

Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace and Social Justice

October 2015 #846



Image: Yoly Petra Stoeve

We Cannot Have Honest Discussions About Racism if We Refuse to Confront Whiteness

Thea Monyéé

Racism is not about blackness. It is about whiteness. The question [earlier this summer] should not have been, “Is Rachel Dolezal black?” or a question of “What is blackness?” The question should have been, “Why doesn’t Rachel Dolezal want to be white?”

The Charleston 9—Reverend Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Susie Jackson, Ethel Lance, Tywanza Sanders, Reverend DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Reverend Daniel Simmons Sr., Myra Thompson, and Reverend Sharonda Singleton—were not murdered because of their blackness. They were murdered because of Dylann Roof’s whiteness.

Whiteness is described by Marilyn Frye, as “a socially and

politically structured ideology that results in the unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin color.” bell hooks adds that it is “a state of unconsciousness, often invisible to white people, which perpetuates a lack of knowledge or understanding of difference, which is a root cause of oppression.”

We continuously examine racism by its effects on black people, instead of its roots in whiteness. As convenient as this is for white people, especially those who pride themselves on being “color-blind,” it continuously lays the burden of resolving racial issues at the foot of the very people it devastates. The result is a conversation where both black and white never create a solution to the root cause of systemic racism: Whiteness.

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SPC INFO

SPC Steering Committee 2015

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peacecouncil.net

Read the *PNL* online (issues dating back to 1936!). See all our projects and events.

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Nuclear Free World Committee: Diane Swords, (315) 391-4484

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Peace Newsletter: Amelia Lefevre

Affiliated Projects & Coalitions

Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse: faith & secular groups

United as One: working for justice in the local justice system

New Yorkers Against Fracking: statewide coalition opposing hydrofracking

Move to Amend: works against corporate control of the democratic system

Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars

Urban Jobs Task Force: working to pass a local hiring ordinance

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Peace Newsletter

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The Syracuse Peace Council (SPC)

founded in 1936, is an antiwar/social justice organization. We are community-based, autonomous and funded by the contributions of our supporters.

SPC educates, agitates and organizes for a world where war, violence and exploitation in any form will no longer exist. We challenge the existing unjust power relationships among nations, among people and between ourselves and the environment. As members, we work to replace inequality, hierarchy, domination and powerlessness with mutual respect, personal empowerment, cooperation and a sense of community.

Present social injustices cannot be understood in isolation from each other nor can they be overcome without recognizing their economic and militaristic roots. SPC stresses a strategy that makes these connections clear. We initiate and support activities that help build this sense of community and help tear down the walls of oppression. A fundamental basis for peace and justice is an economic system that places human need above monetary profit. We establish relationships among people based on cooperation rather than competition or the threat of destruction.

Our political values and personal lives shape and reflect each other. In both we are committed to nonviolent means of conflict resolution and to a process of decision-making that responds to the needs of us all.

Peace Newsletter

Central New York Voices for Peace & Social Justice

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Educate, Agitate, Organize: SPC IN ACTION

compiled by Carol Baum

Iran Nuclear Deal Victory - War Averted

After two months of vigorous tabling, rallying, phoning and sending postcards to representatives, enough members of the US Senate voted not to oppose the Iran Nuclear Deal. SPC members did all of the above. SPC members also met with Senator Gillibrand to talk to her about the deal. SPC was able to shore up her support by amplifying the voices of the majority of people who support the deal, despite the Senator being under enormous pressure to oppose it. The deal, lifting economic sanctions in exchange for stringent inspections of Iran's nuclear program, is expected to be implemented. The end of painful economic sanctions will directly help the Iranian people. The deal will likely lead to de-escalation of tensions between Iran and the US, and in the region, and decreased likelihood of war. Special appreciation goes to Nuclear Free World committee members Diane Swords and Simon Morrin, whose persistence and creativity were essential.

Kathy Kelly to Speak October 6

On **Tuesday, October 6 at 7 pm**, Voices for Creative Nonviolence co-coordinator Kathy Kelly will speak at All Saints Church (1340 Lancaster Ave., Syracuse). She recently returned from one of her many trips to Afghanistan and will speak on "Kabul to Syracuse to Niagara Falls: A Walk to Ground the Drones and End the Wars."

Kathy is here to participate in the beginning of the Undrone Upstate walk, which begins at Hancock Air Base and ends 165 miles later at Niagara Falls Air Base. The Walk is being planned by the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars to heighten public awareness of the mindless murder and relentless terror perpetrated in our names by the use of killer



On September 21, the UN-designated World Day of Peace, five members of Upstate Drone Action Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars were arrested as they held large banners reading "Drones Kill Children" across the main entrance of Hancock Air Base, a home of the weaponized MQ9 Reaper drone. Visit peacecouncil.net for a list of arrestees. Join them in court on **October 14 at 6 pm** in the Town of Dewitt Court (5400 Butternut Dr., East Syracuse). Photo: Ellen Grady

drones. Hancock is a drone base just outside Syracuse; Niagara Falls, another, just outside of Buffalo. The walk is scheduled to end October 21; people are welcome to walk for all or part of it. It will include outreach programs at colleges and community centers along the way, including Rochester, Brockport, and Niagara Falls.

To learn more, go to www.upstatedroneaction.org or contact Carol.

NOON Supports Lacrosse Championship

Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation congratulates the Onondaga for hosting the World Indoor Lacrosse Championship—a historic milestone. This is the first time that an indigenous nation has hosted such an international sporting event.

NOON has been busy recruiting volunteers to help at the Championship

and tabling with NOON materials at the Vendors Village at Onondaga. We—and the Onondaga—have given away hundreds of our *Neighbor to Neighbor, Nation to Nation* booklets. Each person who had their passport stamped at the Onondaga Nation received one. The *Post-Standard* published our op-ed pushing for greater recognition of the sovereignty of the Onondaga Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The print version was on the front page of a Sunday Commentary section, taking up three-quarters of the page. (Oh yeah—we saw some great lacrosse games, too!)

Onondaga Land Rights— 10 Years Later

In 2005, the Onondaga Nation filed a Land Rights Action in NYS courts that asked for official recognition that their land had been stolen and a seat at the table to determine how to clean up the natural environment in their historic territory. Today the case is in the international arena and the Onondaga are waiting to hear from the Organization

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of the Americas. In the mean time, what has changed here in this area that neighbors and Onondaga alike call home? What clean ups have happened and protections put in place for the precious earth? And what remains to be done?

These are the questions we hope to answer at a mid-November event to reflect on the decade since the Onondaga filed their Land Rights Action. Stay tuned for date and location details. Contact Amelia to get on the NOON email announcements list.

Goodbye to Barb Humphrey

SPC and the Syracuse community are saying a fond farewell to Barbara Humphrey who, after calling Syracuse home for several decades, is moving to Florida to be closer to her son and his family. In recent years, Barbara has served on the SPC Steering Committee, the Ground the Drones Committee, and the Fundraising Committee. She has also been an active organizer of the new local Veterans for Peace chapter. In her decades living in Syracuse, she has worked with neighborhood groups, social services organizations, local government, on political campaigns and as an active and reliable SPC activist.

Barbara Humphrey exemplifies what it means to be a “community activist.” Barbara, we wish you joy in the next phase of your life. Your camaraderie and righteous passion for justice will be missed. Thank



Ursula Rozum and Wendy Yost staffing SPC's booth at the State Fair. We've been busy tabling all over the place in the past month. Thanks to the packers and luggers of our literature, tents, and merchandise, and to set-up and take-down people and booth staffers! Photo: Carol Baum

you for all you've given to the Syracuse community!

Anti-Racism Study Group

The Peace Council's Anti-Racism & White Privilege Study Group is halfway through its first session. About 30 anti-racist white people have been gathering every few weeks to examine our own white privilege and educate ourselves about institutional racism. When we learn and talk together about racism and our role in interrupting it, we can become better equipped to work in multi-racial coalitions to end centuries of oppression caused by white supremacy. (See page 5 for a glossary of racism-related terms.) To learn more, visit www.peace-council.net/study-group.

Contact Amelia to receive information about the next session of the Study Group, starting in early 2016. Dates have not been chosen yet, so please let us know about your availability.

Justice for Palestine

The CNY Working for Just Peace in Palestine and Israel committee is currently researching local corporations that profit from Israel's occupation of Palestine. Several international companies with operations in Central New York provide services to Israel and are targets of the international movement for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. The realty company RE/MAX is involved with illegal settlement expan-

sion in the West Bank. The security firm G4S, which provides security services at the Syracuse Airport, operates prisons and checkpoints in Palestine, and global defense contractor Lockheed Martin produces the F-16 jets that Israel has used in its assaults on the Gaza strip. The committee's next meeting is **Monday October 19 at 6 pm**. Contact Ursula.

Volunteers Wanted!

The Syracuse Peace Council runs on people power. If you are passionate about working for peace and challenging US militarism, racism and capitalism, then there is a role for you at SPC. We are particularly in need of activists who want to volunteer regularly at the office. Consider signing up for weekly “office hours” to help with office and organizational tasks. Are you more interested in joining a committee? Our program committees (see page 2) welcome new activists to join in strategizing and planning local campaigns, actions and events.

Getting involved with SPC can be a great opportunity to develop new skills, connect with other social justice activists, and contribute to the collective project of building the just and peaceful world we know is possible. Don't hesitate to contact the SPC office to speak with our staff organizers to find the role that's right for you.

STREET HEAT

Get out in the streets every week speaking out against war and Reaper drones. Bring your own sign or use one of ours.

Tuesdays 4:15-5 pm

- Oct 6** Hancock Airbase Entrance
(E. Molloy Rd., between
Thompson & Townline Rds.)
- Oct 13** Adams & Almond Sts.
- Oct 20** Hancock Airbase Entrance
- Oct 27** Adams & Almond Sts.

Every Saturday 9-10 am

Regional Market, Park St. entrance

**Questions? Contact Ed or Ann,
315-478-4571**

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Anti-Racist Glossary

Compiled by the PNL Editorial Committee

Ally. 1. A person or group that actively uses the privilege afforded them by society (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.) to take down the structures that distribute benefits to the group the ally is part of.

2. A person or group that commodifies and exploits solidarity with oppressed groups for financial or social gain. In the words of the unnamed Indigenous author of the article *Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex*, “Where struggle is commodity, allyship is currency. Ally has also become an identity, disembodied from any real mutual understanding of support.”

Accomplice or co-conspirator. An ally (see definition 1) who recognizes the necessity of anti-oppression work for *all* people, including themselves. In other words, an accomplice or co-conspirator is not “helping” oppressed people and does not cease in the work when a particular struggle slips from public attention. Accomplices and co-conspirators maintain horizontal relationships of trust with members of oppressed groups and support the oppressed group’s strategies instead of imposing one’s own ideas.

Apartheid. Apartheid involves the forced spatial separation of people by imposed racial categories which are placed in a hierarchy (in South Africa it was whites at the top, Indians, coloreds (mixed race), Cape Malays and Chinese in the middle, and blacks at the bottom). New forms of apartheid do not invoke race explicitly in laws to avoid condemnation and legal suits, but rely on less direct ways to enforce separation and hierarchy, such as market-driven gentrification, gated communities, incarceration, explicit or implicit ethnic-based nationalist laws, and contemporary forms of redlining.

Color-blind racism. A belief system that equates any acknowledgement of race with racism. Assimilation with the dominant (white) culture is encouraged and held up as a sign that we live in a “post-racial” society. This belief system ignores the historical legacies of racist practices in the US.

Introduction to the October Issue

The Peace Council recognizes that systems of oppression cannot be understood in isolation from each other and that oppression, including racism, is very closely linked to militarism. However, we have not always looked at racism directly as a primary area of our work for justice.

A group of activists within SPC is working to make us a truly anti-racist organization. We are beginning to interrogate our organizational design and culture in order to eradicate racist or exclusionary practices. Acknowledging that we are currently a predominantly white organization, we believe that disseminating an understanding of white privilege in our organization and Syracuse’s broader justice community is essential for us to move forward.

This issue of the *Peace Newsletter* is dedicated to cultivating clarity of thought about how racism works and the complicity of individual, organizational and community practices in perpetuating it. We have compiled a glossary of terms that, while not comprehensive, we hope will help to clarify contemporary racism and anti-racist work. The two re-printed articles you’ll find in this issue express important black perspectives on how racism operates in white social justice circles today.

Being located in Syracuse, we must keep certain facts in mind. Syracuse was ranked the ninth most racially segregated city in the country by the Brookings Institution in 2010. Syracuse was also recently ranked first for having the most concentrated black and Hispanic poverty in the country in a study conducted at Rutgers University. The Peace Council must be more attuned to these realities. These facts are more than just context for organizing. Rather, we must infuse into our organizing an understanding of our position within systems of racial segregation and inequity as we work to confront these systems.

—Peace Newsletter Editorial Committee

Environmental racism. The phenomenon in which white people are less likely to live in proximity to toxins and other environmental dangers than people of color. This is a result of structural racism in housing policies and housing markets, as well as the greater access and influence white people, including white environmentalists, have over government and industry to ensure industrial and waste sites are moved elsewhere. In some cases, race predicts whether one lives near toxins more accurately than class.

Institutional racism. A term coined in the late 1960s to recognize that “racism need not be individualist, essentialist or intentional... Institutional racism can be prescribed by formal rules but depends, minimally, on organizational cultures that tolerate such behaviors. Racist institutional

decisions neither require nor preclude the participation of racist individuals” (*Toward a Structural Racism Framework*, Grant-Thomas & Powell).

Interpersonal racism. Common popular definitions of racism are often limited to actions, beliefs and feelings based on race, also known as interpersonal racism. This limited definition often carries implications that racism: 1. exists primarily in individuals; 2. is either present or is not (no gray area, a.k.a. essentialism); 3. must be intentional; and 4. consists exclusively of actions or words that are race-targeted (*Toward a Structural Racism Framework*, Grant-Thomas & Powell).



Image: Anonymous

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Whiteness / from cover

But isn't this the conversation we claim we want to have? The conversation that is long overdue even after Barack Obama has been elected...twice?

Yes. It is the honest, straightforward conversation sidestepped by mainstream media, avoided by white people, and mumbled in the privacy of black homes. It is the conversation that challenges white people to evaluate, "Do I benefit from being white? Why am I resistant to owning the history of my ancestors and how has it impacted people of color all over the world? Is it possible that I unconsciously harbor racial bias?"

The choice to avoid discussing whiteness is a matter of life and death. The reasons we avoid conversations about whiteness are: One, conversations about whiteness makes white people feel uncomfortable; and two, most black people are not comfortable with making white people feel uncomfortable.

Historically, giving up our space to ensure the comfort of white people has been a necessity to ensure self-preservation. Today, not much has changed. Black people still allow and even support shifting from significant conversations about white violence and privilege to headlines about black-on-black crime and whether hip hop is to blame for white kids saying the N word.


Thea Monyee is a writer and HBO Def Poet. She is the owner of Canvas Center for Creative Wellness in Los Angeles and the coordinator for the Gender & Sexuality Resource Center at Cal State Los Angeles. She is the author of Murmurs of a MadWoman: An Unconventional Memoir.



Trayvon Martin's murder became a story about how black youth dress. McKinney became a story about why black people don't know how to swim. The story about the Charleston 9 became a story about mental illness and gun control. We, black people, actually spent an entire week arguing over whether a pathological liar and clearly white woman should be entitled to define herself as a black woman because she picked up a brown crayon, at age five. Really?

White people being uncomfortable is a part of the healing process, and it is the pathway to developing authentic alliances. Many self-proclaimed white allies are perfectly comfortable pitying blackness and interjecting their opinions into conversations about the black experience, until you mention whiteness. Mentioning whiteness unearths the infected parts of their identity, and the unexamined narrative that is edited out of every single story about race. It often reveals a well intentioned, yet privileged human being with no framework for how to use their whiteness to address and attack systemic racism.

So long as issues of race are centered on blackness, whiteness will show its dangerous face in our organizations, our churches, in uniforms, and in our untested allies. It is our responsibility to make whiteness the focal point of race-centered conversations, to allow white people to learn from their discomfort, and to remember that our blackness is not the reason that racism exists. ♣



AFRICA (Alternate Solutions) © Marlena Buczek Smith

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Intersectionality. Systems of oppression often exploit and reinforce each other. Racism, ableism, patriarchy, sexism, transphobia, the capitalist class system, and colonialism intersect and are often thoroughly dependent on each other. For example, black people with disabilities and black trans men are the targets of violence more often than able-bodied, cis-gendered black men or white people with disabilities and white trans men. Intersectional organizing is an attempt to counter the “oppression Olympics,” where victims of different systems of oppression vie for priority and undermine one another.

New Jim Crow. A set of nominally non-racial institutions and policies that coalesce to rob black men in particular of their physical freedom, the right to vote, and rights to social benefits such as housing subsidies. Young men of color pass through the school-to-prison pipeline, subject to unevenly enforced drug laws and forms of racial profiling, and kept under the control of correctional systems for the rest of their lives. The New Jim Crow begins where old Jim Crow left off, leaving a racial caste system in place and destroying lives, families and communities.

Positionality. Aspects of one’s identity such as race, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, and age, and the relative power in society that each of these aspects does or does not afford. In other words, your positionality describes your relationship to people of other identities in terms of social power.

Redlining. The practice of denying services on the basis of race in order to control the racial composition of a neighborhood or other space. Denying housing mortgages to blacks in many neighborhoods was law in the mid-20th century after the National Housing Act of 1934. If you compare the maps used to implement redlining laws with maps of racial composition today, the impact of those laws today is obvious. Today redlining is done implicitly or extralegally, as when home- and auto-insurance companies deny coverage to people based on the racial composition of their zip code or profiles that correspond to race.

Respectability politics. Telling individuals or communities of oppressed peoples

to act more like the dominant group in order to receive fair treatment and respect. Respectability politics assumes that any bad outcome for black people and other oppressed peoples is caused by their own behavior, ignoring history and differences in power, and can be solved if oppressed peoples just change their behavior—pronounce words in a particular white dialect, pull up their pants, or listen to different music. In the imagination of respectability politics, police brutality, mass incarceration, and economic inequalities will all vanish with a few superficial changes. The politics of respectability often employs the language of class, e.g. “have some class,” due to the tendency to conflate class and race. Related to *tone policing*.

Structural racism. A framework for understanding racism that includes interpersonal racism, institutional racism, and adds the interactions between various institutions as a factor contributing to racial disparities. This framework holds that “the operation of different institutional actors within and

across domains such as education, employment, healthcare and criminal justice jointly produce social opportunities and outcomes. This interdependence has profound implications for transmitting inequality across domains and for remedying inequality.” The structural racism framework focuses on the racially distributed outcomes of policies and institutional interactions, and does not require that policies, etc. be race-based to consider them to have racist impacts (*Toward a Structural Racism Framework*, Grant-Thomas & Powell).

Structural racism, Marxist. Class was the crucial dynamic that formed our understanding of race when categorization by skin color and origin became an ideological mechanism to justify global conquest and the formation of class hierarchies within European colonies around the world during the last 500 years. These hierarchies included chattel slavery, indentured ser-



Image: Doug Minkler

WE do mind dying.

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#BlackLivesMatter More Than the Hurt Feelings of White Progressives™

Imani Gandy

Editor's Note: A slightly longer version of this article was originally published at rhrealitycheck.org on August 11, 2015, after Black Lives Matter activists interrupted a political rally of presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in Seattle.

Yesterday morning, I tweeted something that now seems irrational.

I tweeted that there was no way I would vote for Bernie Sanders, and that is entirely due to the relentless campaign of harassment to which some of his more overzealous supporters have subjected me and other Black people on Twitter and Facebook. I even mentioned, as I have in the past, that I would vote for Hillary Clinton out of spite, even though I have not yet forgiven her for the racist campaign that she ran in 2008 against President Obama.

As soon as I tweeted it, I knew it was irrational. Why would I refuse to vote for a person whose political positions are most aligned with mine simply because his followers have treated me with overwhelming disrespect, condescension, and flat-out ugliness? It's irrational. I admit it.

But do you know what else is irrational? The behavior of Sanders' fanatical supporters in response to the disruption by #BlackLivesMatter activists at the Netroots Nation convention and the Sanders rally in Seattle led by Marissa Johnson and Mara Willaford this past weekend.

The last few weeks have exposed some real ugliness in the progressive movement, ugliness that has been simmering just below the surface for a long time, but which, due to Black women's increasing recognition of our political power coupled with leadership in the #BlackLivesMatter movement and unapologetic commitment to dismantling white supremacy, has erupted into a fountain of White Progressive™ racism.

And it is appalling.

So it is in that context that I frustratedly tweeted that I would never vote for Bernie Sanders.

But the thing about irrationality is that sometimes it subsides and rational thought takes hold. And so it did with me.

Yes, I am tired of being belittled, and slandered, and talked down to, but that doesn't mean that I should sacrifice my well-being and the well-being of my community out of spite. And I suspect that the many Black people that I have seen who have echoed my sentiment will change their tune in the upcoming months.

But for that to happen, Sanders' overzealous supporters need to back off.

Sanders' fanatics have been viciously harassing Black people on Twitter and Facebook for weeks now—ever since the #BlackLivesMatter activists stood up during the presidential town hall at Netroots Nation and demanded that Sanders provide

substantive answers about what he would do about the epidemic of police violence in the Black community.

In the wake of that protest, Sanders supporters took to Twitter to condescend, patronize, and belittle Black people, talking to us as if we are stupid and don't know what's best for us, and therefore should listen to our White Progressive™ betters lest we usher in a Trump presidency or a Clinton presidency or whomever is the Boogey Man *du jour*.

These supporters have twisted and perverted what is a movement about the liberation of Black people and turned it into a weapon to be used against us. They threaten to withdraw their support in protesting state violence against Black people. In the wake of the Seattle protest over the weekend, Sanders' fanatical supporters behaved just as horribly as they had after the Netroots Nation protest.

If this progressive rage—primarily white progressive rage—at Black voters continues, one has to wonder whether or not Sanders can be defined by the company he keeps, and whether that company will sink any chance he has at becoming the next Democratic nominee.

And let me be clear: It won't be Sanders' fault if he loses the primary. It will be the fault of his supporters.

The Protests are working.

Despite reacting poorly to the protests when they were happening, Sanders has been doing all the right things.

Mere days after the Netroots protest, Bernie Sanders began tweeting about #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName. Indeed, the day after the protest, he said Sandra Bland's name at a rally in Dallas.



BLM activist Tia Oso (center) after she grabbed the microphone from moderator Jose Antonio Vargas (left) as presidential candidate Martin O'Malley (right) looks on at the Netroots Nation Conference on July 18. Source: nationaljournal.com

Imani Gandy is the Senior Legal Analyst at RH Reality Check, and one of the hosts of the popular podcast, This Week In Blackness.



BLM Seattle co-founder Mara Willaford upstages Bernie Sanders on August 8. Source: [need to get from Aly before Monday]

And in a move I consider savvy, he hired Symone Sanders, a young Black organizer with the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and supporter of the #BlackLivesMatter movement as his press secretary. And whatever your view of the hire—in the *New Republic*, Jamil Smith writes that “hiring Symone Sanders, a black woman, as his press secretary... can’t be expected to mollify the movement. #BlackLivesMatter wants policies for black people, not black people for his policies”—it is undeniable that the #BlackLivesMatter protesters are inspiring Bernie Sanders to address the concerns of Black women.

On the morning after the Seattle protest, Sanders published a page to his website that addresses racial justice, and specifically addresses police violence *on its own terms*. His racial justice platform includes Physical Violence (i.e., police violence), Political Violence (i.e., disenfranchisement), Legal Violence (i.e., mass incarceration of people of color), and his bread and butter, Economic Violence (i.e., unemployment and income inequality).

This would not have happened were it not for the #BlackLivesMatter protesters.

Indeed, Smith writes, “A campaign representative reached out to me to say that those proposals, in the works for the three weeks since Netroots, were derived from a speech that’s been on the site since July 25.”

Just yesterday, Bernie Sanders tackled the issue of institutional racism at a rally in Los Angeles.

And let’s not forget that immediately after the Netroots protest, Democracy for America, the organization founded by Howard Dean in 2004, issued a press release via email stating the following:

“After hearing the calls of our friends in the #BlackLivesMatter movement, that’s exactly what we intend to do. Here is what Democracy for America is committing to as an organization with a mission to elect more and better Democrats across the country:

- We will ask every single candidate who asks for our support what they have done, and what they will do to stand up alongside the Movement for Black Lives while confronting structural racism within our country’s culture of white supremacy. As TIME magazine reported, this will apply to candidates running up and

down the ballot—from local and state level candidates to the 2016 Democratic presidential contenders.

- DFA will be working with campaigns to communicate with voters more often and more effectively about race by actively helping campaigns poll on racial justice issues and amplify messaging that takes on structural racism.”

None of this would have happened if not for the #BlackLivesMatter protesters.

The #BlackLivesMatter activists are changing the political conversation. Black women are flexing our political muscles. And it is obvious that Bernie Sanders and the progressive infrastructure is listening.

The only people who continue to stalwartly refuse to listen are his fanatical supporters. They stubbornly continue to claim that the protests are stupid and counterproductive despite clear evidence to the contrary, and they express their displeasure in rhetoric steeped in racism and misogyny.

And it’s profoundly depressing.

Sanders and the Need for the Black

Vote

Ultimately, Bernie Sanders has a coalition problem. His coalition is comprised of primarily white progressives and liberals, unsurprising for a man who hails from a state that is 94 percent white. And when a vocal section of that coalition thinks belittling and harassing Black people is a smart way to encourage Black people to vote for Bernie Sanders, Bernie Sanders likely has a larger problem on his hands than he probably realizes.

Black women are the most loyal and reliable Democratic voting bloc. We won the election for Obama in 2012. Black voter turnout surpassed white voter turnout in 2012. We won the gubernatorial election for Terry McAuliffe in Virginia.

No Democratic candidate can win without the support of Black voters, particularly Black women. And now that that is clear, we are no longer content for Democrats to take our votes for granted. The crisis in our community is too grave to blindly support a candidate and then hope they’ll get around to addressing our issues.

And when we see Sanders supporters entertaining conspiracy theories about the #BlackLivesMatter movement being funded by George Soros or Hillary Clinton, we have to wonder why it is easier for white and non-Black progressives to believe in ludicrous theories about #BlackLivesMatter attempting to destroy the progressive movement or destroy Bernie Sanders than it is to believe that the movement is beyond partisan politics—that the Black women who are standing up in protest are fighting for their very lives and the lives of their children.

The name-calling and slander of #BlackLivesMatter supporters and activists, particularly Black women, by white and non-Black progressives is truly shameful.

Ben Cohen at The Daily Banter called the protesters “idiots.” Hamilton Nolan at Gawker called them “stupid.” The staff of Ring of Fire Radio wrote a truly hateful post in which they complained that the #BlackLivesMatter movement was too focused on Black queer women—because God forbid a movement

continued on page 11

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decenter whiteness—and that Black lesbians (i.e., the founders of #BlackLivesMatter) were trying to destroy Bernie Sanders and the progressive movement. (That post has since been removed.)

Marissa Johnson, one of the women who led the Seattle protest, has been smeared in a blog post being circulated on Patheos as well as a fact-free blog post on PoliticusUSA as a “Sarah Palin supporter” and a “radical Christian.” (She supported Palin when she was 17, and no longer does now that she is 24).

These are the same people who will swear up and down that they are your allies, right up until the protest for Black lives inconveniences them in some way or they disagree with the activists’ tactics.



BLM National co-Founder Patrisse Cullors (center) leads chants at *Netroots Nation*. Source: AP

On Allyship

To those primarily white and non-Black progressives spreading conspiracy theories about #BlackLivesMatter being funded by Soros or paid by the Clinton campaign—as if it is so unfathomable that a group of Black women would be politically savvy enough to organize protests without backing from a rich white savior like Soros or the Clintons—I can only say that your behavior is fundamentally anti-progressive and practically indistinguishable from the behavior of your average Tea Partier or Rush Limbaugh enthusiast.

And to those white and non-Black progressives who are not buying into the more outlandish conspiracy theories, but are nevertheless criticizing the protests as rude, ineffective, stupid, or inconvenient, and who have penned articles offering unwanted and unneeded advice to these brave Black women, I will only say this: Your opinion doesn’t matter.

As Monique Teal recently wrote for *Daily Kos*:

“Posting that you don’t understand the strategy behind a tactic exposes you as clinging to white supremacy. Allies don’t decide the strategy of an oppressed group, they support the strategy said group develops. Period. Stop telling us that we need your validation of our humanity. Because that’s what you’re saying every time you talk about “strategy.” You can house your privilege in

a thousand ways but ultimately, telling people to shut up because you don’t like what they are saying and how they are organizing makes you an oppressor.”

You may be inclined to point to disagreement among Black people about the tactics of the #BlackLivesMatter activists and gloat on to that disagreement to voice your own disagreement.

Don’t.

There is certainly disagreement within the movement about tactics, but that’s a conversation to be had by and among Black people about the liberation of Black people. It’s simply not your place.

That is not to say that we as Black people do not welcome white allies. But that allyship cannot be conditioned upon respectability politics or upon Black people acting in a way that makes you comfortable *or else*. That’s not allyship. That’s a threat.

If you intend to fight with us for our lives, you cannot wield your allyship as a Sword of Damocles to be dropped on our heads as soon as #BlackLivesMatter activists protest, in your view, the wrong candidate, at the wrong time, in the wrong space.

I have seen far too many fragile white progressives exclaim, “You’ve lost an ally to your cause!”

First, allyship is not an identity that can be self-declared. Being an ally is a process. And it can be a grueling and unpleasant process, especially for those who have never had to wrestle with decentering whiteness and centering Blackness instead.

Second, if you are truly a white ally, you recognize that #BlackLivesMatter isn’t “our” cause. It’s a cause for social justice. It’s your cause too. And if you believe that threatening to retract your support is a viable threat, know this: It is not. It is actually a relief because when push comes to shove, Black people need white allies who will be in the trenches with us, not fair-weather audience participants.

I understand that this may be hard for some of you to read. You may be angry at me. You may feel diminished because you are likely accustomed to the warm blanket of whiteness in progressive spaces, and are resistant to centering Black lives and Black issues. Some of you have never been told that your opinion doesn’t matter. And your initial reaction may be outrage or to think that I’m racist or that I hate white people.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Besides, the issue is not whether I or any #BlackLivesMatter activist or supporter hates white people. The issue, as Seattle protester and activist Marissa Johnson so succinctly put it in her radio interview with *This Week in Blackness Prime*, is whether or not you love Black people and are personally accountable to Black people.

Loving Black people is different than not hating Black people. Loving Black people is different than not standing in opposition to Black people. Loving Black people is different than tolerating Black people. If you love Black people and you, as a non-Black progressive, believe that #BlackLivesMatter is your cause, then fight with us. If you don’t or you’re not sure, then we will fight on without you. But believe me: The fight will continue. The disruptions will continue. The demands for recognition that our lives matter will continue.

By all indications, Bernie Sanders recognizes that our community is in crisis.

You should follow his lead.





CHARLES BLOW AND ROSS DOUTHAT

lectures.syr.edu

Charles Blow is the visual op-ed columnist for The New York Times—with a weekly column from a liberal perspective covering politics, public opinion and justice appearing every Saturday—as well as a regular contributor to CNN. Author and influential blogger Ross Douthat is the youngest op-ed columnist in the history of the Times; representing a new generation of conservative commentator, he pens vigorous and penetrating analyses of domestic and international politics and government. For the University Lectures, the two newspaper colleagues and friends will take part in what promises to be a captivating discussion and sharing of perspectives on the topic of social inequality, moderated by SU alumnus and current SU Law student Jesse Feitel '13.

Charles Blow and Ross Douthat
“SOCIAL INEQUALITY: THE HOW, WHY AND WHAT TO DO?”
Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2015

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Anti-Racist Glossary / from page 7

virtude, and wage labor. Capitalism used racial distinctions to dehumanize people of color and divide and rule, spreading and intensifying class hierarchies around the world. These race-based class hierarchies are still in place in many countries today, especially in the Americas and Europe. Capitalism creates, propagates and exploits racism, along with many other forms of oppression, to undermine solidarity among wage laborers.

Tone policing. A tactic to delegitimize resistance to oppression, used when someone shuts down criticism of oppression by criticizing the tone of the speaker, usually if the critic is angry or otherwise upset. Also used to attack strategies of resistance by claiming that anger will prevent resisters from being taken seriously (a mistaken critique if history is any indicator).

White fragility. Feelings such as guilt and defensiveness that white people may exhibit when confronted with their racial identity and privilege. White people are socialized


to see themselves and their culture as the center and the standard, and as non-racial. When pushed to acknowledge their white racial identity and the privilege that comes with it, many white people have feelings of anger, fear, confusion, numbness, guilt and defensiveness. When a white person holds these feelings as more important than the harm done to a person or people of color, that person is exhibiting white fragility.

White privilege. “A transparent preference for whiteness that saturates our society” (*White Anti-Racist Activism*, Holladay). This manifests in opportunities, benefits, and protection from negative societal treatment which is generally enjoyed by white people and generally not available to people of color. These material, social and psychological benefits range from the light-toned “flesh-colored” bandaid to presumptions of competence to a greater chance of financial stability due to a history in which white people were able to accumulate wealth to a much greater extent than people of color; and there are countless other examples.

White supremacy. White supremacy holds that people of European descent are more

intelligent, civilized and valuable than people of color. This belief system was invented to justify white conquest of the world, and the enslavement and dispossession of peoples of color during the last 500 years. Today in the US, most people associate the phrase “white supremacy” with the Ku Klux Klan or other overt hate groups. Yet white supremacy is more insidious and widespread, reproducing itself in most institutions in society in both subtle and overt ways.

Whitewashing. How the role of people of color in organizations or historical movements is erased and whites are given undue credit, e.g. how the pioneering role that black musicians played in the development of rock music is neglected in favor of white musicians. Some music historians think that “rock and roll” started as a term for blues music played by white people, even if it was originally indistinguishable from that played by black people. The formative roles people of color played in the labor movement are likewise neglected.


Visit www.peacecouncil.net/pnl for links to sources contributing information to this glossary. 



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NAOMI KLEIN

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Naomi Klein is an award-winning journalist, syndicated columnist and author of the 2007 New York Times and No. 1 international bestseller “The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.” In her most recent book, 2014’s “This Changes Everything,” Klein argues that climate change isn’t just another issue to be neatly filed between taxes and health care. The climate crisis challenges us to abandon the core “free market” ideology of our time, restructure the global economy, and remake our political systems. In short, either we embrace radical change ourselves or radical changes will be visited upon our physical world.

Naomi Klein

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Seeking New Steering Committee Members

The SPC Steering Committee is responsible for the organizational and political health of the Peace Council. If you are already engaged in SPC's work in an ongoing way and would like to deepen your involvement, consider joining the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee oversees decisions on topics ranging from our annual budget to program priorities and members serve two-year terms (exceptions can be made in special circumstances). Decisions are made by consensus. If you are interested or would like to know more, contact Carol.

Record Breaking Garage Sale!

Despite a rainy Saturday, the SPC Garage Sale was a record success with over \$2500 raised to power SPC's peace and justice work. We are thanking our lucky stars that we had more great stuff donated than ever before!

SUPER thanks to set-up extraordinaires Lanny Freshman, Theresa Buck-Bieling, Ann Tiffany, Marie Summerwood and Geoff Wright. BIG thanks to Ed Kinane, Shirley Novak, Jessica Maxwell, Brian Escobar and Joshua. There's a MOUNTAIN of thanks to Rae Kramer, the heart and soul of the Garage Sale. Thanks also to everyone who donated and everyone who shopped, and thanks especially to the donors of big-ticket items like large furniture and a canoe!

Bike Goes to a Good Home

Congratulations, John Burdick, the lucky winner of another fantastic bike from Mello Velo Bike Shop on Westcott Street!

The Peace Council's annual bike raffle raised a hefty \$950 this year. Our profuse thanks go to Wendy Yost who sold raffle tickets all day long at the Westcott Street Cultural Fair, where the majority of tickets were sold. Thanks also to everyone who bought and sold raffle tickets. Bikes not bombs!

Welcome Fall Interns!

We are pleased to welcome Kirstyn, Manny and Ashley as SPC's Fall 2015 interns. Among a variety of projects, Kirstyn Ross Roach is working on graphic design and website development, Manny Martinez is

helping with event organizing, and Ashley Ventura is working with Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Land Rights Action. Please extend a warm welcome to these bright and motivated interns when you see them at the SPC office and at events.



Activist Appreciation: Geoff Oldfield

Geoff Oldfield (above) is the perfect example of the apple not falling far from the tree. His father John helped raise the alarm about weaponized drones early on, and his mother Julienne has been a peace and social justice worker for much of her life.

Geoff is a genuinely nice person who often works in a background support role. Need things carried or hauled, or people transported? Geoff is there—and with good humor and a smile. He is a quiet, generous person willing to help. He has often transported people and props to the State Fair for the tableau—which is not an easy task. Last year he also joined in as the “drone operator” (see photo).

We thank you Geoff—for sharing your strength and equipment with SPC ... and for your kindness as you do that.

Urban Jobs Task Force

The Urban Jobs Task Force (UJTF), of which SPC is a member organization, had a Rally for Jobs on September 23 before a study session for the Syracuse Resident Employment Ordinance to require more local hiring. The UJTF is distributing a petition in support of the ordinance, which requires that city residents comprise 20% of the workforce on city public works contracts and half of that from impoverished neighborhoods or persons in a workforce database. With the ordinance, community organizations, unions, and workforce developers help contractors find skilled resident labor to meet the goals of the ordinance.

Sign the petition at www.actionnetwork.org/groups/urban-jobs-task-force (or come to SPC to sign a hard copy).

Joe Leonard iPresente!

Joe Leonard lived life on his own terms whether it was managing a rock band or the Dragons Emporium (a head shop), teaching math to high school students or workers returning for a college refresher, fighting for civil rights, spearheading a program for seniors teaching them how not to fall, fighting for LGBT rights, working for peace and social justice. He was a proud member of the ACLU, Sage Upstate and the Syracuse Peace Council. The last time he was at SPC, he had come to improve his “letters to the editor” writing skills. He was a sweet, gentle soul who cared about everyone's rights. The world is a finer place for having had Joe in it.

Plowshares Lawn Signs Need Good Homes

Now that fall is here, SPC's Plowshares Craftsfair and Peace Festival is just around the corner (December 5-6). Helping make the Craftsfair successful is fun and easy – adopt a Plowshares lawn sign for your front yard. We'll put them out the week before and then pick them up the day after the Fair. People living on high visibility streets are especially encouraged, but anyone is welcome to help out. Contact Carol to be put on the lawn sign list.

ACTS' Criminal Justice Task Force Takes Action

The Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS) is a grassroots network of faith communities and organizations in the Syracuse area advocating for social justice. SPC is a member group.

ACTS' Criminal Justice Task Force has been particularly busy lately. Earlier this year they learned that 16- and 17-year-old youth were routinely being held in solitary confinement at Jamesville Prison, locked in their cells for 23 hours a day, excluded from programming and prohibited from interacting with anyone else being held at the jail. ACTS is calling for an end to solitary confinement of 16- and 17-year-olds in Onondaga County. Please sign the petition at <http://tinyurl.com/o4dwws4>.

To get involved with any ACTS task force as an SPC representative, please contact Carol. ♻️

MON

TUES

WED

THURS

FRI

SAT

SUN

OCTOBER 5

Film: Very Young Girls (2008). 6pm. Documentary by Girls Educations and Mentoring. Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 218-5711.

Syracuse Greens Monthly Mtg. 7pm. 2013 E. Genesee St., 1st Floor. Howie, 425-1019.

12 EVERY MON. Free GED/Literacy Program. 9-12 noon. Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave. 478-8634.

EVERY MON. Westside Residents Coalition. 6:30-8pm. Spanish Action League/La Liga, 700 Oswego St.

19 SUN Westside Coalition. 7pm. Brown Memorial, 228 Davis St. 476-7475.



Shaded items are Syracuse Peace Council related events. Info: peacecouncil.net, 315-472-5478.

6 Solarize CNY Workshop - Dewitt. 6pm. Dewitt Town Hall Courtroom, 5400 Butternut Dr. Katelyn, 422-8224.

Kathy Kelly Speaks: Kabul to Syracuse to Niagara Falls. 7pm. All Saints Church, 1340 Lancaster Ave. Carol, 472-5478.

13 NOON Steering Comm Mtg. 7pm. 2013 E. Genesee St., 2nd Floor. Carol, 472-5478.

SUN Southside Coalition. 7pm. Brady Faith Center, 404 South Ave (across from SW Community Center), 476-7475.

20 EVERY TUES. Street Heat. 4:15-5pm. See page 4 for locations. Ann or Ed, 478-4571.

SPC Steering Comm. Meeting. 7-9pm. Open to SPC supporters. Contact Ursula for agenda. 472-5478.

7 Upstate Drone Walk Begins. Hancock Air Base. Carol, 472-5478.

What If... film: We the Owners (2013). 6:30pm. Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave. 218-5711. Free.

EVERY WED: Syr. Community Choir Rehearsal. 7-9pm. Grace Episcopal Church 810 Madison St. Everyone welcome. Children's rehearsal on Mondays. 428-8151.

14 Solarize CNY Workshop - North Syracuse. 5:30pm. Northern Onondaga Public Library at North Syracuse, 100 Trolley Barn Ln.

21 Shaleshock CNY Meeting. 6pm. Onondaga Free Library, Jack, 424-1454 or ramskids29@aol.com.

Skunk City Neighborhood Association. 6:30pm. Mundy Library, 1204 S. Geddes St. 476-7475. Free.

8 Solarize CNY Workshop - West Syracuse. 6pm. Sokay Geddes Community Youth Center, 1010 Woods Rd. Katelyn, 422-8224.

Film: Resistenda: The Fight for the Aguan Valley. 8pm (doors 6:45). Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 218-5711. \$5-15 suggested donation.

15 What If... film: We the Owners (2013). 6:30pm. Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 218-5711. Free.

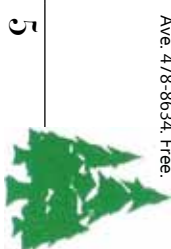
Move to Amend. 7pm. 2013 E. Genesee St. Michael, 663-5640.

Know Your Rights Workshop. 7pm. Plymouth Church, 232 E. Onondaga St. Laura, 218-5708.

22 SUN Southwest Action Council. 7pm. Brady Faith, 404 South Ave. 476-7475.

EVERY TUES/THURS. Free GED/Literacy Program. 6-9pm. Westcott Comm. Center. 478-8634.

28 EVERY WED. Exercise Class for Seniors. 1pm. Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave. 478-8634. Free.



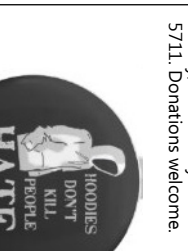
9 Solarize CNY Workshop and Green Bag Lunch - Syracuse. 12pm. Syracuse Center of Excellence, 127 E. Washington St. Katelyn, 422-8224.



16 EVERY FRI: Zumba Fitness Classes. 6:30-7:30pm. Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave. \$7 per class or \$50 for ten classes. 478-8634.

Postpartum Support Group. 7pm. Women's Information Center, 601 Allen St. Christine, 546-5075.

23 The YES MEN are Revolting at Artrage. 7pm. Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 218-5711. Donations welcome.



29 EVERY THURS. Talk to a Lawyer. 6-8pm. Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave. 478-8634. Free.

10 EVERY SATURDAY: Street Heat. 9-10am. Regional Market Main Entrance. Park St. Ann or Ed, 478-4571.

Solarize CNY Workshop - Natur-Tyme. 1pm. Natur-Tyme, 3160 Erie Blvd East. Katelyn, 422-8224.

17 EVERY SATURDAY: Street Heat. 9-10am. Regional Market Main Entrance. Park St. Ann or Ed, 478-4571.

24 Film: The Devil's Backbone (2001). 8pm. Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 218-5711. \$5 suggested donation.

31 Pax Christi Mtg. 9:30pm. 208 Slocum Ave. 475-2811.

11 EVERY SUN: Top of the World. 10pm-12am. 88.3 FM. Music.



18 New School Open House. 2-4pm. 5205 Jamesville Rd.. newschoolsyracuse.org. Explore our independent K-8 school. Chat with teachers, parents and administrators. Children welcome! Free.

25 Film: Winners of Nukebusters short film contest. 7pm. Artrage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave. 472-5478. Free.



SYRACUSE PEACE COUNCIL
COMMUNITY CALENDAR
OCTOBER 2015

Upcoming SPC Events

November 12. Peace Newsletter mailing party. 3pm. 2013 E. Genesee St. 472-5478.
November (date tbd). 10th Anniversary of Onondaga Land Rights Action.