



**There is a lot happening in the world, and I don't want any old fears
to prevent me from playing a big role in making change.**

Alysia Tate



Welcome to the October 2016 *Present Time!* How great to be able to read in one place about people from so many constituencies and countries. Are you from a group that we don't often hear from or a part of the world that we need to know more about? Please write! For the January issue, articles and poems need to reach us by Monday, November 21. We'll need changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, November 28.

Lisa Kauffman, editor
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Hard Things Happened Long Ago

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the New York City Regions' Workshop
in New York City, New York, USA, June 2016*

Almost always, the things that were the hardest on us happened a long time ago. It isn't that big things don't sometimes happen later. It's that the early hurts are the ones that really nail us to the ground, so we can't move very far. And everything accumulates around them, taking advantage of our inability to think there. They're the place where all the oppressions take root.

If we had been connected with someone as children, and hadn't been hurt or could've kept discharging, we wouldn't have believed any of the oppressions that were pushed at us. It's when we can't think, when we are alone, when there is no reference point that we are vulnerable to all sorts of distresses.

We gave up trying to discharge them. And because we weren't able to work on them in the past, we now try to work on the most recent restimulation of them. We've mistaken the symptom for the cause.

We can be upset now by tiny things, especially when they're done by the people we are counting on spending the rest of our lives with. Because we couldn't discharge the hurt back then, and there is some hope we can discharge it now, we tend to grab the latest restimulation of it and shake it in each other's face. "Yeah, see what you did?" (*Laughter*) Well, you know how well that works.

We feel entirely justified. Maybe we are. But we *feel* entirely justified because all of the old feelings from when we *were* justified are attached

to it. It has the full head of steam [full force].

You make some odd little comment, and your sweet, dear love turns and growls at you and shows fangs. What did you say; what did you do? Well, not much. But it hit the spot where he or she never had a chance to discharge and resolve something. It may absorb both of your attentions, but you can't stay there and work on the restimulations very long without being confused. It makes you think it is real and not restimulation. It makes you think something really bad just happened, and it didn't. Almost always, the harshest thing that happened is that you both got restimulated and lost in old distresses that you hadn't had a chance to discharge and get rid of. That kind of thing confuses us and takes us off course, and it can take weeks to get back together enough to peer through a little opening at each other.

It's fine to bring up a restimulation as a place to start a Co-Counseling session. It's a flag that tells us where we are vulnerable. But to stay there



MARGO HITTLEMAN

very long has us working on something that will happen over and over again until we work on what caused the vulnerability: the early undischarged hurt.

As we work on the early things, we are less and less likely to be restimulated. The image I use is of trying to take down a tree that needs to be removed. We can go at it by clipping off leaf after leaf after leaf, but the leaves regrow, just like our restimulations. There will be another one tomorrow. If we really want to make a difference, we have to cut deeper, go down earlier and earlier. As we do that work, something can change.

It feels confusing, but with present-day restimulations, especially in relationships, we always have to decide that something's not right with ourselves. Otherwise we end up in the helpless position of saying that because the other person restimulated us, it's their fault. They may well have distress, but the fact that we are restimulated means that we have distress too. We didn't cause it, we didn't deserve it, but it is ours now. That feels unfair, but it doesn't matter. We have a vulnerability there, and only we can change that. That's the early work we have to do, so we don't waste our time in confusion about each other in the present.

All of us here are the best allies we know how to be. We care as deeply about you as we know how to care, and it will get better as we do this work. There is nothing wrong with any of us. There is only work we need to do on the past, so that we can function more clearly with each other in the present.

* Tim Jackins is the International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

Being Allies to Our Children in School

Dear lovely parents,

I am writing to ask you to share your experience with and strategies for staying close to your children and being an ally to them as they enter school and go to school.

What decisions have you made about their being in the school?

What has changed outside of school in terms of your relationship with, parenting of, and being with your children?

How have you set things up at home in response to school?

Thank you so much,

W—
California, USA

Such a good question.

We get up very early in our house so that before school there is play time, time to do everything we need to do without being rushed, time for sessions if they bubble up. There are, of course, days when we have to hurry, but these go better because they aren't the norm.

Absolutely sacred is thirty minutes of running and tumbling before bed. On days when we are especially late to bed, my younger son will say, "Just two minutes of running and tumbling!" and we will wrestle or do whatever else we think of. We stay with our children until they are completely asleep. We also sleep with them, and they certainly search us out to snuggle in the night.

We have been present in their school building in a variety of ways from day one, giving them a continuing sense of our presence and the availability of resource.

I've learned not to disparage the confusions of the educational system. It's been useful to give our children information and perspective. However, my older son has used my criticism of homework, for example, to avoid doing things that have felt hard. I've learned to use homework as an opportunity for

sessions. (I told the first- and second-grade teachers that our children would mostly not be doing the homework, but in third grade this did not seem useful.)

T—
New York, USA

When my daughter started school, I cut back on my work hours and spent a lot of time with her before and after school each day. We did lots of playing on the playground and lots of special time.*

During special time she would make me eat candy (which I hated) and would laugh and laugh. We also played school—she would be the teacher, and I would be the student. Sometimes I would be a very obedient student, and sometimes I would misbehave and she would punish me. I got some glimpses into what she was facing at school.

I also volunteered at the school once a week. I would read with the children and work on building a relationship with the teacher. My husband and I often wrestled with our daughter at bedtime, to laugh and get close and create ways for her to be powerful.

C—
North Carolina, USA

My son is in first grade at a big public charter school. The adjustment has been shocking and hard for him but also incredibly good for his confidence on so many levels. The oppressiveness of the institution, young people's oppression, and internalized oppression (teasing and some bullying) among the children have been hard. At the same time he has

* Special time is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that she or he is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses her or his entire attention on the young person and follows her or his lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.

fallen in love with his teacher, made some good new friends, won some battles, and is feeling proud of himself. His school is a hard place to be, but it's also a warm place, with many messy and real relationships always moving forward.

I think the most important thing we parents can do is discharge on our own struggles. I've had to discharge on how weak, unable to defend myself, bullied, and defeated I felt in elementary school and how desperate I feel to protect my son. I can see similar distress on several people I know who have chosen to pay tons of money to send their children to tiny private schools. If I had the money, I would have been tempted to do it too! But I am glad now that I didn't. I've learned that facing new struggles isn't necessarily a bad thing for my son, if he has the chance to talk about it, discharge, try things, and have some successes.

At first I gave him special time every day, whenever or however I could. Some days he was scared to go to school, and we would do whatever it took to be ready thirty minutes early so we could go to the local park and have big physical light-saber (Star Wars) battles, and of course he always won. We would laugh as much as we could, which often made it possible for him to walk in the door of the school.

We also do special time after school whenever we can, for a few minutes up to two hours depending on the level of attention his dad or I have and who is working and when.

Once every two months or so, we have a "yes" day (I can't remember where I read about that idea; it may have come from a Co-Counselor). On "yes" day our son gets to set up the day however he wants it. Either his dad or I cancel work, because, of course, he decides not to go to school.

On some "yes" days all he wants to do is be at home—watching videos, having us read to him, playing, and so on. The day unfolds at his pace, which is way slower than the pace of school. Often he tells stories about school. It's not special time—his dad or I can do things we need to do around the house—but we try not to make any major decisions about the day other than to generally follow his lead.

Even though "yes" day is infrequent, it seems to make a big difference and sometimes allows a big session to happen. This is really important, since with boys' oppression and young people's oppression, big sessions are getting fewer and farther between.

I think school is an interesting project for families. There are definitely new layers of oppression to contend with but also new opportunities for connection. Our son's school puts us in contact with many families we wouldn't have gotten to know otherwise, and we're always learning as we stay by his side.

W—
Rhode Island, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



First Assume It's Distress

The phenomenon of being over-fatigued—that is, having recorded fatigue build up to the point where even a little new fatigue triggers an immense amount of recorded fatigue—is very real, and we've been working on it for a few years.

I propose an assumption here. I propose that any difficulty we meet in these later stages of re-emergence be automatically assumed to be something that needs contradiction. That with any problem that seems to be fouling up our lives, throwing us back into the garbage out of which we so painfully crawled—any physical collapse or setback—our first assumption be that it's something that needs contradiction and the resulting discharge, and that we rigorously attack in that direction before we resign ourselves to a life of invalidism.

Harvey Jackins
From *A Better World*, pages 152 to 153





J. EISENHEIM

Five-Year Subscription to *Present Time*

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“Making a Break”

Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, recently led a Jewish Liberation Workshop in Oakland, California, USA. It was a transformative weekend for me.

Cherie shared that instead of “taking the next step” in re-emergence, we could “make a break from the past.” I saw how making a break was a *decision*, was completely outside of any distress, and would provide a perspective that we were no longer living in the hurts of our early lives. It would definitely show that the present reality was safe and hopeful. At the same time it would allow us to discharge on the hurts of our past in a deeper way, because we wouldn’t be confused that they were still happening.

On Saturday evening Cherie talked about how RCers are not yet in full agreement about the part of the RC Jewish liberation policy on Israel and Palestine. She asked who did not agree with a two-state solution, and five of us raised our hands. I was *terrified* to admit it. I had been quiet about my political beliefs, because I was afraid that I would “lose” Cherie (jeopardize our relationship) if she knew where I stood on the issue.

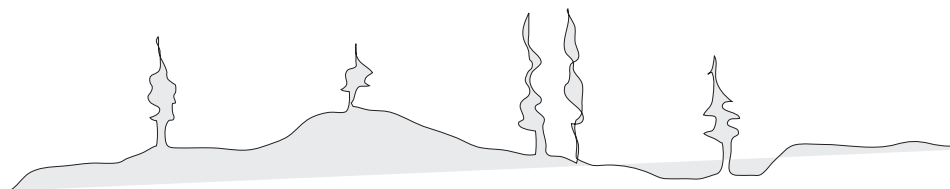
Cherie said she was going to counsel each of us, and I started crying and shaking before I even got up to the front. She asked, “What would you have to face if the policy were correct?” I said, “I can’t even consider that question yet; I’m so scared to have said I did not agree,” and I continued to cry and shake for quite a while.

The most remarkable thing about this turn was that Cherie stayed with me. She didn’t go away; her mind was still with me. I showed my struggle as openly as I could and was willing to counsel on her direction and see where it took my thinking. She said there had to be room for us to work on our feelings about Israel and Palestine, and she gave me that room. After the session I realized that each feeling I had about the policy was parallel to a distress recording from an early hurt.

On Sunday morning Cherie counseled me again in front of the group. I continued to work on my relationship with her, while noticing that she was still with me. She lovingly pointed out that I didn’t appear to trust anyone and gave me the direction to trust her. After discharging on the spot where I *could not* trust her, I made a decision to trust her. It felt like a huge leap in my mind and my heart. I didn’t know what was on the other side. But I had experienced over the years that Cherie could think about me and my constituencies, and I put my faith in that. I took the leap. It made a shift in my mind; it made a break. After the workshop I kept discharging on it. I was able to fix in my mind the spot where I trusted Cherie, and I felt a little less alone in the world.

Thank you, Cherie, for counseling us so lovingly and fiercely, for continuing to think at the very edge of your mind, and for making a break and helping us do the same. Thank you for loving us as Jews.

Anonymous
California, USA



First-Session Counseling Tips

Here are some tips I've given fundamentals students before their first Co-Counseling session:

BEING COUNSELOR

As counselor, you—your presence and loving attention—are the most important thing you can give. Not being alone with the places we hurt or feel bad about ourselves is the biggest “contradiction” to the feelings.

The key things are (1) listening to and caring about the client; (2) noticing where their feelings come up; (3) helping them touch those feelings and keep returning back to where they can cry, laugh, tremble, and so on; (4) believing in them; and (5) trusting their mind to be able to figure out what they need to do.

Listen and provide safety and reassurance. If someone is already discharging, you're on the right track. If they are not, just keep listening and watch for the signs that feelings are close to the surface.

Your job is not to solve the problem but to help the client discharge the feelings that get in the way of their ability to solve it.

The feelings are more important than the story. Notice what the underlying feelings are or might be and help the client to touch and look at those. Follow the feelings, and they will lead to the deepest, oldest core hurts.

BEING CLIENT

As client, you are in charge of your session, though the counselor can suggest and encourage a direction or offer or model a perspective. The goal is discharge.

It's useful to think about yourself as if you were a counselor—for example, to ask yourself, “Where are the feelings?” “What do I need to do to allow myself to touch or feel the feelings in that place?” It is often intuitive and involves listening inwardly.

SOME RC THEORY

Co-Counseling is not really about feeling good. It's about reclaiming our ability to think in areas in which fear, grief, shame, and other emotions interfere and cause confusion. If we reduce the amount of emotional tension associated with those areas, we become more able to think and know what to do. We “get our mind back.”

The emotional tension comes from having been hurt. Some of the hurts are individual, for example, from family dynamics and relationships. Some are cultural and institutional, for example from racism, sexism, classism, or young people's, elders', Gay, disability, or anti-Jewish oppression. The hurts interfere with our ability to think, especially in circumstances that somehow remind us of when the hurts occurred.

Discharge—crying, laughing, trembling, sweating, expressing outrage, talking, yawning, and stretching—is the body's built-in physical way of undoing these hurts. It is what children will naturally do, if allowed to, after something hurtful happens. They will seek benign adult attention, tell the story, discharge, tell the story some more, discharge more, and so on.

For most people, discharge has been cut off or inhibited—in ways that vary depending on culture, gender, and individual circumstances. So step one is often recovering the ability to discharge.

Will (McNaughten) Loving
Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

||||| If you move . . . |||||

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Thank you!
Rational Island Publishers



STAN EICHNER



Handling a Difficult Situation

The United to End Racism team at Tule Lake* handled a difficult situation in which a pilgrimage participant died during one of the weekend activities.

Four of our team were on a hike, organized by the pilgrimage. We and about forty other pilgrimage participants were to visit a historic area at Tule Lake where a group of Modoc Indians, seeking to return to lands taken by the U.S. government, had held off an army of U.S. soldiers for several months. The visit was included in the pilgrimage because of the parallel experiences of racism, discrimination, and resistance in the histories of the Japanese and Native peoples in the Tule Lake area.

On the hike, at virtually the same moment, one elder fell to the ground and another collapsed with what turned out to be a heart attack. Three of our team surrounded the elder who had fallen and helped him get back to the bus. We made jokes and talked to him about his love of fishing, which helped with his feelings about needing help and causing a problem for others.

Our fourth team member and about ten other people were near to the man who had collapsed. That was a much more difficult situation, and the level of panic was high. Soon several hikers from outside the pilgrimage group, who had first-responder training, stopped to help the man. Our team member used her attention to support everyone who was fighting to save the man's life. She put a hand on the shoulder of those who were panicking, offered words of encouragement, and added firm opinions when someone raised an idea that made sense but others weren't able to act on. When a hiker with nursing skills joined the group with her three young sons, our team member took care of and listened to the boys so that the nurse could put her full mind on the situation.

When everyone returned to the bus, the four of us continued to listen to people as they faced uncertainty and fear and eventually the shock of learning that the man who had collapsed had died. One of us listened to someone who had tried to revive the man. He talked about how he had never before seen someone die in front of him and also about his father and other family members who had died. We invited him to our evening

* United to End Racism (a project of the RC Communities) has been sending a delegation to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage—a biannual pilgrimage to the site of the Tule Lake Relocation Center, one of the U.S. internment camps in which thousands of Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II.

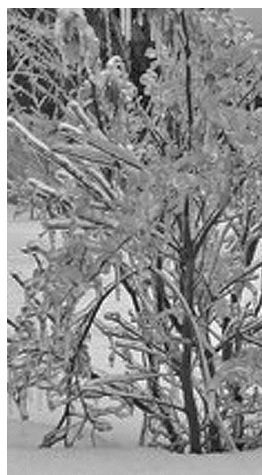
support group. (He did come, and three of us gave him our attention as he talked more about the day as well as how the Tule Lake incarceration had affected him and his family.) Other leaders of the trip found their way to where we were interspersed with other riders. They appeared to want to be around us because we were still thinking, had attention, and could listen to them as they thought about what needed to happen next.

When the four of us rejoined the rest of our team, we discharged hard. Then we were able to put our minds on the present and to help lead an Intergenerational Dialogue Discussion Facilitator Training of close to forty people.

Throughout that evening and the next few days, every member of our team gave time to family members of the man who had died, those who had worked hard to save him, and others dealing with the loss. Some people came to our support group and workshop; others just reached for hugs, a few words, a few minutes of time.

The pilgrimage leaders handled each aspect of this difficult situation beautifully. Many people gave everything they could, with great intelligence and thoughtfulness. We members of the United to End Racism team acted powerfully, with flexibility and caring.

On Sunday the entire pilgrimage gathered and learned about the death of the man. His family members wrote a letter of appreciation to all of the people who had helped on the previous day. They said that the man had been born at Tule Lake and that he had died there surrounded by people who loved him and who had fought for him with everything they had.



BARB DELZIO

Keith Osajima
Redlands, California, USA

Alix Mariko Webb
Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, USA

and Ashley Uyeda
Los Angeles, California, USA

*(for the 2016
United to End Racism
Tule Lake Pilgrimage Team)*

Reprinted from the
RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of Asians

To Discharge Well

Tim Jackins, at a teachers' and leaders' workshop
in Connecticut, USA, May 2000

For anyone to be able to discharge well, there has to be some way of not getting lost in the distress. This is why we set up Co-Counseling sessions. The best thing to remind us about the real world and the present being different from the way we got hurt is to have somebody there who cares about us, who is committed to listening to us, who is not giving us advice but is actually being as we need them, whose attention is on us, for us to use.

Our young ones pick up on [notice] our attempts to not discharge, to suppress it. So what do you do when that control pattern has been installed on them? Well, it's what you do with any client who can't quite figure out if it's safe enough to discharge. You try to change the situation enough that he or she can notice the outside resource of your attention.

People walk around in a cocoon of their own distresses, muffled from the world. What it often takes is someone—you, the counselor—reaching in through that cocoon to make contact, because they can't quite figure out how to get out of it themselves. They live in it all the time. Just your saying, "This is a session and I'm going to pay attention," often isn't enough for them to break out of it.

As we get more experience and gain some command of the discharge process for ourselves as client, we're not so dependent on counselors being able to do that. But it's always useful, as a counselor, to figure out how to do it.



BARMAH NATIONAL PARK, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA • DAMIEN COOK

Clarifying Relationships

Most people at some time or other have difficulties in their relationships with other people, or at least feel that there is distress involved in relationships.

A useful preliminary procedure in improving relationships . . . is to face and realize that all people have a concept of what a relationship "should be" for themselves and generally unawarely assume that other people, including the ones they have or

seek a relationship with, have the same concept of what a relationship means. . . . *This is almost certain not to be true.* Therefore, it is highly desirable to clarify each person's concept of what they "want" and expect from the other person in the relationship and then to communicate this in great detail to the other person.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*, page 112

Young People and Information about Sex

I've been considering the idea that young people will ask questions "when they are ready" and that we then give "age-appropriate responses." However, I think we also need to take into account that everyone is bombarded by the objectification of females (and young males) and by the highly profitable sex and related industries. The media broadcast confusing, distressed messages about sex, closeness, isolation, individualism, greed, and addictions. And there is also the installation of frozen needs and what gets attached to them. I've made many efforts to contradict all this, including engaging in "preemptive" discussions with my daughter.

My daughter is now twelve. When she was very young, I aimed to have lots of aware attention for and benign contact with her. I tried to be thoughtful about how I treated her when changing her diapers. I never said anything negative and always praised her body and mind.

I started talking to her early on about how she could be close with anyone she wanted to and that she was in charge of the closeness. I helped her identify and name her body parts, appreciated her skin color and hair, and contradicted the objectification of young children, particularly females. I encouraged her to be active and strong. I followed her lead and stayed close. I didn't hide when I was in the bathroom or conceal that I was having my period.

In answer to her questions, I explained how we females are born with tiny eggs in our bodies and that when we get a little older, each month one of those eggs ripens and we can choose whether or not to have a baby. I said that blood and other nutrients allow the baby to grow in the uterus and that if there's no baby, they slough off. We also discussed in what body locations urination, sex, and bowel movements happen.

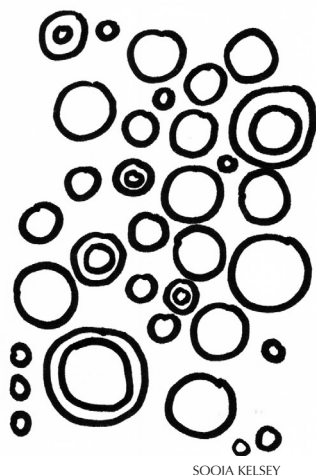
She had many big sessions that appeared to be connected to her birth, and at some point she talked about it and asked specific questions. I said how complex and wonderful we are as human beings and told her a bit about different forms of reproduction in less complex species. I talked about sperm and where it comes from and how an egg can be fertilized. I also talked about taking charge of closeness and how sex is one way people can be loving and close, when it makes sense for both of them. And I said that they get to talk and laugh about it together—before, during, and after.

When she was three, a child five years older acted out perpetrator distress on her at her daycare. She had many sessions. I also gave sessions to the child who had acted out and to the daycare provider and her sister, whose son was the perpetrator. The child had also acted out the distress on the daycare provider's daughter. I ended up doing several special-time* sessions. Not surprisingly, the perpetrator child worked on how he had been exposed to pornography.

Today many young children are exposed to pornography on the Internet. This is in addition to the pornography, sexual exploitation, and violence that have become mainstream in many industries.

Anonymous
USA

* Special time is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that he or she is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses his or her entire attention on the young person and follows his or her lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.



SOOJA KELSEY

The Stupidity of the Pattern

Patterns are fierce, patterns are destructive, patterns are hard and heavily charged-up, but they're stupid! There can be accidental defeats, but, in general, the only time a pattern can vanquish the human being is when the human being slips back into a pattern himself or herself and allows himself or herself to act in a patterned way in response.

As long as you're being flexible yourself, there's almost always a chance to duck [avoid] a pattern. The pattern doesn't know what to do without a patterned response from you. Remember the stupidity of the pattern.

Harvey Jackins
From *A Better World*, page 101

Thinking, Discharging, and Talking about Suicide

I believe that many people have thought about suicide. However, hardly anyone ever talks about it. "Mental health" oppression makes it scary to talk about, because it can send you into the "mental health" system quickly. This is what happened to me when I was fourteen years old.

It is still hard for me to share my suicide-attempt story without feeling some shame. Because I felt like a complete failure, I thought God wanted me to die. Sexism, classism, and "mental health" oppression were to blame for the hurts that my mother and I had, that made us both suffer with depression. Both of us were isolated and targeted for destruction. So she was not able to help me, and my attempts to ask for help did not work.

My mother was adamant after my suicide attempt that I never, ever tell anyone about it or about going to the mental hospital. She implied that it would ruin my reputation forever. I assumed this meant that I really was "crazy" and better hide it if I had any hope of having a "normal" life. The only other option was a life of ruin as a social misfit.

At my first "mental health" liberation workshop with Janet Foner (the International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation), we were choosing support groups and I saw "suicide survivors" listed. It totally amazed me. In that group, at age thirty-six, I told my suicide story for the first time. It changed my life and began my love for Janet and my wonderful journey with "mental health" liberation.

A few years ago one of my dearest Co-Counselors, a "mental health" liberation leader in my Region, committed suicide after the two people closest to her were killed and she got ill with a debilitating illness. I supported her the best I could long distance and was

I would like to see suicide thought of as murder carried out by the oppressive society, which keeps people hurting and unable to connect and heal.

heartbroken when I found out she had killed herself. I decided that the best way I could honor her life was by leading more "mental health" liberation, specifically about suicide.

I tried to lead a topic group about suicide at an ex-inmate liberation workshop and could not keep my attention out. But at a "mental health" liberation leaders' conference, another woman and I led a topic group together. Beforehand we did sessions with short amounts of time back and forth to keep our attention out while we thought about the topic. It was fun to lead the group together, and it filled me with hope.



ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR

After lots of discharge, I decided that someone can only commit suicide if she or he has been really hurt, probably very early, around loss of connection. I began working on my own early hurts around loss of connection, and it has been a long, slow process, as I do not have many early memories. I have also been discharging consistently on my "mental health" and suicide stories, thanks to Janet's encouragement.

As "mental health" liberation leaders, we get to bring up the topic of suicide as much as possible, just to get people talking about it—that the shame and stigma surrounding it are "mental health" oppression and we get to lead the way out of them. Feeling like you want to kill yourself is no worse than other big feelings. It only becomes dangerous if you don't believe that you are connected to anyone, that your being alive really matters to someone. Talking about it is a step toward connection.

No one would ever hurt someone else unless she or he had been deeply hurt and not able to discharge and heal from it. This also applies to hurting yourself. People struggling with suicidal feelings do not deserve any criticism or judgment. Even the people who have killed themselves deserve no blame. I would like to see suicide thought of as murder carried out by the oppressive society, which keeps people hurting and unable to connect and heal.

We can discharge our way to thinking more clearly about how to contradict the distresses that make us vulnerable to wanting to kill ourselves. We can decide to be in charge of our minds and keep fighting the oppression as we head toward good lives, noticing our deep connections with each other.

Joan MacKenzie

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of "mental health" liberation

South, Central, and West Asian People Supporting Black Lives

Police have killed over five hundred people in the United States this year. Over a hundred of those people were Black. (Comparatively, about sixty police officers have been killed in the United States this year.) This violence is a continuation of the violence that U.S. Black people have experienced for many generations.

More people are rising up every day in support of the right of Black people to be alive in the United States. Asian USers have been thinking about how to be vocal and visible and actively contribute to the Black Lives Matter movement. Some have written about how to talk to immigrant elders and other family members about what is happening to Black people and why we need to stand in support of this movement for Black lives.

This work is especially important as we think about the U.S. war on people of our countries: Iran, Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan, and others. There is a war against Black people in the United States.

There is so much to discharge. There is also so much potential for taking creative action wherever we are. This is a moment for South, Central, and West Asian people to support the call to value and protect Black people's lives in the United States.

I would love to hear your thoughts, what you are discharging on, and what you are doing or want to do to support the movement for Black lives.

Dipti Baranwal

Los Angeles, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

Interrupting Anti-Black Racism

I have been discharging rage about anti-Black racism and noticing more directly how Asians get set up in the middle-agent role.

I am interrupting anti-Black racism in my daily life, which brings up terror (it feels like I am going to be killed). It also restimulates people's feelings of being bad and wrong and triggers their defensiveness. The hardest part is remembering I am not alone and that no one is bad (including me!).

I am trying to support my Black partner in interrupting racism and fighting for his mind. I notice that my own rage can be an obstacle in listening to and fully backing him.

I supported a Black theater artist who organized a gathering about police brutality and Black people.

I gave a speech that called out (drew attention to) anti-Black racism in a theater production. This made a huge difference to three African-heritage females that I am building relationships with.

At a recent arts and social justice retreat, I led a non-Black People of the Global Majority table. We got a chance to share where our constituencies get pitted against Black people.

I am going to join a wide-world Hindu network that supports liberation for all people.

I want to keep discharging on early isolation, so I can do more of everything in collectivity with people who can think well and reach for each other.

Anu Yadav

Washington, D.C., USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people



SWITZERLAND • HOLLY JORGENSEN

“Manténganse luchando; las cosas pueden cambiar”

Agradecimientos especiales a Kerri Wall, una aliada excelente, que me ha escuchado con muy buena atención, ayudado a escribir esto en Inglés, y sido un apoyo asombroso para las personas jóvenes.

Hasta el año pasado, había estudiado solamente en escuelas públicas. Pero la fuerte opresión hacia la gente joven era muy difícil de manejar, y decidí dejar el colegio y estar a cargo de mi educación. Quería concentrarme en mi aprendizaje y re-emergencia. No fue un error para mí, porque nosotrxs [x significa a/o/e para integrar varios géneros en una palabra], gente joven, somos interminablemente inteligentes y muy capaces, pero desde la perspectiva del sistema escolar y el gobierno en mi país, esto fue un gran error.

Durante los meses de aprendizaje independiente, intenté decidir si quería terminar la escuela, y si quería ir a la universidad (en Chile la educación media, son los últimos 4 años de colegiatura, de 12, para poder acceder a la educación superior). Realmente luché por decidir qué cresta [la cresta es un modismo chileno que se asemeja a la expresión “qué demonios”] quería hacer después! Tuve muchas sesiones de Co-escucha y finalmente decidí que lo mejor para mí era entrar a una escuela privada donde pudiera estudiar dos años en uno.

Ha sido fácil aprobar todas mis clases [conocido también como asignaturas o ramos], y mostrarles a lxs adultxs en mi nueva escuela la realidad de la gente joven y nuestras capacidades naturales, y la inteligencia innata de todxs lxs humanxs. Al mismo tiempo, esta escuela privada es el sistema opresivo más grande que haya alguna vez tenido que enfrentar, y ha sido impactante y difícil de sobrellevar.



LANEWAY ART, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA • PHOTO BY BARBARA MOLANUS

Al principio me mantuve en silencio para “evitar hacer show” como mi mamá dice, pero me di cuenta que esa no es la forma correcta. Me armé de valor y fui a ver al director de la escuela. Le dije que quería terminar este año escolar en Octubre en vez de Diciembre, y cuán opresivo puede ser para nosotrxs, gente joven, trabajar dentro de un sistema en el que no calza nuestra naturaleza humana. También hablé sobre el maltrato sin sentido que recibimos. Por ejemplo, el primer día de clases, cada profesor nos exigía que nos “comportáramos mejor que como lo hacemos usualmente lxs jóvenes” porque “ellos no querían lidiar con delincuentes a través del año”.

La respuesta del director no fue completamente honesta o precisa cuando empezó a hablar, pero al final estaba escuchando. Luego comenzó a estar de acuerdo con casi todo lo que había dicho. Al término de la reunión me dijo que probablemente me dejaría terminar el año antes de lo usual, y admitió que ir en contra de este sistema es un proceso muy difícil y lento.

Me sentía desesperanzado antes de la reunión, pero después de la charla y de tener una sesión, me pude ver como el ser bueno, cariñoso, preocupado y responsable que era, y que podría cambiar las cosas, es sólo una cosa de tiempo si tienes claras tus convicciones.

Me he comenzado a cuestionar por qué hay tal diferencia entre escuelas públicas y privadas. En Chile, al menos, el clasismo es enorme y está integrado en nuestro sistema de educación. Las personas de clase trabajadora y clase media son empujadas a la periferia de mi ciudad, donde hay un nivel bajo de acceso al conocimiento y a la educación. Esta situación hace que jóvenes viajen largas distancias para llegar a supuestamente mejores escuelas.

Desde mi experiencia, como un joven clase trabajadora, puedo firmemente decir que puedes estudiar lo que sea que quieras, por cuanto tiempo quieras, si tienes gente apoyándote y principalmente si estás desahogando cada re-estimulación o situación que se presente. Soy prueba de que esto es posible. Lo importante es no creer en las ideas o cuentos de los patrones. Se valiente, y lucha.

¿Cómo están manejando la opresión (especialmente el clasismo) en las escuelas, universidades, trabajos, casas o donde sea que estén invirtiendo su vida? Espero que puedan elegir una buena perspectiva y se mantengan luchando; las cosas pueden cambiar.

Sinceramente, con muchos abrazos, fuerza, y amor,

José Nilo Rodríguez
Puente Alto, Santiago, Chile



KOLKATA, INDIA • MAURA FALLON

English translation of the preceding article:

“Keep Fighting; Things Can Change”

Special thanks to Kerri Wall, an excellent ally of mine who has counselled me well, helped me write this in English, and been an amazing support for young people.

Up until last year, I had only studied at public schools. But the heavy oppression of young people was very difficult to manage, so I decided to leave school and take charge of my own education. I wanted to focus on my learning and re-emergence. This wasn't a mistake for me, because we, young people, are endlessly intelligent and very capable, but from the perspective of the school system and the government in my country, it was a big mistake.

During the months of independent learning, I tried to decide if I wanted to finish high school and go to university. I struggled with what the hell* to do next! I had many Co-Counselling sessions and finally decided that the best thing for me was to get into a private school where I could finish two years in one.

At my new school, it's been easy to succeed in all of my subjects and to show the adults the reality of young people, our natural capabilities, and the innate intelligence of all humans. At the same time, this school is the biggest oppressive system I have ever had to face, and it has been shocking and hard to handle.

At first I stayed silent, “to avoid making a scene,” as my mom says, but I realized that's not the right way. I built up my courage and went to see the director of the school. I told him I wanted to finish this year in October instead of November and how oppressive it could be for us young people to work within a system that doesn't fit our human nature. I also talked about the senseless mistreatment we receive—for example, on the first day of classes every teacher told us to “behave better than young people usually do” because he or she “didn't want to deal with delinquents throughout the year.”

* “The hell” is a slang expression that adds emphasis.

The director was finally listening. When he began to speak, his reply wasn't completely honest or accurate, but then he started to agree with almost everything I had said. At the conclusion of the meeting, he told me that he could probably let me finish the year earlier than usual and admitted that to go against this system is a very difficult and slow process.

I'd felt discouraged before the meeting, but after our talk and after I'd had a session, I could see myself as the good, loving, caring, responsible being that I was and see that I could change things. Changing things is just a matter of time, if you hold on firmly to your convictions.

I have begun to question why there is such a difference between public schools and private schools. At least in Chile, classism is *huge* and is integrated into our education system. Working-class and middle-class people are pushed to the periphery of my city, where there is little access to knowledge and education. This makes young people travel long distances to get to supposedly better schools.

From my experience as a working-class young person, I can firmly state that you can study anything you want, for as long as you want, if you have people supporting you and mainly if you are discharging on every single restimulation or situation that comes up. I am proof that this is possible. The important thing is not to believe patterned stories and ideas. Be brave and fight.

How are you managing the oppression (especially classism) in schools, universities, jobs, your houses, or wherever you're spending your life? I hope you can choose a good perspective and keep fighting. Things can change.

Sincerely, with many hugs
and much strength and love,

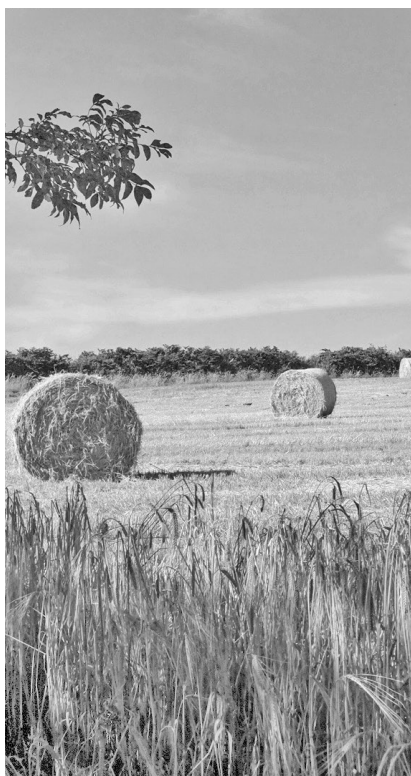
José Nilo Rodríguez
Puente Alto, Santiago, Chile

Listening to People about “Brexit”

We are a small developing RC Community here in Lancaster, a city in the northwest of England that voted narrowly to leave the European Union.

We did a listening project in the city after the “Brexit” referendum. The city council provided the insurance we needed and circulated information about the project to all the city councilors—three of whom got in touch with me and said how important the work was and how we should all be working to combat racism and xenophobia.

Eight of us went out into the city centre with placards saying, “Listening in Lancaster—a safe place to talk about your feelings after the referendum.” We had leaflets about what we were doing, as well as leaflets about RC for anyone who wanted to join us as listeners in the future.



WEST WALES • ELENA MOSES

We talked to about fifty people. They were split between the “leave” and the “remain” sides. Some talked about their fears for the future. Some said, “Get over it; we voted to leave,” but then added that they weren’t happy about the racism and xenophobia that has surfaced in England since the vote. One man said, “We working-class people have felt disenfranchised for years; finally we’ve voted against the establishment.” This made me (as a middle-class woman) think hard about what has just happened.

I met a city councilor who hadn’t wanted to campaign for “remain” in the working-class areas of the city because he hadn’t wanted to listen to racist attitudes. This made me think about the importance of having slack so we can listen to what people are actually saying and feeling when they say, “Immigrants have taken our jobs, houses, and public services.” (I have been discharging on that for two weeks.) The media have been telling people for years, and particularly before the referendum, that “immigrants are a threat,” so I know it’s not anyone’s “fault” if they believe that. (I also know that not all working-class people believe it.)

We made contact with a group of fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds who were demonstrating against the result of the referendum and about not having had a vote. They felt it was about their future and that they hadn’t been heard.

Our local city council had a debate, which I attended, about challenging racism and xenophobia. It was horrifying—nearly every councilor told a story about local immigrants in their area being asked when they were going home. A five-year-old Polish girl found “Poles go home” written on her desk at school. A French family was told not to speak in French and “That’s what we voted for, for you to go home.”

I sometimes work in Scotland, and the atmosphere there is very different. Nicola Sturgeon, the Scottish First Minister, has told all immigrants in Scotland that they are welcome and that their contribution is valued. And it seems there has been no rise in hate crime in Scotland since the referendum.

Fiona Frank

Lancaster, Lancashire, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

Developing New Leaders

Developing new leaders is a crucial function of leadership. . . . Everybody’s wild to do something significant; everybody’s wild to be a successful leader. There’s an old theory that people will only fight for “pork chops” [for economic betterment], and, under certain conditions, it’s true. They will understand fighting for a wage increase. It’s also true that people will fight twenty times as hard and put their lives in much more danger in order to have some meaning in their lives, some hope, some opening. You can provide that, at no cost to them.

Harvey Jackins

From *The Rest of Our Lives*,
pages 166 to 167

Following Up with Contacts Made at COP21

Staying in good enough contact with people we meet at “going public” events like COP21* (and United to End Racism and No Limits events) has been one of our biggest struggles. We do well at making contact with people at the event itself. However, few of these people, especially from outside our countries, have come into RC from our staying in contact with them and teaching them RC one-to-one. (Those who *have* come in have mostly been people who have seen the value of RC themselves and pursued *us*.) So I am excited that nine months after COP21, six RCers are still in contact with people they met there, who don’t live in their countries.

For a while, each of these RCers persisted with the connection on their own. Then Caroline New asked for support. I gave her the names of the other people who were keeping in touch with those they had met, and the “teachers” all made contact with each other for mutual support. I now hold conference calls with these women. They have each made a strong personal commitment to the person they are in touch with and are persisting through many difficulties. Their contacts are learning RC, and we are hopeful they will use it in their environmental activism and will work with us to build RC Communities around themselves. (If you are in touch with someone from COP21, please write to me at <ircc@rc.org> and let me know.)

* In late 2015, fifty Co-Counselors—twenty-five delegates and twenty-five volunteers—did a Sustaining All Life project in Paris, France, during COP21, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change. Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities in which Co-Counselors bring what we’ve learned in RC to people working or wanting to work to stop climate change, the degradation of the environment, and environmental injustice.



SOUTH LAKE UNION, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • LISA KAUFFMAN

We have a lot to learn from what these RCers have done, so I asked them to write a short summary of their connections.

We have a lot to learn from what these RCers have done.

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA

Alima Adams (England)

My contact is A—, from Madagascar. We first had contact by e-mail. A— is a French speaker, so we had to figure out who would interpret. Frédérique Braguier and Delphine Barberot, both French volunteers with Sustaining All Life (SAL) at COP21, were keen and able to help.

A— and I meet when we can on a Saturday evening for at least two hours, on Skype. Frédérique and Delphine alternate as interpreters.

For the first few classes we spent time just getting to know and like each other, so we could learn how best to support each other and begin feeling comfortable to be open with each other in sessions. We also covered RC theory and allowed time for reflection and discussion. At the end of each class, we each had a short session on anything we wanted.

The first class was on RC as an organisation—its aims, work, and history—because A— had only had contact with basic RC theory and the SAL project. We also covered class guidelines, basic theory, and the structure of a session. And we talked about other topics we would cover and where to find RC literature. A— asked if we could cover oppression in the next class. We had decided to stay open to whatever her interests were, so we talked about oppression in the second class and related it to the basic theory of distress recordings.

We spent a few more classes with the same format (greetings, a theory presentation, reflection, a session). Delphine, Frédérique, and I were open and real in our sessions, and discharged openly, and A— got to understand better how to use RC. When she identified something she wanted to work on, we began to have longer sessions of thirty minutes each. Now we are working on bringing a few of her friends into the class and, long-term, on an introductory weekend workshop for a larger group.

We had decided to stay open to whatever her interests were.

Janet Kabue (Kenya)

I have been in contact with B— from Guinea. He is a journalist and an environmental activist who works especially on how mining is affecting his local community. We have two challenges. One is that the Internet connection between our countries is not so good. We tried different applications for months and have resorted to using Facebook Messenger. The second challenge is that English is our third or second language and the only common language between us. It's already a challenge just to hear each other over the bad Internet connection, but we persist, speak slowly, and keep our conversations short. I can tell that he appreciates the contact and being listened to.

I can tell he appreciates the contact and being listened to.

Caroline New (England)

I am Co-Counseling with C—, from The Gambia in West Africa. He is a twenty-eight-year-old volunteer with Activista who works on empowering women to get land for farming, on opposing female genital mutilation, and in anti-migration programs. He trains young activists and leads a team. They are trying to find funding to go to the World Social Forum in Canada. He is an environmentalist and is disappointed that Activista is not sending people to the next COP. He has read quite a lot of our material and likes what he knows of RC. He and I exchange listening a couple of times a week, though often the poor connection makes it impossible to talk for long. He is looking forward to knowing more Co-Counselors and is working toward organizing an introductory RC workshop in The Gambia.

He has read quite a lot of our material and likes what he knows of RC.

Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán (El Salvador)

I am a Latinoamericana woman, born in El Salvador, of mixed Indigenous and Basque heritage. I have been building the RC Community and teaching RC in El Salvador for the last eighteen years. I am following up on D—, an Indigenous woman from Guatemala. After I received her information, I wrote to her several times until she responded to me. We set up a time to talk on Skype and have been in touch since January of this year.

It took several weeks to get the connection and talk for the first time. On our first successful call, I listened to her for about thirty minutes. Then I talked

for fifteen minutes about what RC is and invited her to try a mini-session. For a variety of reasons, we haven't been able to try a session. We are in touch by e-mail, asking each other how we are. She tells me about her work and life.

In her most recent message she asked, "Can we try to have a Co-Counseling session on Sunday, July 17? I would love to try the exercise. We have been months trying to do it—I hope you can." That Sunday I was out of the country, with no reception. I was so frustrated! But so happy she had asked for a session.

She tells me about her work and life.

Jenny Sazama (United States)

I've been the contact person for two people: E—, from Ghana; and F—, from France (originally from Senegal). I communicate with each of them a few times a week on Skype and on Facebook Messenger.

F— has a hard time setting up dates, so I just call her when I am on the road, and we do mini-sessions when we can. I have helped her be in touch with a Co-Counselor who lives near her and with Liam Geary-Baulch (in England), whom she made a nice connection with at COP21. We are now working on getting her to the European BLCD (RC Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop). She travels home to Senegal quite often, she has little money, and her phone often gets disconnected, so we have lost touch a few times. But I keep messaging her, and she always gets back in touch and is ready for another mini-session.

E— has been teaching RC to younger people he works with and is an environmental activist. He is fortunate to live right near a growing RC Community in Ghana and is doing weekly sessions with the Area Reference Person. He has also been to two or three workshops in Ghana. He understands about exchanging listening and paying good attention and really wants to pursue discharge. Most of our sessions are in a public area at his university, where he can sit in a booth and use Skype.

Having this team of women who are doing the same thing has made a huge difference to me in continuing the contact with E— and F— when they have gone through periods of not responding.

He understands about exchanging listening and paying good attention and really wants to pursue discharge.

continued . . .



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LANCE CABLIK

... continued

Bo-Young Lim (Canada)

I met G— at one of our SAL forums. He is an Indigenous Newari man from Kathmandu, Nepal, and a committed climate activist who came to COP21 as an official United Nations delegate.

Since May, he and another climate activist have been in a weekly RC Skype class with Niti Dandekar (the Regional Reference Person for India). I've been assisting her. We are essentially planting the seeds of a new RC Community in Nepal. Despite the challenges posed by our ten-hour time-zone difference and (at times) problematic Internet connections, we seem to have earned their trust and their interest in this project. It's so clear that we like each other!

At COP21, G— signed up to speak at one of our SAL forums in which people could have three minutes to share about the impact of climate change on Indigenous communities. Despite our best efforts, he was overlooked and didn't get to speak. The leaders ended the forum, and as people started leaving, G— went up to the (white) organizer. Rather than complaining or being upset, he simply asked if he could tell his story to those remaining in the area. I was struck by his positive attitude, his friendliness, and his determination to share his experience. The organizer hesitated, repeatedly saying that the forum was over, but G— wasn't going to give up so easily. I

saw all this and voiced my support for him. He left quite an impression on me, so I asked for his contact information.

After I got home from Paris, I e-mailed eight people from COP21 whom I wanted to reach out to but only heard back from three. With G—, I sent a very personal e-mail, saying how much I appreciated his humanness and his dogged determination at the forum. I didn't mention RC. A month passed; no response. Then out of nowhere I got a long e-mail from him saying how thrilled he was to hear from me and that he was moved by my words of appreciation.

In the subsequent months, G— and I talked numerous times over Skype about our climate activist work. We had an instant sense of connection and mutual respect. Our calls often lasted for two hours, which just flew by. We bounced ideas off each other, e-mailed each other stuff we had written, gave each other feedback, and shared resources. I also pushed and asked him "intrusive" questions, so we could share more personally about our families, our struggles, and our successes. He was surprised to be asked but happy to share.

I wasn't clear where the relationship would go; I just enjoyed my time with him and let my mind explore. One thing was certain: I pursued G— for myself, not to promote RC. Marcie Rendon (the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans) has said repeatedly not to "recruit" Indigenous people into RC without building a relationship with them first. I remembered to keep it real and be myself.

The more I got to know G—, the more I liked him. I appreciated his deep connection and commitment to the environment and his Indigenous roots, his close ties with his family and community, his laser-sharp independent thinking, his unapologetic honesty, his easygoing manner, his open-mindedness and humility, and his humour. He had a soft-spoken, gentle way about him, but what a force! He would say things like, "I like to try things without paying too much attention to the results." The foundation was already there for him to quickly learn RC and run with it. By the time I introduced him to Niti in a three-way Skype call, the trust was solid between us—so much so that he brought his life partner, who is also a climate activist, to learn RC with him!

It's so clear that we like each other!

FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOPS

Chioma Okonkwo, one of the Area Reference Persons in Nigeria, has now led three weekend workshops (two in Nigeria and one in Cameroon) for people we met at COP21. In each of these cases, the person who had contact with SAL organized an introductory workshop in his or her local community and Chioma was happy to lead it. Below is Chioma's story about these contacts.

Diane Shisk

Chioma Okonkwo (Nigeria)

I was given contact information for three people after COP21 in Paris. The three of them are now committed RC teachers in their various Communities and countries.

The first is Felix Nkam, from Cameroon. After lots of follow-up e-mails and phone calls, we both agreed on the need for an introductory workshop, which happened in April in Douala, Cameroon. The workshop was successful. People came from other parts of Cameroon and are doing great with RC classes. Felix is now a certified teacher, overseeing the development of RC in four locations in Cameroon.

The second person is Adekunle Akinolz, a lecturer at Adekunle Ajasin University, in Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, in the western part of Nigeria. I led the introductory workshop there in June 2016. Adekunle Akinolz is a great RC teacher now and is beginning another RC Community in the state capital, Azure.

The third contact is Rita Utaka, who resides in the midwest of Nigeria. The workshop in her area happened in August. Most of the participants were very knowledgeable about environmental issues, because the state where the workshop was held, Edo State, is one of the crude-oil-producing states of Nigeria.

Each of these three contacts is committed to and zealous about all that RC stands for. Re-evaluation Counseling literature was helpful. I sent books ahead and e-mailed copies of some articles for the participants to read before the workshops. The postings on environmental teaching, on the RC website, were also helpful.

Each of these three contacts is committed to and zealous about all that RC stands for.

Listening to Leaders



From a talk by Tim Jackins at a teachers' and leaders' workshop in Connecticut, USA, May 2000



AM

Often leaders have no one who simply listens to them. They have people who are committed to following them, but most of them still lead in isolation.

If you're leading, you're supposed to do everything perfectly all by yourself. You're supposed to take all the initiative, and you get to be blamed if everything doesn't work perfectly. People tend to go passive and expect you to do this.

That's a tough position, especially if you don't ever get to talk to anybody. I know Co-Counselors who go to the leader of whatever group they're in and say, "I'm going to listen to you for half an hour each week. When do you want to set it up?" I know a teacher who did that with her school principal. It startled the principal enough that he didn't know what to say. So he said, "Okay, I'll, ah . . . Friday afternoons." And she just goes in and listens to him. That's all—just listens to him for half an hour. And he looks forward to it.

I did that with one of my college presidents. It wasn't explicit. I would just show up every so often [I would just appear occasionally], sit down, and not have anything to say, and he'd fill all the space. I was doing this with him, and then I got pulled off to do a bunch of workshops. I remember coming back after a summer of workshops. I walked in, and he looked over and said, "Where have you been?" (*Laughter*) He couldn't openly admit it was useful—but he let me know.

A Little Step in Taking Care of the Environment

About three weeks ago I met a friend to have a walk along a lake. We started walking, and talked about several things. At some point I started collecting some garbage I found on the way.

We kept talking, I didn't mention what I was doing, and after five or ten minutes my friend joined in collecting things.

After a while we were both carrying a lot of plastic bags, bottles, wrappings, and so on. We found a bigger bag and put things in there. People started looking at us. It must have been a nice picture: two people, quite relaxed, walking around the lake, talking and carrying a lot of garbage. Most of the people smiled at us. Some stopped their walks and started talking to us—about what they were doing to take care of the environment or how annoyed they were about people throwing things into nature. We listened and then kept walking and collecting things.

After a while my friend said, "It's like searching for mushrooms." So we started playing "searching for mushrooms." We looked for garbage, and if one of us found some, the other would say, "Oh no, I saw it first! It's my garbage!" It was fun.

Maybe next time we take a walk, we will bring our own plastic bag to make the collecting easier.

I learned several things that morning:

- As I did what I was doing, it created room for my friend to make his decision for himself.
- Because we both did what we were doing because we wanted to do it, we didn't feel "better than" for doing it. We were just doing it.
- As morality wasn't our motivation, I think it was much easier for people to start talking to us.
- Activism for me is mostly connected with doing the "big thing." This way of getting active is more doable for me. And it gives me more slack to think about bigger things I would like to do.

What are your experiences with doing "smaller" things? How have you tried to bring about change?

Love from Berlin, Germany,

Carsten Filor

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

"I Don't Want to Get Adjusted"

I recently changed the words and added new lyrics to an old religious song and performed it during the creativity time at a recent workshop.

The original words, written by Sanford Massengale, included "the hope of life eternal brightens all our hopes anew." Personally, I don't hold out much hope for eternal life! But the idea of not getting adjusted to "this world" is definitely something I'm committed to, so I changed the words and added a couple of verses:

In this world we have our troubles,
sometimes lonesome, sometimes blue
But the gleam of revolution brightens
all our hopes anew

Chorus

I don't want to get adjusted
To this world, to this world
We can build a new one so much better
We got to build it sooner or later
I don't want to get adjusted to this world

And now we have global warming,
rising coastlines, giant storms
And they want us to believe it's
simply the new norm

(Chorus)

In this world we have oppression,
based on sex and race and class
So let's all rise up together, and we'll
kick them in their brass!

(Chorus)

John Braxton
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA





AURORA PALM

More Resolved to Not Go Quiet

A thirty-year-old Black man was recently shot here in Minnesota, USA. I'd like to hear how people have organized, led, and brought people together around the killing of Black men by police officers in the United States.

Here are some things I am trying:

- A Rabbi at my synagogue and I are talking about having a gather-in or listening circle so we can stay connected, get clearer, and think about our next steps.
- I have recently been carrying a Black Lives Matter sign everywhere I go. I am practicing listening and trying things without having an agenda. It has led to impromptu conversations and been a nice push to think on my feet. It has also led to conversations about racism with our six-year-old daughter, and her friends are asking about the sign and talking about racism and Black people.
- I am reaching out to my Black friends.

I am more resolved to not go quiet. Lighting the candles at Shabbat last Friday night felt different. I felt more united and connected with others. We are in this fight together.

Alicia Phillips
 Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of Jews

We Own the Government

The oppressive society is fundamentally irrational, and all its legalities are for supporting irrationality. There is no legal way to bring about a rational society. There is no legal way to avoid war. There is no legal way to avoid being drafted and having to kill somebody when you are ordered to. There's no legal way to not participate in oppression.

If you are in a runaway railway train that has jumped the tracks and is heading for the lake and the conductor says, "Don't jump," because he's been trained to tell you not to jump (and, in general, it's a good rule not to jump from speeding trains), then I think you need to become illegal at that point.

Lincoln [Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States from 1861 to 1865] said it well in his first inaugural address:

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

He was right. Basically, of course, the government does not own us; we own the government.

Harvey Jackins
 From *The Rest of Our Lives*,
 pages 19 to 20

★ The Movement for Black Lives ★

A few weeks ago, the Movement for Black Lives¹ issued *A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom & Justice* <policy.m4bl.org>. It is also published in Spanish: *Una Visión para las Vidas Negras* <policy.m4bl.org/m4blplatformspanish>.

This platform is a “far-reaching, comprehensive plan for the transformation of society.” It is based on an analysis of existing problems related to racism, and includes a range of policy and program proposals for addressing them. It is singular in its clarity about goals and objectives. As one of the authors stated, “It’s always been clear what we are against, but articulating what we are for, what we want to see, was a real labor.”

The platform has six demands:

- 1) End the War on Black People
- 2) Reparations
- 3) Invest/Divest
- 4) Economic Justice
- 5) Community Control
- 6) Political Power

It addresses a range of issues within each of those demands.

A glossary of terms clarifying how specific language is used is included at the end of the platform.

¹ A collective of over fifty organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the United States



SUE EDWARDS

The Movement for Black Lives Pledge is bold in declaring that “guided by love, we continue to stand together for justice, human dignity, and our shared goal of ending all forms of state violence against Black people.”

The platform has drawn criticism for some unaware anti-Jewish oppression in one of the goal statements. Its stance against the privatization of public schooling and the effect on access to education for Black children has also been criticized.

I was reminded that we may disagree with parts of any policy and that we get to work to change the parts with which we disagree, as some of us are currently doing. I was also reminded of Harvey Jackins’s point that we can’t insist upon agreement on all points before we form alliances; it’s simply unrealistic. We reach agreement on what we can and go forward together in alliance on those points.

While the Black Lives Matter movement has been based primarily in the United States, the goals and policies articulated in the Movement for Black Lives platform are broadly applicable to Black people and other subordinated peoples all over the world.

Many of your Black Co-Counselors, and others, are involved in various aspects of the Black Lives Matter movement. Every RCer, whether involved in the movement or not, shares the goal of ending oppression.

I encourage all of us to discharge on Black Lives Matter, to read and discharge about the Movement for Black Lives platform, and to think about how to use the platform to support our progress on Goal One of the RC Communities.²

I would love to hear the experiences of folks who have used the Black Lives Matter movement or the Movement for Black Lives platform for discharge, and how that has pushed forward their work on the RC Communities’ Goal One of ending racism.

Love and liberation,

Barbara Love
International Liberation Reference
Person for African-Heritage People
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

² A goal adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities and re-affirmed by subsequent World Conferences: That the elimination of racism, in particular the racism aimed at people of African heritage, be actively made an ongoing, central piece of the work of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community.

Black Lives Matter and Policy on Israel

The Black Lives Matter movement has been growing over the past few years in the United States in response to the killing of Black people—mostly Black African-heritage men, but not only men—at the hands of law enforcement officers. Many of the people were unarmed when they were killed. A powerful movement is protesting these murders. It is fighting for a more just criminal justice system and an end to the racism and the degradation of Black lives that has fueled these murders. Many Jews, particularly young Jewish activists, have been involved in the Black Lives Matter movement. A number of Jewish organizations (Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, to name one) are working with Black Lives Matter.

This August, Black Lives Matter published a policy platform, most of which deals with U.S.-based issues related to racism and the criminal justice system. Much of it is excellent. However, in a section on international issues, it labels Israel an apartheid state that is engaged in the genocide of the Palestinian people and calls for the end of U.S. aid to Israel. Many Jewish activists have been upset and confused.

Here are a few thoughts:

- The Black Lives Matter movement is critically important and deserves our support.

- The issue of Israel and Palestine is once again diverting our attention. This is *not* new. We saw this at the United Nations Conference on Racism, in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. The issue has been used this past year at Gay liberation and women's liberation conferences, to name a few, to keep activists divided and confused.

- At a time when there should be massive support for Black Lives Matter, some Jewish organizations are decrying the whole movement. They

- We RCers have put out rational policies about anti-Jewish oppression and Israel in the past—and we can do that here as well.

THERE SHOULD NOT BE A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN CHEERING ON BLACK LIBERATION AND CHEERING ON JEWISH LIBERATION, ISRAELI LIBERATION, AND PALESTINIAN LIBERATION.

are saying that Jewish groups should have nothing to do with Black Lives Matter, because of their policy on Israel. One Jewish group said it was in total agreement with the Black Lives Matter platform. Many are drawing lines in the sand, saying, “You are either for us or against us.” Some are supporting Black Lives Matter while staying in dialogue about the policies they disagree with.

- How do we stay in close with friends and allies while speaking up about anti-Jewish oppression? Most people do not understand oppressed/oppressor dynamics. They do not understand that singling out Israel in this way is anti-Jewish oppression, that it distracts us from our work, and that it will never be a winning strategy.

continued . . .



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

• I recently spoke with two young Jewish activists from “If Not Now,” a new Middle East peace group. One of them said, “How do we find the muscle to not go away in grief and discouragement and also speak up?” They appreciated my reaching out and wanting to know how they were doing and how I could help.

• We Co-Counselors have a key role to play. This is a critical moment for Jewish liberation and for all progressive movements. Because of internalized oppression, the pull for Jews is either to abandon legitimate Jewish concerns and not confront the anti-Jewish oppression in the anti-Israel statements (for fear of being labeled racist) or to do it in ways that are defensive, and often racist, and only increase our isolation as Jews.

• It’s time to have sessions and discharge, discharge, discharge. This is a long-term struggle and will not necessarily move quickly. We need to *slow down* and discharge the early discouragement, so we don’t attach it to the present situation.

• Relationship building is key. If you know people in Black Lives Matter or in Jewish organizations, call those folks. Offer to listen. Offer to exchange time thinking. If you know young activists in these movements, call and offer them time. We forget how much we can contribute by staying close to those on the front lines.

• I think we all need to read the Black Lives Matter platform. We can download it, take it into sessions, and read it—the whole thing, not just the part about Israel.

• The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will continue to be used in our liberation movements to divide and conquer. We can learn how to speak about this. We can talk about how Israel is deeply good and at the same time is set up to oppress the Palestinian people.

• Let’s have big sessions and then try to communicate sound policy. We will make mistakes. We will get scared. We will be afraid to speak up for ourselves as Jews. We will try to speak up for Jewish liberation, and it will slip into racism. We will act too defensive—or

we will go silent, be afraid to speak up, about anti-Jewish oppression. But it’s important that we try. It’s okay to make mistakes. Trying matters. We need to discharge and practice, discharge some more, and practice some more. We need to learn how to stay deeply connected to folks while having strong disagreements.

• This is a key moment for you who are our allies. Be informed about how Jews are getting separated from their natural allies. Discharge and find the courage to speak up about the racism and the anti-Jewish oppression. There should not be a contradiction between cheering on Black liberation and cheering on Jewish liberation, Israeli liberation, and Palestinian liberation.

I am happy to support any of you to find your voice and take action on these issues.

Cherie Brown

International Liberation

Reference Person for Jews

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



Jewish Liberation Part of the Whole of Human Liberation



First—thank you, Cherie, for your thoughtful e-mail about the section of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) platform dealing with Israel and Palestine and the debate that has resulted. [See previous article.] I want to add some thoughts, as a white Ashkenazi U.S. Jew.

I think that as Jews we have work to do in renewing our alliances with other wide-world liberation movements so that Jewish liberation can be correctly understood as part of the whole of human liberation.

I think that as Jews we have work to do in renewing our alliances with other wide-world liberation movements so that Jewish liberation can be correctly understood as part of the whole of human liberation. In the context of the middle-agent dynamic of anti-Jewish oppression, and the oppression and violence that Israel acts out at Palestinians, the importance and goodness of Israel as a national homeland for the Jewish people is understandably confusing to our allies, especially on the Left, and increasingly to some Jews.

I think that the M4BL platform’s use of the words “apartheid” and “genocide” in relation to Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians is not the key issue. These words are misleading, especially without a stated commitment to Israel’s existence.

But I think we can most usefully see their use as an indication of confusion and misinformation about Jewish history and anti-Jewish oppression.

I think that as RCers, we will need to discharge toward becoming clearer in communicating some of our key understandings:

- that Jewish liberation and Palestinian liberation are not in conflict
- that the existence of Israel is crucial to Jewish liberation
- that the creation of a Palestinian nation-state is crucial to Palestinian liberation
- that these can and must move forward together

Yesterday I had some success in communicating with a rabbi friend who does not believe that Israel should exist as a Jewish nation-state. I listened to her thoughts in support of BDS (the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement—a global campaign to put economic and political pressure on Israel to end its occupation of Palestinian land and the Golan Heights, give full equality to Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and respect the right of return of Palestinian refugees). I then tried to give her the biggest picture I could reach for.

I said that it is helpful to think about Israel in the context of other national liberation projects of oppressed peoples. Oppressed peoples establish nation-states as a base from which to reclaim and rebuild their languages, cultures, pride, and histories and heal from their internalized oppression and divisions. However, nation-states, new or old, are not rational entities; struggling to make them so is a necessary part of human liberation. (Harvey Jackins had a clear understanding of this, and I try to remember to read and re-read his writings on the topic.) Moving toward a rational society is a slow, multigenerational struggle.

Once an oppressed people gain political power and national sovereignty, the state violence and oppression they have experienced and witnessed is still recorded in each mind. Without sustained chances to recover from past violence and oppression, the people who get into positions of power act out the recordings, often violently—internally,

... it is helpful to think about Israel in the context of other national liberation projects of oppressed peoples. Oppressed peoples establish nation-states as a base from which to reclaim and rebuild their languages, cultures, pride, and histories and heal from their internalized oppression and divisions.

In more “stable” Europe, and the North American nation-states that have been around for a few centuries, the repercussions of the original founding oppression, racism, and genocide have become so chronic as to be taken for granted.

along lines of color, class, and creed, as well as toward national minorities and neighboring territories.

These dynamics have played a part in the formation of any nation-state we look at. In more “stable” Europe, and the North American nation-states that have been around for a few centuries, the repercussions of the original founding oppression, racism, and genocide have become so chronic as to be taken for granted. (The M4BL platform is largely, I think, a powerful voice in challenging this national chronic pattern in the United States, with many specific and thoughtful examples of how to do so.)

The passing on of unresolved oppression is also evident in more recently post-colonial African, Arab, and Latin American nations, among others—and in Israel. It has been difficult to see and understand Israel in this context, especially for people on the Left.

My rabbi friend and I parted with more understanding between us and an interest in communicating more. It was a start.

As RCers we can learn to be clear communicators about these things. In the broader context of intersecting liberation struggles, we have a crucial role to play in the wide world—in communicating the possibility and necessity of humans healing from the distress recordings resulting from oppression, and assisting people to do so where we have the resource.

I have work to do in my Co-Counseling sessions in order to take this on. I will need to continue and deepen the discharging of my distresses—timidities, fears, feelings of being unwanted—as they get in my way of getting my thinking out with other people. Tim Jackins has reminded us that we need to do consistent work on our earliest defeats and disconnections, so they no longer dominate our perspective in current-day struggles. I'm not there yet consistently, but as I discharge and try things, I get glimpses of being able to look forward to taking on the struggles in front of us, and to doing it together.

Billy Yalowitz
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

A Topic Group on the Black Lives Matter Platform and Israel

At a Jewish liberation workshop in my Region, beautifully led by Dan Alter, I led a topic group on the Black Lives Matter platform's language on Israel and Palestine.

There were six of us in the group, all white Ashkenazi Jews. I started by giving some information about the Black Lives Matter policy platform and its language on Israel. I decided to focus on the accusation that the Palestinians are being targeted with genocide. I had people do a mini-session on the word "genocide" and everything it brings up.

Next I said that this section of the platform, and our reactions to it, involve the hooking of anti-Jewish oppression and racism. It's confusing to look at these two oppressions together, so I said we would look at each one separately.

First I talked about anti-Jewish oppression. I said that when an almost entirely Gentile organization condemns Jews for acting as oppressors but does not acknowledge the existence of anti-Jewish oppression, that is anti-Jewish oppression. Then everyone had a mini-session. I asked them to discharge from the perspective that this part of the statement is anti-Semitic.

Next I said that our reactions to the statement are no doubt affected by our racism. The feeling that

"we know better" or "they are wrong" is racism. We need to discharge on feeling like lecturing the Black Lives Matter movement or telling them what they should do or say. We also need to discharge on the viciousness of the oppression directed at Palestinians. I briefly talked about the legal definition of genocide, which is more complicated than most of us realize. Then I asked people to spend their next mini-session focusing on racism.

Lastly, I said that this is an important time for us as RCers to share our thinking and attention widely. I asked the question, "If you were going to share your perspective on this statement with those around you, what would you say?" We did a short go-around in which we shared our thoughts.

I was happy with what I was able to accomplish in a short time, with little time to prepare.

Terry Fletcher
Berkeley, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

... I said that this section of the platform, and our reactions to it, involve the hooking of anti-Jewish oppression and racism.



AMANDA MARTINEZ

Guiding and Steering the Collapse

If every working-class person agreed to take a big cut in wages, if every woman agreed that her place was in the kitchen and retired from any job that anybody wanted her out of, if every Third World person agreed to accept an inferior position, if every child welcomed oppression by adults, and all the rest of such, the system would still collapse very quickly. We do not have to furnish the motive power or the drive to overthrow the system. That's a misleading concept. The system is heading for collapse. It's "going to hell in a bucket," and fast. All the activist can do is guide and steer the process.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 13

Jews Standing for Racial and Economic Justice

Yesterday I attended a Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) event with my Jews of Color and Mizrahi and Sephardic Caucus (JOCMS).

I'm so proud to be a member of this organization of Jews who stand for just that—racial and economic justice.

This particular rally and march were for Black lives. We were out in the streets to put an end to police killings and the general targeting of Black people in New York City (USA), and beyond.

About two hundred people attended—some members of JFREJ and some not. So great! I heard people say they were grateful that they had somewhere they could be as Jews to show support.

We met at Washington Square Park in New York City. The JOCMS gathered in the front of the march with a banner

saying, “Jews support Black Lives Matter.” I'm crying as I write this.

We walked through downtown Manhattan to a police precinct, singing songs of struggles for justice, in English and in Hebrew. It was so powerful to be doing this work *as Jews*. And as a Jew of color, I finally realized I had a space where I didn't have to choose—I could be me and be with my people. (Everyone is mixed anyway! No one in the world is purely one “race.” Racism is bogus and makes us try to choose.)

We marched from the park to a police precinct and crossed the street. Then seven of us sat in the street (I didn't), and we all continued to sing for twenty minutes. The police didn't stop us, even though we stopped traffic for a while. Finally they told us we had sixty seconds to get out of the street and stop blocking traffic or we would be arrested. Most of us moved, but the seven who were seated had agreed ahead of

time that they would disobey to make a statement and were arrested.

A crew of about thirty of us followed the action closely and showed up as support at the jail where the seven were being held. It was a time we got to be together, process the action, and generally connect and get to know each other better (a lot of people were new to me).

I'm proud to be a member of this organization for racial and economic justice as a Jew of color. I have a sense of satisfaction that I'm disobeying my patterns of upward mobility, which want me to go quiet and seek financial gain. I am “standing on the right side of history” and with my people.

Benjamin Altman

#Jews4BlackLives

New York City, New York, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

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AMANDA MARTINEZ

“Dead Little Circles of Blah”

Many of you are very scared of the “repressive right-wing forces.” I was telling somebody at a meal today, and I’d like to say it to everybody, there’s no basis for being scared of them.

You are just learning about them. You just read about them and you are horrified. It’s something like how we are discovering the majority of children are sexually abused and we are horrified. Hell, it used to be ninety-five percent.

Our becoming aware of the seamy side of pseudo-reality doesn’t make the world worse. These right-wing groups have existed and have been financed and have been sending these messages out for a long time, and they are not suddenly more effective. After a while people get bored with their junk. They shouldn’t be ignored, but they shouldn’t be respected. They are just dead little circles of blah.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*,
pages 164 to 165



Supporting New Parents and Their Children



I am a birth and postpartum doula in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. I do a lot of listening to and encouraging of mothers and fathers before, during, and after their baby’s birth. This includes supporting them as they discover the heavy weight of parents’ oppression. Usually, for the mother—because of the combination of sexism and parents’ oppression—this happens within days of giving birth. This year another doula and I started a Mother Baby Group. Moms come with their babies one morning a week for social and emotional support, and everyone gets some confidential listening time.

I sometimes support the older siblings as well. I find that parents are most open to learning about emotional healing when it pertains to their older children. They are relieved that I can play and connect with the older children and grateful for the attention I have for their upsets as they adjust to life with a new sibling.

Catherine Fischer
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
Reprinted from a newsletter for people
who have communicated with the
Information Coordinator for Birth Workers

Bringing Our Tools to COP22 in Morocco

Sustaining All Life* was accredited by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization (NGO). This gives us “observer status” at the COP22 climate talks in Marrakech, Morocco. The climate talks this year will focus on implementing the Paris Accord and empowering developing countries.

As we did at COP21 in Paris, France, our delegation will hold workshops, forums, listening projects, caucuses, and more, to communicate what we know about ending oppression as a vital part of addressing climate change. We will lead “brainstorming sessions,” to bring people with similar interests together to share their thinking on different strategies to combat and handle climate change.

More details on our plans, including flyers for our events, can be found at our website: <www.rc.org/sustainingalllife>.

You can also follow us on Facebook <[sustainingalllife](https://www.facebook.com/sustainingalllife)> and Twitter <[@SustainingLife1](https://twitter.com/SustainingLife1)>.

Your help in fundraising for this effort is needed and much appreciated. We have many ideas for fundraising on our website, including a fundraising page <www.rc.org/saldonate> with photos of SAL at COP21, a narrated slide show of our activities there, and a PayPal button for making direct contributions.

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA

* Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities in which Co-Counselors bring what we’ve learned in RC to people working to stop climate change, the degradation of the environment, and environmental injustice.

Care of the Environment and Eliminating Racism

A year ago I attended a Care of the Environment and Eliminating Racism Workshop in New York, USA, led by Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People, and Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person. I continue to reference it and incorporate it into my life.

HOPEFUL FROM THE START

From the very beginning of the workshop, Barbara and Diane conveyed a sense of hopefulness. Barbara began by saying that when the astronauts first landed on the moon and looked back at the earth, they could see the Great Wall of China. She said that if humans could create a wall visible from the moon, and thousands of years ago the pyramids in Egypt, we can certainly eliminate racism and save our beloved planet.

For introductions, Barbara named a number of constituencies and we stood up if we were a part of them. Each person stood up at different times, with different groups of people, vividly showing how we are all interconnected.

People of the Global Majority were more than half the workshop, and for the first time an RC workshop was transmitted over Skype, so that Co-Counselors in Trinidad could be a part of it. Using Skype saved resources and burned less carbon than these people traveling to the workshop. The kitchen liaisons composted our food scraps, even though the venue did not customarily do that.

THREE POINTS

Barbara shared what she considers the three main points regarding care of the environment and ending racism:

1) *Environmental damage disproportionately affects People of the Global Majority and Indigenous people, and their lands.*

I've concluded that care of the environment needs to be one of my highest priorities. If we don't stop climate change, we won't have a functional earth to enjoy, and working on all the oppressions will become irrelevant.

For example, in the United States three out of every five African Americans and Latinos/as live within two miles of a hazardous waste facility, and half of all Native people live with an uncontrolled toxic waste site in their community.

2) *Along with bearing this disproportionate burden, People of the Global Majority and Indigenous people lack the resources to pay for cleaning up the environmental damage.*

3) *The green movement is perceived as a "white person's movement."*

People of the Global Majority and Indigenous people have been repairing, recycling, and reusing materials long before there was a "green movement." It was just called "living." In spite of this, the voices of People of the Global Majority and Indigenous people have been silenced. They have been left out of conversations that directly affect them—for example, discussions about which programs should be prioritized and how resources should be allocated.

Someone added that when a white person talks about saving the environment, it's important that ending capitalism and redistributing wealth and resources be part of the conversation. Otherwise it will be experienced as racist.

Diane said, "Climate change is the biggest human rights violation ever, because of the impact it is having on People of the Global Majority and Indigenous populations."

TAKING ACTION

Diane shared that most people have to start care-of-the-environment work where they feel passionate. It's hard to fight for something you are apathetic about. We may have feelings of "Oh no, now I've got to do something about *this* too," but we get to be smart about it, and the work should be fun and not too serious. To illustrate her point, she had brought a rewritten version of "You've Got to Change Your Evil Ways," renamed "You've Got to Change Your Evil Waste," and we sang this funny song to open the workshop.

Diane told us that many scientists are saying we have twenty to thirty years to end the harmful practices that are causing climate change before it severely damages all life forms. She then added, "So it's not time to panic. But it is time to do something."

From what Barbara, Diane, and others in RC have shared, I've concluded that care of the environment needs to be one of my highest priorities. If we don't stop climate change, we won't have a functional earth to enjoy, and working on all the oppressions will become irrelevant.

BEING A WHITE ALLY

Barbara shared a story: One day in rural Arkansas (USA), during a time of widespread racial violence across the United States, everyone knew that some white men from a neighboring area were planning to come and "shoot up" her community. A white man, a friend of her family, got his five sons and they went with shotguns and stood on the road at the edge of the community.

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ICELAND • ALAN EPSTEIN

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When the mob of white men arrived, they told them, "Not today. You need to go home," and they did. It is this kind of firm, unquestioned stand that we as white people need to take on behalf of People of the Global Majority.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOSSIL FUELS

Diane had done some research before the workshop and provided us with the following information:

The earth's average temperature is 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit higher than it was thirty years ago. That may not sound like a lot, but, as one of the young adults at the workshop pointed out, if a human being's temperature goes up by 1.8 degrees, that person is bedridden.

A University of Delaware (USA) study concluded it would cost \$850 billion, and take fifteen years, for the United States to completely convert to renewable energy and not have to use any more fossil fuels.

Governments worldwide give the fossil fuel industry \$4 billion in subsidies each year and spend \$1.75 trillion a year on their countries' militaries. Eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and diverting

money from military spending would be great ways to fund the full transition to renewable energy.

MOVING AHEAD

I've done several things since the workshop:

- I've started a monthly discharge group, in my local RC Community, devoted to care of the environment and eliminating racism.

- I did a public listening project with my best friend and Co-Counselor at a commuter train station. One of us wore a t-shirt that read, "Racism: Getting Better or Worse?" The other wore one with "What's Your Opinion?" written on it. We've thought that a shirt with just "Racism?" on it might draw more people in. We've also talked about creating one that says, "Climate Change?" to go along with the "What's Your Opinion?" shirt.

- A woman of the global majority and I co-lead an eliminating-racism group at my Unitarian church. It is not for going out into the community and doing anti-racism activities; it is a place where people can openly share their stories and feelings about racism so they can think better and act more boldly to

end racism outside the group. We do mini-sessions, which we call "listening partnerships." We've also given people time in front of the whole group. Each meeting is centered on a certain theme relating to racism. A future theme will be care of the environment.

Each participant has mentioned how different the group is from anything else they are a part of and how they treasure it. One man said, "This group has exceeded my expectations, and my expectations were high going into it." A woman who experienced a scary incident said that she hadn't realized how important the group was to her until the incident happened.

The minister of the church and the social justice director asked the co-leader of the group and me for our input, because beginning in the fall they intend to have ending racism be a priority for the church.

- I am building a relationship with the person in charge of the committee that manages the pension funds in my town. I'd like the town to stop investing these funds in the fossil fuel industry.

- Finally, I am talking with the social justice director of my church about creating a Liberation Center in the community that would be a resource for people's individual liberation, beginning with care of the environment and ending racism. Other priorities would be ending sexism and the oppression of young people. To make it fun, a lot of it could be art-driven.

Doing all this has made me more aware of people's individual struggles while also giving me a larger global perspective. And it's true—if you do what you feel passionate about, the work, while challenging and slow moving, is also fun, hopeful, and full of impact.

Dan Iacovella
Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

Elders are perfectly suited to big challenges, as they have faced many of them. Elders are experts at being human.

A Bold Elder Is a Superhero

The leader of my Area elders' support group asked for my thinking about how care of the environment ties logically to the issues of elders. Here are the thoughts I shared with her:

- Elders have well-established relationships and deep spheres of influence.
- Elders have long vision, having seen firsthand how lifestyle, consumption, definitions of wealth, and pressures of capitalism obscure or reveal reality in different political and social climates over time. This perspective is valuable, indeed crucial, now that rapid transition of society is so clearly indicated. We need the minds of elders.
- Elders are perfectly suited to big challenges, as they have faced many of them. Elders are experts at being human.
- An elder standing up for care of the environment commands respect and trust. Since elders are less likely to be around to see the fully ripened fruits of their efforts in this area (or the worst of the damage, if the fight isn't undertaken), there is a built-in integrity and moral authority to their position that cuts through heavy confusions. A bold elder with attention and a mind engaged in leadership is a superhero. The older the better!
- Looking closely at climate change brings up lots of feelings. That's because it's a huge contradiction to distress. To do so means not colluding with discouragement, isolation, or any of the oppressive and wrongheaded ideas about elders being less capable, valuable, or powerful. Taking this on means rapid re-emergence. Who wouldn't want that?

Amy Kalisher
Chaplin, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from *Older and Bolder* No. 7

Older and Bolder No. 7

In this latest issue of *Older and Bolder*, Pam Geyer, the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, sets the tone for elders' liberation work with "It's a New Day for Elders." And the rest of the journal supports the truth of that.

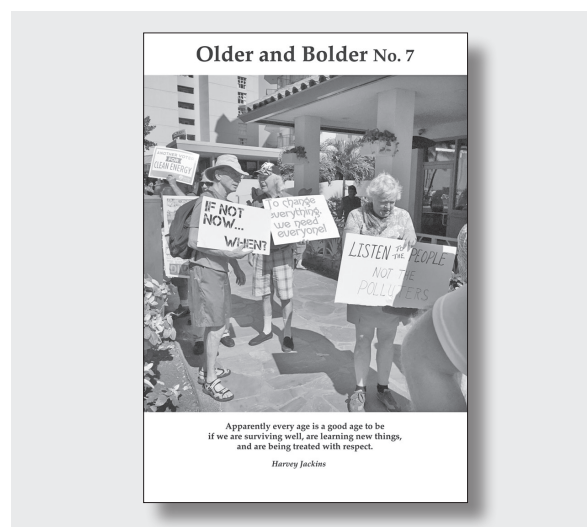
More than seventy-five elders share their experiences of and perspectives on being older—what is difficult, yes, but more important what is excellent and how being an elder offers unique, even breathtaking, opportunities.

Pam Geyer's articles highlight four key activities for moving elders' liberation forward: promoting health, discharging fears of decline and death, ending elders' oppression, and enlisting allies.

According to an article by Tim Jackins, one of the most challenging aspects of being older—discouragement—is not even real. Along with having had time to accumulate wisdom, perspectives, and freedom from many distresses, we elders have also had time to accumulate feelings of discouragement. But *we can discharge discouragement completely*. And as we do, all of our strengths will be available to enhance our individual survival and that of the world around us.

Several years ago Harvey Jackins wrote about elders, "We should lead everything." You will likely draw the same conclusion as you read *Older and Bolder* No. 7.

\$4.00, plus postage and handling
Ordering information on page 110



Attacks

*Tim Jackins and others at a leaders' workshop
in Warwick, New York, USA, December 2015*

Question: Please talk about responding to online attacks on RC, especially when they're brought to our attention by activists. We need to help upcoming leaders discharge, so they can respond to these attacks.

Tim: How we handle an attack varies tremendously depending on the conditions in which it happens. On the Internet people can say anything, and it's not hard to write a restimulating e-mail.

For many attacks, the best solution is to ignore them. However, we do need to pay enough attention to them to understand them and to work on what gets restimulated in us by attacks in general. All of us need to do that, because we are so scared and vulnerable in these places.

A number of topics can be used to attack anybody. An attack doesn't have to have any real substance at all. Even if it doesn't, it still restimulates. So the first thing in handling an attack is to do a lot of discharging yourself. The second thing is to counsel the other restimulated people, if they are within reach. If someone has read the attacking material and gotten caught up in it, then counsel that person on it.

It always helps the people in a Community or class to hear some thinking about attacks before they happen and to work on how vulnerable they are to being restimulated by attacks of any sort. We can explain that RC has always been attacked, from its first days on, and that the content of each attack has been based on what is most restimulating in the society at the time.

It is quite possible that I will be attacked, accused of abusing children. There are lots of good videotapes of RC family workshops, some of which include pitched "battles." Someone would just have to take a few select screens of these, and there we go.

You need to work on your feelings about being attacked. You need to work on all the things you already feel bad and guilty about, because they are where you are most vulnerable. It is much harder to take a rational position if you are feeling guilty. And the attacks that scare you are often those that come from people you want to have like you. That's another place where most of us are especially vulnerable.

You may well have made a mistake, but an attack has nothing to do with you. It always has to do with restimulations that get hung on you for some reason, and the reasons can be really small.

An attack doesn't have to have any real substance at all. Even if it doesn't, it still restimulates.

Sometimes an attack is for the purpose of restimulating people about you. This is what we in RC have officially defined as an attack. Someone is purposely trying to restimulate

people to be against you, to identify you as the source of evil. (There is an assumption behind most attacks that there is evil—conscious evil.) In this case, we need to be forceful and direct. If those attacking are in RC, we must require that they take a reasonable position if they want to stay in the RC Community. We don't treat each other that way.

We do make mistakes. We need to look at our mistakes. But we don't attack each other for our mistakes. That never works to solve difficulties.

When people get restimulated by attacks, they often wonder, "Have I been duped [deceived]? Am I mistaken? Has this evil been hidden from me?" All those doubts can come up. If we haven't worked on our own similar kinds of doubts, it gets very confusing.

When you are handling an attack on RC—for example, if I get attacked—what do you say? Essentially what you have to say is, "No, I know that situation. I know that person. I've seen that person take correct positions, fight for good and correct things, for decades. No. No." People who know you can follow your judgment until they get a chance to discharge enough. That means that you have to unabashedly put your foot down and say, "I stand here," even though you get scared.

You have to be ready to stand up for Co-Counseling and for the people who developed it. It's not that any of us have ever been perfect. But you know the intent we have had and the work we have done. What you can tell the people you know is essentially, "You know me. You know what I am like. You know what I care about. You know how hard I try. Do you think I'm so confused or stupid that I would be fooled by something and simply go along with it? Do you want to know what I think?" Then you can lay out a full

perspective, the best perspective you have on this project that you have worked so hard to move forward.

People can be restimulated by the smallest bit of text, and they can best (and sometimes only) be reassured by another mind that they can trust. They can see the reality of your thought, your intelligence, and your commitment, and they are willing to take a chance with you. They don't need proof exactly. They need the reassurance of another thinking mind having chosen this direction. I think that's what people find most reassuring.

You know us. You know everybody here. Whatever mistakes we make, we continuously try to do the work to correct them. The requirement can't be that nobody can make a mistake without being seen as evil. Nothing can work on that basis. We have to challenge that. It's like the way we treat leadership. We try to figure out how to help people who are struggling to lead, help them discharge the distresses that interfere with their thinking. We don't attack them.

You do need to talk about the fact that we have been attacked, and will be attacked. The attacks on my father are pretty old and stale at this point—the guy has been dead for sixteen years—but people can still be restimulated by them.

You can sense when people are hunting for a place to hang an old upset so they can counsel on it. This is what I would call a naive attack. People have an upset they can't get out of their mind, and they hang it on somebody in the hope that she or he will be their counselor and listen to how upset it makes them. This is different from the less naive attack in which someone is trying to manipulate other people into opposition.

Someone in the group: About twenty years ago you put out a DVD about attacks that was really good. I watched it many times. It was called *Supporting Leaders and Handling Attacks* [DVD No. 219].

Tim: I've been talking about this for twenty years. Yeah.

Diane Balsler: Some of you are activists online. I think it's important for you to get information out about attacks. Discussions online can be vicious, and people can't have intelligent discussions under those conditions. If you have a minority point of view, you often get creamed [strongly attacked]. It would be good to put out what we know about attacks and handling them. The political discussion online could be so much better if it wasn't vicious. I think we can be confident about something we know. We can explicitly say that the goal is to have intelligent political discussion, including an opportunity to disagree, and to not personalize everything. We need not mention RC.

Tim: There are two things I would add. First, don't try to handle an attack alone; don't pull back from people because you feel bad. Second, if you know someone is being attacked, don't leave him or her to handle it alone. Move. Step in front of that person and say to the attacker, "No, you don't get to do this. I know better than this." Somebody has to take a correct line. There may be mistakes involved, and that's fine. They don't justify an attack. We have to get clear about this.

Gwen Brown: I've been doing something that helps people think about attacks before they get restimulated by them. Not in the RC introductory class but in the first class for those who come back, I tell people about the RC website and say, "If you look at other references to RC, you may find confusion and attacks. Remember that one of our goals is eliminating racism. Do you know of any organization dedicated to eliminating racism that doesn't get attacked and have irrational things said about it? Saving the environment means changing the economic system. Do you know of any place where people advocate that without a lot of people reacting? There are all kinds of people out there who have all kinds of feelings about our progressive goals, and they will try to undermine our efforts. That's what you will find on these other sites. However, if you go to our website, you will see what we think. If you have questions, come to me. Maybe I can help you think through the confusions."

Tim: One more thing. I have on occasion taken a slightly defiant position in talking about attacks: "If it's too scary for you, I am sorry. We will miss you."

Barbara Love: I sometimes say, "I have found this theory and tool to be useful. I invite you to try it. If it's useful, use it. If you try it and it's not useful, don't use it."



MATT WEATHERFORD

The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On the morning on August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Two days later, it dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki (Japan). According to Wikipedia, "Within the first two to four months of the bombings, the acute effects of the atomic bombings killed 90,000 to 146,000 people in Hiroshima and 39,000 to 80,000 in Nagasaki." Not enough attention has been put on discharging the horror caused by the bombs and the fears installed on people all over the world. I encourage everyone to have a session on nuclear weapons. Here are some possible questions:

- When did you first learn of the bombings and how (from the media,

from your family, at school, and so on)? How did you feel?

- How does the existence of nuclear weapons affect you today? How does it affect your hopefulness, your relationships, your powerfulness?

- If you are not Japanese, how have the bombings affected your relations with Japanese people or other Asians? If you are Japanese or Asian, how have they affected your relations with Westerners?

- What steps can you take to eliminate nuclear weapons?

There are many ways to learn more about the horrors of the bombings. John Hersey's book *Hiroshima* is a

good place to start. It was published in 1946 and tells the story of six survivors of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. A later edition adds more to the original book.

I have also read some stories in *Japan at War: an Oral History*, by Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, first published in 1992.

With love, and gratitude
for being with you
in our project to make
this world a better place,

Julian Weissglass
International Commonality Reference
Person for Wide World Change
Santa Barbara, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

Useful Environmental Materials

Dear Diane,¹

I want to let you know how helpful the environmental materials you put together² have been. When I semi-retired in April, one of my goals was to participate in environmental activism locally. I didn't know much at all, especially about the technical terms. I have been studying your materials (the PowerPoint, classes, *Sustaining All Life* booklet, and so on), and they have been hugely helpful to me, both in teaching RC and in my new wide-world work.

I have been attending meetings about environmental justice with a small group of people at my church. The church is a Protestant congregation, about fifty percent People of the Global Majority and fifty percent white people. A woman of the global majority leads the environmental justice group.

A few weeks ago I attended a training for local activists on the Clean Power Plan and how we can affect it in Delaware, USA. The state is holding hearings in late August, and a number of us plan to make sure that the needs of frontline communities are addressed. I still have lots to learn, but your materials have been helpful in bringing me up to speed.

I have also gotten involved with a program that teaches young people, primarily of the global majority, about the environment and environmental justice and empowers them to learn more about both science and activism. I've been able to support the woman of the global majority who is leading it.

Thanks again for your well-written, informative, straightforward materials. I have been relying on them as I take action in this new area for me.

Linda Whitehead
Wilmington, Delaware, USA

¹ Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

² You can find these materials on the RC website at <www.rc.org/coe>.

Talking about Oppressor Material, Outside of RC

At a non-RC conference for activists, Alima Adams and I led a one-and-a-half-hour workshop called "Perspectives and Tools for Overcoming Divisions within Progressive Movements."

We did not do it as part of an RC delegation but rather as two independent activists working as a team. We have learnt a lot from being part of RC delegations, and we used that in our workshop, but it has been useful to also become an independent "parallel" force in the world.

We had to write an abstract of the workshop, in just two hundred words. (It took us eight hours!) This is our abstract:

Perspectives and Tools for Overcoming Divisions within Progressive Movements

Effective action on many critical issues, such as the destruction of the environment, will require united and broad-based mass movements. The biggest impediment to all progressive movements has been division (whether externally provoked or spontaneous), in which a section of humanity comes to view another section as their major problem, diverting both from achieving their common interests. Preventing and overcoming division are vital for the future of humanity.

Division has been used to control societies for millennia. Perhaps the most effective divisions have been where one group is given a "platform" from which to mistreat another group (for example, sexism and racism). The hurt and resentment on one side and the unawareness and denial on the other make it difficult for each side to understand the other—the first step towards unity.

Emotional damage, sustained from growing up within an oppressive system, leaves each person vulnerable to being co-opted into that system. Blaming the "bad people" comes from misunderstanding the problem and actually prevents solutions.

Overcoming divisions will require understanding the oppressive structures as well as how mistreatment and oppression work at the emotional level and how to undo them.

Format: short presentation, inclusive discussion, small groups.

Our proposal was accepted, and the workshop was popular. Twenty-four people came, even though six workshops were running at the same time. It was clear from the number of people and from what they said in their introductions that people thought the topic was important.

Following introductions, we did a short talk called "Human Attention Is a Resource." Next we organised people into mini-sessions. We wanted them to have the resource of each other's attention and be familiar with the mini-session format, so they could use these things to think about the ideas we presented.

We talked about oppressor material but called it "the (acquired) vulnerability to mistreat others." We wanted people to focus on understanding the oppressive system we live in rather than identifying with being "oppressor" or "oppressed."

"Divide and rule" has organised almost every human into both oppressor and oppressed roles. Within the context of a given oppression a person is either "oppressor" or "oppressed," but this is true only within that artificial context. I think that context does not correspond well enough to reality to help us think about and solve the actual problems humanity faces.

BUILDING CREDIBILITY

Over the last few years I've been trying to build my credibility outside of RC. Because of my internalised oppression (I am of Chinese heritage and was raised working class), I have not found it easy to promote my own leadership. Re-evaluation Counselling has encouraged and supported my leadership, and in the caring and supportive environment of RC my confidence as a leader has slowly grown.

Outside of RC, no one "knows" that they "should" treat me with the respect I get inside RC. It has taken me a long time to stop seeing that respect as a "right" that I expect people to honor and instead understand that I have to build and earn it.

I think the main benefit of our leading this workshop was building our personal confidence and public credibility. We had to deal with some unexpected and somewhat difficult situations, but we dealt with them well and learnt from them.

OTHER TIMES I'VE TALKED ABOUT OPPRESSOR MATERIAL

For a while I've been using the thinking we've done in RC about oppressor material (and related ideas) with activists outside of RC. They have found it useful to hear someone talk about the big problems they are trying to think about from a point of view that immediately makes it clear that no one is to blame.

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WIDE WORLD CHANGING

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When I am in a group, I don't speak for a long time. Instead I listen to the whole group until everyone has spoken. Sometimes I only speak when someone else asks me what I think. At that point people are usually willing to listen well to what I have to say.

When I speak, it is about two main things: "divide and rule" and oppressor material (though I don't use that term). I choose which points to talk about, and how to talk about them, based on what I've heard people say earlier, and I try not to talk for too long.

These are some of the things I say about "divide and rule":

- I am interested in thinking about divisions among people and how to end them.
- Almost all groups that aim to improve society seem to get diverted from their goals by a division of some kind—either an internal division or a conflict with another group.
- For thousands of years we've been living in societies in which the strategy of "divide and rule" has been used to control people.
- It has been used to divide people on every "scale," from nation states to people in a single office or factory.
- This has been happening for so long that it has become part of our culture and we may think it is human nature.
- If you want to divide two groups of people, it is much more effective to give one group a higher status, and give them power over the other group.
- If people have equal status or power, then they can easily unite, as they see each other as equals with common interests.
- But how do you unite with a group of people who systematically mistreat you and who are almost completely unaware of it?
- Alternatively, how do you unite with a group of people if you see them as unimportant, unintelligent, ungrateful, irrational, and weak—or if they are angry in your direction, for no reason you can see?
- Under systems of "divide and rule," almost everyone is assigned both oppressor and oppressed roles.
- This has been confusing to many liberation movements. Organising against the "oppressors" reflects a misunderstanding of the problem.

These are some of the things I say about oppressor material:

- If young children are mistreated, or witness mistreatment, they later become vulnerable to mistreating others.
 - Over thousands of years, our societies have evolved power structures based on this vulnerability—structures such as sexism, racism, and classism.
 - Everyone has been made vulnerable to mistreating others, but different groups of people have been given "platforms" from which to act it out—for example, men are given the platform of sexism, white people are given the platform of racism, and adults are given the platform of young people's oppression. (By "platform" I mean the support of the society.)
 - Some people are then publicly blamed for acting out the mistreatment. For example, special attention is given to the racism of working-class white people and the sexism of African-heritage or Muslim men.
 - This public blaming makes those of us who are not in those groups try to hide that we carry a similar vulnerability to mistreating others.
 - It also makes us defensive. It becomes hard for us to look at where we are in an oppressor role or where we personally mistreat people.
 - All of this makes it harder to understand that our problems are caused by a system that is much bigger than any person or group.
- I have presented these ideas about fifteen times, with activists who had different areas of interest and different identities. Every time I've gotten a positive reaction. When I have spoken to small groups, the whole group has visibly relaxed and started smiling. When I have contributed to discussions in larger groups, the group has spontaneously applauded. These reactions have occurred so consistently that I've decided to do more with these ideas. I'll write about that in later posts.

Karl Lam

Burwell, Cambridgeshire, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



KK

Some of RC's Contributions to Social Change

From *Logical Thinking about a Future Society*, by Harvey Jackins

The theory of Re-evaluation Counseling has made and will continue to make important contributions to the theory and practice of social change. Among its present achievements are the following:

1. Revealing the distress pattern as the key mechanism for the perpetuation of oppression, for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

This is a tremendous insight. Knowing that people should be good but being unable to understand how they could be so bad, how they could be so oppressive on the one hand and so submissive on the other, was very confusing. We now know how oppression evolved, and, given the resource, we know exactly how to undo it. We know how to help any individual oppressed person stop being submissive and become a tiger. We know how to help anyone in the oppressor role be proud of themselves while they discharge and become a firm ally. This is a tremendous achievement.

2. Clarifying the unworkability of organizing, mobilizing, or appealing for support on the basis of any kind of distress (fear, anger, guilt, shame).

The great organizers have always intuitively done this. Lenin never screamed at his followers. He said something like, "We will now proceed to construct the new society. Ah ha ha!" Mao Tse-tung said something like, "It may take a long time, things may go backwards for fifty years, but the struggle will not be lost." The great ones spoke like this. However, countless would-be organizers and revolutionaries and social changers got up and exhorted people and yelled at them and blamed them and denounced them. We're so much easier to listen to and follow if we strike a note of hopeful appreciation and confidence.

3. Enormously extending the breadth of possible alliances by identifying the human ally still resident within each antagonistic and/or oppressor distress pattern.

This is hard for seasoned wide world changers to hear, but we know that there are no oppressor humans. There are only oppressor patterns. And inside each oppressor pattern there is a good human being doing stupid, evil things out of something he or she can't help. Somebody can reach in from the outside and turn the switch and let them off of it. Just to understand this is to greatly extend how far we can make alliances.

4. Discovering and clarifying the role of internalized oppression in immobilizing and dividing the forces of liberation.

This is a stroke of the greatest importance. It is one of the major contributions that RC will ever have made to realize that the difficulties we confront inside our own movements are exactly the internalized oppression, and that we can scrub it out. Just to have the theory is to lift fears everywhere.

continued . . .



DIANE SHISK

... continued

5. *Supplying the tools and techniques for removing the patterns of oppression from both oppressor and oppressed individuals.*

To know how to do this is a tremendous breakthrough. But it does take doing it.

6. *Clarifying the necessity of logical thinking against all addictive pulls and all painful-emotion appeals.*

See “The Logic of Being Completely Logical,” in *The Human Situation*.

7. *Clarifying the role of all other oppressions as devices developed for the maintenance of classist oppression and exploitation.*

It’s very clear that all the other oppressions—racism, sexism, young people’s oppression, and so on—were invented to divide the fundamental group of the oppressed, those oppressed by classism, whose labor is exploited to take some of the value that they produce. All the other oppressions were developed and extended to serve this one.

This is very important. If it is understood, then the isolation of the different liberation movements has to end. Understanding this, the different national liberation movements will turn to their own members in basic industry and start pushing them for the unity of the industrial workers, getting the locomotive into action as well as the golf cart.

8. *Developing the procedures for the intermittent caucusing by themselves and then reporting to each other that permits the establishment of unity among all oppressed groups.*

The technique of separate meetings for discussion, coming together to listen to each other with respect, and then developing unity is a powerful tool. It works with all kinds of oppressions.

9. *Creating the perpetually-rediscussed-and-revised-draft-policy procedure for assisting each group of oppressed people to work out their own program out of their own experiences.*

Writing a first draft, sending it out for revision, bringing it back, redrafting it, sending it out again for revision—as a continual process—is a tremendous tool for allowing the real thinking of people to come forward. It’s very powerful and has tremendous use everywhere.

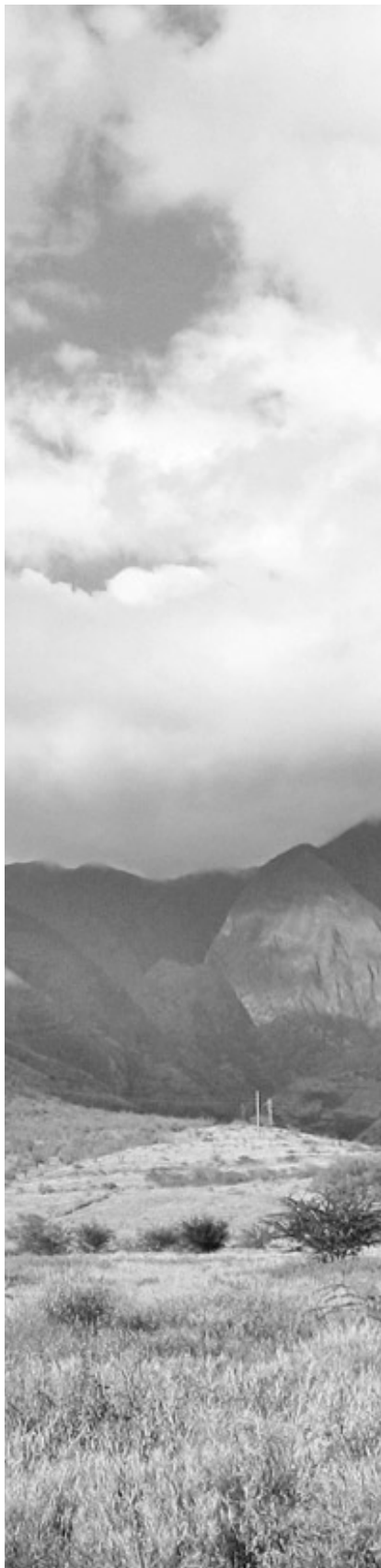
You never have a finished program. You put together a program for the liberation of each group the best you can and constantly revise it. I’ve written a lot of them, even though I’m not a member of the particular oppressed group. (Here we get a glimpse of how the person outside of the internalized oppression can be helpful.)

10. *Realizing the necessarily basic character of one-to-one communication.*

You cannot replace it, no matter how much your fears, timidities, and embarrassments would like to write leaflets and scatter them from airplanes. The only thing that works is one-to-one, eyeball-to-eyeball, nose-to-nose, knee-to-knee, discharge-to-discharge communication.

11. *A rational theory of leadership.*

See the pamphlet *The Enjoyment of Leadership*.



DIANE SHISK

BLCD News Flash!

News Flash: BLCD* has many feet—walking and running.

News Flash: BLCD has wings—has been seen flying high, sharing support, sprouting liberation!

MY! Oh my, oh my, oh my!

I write to tell you—I cried all the way through East Coast BLCD. I cried as I got the reports about West Coast BLCD.

I got texts and photos and videos and news flashes from Midwest/Mid South BLCD, led by Cliff Jones. Apparently it was outrageously awesome.

Somebody said, “I don’t know how to tell Barbara that this was the best BLCD ever!” I said, “Tell that person that this is as it should be. Every BLCD is supposed to

be better than the last.” And so it seems that BLCD is happening in just that fashion.

Alysia (Tate) told East Coast folks, “You might have noticed that I am not Barbara Love.” They laughed. They had indeed noticed. She said, “No, I am not Barbara Love. I am Alysia Tate. There is only one Barbara Love, and that is good. BLCD doesn’t need another Barbara Love. BLCD needs Alysia Tate and you and you.” They understood her point. They were totally with her, and they rose up into a powerful and transformative BLCD.

Olivia (Vincenti) walked into West Coast BLCD full of power, energy, brilliant thinking, and encouragement. She pulled the group into “a step-by-step painting of an eloquent picture of re-emergence and liberation.”

[Fela Barclift will be leading the BLCD for Europe at the end of October 2016.]

* BLCD stands for the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshops—RC workshops for African-heritage people, held annually for the last thirty years. Until 2004 there was one workshop each year, led by Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People. Beginning in 2004 there was an International BLCD every third year, led by Barbara Love, and Regional BLCDs in the intervening two years, led by Rudy Nickens, Rachel Noble, Waveney Richards, and Dorann Van Heeswijk. This year a new team—Fela Barclift, Cliff Jones, Alysia Tate, and Olivia Vincenti—began leading the Regional workshops.



Barbara Love
International Liberation Reference
Person for African-Heritage People
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of African-heritage people

A new CD

The Importance of Harvey Jackins

(CD # 1005)

Six RC leaders who knew Harvey Jackins well talk about what he meant to them. Their comments capture some of Harvey’s unique strengths and lovable ways. Their love and respect for him shine in their words. They bring Harvey to life.

We get a glimpse of a working-class man who gave his all to human re-emergence and liberation. We can see the key role he played in the development of (probably the existence of) the RC liberation constituencies these leaders represent. Don’t miss this lively “portrait” of Harvey—and of the profound and encouraging benign reality that he embodied.

\$10.00, plus postage and handling
Ordering information on page 110

This CD will be included in the upcoming Teacher Packet.

Introducing RC to a Group of Kenyan Women

I have been slowly building a group of women, and now there are ten of us. We meet weekly, every Friday. Because we cannot afford to meet elsewhere, we rotate meeting in each other's homes. Many of the women are realizing that we can reach out to each other, address our needs, and heal our wounds.

During our meetings we each share our "new and good" from the past week and occasionally I share a bit of RC theory, drawing from my own personal experiences. At one of the meetings I shared my story while using the group's attention to discharge. They could not understand and initially attempted to calm me down. I kept sobbing and continuing to talk. Then I gave each of them an opportunity to tell her own story. At the end of the morning, I asked them to Co-Counsel with each other.

Some of the group members have been struggling with the loss of loved ones, terminal illness, resentment, and anger. We came together initially to help each other share and understand these specific challenges. But later many of the women became aware of the grief hidden in all our traumatic experiences. Now they have started to see how powerful Co-Counseling is. This has had quite an impact not only on them but also on their families.

The mothers say their children are noticing that something is happening. The mothers are better listeners and are opening up and reaching out to their children. One of the sick ladies is allowing herself to discharge about her illness, and her health has improved tremendously. She is able to sit and stand up, walk around, and

even dance, and she loves it. We are all greatly encouraged by her wellness.

Wanjiku Kironyo (the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa and East Africa) and some other Kenyan RC leaders attended our last meeting. They shared more about RC, with special emphasis on colonialism, sexism, and male domination. The women in the group participated actively in the discussions and agreed that they would like to learn much more about RC. In my opinion, they are ready to start fundamentals classes.

How wonderful it is to continue exploring new ways of sharing RC. I am forever happy and grateful to be an RCer in Africa.

Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi
Nairobi, Kenya

Reach for the Great Majority—the Working Class



STEVE BANBURY

I don't know what it's like in the Netherlands,* but in U.S. cities, the classes and support groups that our largely middle-class leadership has organized are too difficult for working-class people to come to. Middle-class people have the slack and the resources to get to class Thursday night at 7:30 every week. People who are still working with their hands have too many crises every week to get there every Thursday night.

But if you have a Saturday class once a month, with your best teacher leading it, and a very small fee that people are welcome to skip if they want to, and some milk and apple juice and some jam and bread for lunch if they forgot their lunch, and if you have a simple agenda, working-class people who have heard about or experienced RC will make great efforts to get there once a month.

Now if they come and you say to them, "But you haven't had a fundamentals class," or if you offer them only herb teas to drink, they won't come back. I wouldn't either. But if we give up our funny little mannerisms from the counter-culture movement and from our middle-class backgrounds, working-class people will surge into RC, will take over RC, and it will be a better RC for all of us when they do.

Harvey Jackins
From *A Better World*, pages 20 to 21

* Harvey was speaking at a workshop in the Netherlands.

Leveraging Our Projects; Fighting for Z—

As I have gained more experience in RC, I have become increasingly aware of the limits of our resource at this moment in history.

It has always been easy for me to notice the goodness of people, and our very hopeful potential. What has been more difficult is to take a hard look at distresses and evaluate them in terms of how they operate in the present, for now, until they are discharged. I am learning how to judge the amount of resource we have at a particular moment in relation to the size of the distresses with which we are contending. As an RC leader, I am attempting to be more strategic in the use of our resource.

Last year a dear leader in our small local RC Community got overwhelmed by her distresses and was admitted to a “mental hospital.” I will call her Z—. Very quickly, it became clear to Z— and to the RCers close to her that she had become entangled in a part of the “mental health” system that was oppressive and dangerous to her. Her family members reached a similar conclusion not long after we did.

Our small Community needed to figure out to what extent we would attempt to intervene, and how. As Area Reference Person, I was far enough along in my own work on developing judgment and being strategic that I had the presence of mind to *not* put on a superhero cape and fly in to save her but rather to discharge and think.

What I decided was that Z— was important enough to enough of us, and that we had enough resource, to take this on [undertake this]. I knew it would be a challenge, because in addition to Z—’s and our own distresses, we were dealing with “mental health” oppression and the actual “mental health” system. Nonetheless, the project needed to do double duty: it had to both fight for Z— *and* build our Community.

In my experience, taking on the project of providing resource to someone in a big crisis has often resulted in the Co-Counselors involved getting burned out and hitting a tipping point at which they begin to dread contact with the person and eventually pull back on the relationship. They are unable to keep up with the



DAMIEN COOK

demands of the situation and to discharge on all the restimulations that come up, whether they be from the content of the crisis (hospitals, illness, family members who are not Co-Counselors, death, and so on) or from the giving of one-way time. I was determined that *if* we were going to take this project on, that would *not* be the result.

Rather, we would come out of it stronger, more in contact with each other, and with cleaner relationships and more experience. To that end, I set out these goals:

- To give Z— a hand (some help) by becoming more strategic counselors of her
- To build our knowledge about the “mental health” system and “mental health” oppression and liberation
- To build slack in the area of “mental health” liberation
- To learn how to work as a team
- To become closer to each other

We would need to commit to discharging, so there would be no residual sludge from our work. I reminded us that Z— would have to fight for herself, that we did not have control over that part of the fight, that our efforts might not reap the outcome we wanted, and that we would have to discharge on the possibility that she might not make it [succeed]. The definition of success would have to be that we gave her the opportunity to use the resource we could offer, that we learned a lot, and that we became a stronger team.

I asked Z— for permission to form a team to think together about her, and she gave us that permission.

Then I led a class in which people could consider the project, discharge about it, and decide on whether they wanted to be on the team. I was transparent about my thinking, including the goals and what I saw as potential pitfalls. I emphasized that it was a choice to participate, not a requirement, and encouraged each person to take into account the distresses and resources she or he had at the time.

continued . . .

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

Four of us chose to participate, which was enough to form a strong team and to move forward. We figured out what kind of time and attention we each could contribute, and two more Co-Counselors, who had long-standing relationships with Z— but lived three time zones away, also joined the team.

I checked my thinking with my Regional Reference Person and set some policies for the team:

No one would go in alone. As much as possible, two of us would go together into the “mental hospital” and into the sessions with Z—. We would have mini-sessions with each other before and after each contact with her.

We would make a commitment to discharge any residual feelings, so that our relationships with each other and with Z— would become closer than ever.

We would meet as a whole team to think about Z—. I would lead the team. We would do mini-sessions, share “news and goods,” and each give an update on the current situation from our perspective: how we saw Z— as client, how she was doing as counselor, what seemed to be working in her sessions, what was happening in terms of the “mental hospital” and the family. Then we would take a turn to discharge.

We would establish a lead counselor of Z—, who would lead the contact with her and her family. We would coordinate our efforts with that person and keep him or her updated on each contact.



KOLKATA, INDIA • MAURA FALLON

We would require two-way sessions. It looked to me like Z—’s early distress included a large dose of helplessness. Because of how the “mental health” system often colludes with that distress, we would only do two-way time with Z—, no matter how much it felt like she could not get her attention out and be counselor. The tone would be one of high expectations of her ability to do it.

With those policies in place, we dove in. A particular challenge was that our team had to interact with Z—, her family and friends, and the “mental health” system much more directly than we typically do in an RC relationship. This meant that we had to be exceptionally thoughtful about RC’s no-socializing policy. We also did not have the resource to provide all of the sessions and real-life support Z— needed to win her battle. We strategized with her and her family about how to pull in other resource—staying mindful of our role as Co-Counselors, giving people the space to discharge and think, and not taking over (assuming control) or making the decisions.

In the most acute phases of the project, we met as a team about once a week, sometimes by phone and sometimes in person. We were able to keep discharging, thinking, and handling the challenges, and the project went well.

Z— was able to use the resource we offered, as well as other resource, and make the essential decision to fight for herself. Then she fought hard, with everything she had. She got herself out of the hospital and then into and through a more humane treatment program. She then strategized with her therapist to find and gain the support of a new psychiatrist who would help her get off of all psychiatric medications, which she then did. What a victory! What an honor to have been part of her journey!

When Z— came back to our Area, we met as a team with her. She shared her goals and plans, both for her re-emergence and for building her life. She talked about the distresses she was tackling and what directions were working for her, and I counseled her in the group. Then we on the team discharged and shared our thinking with each other. Despite Z— really struggling sometimes to be counselor (she would fall asleep in sessions), we maintained our expectation that she would be an excellent counselor in each and every session.

After Z— was back in the Community, the team met every few months, because, in my judgment, neither the early chronic distresses that had pulled Z— into the “mental health” system nor our own restimulations had been thoroughly discharged.

At this point, it looks to me like we are all in good contact with each other. A next step for us as a team would be to consolidate everything we have learned in this project and perhaps make a written record of it, as a vehicle for capturing our knowledge. This article is one step in that direction.

Z— is doing well. She has been participating fully in our Community for over a year and is continuing to fight for her re-emergence. She is steadily chipping away at her early distresses and is increasingly able to hold on to an accurate perspective about reality. Outside of counseling, she has had a host of victories and continues to create an even fuller, stronger life for herself than she had before the crisis. As we have

witnessed her decision to fight, her determination, and her repeated effort to decide, act, and discharge, she has become an inspiration for all of us.

As for the project, I think the bigger picture here is not specific to the “mental health” system or a particular crisis. At this point in history when, in relation to the size of the project of ending oppression and sustaining all life, our numbers and resources are still small, it makes sense to leverage everything we do toward building our capacity—our capacity to work as a team, to take on a project, to discharge fully, to gain slack in tricky areas, to think about each other, to build relationships, and to build knowledge together.

Anonymous
USA

Winners against Racism

I recently attended a teenage workshop for the Nordic countries. We were ten People of the Global Majority (PGM)—four teenagers and six adults. It was the first time we had such a big group of PGM. Twenty-eight people were white. I came as an ally to support the relationships between the teenagers and their parents.

I soon saw that racism was playing out among the teenagers—competition, going silent, and so on. I pointed this out to another PGM adult. Afterward I went and talked to the leaders’ team (five people, all white). I noticed that I didn’t need to care take of the white leaders’ feelings as much as usual. But I was scared. My legs were shaking. There were two things I didn’t dare to say.

The following morning I told the leaders’ team that I wanted to talk to them again, and I addressed the things I hadn’t mentioned before. They followed my suggestions, which were as follows:

1) I suggested that we have physical counseling sessions and fight for ourselves, which is how we can fight for other people. I talked to the women and said I wanted us to reach our voices as women, trust our thinking, think well about the other women, and deepen our connections. We split up into two groups, with the PGM women in one room and white women in another. (The men met separately for their physical counseling sessions.)

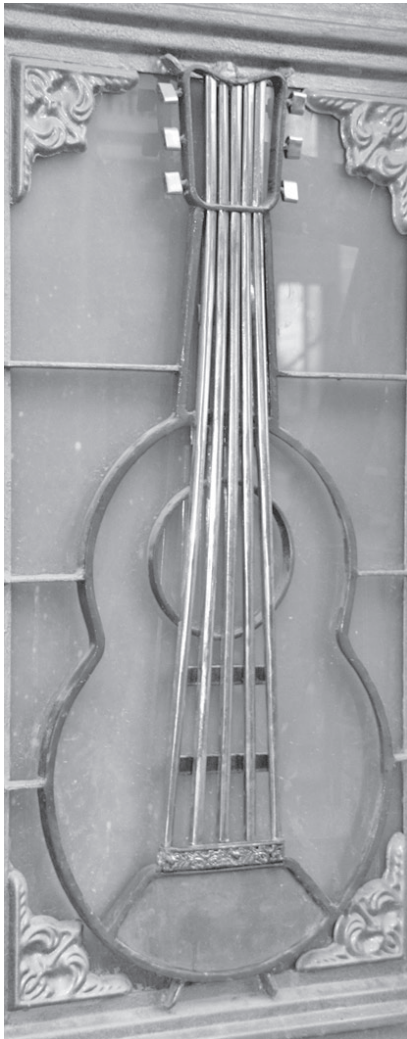
2) A PGM supported me as I pointed out that racism needed to be addressed by the whole group. I explained how racism was playing out at the workshop and described its effects on the PGM—being silenced, backing away from what we wanted, and feeling discouraged.

These two initiatives made a huge difference for the relationships between the PGM teenagers and the white teenagers, as well as for the adults’ relationships. We all got much closer. The PGM teenagers immediately occupied more space.

I am proud that I trusted my mind, shared my thinking, and did not let internalized racism silence me.

I also met with the PGM adults several times to build closer bonds. Most of us have known each other for many years. I realized that our relationships have reached the point where internalized racism can no longer split us apart. We are invincible. We are winners against racism. I’m proud that the PGM teenagers get to see that we can fight our way through the internalized racism. We have each other.

Sujata Maini
Stockholm, Sweden
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of South, Central,
and West Asian-heritage people



LYNDALL KATZ

A Community Takes Root

On Friday, June 24, 2016, Chioma Okonkwo (the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria) and I left Lagos at 5:00 a.m. for Akungba, to keep a date with history. That day the first RC Community in Ondo State, Nigeria, would be inaugurated—bringing to fruition the sustained efforts of the contact person, Adekunle Akinola, which began in 2015 after his encounter in Paris, France, with the Sustaining All Life delegation.*

When we arrived, we received a warm and loving reception. Though skeptical, the participants were eager to know more about RC.

The next morning we began with a beautiful game of ball throwing, which calmed nerves and restored confidence. We progressed with teachings on basic RC theory, the art of listening, the counselor-client relationship, and confidentiality, as well as information about Sustaining All Life.

The participants asked questions and appreciated the opportunity to be at the workshop. Many expressed a desire to attend RC classes. Adekunle, the contact person, showed so much zeal and passion for RC.

My appreciation to Chioma, who led the workshop. Her deep commitment to RC has been of immense benefit to the RC Community in Nigeria.

Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Area Reference Person for
North Central Lagos, Nigeria
Lagos, Nigeria

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for Area Reference Persons

* Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities in which Co-Counselors bring what we've learned in RC to people working to stop climate change, the degradation of the environment, and environmental injustice. In December 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during the United Nations conference on climate change.

Please take a look at the lists in the back of this *Present Time* and let us know if you find any inaccuracies. You can send corrections to <publications@rc.org> or to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

Thanks very much!
Rational Island Publishers

Trust your own thinking. Other people's thinking can be important *information* for you, but only your own thinking is thinking *for you*.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*,
page 210



KK

Our Community Response to Current Events

It has been a hard couple of weeks in my country (the United States) and in the world.

A young adult Afghan American massacred fifty mostly Latinas and Latinos in a Gay nightclub in Florida (USA).

Then, at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, several attacks occurred in Turkey, Iraq, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia, killing hundreds.

Meanwhile, one of the U.S. candidates for president is openly calling for a ban on Muslim immigration.

In various U.S. cities, police killed more African-heritage men. Some of these killings were videoed, and the videos circulated widely.

At a protest against the killings of African-heritage men, in Dallas, Texas (USA), a young adult African-heritage U.S. Army veteran shot and killed five police officers and wounded others. Then police killed him with an explosive-armed robot.

In my Region, I have the job of coordinating “Rapid Response” gather-ins at which Community members can come together and discharge about world events. Consulting closely with my Regional Reference Person, Mary Ruth Gross, we try to quickly plan a gather-in when we think our Community needs a chance to discharge on some recent event in the world.

We held such a gather-in for LGBTQ people and allies a couple of days after the massacre in Florida. We were organizing another after the Ramadan bombings, when more police shootings of African-heritage men occurred, followed by the shooting of the police in Dallas and the killing of the shooter. So we updated our gather-in, inviting Community members to come together and discharge on any or all of these violent events. My Area Reference Person, Gail Mandella, led the exceptionally powerful evening on very short notice. About fourteen people attended, from all the nearby Areas in our Region.

Gail started by talking about violence early in our lives and how, if not discharged, early experiences of violence affect our current response to violence in the wide world. There were two demonstrations, followed by constituency groups meeting separately. I led the white Jews. Other groups were for People of the Global Majority and Indigenous people and for immigrants.

Then Gail talked about how the genocide of Native people and the enslavement of Africans were the context for much of the current violence. She talked about the history

of the oppression of African-heritage people in the United States, about African-heritage men being “targeted for destruction,” and about the Black Lives Matter movement (a national movement to change the way U.S. police treat African-heritage people). This was followed by meetings of the same constituency groups as earlier.

Last, Gail spoke about the bombings during Ramadan and the increasing anti-Muslim oppression in the United States. She described how the Ramadan attacks, anti-Muslim oppression, and the U.S. role in wars in Western Asia, particularly Iraq, were connected. She then did a demonstration with a Muslim woman. This was followed by mini-sessions.

All in two hours!

As invariably happens with these Rapid Response gather-ins, I left lighter hearted, thinking more clearly, and more aware of my human connections.

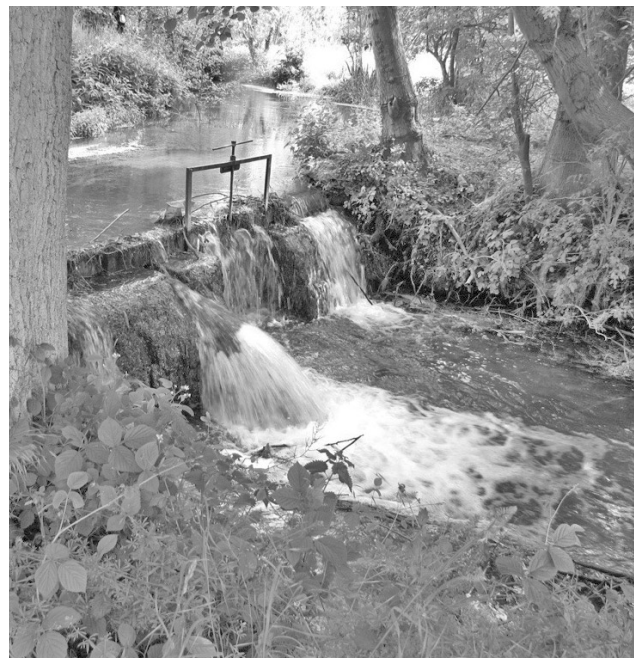
In these times we have each other, and a dependable method for assisting each other to handle the challenges that reality is placing before us.

How have you been responding in your RC Community to recent events?

Glen Hauer

Berkeley, California, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



GIVERNY, FRANCE • ALAN EPSTEIN

Acknowledgement of Country

I want to share a wide-world practice, Acknowledgement of Country, that is becoming more common in Australian RC.

The British colonized Australia in 1788. However, all areas of Australia have always had Traditional Owners ("Traditional" refers to what is determined by Aboriginal culture and law) irrespective of Government legislation, and this includes where major cities stand today.

Acknowledgement of Country is a way for non-Aboriginal people to show their respect for the Traditional Owners of the land on which a meeting or an event is being held. It is also a way to recognise Aboriginal people's continuing connection to their Country. ("Country" refers to the landscape; grounds; skies; water; living things, including humans; and any natural phenomena that occur on that land.)

More RC leaders are putting aside time for this at the beginning of an RC meeting. They may say something like, "I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the Traditional Land of the (appropriate group name) people and pay my respect to the elders, both past and present." Sometimes they research and add information about the

Aboriginal groups who lived or still live there—for example, where tribal boundaries ran, or run, and who the Aboriginal people were/are, what kind of lives they led/lead, or what languages they spoke/speak. I always love to listen to this and learn more about the place.

The acknowledgement is sometimes followed by a mini-session. Questions people can answer may include "How are you benefitting from the genocide of Indigenous people?" and "Where did your people come from?" The one I like thinking about most is "How do you feel about being a part of the culture and society that have continued to exist for over seventy thousand years?" I get overwhelming feelings of both privilege and humility and usually discharge hard. I then get fresh perspectives on my relationship to Australia and to its environment.

In the wide world, members of the local Aboriginal community are sometimes asked to lead this, and it is then called "Welcome to Country."

Rie Shiraishi

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



AMANDA MARTINEZ

They Will Get Curious about RC

A women's support group leader can say at each meeting, "Who would you like to invite to the next meeting? No, she doesn't have to be in RC; she doesn't have to know anything about RC. She just has to be someone you think would enjoy being listened to for a whole turn without being interrupted."

When this is done, any worries of the leader about "How will I teach her to discharge if she hasn't gone to a fundamentals class first?" turn out to be ridiculous. If people are listened to for their turn, without being interrupted, for one or two meetings, then at the third meeting somebody starts to cry. If the leader keeps other people from making her stop, at the next meeting two other people will have noticed that it's possible to cry in the group, and three people will cry. They will get curious about RC, particularly if there is literature there at the support group meeting that they can buy, and they will ask if there is a class that they can attend. You will never have to go around pleading with people to come to your class.

Harvey Jackins

From *A Better World*, page 19

A Week in El Salvador

I got back to Los Angeles (California, USA) last night after a week of RC in El Salvador. Things went even better than they did last year.

Rolando picked me up from the airport, as he has for my last two visits. He is a part-time mechanic, driver, and event organizer (weddings, parties, and so on) who has provided transportation to Co-Counselors for years.

Last year as we were driving, I gave him a short introduction to RC and we had a mini-session. He laughed about my timer but seemed not to mind, and I was encouraged by the interest he showed in Co-Counseling. Later I wondered if he had tried RC out of courtesy to me and if I had pushed him to do something he hadn't really wanted to do.

This year, after leaving the airport, he and I did another mini-session in the car and talked more about RC ideas. I gave him a copy of *Cómo Dar a Los Niños Una Ventaja Emocional* (*How to Give Children an Emotional Head Start*). Rolando is the father of a four-year-old. He seemed pleased about our RC mini-class and mini-session, and we confirmed plans to do some sightseeing during the coming week.

Later I met with a second friend, C—, and did a mini-session—the first of seven we did during the week. (It was challenging to find time in people's lives for long sessions, so we did the best we could with minis.)

On Saturday afternoon, I went to the hostel where Lorena (María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán) teaches her classes. There I led a half-day



PAM ROBY

men's workshop with a group of guys Lorena has brought together. They seemed committed to learning RC and did a good job of keeping each other laughing. We spent the first hour on introductions and discharging on our family and personal histories, which the men appreciated. The second part was on the good human nature of men and on our relationships, followed by turns discharging on positive early memories of men in our lives. Next we talked about men's oppression and liberation, the ways we're conditioned as boys in an oppressive society, and the institutions of men's oppression. Then we did another round of discharge turns. The last part was on building an alliance between women and men to end sexism, male domination, and all oppression, again with discharge time. I was impressed by how brave these men are. They stand up against sexism and male domination despite the reactions they get from other men.

On Sunday, Lorena led an all-day workshop for her whole class, with me as an assistant. At one point I mentioned closeness as a key contradiction to distress and talked about a direction I'd been using in sessions: "It's possible that you love me (as much as I love you)." Lorena then suggested that she and I use my direction in a demonstration on closeness in our long-term relationship. It was very alive, with lots of discharge for everyone. After that she organized people into two discharge groups and encouraged everyone to try the direction.

At least one of the women and two of the men were able to discharge tears—for the first time in six months of classes.

After lunch Lorena suggested that I lead the afternoon class, so people could have access to another leadership style. The workshop was the last meeting of six months of classes, and she wanted people to think of RC as a long-term process. So I focused on RC's long-range vision of human liberation, including both personal re-emergence and the need for social activism outside of RC.

I did a demonstration with one of the women on the idea of having a committed Co-Counseling relationship with someone for the rest of her life. Both she and others discharged when they heard this idea. I explained that a commitment was not an obligation—that it meant not letting restimulations interfere with the relationship, and that it needed to be intelligent and flexible. We

continued . . .



LONGWOOD GARDENS, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • SUE EDWARDS

... continued

also worked on each person being in charge of her or his universe and on the necessity of long-range goals.

We ended by reading the 2013 environment goal* in Spanish and having a mini-session. I distributed ten Spanish versions of the *Sustaining All Life* pamphlet plus five copies of *El Varón* (*The Human Male*).

People were pleased with the work we did, and most seemed ready to sign up for an ongoing class.

On Monday morning, Rolando and I drove up into the hills above San Salvador to see the view from

* A goal adopted at the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities:

That members of the RC Community work to become fully aware of the rapid and unceasing destruction of the living environment of the Earth. That we discharge on any distress that inhibits our becoming fully aware of this situation and taking all necessary actions to restore and preserve our environment.

Distresses have driven people to use oppression against each other and carry out destructive policies against all of the world. A full solution will require the ending of divisions between people and therefore the ending of all oppressions.

The restoration and preservation of the environment must take precedence over any group of humans having material advantage over others. We can and must recover from any distress that drives us to destroy the environment in our attempts to escape from never-ending feelings of needing more resource.

Los Planes de Renderos and La Puerta del Diablo, two beautiful natural areas surrounded by coffee fields and orange groves. The view of the city was stunning. Rolando answered my questions about the poor and working-class neighborhoods and the *maquiladoras* (assembly plants), the labor unions, an Indigenous town where people still speak their language (Pipil), the economic oppression, and the environmental issues. I learned that the minimum wage is \$4.00 to \$6.00 (U.S.) per day for most working-class jobs, while prices in the stores are almost comparable to those in the United States. The water system is largely contaminated, and many people can't afford bottled water.

Later I taught more RC to Rolando at a *pupusería* (restaurant with traditional Salvadoran food). It was a pleasant setting—good for keeping attention off distress. Rolando grasped the significance of the theory, related it to his own experiences, and talked about its implications. On the way back to the city, I learned that he'd already started teaching a friend the basic ideas. There is something especially inspiring to me about connecting with people from groups underrepresented in RC who are far from organized Communities

and seeing their minds light up about our theory and practice. By the end of the morning, it was clear that Rolando and I had become friends and Co-Counselors.

On Tuesday, my friend C— and I went to a rural area outside the capital to spend time with his family. I had met them last year, and once again we had long conversations. This year they shared more openly, including about their experiences during the civil war of the 1980s and early 1990s. They also described how climate change is disrupting the seasonal cycles that farmers count on and creating even more hardship in terms of food dependability.

The next day, C—, Rolando, and I drove through beautiful green coffee fields and *milpas* (corn fields) to Lake Coatepeque, considered by some to be the eighth wonder of the world. It is an enormous lake, formed when a volcano collapsed. I had thought that we might have a three-way session. Although it didn't work out this time, C— and Rolando talked a lot on the trip and seemed to feel more and more comfortable with each other.

After we got back, C— and I went to the movies in an affluent mall in San Salvador. The impoverished parts of the country and the relatively wealthy areas often seem like two different universes.

I spent my last day and a half doing mini-sessions and preparing to return home. On the way to the airport, Rolando told me how happy he was to have found RC and how it had the potential to transform his country. We will be staying in touch by e-mail. He said I could mention him by name and gave permission to use any of the photos he took during the week.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

RC in the Czech Republic

I was born and raised in the Czech Republic, and five years ago I connected with Co-Counseling here in the United States. After finding out there were no Co-Counseling resources back home, I was inspired to make RC available. With the support and encouragement of my RC teacher and the RC headquarters, I was able to bring this dream to fruition. In May, Jacek Strzemieczny, the Regional Reference for Poland, came to Prague to lead an evening presentation and a one-day workshop.

My friend who's a local therapist and I were able to reach out to our friends' and clients' networks. Fifteen people came to the evening introduction, and twelve participated in the daylong workshop the following day. Jacek presented in English, while I translated into my mother tongue.

Some things resonated especially well with these Czech people: the impact of oppression on citizens who grew up in a communist totalitarian regime, women's and men's oppression, our basic goodness, the importance of connection, and holding a respectful space for each other's emotions.

Participants had a chance to experience discharge and notice relief from sharing their feelings while being safely connected. Jacek's humor and vulnerability created an atmosphere that invited laughter and tears, from people who were strangers just a few hours before.

Many people stayed after the workshop and asked questions—for example, about using RC with children and managing overwhelming emotions. It was a pleasure to witness my country-people connecting with RC principles and fully experiencing their feelings.

Since the workshop a small group of folks have met a few times to exchange sessions, and three of them occasionally Co-Counsel with me via Skype. Jacek was encouraged by the interest in Co-Counseling and expressed a desire to come back and lead more classes. Special thanks to the Seattle (USA) RC headquarters for supporting this project by paying for Jacek's transportation.

Marek Tresnak
Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, USA



CHUCK ESSER

The RC Teacher as "Literature Agent"



The RC teacher is, of necessity, *the basic* literature agent. The students in the class are eager to become acquainted with the richesses of RC theory. When the sample copies included in the Teachers' Packet are passed around in the class and orders are taken, it can greatly enhance the students' learning and multiply the effectiveness of the teacher's work. To not do this is to allow a block to be in the way of the students' progress. They are not likely to be urged toward or reminded of RC literature in any other context.

Harvey Jackins
From *A Better World*, page 309

Working on Violence

I am a white Protestant working-class USer, born and raised in the southern part of the United States. I am also the Area Reference Person for a small Community in North Carolina, USA. The following is my experience with working on violence at an Area workshop.

I chose the topic of violence because I believe that acts of violence will continue as capitalism continues to collapse. This summer we have witnessed many violent events. They can leave us feeling terrified and helpless. We need to discharge systematically on violence, so we can keep thinking and help others keep thinking.

I chose the topic of violence because I believe that acts of violence will continue as capitalism continues to collapse.

First we focused on our relationships with one another. To discharge fears and other difficult things, we need good connection with each other. Then I asked people how capitalism and the recent violence have affected them. We did long three-way sessions and many mini-sessions.

After lunch we had a class on confronting violence. We started with long mini-sessions on the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of African people. The United States was built on genocide and slavery. Violence has been part of the culture of the United States since its very beginnings.

A second long mini-session focused on how African-heritage men are being targeted with massive violence and how this, too, has been part of U.S. society since its beginning.

I shared that all oppressions are enforced with violence or the threat of violence. Sometimes there are acts of violence that are clear and easy to identify. Sometimes there are threats

of violence that are more implicit—a harsh tone of voice, a stern grab on the shoulder, and so on. I counseled two people in front of the group and asked them, “Where was the violence in your life?” Then we had three-way sessions in which everyone had twenty minutes to discharge.

Afterward we played together during a break and then had a short class on hope. I talked about developing hopeful perspectives and discharging on early discouragements, so we can remain hopeful. Hope is a revolutionary stance that helps other people fight discouragement too.

I asked people to think about people and things in their lives that bring them joy. We need good places to put our attention when we are not in a session. It is good practice to notice and remember things around us that are hopeful and human.

Rachel Winters
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



SNOQUALMIE PASS, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN



MATT WEATHERFORD

The closer we are to ourselves and each other, the harder it is for the society (or anyone or any situation) to manipulate us into oppressing each other. This thought gives me lots of hope.

Eeva Hämäläinen
Helsinki, Finland

The 2016-2017 Pre-World and World Conferences

AFRICA

November 18-21, 2016
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria
Organizer: Chioma Okonkwo
+234-8023-108-536,
chioks4@yahoo.com

EAST ASIA

February 23-26, 2017
Beijing, China
Organizer: Ma Lihong
+86-13552670282,
rcmalihong@163.com

EASTERN EUROPE AND ISRAEL

May 19-22, 2017
Warsaw, Poland
Organizer: Yvonne Odrowaz-Pieniazek
+48-502-594-833,
ywoodr@yahoo.com

SOUTH ASIA

November 25-28, 2016
Pune, Maharashtra, India
Organizer: Niti Dandekar
+91-20-24352771,
dandekarniti@gmail.com

LATIN AMERICA

March 23-26, 2017
Near Santiago, Chile
Organizer: Ellen Tait
+56-998731199,
ellentait@hotmail.com

WESTERN EUROPE

May 25-28, 2017
Near Malmö, Sweden
Organizer: Fredrik Eklöf
+46-70-885-9171,
parsamtal@fredrikeklöf.se

WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA

January 13-16, 2017
Los Angeles, California, USA
Organizer: Mary Ruth Gross
+1-510-243-5934,
maryruthgross@gmail.com

CENTRAL/SOUTHERN NORTH AMERICA

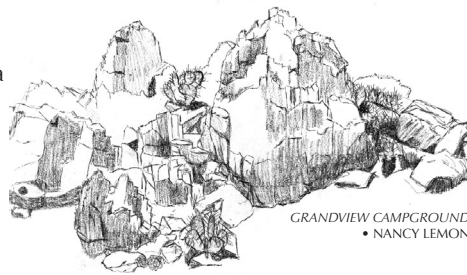
April 27-30, 2017
Near St. Louis, Missouri, USA
Organizer: Alysia Tate
+1-773-680-9767,
alytate@gmail.com

EAST COAST NORTH AMERICA

June 22-25, 2017
Near Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA
Organizer: Beth Edmonds
+1-207-865-3869,
bethedmonds@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

February 17-20, 2017
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
Organizer: Lyndall Katz
+61-4-1053-1243,
lyndallk@gmail.com



GRANDVIEW CAMPGROUND
• NANCY LEMON

WORLD CONFERENCE

August 8-13, 2017
Storrs, Connecticut, USA
Organizer: Stacey Leeds
+1-860-974-1043,
leedspechie@charter.net

From Rational Island Publishers

Sustaining All Life No. 2

Don't miss the second issue of *Sustaining All Life* (the RC journal about care of the environment)! It's filled with inspiring examples of the clear thinking and good work that Co-Counselors are doing around the world.

Consider ordering a copy now. We all need to be well informed about climate change and environmental degradation and understand the large role we can play in reversing them.

\$4.00, plus postage and handling

The pamphlet

Sustaining All Life

The RC Communities sent a delegation to the United Nations climate conference in Paris, France, November 30 to December 8, 2015. A pamphlet, *Sustaining All Life*, was created for that purpose. It gives a succinct picture of how RC theory and practice are not only useful for but essential to solving the climate crisis.

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

A Sustaining All Life T-shirt!

Support Sustaining All Life* by buying and wearing the attractive T-shirt shown in the photo below. The Sustaining All Life logo consists of images of hands placed in a flowering pattern.

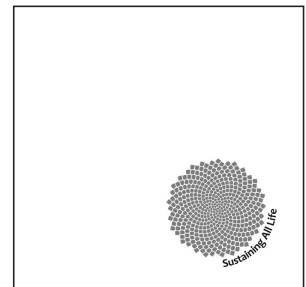
The "Morocco 2016" version is available in S, M, L, and XL. There are only a few "Paris 2015" shirts left.

\$20, plus postage and handling
(no quantity discount)

A Sustaining All Life Hankie!

To raise money for Sustaining All Life,* we are selling the beautiful handkerchief shown to the right. It measures 14 inches by 14 inches (35.5 centimeters by 35.5 centimeters) and is printed on natural-color cotton fabric. It has the Sustaining All Life logo in one corner, so it will be prominent when the hankie is folded into quarters.

\$10, plus postage and handling
(no quantity discount)



YOUNG ADULTS IN THE SUSTAINING ALL LIFE PROJECT DURING THE DECEMBER 2015 CLIMATE TALKS IN PARIS, FRANCE • ROB VENDERBOS

Ordering information on page 110

Sexism, Pornography, and War

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the European Men's Workshop in the Netherlands, November 2015

We men have distress in the way of our connecting with others. It gets in our way in several ways. It's part of sexism. Women recognize it on us. They see our struggles to actually pay attention to them. They also see the frozen fascinations most of us have with their bodies. *(laughter)* Some of us have those fascinations with men, and some of us with women and men. Such a serious topic—you sit solemnly and nod. *(more laughter)*

It's distress, like every other distress, but it's ours. However it happened, however we got hurt, it's now ours. No one else can change it but us. We know it spoils our lives, even if some parts of it seem to feel good. Certain distresses are addicting; it feels good to let them play in our minds. For most of us, sexual experiences feel good, even if we are not quite fully conscious or aware. We feel better than we felt before. *(laughter)*

But you might notice that you do the same things over and over and over again. And they don't lead anywhere. It's like you can't learn anything. But because you are addicted, that doesn't stop you from trying it again, in exactly the same way, with the same person, or with someone just like that person. If you look back at your history of the people you've had relationships with, they often have a strong similarity to each other. That probably wasn't because you were making rational choices. *(laughter)*

You sit and watch crowds of people come by, just as small children do. The children are still looking for eyes that are alive. And so are you, but you will settle for something else,

(laughter) because it might give you at least a hint of not being alone.

Most of us don't have sexual fascinations that make us want to hurt someone else. Some of us do; we got hurt that way. But for those of us who don't, the standard fantasy seems to be as follows: we don't want to hurt anybody, we don't want to be hard on anybody, but we want to find someone whose fascinations fit ours perfectly, so we can do exactly what we feel desperate to do, and they can do exactly what they feel desperate to do, and that's "happiness." *(laughter)*

Sound a little familiar?

The problem is, acting out our distresses doesn't go anywhere. Actually building a connection with someone means trying for connection and discharging on anything that pulls us to be unaware of each other. We almost never have an opportunity to do this.

What you need to do is tell somebody about your distresses around connection, closeness, and sex. You need to tell someone all the things you never told anyone, all the parts of these distresses that you've kept secret. This is important for your relationships, for your chance to have relationships, and also just for your own mind.

There's an additional reason: You are vulnerable here. You are vulnerable to other people's irrationality, to being manipulated by other people's distresses. Where you can't think, you can do stupid things. And some of them can be dangerous—to you, to your relationships.

Capitalism loves that you are vulnerable here. Capitalism makes billions upon billions of dollars because it can manipulate you in this area. The whole advertising field is aimed at your material, especially this piece of it. If you stop thinking,

continued . . .



MUIR BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA • SUSAN FREUNDLICH

LIBERATION

... continued

you'll buy things you don't need. The example I like is car shows—the beautiful cars with beautiful women leaning on them, smiling. The clear message is, you buy the car, you get the woman. You know it's not true, but you stay there. You know it doesn't work, but you can't stop being fascinated. You don't even want to think about that woman that way, but you are fascinated.

PORNOGRAPHY

The harder piece to talk about, of course, is pornography. Everybody here has seen pornography. It's pretty much unavoidable. I was around at the beginning of the Internet. When people first began putting porn out on the web, there were no filters. I would come in every morning and turn on my computer, and it would scare the hell out of me. Some mornings I would open my mail and then turn off the computer. Really harsh pornography just filled the screen, over and over again.

Because we have distresses about sex, we get fascinated. We may be vulnerable to some particular type of pornography—whether it involves women or men, young or old. These fascinations come out of our distresses. You know how often your mind gets trapped fighting that strange battle.

People like to argue that it's a private matter. "It's just me, sitting alone in front of the screen. It doesn't hurt anybody." But it corrupts all our relationships, and it confuses us about what relationships are. So we have to consider it like other addicting patterns. We get to counsel on it. We get to tell our counselors about it. We get to stop giving in to the pull to act on it. This can be a very big battle.

It's hard to find someone we dare counsel on it with. But you're going

to do it right now. We're going to do a six-minute-each-way mini-session in which you get to tell your fascinations. Whether it's just looking for that special person, or it's gotten attached to pornography, or it's just a dream you have every six months.

One more thing: It's okay that you have these distresses. I'm sorry you do, but this happens to all of us and it's nothing to be ashamed of. It is done to us by an irrational system. It's sad, but okay, that we have these distresses. It's not okay that we keep them. That's the work we are doing.

DAY-TO-DAY IRRITATIONS, AND SEXISM

I'm going to talk now about the day-to-day irritations. (*laughter*)

If you are living with a woman partner, she probably irritates you—often, in many little ways. And you hide it well—you think. (*laughter*) But it's not as if she doesn't know. And she has to interact with you anyway, knowing you are going to be irritated, especially if she interrupts you living your life. (*laughter*) Couldn't she see that you were busy? Apparently she couldn't. You know that feeling? (*laughter*) That's sexism. That's part of the daily sexism that interferes with our relationships.

You feel irritated. And you feel justified in feeling irritated. But you are mistaken in two ways: It's never correct to let your distresses get the best of you, let distresses gain control over you. You just lost a battle. And, if you're irritated, how do you know she's not right? You're irritated, so clearly you're not thinking well. Maybe she is right. Maybe the irritating thing she always does makes sense. Damn. (*laughter*)

So what do you do? You, who are sitting there in bitterness? I can tell you what I decided to do. It doesn't

work to show you are irritated. It never works to act out your distress. And it's likely to restimulate her. She knew you would be that way, and, yes, you are that way again. So what I've decided to do is to do, enthusiastically and fully, whatever it is she is asking. I don't say, "In just a minute," which she knows means, "I will do it as soon as I finish the important thing I'm doing that you did not recognize." I don't resentfully do what she's asking. I decide each time that she's right, and I try to put my full heart behind doing what she asks.

It's an interesting process. And we don't want to do it. (*laughter*) At the beginning we don't want to do it. We want to stay small and bitter and sit in the middle of our distress until it's recognized and she apologizes and makes up for it. We know that has never worked. It's where we got stuck as children. It doesn't work.

What we have command of is ourselves. We can decide to handle things differently. We can do things against the pull of our distresses. We can also decide to try hard for someone we love. At that moment we don't remember that we love her. We're lost back in our struggles. So we have to decide that we are upset, we are confused, and that we can change it.

Here's my experience: It took a few tries, (*laughter*) and now I like it. It changes everything. I get up from my desk and say, "Where is it? Where is the thing to do? Show me how you would like it done." And I go and do it happily. I can actually do it happily. It changes my whole mind. And it's been interesting watching the effect on her. She will come and ask me sooner. She doesn't have to get up her courage to face my upset. She doesn't have to get restimulated before she comes to me.

I've been talking about this in the context of a long-term relationship with a woman, because it's part of sexism; it's part of trivializing women's thinking and decisions. Of course it happens in other relationships, too, but it doesn't feed on the same oppression. If you are in a relationship with a man, you're going to have a different set of restimulations. You're still going to have restimulations. (*laughter*) But they won't tap into that particular oppression. They will tap into the oppressions involved in that relationship. If it's a Gay relationship, they will tap into the oppression aimed at Gay people.

The basic idea remains the same: to be able, at that moment, to choose the person over your restimulation. The person is always more important to you, even if you can't remember it. And each of these moments of restimulation between the two of you is an opportunity to challenge what separates you, and to reach for each other in spite of it.

The even more general statement is, every restimulation is an opportunity for progress.

WAR

There is a third thing I want to get to. As men, we are mistreated and oppressed for a purpose. To maintain an oppressive society, somebody has to be the last tool of oppression. When intimidation isn't enough, the society tries to physically oppress people. That's been our job as men. Whatever else we were trained to do, we were trained to be a weapon of oppression. We were trained to be restimulated and manipulated enough that we could hurt other people. That's what all of the fighting in childhood is about—to toughen us up. It wouldn't happen if there were no wars. War is the last desperate

attempt of oppressive societies to hang on.

We have lived in oppressive societies for a long, long time. And because we've lived in them, we have heard stories of war. My sixth-grade teacher had recently come back from war, and occasionally—he couldn't stop himself—he would have to tell the class a war story. I don't think he ever told anyone else. He had a captive audience. We would hear how horrible men could be to other men.

Many of us had relatives who talked about war when they returned, or wouldn't ever talk but the effect of war showed on them.

We need to work on how this distress came to us, because we have to stop war. And to be able to stop it, we can't stay horrified and vulnerable. We need to talk about the people we've seen who have been hurt by war. We need to talk about the stories that have been handed down in our family and from our people—old, old stories that we still feel the effect of. We get to discharge all of the hurt, so we can think about how to end war and help other people discharge about it.

This is important work. In some periods of history, it wasn't as important. In this period, it's very important. Society is collapsing, and there are and will continue to be many desperate attempts to keep it going. There will be many desperate attempts to keep people divided against each other. These attempts are all around us already. It won't get better soon. When we have enough rational people, societies will change without war. I don't think we have enough rational people yet.

This is a reason to build your RC Community. We are one of the best producers of rational minds, and in

a crisis we need as many of those minds as possible. Don't think that building the Community is a small, personal thing. It has a big implication in this period. The more we build, the less destruction will occur and the better the result will be. We can play a significant role. You can play a significant role. None of us are quite ready yet, and none of us were ever told that we could play a significant role, but we can decide to do it. Someone has to go first. It may as well be us. We can try, and find out what we can do. We need to discharge on war to be able to do that. We need to be able to fight with our full minds, without violence. That will be a new phenomenon; it will be interesting.

I once interrupted a fight between two guys. One had the more aggressive pattern. I said, "You can't do this." And he said, "Or else what?" I said, "You can't do this. There's no 'or else.'" (*laughter*) That interrupted it. Maybe it confused him, I don't know. But I think I had the right attitude—that this must stop. There is no other alternative. Progress is in that direction.

We are going in that direction. It may be hard. We may be slow. We may make mistakes. But we are going there together. We have to discharge the distresses that confuse us about that, and one of the big confusions is that in desperation we must be violent. I don't think that's true, but none of us can remember it well. So we have discharging to do so the perspective is solid in our minds.

Have fun! It should be fun. Doing hard things should be fun, because we get to move the world forward, together. I think that's what every child wants at the beginning. So we get to fulfill our childhood dreams. I'm sorry we are so late in getting to that, but let's do it now.

A South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage Support Group

Our South, Central, and West Asian-heritage support group in Los Angeles, California, USA, continues to go well. Four or five of us meet monthly.

For several months we worked on pride in our national (Canadian and USer) identities. It was hard to distinguish between pride in the human aspects of our national cultures and pride in the policies of our national states. There was some resistance to what felt like a direction to take pride in the oppressor role of our nations. Eventually I looked up the word “nation” in a dictionary and found that it basically meant a people, with a territory and government. This seemed a more workable place from which to discharge on pride in our Canadian and U.S. peoples, the history of our resistance to oppression, and the beauty of the land.

During the last few months, we worked on appreciating human aspects of South, Central, and West Asian national identities that are not our own, though we may feel a connection with them. (For example, a Muslim may feel a connection with Mecca and Saudi Arabia but not have a Saudi identity, or a Christian may feel a connection with Jerusalem and Israel/Palestine but not have an Israeli or Palestinian identity.) This was how we began working on the harder aspects of our internalized oppression as a large and varied constituency.

Just as with the work on U.S. and Canadian identities, the oppressor roles and histories came to mind and made this challenging for several of us. We struggled with distresses and stereotypes and sometimes had to discharge on those

first. But then we came back to the direction of appreciation, even if it meant simply saying that the people of a particular country were human beings. (Often our lack of knowledge showed.) Given that our support group is a mixed group, with some of us feeling connection where others might have distress, we gave each other permission to start the work the best we could, even if it wasn't done perfectly. We learned from the process and continue to have flashes of insight into what we appreciate.

At our most recent meeting, I read from the chapter “Jewish-Arab Unity” in Harvey Jackins’s book *The Benign Reality*. It’s the transcript of a talk Harvey gave at a gathering of Palestinians and Israeli Jews in Israel. We read it a page at a time, alternating with mini-sessions. It is excellent and thought provoking and was helpful to us. I recommend it.

A final thought has to do with skin color. Many of us South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people who have light skin did not inherit it (or all of it) from European ancestors. It may have been passed on to us from our light-skinned Asian ancestors. I have learned that ancient Central Asian populations had a great diversity of physical characteristics and that as they spread out to the rest of Eurasia, different characteristics dominated in different places.

We are in the early stages of finding our way toward clarity, liberation, and how to apply RC to this work.

Amin Khoury

Los Angeles, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people



KATIE KAUFFMAN

All subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. We can't send back issues as part of a new subscription, because we rely on bulk mailings to save money and it costs more to send a single copy. You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 102 and 110).



AUSTRALIA • TIM JACKINS

Hindu Heritage and Liberation

On pages 17 and 18 of the April 2016 Present Time there are several responses to some questions that were posed to Co-Counselors of Hindu heritage on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people. Here is another response:

Hello, beloved Hindu-heritage Co-Counselors! I'm thrilled to be doing this work with you.

What is your earliest memory connected to being Hindu heritage or to Hinduism?

The Hindu Temple of North America in Flushing, New York, USA. The smell of the place—in particular, coconut oil, jasmine, ghee, incense. The sound of the first bell you ring when you walk in. The sight of slippers all haphazardly piled up near the entrance.

What's been good about having Hindu heritage?

Connection and closeness with family and with women in particular, music, and a surprisingly ingrained belief that I am part of divinity. The latter has worked to contradict a lot of self-doubt.

What's been challenging?

The rise of Hindu fundamentalism and extreme intolerance in India. Learning how to discharge on my Savarna (Brahmin) history

and identity and the oppression of Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi peoples. Being influenced by Brahminical Hindu philosophy and at the same time committed to leading a secular life.

What are key aspects of your life story as a Hindu?

We were very insular Brahmin Kannadigas (people from the state of Karnataka who speak Kannada). Being in New York and then New Jersey (USA) meant that we had the option to socialize only “with our own,” and that is what my parents chose to do. I was raised completely naive about caste and the experience of Muslims and at the same time *very proud* of being Brahmin—something that never settled easily for me but that I didn't understand enough to challenge (or so I was led to believe).

We were active in temple life and helped to start a few small temples in New Jersey. Many Swamijis (supposedly learned ascetics who travel where the “flock” needs them) came through our home, including a few that overstayed their welcome and did unconscionable things to the girls and women in our household.

My mother spent a lot of her energy drilling devotional songs into us. To this day, I rely on them when I'm singing to my baby.

After college I backpacked by myself for six months around India and stayed for an extended period in an ashram in the Himalayas, which clarified some important things for me.

I did not belong to the mainstream Hindu community—with its misogyny, casteism, Islamophobia, and complicity with the neoliberal capitalist agenda—but I love the music and the inner sensations of chanting or singing in the company of believers.

What thoughts do you have about your liberation as a Hindu-heritage person and about Hindu liberation in general?

My work needs to be, first and foremost, about caste-based oppression and Savarna (caste) privilege. I also need to work on Hindu majoritarianism in India, including my own places of unawareness about Islamophobia. Hindu liberation, in general, needs to focus a lot more on colonialism and the Brahminization of mainstream Hinduism.

And I think the gears in my mind just screeched to a halt right there. Time for a mini-session!



Surabhi Kukke
Austin, Texas, USA

What Class Am I?

Some mixed-class workshops are coming up at which we may at some point divide into separate groups based on the labels “raised poor,” “working class,” “middle class,” and “owning class.” A person may have to decide which group to go to, which label best fits their experience. People are asking, “What class am I?” There is no correct answer.

The four categories above describe general roles assigned to us in a class society, but they only approximately describe any one person’s experience. Many of us have influences from several of them, and we may at different times go to different groups to look at each one.

It is most useful to talk about our *experience* of class oppression. The question I use in classes on “class” is “What is your connection to the working class?” (I described this in my article “A Useful Format for Working on Class Oppression,” on page 47 of the October 1996 *Present Time*.) Every RCer has an answer to this question. It is also useful for people who are not Co-Counselors. Some RCers were raised in economic systems outside of capitalism, but this question works for them too.

Genocide, racism, anti-Jewish oppression, sexism, war, immigration, “mental health” oppression, Gay oppression, disability oppression, and many other factors contribute to our experience of class oppression. It is good to talk about all of these. They cannot be separated from questions about class.

The important thing is for each of us to tell our story, independent of labels, and to discharge on the strengths and hurts associated with it.

When there is time, such as at a weekend workshop, it is good to avoid the general labels and set up support groups of four to six people with similar, more specific class backgrounds. Some examples are “raised middle class but downwardly mobile through divorce,” “mixed and confused children of Asian immigrants,” and “raised rural working class.”

My proposed “Initiative on Ending Classism” (see page 8 of the July 2014 *Present Time*) asks people in the RC Community to focus their discharging and thinking on a particular sector of the working class—one that plays a key strategic role in the economic system. I define it as “people engaged in the direct production of goods and services.” This sector’s labor directly creates the wealth that all other people in the class system depend on. It is also the sector least represented in RC, despite its being the largest sector of the working class in the world. In my article I list other strategic reasons for focusing on this group.

Most RCers live in the United States, a country that plays an oppressor role economically in the worldwide system of capitalism. So even though we as USers might be working class or poor, we need to discharge and think about our oppressor distress as USers and not just about how we have been or are oppressed.

Our class background does not in any way inherently limit the role we can play in ending classism. Each class has its strengths and liabilities. We can develop the strengths we have from our experience and discharge whatever prevents us from playing a useful role.

Please keep sharing your experiences with and questions about moving against classism.

Dan Nickerson
*International Liberation Reference
 Person for Working-Class People*
 Freeport, Maine, USA
 Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
 list for RC Community members

Guidelines for People of the Global Majority Attending RC Workshops

Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People;
reprinted from *Black Re-emergence* No.12

The participation of People of the Global Majority (PGM) in all aspects of RC has continued to blossom and grow. PGM are involved in all aspects of constituency work, are leading at the Area (ARPs), Regional (RRPs) and International (ILRPs) levels, and are leading various dimensions of the liberation work such as family work, large women's work, men's work, and so on. Our understanding of internalized racism and its effects on us and on our relationships continues to grow. One place where we have put some attention lately has been on increasing the effect of our participation in RC workshops.

For many years, PGM complained that they spent their time at many RC workshops focusing on discharging on the racism that they encountered at the workshop rather on the focus of the workshop. While many workshop leaders include early morning groups discharging on racism, and most workshop leaders spend some time talking about and working on racism as part of the workshop, the individual acts and experiences of unaware racism kept many PGM from being able to gain full benefit from many workshops.

One strategy in response to this dilemma has been to have workshop leaders spend time meeting with PGM prior to the workshop to discharge and prepare for participation in the workshop. This has been beneficial to those who have participated in those pre-workshop days or evenings. At the same time, it has meant that PGM have to spend extra funds to participate in a pre-workshop to prepare them to withstand the racism that they will face as participants in the workshop.

A second strategy has been to identify some of the specific ways that racism shows up at RC workshops, discharge about those specific manifestations of racism, and develop strategies to interrupt and counteract those specific manifestations of racism.

One benefit of this analysis has been our ability to notice that in every case where we complain and feel bad about the racism that is targeted toward us, we see the evidence of how that racism has been internalized and keeps us from acting powerfully on our own behalf. We developed strategies for acting to interrupt racism directed toward us at RC workshops.



IPSWICH, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND • TIM JACKINS

Many of us report using these same strategies to interrupt racism in our wide world communities, in our workplaces, and in our lives. The resulting discharge and re-evaluation has pushed us outside the victim role installed on us by internalized racism. Acting powerfully on our own behalf and on behalf of each other, we have been able to take huge steps outside the internalized racism.

The guidelines for PGM attending workshops have been shared with PGM in many parts of the Community, by word of mouth, e-mail, and other media. PGM who have heard of the guidelines sometimes ask for a copy. They have also been shared with white workshop participants as a way of increasing understanding of the forms unaware racism can take. For example, an ordinary everyday pattern, not attractive when directed at anyone, will most likely be experienced by PGM as racism. PGM will quite likely experience a white person's pattern as any of the following: thinking that they know best (white superiority) • trying to tell them what to do (white dominance) • assuming that PGM should follow white people (white dominance) • assuming that the PGM doesn't know what they are doing or how to do a particular thing (white dominance/white superiority) • assuming that the PGM is stupid (white superiority), and so on.

Sometimes having this information can help a white person recognize when their behavior follows such patterns and increase their ability to interrupt their behavior before it has a negative effect on PGM.

continued . . .



BOISE, IDAHO, USA • RANDALL W. SMITH

... continued

Some Guidelines

Own this workshop: This is your workshop. Take up the space.

End marginalization: Be in the front, not at the back. Be at the center, not on the sidelines, not on the margins or the periphery—both physically and all other ways. “Decolonize” the seating at the front of the room. White people generally take the available space. They do not think about what it means for the workshop as a whole or the participation of PGM when all the seats near the front of the room are taken up by white people. They see this as normal and do not experience a white-only space as out of the ordinary or as something to be interrupted.

It will be up to you to make sure that the front of the room is not all white and that all of the PGM are not left at the back of the room or on the margins. If necessary, use tape to mark spaces at the front of the room and on the mats as PGM spaces. When some seats are marked in this way, PGM do not have to scramble at every class meeting to be sure to be in the workshop instead of on the sidelines.

Help white people get accustomed to the idea that it is everyone’s responsibility to make sure that PGM are not marginalized at workshops. Some white people might be offended that some seats have been marked as PGM. They might need to discharge on the idea that not all of everything must be available to white people at their choice. You are

not required to give them this session. They can seek the attention of another white person to discharge this bit of white domination.

End silence: Break the tendency to go silent. Speak up, open your mouth and let the words come out. Talk. Don’t worry about which words and in what order. Voice, voice, voice! You are smart and intelligent. Resist doubting yourself and your thinking; resist the temptation to think that you are not smart enough.

Strive against thinking that we don’t have anything important to say or that what we say will not be intelligible or smart or what we say doesn’t make sense. What you have to say is as coherent as what the other people will say. Your thinking is smart. Your thinking is significant and matters

You are significant, big, and strong. Be Big. Know your significance. Remember that You matter, your presence matters, and your thinking matters.

Contradict isolation: Stay connected to other PGM. You are not alone. Isolation says, “I am all alone, I am all by myself, it’s just me. I have to do this on my own.” Have buddies. Contradict the messages of isolation by sticking together with at least one or two other PGM. Agree before the workshop or at the beginning of the workshop to be buddies to each other for the duration of the workshop. Separation and isolation are false and wrong messages, lies, imposters. That message is nothing. Discharge it! (Spit on it!)

Reserve some times when PGM will get together as a total group. Reserve some meals when PGM will eat together. Agree on these times in advance and be sure that all PGM know so that they can plan to attend if they choose to do so.

Remember that discouragement is always old: Take the long, big view. Remember the benign reality. There is

an upward trend in the Universe. We can discharge anything that gets in our way. If you are feeling discouraged, don't believe it. Get a session.

Understand that white people will want your attention: They will take over your space and time if permitted. Don't stay stuck. Extricate yourself from the person that has taken over your space or time.

Part 1: Thank you so much. I must go now. I have an appointment with X—. I have to go upstairs. I have to go.

Part 2: Make an intervention when you see one of us cornered by a white person. Don't walk on by—stop and offer a way out (rescue).

White people will take over your agenda and insert their agenda on your time and attention. Hold on to your own purpose and your agenda. Remember

that “no” is a complete sentence. You are not required to explain to a white person why you do not want to follow their suggestion, have a session with them, have the next mini-session with them, or do what they say to do (different from following the leader). You can say no with or without a smile.

Interrupt “quiz-versations”: Some white people make great efforts to get to know PGM. In their effort to get to know PGM, they will ask a lot of questions. Rather than engaging in a conversation with the PGM, they ask a lot of questions or engage in a “quiz-versation.” This is usually *not* a good way to get to know PGM. Say to the white person who is quizzing you: “Asking me a lot of questions is not a good way to get to know me.” If you choose, tell the person a good way to get to know you.

Interrupt patterns of “taking care” of white people: For some of us, survival has meant making sure that white people felt okay about us, liked us, did not have any doubts about our allegiance or loyalty to them, and chose us as one of their own. PGM often worry about what white people are thinking, whether they will feel bad if we do not follow their commands or directions (outside of leadership situations), whether they will think that we do not like them. This can show up in the present as “care taking” patterns—making sure that white people are okay, and trying to please white people.

See *Black Re-emergence* No. 12 for the last page of this article.

Black Re-emergence No. 12

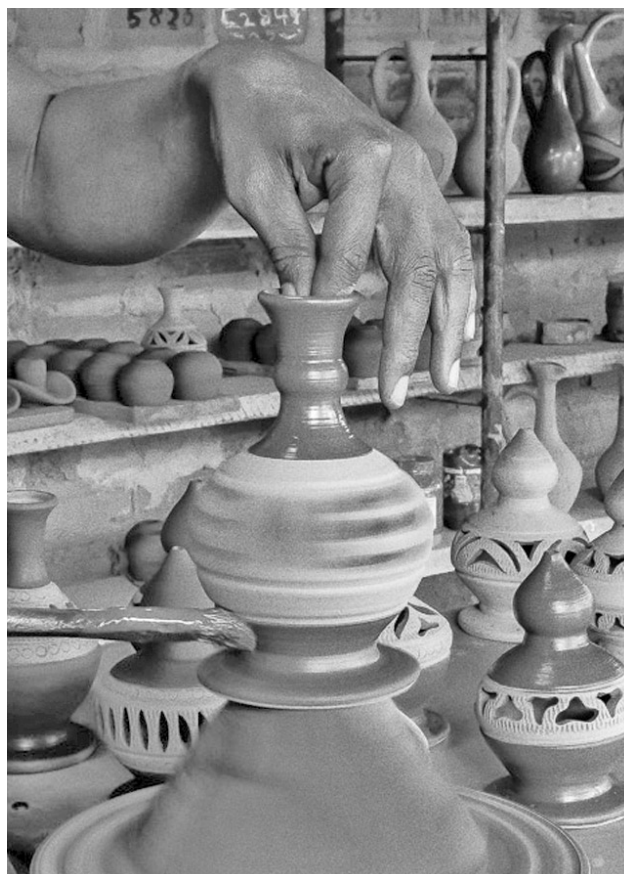
Join the Celebration!

The new issue of *Black Re-emergence* (Black Re-emergence No. 12) celebrates thirty years of Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) Workshops. It shows well the progress in Black liberation resulting from BLCD and from other inspiring work done by Black Co-Counselors.

Thirty-three people share what BLCD has meant to them. Others share how they are taking leadership, overcoming internalized racism, and uniting to end racism. Several articles report on taking Black liberation to other constituencies, such as raised-poor people, large women, “mental health” system survivors, and middle-class people. Altogether, there is writing from fifty-seven people.

The article reprinted above is one example of the excellent articles you will find in the journal. Don't delay in ordering *Black Re-emergence* No. 12!

\$4.00, plus postage and handling
Ordering information on page 110



STAN EICHNER

The Right Time for Intersex Liberation

For three years I have been part of a non-RC support group for intersex people. It has been a place for us to share experiences of childhood treatments, hospitals, secrecy, silencing, and coping with the gender expectations in society. We have used the time mainly for telling our stories, and I have gradually presented some RC theory about oppression and discharge.

At one meeting someone asked how we had each found the support group, and everyone answered “the Internet.” After a discussion, we decided to open a website where we could give information in our language about intersex issues and share our own stories about how we had coped with challenges related to health, and sex and gender, and what the peer support had meant to us. Our goal was to make it easier for intersex people to get information in their own language and to find our support group.

We soon realized that we needed to keep the support group and the tasks related to the website separate. We made it clear that sharing our stories in the support group was our main activity and that everyone could decide if they wanted to participate in the other tasks.

Since opening the website we have received some messages from intersex people. We wish for more and will think about other ways to reach out. What we did not expect were several contacts and requests from the media and governmental and municipal organizations. We decided to answer the ones that seemed respectful, that were meaningful and interesting to us, and that we could respond to anonymously (at least to some extent) and not alone.

The Social and Health Ministry invited us to talk to the national ethical board of medical professionals—even though we were an unofficial group and those of us behind the website were anonymous. After we talked to them, a group of professionals started working on requirements for medical institutions for the treatment of intersex children. They also started cooperating with the Ministry of Justice, which is currently changing the law as it relates to transgender and intersex people.

About the same time, a national board on children’s rights wanted our opinion on how human rights are violated when intersex children are treated medically. We have also been contacted by a midwives’ organization, a board that’s planning early childhood education, and several other organizations, as well as some research groups and newspapers.



SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

I think the reason all this is happening now is that the time is right:

- People have started to get information about intersex, to want to know more, and to feel upset when they learn about present medical practices. Even though intersex is quite marginal in terms of numbers of people, it brings up attitudes toward young people and the power of medical institutions and shows how gender-based society is.

- Many organizations have started to work on intersex issues and are struggling to find people who can tell about their experiences.

- The time is right for us to reach out. We trust each other, and our support for each other, and are no longer too focused on our painful experiences. We are learning that we need to speak up and forget the internalized “this is too marginal to talk about” position. We are learning that we can be effective without sacrificing ourselves, can stay anonymous if we decide to, and can set our limits.

This process makes me wonder if it could have been planned. Is there a way to know when the time is right to get things moving? Or can we do something to “make the time right”? What do you think?

“Prsank”

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

Chicano and Mexican Men's Sexism

Chicano and Mexican men's sexism is not easy to think about. And it's especially difficult to find places where we can discharge about it.

It's true that every group's sexism is equally overt, insidious, and pervasive and that Chicano and Mexican men's sexism is no worse than that of any other group of men (in particular, men of the dominant culture).

I grew up with the sexism of male Chicanos and Mexicans. I know it as well as anything in my life. I expect it. At other times I'm completely surprised by it, although it is as familiar as my mother's voice.

I understand needing to defend against the racism that comes at men of non-dominant groups. I do it all the time. Defending male Chicanos and Mexicans is one of our women's main duties. We defend our men against racism.

We even defend our men in RC by (1) not working on the sexism aimed at us by Chicano and Mexican males, (2) not standing up for ourselves or for those we witness receiving the sexism, and (3) not insisting that our Chicano and Mexican males work to end sexism.

There are few places where I can work on this sexism. Every time I try to work on it with a Co-Counselor who is not Chicana or Chicano, I know that she or he might be confused by (1) thinking our men are bad, or (2) being fascinated by our men. Either of these is useless to me, and to other Chicanas.

Working on it with other Chicanas is also difficult. Chicanas tend to be either completely infuriated by the sexism of our men, and angry with them, or completely disgusted by the victimhood of our women and only wanting

to defend our men. There has to be a way to move off of both of these. I suspect it is by working on sexism without trying to defend our men at the same time. I think it's impossible to do both. How can you work on sexism when you are constantly defending the men from whom you first experienced sexism?

Clearly, we can't be waiting for racism to end before we get to the work of ending sexism. And it's clear that we can't wait for the men to work on sexism of their own volition. I think it is we who must begin the work, especially with other women who are fighting the same battle. We might as well trust each other.

Sparky Griego

Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Latinos/as and Chicanos/as

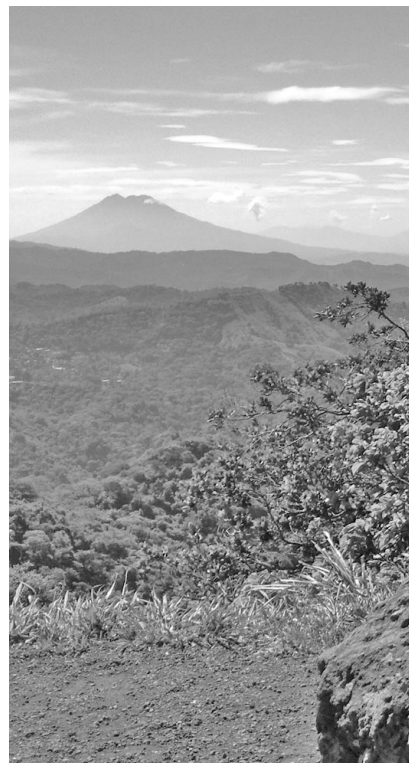
The Under-Thirty-Five Workshop in Japan

In April 2016 I attended the Under-Thirty-Five Workshop in Japan. With the support of the Japanese RC Community and the leadership of Emily Bloch (the International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults), we had a great weekend. One of my highlights was being there with another Kenyan RCer, Rosenell Nyakinyua.

We discharged on young adult oppression and how it is organized. Having control over our own resources would be a problem for capitalism. Also, the oppression has to be harsh so that we are not hopeful. We worked on how lack of human connection makes us prioritize material possessions over human relationships and on how to decide, act, and discharge.

I went home with wonderful memories of the beautiful gardens at the workshop venue and with hope about building relationships around the world.

Janet Kabue
Nairobi, Kenya



EL SALVADOR • ROLANDO GARCIA, JR.

An Artists' Liberation Workshop

I was thankful to be a part of the Artists' Liberation Workshop led by Emily Feinstein in Hancock, New Hampshire, USA, this past June.

Below are some of the ideas Emily shared:

Referencing Harvey Jackins's pamphlet *The Good and the Great in Art*, Emily talked about making art that presents benign reality and possibility. Good art can show a person's or a group's struggle, but it also helps to build understanding and awareness about the fight to overcome it. Much current art calls attention to a struggle but does so by re-enacting it with the intention to restimulate. As artists we can work through our distresses in our sessions or in the privacy of our studios and avoid using our audiences to work through them.

Art is about re-enlivening our imagination, not about escape.

Art is essential to our humanity. Emily asked us to imagine a world without any art; it's not a world we would want to live in.

Many factors, including "mental health" oppression, classism, and artists' oppression, set up artists to be seen as "special" or "different," and our early hurts make us vulnerable to internalizing that. Emily encouraged us to look at where we've relied on feeling "special" as a way to contradict how we have been marginalized in society and feel separate from others.

Those of us who have prioritized making art, regardless of the medium, can play an important role in connecting with all people. Emily talked about how some of her favorite things in making her art are the relationships she builds with lumberyard workers, upholsterers, tailors, and metal workers.

An important goal of artists' liberation is building a just and human world. We get to discharge and think about what role we want to play in that.

Everyone is an artist, in that creativity is part of being human. We come into the world and want to understand it, so we put things together, draw, touch, sing. These are natural creative impulses. However, many people struggle to claim the artist identity, in part because of confusion brought on by racism, classism, and artists' oppression.

The stereotypes of artists, including the common depiction of the white male European artist, present an inaccurate and incomplete picture of the history and experience of artists. We need to work on all of the ways that oppression has limited or distorted our view of ourselves, so that all of us can claim art, and its significance in our lives.

Those who choose to be "professional" or "career" artists face challenging pieces of the oppression that are embedded in the capitalist system. There are pressures to create work for the "art market," in which the product is valued more than the artist. Often artists have limited financial resources, so they try to fit in and be successful in the system. Working on our internalized oppression is key to forming alliances with all artists and finding creative, sustainable, inclusive ways to make art.

We get to decide how to approach our art and what role it will play in our lives. Emily said she didn't go to art school after high school because she struggled with not feeling "good enough." She later realized it was a good decision, because she probably wouldn't have had the resource to withstand the constant criticism and judgment. Six months after she joined Co-Counseling, in her twenties, she decided to re-prioritize making art and organize her life around it and eventually went back to school to get her Masters in Fine Arts. After graduating, she concluded that going to art school was not necessary and that it fed into a system that wanted people to be in debt. However, there were also many benefits, including the start of building her artists' community.



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

Given current conditions, artists' oppression, and our early hurts, many of us feel discouraged and defeated. Emily emphasized working on our early defeats, so we don't get confused about the possibilities in the present. She counseled someone on going back to face the belittlement and humiliation and deciding to get up and try again. We can resolve the early defeats "once and for all." They apply only to those particular incidents at those particular times; they don't determine what we get to try for now.

I also had some insights:

I noticed a difference between performance art and visual art. It seemed like most of the people at the workshop were visual artists—painters, sculptors, or designers—which meant that they often spent long hours working alone on their art. Many had done things to contradict the isolation, but it still appeared to be heavy for most.

I'm making a film and have acted. I realized that performance art—whether acting in a show, putting on a theater production, singing in a choir, or being part of a dance troupe—forces us to need and interact with other people (though it does have isolating aspects, such as many hours of rehearsing alone, or practicing an instrument to be a part of a band, or numerous rejections in auditioning). Of course distresses come up when we're working with a group of people, but the experience of presenting our art together with others I think is re-emergent.

In terms of going back with someone to work on early hurts, a useful first step for me is to notice that someone is actually with me. I try to notice my counselor first before going back, and often the rest of my session continues to be

devoted to just trying to notice the counselor. My attention often wanders away from that, and then I try to come back to it. It's not easy, I'm not always successful, but I can tell that it's essential.

Sometimes the most effective way for me to work on early distress is to try to move toward something. In my last support group at the workshop, I thought of three questions for myself:

- What don't I want to feel?
- What is the scariest rational thing I can do?
- What do I want my life to look like?

As a man, I sometimes have limited access to discharge, but moving toward something keeps me from feeling stuck and frustrated about

that. It also changes my life. It's like what Harvey said about "decide, act, discharge." If I am pushing to move my life forward, I don't have to worry about the early distresses not coming up.

Emily set the right tone for the workshop, and a part of that was inviting people to tell jokes on Saturday night. One person shared the following:

Person A: Knock, knock.

Person B: Who's there?

Person A: Boo.

Person B: Boo Who?*

Person A: Keep going.

Dan Iacovella
Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

* "Boohoo" means loud crying.

Our Differences Are Tiny

The actual differences between any people are tiny. If a billionaire owning-class person came into RC—none have, so far—and somebody from Tierra del Fuego and someone from Nome, Alaska, got together with this billionaire, and a skillful counselor helped them take turns being listened to, the three would very quickly discover that they're fundamentally very, very much alike.

We've been paying attention in RC to our differences, because the differences are where the patterns hang up, where the oppressions get their claws in. We have been tackling these oppressions and have done a pretty good job of this in many ways by paying attention to the difficulties for which our differences are used as an excuse.

The truth of the matter is, the differences between us are 1/100th of one percent and the similarities are 99.99 percent. There is no person of a different color than you, there is no person of a different class background than you, there is no person of a different cultural background or a different age than you that you cannot understand easily, be completely close to, and thoroughly enjoy a relationship with. We're all very, very much alike, and if we start acting like it, the barriers will crumble.

Harvey Jackins
From *A Better World*, page 21

Discharging on Whether or Not to Raise a Child

I attended a daylong workshop in Oakland, California, USA, led by Ayana Morse and organized by Vivian Santana-Pacheco. It was for women in their twenties and thirties, and the topic was deciding whether or not to raise a child (or children). About thirty women came. Not having decided about becoming a parent was a requirement for attendance.

We started by taking turns saying, “Raise your hand if you are female and . . .,” to see who else shared one of our identities or experiences. It was a lovely way to get to the root of our connection as females and to air out all the ways we might feel different from the group.

Ayana talked about how having a big life is really about us being *ourselves*. We, as females, might think that being a mother is the only big challenge available. She dared us to fight completely for ourselves, whether or not we decide to become mothers, and said it is important to do this before becoming mothers.

She said that we can’t avoid a life of struggle, especially in these times. This is a tough spot for me personally. My immigrant family left their homes in Mexico and the Philippines and endured racism, assimilation, and language oppression in order to move out of poverty and have a better life—a life of “ease” and “comfort”—in the United States. Deciding not to parent can feel attractive

to me, as I could avoid being targeted with parents’ oppression and therefore have an “easier” life. This is a solid place from which to discharge on the upward mobility and false “comforts” of middle-class life in the United States. Ayana was clear that either way we decide, we will face female oppression—the heavy exploitation and oppression that come with doing the unpaid and barely recognized labor of raising children, or the intense sexism that targets women who don’t have children.

She asked, “What would it look like to pick a goal of your own choosing—something that lets your mind think big enough?” She asked us to think about something that could be as interesting, meaningful, and satisfying as raising a child. She was clear that child raising is an institution of sexism and that women do an “over-the-top” (a huge) amount of the work involved.

I’m grateful to Ayana for extending herself to us younger women and for giving us an opportunity to discharge about something that preoccupies almost all of us. I’d love to hear from other women who haven’t made the decision, and about any opportunities they are organizing in their Communities for women to discharge on it.

Cristina Mitra
San Francisco, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

Distress Patterns from Conquest

I’ve been reading about the Spanish colonization of Mexico. In the early years of the colonization, women were regarded as spoils of war. Rape, forced sexual slavery, and arranged marriage were also used to win favor with the colonizing forces.

I speculate that every culture has incorporated distress recordings from conquest—patterns of dominance, subordination, fear, and self-preservation. Everyone is vulnerable to acquiring these patterns. Some of us, however, have been singled out as examples—for example, Latinos are “macho” and Latinas are “oversexed” and “promiscuous.”

No man should fall into the trap of believing he is exempt from these patterns or smugly decry the irrationality of others—for example, men in the military or men from other cultures.

We all need to reach for our justifiable indignation, while reaching for our brothers and sisters who are caught up in the oppression. We can unite and end this, and all, oppression.

Lorenzo Garcia
International Liberation Reference
Person for Chicanos/as
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

Jews and the Oppressed/Opressor Dynamic

For us Jews, understanding our oppressed/oppressor dynamic is a key to working on all of our Jewish material (distress), including that related to racism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. How do we counsel more effectively on this dynamic, so we can bring rational leadership to our people?

I recently assisted a client who had a particular patterned difficulty. He felt terrible about it, and had counseled on it, but had had limited success in altering the distressed behavior. I counseled him three or four times over the course of a workshop and was consistently loving but completely un reassuring: “You are good, good, good, good, and at the same time this behavior *is* awful.” I kept being firm on *both* “ends.” When he felt horrible about himself, I would insist that he was thoroughly good. When he said the behavior “wasn’t that bad,” I would firmly and lovingly, with no soft pedaling, say that it *was* bad behavior. To my surprise, after several strong sessions he began to find the leverage he needed to turn around the distressed non-survival behavior.

I experimented with this same approach in my Jewish leaders’ class.

First, in mini-sessions, I had everyone work on the question, “What is a behavior that you often feel bad about?” Then I counseled two people. The first worked on being a Jewish parent. When she worked on feeling awful about herself as a parent, I would remind her, over and over, of her complete goodness. When she jumped to, “But what I do isn’t *that bad*,” I would be equally firm in saying, “It *is* bad behavior. You *are* passing distress patterns on to your children.”

In the second demonstration, the client wanted to work on her “bad behavior” of never being able to say no and agreeing to do things that she knew she would never be able to do. She was particularly concerned with the racism in it when she did it with people targeted by racism. I again held out strongly and firmly, over and over, her total goodness. When she said, “Well, it’s really not that bad,” I would keep saying, “Well, actually, it *is* bad behavior.” And every time I said that, she would shake and howl with laughter.

We all felt hopeful about this being a way to effectively discharge oppressor material.

I think the key is to keep working on the unbearable spot where we are *both* completely good *and* we do awful things. As counselors we can’t avoid either side. We can’t offer reassurance that doesn’t let our clients face with honesty the distresses they actually yearn to be able to face.

I am excited about this work. Those who want to claim that Jews (or Israel) are *all* good and not look at the oppressor patterns miss the whole picture. And those who claim that Jews (or Israel) are mostly oppressors and refuse to look at the very real oppression underlying the patterns miss the whole picture.

Communicating this complex piece of RC Jewish liberation theory—that Jews are both “oppressed” and “oppressors”—will be much easier when we ourselves have discharged more on being in both roles. As we counsel more effectively on this material, we can help our beloved Jewish people do the same.

Cherie Brown
International Liberation
Reference Person for Jews
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews



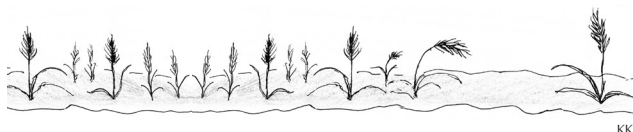
EL SALVADOR • DAVID GABRIEL MOLINA ORELLANA

RC Information Coordinators

Below are a few of the reports we received from Information Coordinators in response to a request by Tim Jackins for information about their activities.

(An Information Coordinator is an RCer who has agreed to keep an up-to-date list of Co-Counselors in her or his constituency, occasionally circulate an informal newsletter [to those who've contributed to it], and help plan any workshops, policy statements, or classes related to the constituency.)

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA



Raised-Rural RCers

For many years I have gathered folks raised rural at nearly every workshop I have gone to; I've led about thirty topic tables and a few support and topic groups as well as two tables for raised-rural people and allies. One or two folks contact me a year, and I am in regular contact with many others, mostly in the United States.

I love the work and intend to schedule a raised-rural workshop soon.

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Cajuns

About eight years ago I started a bi-weekly Cajun phone support group. Five of us, who live in Louisiana, Texas, Florida, and Washington, D.C. (USA), participate regularly. A sixth, from Brooklyn, New York (USA), joins us from time to time. I've also led a few Francophone topic tables over the years.

Five years ago four of us went to the North American Francophone Liberation Workshop, and we all wrote something about it for *Present Time*. We are working toward a Cajun workshop.

Je vous aime gros (I love you big),

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Managers, Administrators, and Executives

I have been the Information Coordinator for many years. I have regular counseling contact with a number of people in the constituency, lead a workshop for managers about once a year, and lead topic tables or support groups at probably half a dozen workshops a year. I have written many articles on manager issues for *Present Time*. I still get one or two e-mails a year from people I don't already know.

I like the role. Many people reach out to me at workshops—asking me to do something for managers or just wanting to talk and discharge about something related to leading people.

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Physicians

About fifty physicians have expressed interest in being on a physicians' list. I have also had contact with a couple of medical students.

I sent out a request for stories about prioritizing counseling while being physicians, but it is clear I will have to take a lot more initiative to make the list active.

I have invited about twenty physicians to a periodic phone discharge group. We have held it about eight times in the past two years, and four to ten folks have joined. It has been useful, and I would love to keep doing it, but I probably need help with the organizing. I still get overwhelmed at work, and months go by without my putting another date on the calendar.

At workshops I usually call a health-care workers' table to give folks the space to notice what they like about their work, share some of the challenges of operating in an oppressive system, and hear from folks with different roles in the system. I also organize a session or (depending on the numbers) a discharge group with physicians.

I think focusing on class issues will help us to figure out the kinds of challenges physicians face and to move more effectively. My challenge is to contain work so that I am not spending all my time navigating work responsibilities.

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Irish-Heritage USers

For about four years, at every workshop I went to I called a topic table for Irish-heritage USers (unless it did not make sense, given the workshop topic). It was a great way to get a wider picture of this group, our strengths and struggles. I also got lots of chances to counsel people in short bursts.

At one weekend (middle-class) workshop, our Irish-heritage group became central to the leader. At his request, we met three times: at the end of each evening and during lunch. For the first time we got a picture of becoming a united force, making sure things went well at a workshop.

For a year I did phone mini-sessions with Irish-heritage USers who wanted to work on the identity.

I also described the group and the project in *Present Time* and invited people to contribute to our first newsletter (offering counseling time to those who wanted to write but found it difficult). The newsletter generated a

lot of interest. Several people in Ireland asked if they could contribute—to express what Irish identity looks like from their perspective. We ended up with forty-two letters (thirty-six from the United States, and six from Ireland).

It took a year for me to collect all the letters, edit them, and send them out to all those who wrote. Several people told me they could not stop reading them, that they'd read the whole newsletter in one sitting. It seemed to have captured some common experiences.

In the next newsletter I'd like to include a wider group of writers. In particular, I'd love to hear more from mixed-heritage people (people of both Irish and other backgrounds), Irish-heritage Protestants, Irish U.S. Southerners, and Native and African-heritage people with Irish heritage.

The unity that's built via Information Coordinating makes a big difference!

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Elected Officials, Current and Former

I have posted on RC e-mail discussion lists.

In the last year I read on a discussion list that a Co-Counselor had run for office. But upon following up, I learned he did not win the election.

I have also collected earlier postings from people who have considered running for office or have lobbied elected officials. This year, given that it's a U.S. presidential election year, many people have written about the candidates. Few, however, have expressed interest in running for office.

In July 2017 I will no longer hold elected office as I am not running for re-election this fall. But I am happy to continue serving as Information Coordinator.

Ruth Atkin
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LIBERATION

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Clergypersons

I have been in contact with about fifteen Co-Counsellors from different Jewish or Christian religious organizations. I have also recently met up with a Catholic lay school chaplain who lives nearby and is interested in learning more about RC. I'm due to have time with him next week.

I am still involved in my local church parish and lead some services in other parishes. I also write a weekly column, in a local paper, about religion in general and my own denomination, the Church of Ireland.

As far as I know, there are no clergy people in Ireland who practice RC, and globally we are, as is said, "thin on the ground," meaning few in number.

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LGBTQ Parents

I took on the job in 2003, and between 2003 and 2006 five people wrote to me. Since then I have not received any e-mails.

I regularly get together with parents at LGBTQ and Formerly-identified workshops—at topic tables, in topic groups, and occasionally in support groups.

In November of 2013 we had our first workshop for LGBTQF parents, and just last month I organized the first LGBTQF family workers' workshop, which included many parents. Both of these workshops were exciting. Those of us who attended had great connections and discharged about these identities and the convergence of the two oppressions.

"Laura Secord"
e-mail: laurasecord2@yahoo.ca

Veterans

Tony Switzer, my predecessor, put out a newsletter drawn from letters he had received, and together we wrote the original draft Veterans' Liberation Policy, in 1985. Tony also led two weekend workshops for veterans.

After I took on the Information Coordinator role, I led several weekend workshops for veterans, a gather-in for vets and allies in Seattle (Washington, USA), and a monthly telephone support group. Julian Weissglass, the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, suggested that we co-lead workshops for veterans and allies, and we led three. I also organized a revision of the Veterans' Liberation Policy.

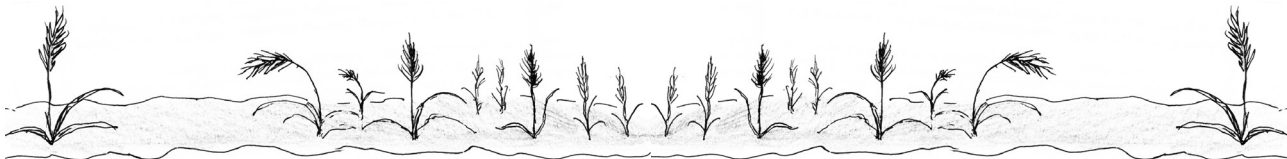
I have written articles about veterans for *Present Time* and the RC e-mail discussion lists. I regularly call topic tables for veterans, and sometimes allies to veterans, at workshops and counsel with a number of veterans around the country. I don't think I've ever gotten a contact from the listing in *Present Time*.

The Information Coordinator role has also inspired and informed a lot of work in the wide world. In 2005 I started Vets4Vets (V4V), which taught naturalized RC at eighty-five residential weekend workshops to fifteen hundred returning U.S. veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. There was lots of discharge, and a peer-reviewed journal article documented the benefits. We set up forty local support groups around the country. We saved some lives!

I do recommend continuing the Information Coordinator role. In addition to providing a point of contact, it gives a potential leader some legitimacy for taking initiative.

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To see a list of all the current Information Coordinators, go to page 89 of this Present Time.



The following three articles are reports given at a May 2015 gather-in, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, at which thirty of the International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons talked about their work. To see all the reports, go to <www.rc.org/publication/ilcrp/contents>, on the RC website.

This Work Is for Everyone

Hi, I'm Marilyn Robb. I'm from Trinidad and Tobago, presently living in Aruba. I bring the Caribbean flavor to RC. I am the International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change.

One of the things I like about the job is that I get to reference everybody. I keep reminding everybody that working for educational change is not just for schoolteachers. It is true that our big vision, our ultimate goal, is to create schools in which there are no oppressions. A number of oppressions operate in school, and all the different groups in school—teachers, students, social workers, administrators, anybody

who's connected to school—experience these oppressions. So there's a lot of work to do there. Yes, that's true. However, the other part of it is that every one of us who experienced school or in some way had a learning experience acquired hurts. And we all need the opportunity to discharge those hurts and reclaim our intelligence.

With that as our vision, we do this work in three different directions: First, we work to make the RC Communities a safe place for all those who are working in schools to come and discharge, re-energize, be supported, and reclaim their own joy of teaching and learning. Sec-

ond, we keep building the strength of the RC Communities and the solid grounding in Co-Counseling that will give every Co-Counselor the chance to reclaim that great intelligence that we know we were all created with. And third, a lot of people are out there doing a lot of good work changing schools, so we figure out how to support them, how to bring them RC.

I invite you all to reclaim your own intelligence and to make your RC Community a safe and solid place for everybody to be able to do that. Thank you.

Santa Cruz, Aruba

Music Is Part of Our Humanness

Hi, I'm Heather Hay, and I'm the International Liberation Reference Person for Musicians. I've loved music my whole life. How many people here love music?

In RC we're about connection, we're about reclaiming our full intelligence, we're about noticing benign reality. Music is so powerful and beautiful. It can remind us of who we are and how good it is to be alive. It can connect us with nature and each other. It is a universal language.

Music is for everyone. It's a part of our humanness. We are born with a love for and attraction to music. Music is about play and reminds us to play. When we reclaim our creativity, we are reclaiming our intelligence—they're the same thing.

I encourage all of us to think about the music of our family, our culture, our people. It's a way of fighting back against

genocide, assimilation, and domination. And we need the music of all the peoples of the world. There can never be too much music. Music needs to be everywhere, because it contradicts discouragement, isolation, and urgency and encourages discharge.

Everyone is in my constituency, but I want to speak for a moment about working musicians. They need to remember the significance of their work. They've worked hard, they've made a big commitment, they've put many hours into it. It's not about talent or a special gift. That's a myth.

The last thing I'd like to say is that musicians, and all people, can use the power and beauty of music to end class oppression and inspire rational action. Music has great potential to rally people toward revolution.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

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We Are Out There with Workers

Hi, I'm Joanie Parker. I'm the International Liberation Reference Person for Union Activists. I get to lead, get to know and work with union members, union activists, and community organizers who work within the labor movement. What a great job.

I'm wondering how many people here are union members. Raise your hands. Okay! I want to know you. My job for the next two minutes is to figure out how to organize the rest of you into a union or into being allies for us.

The fact is that union activists are up against the oppressive system every single day. We're out there fighting, working for a society of fairness and liberation, and we can end up feeling discouraged, defeated, alone, and enraged about being up against greedy employers all the time. That's where you come in

as allies. We need you to listen to us, to listen to our feelings, so we can discharge and get out there and continue the fight.

If you know any union members, teach them RC. And if you're already teaching a class that includes union members or union activists, ask them what it's like. One of the most amazing contradictions (to distress) for us is to talk about our successes, no matter how small.

We are out there with workers who are fighting for a minimum wage of \$15. We are out there doing contract negotiations for increases in pay and guaranteed benefits and good working conditions. That's something we can all take on. And as we say out there, "¡Si se puede! Yes we can!"

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



MAUSOLEUM, MEKNES, MOROCCO • ELENA MOSES

NO LIMITS: The Liberation of Women (a pamphlet)

In March 2015, No Limits for Women, a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, sent a delegation to the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing Plus 20, in New York, New York, USA.

This twenty-page pamphlet was created to help the delegation inform other delegates about the work of No Limits.

We can continue to make good use of it—in communicating ever more widely what we've learned in RC about women's liberation.

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

Internalized Sexism

From a talk by Tim Jackins at a teachers' and leaders' workshop in England, January 2016

The oppression of women is very real and very heavy, with lots of variation depending on where you are and whom you're with. It's built into the structures of society. There are big battles to take on there.

I think that for many people in RC, internalized sexism is still a big limiting factor in their backing each other fully and moving out into the world to challenge the structures. I'm talking here about women's attitudes toward each other that have been pushed on them by society.

I said this morning that there is no limit to how wonderfully intelligent we can be. There is also no obvious limit to how troubled we can act toward each other. Women can be very nasty to each other. They can be viciously nasty—and smile.

That piece of what's been done to women hasn't gotten worked

on very fully as yet. As with a lot of oppressions, people try to hold it out of sight, not act it out, make it less obvious that they have it. But sooner or later it gets restimulated enough and gets acted on. What that does to the trust in the relationship can be big. Two women can know they each have this material and can still like and care about each other, but if it ever gets loose and gets aimed at each other, they often don't know how to get back together. It is so restimulating of what's happened before. They each have been targeted by similar behavior too many times before without the chance to discharge.

We all have distresses that are really nasty. You're nice people—and there are certain moments in your life when I don't want to be around you. It feels dangerous to me. I get restimulated, and I'm not sure that I know how to handle it, and I don't feel like trying to handle it.

We all have both sides to work on—how vulnerable we feel, and our potential for losing control of what we haven't been able to work on.

We're very good counselors as long as our Co-Counselor likes us all the time, but any little look of irritation is enough to push us back a couple of feet. We have to get less vulnerable to that kind of thing. We have to be able to handle horrible material. The world is full of horrible material. And none of it is meant. None of it is personal. It's all restimulation. Yet we can't remember that at those moments.

So let's use this as a pretext for a mini-session. What's the material that you hope no one acts out at you? What's the unbearable thing that you could not handle?

Many Liberated Elders

At a recent Australia and New Zealand leaders' workshop, Cathy Picone called an elders' liberation topic table at lunchtime. A number of us gathered, then more came, then more. We added tables. Then we needed the hearing loop, as the table(s) had become so long.

We all introduced ourselves and stated what year we were born and how old we were. So many people! Then, starting from the eldest, each of us talked about how we saw elders' oppression. There were so many of us that we stood to be heard.

It was wonderful for us RC leaders to claim being elders, be unapologetically visible, take up space and be loud and playful, have physical needs, and be led by someone who modeled all this. I carried away a sense of connection with other elders and of my power, wisdom, playfulness, and right to be thought about.



Anne Thompson
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of elders



STEVE BANBURY

The Chronic Patterns of Classism

Harvey Jackins, excerpted from *A Better World*, pages 288 to 291

As we try to Co-Counsel with each other well across our class divisions, we are detecting certain common chronic patterns attached to members of the same class.

WORKING-CLASS PATTERNS

The chronic patterns of working-class RCers that make it difficult to encourage them into leadership are likely to be lack of confidence, feeling “dumb” or unintelligent, and feeling that “it’s no use to struggle,” that “one can never win.” Other common working-class feelings are “If I take leadership, all my friends will think I am being too good for them and won’t support me anymore” and that one must copy the speech, mannerisms, accent, and clothing of middle-class people or owning-class people in order to be taken seriously.

Chronic patterns of working-class people that interfere with their taking responsible leadership can include grievancing as a substitute for action, and “comforting” oneself with food or alcohol or preoccupation with sports, on or off TV.



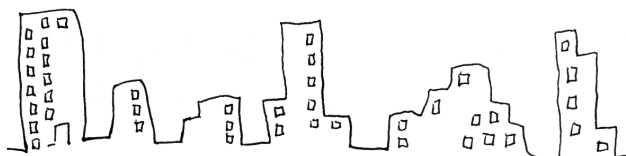
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MIDDLE-CLASS PATTERNS

Some of the chronic patterns that commonly tend to keep middle-class people from assuming responsible leadership include strong feelings that one must fit into, be approved by, and support the oppressive society as “the only world one has ever known.” Others are a fearful need for approval and pats-on-the-head from the “powers

that be,” a passionate (fearful) belief in reform rather than fundamental change, and the “liberal” attitude that “one can never be sure that one is right.”

The chronic patterns that make leadership difficult for middle-class people once they’ve assumed it include self-doubt, a fearful need for conformity, and assumptions about the “eternal verity” of the system in which one is functioning.



OWNING-CLASS PATTERNS

Owning-class people’s chronic patterns that keep them from assuming rational leadership include patterns of laziness and self-indulgence, the conditioned belief that they must enjoy themselves at all costs, irresponsibility, and the feelings that they do not dare “become visible” lest they meet reprisals. There is also a factor that they rarely admit to themselves and never acknowledge to others: that deep down they don’t believe in themselves.

Some of the patterns that tend to limit their leadership are unfaced commitments to the present oppressive system and a difficulty in conceiving that they can be accepted as allies by the working and middle classes because of the resentment that they assume the members of these classes feel toward them.



Written Language, Oral Language, and Their Liberation

The following is Part II of this article. You can read Part I on pages 30 to 32 of the July 2016 Present Time. Part III will be printed in the January 2017 Present Time. You can also read the entire article, in English, Basque, or Spanish, on the RC website at <www.rc.org/page/onlinereading/contents>.

TURNING LINGUISTIC OPPRESSION AROUND— PRACTICING LIBERATION

Connection and linguistic liberation, in my role as a client

I have noticed that when my Co-Counselors feel united with me, they give the best of themselves and I give the best of myself. In other words, we give the best of ourselves in RC activities when we are connected. I believe we should focus all our attention on this fact at the beginning of every session.

When I am client, the most important thing is not that the counselor understand what I am discharging about (even if that is generally helpful). Something more crucial, which can completely determine the outcome of the session, is that I offer access to my mind so that the counselor can come in. It is about consciously using the connection. That is a truly powerful action and is the sharpest weapon against my distresses.

I have observed that linguistic oppression can hinder and even prevent the connection. For this reason, when I am the client, I try to bring the counselor toward the inner process of my mind by doing, among other things, the following:

When the counselor's language is different from mine, I say a few words, a common sentence, in her

**If she shows some
interest in my language,
she is showing interest
in my person.**

language: "So good to see you." And I perceive the deep meaning of this sentence and in which way it is good for me to see her again. Saying this sentence in her language adds a special power to our connection. I usually spend the first ten to fifteen minutes of the session on this sentence. Then, in the rest of the session, my attention is not as pulled to go to my distresses. It wants to keep swimming in the shiny surface of the ocean of connection, in reality.

Other times, before my or my counselor's distresses start to make some noise, I gaze for a long time into my counselor's eyes, or repeat her name again and again, and am conscious of the present moment that we have together.

In one way or another, I make an effort to see that my counselor is a witness to and participant in my process. I let her know that I will use all her presence and that the language difference won't be an obstacle to the connection we need to establish from the first second we meet.

Language, an instrument to unite us and bring us even closer, in my role as a counselor

When I am counselor, if a client who doesn't know my language lets me know that she will be there, aware of me, ready and open to have me with her a hundred percent, the session is usually excellent.

This occurs easily when she has taken into account that different languages are involved and that hers is neither the only one nor the most important one, and when she has realized that achieving the entire dimension of the communication depends on both people, not only on the full effort of one. This applies especially when she is from a dominant linguistic group.

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DOLOMITES, ITALY • LYNDALL KATZ

LIBERATION

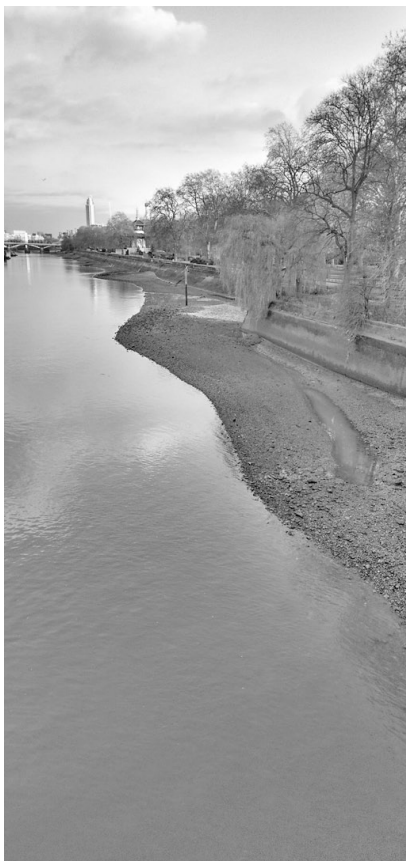
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If she shows some interest in my language, she is showing interest in my person. When she makes a gesture on the linguistic situation, it makes possible what language oppression presents as impossible—that the two of us can have complete connection—and I never feel confused or lost as a counselor.

Minoritised-dominated languages and internalised inferiority

My language, aside from being a *minority* one (spoken only by a minority), has been *minoritised*—deliberately restricted, marginalised, forbidden, and persecuted. This has been done with laws, sociopolitical rules, and sometimes violence. My language has also been *isolated*; it has lost its relationship with its old language family. This has affected how Basque people think about themselves and their capacity to make relationships with new “neighbours.”

The minoritisation and isolation can show up in my behaviour. I refer to this as *internalised inferiority*. I can easily—and without external intervention—feel less than the rest of the group, begin speaking in the language of the other person, or move myself from the center to the margin. I can forget my own importance and significance, or fall into the patterned behaviour of “give and give and give.” (This kind of giving is one of the consequences of genocide. As Indigenous people we have a tendency to give out everything, believing that by doing so the white people, or the invaders, will maybe spare our lives or go away and leave us in peace.) Internalised inferiority can be summarised as follows: “I don’t deserve as much as . . .” This influences our RC project.



LIAM GEARY-BAULCH

Majoritised-dominant languages and internalised superiority

The *majoritised-dominant languages*, which are the ones that surround mine, include the following:

- *The majority languages*—the languages with the most speakers in the world
- *The majoritised languages*—the languages that are given a higher status, are assumed to be more important than and superior to all the others; more complete, more adequate, more developed
- *The dominant languages*—those that have other languages, generally the minoritised ones, under the scope of their power and authority; that force the speakers of the other languages to adjust, submit, and assimilate to them.

Traces of the oppression connected with the majoritised-dominant languages can be found in the people who speak them—mainly due to their living in countries with a capitalist, imperialist way of life that has made their language and culture dominant. I call this *internalised superiority*. It tends to make these people see as inferior the people who speak the minoritised languages, to make them expect that the speakers of the minoritised languages will adapt to the mode, pace, and style of the majoritised-language speakers and offer them gratitude, admiration, privileges, service, or favors, because they deserve it. This distressed tendency can be summarized as “I need and deserve more, or more than . . .” This has considerable influence in our RC activities. (For instance, Co-Counseling activities with a significant number of white people are particularly challenging for Indigenous people like me. I usually spend a big part of my session time on not letting this issue keep me from being an active part of the International Community and its activities.)

Facts to remember and make clear

In our International RC Communities, it should always be clear that not speaking English is the natural state of a lot of RCers and in no way represents a lack of capacity or responsibility. Also, in the absence of distresses, everybody would want to know and speak the languages of their fellow humans as much as their own.

Overcoming internalised inferiority and superiority, in an RC session

In an RC session, two minds, in a mutual and equal relationship, can help to free each other from internalised inferiority and superiority.

If I am a client with someone from a majoritised-dominant language, I model making space for the counselor to come into my session, my mind, and my life and submerge herself in my discharge and re-emergence. This is a way to interrupt my internalised inferiority and hold up the power that belongs to me.

If the counselor doesn't understand my language, it has worked well to provide at the beginning or the end of the session a summary of what I will be or have been working on; to look lovingly, for a long time, into the counselor's eyes before starting; to say to her words of endearment in my own language; to take her hands in mine and sing her a lullaby.

Because she has been assimilated into the superior or dominant attitude of her culture, she could forget more easily than I that seriously attempting to get closer, past all the limitations, is both of our responsibility.

You, also, will find many ways to do this as you go. Let's go!

If I am counselor, a client from a majoritised-dominant language can try to be aware that I am over there, with my cultural background. She can ask me how to say some words of my language that have great significance for me, such as, "I love you," "Your heart and mine," "Good to see you," "You and me forever," "Close by," "No fear now," "Forgive me." Then I can put into the session my full potential in her favour, and she can face her internalised superiority with me on her side.

A common characteristic of internalised superiority is to use language to make noise to cover up the lack of connection, or the fear of the unknown or of strangers, instead of using it to build connection and closeness. When I see this, I ask the client to remain silent and to look at me for five minutes or so. I am sure

you will find many ways to deal with this in your practice.

The course of a session is often determined by the indestructible connection that emerges between the two of us after we have both understood that each of us is responsible for getting unlimited closeness between us. The client is no longer working by herself, and the session is very vigorous. Both of us are in the present, and the re-evaluations happen more easily.

And we should not forget that the other oppressions (classism, sexism, racism, and so on) surround the internalised inferiority and superiority and can reinforce or distort them, in ways that depend on the role we have played in these other oppressions.

False expectations

Both counselor and client also need to be aware of the false expectations that can come from language oppression. Below are some that arise in speakers of majoritised and dominant languages, due to internalised superiority:

- "The person who speaks the minority language, as well as the minoritised one, will understand my language because she has learnt it. So she should take the first step to get closer to me and to ensure that the session is intelligible."
- "The person who speaks the minority language, as well as the minoritised one, should learn my language, as it is the one most used internationally. Because almost everything happens in my language, she would benefit from learning it."
- "When counselor, the person who speaks the minority language, as well as the minoritised one, has to make the effort to understand me and get close to me in my language

and should let me do the session my way, because I know better."

The following are expectations that stem from internalised inferiority:

- "I should know her language," "She does not and will never understand me in my own language."
- "This won't go well," "We won't be able to communicate."
- "It is useless with her," "They are all the same," "She will not see me; she won't notice anything."
- "And all the above are true, in great measure, because of me—because I am ignorant, I am not as much as I should be, and there is nothing I can do about these people."

Counseling in RC groups

Generally speaking, the above recommendations also apply in support groups and other RC groups. And here are some additional thoughts and observations about counseling in groups:

A client in an RC group may pick a counselor who speaks her language. She may believe that in their speaking the same language she will find connection and a contradiction to her distress. But she is focusing on a small, cognitive portion of the whole communication. A cognitive understanding does not necessarily mean connection.

I have also observed that fear of a stranger and distrust of the unfamiliar can lead to someone picking a counselor who is fluent in the same language.

In fact, any counselor can offer, in any situation, the connection, contradiction, and logical and exact perspective that the client needs. Remember that we RCers have done this Co-Counseling exercise

continued . . .



SKY YARBROUGH

... continued

thousands of times and have all become experts at it.

Even though it's important to understand the client's verbal communication, attitude is the element required for the real revolution—the connection—to happen between the client and the counselor.

At times, instead of making a direct relationship, the counselor or client will use an interpreter as an intermediary. (This happens more often when the client and counselor are of different cultures, languages, or origins.) This doesn't allow for truly knowing the other person or making a direct connection with her mind.

Something will always be missing: the true relationship.

In such a case, I usually encourage the person not to use the interpreter as a bridge or a way to indirectly reach the other person. There is nothing like a direct relationship to provide the most powerful contradiction to the griefs, fears, and frustrations we have accumulated from our other relationships.

Patxi Xabier Odriozola Ezeitza
International Commonality Reference
Person for Languages and Interpreting
 The village of Marieta Larrintzar,
 Araba, Basque Country

Translated from Basque to Spanish
 by Juan Gabriel Urriategi

Translated from Spanish to English
 by Stéphan Picard

Revised in Spanish and English
 by Goizalde Galartza

[Juan Gabriel Urriategi, Stéphan Picard, and Goizalde Galartza also translated and revised Part I of this article. We apologize for not listing their names at the end of that part, on page 32 of the July 2016 *Present Time*.]

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More Thoughts on Oppressor Material

Since my article “Working on Oppressor Material” was published in the January 2015 *Present Time*, a lot of people have said it has been useful.

I think that part of what makes it useful is that it puts oppression in a wider context. Rather than looking at individual oppressions, it allows the whole system of oppression to be understood in a way that helps to unite people. We still need to understand the detailed operation of individual oppressions, but it is not enough to focus only on one oppression at a time, or even the interaction of several oppressions.

Since I wrote the article, I’ve continued to lead workshop classes, community classes, and topic groups on “oppressor material” (oppressor distress) and have had some new thoughts about it. I’ve set out some of these thoughts below. (Some will make sense only after reading the original article.)

REACHING FOR POWER AND FINDING OPPRESSOR MATERIAL

In the original article, I wrote that we can act out “oppressor material” even in situations in which we are not in the oppressor role, and that this often happens when we feel the need to defend ourselves.

A new thought I’ve had is that when we reach for our power, often what we find instead is our oppressor material.

One can see this both inside and outside of RC. Many liberation groups, especially outside RC, are pulled to target people who are (or appear to be) “the oppressors.” An example is when activists who oppose oppressive policies attempt to humiliate or ridicule the politicians who put forward those policies. The activists are restimulating their own oppressor material as a way to avoid feeling like victims. This then scares everyone else. Restimulating one’s own distress recordings as part of a liberation strategy is counterproductive.

ACTUALLY DISCHARGING “VICTIM MATERIAL”

In the original article I wrote, “A lot of our distress recordings include oppressor material, but for the most part we’ve focused on where we are being hurt rather than on where we may be hurting someone else. If we think of all of our recordings as a heap of dirt, we’ve taken big shovelfuls out of the ‘victim’ side of the pile (and we carry on shoveling, even when we’ve reached the bottom) but the ‘oppressor’ side has been left relatively untouched.”

What I now think is that our “oppressor material” has been like a shell that protects our “victim material” and often prevents us from working on it. In our sessions we need to dare to look at how small and powerless we were when we were first hurt. Instead we have been pulled to rehearse anger recordings or rebellion and defiance, which feel more powerful but aren’t discharging the actual victim recordings.

TAKING CHARGE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The perspective that we all carry oppressor material and have all been acting it out unwarily, irrespective of our oppressed or oppressor identities, seems to help us take charge of our end of relationships.

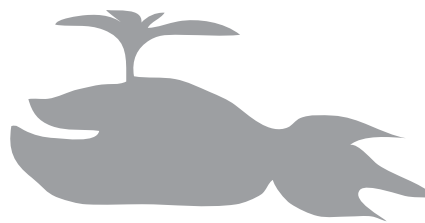
ENDING FASCINATION WITH OTHER PEOPLE’S OPPRESSOR MATERIAL

I think we have all been encouraged to become fascinated with each new instance of other people acting out their oppressor material. (Almost all sources of news, even the more accurate ones, perform this function.) Currently we are too easily manipulated and divided on the basis of that fascination. I don’t think we will organise effectively to end oppression until a significant number of us can get past the fascination and lead from that position. Discharging and understanding our own oppressor material helps us become less fascinated with other people’s.

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF DIVISION

I am currently writing an article about how division is a more fundamental problem than oppression—and how the main function of oppression is to maintain division. All oppressive societies maintain systems of “divide and rule.” Under these systems, every single person is assigned both oppressor and oppressed roles. However, we tend only to notice where we are oppressed. If our liberation strategy is “find the oppressors and stop them,” then we put ourselves in a position in which we cannot understand the system accurately enough to organise to end it.

Karl Lam
Burwell, Cambridgeshire, England



Catholic, on Our Own Terms

Joanne Bray, the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, led an excellent workshop for our constituency, in England, in March of this year. The participants came from ten or more countries and with very different experiences of being Catholic—the most obvious from living in a predominantly Protestant country, like South Africa, the United States, or England; in a predominantly Catholic country, like Chile, Mexico, or Italy; or in a country divided by religion, such as Northern Ireland, Germany, or the Netherlands.

We were encouraged to discharge on everything associated with being Catholic—based on our experience of external or internalized oppression within our country of origin—while looking at the Catholic identity. We were encouraged to re-evaluate and claim, or reject, everything on our own terms, with our own minds. This included the word “Catholic” and any and all of the divisions amongst us—especially the divisions between those of us who are not (or never were) observant and those of us who are “practicing.”

On Sunday morning Joanne talked about how a fourth-century emperor wanted to unite, for his own political purposes, an empire that had been divided for centuries into factions based on religious beliefs. To do this he called together a group consisting exclusively of males (who were not discharging) to define beliefs in a short creed. This creed meant an end to dissension, be it religious or political. It meant “One Empire, One Emperor, One God.” Eventually it meant that religion was backed by the power of the state to persecute those seen as “heretics” within the new alliance. This installed, for centuries to come, recordings of fear and submission surrounding what defined “Catholic.” It also eventually initiated a separation and persecution of Jews, who became seen as “other.”

Given this history, we were encouraged to discharge, to appreciate everything we valued from our culture and religion, and to take a fresh look at early memories of what we’d held as sacred, including all rules, prayers, creeds, structures, and authorities. We were to take the time to actually “own” our minds and what we believed or did not believe, to strip them of fear and submission recordings. Joanne used herself as an example and said, “I am never more of a practicing Catholic than when I am leading in RC! This is when I use my mind and leave no one behind.”

We can separate distress recordings from our culture and beliefs (about life, meaning, spirituality, the nature of human beings), just as we separate the human being from the distress pattern. It is premature to say that we have a view of a rational religion (one guided by intelligence versus old feelings). That would be like saying we have a picture of rational sex. Given the ancient confusions we’ve each inherited, we have a body of work to do before we can say we have a picture of a religion free of distress. At the same time, we can look for ideas from our culture, tradition, religion that are consistent with RC. One example is a quote from a second-century theologian: “The glory of God is the human being fully alive.” Is this an idea we can hold on to that is parallel to RC? Is it something we recognize as expressing human intelligence? Are there other “diamonds” amidst the confusions?



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • JENNIFER ROBERTS

At the workshop we worked on four things:

Insignificance. How can we use the contradiction (to distress) that we belong to a group of 1.2 billion people—most of whom are colonized people from the global south, many of whom are People of the Global Majority? Can we require our allies to remember this important fact? Can we remember that each and every one of us matters—as an individual and as part of a people—and that no one gets left behind as “insignificant”? We are each significant.

Identity. In sessions we can use the phrase “I am a Catholic” to discharge and flexibly claim the identity, or we can discharge on “I’m not a Catholic; I’m a human being.” This discharge work is not the same as requiring a person to go to church or to claim a set of beliefs. Rather it is to dissolve the internalised oppression and to begin the work on oppressor recordings.

Isolation. Working consistently on identity will help us end the separations among us as Catholics. Our unity is very important now. We need to be a cohesive force for good, given what we Catholics understand about social justice, all-for-one-and-one-for-all, and not leaving anyone behind.

Invisibility. As a contradiction to the invisibility of Catholic social-justice activists, there was an entire wall at the workshop filled with photographs and short biographies of women and men who have been models of courage and integrity as Catholics, who have stood against oppression and changed the world in liberating ways.

Roslyn Cassidy

Johannesburg, South Africa

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Catholics

More Relaxed as a Northern Irish Catholic

I recently participated in a Catholic liberation workshop, in Manchester, England, led by Joanne Bray, the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics.

Since the workshop I feel more reassured and have more “ground beneath my feet” about my goodness as a person. And I feel that my thinking might just be useful and my life choices just fine.

This is a good destination for any Catholic to arrive at and journey on from. All our young lives we were told about sin, having to confess, and not being near enough to God. As teenage girls we were told that it was our fault if boys acted thoughtlessly or aggressively in a sexual way.

After two workshops with Joanne, I finally have a more relaxed attitude toward the “Catholic” label. It is quite wonderful to arrive at where I can say that I am Catholic, be happy about it, and know that it has richness and appropriateness for this world’s challenges.

I should mention that I am a Northern Irish Catholic, which brings a dual identity. The Indigenous people of Ireland are largely Catholic, and we were the target of colonisation and genocide by the British, our next-door neighbours. It is hard to separate one identity from the other, and each brings its unique challenges and positive attributes.

Catholicism gave me a social conscience, long before I knew what that was, and allowed me to apply it to the conflict and political upheaval. We learned to care for neighbours, notice and help those in difficulty, and raise our heads to international problems too. We learned that when all else was hopeless, we still could hope and pray, and that no one could take that from us.

Now I know that that attitude is not just some foolish helpfulness but rather what is needed to change the world for the better. As Patty Wipfler (a former International Liberation Reference Person for Parents) pointed out, we will need to bring the generosity of spirit we have with our children out into the world to leaven the work of wide world change.

My parents did their best in difficult times. I have many happy memories of us seven children gathered around my mother and father in a farm kitchen, saying the Rosary [a series of prayers said while moving the fingers along a set of beads] every evening. All those in need got a mention and a prayer.

As an Indigenous and colonised person, at times I can hardly raise my head because of the long-ago-absorbed ridiculing and demeaning. We were dismissed as second-rate citizens, not to be trusted, and were literally targeted

continued . . .



BASQUE COUNTRY • DAPHNE DERTIEN

LIBERATION

... continued

for destruction. Simply being Catholic in Northern Ireland was enough to be shot and killed (more so for men than for women), and we were seen as expendable, financially and socially, in many business and community settings.

We lived with and survived that and are in a much better place now that we are achieving political peace. But although things have gotten better since the Belfast Peace Agreement of 1998, the oppression still lies deep in our souls. I often look at people at Mass and think that they are there not because of a deep and connected religious faith but rather because of an age-old habit of huddling together to get away from the colonial oppression.

The oppression and fear of being killed have put national liberation at the top of the change agenda in Ireland. A big problem for me, as an Irish Catholic woman, is that it has superseded the awareness of and efforts to end sexism. The well-being of children was also overlooked in the old-fashioned, limited view of the "Irish liberation" struggle.

Unlike the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, the Church in Ireland never truly joined the opposition to the political oppression. It kept itself safe, lest it lose its place with the powers in the country. This, too, has affected our relationship with our religion.

Considering my dual experience here in Northern Ireland, I am reassured that my understanding of the world, as formed in a Catholic home with three generations of wide-world activism sewn in, is just right. The decisions I have made in life are good, and I will not reprimand myself for them. They include marrying a Protestant, getting

divorced, being a single parent, not having any Catholic religious symbols in my Irish home, and going to Mass on my terms. I now consider myself a good Catholic, and I'm able to say that, even in a political setting. I also have the confidence to share my understanding of society with my family and in RC.

I should add that my feelings of strength come from the relationships I have built in our small RC Region. Four other Catholics from Northern Ireland accompanied me to the workshop. We are all in a Catholic support group in Belfast. Pascal McCulla has led this group for many years. He persists, makes sure nobody is left behind, and demonstrates the depth of relationship building necessary to keep a "post conflict" RC Community together.

Joanne made sure that we addressed language liberation right from the first evening of the workshop. When we set aside our "English first" language supremacy and listen to people who speak other languages, we get to know them. It was also an invitation to reclaim my own "lost language" of Irish. I discovered that "oppression" in Irish translates as "a foot on your stomach." The riches to be discovered in our languages!

It was a great workshop for me and my people. Joanne, you should be well pleased with what you achieved in Manchester.

Sheila Fairon

Portrush, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Catholics



LOUGH KEY FOREST PARK, COUNTY ROSCOMMON, IRELAND • ANET MOORE

Forging Unity across Class Barriers

We have finally evolved to a clear understanding that all classes in this society are oppressed by the society itself. We are trying to forge bonds of unity across the most intransigent class barriers of the past, toward creating a movement that will include people from all classes, comprising the great majority of the population, and be dedicated to creating a rational society.

Harvey Jackins

From *A Better World*, page 288

The following four articles are about the Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop, led by Diane Balser, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, in December 2015. For more articles on contemporary women's issues, see pages 33 to 47 of the July 2016 Present Time.

I've Always Been Female

I loved being at the Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop. On Saturday night, after two days and three nights of not having to constantly negotiate sexism and male domination, I felt a sense of sisterhood as we, a hundred and fifty females, sang joyously, took up space, put our minds together, and worked hard on our liberation.

I'm a forty-one-year-old heterosexual Chinese-heritage female raised upwardly mobile by immigrant parents and a grandparent. I have avoided claiming being female, because of how hard it is to face the brutality of sexism and male domination—the constant threat of sexual violence; the objectification, commodification, and handling of our bodies that is considered acceptable; the messages and policies that say our bodies are not our own; being considered the property of men; the super-exploitation of our labor and reproduction; and on and on.

The sex industries have had a significant market in Asian countries, because of the history of war and imperialism there and the racist stereotyping of East Asian and Pacific Islander women as subservient, accommodating, docile, delicate, and fragile.

I was not going to be boxed into the stereotype of an Asian female and left vulnerable to sexual exploitation. And because of the images around me in books, on television, and so on, I didn't feel female. Racism dictated that female was how white girls looked. (I did notice that in my Chinese community, where I wasn't targeted for looking different, I could be more myself, and that myself was female.)

I disliked looking traditionally "feminine." I didn't like dresses, skirts, dress shoes, purses, and make-up. Until I started Co-Counseling, I wore baggy clothes that hid my body. In my twenties, people assumed that I was a

Lesbian, because of how I looked and dressed and how I interacted with my closest female friends (both Lesbian and heterosexual). I felt glad to be targeted with Gay oppression as opposed to fitting into the racist, stereotyped box of an Asian female and feeling vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

I now realize that I've always been vulnerable to sexual violence, objectification, and commodification—because I've always been female. Every way I've ever been treated has been as a female. I have to look squarely at what it means to be female—at both how wonderful it is and how terrifying sexism and male domination can be. There is no way to get around it. But together as sisters (and with our "sister" male allies) we can fight for our true liberation and the liberation of all people.

*Irene HongPing Shen
Brooklyn, New York, USA*

A Mere Fraction of What Happened

I identify as an African-heritage Lesbian. The Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop was one of the safest places I've had in RC to work on my early hurts from male domination that set me up for a Lesbian identity.

Diane is clear about not being "liberal" in our counseling. For me that means not being afraid to expect RCers to discharge on wide-world issues that confuse us and inhibit our re-emergence. For example, in RC we have thinking about pornography and gender identity that does not align with wide-world perspectives. Diane did not shy away from counseling women on their early sexual hurts, as they are the glue that holds so much of our material (distress) together. She did not shy away from describing how identities collude with early feelings and do nothing to change the underlying class system that is the basis of sexism and male domination.

I led a topic group with another woman about paid and unpaid labor. What is considered women's work in the Western Hemisphere started as completely unpaid work by women who were owned by men. The institution of marriage set things up so that women who weren't enslaved were effectively owned by their husbands. As a result, female income has always been seen as supplemental to male income and therefore consistently undervalued.

That's a mere fraction of what happened over the weekend!

Anonymous

A Glimpse Outside of Male Domination

I was one of nineteen men who attended the Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop.

Some time ago I heard Diane Balsler say that even though women are the majority in RC, RC is still operating under male domination. At the workshop I was able to understand the truth of that. Because the workshop operated, to some degree, outside of male domination, I had a chance to observe women speaking their minds with more confidence and conviction and at greater length than in typical RC settings. I now see how the effects of male domination are operating nearly all the time, everywhere—pushing women to be quieter, less opinionated, less confrontational, less at ease; to be taking less initiative on their own behalf; and so on.

The sessions in front of the workshop illuminated the devastating distress recordings installed by the sexist society, via the institution of marriage, the sex industries, messages about body image, and so on. It is unlikely I will ever again underestimate the fight women face every minute to be



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themselves, and to be pleased with themselves.

This was the first time I'd seen Diane lead a workshop. I could see the influence on her leadership of Jewish traditions—speaking one's mind, intellectual engagement, a deep sense of history (particularly the history of oppression), reaching for members of other oppressed groups, humor, doing the right thing, and the open exchange of opposing opinions.

We men did our best not to act out the patterns installed by male oppression. Instead we put our attention, as a group, on the women and the work they were doing. Notably, I felt less competition among the men than is typical in any setting, RC or not. In this situation, the competition would have taken the form of trying to prove who was the best ally to women. I sensed none of that. I sensed that we wanted, equally, the best for ourselves and the best for each other. We were kind to each other and noticed how connected we were.

Typically, I am a quiet person. At this workshop I spoke up more often, sometimes in contradiction to another man. I think I was able to do this, in part, because I was at a workshop led by Diane, who speaks from her powerful and effective mind.

Since the workshop, I've had numerous long conversations with my partner, a woman, about the workshop and about her past and current life within the oppression of women. I think she is showing me more of the effects of sexism and male domination, and I have more attention for it.

Jay Raymond

Frenchtown, New Jersey, USA

Still Much More to Do

I attended the Contemporary Women's Workshop as one of nineteen male allies. It was an amazing workshop and an honor to be there.

I have a three-year-old daughter. My wife does not want to have any more children; I can see that it's the right decision for her, but I have been sad about it.

At the workshop I realized I would not feel as sad if my only child was a boy. Deep down, I feel like my daughter is not enough, like she is not as valuable or important to me as a son would be. It was hard to admit this to myself, but once I did, it opened up an ocean of distress to discharge.

One of the first messages I got after I was born was that it was great that I was a boy. People were excited about it. I don't know that anyone ever explicitly said that girls were not as good as boys, but that was the implication.

I have been having great sessions on all the messages that it is better to be male than female. For instance, I have never seen a movie in which the family gushes with joy because their first child is a girl. Rather, it is when it's a boy that great joy is expressed, particularly on a father's face.

I think that the strength and unity of the women at the workshop, and the clear message of "female first," made it possible for me to look at all this. I have been a good father to my daughter, and a good ally to her as a female—yet there is still much more to do.

Anonymous

Appreciating *Present Time*

Thanks for PRESENT TIME. I love reading it all the way through and taking responsibility for getting it to the people in the Leicester Area (in England) and others who are not in organised Areas.



Anthony Guy Simmons
Leicester, England

Dear Tim,*

Thanks for the latest PRESENT TIME! It arrived today and is packed with great articles. Could I have permission to copy your article "Reaching Across the Line Drawn by Racism" for my Area workshop tomorrow?



Hao-Li Tai Loh
Merion Station, Pennsylvania, USA

* Tim Jackins



JAPAN • DIANE SHISK



I not only immensely enjoy the publication but also derive a great deal of healing and inspiration from it.

Tala Jalili
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Thanks for getting the most valuable literature out into the world.

Trevor Whitton
Flemington, Victoria, Australia



PRESENT TIME is a veritable cornucopia of encouraging information, good thinking, and contradictions to daily distress.

Penny Ives
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Good Hygiene

I'm glad you remember to look at the RC literature when you get sunk. It's my dependable way of handling my distress when it comes up in my sleep. It certainly helps to reach for *Present Time* and start reading.

I think that reading RC literature first thing in the morning is an absolute necessity for good hygiene.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1989

The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <www.rc.org>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, *The Human Side of Human Beings*, and the RC postulates)
- Introductory talks (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986) and Tim Jackins (2008)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- *The Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2013 edition, and forms
- Updates to and articles referred to in the *Fundamentals Teaching Guides*
- Translations of articles into many languages, and language liberation information
- Articles from recent journals and *Present Time*
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Contact information for ordering literature from Rational Island Publishers
- An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Articles about teaching RC and outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974 to 2011)
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives
- And more

How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

Online Fundamentals Class

An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via e-mail is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions.

Please see the RC website at <www.rc.org/onlineclass> for more information about how to sign up for membership in the online fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <www.rc.org>. The e-mail address for UER is <uer@rc.org>.

United to End Racism is working with other groups involved in eliminating racism, and sharing with them the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.

Sustaining All Life

Sustaining All Life (SAL), a project of the RC Communities, sent a delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris, France, in late 2015. Sustaining All Life presented workshops, held public forums and caucuses, and led support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of the work of taking the tools of RC to climate change activists. We will be sending a delegation to COP22 in Morocco in November 2016. For reports on our activities and more information, see <www.rc.org/sustainingalllife>.

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. These lists are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for active leaders only. (If English is your first language, part of being an active member of the Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) If you would like to subscribe to a list, first e-mail the person in charge of the list, then forward that person's approval, your request, your contact information (phone number, mailing address, city, state, postal code, country), and whether or not you have a subscription to *Present Time*, directly to the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>. Read the information below for the various lists and whom you need to contact for approval to subscribe to them.

RC Community Members: <rc@mail.rc.org>.

Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism: <uer@mail.rc.org>. Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person. (This list is for trading information on the theory and practice of using RC in the fight to eliminate racism, both inside and outside of the RC Community.)

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons: <ilrp@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Editors of RC or non-RC publications: <editors@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature:

<translators@mail.rc.org>. Contact Truus Jansen, Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator, at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of African-Heritage People:

<black@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People, at <bjlove.rc@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Artists: <artists@mail.rc.org>.

Contact John Fehringer, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <rc@fehinger.com>.

Leaders in the Care of the Environment:

<environment@mail.rc.org>. Contact Wytske Visser, International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment, at <wytskevisser.coe@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Catholics: <catholic@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, at <jmbray@aol.com>.

Leaders of College and University Faculty:

<colleagues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Ellie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty, at <ebrown@wcupa.edu>.

Leaders on Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:

<health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton, International Liberation Reference Person for People with Disabilities, at <marsax@wid.org>.

Leaders of East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-Heritage People: <asian@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <franciechew@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Educational Change:

<education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

Leaders of Elders: <elders@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Pam Geyer, International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, at <pgeyer@medcetera.com>.

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RC ON THE INTERNET

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Leaders of **Family Work**: <family-work@mail.rc.org>. Contact Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at <ckesser1@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People**: <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon, Regional Reference Person for Northern Ireland, at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

Leaders of **Jews**: <jewish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, at <nbiinc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as**: <latino@mail.rc.org>. Contact Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at <garcialore51@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Men**: <men@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **"Mental Health" Liberation**: <mental-health@mail.rc.org>. Contact Janet Foner, International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation, at <jbfoner@verizon.net>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People**: <middle-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, at <seangruth@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Native Americans**: <natives@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, at <MRendon70362@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Owning-Class People**: <owning-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jo Saunders, International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, at <jo.saunders@btinternet.com>.

Leaders of **Parents**: <parents@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, at <maryaaxner@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Raised-Poor People**: <raised-poor@mail.rc.org>. Contact Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, at <gbbrown@udel.edu>.

Leaders of **South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People**: <scw-asians@mail.rc.org>. Contact Azadeh Khalili, International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, at <azikhalili@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Union Activists**: <unions@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Union Activists, at <Joanieparker7@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Wide World Change**: <wwc@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <julian@weissglass.net>.

Leaders of **Women**: <women@mail.rc.org>. Contact Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women, at <dibalser@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Working-Class People**: <working-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, at <dnickerson122@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Young Adults**: <young-adults@mail.rc.org>. Contact Emily Bloch, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, at <bloch.emily@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Young People**: <young@mail.rc.org>. Contact Mari Piggott, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, at <marikathleenp@yahoo.ca>.



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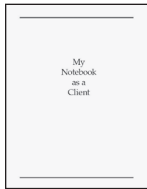
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The Translation Coordinators for each language are listed on the RC website at <www.rc.org> and on page 98 of this *Present Time*.

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(If none is noted, Harvey Jackins is the author.)

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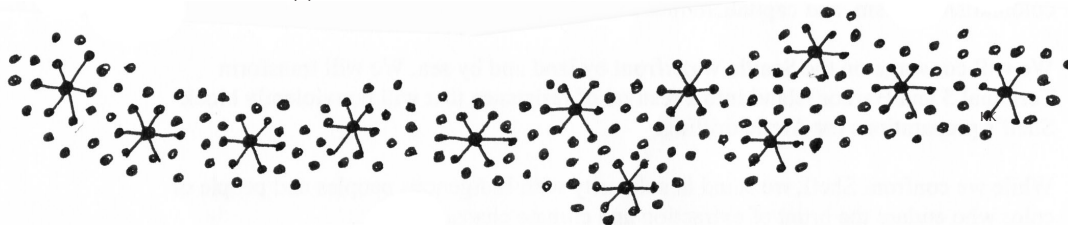
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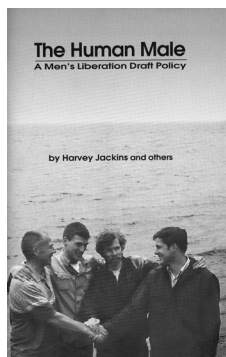
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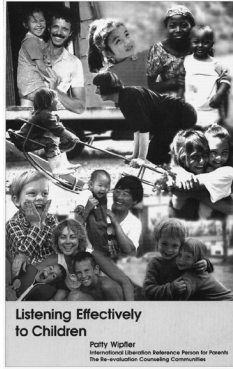
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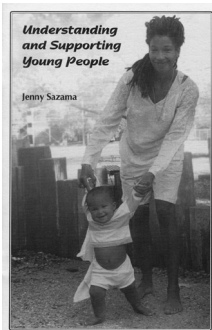
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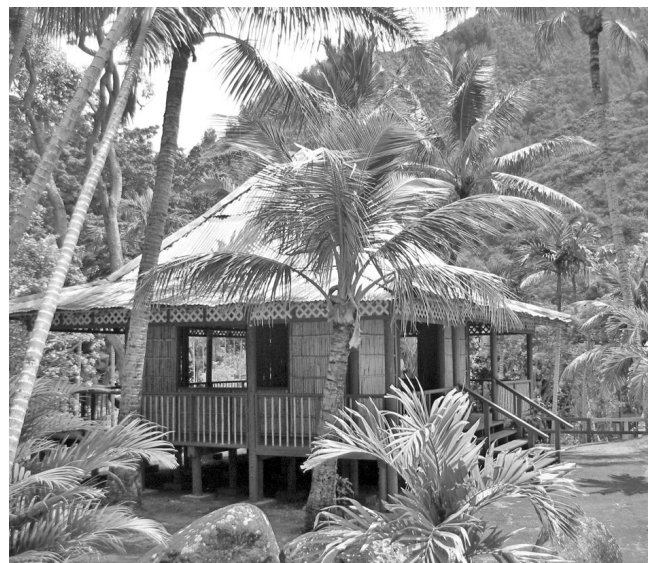
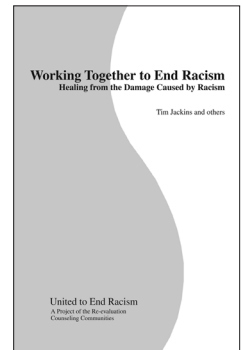
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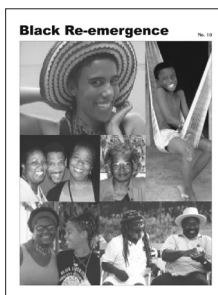


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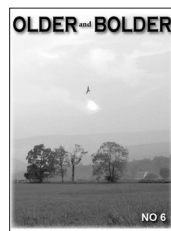
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continued . . .

VIDEOCASSETTES AND DVDS

... continued

<p>"THE UNDERSTATEMENT" (55 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A talk on Understatements and three demonstrations illustrating the use of them.</i></p>	<p>DVD 228 VHS 228</p>
<p>UNDERSTATEMENTS (AND MORE), IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH (2 hours) with Harvey Jackins <i>Several demonstrations using Understatements.</i></p>	<p>DVD 229 VHS 229</p>
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<p>THE ROLE OF WHITE PEOPLE IN ENDING RACISM (1 hour) with Tim Jackins <i>A talk at a United to End Racism workshop at the NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 231 VHS 231</p>
<p>UNITED TO END RACISM (1 hour, 24 minutes) <i>Undertakings and experiences of United to End Racism at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 232 VHS 232</p>
<p>REACHING NEW PEOPLE WITH OUR WORK TO END RACISM (1 hour, 51 minutes) <i>Ten- to fifteen-minute segments from ten of the United to End Racism workshops at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 233 VHS 233</p>
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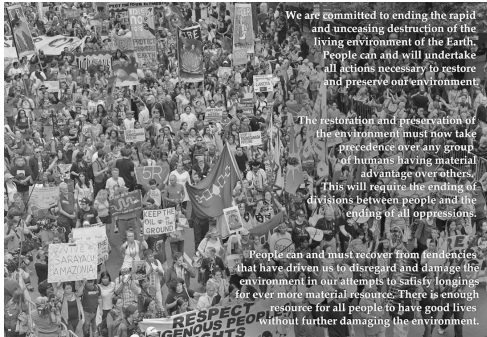
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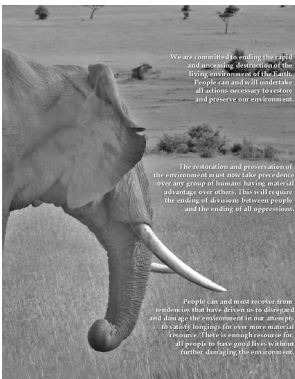
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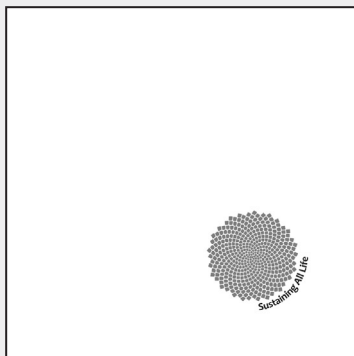
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Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

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When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others and more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

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