fees for workshops) has helped Project South gauge community interest and investment in our various projects. And when people do not respond or seek out opportunities to participate with us, it forces us to ask questions, especially this one: Do our programs/publications/resources reflect the priorities in the community? Grassroots fundraising provides a checks-and-balances structure.

The danger in this practice, as our organization still operates within a capitalist framework, is that we might be tempted to follow the money rather than follow the work. Generating income while maintaining relationships built on a commitment to long-term social justice requires consistent examination and evaluation so that organizations do not compromise principles for the sake of increasing revenue.

Project South has not, by any means, perfected this approach. We are not fully funded by grassroots sources. Our membership is still unorganized and uncharted. But we strive for a process that prioritizes grassroots sustainability over limited (and dwindling) foundation relationships that chart our success on a short-term rather than long-haul basis. We consistently ask ourselves: Could we survive if we didn't have foundation money tomorrow? Our answer is yes, but at a reduced level. We make a commitment to increase our financial independence not only for our own sustainability in a dangerous political climate, but also to be accountable to the communities who support us and whom we work to support.

To think of fundraising as a dirty word does not make our vision of a better world more viable or pure. Developing a real community-based economic system that redistributes wealth and allows all people to gain access to what they need is essential to complete our vision of a liberated world. Grassroots fundraising strategies are a step in that direction.

»Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo

“we were never meant to survive”

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*Fighting Violence Against Women and the Fourth World War*

ON JANUARY 1, 1994, THE ZAPATISTAS LAUNCHED THEIR INSURGENCY in Mexico. The date signified opposition to NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), one of the greatest neoliberal projects, set to commence that day. Globalization policies like NAFTA deem expendable the life and lands of indigenous peoples. This is why, in 1997, Subcomandante Marcos declared in an article in *Le Monde* that “the fourth world war has already begun.”<sup>1</sup> Following the cold war, which Marcos refers to as the third world war, the fourth world war doles out violence and intimidation in dollars, in market bombs.<sup>2</sup> The fourth world war is where the logic, organization, and violence of the market is deployed in always increasing disbursements to all corners of the world and to all aspects of life. Violence, in all its myriad manifestations—economic, environmental, militarized borders and wars of terror, attacks on language and culture, and more—is deemed a natural phenomenon by imperial and corporate powers. Like the sun, the market also rises, and money is naturalized as that neutral ingredient which makes the world go round. The same is true of our social movements, which, like many of us, took the bait hook, line, and sinker. The non-profit industrial complex (the NPIC) emerges from these processes of privatization and globalization, and the non-profitization of our social movements is wielded as a weapon in the fourth world war.

How did it happen? How did our movements come to look the way they look? Is the way we work, the way we prioritize and engage in social change reflective of the change we’re seeking? What kinds of communities and societies are our current social movements creating? Is the daily minutiae of our work consistent with our vision for a more just and peaceful reality? Who do we name as allies in our work? What is our accountability to each other, and do our “partners” share our commitment to ending violence against women? And what’s money got to do with it? In our efforts to fight violence against women, have we become complicit partners in the fourth world war?

*Let me tell you about the sinker.* After over 10 years in the antiviolence movement, I reflect in awe at the courage and leadership of so many sisters across the generations who have given and continue to give of their hearts to create more just and peaceful communities, to stand in solidarity with a sister going through it in the middle of the night. My work humbly rests on the strategies for survival unearthed by many who call out violence against women, insisting on dignity and humanity for all. In that spirit of calling out, I recall a few moments when I witnessed the movement sinking, when I noticed that our practices had become inconsistent with our vision; when we were usurped by capitalism and the state and became complicit with the violence of racism *and* violence against women (not mutually exclusive forms of violence, but rather interrelated and interdependent forms of violence<sup>3</sup>). These “sinking the movement” moments speak specifically to how funding steered our labors toward reproducing instead of eliminating violence against women.

*1995.* While working in the “Latina program” at the Support Network for Battered Women, I learn that an immigrant Latina has been brutally beaten by “*la Migra*” (immigration law enforcement). I approach the executive director with an op-ed I wrote on behalf of the program that speaks out against all forms of violence against Latinas, including both domestic violence and anti-immigrant state violence. (The executive director’s approval is needed prior to publishing anything.) She tells me the board would never allow such an opinion to represent the organization because it is not allowed to take a political stance and “this” (the INS beating, not domestic violence) is clearly a political issue.

*1997.* After a racist and professionalist takeover of La Casa de las Madres, the new white managerial and directorial staff explicitly hire with a bias toward specialized and licensed degrees, while queer and immigrant Latinas are targeted for harassment. Many of us gather at a forum in New College, in San Francisco, where we tell our stories and critically assess the professionalization of the domestic violence movement and the increasing divide between social work and social justice.

*1998.* An attempt to rule out bilingual education is underway with the Unz Initiative (aka Proposition 227) in California, a measure that would seriously impede Latin@s’ access to education and employment. I work with Sor Juana Inés: Services for Abused Women, a Latina organization assisting predominantly Latina survivors and their families. While exploring ways that Sor Juana can take a stance, I am reminded at a meeting of the state’s Maternal and Child Health funders that agencies will risk losing their funding if they take a political stance. I go back and read the bylaws and find that upon accepting funding, agencies forfeit their right to take a stance on political matters especially those pertaining to elections.

2005. After facing over a year of threats to its very existence, not to mention threats directed at staff, San Francisco Women Against Rape loses most of its city funding as well as some foundation money. Many point to the harassment and loss of funding as a Zionist response to the organization’s stated position against Israeli-imposed colonial violence and sexual violence against Palestinian women.<sup>4</sup>

Let’s take a closer look at how these moments reflect the sinking of the movement, diverting our work toward a project that colludes with violence against women.<sup>5</sup>

### antiviolence organizations reproduce racist violence against women

In the first case scenario, we note the existence of a “Latina program.” Now a staple in many antiviolence programs, ethnic- or race-specific specialty programs exist within a larger “general” operation. Embedded within this organizational strategy is an assumption of universal whiteness. Within many antiviolence organizations, the distribution of resources (salary, benefits, and travel, for example) is consistent with the racial disparities that shape this process in the larger society; more often than not, the programs serving communities of color within larger organizations receive the smallest share of their organization’s economic resources. Since most antiviolence organizations have become hierarchically ordered, decision-making power is another significant resource that is doled out unequally. Although this arrangement seems inconsistent with organizational objectives to foster and promote relationships in which power is shared equally and not abusively, it nonetheless perseveres, and, again, inequality manifests itself across racial lines.

The existence of “special” and “non-white” programs emerges from the logic of the liberalist project of multiculturalism. While there are clear racial hierarchies structured into organizations, these programs are developed under a multiculturalist model that renders race marginal by heralding the primacy of culture. Multiculturalist ideology is a remnant of early-20th-century modes of studying ethnicity, which were modeled on the experiences of white European immigrants who, through processes of assimilation and acculturation to dominant culture, became new white Americans. Although this model is mute on the issue of race—a silence which is part and parcel to the project of whiteness—it often conflates the experiences of communities of color with the experiences of white European immigrants. Thus culture becomes the dominant framework in establishing support to communities of color, yielding the institutionalization of “culturally competent” services across domestic violence organizations. Cultural competence models also falsely assume that culture is fixed and static, often dismissing great heterogeneity and inequalities internal to a particular nation,

race, or ethnicity. While culturally specific services and programs might appear to address the injuries of racism, this organizational strategy actually displaces race from the broader analysis—effectively ignoring the power structure of white supremacy and the structured subjugation of people of color, which effects countless forms of violence against women. By adding a program ostensibly designed to serve the needs of a given community of color, the larger organization avoids direct accountability to that community. In other words, the organization's own white supremacy remains intact and fundamentally unchallenged, as are the countless forms of violence against women perpetuated by racism.

Further, as this example illustrates, the larger organization's white supremacy clearly shapes *all* its work, programming, and decision-making, including its "specific" projects. Certainly, institutional white supremacy dictated the work of the "Latina program," with the Support Network for Battered Women taking a position that silently supported state racist violence against Latinas by muzzling an attempt to publicly denounce it. Thus, "culturally competent" and/or multicultural organizational structures collude with white supremacy and violence against women of color, namely because this logic enables organizations to dismiss the centrality of racism in all institutions and organizations in the United States. These structures also help protect the state, whose Department of Justice was at once responsible for the brutal beating of a Latina immigrant *and* the funding of several staff positions and programs at the Support Network for Battered Women, including my own.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, this funding relationship encourages the organization to privilege its own "fiscal well-being" above all else, including the imperative to challenge state violence against women. Here, as the Sor Juana Inés example affirms, we see the paradoxical depoliticization of movements to end violence against women, an insidious process which obscures and protects the tyrannies of the state while diverting these movements' energies away from projects of resistance.

### the non-profitization of the antiviolence movement

In her speech at the 2004 conference *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, veteran antiviolence activist Suzanne Pharr pointed to the significant injuries progressive social movements incurred through McCarthyism, COINTELPRO, and as an effect of establishing an alliance with the state by joining the non-profit sector. At first, she said, women doing antiviolence work sought tax-exempt status for shelters. But the price of achieving non-profit status became obvious early on as organizers were taunted with lesbian-baiting and misogynist jokes—and as funders demanded of the institution certain policies and practices, including professionalization. Soon funders were expressing their preference for degree-

bearing professionals instead of community organizers; organizations were expected to have hierarchical structures; and therapeutic social services were funded over popular education work. Ideologically, violence against women became more and more a behavioral, criminal, and medical phenomenon, rather than a social justice issue. When violence against women is understood this way, interventions and attempts at prevention are overly reliant on therapy and the courts—all individualized methods of intervention that fail to address and combat the social organization of violence against women. These methods are also inextricable from institutional arrangements that carry steep histories of racism like the medical industrial complex and the prison industrial complex; as a result, the re-victimization of women of color becomes more likely.<sup>7</sup>

Ronald Reagan, a key player in the emergence of the fourth world war, made massive attempts to extend privatization to social movements and academia.<sup>8</sup> Through the non-profitization (a kind of corporatization) of social movements, a non-profit organization’s economic structure, survival, and identity (that is, tax classification) became a dominant aspect of the organization. Ideologically, and in practice through the strict regulation of finances, the “rest” of the organization’s work is understood as a consequence or byproduct of the funding. As organizations became non-profitized they began to lose political autonomy (from the state and funders), and their sense of accountability shifted from their constituents to their funders. The movement was literally split in two when funding came in to work discretely on *either* domestic violence *or* sexual assault, but not both, as if they were so neatly divisible and mutually exclusive. (In reality, sexual assault is one of the most common forms of domestic violence, and most survivors of sexual assault knew their assailants prior to the attack.)<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, executive directors and managers are often given tyrannical say and power while hierarchies are entrenched, usually in line with social axes of inequality such as class, race, nationality, sexuality, and ability. The growing heterosexist and racist harassment pointed to this entrenchment at La Casa de las Madres, and the INS incident at the Support Network confirm the tangible power inequality. Ironically, it appears that our corporate-modeled hierarchical organizational structures are actually reproducing the same cycle of violence we seek to eliminate.

*Let me tell you about the line.* Through funding and non-profitization, the movement was called in to sleep with the enemy, the US state, the central organizer of violence against women in the world. In an effort to maim the movement, the state made its interests seem compatible with the interests of women. As Patricia Hill Collins observes, “Domination operates not only by structuring power from the top down but by simultaneously annexing the power as energy of those on the bottom for its own ends.”<sup>10</sup> Through policy, ideology, and the NPIC, the state began to break into pieces the radical social justice agenda of the

movement against violence against women. First, by prohibiting non-profits from engaging in “politics,” it separated interpersonal violence against women from state-based, economic, and institutional violence against women. This individualization of violence excluded the experiences of women of color surviving the multiple forms of state violence.<sup>11</sup> Then the state splintered anti-sexual assault work from the movement to end domestic violence, while certain state-based forms of sexual assault were kept out of the discourse of violence against women (for example, militarized and prison sexual assaults, militarized border rapes, and sterilization and other population control practices.)<sup>12</sup>

The production of knowledge consistent with this agenda is a key strategy to get us to “buy” the line and to further the project of the non-profitization, professionalization, and social servicization of the antiviolence movement while escalating the criminalization and medicalization of violence. Academic research, under attack by “academic capitalism” and the extension of privatization to academia, has become increasingly dependent on federal and foundation funding. This funding develops a problematic allegiance to the state and foundation capital and steers the production of knowledge toward those ends. It is in this aforementioned context that the history of domestic violence research is produced. Thus, the historical legacy, the trends and directions in the literature on domestic violence, for example, reflects the trends and directions of the “sinking movement” in so far as they follow the subterfuge of the state’s ideology on violence against women.

### the state’s line on the criminalization of domestic violence

In a move to align itself alongside the antiviolence movement, the state increasingly came to structure violence as a crime. This ideology naturalized violence as a crime, and thus emerged normative contemporary vernacular on “violent crimes” and “hate crimes” that conflates violence with crime. Violence is not naturally a crime, yet the interests of the state and the economy are served when violence becomes a crime.<sup>13</sup> The criminalization of domestic violence created a dual advantage for the state: the perpetrator became the sole party responsible for violence against women while the state positioned itself against the perpetrator and thereby as an ally of battered women. Criminalization also buttressed the state’s claim that prisons were the solution to domestic violence, a framework that has been proven to the contrary while yielding disastrous results for women of color and their communities.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, this development closely parallels the growth of the prison industrial complex (PIC) and the heightened criminalization of domestic violence through mandatory arrest policies, development of new crime legislation, and steepening sentences for existing crimes.

Federal funding to address violence against women was a key strategy to align the antiviolence movement with the criminalization project. In 1976, the Center for Women Policy Studies received a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the first federal monies made available to address domestic violence. The Center published *Response*, a newsletter intended to reach a national audience with the hope of fostering support for the funding’s objective: the criminalization of domestic violence, specifically, by improving criminal prosecution rates.<sup>15</sup> Through this newsletter and funding, the interests of the criminal justice system and the battered women’s movement were made to look compatible, and domestic violence came to be seen increasingly, both within the movement and in larger society, as a crime. Federal funding pitched the need for a “system-based” response to domestic violence, a move that partnered the anti-violence movement with the prison industrial complex, the medical industrial complex and state social service agencies. The criminalization project ensued, then heightened when two policies that created the largest pools of state funding for antiviolence work became law: the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 (VAWA) and the Violence Against Women Act II in 2005. VAWA I and II merged in policy the interests of the state—to criminalize society, populate the cheap labor force of the PIC, manage the nation’s shifting racial demographics (specifically, a declining white population) by quarantining more people of color in prison, and deflect attention from its role in the production and reproduction of domestic violence—with the interests of the antiviolence movement.<sup>16</sup> To affirm and structure this merger, VAWA created the US Office on Violence Against Women and housed it in the Department of Justice, the federal arm of the PIC. Thus, federal funding has entrenched the ideology of the criminalization of violence against women, doling out “the line” inside billions of dollars of funding.

One of the dangerous effects of the criminalization process is that it has inhibited grassroots organizing and creative community thinking about real solutions to domestic violence. Instead, the now-naturalized response to domestic violence is to “call the cops,” a tactic that doesn’t work too well for communities already under attack by the racism of law enforcement, immigration laws and enforcement, and the prison industrial complex. Additionally, mandatory arrest laws, which are pervasive throughout the country, require an arrest be made if there is a domestic violence call. But rather than protecting women against domestic violence, these policies often revictimize the survivor by either leading to her arrest (if she so much as scratched her abuser in self-defense) or to the arrest of the abuser without survivor consent. In 2004, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence and Critical Resistance released a joint statement regarding the criminalization of domestic violence that revealed the state’s true colors:

As an overall strategy for ending violence, criminalization has not worked. In fact, the overall impact of mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence has led to decreases in the number of battered women who kill their partners in self-defense, but they have not led to a decrease in the number of batterers who kill their partners. Thus, the law protects batterers more than it protects survivors.<sup>17</sup>

### the state's line on the medicalization of violence against women

The Western medical model of disease deflects political causation and individualizes the origin of the problem/illness. Likewise the medical industrial complex (MIC), yet another partnering of the state and capital, co-opts social justice issues by taking them under its jurisdiction.<sup>18</sup> Through policies such as health practitioner mandatory-reporting policies, the MIC interfaces with the PIC to support state and economic interests in the criminalization of violence against women. For instance, these policies require that health care providers report suspected abuse to law enforcement. But survivor advocates argue that mandatory-reporting policies disregard survivors' choice to contact law enforcement, and in the process they are revictimized with the increased danger of being arrested or deported.<sup>19</sup> The MIC and PIC are principally interested in promoting profit, often at the expense and victimization of the most marginalized members of society, such as women of color. Just as the criminalization of violence against women emerged alongside the growth of the PIC, the medicalization of violence against women is closely linked to the growing privatization and corporatization of health care.

The criminalization and medicalization of violence against women intersect in that they promote an agenda to depoliticize the movement. The racist, corporate, and hierarchical organizational structures of the MIC and the PIC are extended to social movements, and more and more, the antiviolence movement mirrors these violent organizational structures. Private and public funding that encourage, or require, a "system-based" response coerce antiviolence organizations to work alongside these industrial complexes by extending the criminalization and medicalization of violence against women.

### calling out the "antiviolence" state

As argued earlier, the state used funding as a strategy to ally itself with the anti-violence movement while diverting our attention from state violence. But our efforts to fight violence against women must account for the ways the state deploys violence; we cannot plan and create just and peaceful realities without calling out the state that deceptively positions itself as the "antiviolence" state.

As Angela Davis poignantly argued in her opening address at the first Color of Violence conference, violence is constituted in the very fabric of society.<sup>20</sup> In no way an unexpected aberration in the order of things, violence is the knife that cuts *and* the thread that sews this racist imperial nation together; violence *is* the order of things. It creates and separates nation-states, slices us into genders and sexes, Global North and South, distances the suburbs from the inner cities, brown and black from white.<sup>21</sup> Indeed unequal and oppressive social arrangements are engendered through acts of violence.<sup>22</sup> It takes violence to breed injustice, it takes violence to keep injustice.

The specific contours of violence today glare with a neocolonial empire building agenda that has conjured "the war of terror," the 21st-century invention of an ideological weapon wielded to maneuver public consent for abhorred attacks on humanity. It has been estimated that more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in just the first 18 months of military occupation—this, in addition to the many more hundreds of thousands killed through economic sanctions and the Gulf War invasion in 1991.<sup>23</sup> All expressions of violence are interconnected, and physical and military violence require ideological violence for legitimation and to enlist our participation. A war could not be without acquiescence to the logic of war.

The US-Mexico border reminds us that mass rapes, the mutilation of bodies, and murder have been integral ingredients in the concoction of neocolonial, neoliberal relations—the fourth world war. The Juárez femicides and the entire continuum of violence against Mexicanas and other migrants follow the violent incision of an increasingly militarized US-Mexico border into these lands and peoples.<sup>24</sup> Violence is an attempt to mark domination. Paolo Freire argued that violence is a tactic in the pursuit of power, a tool of domination that is centrally deployed by the state.<sup>25</sup> This is consistent with the work of Yvette Flores-Ortiz and Antonia Castañeda, who trace the foundational acts of domination in the United States—acts of conquest and colonial violence against native women and black women.<sup>26</sup>

Where violence is the constant and the context, multiple forms of violence are co-constituted, carried out in an organized manner that drives the mission of empire and its hues of a heteronormative, white supremacist patriarchal capitalist order. Domestic violence is a manifestation of unequal, or the pursuit of unequal, intimate relationships, and it emerges from and within a social context marked by inequality and the pursuit of inequality.<sup>27</sup> The state cites the exclusive primacy of gender oppression in its ideology on domestic violence. This emphasis is dangerous, as it obscures how other central social processes such as race and class are implicated in the production of domestic violence, not just as effects but as constructive forces. For example, the feminization and racialization of poverty don't just create additional barriers for poor survivors of domestic violence who

are women of color; these social processes are actually constitutive elements in domestic violence.

Violence itself, as Angela Davis also noted, is a “powerful ideological conductor, whose meaning constantly mutates.”<sup>28</sup> Discourses of violence are situated and produced amid specific political and historical interests and contexts. So it is compelling to note that the state has ushered in what have become dominant narratives on violence against women that do not consider the intersection of state and interpersonal violence.<sup>29</sup> Antiviolence groups who do consider this intersection, such as San Francisco Women Against Rape, are considered a threat and have had to endure organized attacks. When the state defines violence against women, it excludes from the definition among the most egregious attacks in the history of the human experience, dismissing many experiences of colonial and racist violence. In fact, the state narrative on violence against women excludes just about every form of violence, including military violence.<sup>30</sup> When we ask the question, “What counts as violence against women?” we come to find that the state’s narrative not only fails to consider the experiences of women of color, but it also fails to represent the scope of violence against us. In doing so, it ignores the roots of domestic violence, therefore missing any opportunity to arrive at real solutions.

Through the criminalization process, the state also produces a racist, sexist, and heteronormative discourse on violence that works to purport men of color as hyper-violent, legitimating the racist practice of containing, detaining, invading, criminalizing, and splitting people-of-color communities.<sup>31</sup> The ideological work of a hegemonic discourse on violence against women that avoids many other prevalent forms of violence, particularly those experienced by women of color and our communities, sets up a pretense to address violence while simultaneously protecting white supremacist, patriarchal, and capitalist social arrangements. This analysis begins to reveal not only the state’s complicity in maintaining violence against women, but the state’s interest in deploying violence against women. This is the state’s double discourse on violence against women: expressing interest in care, definition, and intervention of certain forms of violence (individual) on one hand, while dismissing, negating, and deploying other forms of violence.<sup>32</sup> In practice, the state legitimates violence as “legal,” excluding its own practices from the very nomenclature of violence.<sup>33</sup> Violence is defined as separate, even oppositional to the state, in order to evade accountability. During the civil rights era, the state’s concern with the threatening rise of social movements reinvigorated its interest in violence. In direct response to that summer’s “urban riots,” in 1967 the federal government commissioned the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (popularly known as the Kerner Commission), which established a link between civil disorder and violence. A year later, the first federally appointed body to ascertain the “problem

of violence" in the US, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence was born.<sup>34</sup> The commission was given the following tasks:

To investigate and make recommendations with respect to: (a) the causes and prevention of lawless acts of violence in our society, including assassination, murder, and assault, and (b) the causes and prevention of disrespect for law and order, of disrespect for public officials, and of violent disruptions of public order by individuals and groups.<sup>35</sup>

This ideological maneuvering positions violence outside the jurisdiction of the state, as "lawlessness." From this it seems clear that the commission's assigned task was to quell popular uprising which could potentially pose a threat to the state by any available measures, particularly the law-and-order state itself.<sup>36</sup> To that end, this historic panel's work assigned violence to the state's "control" and tagged myriad resistant activities as criminal. It sets violence as an expression of opposition to the state/law, as well as a crime and behavioral issue. The latter two frameworks are rooted in the individual, and with this swift move, the state slips itself out of the realm of violence. Undergirded by this ideological foundation, the social servicization of violence against women is made a dominant feature of the antiviolence movement through funding that effectively discourages social change, a recurring tactic of the NPIC.

While the state posits itself as an ally in ending violence against women, the antiviolence movement grows ever more dependent on its funding and ideology. Antonio Gramsci argued that the consent of the ruled is achieved through the state's education of the masses. In other words, the feeding of the line is key to establishing hegemony, the way the dominant group, through culture, folklore, and an array of social institutions, creates what comes to be known as "common sense."<sup>37</sup> And through the ideological disbursements in funding, we come to expect prisons, therapists, and medicine to eliminate violence against women. The NPIC has delivered the line.

*And the hook?* Money, money, and more money. The US Office on Violence Against Women diffuses the state's ideology on violence against women through the more than \$1 billion of funding it administers each year. The context is key here because the non-profitization of social movements occurs in a globalizing context, in which privatization is extended more and more to all aspects of life, including resistance. In this way, non-profitization becomes a weapon of the fourth world war. Everyone, whether an educator, a health care worker, or a domestic violence advocate is working in pseudo-corporate environments where the culture and organization of the market is increasingly encroaching on our lives. Instead of organizers, we have managers and bureaucrats, receptionists and clients. Instead of social change, we have service deliverables, and the vision that

once drove our deep commitment to fighting violence against women has been replaced by outcomes.

Globalization also sets out to heighten need and dependence on money by impoverishing and crippling economies and then fostering dependence on the institutions and national currencies capable of distributing it. The same is true for social movements that arise out of severe injustice that cripples and impoverishes the marginalized members of society. So in many ways, social movements for justice and liberation are made to *need* money. To the hungry fish in the sea, the bait on the hook looks real good. But soon enough, the fish learns that the hook ain't worth it, that the bait ain't just a meal, after all. Do we take to the hook because we need it? And when do we come to know the hook ain't worth it, and the money ain't worth it because it's actually killing the change we set out to create while signing us up to become complicit partners in the fourth world war? What will it take to resist the hook, to disinvest from the NPIC?

### going global: the mcdonaldization of a movement

Subcomandante Marcos asserts, "What is to be done when violence derives from the laws of the market?" The greatest casualties of the fourth world war are undoubtedly endured by the most disenfranchised: lands, nations, and indigenous peoples in the Global South. Movements of resistance and justice also stand among the casualties. Like McDonald's franchises on the global market, movement-sinking ideology from the state, non-profits, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) is handed out alongside billions of dollars in funding. Globalization extends the logic and organization of the market to all aspects of life; imperialism extends the state ideology. The two work hand in hand while the criminalization, social servicization, medicalization, and non-profitization of social movements proliferates. Under the guise of transnational feminist projects, many US-based organizations and funders partner with organizations in the Global South in their fight against domestic violence. In a move reminiscent of the prior discussion on multiculturalism, institutionalized racism, and cultural-competency models, US-based "maimed movement" approaches are signed, sealed, and delivered throughout the world, with minor adjustments to protocol and practice based on the cultural and social particulars of the Global South partner. Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal reveal that the fallacy of supposed transnational feminist projects lies in their inability to commit to engaging an international and critical analysis and practice that recognizes asymmetries of power and multiple expressions of agency.<sup>38</sup> In effect, the imposition of US models of intervention in violence against women dismisses the context of globalization and imperialism, falsely casting the United States as interested in the

safety and well-being of women in the Global South. Further, this imposition frames US antiviolence models as superior to all others, jeopardizing the practices, traditions, and epistemologies of indigenous women and communities in the Global South.

The antiglobalization movements throughout the world are leading the way in fighting privatization and the fourth world war. Given that they share the same enemies, what will it take for the antiglobalization movements to ally with the antiviolence movement? First, both movements would have to jointly resist non-profitization, the process which extends privatization to social movements and allies them with profit-seeking interests like the PIC and MIC. And second, both movements would have to jointly articulate and engender visions of social justice and liberation that account for the ways the fourth world war deploys violence against women and sets out to co-opt the antiviolence movement.

## getting there

I was recently riding a taxi in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the driver, a middle-aged man from Mumbai, India, commented that we should always be skeptical of research findings and design, and that we should look very closely at who is funding the research. "Through funding they tell you how to think," he said....

In 2003, in Delhi, India, INCITE! met with a grassroots activist group doing work around AIDS. The group refused any money except that raised through grassroots means. We were reminded that money corrupts and always carries strings.

Suzanne Pharr asked the audience at the Revolution Will Not Be Funded conference, in a time of rapacious capitalism, "what might we do to fund a radical movement?" Many sisters are leading the way, disinvesting from the NPIC, disinvesting from the state, and redirecting energies and precious resources and time to grassroots organizing, political education, and community mobilization. As I write this article, Sista II Sista is de-501(c)(3)izing,<sup>39</sup> INCITE! still refuses to incorporate as a non-profit, and we remember the rejection by the NCAVP (National Coalition of Antiviolence Programs) of \$600,000 from the Department of Justice, the federal agency that refused the group's references to lesbian battering, racism, and commitment to organizing.

In spite of the dismal landscape, we persevere with fierce and strong determination as more radical and grassroots movements against violence against women are born. These movements insist on recognizing all forms of violence against women, including state and racist violence. More interested in ending violence against women than in winning the largest grant, pandering to funders, or worrying over government regulations, we are reminded to take a close look and notice what path we're headed down. This is a call to remember why funding

takes the directions it takes, why some things get funded and others don't, and what we become complicit in by pursuing and accepting certain funds.

Funding, whether government or foundation money, emerges from the deepest ravages of capitalist inequality. Simply put, the government will not dole out dollars to organize against privatization, against the fourth world war, or against itself—in other words, it will not fund the movement to end violence against women. Paulo Freire once said that violence is an instrument of terror intended to immobilize the opponent; it stands then that the non-profit industrial complex is guilty of deploying the violence of non-profitization, an attempt to sink our movements. And, just as we have always done, we will not stand for violence. We will call out injustice wherever we see it and continue our long, hopeful fight to end violence against women *and* the fourth world war.

### notes

The title of this essay is inspired by Audre Lorde, who wrote: “For to survive in the mouth of the dragon we call America, we have had to learn this first and most vital lesson—that we were never meant to survive.” Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984).

1 Subcomandante Marcos, “Why We Are Fighting: The Fourth World War Has Begun,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1997, <http://mondediplo.com/1997/09/marcos>.

2 Subcomandante Marcos, “The Fourth World War Has Begun,” in *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, 1997), 270–275.

3 For further discussion of the intersection of the violence of racism and violence against women, see the work of Antonia Castañeda and Yvette Flores-Ortiz, and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, ed., *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006).

4 For further discussion on Zionism, please see *Color of Violence*, specifically Nadine Naber, Eman Desouky, and Lina Baroudi’s “The Forgotten –ism: An Arab American Women’s Perspective on Zionism, Racism, and Sexism” and Nadine Naber’s “A Call for Consistency: Palestinian Resistance and Radical US Women of Color.”

5 My observations stem from my own direct personal experience working in the movement and the emergent patterns noted from countless conversations and statewide and national meetings. These formations are not present in every organization; rather, such organizational structures have become dominant and mainstream within the antiviolence movement as a whole.

6 Violence Against Women funding is administered through the Department of Justice, which, up until the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, also housed and administered immigration enforcement.

7 Beth E. Richie, *Compelled to Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

8 See the following: Jennifer Washburn, *University, Inc.* (New York: Basic Books, 2005) and Andrea del Moral, “The Revolution Will Not Be Funded,” *LiP: Informed Revolt*, April 4, 2005.

9 Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, “Statistics,” <http://www.rainn.org/statistics/index.html>.

10 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

11 Gail Garfield, *Knowing What We Know: African American Women’s Experiences of Violence and Violation* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

12 See the following: Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women’s Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Sylvanna Falcón, “Securing the Nation

Through the Violation of Women’s Bodies: Militarized Border Rape at the US-Mexico Border,” in INCITE!, *Color of Violence*; Andrea Smith, “‘Better Dead than Pregnant’: The Colonization of Native Women’s Reproductive Health,” in *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender, and Criminalization*, ed. Jael Silliman and Anannya Bhattacharjee (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002).

- 13 Urvashi Vaid asked in her speech at INCITE’s first Color of Violence conference in Santa Cruz, “If hate violence is motivated by prejudice, why is there an over-reliance on the law through the pro-criminalization of hate crimes and an under-reliance on education?” Urvashi Vaid, opening plenary (Color of Violence conference, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 2000).
- 14 See Justice Now, [www.jnow.org](http://www.jnow.org), and “INCITE!/Critical Resistance Joint Statement,” [www.incite-national.org](http://www.incite-national.org).
- 15 Susan Schechter, *Women and Male Violence: The Visions and Struggles of the Battered Women’s Movement* (Boston: South End Press, 1982), 189–191.
- 16 Antonia Castañeda, “History and the Politics of Violence Against Women,” in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998); Yvette Flores-Ortiz, “*La mujer y la violencia*: A Culturally Based Model for the Understanding and Treatment of Domestic Violence in Chicana/Latina Communities,” in *Chicana Critical Issues*, ed. Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambios Sociales (MALCS) (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1993); Andrea Smith, “Looking to the Future: Domestic Violence, Women of Color, and Social Change,” in *Domestic Violence at the Margins: Readings on Race, Class, Gender, and Culture*, ed. Beth E. Richie, Natalie J. Sokoloff, and Christina Pratt (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).
- 17 Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, “Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex,” in INCITE!, *Color of Violence*, 223.
- 18 For further discussion, see my essay “The Medicalization of Domestic Violence,” in INCITE!, *Color of Violence*.
- 19 Ariella Hyman, *Mandatory Reporting of Domestic Violence by Health Care Providers: A Policy Paper* (San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1997).
- 20 Angela Y. Davis, keynote speech (Color of Violence conference, University of California, Santa Cruz, April 2000).
- 21 For discussion on the production of normatively sexed bodies and gendered subjects through medical violence, specifically through sex assignment surgeries, see Cheryl Chase, “Hermaphrodites With Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism,” *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1998): 189–211
- 22 Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (1970; repr., New York: Continuum, 1982), 26–40.
- 23 Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon, 1997).
- 24 See INCITE!, *Color of Violence*, especially Rosa Linda Fregoso’s “The Complexities of ‘Femicide’ on the Border” and Sylvanna Falcón’s “‘National Security’ and the Violation of Women: Militarized Border Rape at the US-Mexico Border.”
- 25 Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 26–40
- 26 Flores-Ortiz, “*La mujer y la violencia*” and Castañeda, “History and the Politics of Violence Against Women.”
- 27 Over and over again, I have been told by women in Chiapas, Colombia, and Palestine that as military violence escalates, they see forms of intimate gender-based violence escalate. See Enloe, *Maneuvers* and Clarissa Rojas, Margo Okazawa-Rey, and Marisol Arriola, “War Hits Home for US Women,” *War Times*, no. 6 (October 2002).
- 28 Davis, keynote speech.
- 29 For further information, see the work of Nadera Shelhoub Kevorkian, Nada Elias, Margo Okazawa-Rey, and Cynthia Enloe. For recent findings that female US female military personnel have been dying from complications resulting from holding their urine, for fear of being raped by men in their own armies if they went to the restroom in the middle of the night, see Marjorie Cohn,

“Military Hides Cause of Women Soldiers’ Deaths,” *truthout*, January 30, 2006, [www.truthout.org/docs\\_2006/013006J.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/013006J.shtml).

- 30 Office on Violence Against Women, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/>.
- 31 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak stated that colonialism (in the minds of some colonizers), as in the invasion in Afghanistan, involves “white men saving brown women from brown men.” See also Nadine Naber et al., “The Forgotten –ism.”
- 32 Another double discourse exists with regard to the state’s narrative on other forms of violence. For example, a February 26, 2006 headline read, “Bush Urges Iraqis to Stem Wave of Violence” (AP). Simultaneously Bush addresses Iraqi violence while dismissing the violence of the US military invasion. This also exists with the prison industrial complex, where prisoner violence is noted yet the many institutional acts of violence that prisoners endure are ignored. These double discourses are also racialized—they are specifically intent on pinning the tag of violence on people of color, while the violence of white supremacy and colonialism is evaded.
- 33 Alexander Passerin d’Entreves, *The Notion of the State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
- 34 Albert J. Reiss, Jr., *Understanding and Preventing Violence*, ed., National Research Council (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1993), ix–27.
- 35 *Ibid.*, x.
- 36 The commission was also set up in response to the National Science Foundation’s Program on Law and Social Sciences, which was interested primarily in studying violent behavior, and the National Institute of Justice, which sought assistance with preventing violent crime.
- 37 Rosemary Hennessy, *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Q. H. Smith and G. N. Smith (1971; repr., New York: International Publishers, 1999).
- 38 Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 3, 19.
- 39 To learn more about Sista II Sista’s decision to disinvest from the non-profit system, see Nicole Burrowes, Morgan Cousins, Paula X. Rojas, and Ije Ude, “On Our Own Terms: Ten Years of Radical Community Building With Sista II Sista,” which appears in this volume.