

# **A GLOSSARY OF SOME TERMS USED IN CWS WORKSHOPS**

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# A GLOSSARY OF SOME TERMS USED IN CWS WORKSHOPS

## Accountability:

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, an anti-racist training organization based in New Orleans, defines *accountability* as:

“Accountability is a position by which one will be held in check or account for one’s decisions and actions...the acceptance of a role fits within a cultural, political, and social perspective that leads to the liberation of peoples of color from racism, oppression and cultural subordination. It requires a commitment to the vision of African-Americans and other oppressed peoples to assume self-determination over those areas deemed by them to directly affect their lives.”

“Accountability” as a CWS concept is adapted from the work of both European Descent,” a white anti-racist group in New Orleans that works in alliance with The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond; and SPARC (Sparking Anti-Racist Collaboration), a Boston-based white anti-racist training and organizing group. It includes several aspects, but the key theme is *commitment*:

\*\* Commitment among a group of white anti-racist activists to take a stand against racism, in both personal and public lives; to being honest, trusting, respectful and caring of each other; to supporting each other on their anti-racist paths;

\*\* Commitment to support and respect the group by coming to meetings regularly, carrying out assigned tasks, bringing in new members, and working to maintain the group’s integrity;

\*\* With other white people, to work respectfully to challenge racism, promote anti-racist culture and networks;

\*\* With people of color, to accept leadership of people of color while defining within the allied group what precisely ‘accepting leadership’ might mean;

\*\* From SPARC comes the belief in the specific responsibility of white activists to challenge racism of other white people, and to do anti-racist organizing within different white communities. SPARC focuses on the intersections of racism and other oppressions, especially class, and the accountability necessary to respectfully deal with the barriers to anti-racist collaboration within different white communities.

CWS workshops serve as laboratories for participants to learn to practice accountable behavior toward each other, toward the workshop as a whole, and toward the grassroots communities in which activists will be working. *Accountability* can be demonstrated by small actions like coming to the workshop on time and doing the homework, to long term principled practice in a particular grassroots community.

## Alliances:

Alliances are long term relationships between two or more individuals or organizations. They are usually based on developing respectful and trusting relationships, politically and often personally; as well as shared political visions and strategies. Multi-racial alliances are very very difficult to create and maintain.

## Allies:

Allies are those who know and have your best interest at heart and act or behave in such a way that protects those interests. *An ally is someone who has your back.* An ally does not:

- \*\* Have to share in your oppression to denounce it, understand its damages, work to end it;
- \*\* Require you be present in order to confront the issues that restrict your freedom such as racist or sexist jokes, unequal hiring practices, etc.;
- \*\* Require thanks or appreciation for their actions towards justice. An ally is an ally because she/he believes in equality, not because she/he wants to make friends, be popular or be perceived as politically astute;
- \*\* Need to like you or be your friend in order to be your ally. Again, the justice thing here. (Definition by Breathing Fire Productions, S.F. 1997.)

## Analyzing and Organizing with an Anti-Racist Lens

*Analyzing with an anti-racist lens* means to examine every situation, event, relationship, story, institution, culture, belief, etc., to understand how the dynamics of racial/national oppression and white privilege work in that instance.

*Analyzing with an anti-racist lens* means to understand the interrelationships between the white supremacy system and the other major systems of oppression: capitalism and imperialism, patriarchy and heterosexism, and the systemic violence of the state from the perspective that people of color will always be affected differently by these systems than non-ruling class white people.

Because of the impact of the white supremacy system on other systems of oppression, people of color will be hurt first, hardest and longest by *all* systems of oppression. Non-ruling class whites will be impacted negatively by other systems of oppression, but at the same time they will *benefit* in some way (material, psychological, political or cultural) by the structures of white privilege (affirmative action and exemption from racial oppression) in the white supremacy system.

Organizing with an anti-racist lens means that anti-racist organizers need to base their strategies on the understanding that because non-ruling class whites (including white social justice activists) are *both oppressed and privileged*, their resistance to oppression -- and all of their social justice work -- is likely to be a *bundle*

*of contradictions.* White activists will usually challenge their oppression, or try to do social justice work, while marginalizing or ignoring struggles for racial justice.

Organizing with an anti-racist lens , therefore, involves figuring out how to convince non-ruling class white activists that the *long term benefits* of fighting for racial justice and challenging white privilege *outweigh the short term costs* of doing this difficult work.

(The concept of 'Analyzing with an Anti-Racist Lens' was created by Enid Lee, an African-American anti-racist trainer, in her essay, "Looking Through an Anti-Racist Lens," in Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development. Edited by Enid Lee, Deborah Menkart and Margo Okazawa-Rey. Washington, DC: Network of Educators on the Americas. 1998. pp. 402-404 (NECA, PO Box 73038, Washington, DC. 20056. Phone: 202-238-2379. E-mail: necadc@aol.com).

### **Anti-Racist Activist and Organizer:**

An anti-racist activist is a person who is deeply concerned about racism, who takes action to express that concern, and for whom *taking action becomes a way of life*. An anti-racist organizer is an activist who *motivates and educates* others to become anti-racist activists, who assists them in their efforts to challenge racial injustice *effectively*, and who helps them understand their *power*: their capacity as a group of people to decide what they want and to act in an *organized* way to get it.

### **Anti-Racist Community:**

A small group of friends whose common bond is their commitment to anti-racist activism. For white social justice activists, this kind of community is a vital support because the activists may find that their primary 'social justice community' does not wholeheartedly support their anti-racist transformational work.

### **'Anti-Racist Toilet Training:'**

'Anti-Racist Toilet Training' is the name CWS gives to a group of exercises and methods of challenging the white privilege behavior of social justice activists. The exercises include "*Creating Anti-Racist Language*," "*Creating Anti-Racist Group Dynamics*," and "*Active Listening*." All three are incorporated in the CWS '*Workshop's guidelines*.'

The controversial term 'anti-racist toilet training' refers to the necessity for white social justice activists to change the basic behaviors that they have learned in the white supremacist socialization process so that they will be able to work respectfully in multi-racial groups. Some of the negative behaviors that often result in people of color leaving a group when lots of white activists come into it are: speaking first, out of turn,

and too long; reframing an agenda raised by participants of color to suit white activists' concerns; refusing to listen to others when they speak; remaining silent when a white activist says something offensive to participants of color; or interrupting.

## **Base (or 'Constituency')**

In community organizing terms, a *constituency* is a group of people who have characteristics in common other than where they live or work, such as race, gender, ethnic background, age, language, differential physical abilities, sexual orientation, religion, general political outlook. For example, the 'constituency' which CWS workshops and organizing projects address is predominantly white grassroots social justice activists, especially in the Bay Area, which is the home of CWS. (Definition by Si Kahn in Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders. National Association of Social Workers, 1991 \*no publishing place listed. Page 70.)

A *base* are 'folks in your constituency who are already somewhat involved. They've come to a meeting, event or action.' For example, a 'base' for anti-racist activism might be some predominantly white social justice activists at a school or in a community who have already demonstrated interest by supporting a racial justice event or action. (Definition by SOUL: School of Unity and Liberation. Organizing 101 Fall, 2000. SOUL is located at 1357 Fifth Street, Oakland, CA. 94607. Phone: 510-451-5466. E-mail: soulschool@hotmail.com)

## **Benefit/Cost Analysis:**

The structures of white privilege confer real, if short term, benefits on all non-ruling class white people, including social justice activists. In order for social justice activists to become anti-racist activists, they will need to make some difficult political choices. They will need to learn how to:

- \*\* educate their 'reluctant' comrades about why they must do this work;
- \*\* make the time in their already hectic schedules for these discussions;
- \*\* change their thinking from 'either/or' to 'both/and' logic;
- \*\* figure out guidelines for 'respectful behavior' during these difficult dialogues;
- \*\* face the possibility of some activists leaving their groups;
- \*\* reprioritize their agenda to frame their work with an anti-racist lens.

The CWS "Benefit/Cost" analysis exercise is a way for activists to prepare for this challenging work. It helps people think about all the *benefits* (short and long term, spiritual, moral, relationship-building, political, movement building, visionary, etc.) of creating an anti-racist agenda in a group; as well as all the *costs*. Thinking clearly about the path ahead helps prevent some of the frustration and sense of 'burn out' that some activists may feel when they experience how difficult and long term -- as well as how rewarding and inspiring -- this work actually is.

Workshop participants then role play having 'difficult dialogues' with social justice activists in which the anti-racist organizer tries to convince a 'reluctant reformer' that creating an anti-racist agenda is *both a principled and an effective thing to do*.

## **Capitalism:**

Capitalism is a system of domination based on class in which the ruling class owns and controls the resources of the society. Capitalism creates the wealth and power for the ruling class through the exploitation of land, waged and unwaged labor, and the oppression of non-ruling class people.

## **Coalition:**

A coalition is a network of organizations and sometimes individuals who unite around a specific common goal. Coalitions are usually short-termed formations because they are not based on broad-based political unity of all coalition members. (Definition by SOUL, Organizing 101, Fall, 2000. op. cited.)

Multi-racial coalitions that involve white social justice activists are difficult to build and even more difficult to maintain. Bernice Johnson Reagon, founder of *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, once said of such coalitions,

"You don't go into coalition because you like it. The only reason you would consider trying to team up with somebody who could possibly kill you, is because that's the only way you can figure you can stay alive."

(Quoted from 'Coalition Politics: Turning the Century,' in Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology. Edited by Margaret L. Anderson and Patricia Hill Collins. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1992. Page 504.)

## **Colonialism:**

Colonialism is a system of national oppression in which a colonizing state maintains total economic, military, political and cultural control over a colonized nation or people. The purpose of colonialism is to extract maximum profits from the colonized nation for the colonizing state.

## **Culture:**

Culture is a way of life. Culture is passed on from generation to generation through institutions, groups, interpersonal and individual behavior. Culture provides the glue which gives institutions their legitimacy from generation to generation. To individuals, culture provides a sense of identity, belonging, purpose and world view. In a society, culture provides the basic values, assumptions, ways of thinking, styles of learning, language, ways of relating to each other, and basic world view.

(Thanks to Diana Dunn of The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond for most of this definition. The People's Institute can be reached at 7166 Crowder Blvd., Suite 100, New Orleans, LA. 70127. Phone: 504-241-7472. Fax: 504-241-7412. Email: pisab@thepeoplesinstitute.org. Web: www.thepeoplesinstitute.org.)

## **Culture of White Supremacy (White Culture)**

The culture of white supremacy is an artificial, historically constructed culture which expresses, justifies and binds together the United States white supremacy system. The culture of white supremacy perpetuates the belief and legitimizes the practice of treating people of color as inferior and white people as superior.

In the U.S., the culture of white supremacy is intertwined with the cultural expressions of the other major systems of oppression: the greed, competition and individualism of capitalism; patriarchy's fear and hatred of the power of women; historical Christianity's hatred and fear of sexuality, and its Protestant compulsion to divide people into the 'saved' and the 'damned;' and a European-based glorification of war, conquest and violence as proofs of manhood and nationhood that goes back thousands of years.

The culture of white supremacy is a melting pot of greed, guys, guns, gods and white power. It is a deadly brew.

### **Either/Or Thinking:**

Either/Or thinking, also known as dualistic logic, is a way of thinking inherited from early Christianity. It assumes that in any situation, there is one truth only, and that any other perspective is false. It does not believe that internal contradictions and possibilities for transformation exist in most situations. It does not believe that there may be many perspectives on a situation, all of which have some truth to them.

White culture promotes either/or thinking, and most social justice activists unconsciously perpetuate it. CWS advocates thinking instead with *both/and's* in mind, and then *prioritizing* possible choices or actions.

### **False Analogies and False Universals:**

False analogies and false universals are two expressions of the culture of white supremacy that white social justice activists seem to use all too frequently. A *false analogy* is a comparison between two sets of experiences which emphasize the similarities but blot out the differences. A *false universal* is a statement which purports to speak for all (universalizing the experience), but in reality, speaks only for some.

Common examples of false analogies are comparisons between the oppression of some group of non-ruling class whites and the oppression of African

Americans. For example: queer activists who advocate for an end to discrimination in the military frequently compare the homophobia against themselves to the racism against African Americans, particularly during the period of segregation/apartheid.

Examples of false universals are: *the* women's movement , *the* holocaust, *the* environmental movement and *the* movement.

Both false analogies and false universals reflect the deeper dimension of the culture of white supremacy, its tendency to norm-alize the experience of white people, and marginalize or ignore the experiences of people of color. White experience becomes the unquestioned, assumed basis for examining what happens to 'people.' When white social justice activists use these forms of expressions, they betray the depth of cultural racism and arrogance that plagues all white people in this country.

### **Heterosexism:**

Heterosexism is a social system that gives privilege and power to heterosexuals at the expense of queers.

### **Imperialism:**

"We will simply say that imperialism can be defined as the worldwide expression of the search for profits...by monopoly finance capital, centered in Europe, and then in North America...Imperialism is piracy transplanted from the seas to dry land, piracy reorganized, consolidated, and adapted to the aim of exploiting the natural and human resources of our peoples..." (Definition excerpted from a speech by Amilcar Cabral, Revolutionary Leader in Guinea-Bissau in the 1960's.)

### **Imperialist Globalization (Global Capitalism)**

Imperialist globalization is a phase of imperialism which has been in existence since the mid 1970's. It is characterized by the rapid movement of capital from one part of the world to another, or from one firm or industry to another; the world domination of transnational corporations which have more economic power than most nations and operate beyond national loyalties; massive mergers that dominate industries and markets; transnational laws and economic agencies (e.g. NAFTA, WTO, IMF, World Bank) which operate solely for the benefit of the multi-nationals, their CEO's and major stock holders; and the primacy of the stock market.

Imperialist globalization has been a disaster for hundreds of millions of the world's peoples, especially peoples and nations of color. Its policies and programs have meant poverty, starvation, forced migration, polluted waters, massive debt, wholesale slashing of services for basic human needs, and brutal repression. The wealth that has been stolen from Third World peoples has been concentrated in a tiny group of multi-billionaires and their top business and government cronies.



## **Internalized White Supremacy:**

The values, norms, assumptions and ideology that asserts the superiority of white people and the inferiority of peoples of color. Internalized white supremacy operates consciously and unconsciously in the minds and hearts of every white person socialized in a white supremacy system.

## **Legacies:**

*Legacies* is the term CWS uses to describe the study of the history of the U.S. white supremacy system, and of the 500 year long struggles of nations and peoples of color against that system, in order to gain insights for doing anti-racist organizing today. CWS believes that anti-racist activists must understand our past in order to analyze the present; and that we must carefully analyze conditions in the present in order to begin to create effective strategies to change those conditions in the future.

One of the most effective strategies used by the white supremacy system's educational and cultural institutions is to instill in the white population the belief that the past has no effect on the present. This is a lie. It is a device used to keep us ignorant of one of the means for creating fundamental societal transformation.

## **National Oppression:**

*National oppression* is a term often usually interchangeably with *racial oppression*. But the term 'national' refers to an historically created people, who come from a common land base, share a common culture, history, language or set of related languages, and who often suffer systemic oppression based on that national origin.

The term 'national oppression' was used often by U.S. revolutionaries during the 1970's when national liberation movements were active both within U.S. borders and throughout the Third World. The political antidote to 'national oppression' is usually called '*national self-determination*,' or the right of a nationally oppressed people to determine its own political goals for liberation, its own organizational forms, and its own strategies and tactics to move forward in the liberation struggle.

## **Neo-Colonialism:**

Neo-colonialism is a system of national oppression in which the colonized nation wins political independence from the colonial power. But the colonial power actually retains control of the oppressed nation by:

- \*\* Maintaining ownership and control of the oppressed nation's economy;
- \*\* Financing and training the nation's military; and

\*\* 'Offering access' to the colonialist's education in order to colonize the minds of government officials and other leaders.

In the present era of imperialism, the IMF, World Bank and WTO function as the neo-colonizers of most Third World nations. (Thanks to Harmony Goldberg of SOUL --School of Unity and Liberation -- for assistance with this definition.)

### **'Nourishing the Spirit:'**

*Nourishing the Spirit* is an exercise to open a meeting of a group of anti-racists. Its purpose is to center the participants in the work at hand, to introduce them to each other, and to strengthen each other for the task at hand.

The group organizer (facilitator) places a candle in the center of the circle and lights it. Then she asks each person to share briefly with the group one event in the past week that nourished her spirit and gave her the courage 'to keep on keepin' on.' (This exercise is inspired by the work of the Women's Theological Center in Boston.)

### **Oppressor, Oppressed, Oppression:**

An oppressor is one who uses her/his power to dominate another, or who refuses to use her/his power to challenge that domination. An oppressed is one who is dominated by an oppressor, and by those who consent with their silence. Oppression is the power and the effects of domination. In the United States, there are many forms of (often) interlocking systems of oppression: white supremacy, capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, heterosexism and the violence of the state; ageism, ablism, anti-semitism, etc.

In a white supremacist, capitalist, male supremacist and heterosexist system, all non-ruling class whites (the poor, working and middle classes) are in some way oppressed by that system, but they are also privileged by it. When they organize against their own oppression, but not against their privilege -- that is, against the oppression of people of color -- they become oppressors of people of color. Inaction is complicity. Silence is consent. To cease being oppressors, white people must act against oppression.

### **Pair 'n Share:**

CWS workshops encourage participants to seek out one person either within the workshop or in her community outside with whom to share her personal path toward anti-racist activism. Anti-racist training stirs deep emotional responses in most participants, but the CWS methodology does not focus on 'processing the emotions.' Therefore, having additional support may strengthen an activist traveling on her path.

## **Patriarchy:**

Patriarchy is an economic, political, cultural and social system of domination of women that privileges men. Patriarchy is based on binary definitions of gender -- male/female -- with strict gender roles. Patriarchy also has rigidly enforced heterosexuality that places male/straight as superior and women/queer as inferior. Patriarchy shapes and is shaped by white supremacy, capitalism and the state. Together, they form interlocking systems of oppression in the United States.

(Definition by Chris Crass, CWS anti-racist trainer and organizer.)

## **Power:**

“Power” is a relational term. It is a relationship between human beings in a specific historical, economic and social setting. It must be exercised to be visible. Here are several different definitions of “power.”

(1) POWER is “having legitimate access to systems sanctioned by the authority of the state.” (Definition by Ronald Chisom and Michael Washington in Undoing Racism: A Philosophy of International Social Change. The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond., Second Edition, 1997. Page 36.

(2) POWER is “ the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition.” (Definition created by Dr. Wade Nobles and used at an Undoing Racism Workshop of The People’s Institute.)

(3) POWER is ownership and control of the major resources of a state; and the capacity to make and enforce decisions based on that ownership and control. (CWS)

(4) POWER is *access* to those individuals, social groups, class and institutions which own or control the resources of the state. (CWS)

(5) POWER is the capacity of a group of people to decide what they want and to act in an organized way to get it. (Definition by Jan Adams and Rebecca Gordon, anti-racist activists in San Francisco.)

(6) POWER is the creative capacity of an individual to act. (CWS)

## **Prejudice:**

A prejudice is a prejudgment in favor of or against a person, group, event, idea or a thing. An action based on a negative prejudgment is called discrimination. A negative prejudgment of a group is often called a stereotype. An action based on a

negative stereotype is called bigotry.

What distinguishes this group of terms from such terms as 'racism,' 'sexism,' 'classism,' or 'homophobia' is that there is no underlying *systemic power relationship* necessarily implied or expressed by 'prejudice,' 'discrimination,' 'stereotype' or 'bigotry.'

## **Principles:**

CWS workshops are based on the practice of six 'principles,' called 'Creating an Anti-Racist Agenda.' The first of the six is "Act on Your Principles." The use of the term *principles* suggests that at its core, anti-racist transformation for white social justice activists is a spiritual and moral process.

The daily, often unconscious practices of white privilege and racist behavior, either in actions or by the silence of consent, poisons the psyches of all white people. It adjusts them to injustice. A spiritually healthy response to injustice is anger -- with love -- and a desire to right a wrong. Anti-racist action that comes from this spiritual basis often gives an activist a sense of 'finding her path.' That centeredness will help her figure out ways to make her anti-racist work *more effective as well as principled*.

## **Race:**

Race is "a specious classification of human beings created by Europeans (whites) which assigns human worth and social status using 'white' as the model of humanity and the height of human achievement for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power." (Definition by Ronald Chisom and Michael Washington in Undoing Racism: A Philosophy of International Social Change. *op. cit.* Pages 30-31.)

## **Racism:**

Racism is race prejudice plus power. (Definition by The People's Institute.)

\* *Note: CWS uses the term 'white supremacy' as a synonym for 'racism.'*

### ***Internalized Racism:***

(1) The poison of racism seeping into the psyches of people of color, until people of color believe about themselves what whites believe about them -- that they are inferior to white people.

(2) The behavior of one person of color toward another that stems from this psychic poisoning: often called either inter-racial or intra-racial hostility.

(3) The acceptance by peoples of color of Eurocentric values.

(See Virginia Harris and Trinity Ordone, "Developing Unity among Women of Color: Crossing the Barriers of Internalized Racism and Cross Racial Hostility," in Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras. Edited by Gloria Anzaldua. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Press, 1990. Pages 304-316.)

**Reverse Racism:**

A term used by white people to deny their white privilege. Those in denial use the term 'reverse racism' to refer to hostile behavior by people of color against whites, and especially to affirmative action programs which allegedly give 'preferential treatment' to people of color over whites. There is no such thing as 'reverse racism.'

The concept of 'reverse racism' was coined by arch segregationist George Wallace in his 1968 presidential election campaign. The term was the ideological foundation of "The Southern Strategy," which used the racist resentment of non-ruling class whites against the Black Liberation Movement to win the whites away from the Democratic party. The effort was successful: ten million whites voted for Wallace, and these voters eventually became the base of the Republican party in the South and Midwest. (See Thomas and Mary Edsall, Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics. W.W. Norton & Co., New York. 1992.)

**A Racist:**

A racist is one who is *both privileged and socialized* on the basis of race by a white supremacist (racist) system. The term applies to all white people (people of European descent) living in the United States, regardless of class, gender, religion, culture or sexual orientation. The term has nothing to do with one's intentions or individual actions. It denotes a relationship of *relative access*, based on ancestral origin, to the power of institutions in a white supremacy system.

By this definition people of color cannot be racists. Living within the U.S. white supremacy system, they do not have the institutional power to back up their individual or group prejudices, hostilities or acts of discrimination. (This definition does not deny the existence of such prejudices, hostilities, acts of discrimination or even rage.)

**An Anti-Racist:**

As applied to white people, an anti-racist is a person who acts to challenge some aspect of the white supremacy system. That is, she challenges both racial oppression and her white privilege, and she works for some form of racial justice.

As applied to people of color, some use the term 'anti-racist.' Others use synonyms such as freedom fighter, racial justice activist, warrior, liberation fighter, political prisoner, prisoner of war, sister, brother, etc. In practice, it is difficult for a social justice activist of color not to be an anti-racist, since the struggle against racial oppression intersects with every issue affecting people of color.

**A Non-Racist:**

A non-term. The term was created by whites to deny responsibility for systemic racism, to maintain an aura of innocence in the face of racial oppression, and to shift responsibility for that oppression from whites to people of color ('blaming the victim'). Responsibility for perpetuating and legitimizing a racist system rests both on those who actively maintain it, and on those who refuse to challenge it. *Silence is consent.*

## **Reflective Action:**

Reflective Action is a term CWS uses to describe the process of anti-racist transformation that white social justice activists may go through as they learn to practice an anti-racist agenda. 'Reflective Action' is like a spiraling cycle: *listen, learn, reflect, act, reflect, learn, listen*.

## **Respect the Person; Challenge the Behavior:**

This phrase is the core of CWS's suggestions for *Practicing and Modeling Respectful Behavior*. It means that when a person is challenged for a racist or white privilege action or inaction, the challenger should focus on the behavior and its effects, not on the supposed intention of the person being challenged. No human can look into the soul of another. That examination is for a person to engage in with her creator.

Respecting the person and challenging the behavior also suggests that "*Constructive Criticism is an Act of Love*." Therefore, it is helpful to praise a person's efforts before raising criticisms of what actions need to be changed. And it is also helpful to be able to suggest some steps to behavioral alternatives.

## **Self-Determination:**

Self-determination is a political term which refers to the right of an oppressed nation of people to make its own decisions about the political goals, organizational forms, strategies and tactics of its liberation struggle.

In the context of a CWS workshop, *self-determination* is used to support the right of participants of color in the workshop to organize into their own small groups if they so choose, without interference from any white participants.

## **Solidarity:**

Solidarity is an *act of bonding* with people struggling for their liberation. The solidarity is with the resistance fighters, those who are carrying out the resistance struggle. The resisters initiate the struggle. We respond with our solidarity.

From the 1950's through the 1970's, resistance struggles of nations and peoples of color were usually called 'national liberation movements.' Today, the term 'racial justice' is more commonly used to describe struggles of people of color within U.S. borders. Terms such as 'sovereignty movements' are still used to describe the resistance of indigenous peoples, including Native Hawaiians; and 'anti-colonial movement' to describe the 100 year struggle for the liberation of Puerto Rico.

*Standing in solidarity* is different from:

\*\* Charity. Charity may relieve the momentary effects of oppression, but it does nothing to change the power relations that cause the oppression. It does not

empower the oppressed to liberate themselves from their oppression.

\*\* An act of surrender or subordination to liberation fighters. A solidarity relationship is an act of mutual respect between two independent parties. It is based on mutually shared liberation goals, as well as mutual benefits from the act of bonding.

\*\* Acting as an ally. Standing in solidarity is a political and spiritual relationship, often to a group of people or an organization that the solidarity activist does not know personally (though long term solidarity relationships often develop personal bonds). Acting as an ally is usually a one-on-one action or relationship.

\*\* Acting against oppression. Activists can challenge oppression whether or not they are responding to the initiation of struggle by resistance fighters. For example, religious activists have been organizing to challenge the death penalty for decades, long before the organized voices of recently released death row prisoners have taken a leadership role in that struggle. However, the leadership role of those directly affected by the oppression makes a major difference in the politics, culture, racial and class composition of the resistance movement.

## **Sovereignty:**

*Sovereignty* is a political term indicating the internationally recognized independence of a nation. A sovereign nation determines its own laws and form of government, its own economy, culture, policies and programs, defense and international relationships. Indigenous nations within the present U.S. borders, as well as Native Hawaiians, assert their right to be treated by the U.S. government as sovereign nations.

## **Strategy:**

Strategy is a plan to organize your folks and your friends to force the man to give you the goods. (Definition by SOUL: School of Unity and Liberation. 1357 Fifth Street, Oakland, CA. 94607. Phone: 510-451-5466.

For example, the strategy of the CWS Workshops and organizing projects is to do anti-racist training and organizing specifically with predominantly white grassroots social justice activists.

## **Strategy of the Slave Owners:**

The 'Strategy of the Slave Owners' was the creation of 'white privilege' that Virginia colonial slave owners used to divide the oppressed on the basis of continental origin (European, African, indigenous Americans) in order to prevent them from uniting against their common oppressors, the slave owners.

The strategy had several components:

\*\* Rewards and punishments: It rewarded white (European) indentured servants who refused to support enslaved Africans and indigenous peoples and severely punished those who did.

\*\* Eradicating the *material basis* for unity among the oppressed: White indentured servants were granted a plot of land, a gun, a small amount of cash, and the right to testify in court. Neither enslaved nor 'freed' Africans got these benefits. On the contrary, their conditions were worsened -- to chattel slavery or bare survival. As the daily life experiences of Europeans and Africans began to differ profoundly, it became much more difficult to unite around areas of their common oppression.

\*\* Socializing the white oppressed to believe that their 'privileges' were granted because they were superior to Africans and indigenous people on the basis of their 'race.'

The strategy worked well in colonial times. After the construction of white privilege, there were no more multi-racial servant and slave revolts. And the strategy still works today, as white-dominated progressive movements continue to undermine or sabotage the possibility of building multi-racial coalitions by refusing to work for racial justice and thereby challenging their white privilege. (See Robert Allen, Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1983.)

## **White People:**

The term 'white,' referring to people, was created as a legal concept by Virginia colonial slave-owning rulers in the 17th century. It replaced terms like 'Christian' or 'Englishman' (sic) to distinguish the legal status of English indentured servants from that of Africans or indigenous peoples. The colonial powers established the legal construct of 'white' after Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 united European indentured servants and African kidnapped workers against the colonial elite. The construct separated the servant class on the basis of continental origin and skin color.

The Virginia ruling powers enacted Slave Codes from 1680 through 1705 which defined the legal *privileges* for 'white' indentured servants (a plot of land after they finished servitude, a gun, and a measure of tobacco -- legal tender for the colony). The same Slaves Codes also defined the status of kidnapped Africans as chattel slaves. The Codes equated the terms 'slave' and 'Negro,' thus institutionalizing the world's first system of racialized slavery.

## **White Privilege:**

"A privilege is a right, favor, advantage, immunity, *especially granted to one individual or group, and withheld from another.*" (Webster's Dictionary. Italics added.)

White privilege is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of:

\*\* *Preferential treatment* of white people based solely on their ancestral



origin from Europe; and

\*\* *Exemption from racial and/or national oppression* based on ancestral origin from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Arab world.

All U.S. institutions give preferential treatment (*affirmative action*) to people whose ancestors came from Europe over peoples whose ancestors are from the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab world; and exempt people of European descent -- white people -- from the forms of racial and national oppression inflicted upon peoples from the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab world.

All white-dominated U.S. culture perpetuates the ideology that white people -- people of Europe and of European descent -- are morally and intellectually superior to people of color; and that peoples and nations of color -- people from the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab world and their U.S. descendants -- are morally and intellectually inferior to white people.

In a white supremacy system, white privilege and racial/national oppression are two sides of the same coin. Wherever there is racial /national oppression, there is always white privilege.

*Non-ruling class white people (poor people, working class and middle class) are both oppressed and privileged.* They are oppressed most significantly on the basis of class, gender and sexual orientation; and also on the basis of religion, culture, ethnicity, age, physical abilities and political expression. At the same time, they are all privileged in relation to peoples of color. Ruling class white people do not need white privilege. They have *class power*.

## **White Supremacy:**

White Supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power and privilege.

## **Workshop as a Laboratory:**

CWS uses the concept of "*the workshop as a laboratory*" to describe the workshop's training methodology: everything that goes on within the workshop is a laboratory for the anti-racist organizing that participants will be doing in their own communities. CWS believes that theory, practice and evaluation go hand in hand. This is the basis of *reflective action*.

Draft written in December, 2000. Your constructive criticism is welcome:

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