

**Roots in the Movement:
Imagining a New Radical Organization for Seattle and Beyond
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"Another world is possible," the slogan says, and I ask you if you believe it.

"I don't know," you reply, squinting, hesitant. "I think I do."

I tease you lightly about your uncertainty, but you are looking down, carefully preparing a large pile of words.

"It all just seems so far gone," you say. "It seems like there's so much wrong in the world, I don't know if I really believe it can be changed. I can say I believe it, but if I'm being honest, no...I just don't see it. It's too late for us. Pieces, yes; pieces can be improved...but the whole thing? It's just too big."

I'm looking down now also, nodding and listening. You continue.

"I've gone to meetings, I've gone to marches, I've been wanting to change things for so long, but it doesn't all work out like that. It's a grind. Ideals so often end up grinding us down, you know? With the resistance we get, the infighting, the constant internal conflict, the feelings of guilt and judgment and misunderstanding...the loneliness...it gets so tiring. And this is usually just in fighting for those little pieces! And who knows if we'll actually even win anything from it, from all of the toil and heartache...and so people get burnt out even in the planning stages of a project. They just stop showing up at meetings. If it's this hard now, while we're so small, focusing small, what reason or room is there for focusing big?"

"I don't know if another world is possible, but I do know that I get exhausted when I think about it."

You look over at me, and I look up at you. There is a recognition there. The same sadness, the same tiredness, the same dissatisfaction. And underneath all that, the same fiery desire. There was a time, and we both remember it, when just standing up and fighting was enough to keep us going. When the struggle seemed like this vast, open field, full of possibilities and strange new ideas, names and dates and histories that we didn't quite remember, but were inspired by nonetheless. Before deadlines and press releases, before grant proposals and dissolving organizations, there was a time when we were fueled simply by values, which felt so rich and real. Justice. Equality. Change.

Another world did seem possible.

In our silence, there is a dialogue going on between us, as both of our minds are circling around the same thought:

I wish we could get back to that.

Introduction

Right now, within our local social and environmental justice movements, I believe that there is a burning desire for some new approaches. I believe that there are many people, just like myself, who deeply want to believe again, or maybe for the first time, that another world is possible. I believe that there are many of us who are pining for our movements to become more personally sustainable; for them to develop ideas and practices that better energize and inspire us; and for them also to become more effective at making *us* effective at changing the world. There is a burning desire for new ways of thinking and orienting ourselves, for new ways of organizing ourselves, and especially for new ways of relating with one another, both inside and outside of "the movement." Many of us want something more.

Yet, sadly, with all of these desires pulsing within us, most of us have been silent about what we're wanting, talking only amongst our closest friends and colleagues, complaining, wishing, but feeling too uncomfortable, too insecure, too scared to speak up about it. We are too unsure of ourselves to make any proposals. What are we afraid of? That no one will listen? That we will be attacked for trying to "take over" or "divide the movement?" These fears are real, and I know them well, but I'm getting tired and lonely in the silence. Being silent about the kinds of movements that we want—and deserve—only guarantees that we will never see them become real. And silence can be every bit as divisive as speaking up, it just looks different: a cold, alienating status quo. If we want something more, then we must build it, together, because that is all we have. And in order to build it together, we must talk together. All of us. Across our differences, across our identities, across our organizations and issues and campaigns. We must talk.

That is what this paper is about, talking together in order to revitalize and strengthen our movements. In it, I want to help us to use our imaginations to think about what this kind of talking might look like, and what could possibly come of it. I have tried to collect some of my own favorite ideas about organization, movement building, and political education, as they have filtered through my own particular perspectives and identity, and then, rather than just presenting them in an abstract, theoretical form, I have decided to present them as a kind of "what-if" story. It is the story of an alternative local reality, in which a new organization has formed that has managed to get many of us talking, an organization called *Roots in the Movement*. In this piece, we will get a glimpse of this organization's origins, its unique ideas, values, and structure.

Hopefully by reading this little story, reflecting on it, and expanding on it, we can have more discussions about how to do similar things in real life, or maybe we'll decide these imagined avenues aren't worth traveling down after all. Regardless, I hope that by using our imaginations, thinking vividly about what could be, pondering this "what-if" together, we can be motivated to expand our visions and "what-ifs" further and further into the future, until we can arrive at something that we can collectively unite around.

So, let me introduce you to Roots in the Movement.

The Back-Story

Roots in the Movement might never have been formed if Bush had lost in 2004. It was very much the shock and confusion of that November that first brought people together. With the dissolution of the Northwest Social Forum just months before, many Seattle activist folks had been wary of any more big-picture, cross-community

conversations. They had started mousing back into their warm movement holes, their own safe(r) communities, their comfortable, tried-and-true issues. But when Bush won, the urge to talk was rekindled. Silence and separation then felt like capitulation. Just sharing and listening, mourning and venting, felt like supreme acts of resistance. We were all in this together.

The first conversations were in coffee shops and over email. A few radical activists—mostly people of color, some white, mostly women, some men and trans folks—began talking about what had happened and what to do, about how to build a broad coalition of our various movements that could go beyond the dying, corrupt Democrats, toward a more lasting, transformative, and globally conscious (as in, conscious of the inspiring radical social movements blossoming in South Asia, in South Africa, in Latin America) approach. They enjoyed their coffee (although I drank juice), took down some sporadic notes, and for months nothing really came of any of it. Just some exciting political discussions, nothing more, nothing less.

Then someone suggested a larger meeting. I can't remember who, but they emailed out the idea, a number of people enthusiastically jumped onto it, and after a few more months of waffling, procrastination, and over-extension, there was, in fact a meeting. The first of many. People had actually come, and they stuck with it. Yet Roots in the Movement was still more than a year off.

As this fledgling group began to steadily meet nearly every two weeks—in churches, in conference rooms, in restaurants and living rooms—they knew that they were on a path toward building something concrete and new, but it was going to be a long time before they knew what it was going to be. That seems to be the way with good

ideas, collectively developed: they take time and patience. With this new project, people wanted to be very deliberate about what they were building. They wanted to be intentional about their process, their dynamics (communication, power, gender, race, class, sexuality, the whole gamut), their values, their goals and strategies. They wanted to create something that would last, and that would truly speak to current social realities. Perhaps most importantly, they wanted to take the time to actually get to know and trust each other (sharing meals at each meeting really helped in that regard), rather than rushing into a project that, even with great politics, was always being threatened by personality conflicts.

And as the meetings continued, a lot happened. People were challenged, and people changed. People got defensive, and people changed. People were inspired with new ideas, and people changed. Some people left, some new people started showing up, and yet most people stayed. After debates about the relationship between capitalism and white supremacy over baked potatoes, about the nuances of transgender politics over soul food, and about elitism and leadership over enchiladas, people eventually started harmonizing with each other in significant ways. At four months, the group had sketched out its basic ideas as a scattered body of notes spread out across a number of different people's notebooks. At three months, they had managed to get these ideas typed onto just a couple of pages, a foundation for what was to come:

The Basic Ideas

1) *The right's greatest strengths are the left's greatest weaknesses.*

The right has money and uses it to fund projects at all levels of society. The left doesn't have that kind of money, and what it does have is not used very efficiently or strategically.

The right has the ability to effectively, systematically communicate a unified worldview across a wide range of media, from internet to radio to textbooks to community meetings to letters to the editor to television and movies. The left (especially the radical left) lacks a broad, coherent message as well as the means to effectively communicate it.

The right, particularly the Christian right, has built an infrastructure of churches, think-tanks, and community groups that serve as the means for the development of a uniquely right wing culture; this infrastructure is growing and is becoming increasingly linked to structures of political power through the Republican party. The left has a weak and fragmented infrastructure of non-profits and activist groups that exist more or less in isolation, seldom communicate with each other, often compete for resources, and rely on professional staff rather than on mass participation and culture building; the left is poorly served by existing structures of political power, especially including the Democratic party.

Our new project should be organized to counter this reality, with modest and efficient relationships to money; with an emphasis on idea generation, grassroots media, and popular education; with a structure built around grassroots cross-movement communication and movement building.

2) *People put energy into movements that inspire and fulfill them as whole people.*

People don't participate in movements just because they agree with the movements' politics, they participate because they want to make friends, they want to feel valued and validated, they want to grow and be challenged, and they want to feel like they are making a difference in the world. Many people participate in movements for the same reason that they join churches, because they want to be a part of something larger than themselves. Many of our movements have forgotten these truths by streamlining into professionalized, single-issue, all-business approaches, that sacrifice larger values, visions, and connections for often uninspiring short-term campaigns...which we often lose nonetheless.

Our new project should be rooted in grassroots participation, in relationship building, in personal growth, and especially in a *sense of the movement* as the large, historically rich force that binds us all together in struggle.

3) *Our strength lies in direct proportion to how well we account for the diversity of our experiences and our issues.*

Many of us on the left have a dangerous tendency to try and define ourselves around one "key issue" or area of struggle, sometimes using a kind of domino theory of social change...knock one down and the rest will come crumbling. When people claim that "healthcare should be the priority of the left" or that "racism and classism are the keystones of our system," they may think that they are being strategic and even unifying, but in truth they are being profoundly divisive, because they are asking people to put aside the complexities of their own realities for something that is more abstract and simplistic, which narrows our incredibly diverse, interconnected experiences, interests, and struggles.

When we move beyond this thinking, and see ourselves as less a domino structure of movements and more as an *ecosystem of movements*, then we can see that the more we

acknowledge different peoples and experiences, and different social systems such as patriarchy, capitalism, white supremacy, heterosexism, ablism, ageism, environmental domination, and religious oppression, the more people whose lives we will speak to and whose concerns we will address.

Rather than prioritizing any particular issue or group of issues, our new project should prioritize getting people to see themselves as part of this larger *ecosystem of movements*, so that no matter what particular area of interest they have, they will participate in solidarity with all the rest of us.

The Organization Crystallizes

Writing down their basic ideas felt like a collective exhalation for the group, a release of ideas and tensions that many of them had been keeping to themselves for years. They felt refreshed to have created a space where "coalition" did not mean least-common-denominator and where "movement" really did encompass something more than short-term reform campaigns. All of them being activists and organizers in their daily lives, they felt like this new group was providing an excellent new space for recuperation and regeneration, a powerful compliment to their more traditional activist work. They were ready to build this new group to the next level.

For the first time, the group began to explicitly understand itself as building a new radical organization in the Seattle area, and with this recognition, a whole new round of questions and debates began. Who would join the organization? What kind of leadership structure would it have? What would it do? What kind of relationship would it have with all the existing organizations in Seattle? How ideologically diverse would it be? For months they discussed these questions, with a potent mixture of patience and excitement, and slowly, like a chrysalis, the form of the organization took shape around them.

They wanted an organization that would be coalitional, which would exist in parallel with existing organizations and groups without replacing or being redundant with

them. They wanted an organization that would foster visionary, big-picture thinking, and that would prioritize broader movement and community building over any specific campaigns or actions (there already being plenty of campaigns and actions in the city as it was). They wanted an organization that would have a compelling radical message and that would communicate that message through media and popular education. They wanted an organization that was truly diverse, while still being united around a core of radical politics, and they wanted that diversity to be fostered through directly democratic and participatory structures.

This is what they wanted and, with time and deliberation, this is what they built, an organization that they eventually named Roots in the Movement.

Roots in the Movement – Mission and Values

Our Mission

Roots in the Movement is a grassroots, membership-based organization helping to build a transformative social justice movement in King County through popular education, community building, and cultural activities. We consider ourselves as just one part of a much larger liberation movement.

Our Common Values

We believe that another world is possible. The global society that we all currently share has never been inevitable. It is the product of thousands of years of history, thousands of years of human relationships and human activity. And so, through human relationships and human activity, our society can be changed. It can be vastly improved. We can build a global society that better fulfills our common needs, dreams, and desires.

We are radical. Radical means to go to the root. If we are truly going to build a better world together, we believe that it is necessary to look at the roots of what does not work in our current world. What we see when we look with this radical lens is a society that is built on unfair, oppressive social systems, which demand to be replaced.

We embrace complexity. When we look at these many social systems at the roots of our society, such as Patriarchy, White Supremacy, Heterosexism, Capitalism, Statism, Ablism, Ageism, Ecological Domination, and Religious Oppression, we recognize how

incredibly complex they are, and how they reinforce and interconnect with each other on personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels. We recognize that these systems are infused into every aspect of our lives and our communities, and that none of us are immune to their dangerous effects. We are not afraid of this complexity; instead, we wish to face it directly together, never shying from how it might affect us as individuals, as groups, and as whole social movements and communities.

We have our roots in the movement. As individuals and as an organization, we draw strength from the histories of all of our peoples' various movements for social and environmental justice. Our collective stories of resistance and liberation stretch back many thousands of years, to the very beginnings of humanity, and we believe that being rooted in these histories can be one of our greatest strengths. We strive to infuse our movement roots into our daily organizational practices, so that all of us can understand how our actions are connected to an ecosystem of movements that stretches far beyond ourselves and our generation.

We believe in the strength and wisdom of our own communities. We are a neighborhood-based organization. We believe that our neighborhoods are fertile fields for the development of new community leaders, new community institutions, and new levels of community power that can eventually become city-wide power, county-wide power, state-wide power, and eventually even national power. Our neighborhoods contain the life, the spirit, the beauty, and the collective history to be foundations for building and strengthening our larger social change movements.

We are only whole when all are participating. The process of building a new society is really a process of building new lives for ourselves, lives that are based on cooperation and mutual inspiration. We can only build these kinds of lives by working together, in organizational structures in which all of us can participate, be challenged, and grow. Top-down leadership, leadership by representatives or committees may sometimes be more efficient or even necessary in special circumstances, but we hold direct, participatory democracy and authentic diversity to be our core values. Further, we seek to sustain ourselves through the commitments of our entire, active membership, not through the professionalized channels of the non-profit system. And finally, we hold childcare, youth programs, and elders programs as priorities.

We are who shows up. We strive to be a multiracial, multi-gender, queer inclusive, cross-class, accessible, intergenerational, interfaith, and multilingual organization. At the same time, we recognize the ways in which past organizations have been frozen into inaction by the lack of participation of one group or another, and we have noticed such groups going on "diversity scavenger hunts" which have only made authentic representation and cross-community collaboration harder to achieve. So, rather than making blanket statements about who we are, we will take the approach that we are who shows up to participate in our projects. If this is mostly white people, for example, then we are mostly white people, and we will live with that while taking responsibility for what that means and for how we should interact with the rest of our community. We

always strive for maximum diversity and participation, but we will not, we cannot be frozen until that imaginary point of "perfect" diversity is realized.

Roots in the Movement – What it is and How it Works

The fundamental purpose of Roots in the Movement is to build and strengthen a holistic, radical movement in the Seattle area. It is a movement building organization, plain and simple, and its structure and its activities were designed specifically to suit that purpose.

As the mission and values statement says, Roots in the Movement is a neighborhood-based *and* membership-based organization. What this means is that its primary organizational "units" are neighborhood chapters and the individual members within them. To be a member, a person must do three things: 1) agree with the mission and values of the organization, as well as with the organization's behavioral agreements and bylaws, 2) participate in the ten week Roots in the Movement class (see below), and 3) make a time commitment and a financial commitment to the organization. There were a lot of debates around the question of membership and whether it is elitist or otherwise counterproductive, and the group decided that while membership has its dangers, it also allows for a group to best sustain itself and maintain its integrity without needing to rely on grants or on top-down leadership models. Each member's primary affiliation is with their neighborhood chapter, along with any other working groups, workplace groups, caucuses, etc. they also belong to. Neighborhood chapters meet either biweekly or once a month, it's their choice, and, also, once every two months all the neighborhood chapters gather together in a meeting of the entire Roots in the Movement membership. Nearly all members are also members of more focused activist groups and organizations, as well.

Roots in the Movement's primary activities are educational and community building activities, activities designed to *expand people's roots in the movement*.

The most basic, fundamental activity of the organization is the Roots in the Movement class (see appendix), which is designed to teach radical theory and organizing skills through a curriculum based on personal storytelling, group relationship building, and social movement history. This class is free, it is offered throughout the year in many different locations, it is open to everyone, and it is a prerequisite for all who wish to join the organization.

Roots in the Movement also offers more specific classes, on specific types of organizing, on specific political issues or movements, and for specific populations within the Seattle area (ESL structured classes and youth classes, for example).

Beyond classes, workshops, and trainings, the organization hosts regular movement forums, for raising debates and questions of broad social movement politics and strategy; it hosts cultural events such as dances, picnics, game nights, sports leagues, summer camps, etc...all linked to movement ideals and legacies where possible; and it helps to produce literature, radio and television programming, and web content for spreading radical ideas through grassroots media.

Overall, Roots in the Movement chapters choose projects that they feel will speak to their neighborhoods, which will build hope and a sense of power, and which will then inspire community members to take action to win specific local changes or to build specific local institutions. By focusing almost solely on educational and cultural work, Roots in the Movement is able to really build people's senses of themselves as part of a larger movement, which they can then take to whatever specific action groups or reform

projects they want, and which bridges hundreds of previously separate groups, allowing them to cross-fertilize and provide solidarity to each other.

Building Power in Seattle and Beyond

By being rooted in neighborhoods, and by working to foster a broad, holistic mass consciousness, Roots in the Movement is pursuing a very specific kind of movement strategy. It hopes to build a new kind of community power, a complex web of institutions, personal relationships, and political alliances that will eventually allow Seattle radicals to fundamentally transform the politics of their city. It hopes that eventually neighborhood chapters will inspire the formation of neighborhood and workplace "social assemblies," which will provide a kind of radical, directly democratic form of community governance. As these social assemblies build their bases, and federate across the city, county, and even state, then the relations of power in Seattle and beyond will be more strongly contested, and radical new opportunities for social transformation will open up...hopefully toward a process of global social reconstruction: the building of a new world, all of us together.

But, even if Roots in the Movement is not successful at this next stage of building and contesting power, it has at least allowed for the development and preservation of a stronger radical culture, which can evolve and grow in future generations, and eventually inspire organizational forms that *will* build and contest power. That is one of the greatest strengths of an organization like Roots in the Movement, by itself it doesn't need to win even a single bit of actual change to be successful, it merely needs to build the kind of climate that eventually will give birth to the movements that will win changes. Roots in

the Movement is the seed and the fertilizer, and it can afford to be patient as the plant eventually grows.

Conclusion: Just My Imagination?

This is just a story, just a brief imagining of the kind of new approach that I would like to see in this city. Roots in the Movement is only one possible story among many, and I hope that by reading this, folks will be inspired to spin their own stories. I want to talk with people about our ideas for energizing and strengthening our movements. I want to hear people's fantasies of how they see Seattle radicals taking or building power. Clearly, what is going on right now, the activist status quo, is not enough. We need to be having these imaginative conversations! I hope that this little story will help more of these conversations along.

Please, take your radical dreams out of their hiding places, and let them see the light of day. We need them out here, walking among us, inspiring us to something greater. We need them to remind us each day, in the face of so much wrong, that another world really is possible. We need them to help us believe in ourselves.

I still believe in us. Do you?

Appendix: Curriculum for the Ten Week Roots in the Movement Class

Class Purposes:

- To create an environment in which people feel safe to learn, to be challenged, and to build relationships with one another.
- To learn about the complex social systems which make up the foundations our society, so that we can resist them and eventually replace them with something better.
- To develop our consciousnesses, visions, strategies, and skills for building a world that is truly based on values of justice, cooperation, equality, and freedom.
- To help each of us discover and embrace our personal roots in the movement for social and environmental justice.

Class Facilitators:

A team of 4-6 Roots in the Movement members, who have worked together from this base curriculum to design a specific agenda which works for them and their specific class constituency. At least three of the facilitators should be first-timers, so that teaching skills related to this class can be spread as far and wide as possible. The team should begin planning their class at least two months before it begins.

Class Overview:

This is a ten week class, meeting once a week, which is designed to give people a broad introduction to radical politics and organizing. It is focused heavily around relationship building and trust-building; around personal storytelling and discussion; and around the development of a social movement centered historical consciousness in class participants. Classes should never be more than a ration of 1/3 lecture to 2/3 participatory activities. Frameworks of consciousness, vision, and strategy should be integrated deeply into every class session. By the end of the class, participants should recognize themselves to be valuable members of the movement, and they should feel at least basically prepared to engage in concrete action to help our movements in the struggle for justice.

The Curriculum:

Session 1: *Introductions, Relationship Building, and Intro to Holistic Politics – 8 hours*

This extra long opening session is focused on helping participants to feel safe and comfortable with each other, to get to know each other, and to begin thinking about their relationships to social and environmental justice work. Discussion questions such as, "Talk about one movement for social change that has affected your life" and discussion questions that draw out people's values and visions are all highly recommended.

Simultaneously with this relationship building and personal reflection work, participants, basic concepts of holistic politics (oppression, power, privilege, institutions, interconnections, internalization, globalization, consciousness, vision, strategy, etc.) should be covered.

The plan for the rest of the class should be introduced in this session as well.

Session 2: *Gender, Sexuality, and Patriarchy – 3 hours*

This session should continue personal reflection and relationship building by getting participants to discuss their childhoods, socializations, and their ideas about

relationships as a whole...all through an examination of gender and patriarchy. Issues of sexual and domestic violence, institutionalized patriarchy, community accountability, male privilege, trans politics, and heterosexism should all be discussed at least briefly.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: feminist, queer liberationist, men's, and anti-violence movements.

Session 3: *Culture, Race, and White Supremacy – 3 hours*

This session should build from personal to more culture wide reflection by getting participants to discuss their cultural roots and their relationships to structures of racism in the United States. Concepts such as institutionalized racism, genocide, white privilege, internalized oppression, colonialism, nationalism, and cultural appropriation should be discussed.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the Chicana/o movement, the civil rights movement, indigenous movements, the Puerto Rican independence movement, women of color movements, etc.

With this and all future sessions, special care should be taken to integrate interconnections into as many activities as possible.

Session 4: *Capitalism, Classism, and Anti-Capitalism – 3 hours*

This session should focus on getting students to develop their institutional analysis skills, by pushing them to analyze the economic institutions that surround them, as well as the ideas of anti-capitalist movements trying to replace those economic structures. Concepts such as markets, corporations, corporate globalization, consumerism, ruling class, working class, poverty, exploitation, labor, strikes, cooperatives, and socialism should be discussed.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: socialist movements, the global justice movement, cooperative movements, movements for universal healthcare, etc.

Session 5: *Militarism and the State – 3 hours*

This session should encourage students to think about governance structures and questions of nationalism and patriotism, by having them examine the structures and ideas behind the US state. Issues such as the branches of government, lobbying, privatization, the armed forces, the police, war, censorship, cointelpro, the intelligence services, the mainstream media, and patriotism should be discussed.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the anti-war movement, the nuclear freeze movement, the anti-School of the Americas Movement, the anti police brutality movement, etc.

Session 6: *Imperialism and Internationalism – 3 hours*

This session should expand on the previous sessions by expanding our thinking to the international level, exploring how our ideas and experiences of the system in this country might be related with the experiences of others across the world, and thinking

very seriously about what international solidarity means. Issues such as globalization, war, imperialism, colonialism, debt, structural adjustment, the cold war, the war on terror, the global south should be integrated into the session.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the global justice movement, international indigenous movements, movements against global sex trafficking, movements for debt-forgiveness, Latin American social movements, etc.

Session 7: Ecology – 3 hours

This session should get participants to more fully integrate their personal experiences with their systemic analysis through a discussion of nature and our relationship to nature. Students should be able to discuss their own relationships to nature and then tie that to a larger understanding of our current systems do and do not reinforce their personal experiences. Issues such as peak oil, global warming, environmental racism, cancer, extinction, social ecology, workplace pollution, and sustainability should be discussed.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the anti-nuke movement, the environmental justice movement, the earth and animal liberation fronts, the tree-sitting movements, sustainable community movements, etc.

Session 8: Ageism, and Youth and Elder Liberation – 3 hours

The purpose of this session is to re-emphasize personal reflection and relationship building by getting participants to share their experiences of ageism growing up (since all of us have experienced it), and by discussing the institutionalization of ageism in schools, in nursing homes, and within families. Issues such as compulsory schooling, the WASL, school reform, nursing home abuse, ageism and corporate marketing, predatory advertising to elders, social security, and healthcare should be covered.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the youth liberation movement, the school reform movement, retired peoples movements, the disability rights movement, etc.

Session 9: Ablism and Accessibility – 3 hours

This session should be used as an opportunity to discuss movement structures and dynamics, and how they can be either accessible or silencing to different people, all through the lens of ablist. Issues such as forced institutionalization and medication, seen and unseen disabilities, wheelchair accessibility, healthcare, the ADA, school inclusion, meeting dynamics, deaf and blind oppression, and patronization should be discussed.

Participants should explore and discuss at least two historically related movements. Some suggestions are: the deaf culture movement, ADAPT and wheelchair and disability rights movements, the movement for de-institutionalization, etc.

Session 10: Strategy and Movement Building – 8 hours

In this final, extra long session, participants should be asked to reflect on all their previous sessions, and then looking at their personal experiences as well as all the movements they explored, they should be encouraged to have an open discussion about

movement strategy. As this progresses, facilitators should offer ideas and wisdom to help solidify the discussion and to offer new ways of thinking about strategy that have yet to be discussed. Issues such as reformism, dual power strategy, insurrectionism, revolution, electoral politics, lobbying, education, media, should be included.

Concrete activist skills, such as meeting facilitation, press releases, campaign planning, letter writing, dealing with police, guerilla art, picketing, and civil disobedience should be offered, and extensive time should be made for skill-sharing amongst participants.

The final few hours of the session should be focused on discussions of next steps (Roots in the Movement should be mentioned as an option), on the solidifying of relationships, and on transitioning people out of this class and into broader action.

Filling in this Curriculum

This is Roots in the Movement's overall guide to the class. Class facilitators are expected to take this curriculum and to fill it in with content and activities that they feel are appropriate to their class and their skill levels as facilitators. By leaving the specifics of the curriculum open, we hope to empower facilitators to collaborate more with each other and to be more creative in how they relate the basic goals of the class to the specific personalities within their classrooms. This approach makes our class one of our finest teaching and skill-building tools, not just for class participants, but for facilitators as well.