

Black

Lives

Matter at

Work



**A resource guide for
workers and organizers**

Compiled by the Young Worker Media Project

“It is no longer the time to be silent at the water cooler. It is time to start the conversation. You walk up and say, we’ve been sitting in this cubicle next to each other, in this class next to each other. I’ve been watching you scrub my floors, wipe out the bathroom, serve my food, drive my bus. We don’t know about each other’s lives and we need to find out!”

Cleveland woman protesting the murder of 12-year old Tamir Rice

As workers and organizers, the time to be silent is over.

Black lives matter. Racial violence rolls on. What does this mean for us in the labor movement? What can we do to uplift the rage of the current moment and address the collective trauma of anti-Black violence? What can we do to dismantle white supremacy where we work and beyond?

The goal of this resource guide is to provide information and support that we can share across our spaces.

How was this guide created?

This guide is hosted by the [Young Worker Media Project](#), a volunteer network that emerged from the 2014 Labor Notes conference. The content comes from people in our spaces as well as responses to a survey that we put out. While contributors represent a range of backgrounds, we’ve emphasized the voices of Black folks, especially women and queer people. We’ve also put an emphasis on tangibles to share with workers and organizers. We’ve welcomed a range of views, but are unapologetically focused on the mission of Black liberation and healing.

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September 2015 / Young Worker Media Project

Everyone agrees, in some way or another, that young workers are the "future of labor." But this doesn't guarantee us a voice in the movement—let alone at the workplace, or in the broader conversation. So, we need our own media. Using media, we can elevate the voices of young workers and bring more voices into the mix. Young worker media can encompass the diverse identities of young workers and bridge the divide between union workers, non-union workers, and other young people.

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Why young workers? We hear about our job prospects and student debt. We hear how young workers are apathetic, or lazy, or selfish. We don't hear as much about our struggles, or our work, or what we value. When we do, it's rarely we who get to tell the story. Our workplaces and our lives are changing, and we know it. We're the generation of electronic medical records, standardized tests, "shared services," lean production, temp jobs—and debt. And we're not just a single population but many, with many stories to tell.



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[Excerpt] A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

**Alicia Garza, Black Lives Matter Co-Founder,
National Domestic Workers Alliance**

Full text at [The Feminist Wire](#)

...When we say Black Lives Matter, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement [that] Black poverty and genocide is state violence. It is an acknowledgment that 1 million Black people are locked in cages in this country—one half of all people in prisons or jails—is an act of state violence. It is an acknowledgment that Black women continue to bear the burden of a relentless assault on our children and our families and that assault is an act of state violence. Black queer and trans folks bearing a unique burden in a hetero-patriarchal society that disposes of us like garbage and simultaneously fetishizes us and profits off of us is state violence; the fact that 500,000 Black people in the US are undocumented immigrants and relegated to the shadows is state violence; the fact that Black girls are used as negotiating chips during times of conflict and war is state violence; Black folks living with disabilities and different abilities bear the burden of state-sponsored Darwinian experiments that attempt to squeeze us into boxes of normality defined by White supremacy is state violence. And the fact is that the lives of Black people—not ALL people—exist within these conditions is consequence of state violence.

#BlackLivesMatter doesn't mean your life isn't important—it means that Black lives, which are seen as without value within White supremacy, are

important to your liberation. Given the disproportionate impact state violence has on Black lives, we understand that when Black people in this country get free, the benefits will be wide reaching and transformative for society as a whole. When we are able to end hyper-criminalization and sexualization of Black people and end the poverty, control, and surveillance of Black people, every single person in this world has a better shot at getting and staying free. When Black people get free, everybody gets free. This is why we call on Black people and our allies to take up the call that Black lives matter. We're not saying Black lives are more important than other lives, or that other lives are not criminalized and oppressed in various ways. We remain in active solidarity with all oppressed people who are fighting for their liberation and we know that our destinies are intertwined.

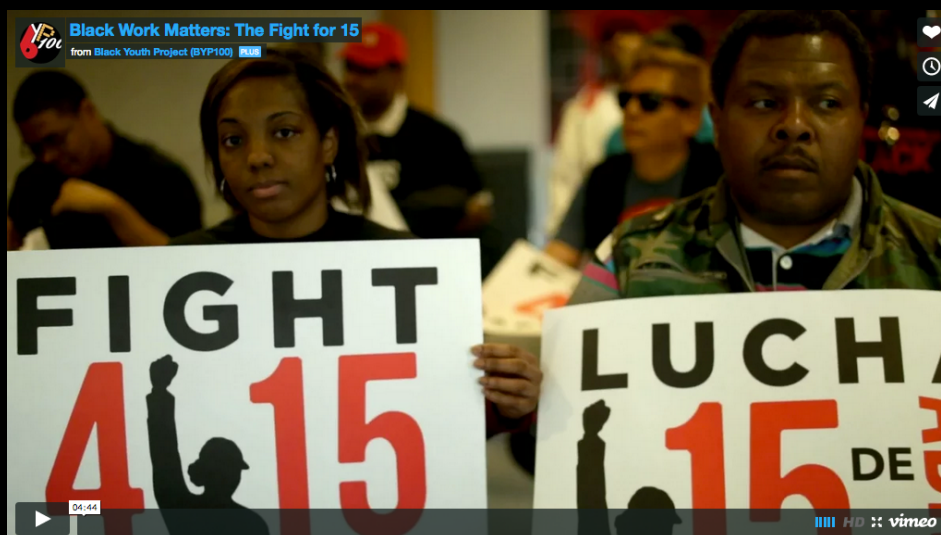
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When you adopt Black Lives Matter and transform it into something else (if you feel you really need to do that—see above for the arguments not to), it's appropriate politically to credit the lineage from which your adapted work derived. It's important that we work together to build and acknowledge the legacy of Black contributions to the struggle for human rights. If you adapt Black Lives Matter, use the opportunity to talk about its inception and political framing. Lift up Black lives as an opportunity to connect struggles across race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality and disability.

#BlackWorkMatters: Resources From the Black Youth Project

"How a Fair Wage Saved My Life" BYP Co-Chair Jasson Perez, *Ebony*

"For me, being paid a fair wage means that I don't have to work an extra job just to make ends meet. It means I have the time I need for self-care to maintain my health and my sobriety (now 14 years strong), and it means I have time and energy to parent my daughter – taking her to gymnastics practices, attending meetings at her school, reading to her at night and being an active participant in her life. Earning enough money also gives me the space to fight in solidarity with those workers still economically-trapped in low-wage occupations." [read more >>](#)



Shot and edited by Terrence Thompson (tbthompsonfilms@gmail.com).

What Is Collective Liberation?

JT Taylor, United Students Against Sweatshops, Local 86

Collective Liberation is principle and practice, it is personal and political. It's the collective, horizontal, reciprocal, inclusive, and non-hierarchical organization of people. All marginalized identities' fights and struggles are to be given equal concern and equal respect. There is no power from people unless it is collective. Liberation, a greater weight than simple freedom. When we liberate ourselves, it is from chains of oppression, liberating silence, liberating shame so that it becomes fiery empowerment and reclamation.

Collective Liberation is kept alive in United Students Against Sweatshops through our Collective Liberation workshops. Everyone is required to attend introductory workshops on marginalized identities, types of



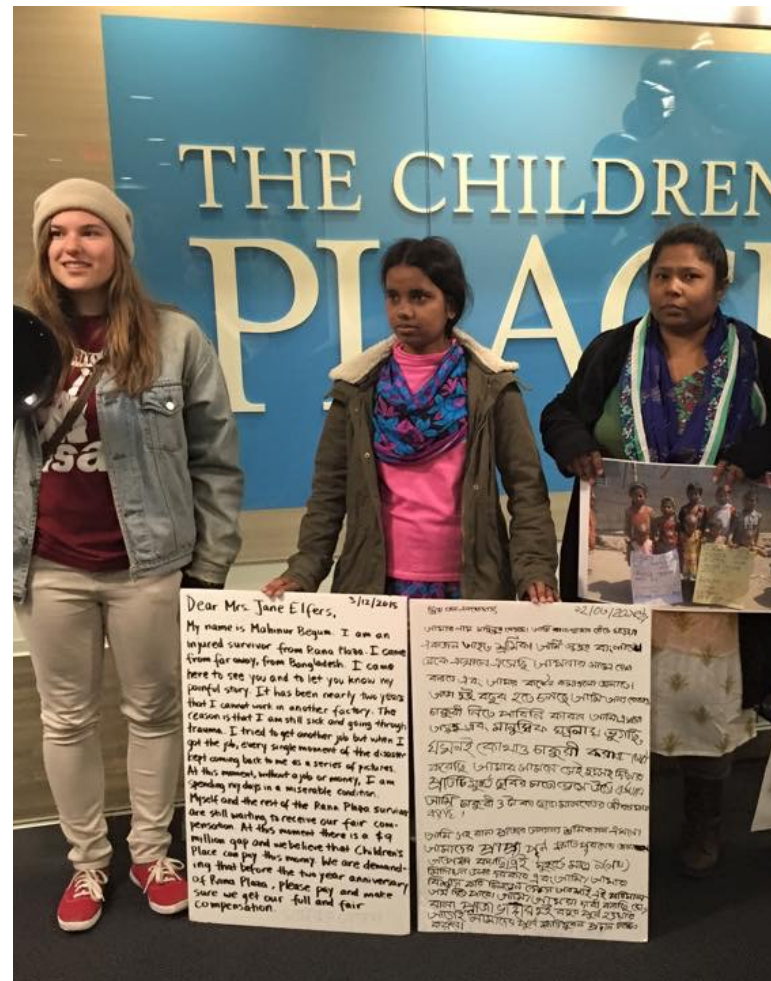
oppression, how economic, political, and social factors uphold these chains of oppression, and how to utilize disadvantages for our own betterment.

Seeing that our world is a caucus of its own for privileged identities, we elect caucus co-chairs to lead discussions for womyn, people of color, queer, non-binary, and trans folks, queer trans people of color, working class people, disabled folks, and mix race-identifying folks. We do this to keep our organization in alignment with equal opportunities for leadership for marginalized people and critical analysis and critique of USAS's inclusion. Further, we run solidarity campaigns to put our principles into action. We often quote the late and great activist and organizer, Fannie Lou: "Nobody's free until everybody's free."

Labor activists and the Movement for Black Lives need to feed these principles and practices to all people, to our organizing and to our lives. To get the world to see that Black lives matter, to see that we cannot survive on poverty wages, and to see that unions matter, we cannot be the only people saying so. The whites living in the same projects and being paid the same poverty wages need Collective Liberation. Including people of color, women, trans, queer, working class and disabled folks' labor and lives amplifies our fight. We have to connect our oppressions over fences of privilege. Marginalized folks have to recognize other marginalized folks. We cannot afford to participate in the oppression olympics anymore. We are all struggling under the same system that holds a single bottom line over us: exploitation. We have to give one another equal respect and concern. Labor is the cornerstone of all lives, be it a privileged or working class one.

I've seen these ideas and urgency in the Movement for Black Lives most clearly this summer. During the national convening for Black Lives we gave light and respect to Trans Brilliance, preferred gender pronouns, accessibility to non-binary spaces, and saying our trans brothers' and sisters' names with equal passion and resonance as a Black cis male's life. Seeing seasoned comrades such as Rev. Sekou and Cornel West calling transmen "son" means they see us. They see that we matter, too. Erasure of trans lives won't be silence anymore. Or fighting for justice with our siblings in Palestine on American soil facing parallel military occupation and government sanctioned violence. Or the global recognition of income inequality and racial injustice from Show Me \$15 and Ferguson's Freedom Fighters. Or Tokyo's tired sweatshop workers fighting for living wages while we fight for living wages here—which amplified both of our fights and brought global attention.

In order for the Movement for Black Lives to succeed, we must emphasize that we have been ignored, but we must also recognize those who have been ignored for laboring like us, dying like us, and facing social struggles like us.



How One Union Is Taking on Cops in the House of Labor, Step by Step

As told by members of the University of California grad employee union

1. In 2010, graduate workers in the University of California system organized Academic Workers for a Democratic Union as a caucus within the local union, UAW 2865. Many of these workers were involved in the massive, statewide protests in the Fall of 2009. Under previous union leadership, half of the elected Joint Council positions were vacant, and most of the power was vested in the ten-member Executive Board. In 2011, AWDU took over union leadership.
2. The union built power by organizing in coalition with students, unions, and social justice groups. It staged militant contract fights and won demands beyond wages and benefits, from all-gender restrooms to funding for undocumented graduate workers.



3. In November 2014, following the non-indictment of Darren Wilson, the union released a statement, prepared by the Working Group to Address Anti-Blackness, in support of the movement for Black lives. It read that “being Black and being of Color is a labor issue,” noting systemic racism in the UC system and its reflection in the makeup of the union itself.

4. In December, the Black Interests Coordinating Committee was formed. The BICC was empowered to choose the issues most important to them and bring them to the Joint Council.

5. Over the course of the school year, members took action with the movement for Black lives. On May Day, the union endorsed and participated in dock workers’ shutdown of the Port of Oakland.

6. In July, a member of the BICC presented a letter to the Joint Council calling on the AFL-CIO to end its affiliation with the International Union of Police Associations. It read, “police unions serve the interests of police forces as an arm of the state, and not the interests of police as laborers.” It detailed the history of police unions and their conflict with the labor movement at large.

7. After the letter was put out, the union quickly called a vote to endorse it. Although some were concerned with specific points of language, the original resolution overwhelmingly passed. Honoring the language of the original letter was a concrete way to support both the voices and concerns of Black union members. Given that the union is only 3% Black, it was important that the room didn’t micromanage the language.

8. The reaction: The IUPA called it a “publicity stunt” and called out the local for fixating on the IUPA at the expense of other unions that have police in their membership. (This ignored the union’s original call for soul searching throughout the labor movement.) Meanwhile, the union has received letters of interest and support from other unions as well as caucuses within unions.

9. Entering the Fall semester: The BICC is strategically reaching out to other locals to push the issue and build power.

To get in touch with the Black Interests Coordinating Committee, email blackinterestscc@gmail.com.



How to Bring Mumia to Work, Piss Off the Cop Union, and Stay Woke

An interview with New Jersey teacher Marylin Zuniga

Marylin Zuniga, a teacher from New Jersey, was fired on May 12, 2015, for political reasons. She allowed her students to write get-well letters to Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black freedom fighter and political prisoner.

How has your support for Mumia, and the backlash you have experienced, been a catalyst for spreading the message of Black liberation among teachers, students, and community members?

The case has served as a platform to discuss the state of public education, in general, within our nation. I have personally had the opportunity to spread the message of how important it is to teach Black history, especially from the perspective of Black freedom fighters such as Mumia Abu-Jamal. I have been blessed with the opportunity to speak on this topic in the form of one-on-one interviews, workshops, conferences, and other intimate spaces.

Furthermore, it has been an honor and blessing to hear that pre-service teacher and graduate programs have addressed this case in their courses and have engaged in critical dialogue around topics such as anti-Black racism, the de-professionalization of teachers, culturally relevant pedagogy, and social justice education in its entirety.

What brings you, personally, to this fight?

I was introduced to Mumia's case in 2012 and, instantly after reading Mumia's biography, *On a Move*, connected to his story and his fight for freedom. Shortly after, I read *Assata*. These books changed my life and inspired my growth as a freedom fighter. My work as an educator organizer is a direct result of my miseducation in public schools. When history was taught there was an erasure of my people's history, the Latino population, the brown immigrant community. Teaching in a classroom that was predominately Black as a first year teacher, I promised myself I would not allow my students to have the same experience.

This has reinforced my work within the community as well. As a member of The Maroon Project, a newly founded grassroots organization based out of Newark, I help implement educational programs. One of our flagship programs, Books and Breakfast, is a monthly program that provides the community with free new books and a hot breakfast.



Moving forward, what else are folks in East Orange and the Newark area doing to build the struggle?

There are several projects within Orange, New Jersey, and surrounding communities moving forward. There are local politicians and organizers fighting to change the Orange Board of Education to elected officials rather than an appointed board. There has been a very successful twitter talk around, not only my case but, social justice education and how we can implement culturally relevant pedagogy in elementary classrooms. The hashtags used were #isupportmarylin and #sojustedu, the latter being a continuous discussion that will occur on a monthly basis. Furthermore, The Maroon Project (Newark) is working on multiple educational projects, including Books & Breakfast which is the last Saturday of every month at Source of Knowledge Bookstore in Newark. Our organization is also looking at different initiatives to engage parents and family members of Newark students this upcoming school year. Last year we organized a parent talk-back where parents were able to voice their opinions about the current state of education, specifically in Newark Public Schools, and create concrete solutions to their concerns.

What would you tell a teacher who has heard about #BlackLivesMatter, or heard about your case, but is unsure how or whether to get involved? What would you say, in general, that workers can do to resist anti-Black racism?

There are two components that I focus on: (1) ideology and (2) practice. Ideologically, the best advice I can give is, don't be afraid. Stand up for what you believe in. Practically, teachers should join an organization or collective that is doing critical work and making necessary change in the

community in which they teach and/or live. Teachers are natural organizers, and have the potential not only to make transformative change in their classrooms, but also outside of them. This may look like a teacher who lives in a predominately white neighborhood who teaches in a predominately Black and/or Latino district creating an anti-racist white coalition in their own community. This may also look like a teacher who lives and teaches in the community she/he was raised in getting involved with an already established grassroots organization. This practice is multifaceted and may manifest in many different ways, but it is one of the most important decisions a teacher can make.



I recently participated in a national teacher tour of the Dominican Republic. There is a group of resilient women that go by the name of MUDHA (Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicana-Haitana). They address the needs of their community, predominately Black Dominicans of Haitian decent, (e.g., health & wellness, political education, and human rights). MUDHA has started a school within their small community in Santo Domingo. Their resources are limited to 3 teachers to serve 200+ students, 4 classrooms, little to no books and schools supplies, and a whole lot of empowerment and love. Their work has inspired me to keep moving and keep fighting. They are inspiring in every way and have recently caused my motivation to skyrocket.

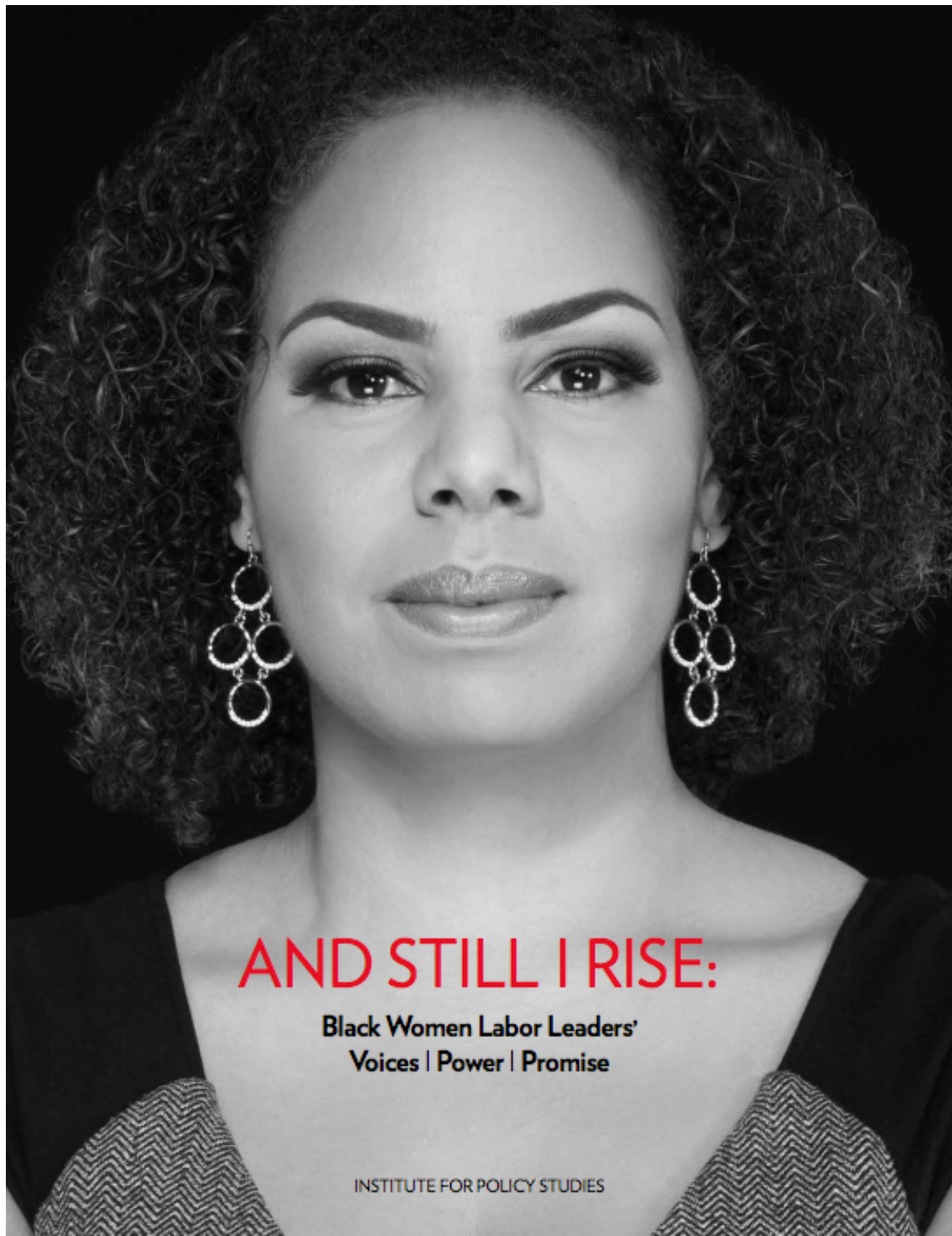
"The Story That Needs to Be Told"

Jennifer Epps-Addison, Wisconsin Jobs Now

When I think about labor leadership among Black women, I think about winning. We're talking about a movement that's been decimated—in Wisconsin, we went from roughly 30% to 6% union density in a single generation. The statistics show us that the fastest growing organizing is among Black women—and campaigns organized by Black women. This is where we need to invest our resources in building power. We are demanding representation and ownership over our strategies and the direction of the organizing. We work in different spaces—but we have very similar experiences. That's the story that needs to be told.

I think about what has happened on the ground in Ferguson. The killing of Michael Brown happened across the street from one of the strongest Fight for 15 McDonalds stores we have in the country. Workers there were going out on strike for well over a year. These leaders were some of the first out on the ground to direct strategies and tactics. It wasn't because the labor movement taught them to do it—it's because this was their life and this was their liberation. To honor the people of Ferguson, they traveled to New York for one of their next strikes. That day, one of the main things they did was to connect their struggle in the Fight for 15 and the struggle for Black lives. This isn't just about labor rights in our communities, but for racial justice, and for control over Black women's labor. This movement isn't just a movement for us not to be shot and killed, but a movement for the quality of Black life—in our schools, our jobs, and our communities.

This report gives us a grounding in the historical and contextual relationship between systemic racism and the current economic conditions of our country. While it's really easy—and overwhelming—for us to get bogged down in what's wrong, there is hope and power in stories of resistance. In the stories of the women in this report, there's a real sense that our movement is changing things.



"A 21st Century Workers Movement"

Bill Fletcher, Jr., racial, labor and global writer, activist

This report is an analysis and a platform for a 21st century workers movement. What makes it interesting and unique is that it's done from the standpoint of Black labor. This is not simply a list of the issues that are facing Black people or Black workers—it's looking at the issues facing workers, from a Black perspective. Frequently, when there's a generic category like "labor," the context is framed by whites, and then people of color are sort of an add-on. It's almost like someone bakes a cake, and they ask somebody else to put on the cream—but the essence is cooked by someone else. That's what happens. That's the relationship that we as Black folks usually have. Or, there's this alternative—it's a "special take" from Black people that becomes an add-on.

In this case, we have something new to say as Black workers in the US. What's happening to Black workers is not an aberration, but it's the canary in the coal mine as far as the larger working class is concerned. What is happening to us are tendencies that are going to affect most of the working class. These are not special issues that we're asking others to engage in just so that they can be nice people.

This 35-page paper is published by the Black Labor Collaborative, a group of influential leaders from major labor organizations.

**A Future for Workers:
A Contribution from Black Labor**

FERGUSON



The McDonalds Where It Happened

Jeanina Jenkins, Show Me 15

What opened my eyes up was when August 9 happened. I worked at that McDonalds where it happened. I heard those gunshots at work. That woke me up. I got off work and saw Michael Brown's stepfather on the corner with a sign. I've never seen Black people come together and want to fight back like this. So many people came together—no matter where they were from.

As a woman, I could let it happen or do something about it. It's been going on for years. This time, I felt like I had a role to play to support my Black men and brown men. In this fight, the power that we have is, we're always the ones who are leading. We have a voice that people want to listen to and people want to tune in to. I knew how to talk to people, while Show Me 15 showed me how to organize.

What keeps me going? The people. The people keep me going. The youth, our generation, keeps me going. My niece keeps me going. I want them to be able to afford to go to school. You've got to keep fighting and keep getting people involved.



I want to be a voice for the people. When you see fast food jobs, you see older people—it's the only jobs that they can get. \$7.65 is not enough. No one can survive off \$7.65.

When we were at the hearing the other day, someone came from the Black Lives Matter movement because the people of St. Louis are living in poverty. The movements connect because we want to free our people and give them a living wage. My group is called Freedom Fighters. We have a committee of people who have the same goals together. We talk to people about police brutality and race. We step outside the box. They bring more police into neighborhoods instead of more jobs into neighborhoods. We don't need more police, we need more jobs. They're slowly connecting.

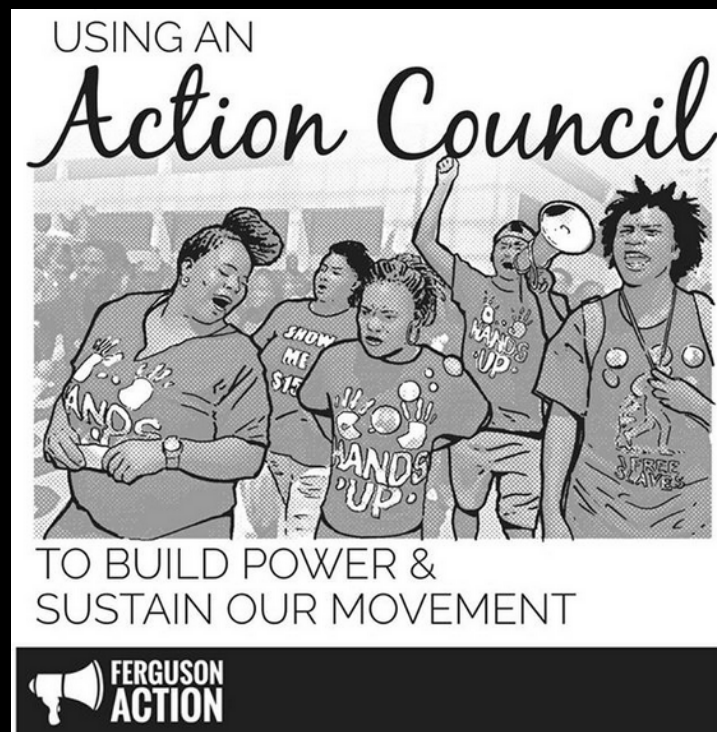
Why the AFL-CIO Prez Showed Up

Jeff Ordower, Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment

When Mike Brown was murdered by Darren Wilson, organized labor in the St. Louis Region was split. Since the head of the Police Officers Union was on the Executive Board of the Central Labor Council, most unions and the local CLC and State Fed sided with the police. Four days before the shooting, all of labor except SEIU had backed a white Democrat for St. Louis County Executive against the African American incumbent in the primary. SEIU and CWA members were in the streets and providing support for the protesters, while the rest of the unions were either actively supporting the police, or ducking and hoping it would go away. Mike Brown's mother, a UFCW member, had virtually no support from her union at the time. Horrified by the deafening silence of local labor for

racial justice, in September, Richard Trumka came and addressed the Missouri AFL-CIO Convention with a powerful speech about racial justice, followed by considerable national support for the Ferguson October Mobilization.

Jeff, MORE: Action Councils are one of the most effective means of scaling up disruptive action. Action Councils share joint infrastructure, ranging from communications to jail support to mass trainings, and because they are not coalitions, everyone—whether they are a large community group or union or a small group of comrades—can participate, have a say, and plan an action individually or collectively.



“Come on out, we got yo’ back!”

JT Taylor, United Students Against Sweatshops, Local 86

April 15 was a stormy and windy day in Tennessee. We planned to start our day at 6 a.m., and the rain was falling before 4 a.m. When I made it down to the McDonalds on “The Strip,” Cumberland Avenue in Knoxville, I saw dedication and resilience. Their faces were gritting against the slanted rains. I saw USAS posters in my comrades’ hands and I saw solidarity with Show Me 15 as their hands linked around umbrellas. Show Me 15 was the catalyst that USAS’s local chapter, the Progressive Student Alliance, needed. Since 1999, we have been campaigning and working with our non-majority campus union, United Campus Workers, on living wages for the University of Tennessee–Knoxville. For years, USAS had been calling out UTK for being a sweatshop. For years, USAS had been calling out UTK for exploiting women and folks of color.

We took the intersecting issues of economic and racial injustice from UTK to Ferguson. When we got to St. Louis, the skies were clear. Everything felt right. When we met the other groups on the streets, we ran to one another. We hugged, we screamed, we danced, and we immediately knew that we were in the right place. We were with the right people, we were with family. We kicked it up a notch, and we headed to Ferguson on yellow buses. When we made it West Florissant Ave. in Ferguson, we met even more people. There were around 400 folks, and nearly half the crowd rushed in to support the workers in McDonalds. “Come on out, we got yo’ back!” we chanted. We rallied, we took back our streets, we drove police away with our collective bodies and voices. April 15 was a day for the people.

We calmed down to show respect for Mike Brown as we marched to Canfield Street, the site where Mike Brown was killed. Four minutes of silence were given to represent the 4 hours the police department and Darren Wilson let Mike lie in the street after being executed. And then we hyped ourselves again! We showed what democracy and collective power looks like! We owned April 15! I was there with fast food workers bravely striking from Knoxville, to Memphis, all the way to Ferguson! We were fed up!!! And we had a day to rage and show that we are not compromising nor are we intimidated by corporate efforts to raise poverty wages until we see \$15 AND a union!



MADISON



Demands

Young, Gifted and Black

Since November of 2014, the Young, Gifted and Black Coalition has been organizing the Madison community to show that #BlackLivesMatter.

Using a wide and creative variety of educational and disruptive tactics—from marches and rallies to barbecues and teach-ins—YGB has unrelentingly mobilized the community against the city's carceral racial disparities and in support of five demands:

1. No New Jail (the county should not build a new jail nor rehabilitate the existing one)
2. Free the 350 (balance racial disparities by releasing 350 Black people from the jail who are there for "crimes of poverty")
3. End Solitary Confinement
4. Invest in Black-Led Initiatives
5. Community Control of the Police

The Coalition's focus emerged with the "Build the People, Not the Jail" campaign. After months of resistance, this effort succeeded when the Dane County Board voted not to build a new jail and instead create work groups to study more effective solutions to what ails our community. YGB's current primary focus is on achieving community control of the police, wherein a system of policing will exist in which neighborhoods are able to determine all aspects of what "policing" looks like.

All are encouraged to join the Young, Gifted and Black in the pursuit of justice. YGB is always seeking participants for political action, donations, and allies in outreach to do things like host living room conversations to educate other allies in how and why to support the Coalition's efforts. Learn more at www.ygbcoalition.org, and all power to the people.

Freedom Struggle and Fiscal Policy

Michael Billeaux, Teaching Assistants' Association

The Teaching Assistants' Association, AFT 3220, the labor union for graduate employees at the UW-Madison, understands that raising the demand for Black freedom is a crucial component of reviving the labor movement in general. The TAA fights to defend and improve the wages and working conditions of vastly underpaid and often abused graduate workers—indeed, for the last 3 years, we have waged a campaign for increased pay and paid parental leave—but we have always understood that the labor movement can't grow if unions focus on bread-and-butter demands to the exclusion of broader issues of oppression.

This informed our decision to support Madison's YGB Coalition. In their fight against an \$8 million proposal to renovate the Dane County jail, the YGB had already drawn the connection between the Black freedom struggle and fiscal policy, so we wanted to connect our struggle against Walker's austerity budget and the privatization of the UW to the demands of YGB. To that end, when the TAA organized a rally against the proposed restructuring of the UW and the \$300 million cut, the TAA and other campus unions wanted YGB to help build the rally and lead its messaging. Seeking to build support for the Black freedom struggle within the labor movement, the TAA delegation to this year's convention of the Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions proposed a referendum (passed unanimously) committing participating locals to develop strategies for winning support for the Black Lives Matter movement within their respective parent unions and central labor councils.

TAA Resolutions [Excerpts]

October 2014

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the TAA endorses the Ferguson Weekend of Resistance;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that members are encouraged to participate in the Ferguson weekend of resistance;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the TAA stands in solidarity with the protesters in opposition to racism and police brutality.

February 2015

Resolved that the TAA endorses the demands of the YGB Coalition and urges swift compliance to these demands by the Madison Police Department and other relevant parties, and be it further

Resolved that the TAA recognizes the YGB Coalition as a coalition partner in the struggle to defend the University of Wisconsin's funding and its public character, and be it finally

Resolved that the TAA will keep the membership informed of the YGB Coalition-organized activities and encourage participation in events and demonstrations called by the YGB Coalition.

What Is State Violence?

Student Labor Action Coalition, USAS Local 1

As a labor-focused organization, SLAC has prioritized attending Black Lives Matter events in Madison, ranging from rallies and protests to community meetings, and generally organized by Young, Gifted and Black. As an organization focused on economic justice, we know economic justice and racial justice are tied together. Mass incarceration is a union-busting way to get cheap labor for the wealthiest elites. Poverty wages for people of color and African-Americans in particular is just another version of state violence against Black and brown people. As students, we know that this form of state violence directed at people of color, alongside others like incarceration and murder, contributes to the lack of diversity at our University and the continuation of the privatization of our public University into one that is only intended to serve wealthy white people. That's why SLAC is in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.



SHUTTING IT DOWN

Over Labor Day weekend, the International Longshoremen's Association in Charleston, Local 1422, convened a national gathering, bringing together "people of faith and conscience"—including dockworkers from as far as San Francisco who have, like those in Charleston, shut it down for racial justice.

This gathering, or "Days of Grace," was held "to remember our fallen friends and to reflect on the racism and hatred that lay at the root of their deaths, as well as the violence that tears away at the fabric of our communities.... Out of this mass gathering and a one-day strategy conference, we will build on the efforts of many grassroots organizations who have worked tirelessly and often thanklessly over the years to bring about a better South Carolina."

How Charleston Gets It Done

Leonard Riley, International Longshoremen's Association,
Local 1422

When you recognize that you're a major part of the supply chain, the recognition demands responsibility for how to use your leverage. We've learned a lot since 2000, when we were engaged in a struggle where they were trying to take us out. The state was determined that they were going to bust our union—with physical force. Contracts had no meaning and no significance for them. We could ill-afford to ignore that kind of aggression. It was partly about self preservation. We also realized that our employers had changed. Instead of being locally grown companies, they were multinationals. Anything that it took for them to match that bottom line, they were in partnership with it. After the "Charleston 5," the members who were falsely indicted in the fight, we've been active in social justice. We believe that working people, if we're going to survive,



and make a demand to be treated fairly, have to join together. Around the world, not just in South Carolina, not just in the US, we have to reach out to unite around these common needs—protections on the job, discrimination, healthcare. All these rights have to be a part of what we fight for collectively.

When there's a problem anywhere in this country, we try to get involved. We were a part of the effort calling for the removal of the Confederate flag. Going back several decades, any time there was a march to remove the flag, we were a part of it. Racism is at the root of a lot of the conference, over Labor Day weekend, in Charleston. It's at the root of the Charleston 5. It's at the root of the Walter Scott killing. It's at the root of the Emanuel 9 killing. We are willing to do whatever we can to challenge this reality.

When Walter Scott was killed, we held meetings. We planned protests. We planned strategy—how do we change local policy, how do we change state policy? We were directly impacted by it. It was a response by this local that we were part of this conflict because of who we are. With the Emanuel 9, we did the same thing.

Our new union hall is a safe haven for all workers to find a safe haven and get help. Sometimes we have too many meetings for the space. We hold events to say to the community, this is what it looks like for the community to come together. How do you counter deep pockets like Boeing who can give millions of dollars into your education system, and yet give to workers doing the same job that they're doing in Washington half the fee of South Carolina? We have to do something to counter that.

Because of the political climate, our action is more limited than I would

own union. It's not an easy path to blaze, it's not an easy path to walk. Our administration has a commitment to standing up to these issues because it's right. Black Lives Matter is on the scene. We recognize this newly energized segment of our population, and we have to be there for new ideas and new energy. As we speak, Black Lives Matter has a meeting scheduled at the hall. Whatever that takes, we are willing to navigate that course. We're fully engaged. It's all about to dismantle these systems. The flag was a symbol of hate and racism. We can do it. We've got a shirt to say, "Do you believe it now?"

I want white people, Black people, Latinos, everyone to respond to these horrific, tragic events, but also get to the cause and identifying the system. I was talking to a white woman. She was saying, it didn't have to get this bad for certain things to happen. She was busy saying, I'm white but I'm not one of them. (Some of these guys have been in the State Senate and the House for years.) She's so repentant. I'm saying, help me eliminate that kind of situation if you love me, because we all are one.

I grew up in an educational system where I went to one school for 11 years and then integration came. The first day in the white school, I walked into algebra 3 and trig class, and a white student said, I'm sorry, you're in the wrong class. I said, are you the teacher? I said, I'm in this class. She said, I don't think you're going to pass. That was my first day of school. Let's be real. Let's identify these major things that have their roots in racism and capitalism. The thing that sticks in my head is that labor must lead. This group of workers, with union protections, can wage protests that others can't. We can't confine our energy to just going to work.

Stopping Work in the Bay

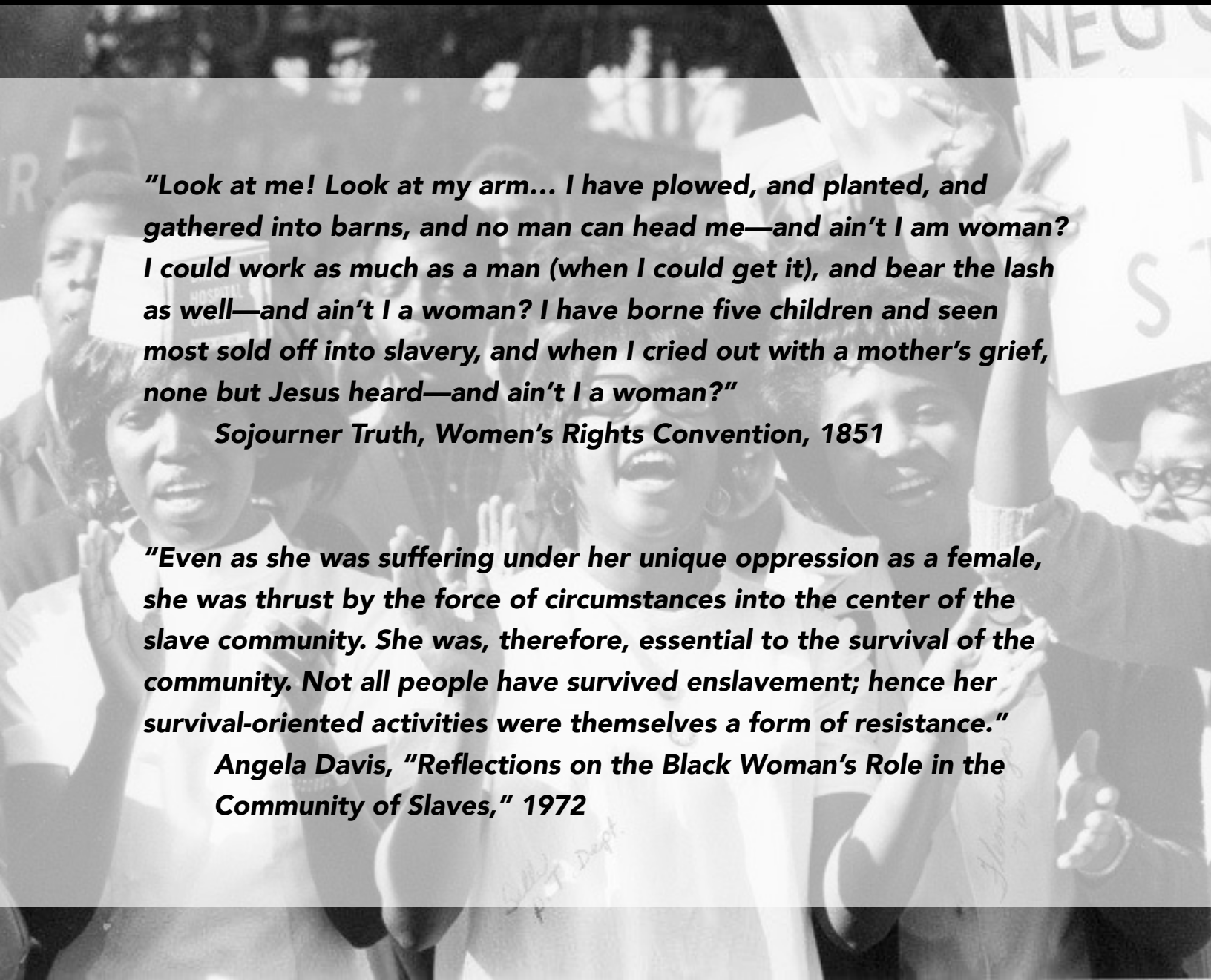
Melvin Mackay, International Longshore Workers Union, Local 10

We move when the wind moves—when there's something on the rise that affects someone in our community or the membership as a whole. There's no particular day that we just choose to do something. We don't jump or rush to judgment. On May 1, we had a march on Black Lives Matter. That was a day of reckoning. We were given the opportunity to use our union's stop-work meeting for Black Lives Matter. Participation depends on the individual. I was born in the civil rights movement. I'm 62 years old. I know what the struggles of California are. When there's a difference for the community at large, we will try to participate in social justice.

UAW Local 2865 Berkeley Unit Statement in Solidarity with Bay Area Dockworkers' Courageous Actions Against Racist Police Violence



BLACK WOMEN ORGANIZING THE SOUTH



"Look at me! Look at my arm... I have plowed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man can head me—and ain't I am woman? I could work as much as a man (when I could get it), and bear the lash as well—and ain't I a woman? I have borne five children and seen most sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard—and ain't I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth, Women's Rights Convention, 1851

"Even as she was suffering under her unique oppression as a female, she was thrust by the force of circumstances into the center of the slave community. She was, therefore, essential to the survival of the community. Not all people have survived enslavement; hence her survival-oriented activities were themselves a form of resistance."

Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," 1972

As a form of resistance to slavery, arson was most often carried out by women. In 1740, Charleston, South Carolina, condemned a Black woman to death after killing slave owners and poisoning their food.

In 1862, a fight broke out between a community of marooned, former slaves and Confederate soldiers in Virginia. Women helped put the soldiers to death, and the maroons won.

Conversations to Follow

#SayHerName

#BlackTransLivesMatter

#BlackWomenEqualPay

#FergusonSyllabus

#BlackSpring

#BlackAugust

#BlackWorkMatters



In 1866, laundry workers in Jackson, Mississippi, struck for higher, uniform wages, threatening to impose a fine on employers who didn't meet them. These women were among the first in the South to form an organized worker group after the Civil War.

In 1881, led by the Washerwomen's Association of Atlanta, 3,000 women struck for \$1 dollar per 12 pounds of washing. Supported by Black churches, this effort spurred cooks, servants, and nurses to push for increases. It was timed to coincide with Atlanta's hosting of the International Cotton Exposition, which relied on Black service workers.

In 1898, tobacco stemmers, pickers, and hangers from Florence and Danville, South Carolina, struck, and won, with the support of the National Tobacco Workers Union. Black women workers had unique leverage because others wouldn't take these jobs.

Lucy Parsons, a Black woman of mixed Native and Mexican descent, helped found the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. She was born in Texas, but left the South amid the rise of Jim Crow and its crackdown on activists. She returned to work on the case of the Scottsboro Boys put up for the death penalty in Alabama in 1931.

When we say #BlackLivesMatter, we mean Black workers too.

#BlackWorkMatters

@BYP_100, 5/18

What does black economic justice look to you? #BlackWorkMatters

@BYP_100, 5/18

In 1923, Mary McLeod Bethune became the first female president of the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, which later became the American Teachers Association and joined the National Education Association. Born to former slaves in South Carolina, she started a school for Black girls in Daytona Beach, Florida. She rose to prominence as a civil rights activist and founder of the National Council of Negro Women.

From its founding in 1925 to its first contract in 1937, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters relied on Black workers' wives to sign up new members, set up meetings, and work to protect organizers. Largely excluded from the union itself and left to "auxiliary" status, they formed the International Ladies' Auxiliary in 1938.

In the lead up to World War II, the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses worked to end quotas and segregation in the Army Nurse Corps. In 1943, the American Nurses' Association formed a special unit that worked to get white nursing schools to admit Blacks and to fight employment discrimination at hospitals. In response, the share of integrated schools grew from 14% to 32%.

Black life will continue to teach you we exist, even when you stay paying us death wages #BlackWorkMatters #FightFor15
@ImaniBrown20, 4/13

#BlackWorkMatters b/c we spend most of our time at work. We are due rightful compensation for our time, energy, and abilities.
@LaCretiaBirts, 4/13

With support from the Southern Negro Youth Congress and solidarity from white women textile workers in the CIO, 400 Black women tobacco workers staged a spontaneous strike in Richmond, Virginia, on May 6, 1937—and won. At the I.N. Vaughan factory, they struggled under 80 hour work weeks and crowded, polluted conditions. They won higher pay, an 8-hour day, and collective bargaining recognition.

On June 17, 1943, Black women working as stemmers at R.J. Reynolds in North Carolina stopped work in response to short staffing, wage grievances, and work speed-up. This followed a two-year campaign—and led to the unionization of 8,000 Black workers. After the first contract was signed, the union, Local 22 of the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers, or FTA, trained 100 shop stewards, overturning paternalistic rule at the plant. The union became a cultural and social center for Black workers throughout Winston-Salem.

Your work neighborhood= your living neighborhood

#BlackWorkMatters

@yayayarndiva, 4/13

.@BYP_100 No more hiring discrimination for/exploitation of formerly incarcerated people by employers #BlackWorkMatters

@ashapoesis, 4/13

#BlackWorkMatters because when you close Black public schools, teachers, janitors, and cafeteria workers lose jobs. Right,

@RahmEmanuel?!

@BellicoseGarvey, 4/13

After a nationwide strike against Armour, Hormel, and Swift in 1948, the United Packinghouse Workers of America set up women's leadership programs, women's conferences, and an Anti-Discrimination Department. These efforts reflected the power of women of color in canning, tobacco, and other food processing industries.

The National Negro Labor Council was started by Black labor leaders disaffected by the AFL and CIO's stances on racism. In 1953, the council sponsored a sugarcane workers strike in Louisiana. At its inaugural conference, one third of the attendees were women.

#BlackWorkMatters b/c we spend most of our time at work. We are due rightful compensation for our time, energy, and abilities.

@LaCretiaBirts, 4/13

Black life will continue to teach you we exist, even when you stay paying us death wages #BlackWorkMatters #FightFor15

@ImaniBrown20, 4/13

@BYP_100 Black Trans /gnc HIV prevention workers arrested for carrying condoms, even with work ID's #BlackWorkMatters <http://bit.ly/1FOVSHn>

@BLMChi, 4/13

The workers I've met see \$15 and a union as a START. #blackworkmatters

@CharleneCac, 4/16

By 1950, domestic workers made up 60 percent of the Black female workforce. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956, they handed out flyers at bus stops and talked to other workers while riding the bus to work—making for “freedom buses.” They also gleaned information from white employers for tactical support.

With support from civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer, domestic workers and day laborers formed the Mississippi Freedom Labor Union. After tenant farmers in the Mississippi Delta struck for higher wages in 1965, families were evicted from the land and lived for months in a tent city. To press the federal government for aid, 70 people occupied a barracks at the Greenville Air Force base.

In 1968, 70 domestic workers from Atlanta formed the National Domestic Workers Union of America. They reached thousands of women in the city to educate each other about the rights of domestic workers. They conducted training programs, underscoring the professional, employee-employer relationship of domestic work—which they viewed as opposed to the “care work” of a purely master-servant relationship.

AL auto parts plant slapped with federal restraining order. <http://nbcnews.to/1yBmYIT> @nbc @LearCorporation @Hyundai #BlackWorkMatters #1u @WhoMadeYourCar, 4/17

The strongest organizing in the world happened when FAITH and LABOR worked hand in hand. #BlackWorkMatters #AndStillIRise @EricaNBland, 5/1

At the beginning of the 1968 sanitation workers strike in Memphis, where Martin Luther King was murdered, labor leaders tried to downplay the role of race in the strike. With the slogan, "I AM A MAN," as a backdrop, women like Cornelia Crenshaw, a strategist with Community on the Move for Equality, reminded that race, and humanity, were central to the strike. Women marched, spoke at mass meetings, and were the backbone of the strike.

In 1969, Charleston, South Carolina, hospital workers won a 113-day strike. Emboldened by the movement for racial justice nationwide, they credited the win to 1199 "union power" and Southern Christian Leadership Conference "soul power."

**Told y'all #MiamiFinnaGetLoose #BlackWorkMatters
#WelcometoMiami pic.twitter.com/q58axRf15D
@Dreamdefenders, 7/9**

**Workers in Charleston are organizing in response to KKK intimidation
<http://bit.ly/1Hs6Tj8> #BlackLivesMatter pic.twitter.com/rFu34s79HC
@RaiseUpfor15, 7/16**

**Standing room only for workshop on #BlackWorkMatters and
@And_Still_IRise reports at the @mvmt4bl conference.
pic.twitter.com/iBECOuWVnr
@seandtb, 7/24**

In 1974, the Household Technicians of America fought for the Fair Labor Standards Act to include domestic workers in minimum wage policy—and won. The win spoke to the role of cross-class alliances among women as well as the potential of organizing outside the workplace as a way to build collective power.

In 1977, the National Council on Household Employment held its fifth national conference, a “Practical Workers’ Congress,” in Charlotte, North Carolina. The group invited domestic workers, hotel and restaurant workers, porters, school aides, health aides, migrant workers, and janitors —“precarious” and “contingent” workers of a prior generation.

For a full read on the history of Black domestic worker organizing, check out Premilla Nadasen’s Household Workers Unite.

As young people organize for their rights, the whole world is watching! #fightfor15 #BlackWorkMatters #StayWoke twitter.com/fightfor15/status/634420114771718144

@Y_STL, 8/20

Longshore workers from the West coast all the way to #DaysOfGrace in #Solidarity. "Workers matter!" #BlackWorkMatters pic.twitter.com/nwXNXlmb2p

@ATLRaiseUp, 9/5

Remember the revolutionary activism of Lucy Parsons today and everyday. #BlackWorkMatters #LaborDay pic.twitter.com/OPZDHkiQT6

@LashundaHill, 9/7

FROM AL TO LA



The Largest Union

Jesse Hagopian, Seattle Education Association, Black Student Union advisor

The 2015 NEA RA voted to support a resolution that calls on educators to, "examine concepts of equal justice under the law, racial justice, and institutional racism in their classrooms," in addition to a call to "develop statements of support for Black Lives Matter resolutions..."

As well, educators from around the country overwhelming passed a resolution against the use of the white supremacist symbol of the Confederate battle flag. The resolution directs the NEA towards, "efforts to remove the Confederate battle flag from public schools and public spaces."



These resolutions taken together signal the influence of the Black Lives Matter movement on the largest union in the United States and an important development of the anti-racist consciousnesses of teachers.

However, it should be understood that there is a wide gap between voicing opposition to institutional racism and having tools and capabilities to teach anti-racist lessons in the classroom and organize in solidarity with Black Lives Matter activists in the streets. Social justice educators will have to mobilize to ensure that their union puts resources and effort behind these resolutions.

The importance of anti-racist struggles uniting with union activism was summed up by Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The two most dynamic movements that reshaped the nation during the past three decades are the labor and civil rights movements. Our combined strength is potentially enormous."

National Education Association New Business Item 122

Adopted As Modified: That NEA educators examine concepts of equal justice under the law, racial justice, and institutional racism in their classrooms; and the NEA develop statements of support for Black Lives Matter resolutions, forums, community meetings and peaceful demonstrations that NEA reach out to the law enforcement community to promote positive dialogue between educators and police in support of our young people in school and the community, and that NEA join with labor and community groups to call for the creation of a national model for community policing and well-funded, thoughtful programs that divert marginalized young people into academic and career programs, and an end to institutionalized racism throughout our society.

The Fastest Growing Industry

Martese Chism, RN Case Manager, John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Chicago

I have seen the side-effects of the America Nightmare in the Black Communities. Public schools have closed. After-school programs have been cut. There is a pipeline from the schools to the prisons. If the Labor Movement wants to be great again, the Labor Movement must understand that Black Lives Matter. Either we all fight together, or we all get destroyed together.

I am a living testimony of what happens when we all fight together. When I was five years old, my great-grandmother was murdered by the Klan for fighting for voting rights. We kept on fighting. We elected our first African-American President. If we can unite and elect an African-American President, just imagine what the Labor Movement can accomplish if we unite with the Black Lives Matter Movement. I have a dream.



NNU Statement on Black Lives Matter and the Health Impact of Societal Racial Disparities

[[via nationalnursesunited.org](https://www.nationalnursesunited.org)]

National Nurses United joins with the AFL-CIO and activists across the United States in urging all presidential candidates to address the pervasive problems of racial and economic justice that have so stained our nation.

For nurses, the national dialogue this week about structural racism is a reminder that health, which includes personal safety, is a broad thematic that affects all corners of the national debate—from police shootings to the courts to incarceration, and racial disparities in healthcare, housing, job opportunities, and education.

Systemic racism also contributes to additional race-based violence, such as the horrific massacre that claimed nine lives in an African-American church in Charleston, S.C.

While there are clear correlations between structural racism in the criminal justice system and economic and social justice, each area is also a clear and present danger to life and health, as well as an infringement on the human rights of those affected and on American democracy. As nurses, we are dedicated to preventing all forms of illness, protecting health, and alleviating human suffering.

Black lives matter. According to a *Washington Post* database, more than 500 people, a disproportionate number of them African-American, have been shot dead by police this year. Others, such as Sandra Bland, who died in a Texas jail cell under suspicious circumstances, have died while in police custody. Harassment based on race remains evident in too many routine police matters as well, evidenced by “stop and frisk” practices. All have serious health consequences from loss of life to serious injuries to exacerbating physical and mental health problems.

Inequity in incarceration. With 5 percent of the world population, the United States has 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. Though only one-fourth of the U.S. population combined, African-Americans and Latinos comprise 58 percent of the prisoners. One in three African-American males born today is likely, under current trends, to spend time in prison. Arrests for drug offenses and minimum sentencing laws disproportionately affect African-Americans. In addition to the disparate treatment based on race, inadequate health services are common in prison settings and, the NAACP notes, infectious diseases are highly concentrated in prison settings.

Racism remains a significant public health issue. Even with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, racial disparities continue in access to health services and health outcomes. African-Americans, for example, have shorter life expectancies, higher infant mortality rates, and higher rates of chronic illness, such as higher blood pressure, that can lead to strokes and diabetes than whites. Overall racial discrimination significantly contributes to stress and other adverse health factors.

African-Americans and Latinos have higher jobless rates than white Americans, and have been disproportionately affected by cuts in public-sector jobs, long a key area where ethnic minorities, who face greater racism in private employment, have traditionally had greater opportunity. A result is lower incomes and a wealth gap, which are significant factors in higher rates of medical bankruptcies, lack of health insurance, failure to seek timely medical care, malnutrition, and stress-related health disorders.

Each one of these areas, as well as racial disparities in other walks of life, such as education, housing and homelessness, and environmental racism, deserve attention and systemic solutions from candidates for elected office and other institutions of our society.

NNU supports efforts at comprehensive solutions including, but not limited to:

- Comprehensive criminal justice reforms, including national standards for greater public oversight, accountability, and prosecution for rights violations, improved racial bias training, and diversity in hiring.
- Systemic prison and sentencing reform to reduce mass incarcerations and disparities, and improved prison and jail health services.
- Genuine, universal guaranteed healthcare based on a single standard of quality care for everyone, best achieved by an upgraded and expanded Medicare for all that would help reduce racial disparities and discrimination in healthcare.
- An end to austerity economic policies that disproportionately affect minority populations. Focus on increased revenue, not budget cuts, such as could be achieved by a tax on Wall Street speculation that could raise hundreds of billions of dollars annually for living-wage job; increased funding for healthcare, housing, and education; and robust action to combat climate change and environmental devastation that also hit low-income and minority communities in higher percentages.

Black Immigrants' Lives Matter

Marybeth Onyeukwu, ONE DC, Black Immigration Network

"Black Immigrants' Lives Matter: Disrupting the Dialogue on Immigrant Detention," *Truthout*

I wrote this piece as an intervention in the developing discourse around immigration. Although Black Lives Matter was forcing many within the immigrant rights spaces to take a closer look at problematic organizing strategies, the same anti-Black logic was informing the response. For years, Black immigrants have been at the margins of the immigration narrative. In the struggle for Black liberation, it is critical for their stories to be at the forefront.

Yves Gomes, Silver Spring, MD

"Immigrant Organizers and the Baltimore Protests: A Call for Solidarity and Critical Thought," #not1more

I wrote this piece out of frustration towards fellow undocumented peers who were condescending and indifferent to Black acts of resistance in Baltimore following the death of Mr. Freddie Gray. Black youth in Baltimore City did more work than most undocumented youth in our state in advocating for our Maryland state Dream Act legislation in the 2012 referendum. They challenged their own community's media-enforced stereotypes and misinformation on undocumented people, so I call our community to do the same—to challenge anti-Blackness. At the very least, we can do this by educating ourselves on the history of Black struggle in this country and uplifting the voices of our fellow undocumented Black brothers and sisters, who are brutalized by both mass incarceration and mass detention.

Hitting the Black Jobs Crisis Head On

Los Angeles Black Worker Center

Introducing the Black Jobs Crisis

“From being terrorized on no-wage slave jobs to being minimized on low-wage, underpaid jobs...”



On the Big Stage



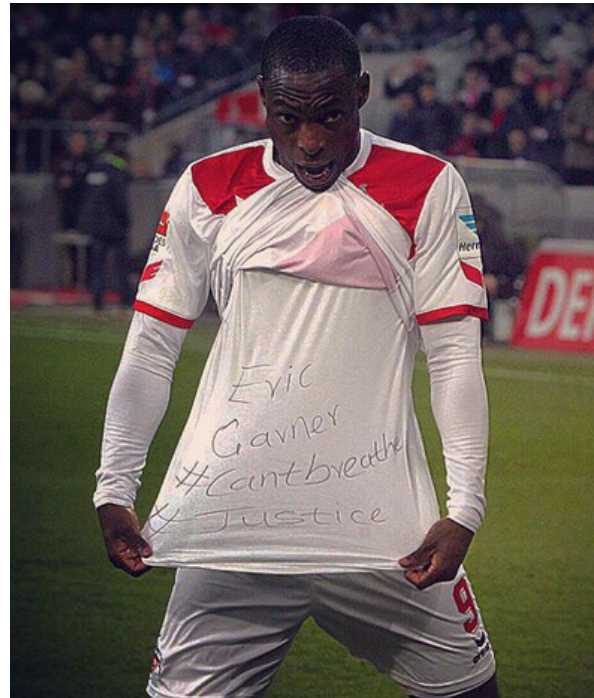
Cal Basketball



Andrew Hawkins, Cleveland



LeBron James and teammates after the killing of Trayvon Martin



Anthony Ujah, Nigerian player in German soccer league

After the Uprising

One Baltimore United demands following the murder of Freddie Gray [excerpt]

After decades of industrial decline, more than 24% of Baltimore residents today live below the poverty line. This decline has hit the black community especially hard, with the unemployment rate for black men between the ages of 20 and 24 at a staggering 37% as opposed to 8% for their white counterparts. Critics say that strategies by policy makers to rebuild the economy in Baltimore have largely failed, with public subsidies disproportionately benefiting downtown development at the expense of struggling neighborhoods... In response, the group is putting forth a new agenda for civil and economic recovery, calling on policy makers both city and statewide to ensure:

- Justice for Freddie Gray, Tyrone West, Anthony Anderson and all victims of police brutality
- All publicly subsidized development include workers rights and community benefits agreements, including a commitment to local hiring and living wages
- New investment in community land trusts for permanently affordable housing
- Adequately funded strong public services and schools



#WholeFrauds

Jadzia Sembla, AFSCME 3800, AFL-CIO Minnesota Young Workers, and Twin Cities IWW 620

Both in Minneapolis and St. Paul, we've had protests at Whole Foods, which profits from cheap prison labor in Colorado. Colorado private prisons pay less than a dollar per hour on average, up to \$1.50. And despite marijuana reforms there, drug arrest rates haven't changed significantly—and continue to target African-Americans disproportionately. This is the New Jim Crow at work. Look up the hashtag #WholeFrauds for more info. These actions were coordinated by the [Black Liberation Project](#), a primarily local group.

8/28/15

Tonight, to wrap up our August of Action, two small but targeted groups shut down Whole Foods stores in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Whole Foods, a corporation branding itself as socially conscious and "progressive", relies on the labor of predominantly Black bodies in prison who often receive no more than \$1.00 per day. We do not believe a company can claim they are "socially conscious" and build profits on the backs of incarcerated Black people. Our activists brought fliers providing alternative options for Black-owned farms and local co-ops. They were met with blank stares, derision, and an immediate police response. Dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex is one of many facets of the Black Liberation Movement. Until all Black people see liberation, even those who are incarcerated, Black Liberation Project will continue to disrupt the status quo.

Ashé.

In St. Paul, BlackLivesMatter St. Paul organized a march and two hour shutdown of “The Great Minnesota Get-Together,” our State Fair, which has become noticeably gentrified after a long climb in costs over the last 50 years. The admission rates are over \$10 per person, with most of the decadent treats inside being similarly priced. My friends who do make the fair a priority save up for it, often spending \$100 per person for food, drink, rides, concert tickets, etc. While on paper, the fair, like most public events, does not discriminate, their prices do, and their reaction to us—a complete lockdown and standoff, all while we were taunted by a bunch of white racists—was ridiculous. Throughout the rest of the fair, hate graffiti and confederate flags were common sights. The governor even stepped in, implying that the fair was a sacred tradition, and not a place for direct action—to which we responded, “Black is sacred, too.”

Please consider finding your local group or starting one. Get out in the streets and be the front lines when you are asked to. If that’s not your style, call out bigotry whenever you encounter it. Understand what the code words really stand for. If you’re a white person, talk to white family members, friends, and coworkers. Help make the demands household knowledge. In my travels to Ferguson in the last year, over and over again, these are the requests. Speaking as a visibly white person, the onus is on us to confront racism in our spaces. To be a comrade, you have to be willing to take action, whether it’s at the dinner table, a meeting at work, or a public event. I am reachable via Facebook (Jadzia Sembla) or email (ereiamjh616@gmail.com) and am happy to provide support to those who seek it.

Decarceration From Within

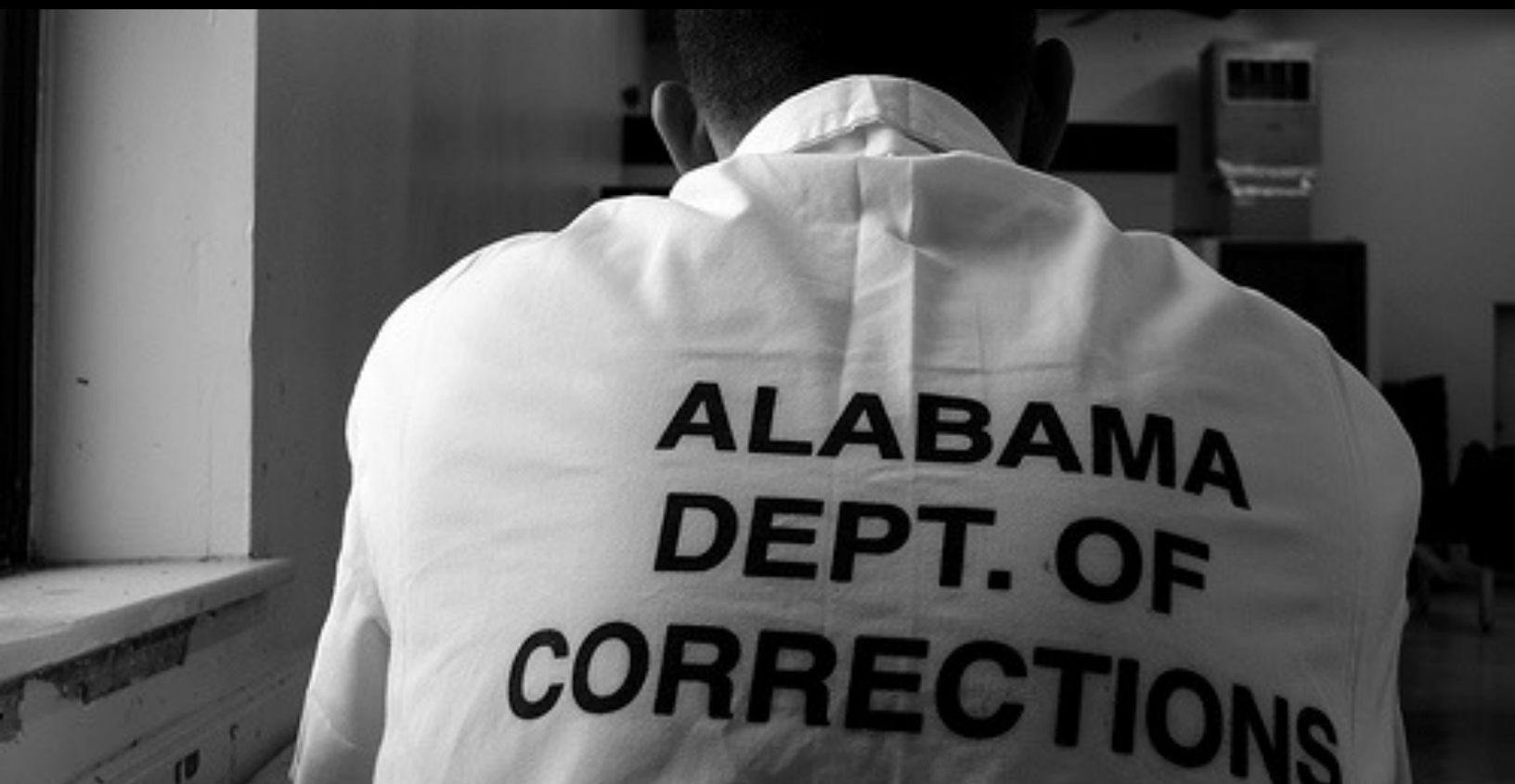
From FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT: *Who We Are* [pamphlet]

1. Who we are

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT is a grassroots organization founded by men incarcerated in Alabama that supports the Non-Violent and Peaceful Protests for Civil and Human Rights by the men and women (and children) who are incarcerated in Alabama, Mississippi, and anywhere else in the U.S.A.

2. Strategy

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT has chosen the Non-Violent and Peaceful



ALABAMA
DEPT. OF
CORRECTIONS

Protest strategy of "shutdowns" / work stoppages to combat the multi-billion dollar Prison Industrialized Complex that has incarcerated over 2 million people for the sole purpose of exploitation through free labor, private prisons, exorbitant fees, and more.

The D.A.'s, the parole board, legislatures, and so-called victims advocacy groups and business interests have told the public that the reason we can't earn our freedom is because we are violent. Well, not only will we continue to demonstrate that we are Non-Violent, but we will also continue to demand that we be afforded access to Education, Rehabilitation and Re-Entry Preparedness so that when we are released, we can make a positive contribution to society.

Also, we have chosen Non-Violence and Peace because there is nothing violent about telling a State that we do not wish to be forced into decades of free labor and be exploited, abused, raped, and beaten in the name of Corrections.

3. F.A.M. Actions

Beginning on January 1, 2014, F.A.M. organized "shutdowns," or non-violent work stoppages at Holman and St. Clair Correctional Facilities, where over 2,300 men engaged in non-violent and peaceful protests for the Civil and Human Rights.

By January 7, 2014, as word spread to other prisons, over 4500 men incarcerated in ADOC had joined this Non-Violent and Peaceful Protest.

These demonstrations ended without a single act of violence. These Non-

Violent and Peaceful protests sent a strong message of unity and Economic Empowerment amongst the men and women incarcerated.

The ADOC, which lost millions in lost labor, over-time pay, was exposed by clandestinely filmed videos and pictures that were posted on F.A.M.'s website, YouTube channel, and Facebook as a quagmire of inhumane living conditions, lack of educational and rehabilitation opportunities, and disproportionate Black men/youth incarceration at historic levels.

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT has UNITED with FREE MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT, to form FREE ALABAMA-MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT UNITED. FREE ALABAMA- MISSISSIPPI MOVEMENT UNITED now represents over 53,000 men and women incarcerated (29,000 in Alabama, and 23,000 in Mississippi). Our goal is to Unite all 2.5 million men and women who are incarcerated in the U.S.

We are currently seeking to establish unity with the following states: Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, California-Washington, and Illinois, but we are ready to accept anyone who is ready to organize right now, in any State.

The "FREEDOM MOVEMENT", which is THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST MASS INCARCERATION AND PRISON SLAVERY, must be led from the inside.

4. Failure of the Prison Industrial Complex

Instead of being a place for corrections, the ADOC has been turned into system of capitalism, where thousands of poor, uneducated, and

disenfranchised citizens are being forced into labor to support a multi-billion dollar Prison Industrial Complex.

In order to fuel this billion dollar enterprise, which includes prison slave labor, expensive phone rates, court fines and fees imposed of people with no income, co-pays, copying costs and more, the ADOC currently has created the most overcrowded, underfunded, and understaffed prison system in the U.S.A., with over 30,000 humans packed into space designed to hold 13,500.

These prisons have vermin infestation, roaches, diseases like HIV, TB, Hepatitis, and more. And, the people being held in these conditions are being forced to live, work and produce billions of dollars-worth of labor, fines, and costs, while having no control over when they will ever go home again.

5. Our Prison Labor is really Slavery

Every week, approximately 10,000 men and women laborers in ADOC are forced to work for free. (For the few that do earn a wage, they are paid from .17 to .71 per hour, for 10-12 hour days. Less than 10% of the 10,000 laborers are wage earners).

Prison labor in Alabama includes food preparation, laundry, and facility maintenance, as well as the production of furniture, license plates, and chemicals, recycling, print shops, fleet service, cattle ranch, farm squads, road crews, sand mining, and more.

F.A.M. demands a change in all of these conditions and the laws that authorize them, and more (please see our "[FREEDOM BILL](#)" on our

website, Freealabamamovement.com) and we call on the Family, Friends, Loved Ones and supporters of those incarcerated, to assist us in ending mass incarceration and prison slavery in Alabama and anywhere else that it exists in the U.S.A.

Join us and start a Chapter in your State today.

WHY WE ARE PROTESTING

1. To Put An End To The System Of Free Labor Within The Alabama Department Of Corrections.
2. To put an end to the inhumane living conditions under which Alabama prisoners suffer, including overcrowding and the warehousing of large amounts of people for no purpose other than exploitation and free labor.
3. To abolish capital punishment and life without parole sentences, and to overhaul Alabama's current parole system to provide more deserving people with an opportunity to earn their release from prison.
4. To put an end to arbitrary laws and sentencing practices that have resulted in the targeting of specific race groups and disproportionate sentences.

A FULL LIST OF OUR DEMANDS FOR CHANGES THAT WE DEEM NON-NEGOTIABLE CAN BE FOUND IN OUR "FREEDOM BILL" FOR EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, AND RE-ENTRY PREPAREDNESS.

WHAT WE WANT

1. We want an end to the system of free labor within the Alabama Department of Corrections.
2. We want to end to the inhumane living conditions under which Alabama prisoners suffer, including overcrowding and the warehousing of

- large amounts of people for no purpose other than to extract free labor.
3. We want improvements in healthcare, a proper and balanced diet, and more control of our resources and the money our families send to us. We also want an end to exploitive practices that penalized our families, like J-Pay, excessive phone call rates, high canteen and incentive prices, and medical co-pay services.
 4. Reform in youthful offender law so that children will no longer be sent to prison for crimes committed beginning at 14 years of age.
 5. Repeal of the Capital Punishment Act, the Habitual Felony Offender Act, Alabama Prison Litigation Reform Act, and other repressive laws.

Contact us via our website:

www.Freealabamamovement.com

Facebook group:

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT

Twitter: @FREEALAMOVEMENT

Email: freealabamamovement@gmail.com

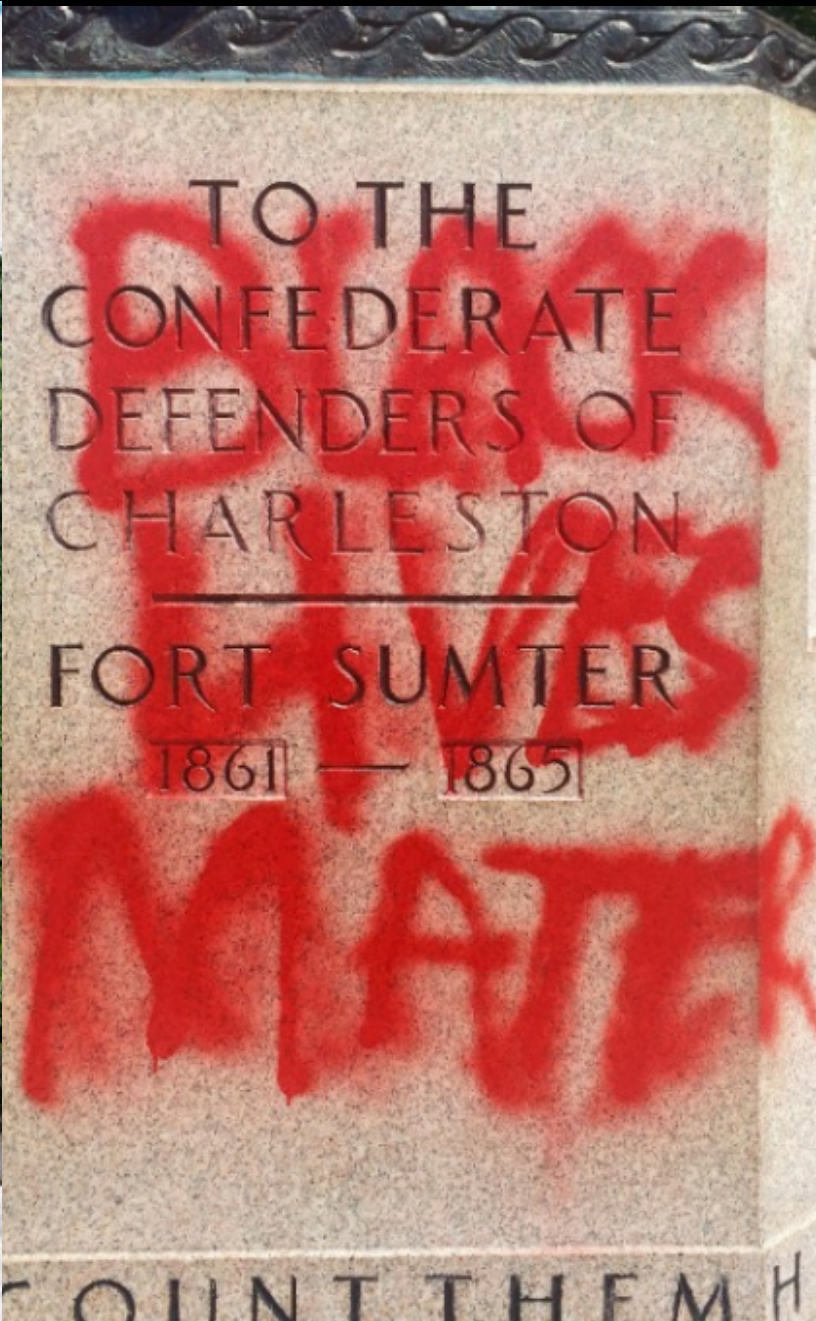
Blogs: Sankofa4fam.wordpress.com /
Freealabamamovement.wordpress.com

FREE ALABAMA MOVEMENT

P.O. Box 186

New Market, AL 35761

HISTORY / PRACTICE



Tracing the Legacy of Slavery

Melanie Wang, Massachusetts

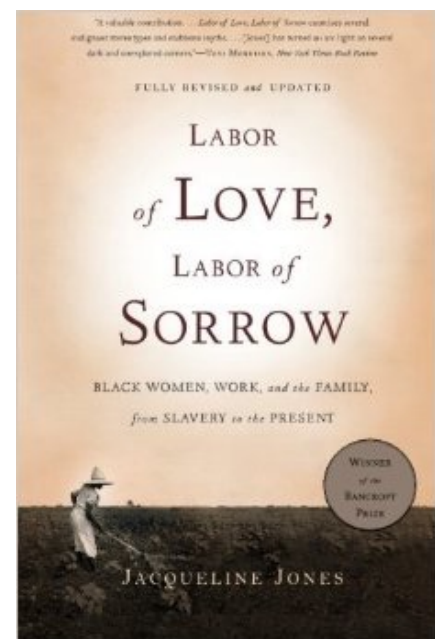
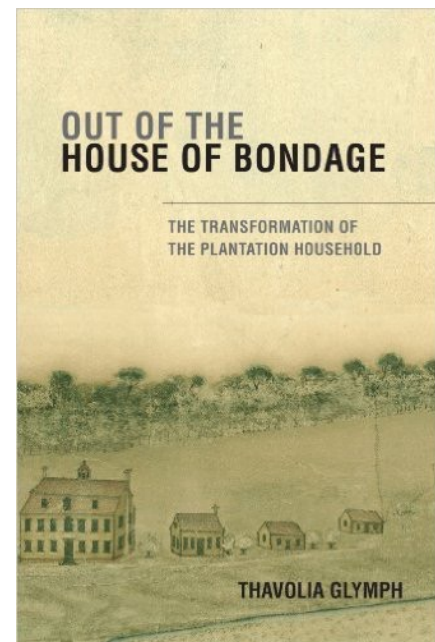
What should be included in this guide?

A list of books and/or scholars who examine the relationship between anti-Black racism, class struggle, and the legacy of slavery in the United States.

Two examples that immediately come to mind are *Out of the House of Bondage*, by Thavolia Glymph, and *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*, by Jacqueline Jones.

The former focuses on the relationships between mistresses and household slaves in Southern plantation slavery, and details how constructions of race and gender played important roles in the subjugation of female slaves.

Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, also begins in the era of plantation slavery but moves all the way through history to the present. It focuses on the experiences of Black women in the labor force over the course of U.S. history.



Using Media for Organizing

POPPYN

This summer, youth producers from POPPYN (Presenting Our Perspective: Philly Youth News) created an episode on the Black Lives Matter movement. Since economic justice and racial justice are so interconnected, it was important for us to address labor struggles in our episode. The following segment highlights a Fight For 15 direct action that took place in South Philly on July 23, 2015.

All organizations featured in our Episode joined a community screening and dialogue hosted by POPPYN on August 26 at Temple University. For more info on POPPYN, contact whatspoppyn@gmail.com. For the Black Lives Matter Philly chapter, people should reach out to blacklivesmatterphilly@gmail.com or [@BLMPhilly](https://twitter.com/BLMPhilly) on Twitter.

POPPYN Presents: Fight for 15 in Philadelphia



[anonymous notes]

"Job applicants with white names needed to send about 10 resumes to get one callback; those with African-American names needed to send around 15 resumes to get one callback."

The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Worker's Notebook,
Jimmy Boggs

"Boggs wrote on labor from a Black perspective and foreshadowed much of what's being called the 'future of work' today. Kinda like actors in horror movies, Black workers tend to feel the effects first."

"Anarchism and the Black Revolution," Lorenzo Komboa Ervin

"a striking challenge to address race and the power of Black liberation within liberatory struggles"



Massive Freedom Schools

Conor Tomás Reed, CUNY, Free University–NYC

Movements to overthrow racial capitalism have always been most effective when they become massive freedom schools in motion. When we're aware of the histories of domination and resistance that built our present situations, we can more clearly enact revolutionary futures. Black labor is at the center of this liberation project. Let these examples be among our ammunition:

Dixie Be Damned: 300 Years of Insurrection in the American South explores "slave revolts, multiracial banditry, labor battles, prison uprisings, and urban riots" that have sustained a long Southern freedom struggle, which *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* picks up through the early 20th century, while *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance* foregrounds Black women's labor in the process.

Hubert Harrison, the *African Blood Brotherhood*, and a strong *Caribbean current of race and labor radicalism* in the 1920s and 30s transformed the *NYC Communist Party* into a militantly anti-racist group. Its rise and demise are worth studying—on unlearning racism through shared actions, and how hierarchical global organizing models can squelch local initiatives.

The Highlander Folk School in Tennessee was an integrated labor movement camp for a few decades before its popular education role in the 50s-60s freedom movement. Myles Horton discusses some of this in his conversations with Paulo Freire.

The Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM), League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW), Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), and other groups in Detroit used newspapers, film, community-to-campus organizing, and wildcat strike organizing to transform race and labor militancy. Some of their inspiration came from James and Grace Lee Boggs, CLR James, Robert A. Williams, Black Arts, Black Power, and urban riots that swept the country in the mid-to-late 1960s. Here, here, and here are some great texts on DRUM's participants.

Many people in the U.S. learned of South African labor militancy against apartheid for the first time during the anti-apartheid solidarity movements here. The film *Have You Heard from Johannesburg?* was an instrumental organizing tool that has since been applied to solidarity with Palestine.

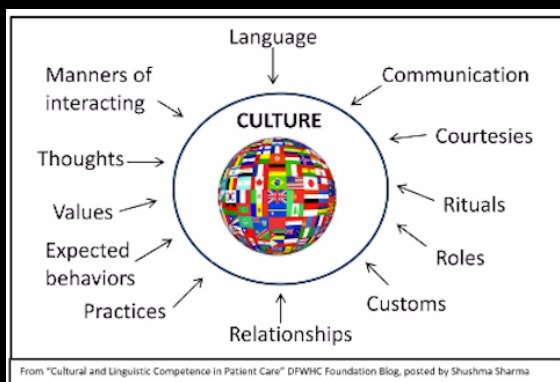


Shifting the Culture of Organizing

David Unger, Program Coordinator, Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies at CUNY

Defining a strong culture is fundamental to forming a powerful union or organization. However, it also defines who gets left out. So, if we don't have a respect, an analysis, and an understanding of how our cultures develop and why, and an appreciation for the necessity of them, we're never going to be able to figure out how to change—or to change in a powerful way. Race, gender, and our intersecting identities have a huge influence on our ability to take and make power. At the end of the day, unions and unionists can't just focus on money, economy, and work in the abstract. One has to deal with the real divisions and power structures inside and outside the workplace.

These materials are from a course at Empire State College in New York, "Diversity in the Workplace," for bachelor's students and members of IBEW Local 3. Contact dungerd@gmail.com for more info.



If you have come to help me
you are wasting your time.

But if you have come
because your liberation
is bound up with mine,
then let us struggle together.

Solidarity

Lila Watson – Aboriginal Activist Collective

Fifty Years Later

Vanessa Lopez, CSU–Dominguez Hills Labor Studies, Alum

This short documentary—created by students and faculty at Cal State Dominguez Hills—shows that the causes that fueled the 1965 Watts Rebellion had been brewing from decades of racial, political, and economic inequalities in South Los Angeles. Starting with housing policies that segregated a growing Black wartime work force in the Watts area during and after World War II, to growing police brutality during the Civil Rights Era, South Los Angeles residents suffered years of police abuse, educational disinvestment, loss of jobs, housing discrimination, and substandard health care. By 1965, outrage was in the air when Marquette Frye, his brother, and mother were accosted by police, and Watts residents began targeting and burning unfairly high-priced business as a means of voicing their anger and frustration with racial discrimination, high rates of unemployment, inadequate schools, and dilapidated housing. The national attention received after the riots bred a civic and cultural awareness in the community that led to an increase in the arts, education, healthcare, employment training, and home buying access.

At the end of the documentary, students ask, “What issues of social significance have transpired since the Watts rebellion? Are the embers of the Watts Rebellion still smoldering today? Fifty years later, we are ripe for another rebellion. What seemed to have happened fifty years ago are similar situations that are happening today, but in a different time. Today the same conditions remain amongst minorities—police brutality cases are being exposed all over the nation. We witness such cases like Michael Brown in Ferguson and Walter Scott in North Charleston... We see a trend in which Blacks and Browns keep struggling for dignity.”

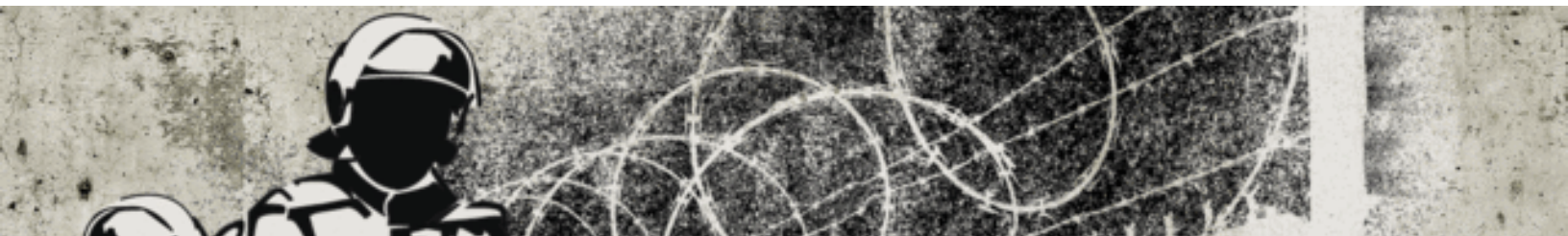
The Matrix of Protest

Unchain Our Schools, Facilitator

These two films are both situated around labor and economic protests and involve disparate factions of young people and others working together. As films, they're exciting to watch and very well-produced. They are DIY, low budget, sophisticated, nuanced, and raw. Both are excellent for seeding discussions around the limits and necessity of street protest and grassroots resistance, the nature of neoliberalism, and how complex, strategic organizing plays out during mass days of action.

This Is What Democracy Looks Like is focused on dissecting and analyzing the 1999 Seattle protests, which involved labor, students, environmental, economic, pro-democracy and human rights activists. It is the best illustration of intersectionality in action that I know of, in the US context. The film includes some of the organizers of the mobilization, whose voices and ideas punctuate the narrative, providing context and clarity to the emerging struggle for a democratic global economy.

Berlusconi's Mousetrap covers additional territory, focusing more on the international "Forces of Order" and how they successfully suppressed another huge intersectional mobilization, this time in Genoa, Italy. It's grittier than the former, with prolonged depictions and narrations of police and state violence and cruelty. It reveals the multi-layered strategy used against people's mobilizations at their apex, including media manipulation and sabotage, infiltration, and architectural fortification.



Resources to share or stories to tell?

Get in touch via our [Facebook page](#) or
email info@youngworkflo.org.