

of hundreds of thousands of US jobs and wage depression even in “job receiving” countries.¹⁰ Additionally, human rights advocates have documented widespread violations of workers rights since NAFTA, including “favoritism toward employer-controlled unions; firings for workers’ organizing efforts; denial of collective bargaining rights; forced pregnancy testing; mistreatment of migrant workers; life-threatening health and safety conditions”; and other violations of the right to freedom of association, freedom from discrimination, and the right to a minimum wage.¹¹ Loss of jobs in the United States reduced the bargaining power of workers, now more desperate for wages than ever, and both wages and benefits declined, with many workers now forced to work as “temps” or part-time with no benefits or job security.

EXAMPLE: In 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, which effectively dismantled what existed of a welfare state—creating a range of restrictive and targeting measures that required work, limited aid, and increased penalties for welfare recipients. The federal government abdicated its responsibility to provide minimal safety nets for poor and working-class people, using the rhetoric of “personal responsibility” and “work” to justify the exploitation and pain caused by capitalism and racism. Sexist, racist images of poor people as immoral, fraudulent drug addicts fueled these policy changes. Since then, different cities have adopted local measures to gut economic safety nets for poor, homeless, and working-class people. In San Francisco, Mayor Newsom’s notorious 2002 “Care Not Cash” program slashed welfare benefits for homeless people, insisting that benefits given to the homeless were being spent on “drugs and alcohol.”¹²

• Scapegoating

The decrease in manufacturing jobs and the gutting of social safety nets for the poor and working class created a growing class of people who were marginally employed and housed, and forced into criminalized economies such as sex work and the drug trade. This class of people was blamed for the poverty and inequity they faced—labeled drug dealers, welfare queens, criminals, and hoodlums—and were used to justify harmful policies that expanded violence and harm. At the same time, criminal penalties for behaviors associated with poverty, like drug use, sleeping outside,

We know that the push for hate crimes laws as the solution to anti-queer and -trans violence will never actually address the fundamental reasons why we are vulnerable to violence in the first place or why homophobia and transphobia are encouraged in our cultures. Individualizing solutions like hate crimes laws create a false binary of “perpetrator” and “victim” or “bad” and “good” people without addressing the underlying systemic problem, and often strengthen that problem. In place of this common sense, we understand that racism, state violence, and capitalism are the root causes of violence in our culture, not individual “bigots” or even prison guards. *We must end the cycle of oppressed people being pitted against one another.*

2. We support strategies that weaken oppressive institutions, not strengthen them.

We can respond to the crises that our communities are facing right now while refusing long-term compromises that will strengthen the very institutions that are hurting us. As more and more awareness is being raised about the terrible violence that transgender and gender-non-conforming people face in prisons, jails, and detention centers, some prisoner rights and queer and trans researchers and advocates are suggesting that building trans-specific prisons or jails is the only way that imprisoned transgender and gender-non-conforming people will be safe in the short-term. Particularly in light of the dangerous popularity of “gender responsiveness” among legislators and advocates alike, we reject all notions that we must expand the prison industrial complex to respond to immediate conditions of violence. Funneling more money into prison building of any kind strengthens the prison industrial complex’s death hold on our communities. We know that if they build it, they will fill it, and getting trans people out of prison is the only real way to address the safety issues that trans prisoners face. *We want strategies that will reduce and ultimately eliminate the number of people and dollars going into prisons, while attending to the immediate healing and redress of individual imprisoned people.*

3. We must transform exploitative dynamics in our work.

A lot of oppressed people are hyper-sexualized in dominant culture as a way to create them as a threat, a fetish, or a caricature—transgender women, black men, Asian and Pacific Islander women, to name a few. Despite often good intentions to raise awareness about the treatment of transgender and gender-non-conforming people in prisons, we recognize

grassroots organizing, and coalitional efforts, more individuals and organizations are aware of the dynamics of trans imprisonment than ever. This work has both fallen prey to the tricky traps of the “New World Order” that we described above and also generated courageous new ways of doing the work of transformation and resistance that are in line with the radical values that we also trace. What was once either completely erased or significantly marginalized on the agendas of both the LGBT and anti-prison/prisoner rights movements is now gaining more and more visibility and activity. We think of this as a tremendous opportunity to choose which legacies and practices we want for this work moving forward. This is not about playing the blame game and pointing fingers at which work is radical and which is oppressive, but rather about building on all of our collective successes, losses, and contradictions to do work that will transform society (and all of us) as we know it.

Below are a few helpful lessons that have been guided by the values above and generated at the powerful intersections of prison abolition and gender justice.³³

1. We refuse to create “deserving” vs. “undeserving” victims.³⁴

Although we understand that transgender and gender-non-conforming people in prisons, jails, and detention centers experience egregious and often specific forms of violence—including sexual assault, rape, medical neglect and discrimination, and humiliation based on transphobic norms—we recognize that all people impacted by the prison industrial complex are facing severe violence. Instead of saying that transgender people are the “most” oppressed in prisons, we can talk about the different forms of violence that people impacted by the prison industrial complex face, and how those forms of violence help maintain the status quo common sense that the “real bad people”—the “rapists,” “murderers,” “child molesters,” in some cases now the “bigots”—deserve to be locked up. Seeking to understand the specific arrangements that cause certain communities to face particular types of violence at the hands of police and in detention can allow us to develop solidarity around shared *and* different experiences with these forces and build effective resistance that gets to the roots of these problems. Building arguments about trans people as “innocent victims” while other prisoners are cast as dangerous and deserving of detention only undermines the power of a shared resistance strategy that sees imprisonment as a violent, dangerous tactic for everybody it touches.

graffiti, and sex work have increased in many parts the United States, and resources for policing these kinds of “crimes” has also increased.

EXAMPLE: In the 1990s, states across the United States began to sign into law so-called “Three Strikes” measures that mandated standard, long (often life) sentences for people convicted of three felonies, many including non-violent offenses. California’s law has resulted in sentences of twenty-five years or more for people convicted of things like shoplifting. The popularity of Three Strikes laws have been fueled by a growing cultural obsession with criminality and punishment that relies on images of violent and dangerous “career criminals” while functioning to imprison enormous numbers of low-income people and people of color whose behaviors are the direct results of economic insecurity.

EXAMPLE: Under President Clinton’s 1996 welfare reforms, anyone convicted of a drug-related crime is automatically banned for life from receiving cash assistance and food stamps. Some states have since opted out of this ban, but for people living in fifteen states, this draconian measure presents nearly insurmountable barriers to becoming self-sufficient. Unable to receive cash assistance and subject to job discrimination because of their criminal histories, many people with drug-related convictions go back into the drug trade as the only way to earn enough to pay the rent and put food on the table. The lifetime welfare ban has been shown to particularly harm women and their children.¹³

• Fear-Mongering

The government and corporate media used racist, xenophobic, and misogynist fear-mongering to distract us from increasing economic disparity and a growing underclass in the United States and abroad. The War on Drugs in the 1980s and the Bush Administration’s War on Terror, both of which are ongoing, created internal and external enemies (“criminals” and “terrorists”) to blame for and distract from the ravages of racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism. In exchange, these enemies (and anyone who looked like them) could be targeted with violence and murder. During this time, the use of prisons, policing, detention, and surveillance skyrocketed as the government declared formal war against all those who it marks as “criminals” or “terrorists.”

EXAMPLE: In the 1980s, the US government declared a “War on Drugs” and drastically increased mandatory sentences for violating drug prohibition laws. It also created new prohibitions for accessing public housing, public benefits, and higher education for people convicted of drug crimes. The result was the imprisonment of over one million people a year, the permanent marginalization and disenfranchisement for people convicted, and a new set of military and foreign policy intervention justifications for the United States to take brutal action in Latin America.

EXAMPLE: Following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, politicians manipulated the American public’s fear and uncertainty to push through a range of new laws and policies justified by a declared “War on Terror.” New legislation like the PATRIOT Act, the Immigrant Registration Act, and the Real ID Act, as well as new administrative policies and practices, increased the surveillance state, reduced even the most basic rights and living standards of immigrants, and turned local police, schoolteachers, hospital workers, and others into immigration enforcement officers.

• **The Myth That Violence and Discrimination Are Just About “Bad” Individuals**

Discrimination laws and hate crimes laws encourage us to understand oppression as something that happens when individuals use bias to deny someone a job because of race or sex or some other characteristic, or beat up or kill someone because of such a characteristic. This way of thinking, sometimes called the “perpetrator perspective,”¹⁴ makes people think about racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism in terms of individual behaviors and bad intentions rather than wide-scale structural oppression that often operates without some obvious individual actor aimed at denying an individual person an opportunity. The violence of imprisoning millions of poor people and people of color, for example, can’t be adequately explained by finding one nasty racist individual, but instead requires looking at a whole web of institutions, policies, and practices that make it “normal” and “necessary” to warehouse, displace, discard, and annihilate poor people and people of color. Thinking about violence and oppression as the work of “a few bad apples” undermines our ability to analyze our conditions *systemically* and *intergenerationally*, and to therefore organize for systemic change.

RADICAL LINEAGE	CONTEMPORARY DESCENDANT
of advanced degrees, and our working conditions and benefits should be generous. If we support a world in which we have time and resources to take care of ourselves, as well as our friends, families, and neighbors, we might not want to work sixty hours a week.	have survived a great deal of violence to get where we are today. Our work must support our full humanity and reflect the world we want to live in.
<p>Real safety means collective transformation! Oppressed communities have always had ways to deal with violence and harm without relying on police, prisons, immigration, or kicking someone out—knowing that relying on those forces would put them in greater danger. Oppressed people have often known that these forces were the main sources of violence that they faced—the central agent of rape, abuse, murder, and exploitation. The criminal punishment system has tried to convince us that we do not know how to solve our own problems and that locking people up and putting more cops on our streets are the only ways we can stay safe or heal from trauma. Unfortunately we often lack other options. Many organizations and groups of people have been working to interrupt the intergenerational practices of intimate violence, sexual violence, hate violence, and police violence without relying on the institutions that target, warehouse, kill, and shame us.</p>	<p>Groups like Creative Interventions and generationFIVE in Oakland, Calif., Communities Against Rape and Abuse in Seattle, Wash., and the Audre Lorde Project’s Safe OUTside the System (SOS) Collective, have been creating exciting ways to support the healing and transformation of people who have survived and caused harm, as well as the conditions that pass violence down from one generation to another. Because violence touches every queer and trans person directly or indirectly, creating ways to respond to violence that are transformative and healing (instead of oppressive, shaming, or traumatizing) is a tremendous opportunity to reclaim our radical legacy. We can no longer allow for our deaths to be the justification for so many other people’s deaths through policing, imprisonment, and detention. Locking people up, having more cops in the streets, or throwing more people out will never heal the wounds of abuse or trauma.</p>

Resisting the Traps, Ending Trans Imprisonment

Even in the context of growing imprisonment rates and deteriorating safety nets, the past decade has brought with it an upsurge in organizing and activism to challenge the imprisonment and policing of transgender and gender-non-conforming communities.³² Through high-profile lawsuits, human rights and media documentation, conferences and trainings,

RADICAL LINEAGE	CONTEMPORARY DESCENDANT
<p>wrong helps us stay creative and accountable to our communities and our politics.</p>	<p>complex. The message here is that even though it might feel nice to get an invitation to the party, we would be wise to ask about the occasion.</p>
<p>For us, by us! The leadership, wisdom, and labor of those most affected by an issue should be centralized from the start. This allows those with the most to gain from social justice to direct what that justice will look like and gives allies the chance to directly support their leadership.</p>	<p>FIERCE! in New York City is a great example of this principle: By building the power of queer and trans youth of color to run campaigns, organize one another, and challenge gentrification and police violence, FIERCE! has become a powerful force that young people of color see themselves in. At FIERCE!, it is the young people directly facing the intersections of ageism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia who identify what the problems, priorities, and strategies should be rather than people whose expertise on these issues derives from advanced degrees or other criteria. The role of people not directly affected by the issues is to support the youth in manifesting their visions, not to control the political possibilities that they are inventing.</p>
<p>Let's practice what we preach! Also known as "praxis," this ideal strives for the alignment of what we do, why we're doing it, and how we do it—not just in our formal work, but also in our daily lives. This goes beyond the campaign goals or strategies of our organizations, and includes how they are organized, how we treat one another, and how we treat ourselves. If we believe that people of color have the most to gain from the end of racism, then we should support and encourage people of color's leadership in fights to end white supremacy, and for a fair economy and an end to the wealth gap. People in our organizations should get paid equally regardless</p>	<p>An inspiring example of praxis can be found in the work of Southerners on New Ground (SONG), based in Atlanta, Ga. SONG strives to integrate healing, spirit, and creativity in their work organizing across race, class, gender, and sexuality to embody new (and old!) forms of community, reflective of our commitments to liberation. SONG and other groups show that oppression is traumatic, and trauma needs to be addressed, acknowledged, and held both by individuals and groups of people. If trauma is ignored or swept under the rug, it just comes back as resentment, chaos, and divisiveness. We are all whole, complex human beings that</p>

This narrow way of thinking about oppression is repeated in law, policy, the media, and nonprofits.

EXAMPLE: Megan's Laws are statutes that require people convicted of sexual offenses to register and that require this information be available to the public. These laws have been passed in jurisdictions around the country in the last two decades, prompted by and generating public outrage about child sexual abuse (CSA). Studies estimate that 1 in 3 people raised as girls and 1 in 6 people raised as boys were sexually abused as children, as a result of intergenerational trauma, community- and state-sanctioned abusive norms, and alienation. Rather than resourcing comprehensive programs to support the healing of survivors and transformation of people who have been sexually abusive, or interrupt the family and community norms that contribute to the widespread abuse of children, Megan's Laws have ensured that people convicted of a range of sexual offenses face violence, the inability to find work or a place to live, and severely reduced chances of recovery and healing. Despite the limited or nonexistent deterrent effect of such laws, they remain the dominant "official" approach to the systemic problems of CSA.¹⁵

EXAMPLE: As we write this, the Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act has recently passed in the US Senate, and if signed into law would give \$10 million to state and local law enforcement agencies, expand federal law enforcement power focused on hate crimes, and add the death penalty as a possible punishment for those convicted. This bill is heralded as a victory for transgender people because it will make gender identity an included category in Federal Hate Crimes law. Like Megan's Law, this law and the advocacy surrounding it (including advocacy by large LGBT nonprofit organizations) focus attention on individuals who kill people because of their identities. These laws frame the problem of violence in our communities as one of individual "hateful" people, when in reality, trans people face short life-spans because of the enormous systemic violence in welfare systems, shelters, prisons, jails, foster care, juvenile punishment systems, and immigration, and the inability to access basic survival resources. These laws do nothing to prevent our deaths, they just use our deaths to expand a system that endangers our lives and places a chokehold on our communities.¹⁶

• **Undermining Transformative Organizing**

The second half of the twentieth century saw a major upsurge in radical and revolutionary organizing in oppressed communities in the United States and around the world. This powerful organizing posed a significant threat to the legitimacy of US power and capitalist empire more broadly, and therefore needed to be contained. These movements were undermined by two main strategies: First, the radical movements of the 1960s and '70s were criminalized, with the US government using tactics of imprisonment, torture, sabotage, and assassination to target and destroy groups like the Black Panthers, American Indian Movement, and Young Lords, among others. Second, the growth of the nonprofit sector has seen social movements professionalizing, chasing philanthropic dollars, separating into "issue areas," and moving toward social services and legal reform projects rather than radical projects aimed at the underlying causes of poverty and injustice.¹⁷ These developments left significant sections of the radical left traumatized and decimated, wiping out a generation of revolutionaries and shifting the terms of resistance from revolution and transformation to inclusion and reform, prioritizing state- and foundation-sanctioned legal reforms and social services over mass organizing and direct action.

EXAMPLE: The FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) is a notorious example of the US government's use of infiltration, surveillance, and violence to overtly target dissent and resistance. COINTELPRO was exposed when internal government documents were revealed that detailed the outrageous work undertaken by the federal government to dismantle resistance groups in the 1960s and '70s. Although the program was dissolved under that name, the tactics continued and can be seen today in current controversies about wire-tapping and torture as well as in the USA PATRIOT Act. Overt action to eliminate resistance and dissent here is as old as the European colonization of North America.¹⁸

EXAMPLE: In the wake of decades of radical organizing by people in women's prisons and activists on the outside decrying systemic medical neglect, sexual violence, and the destruction of family bonds, California legislators in 2006 proposed a so-called "gender responsive corrections" bill that would allow people in women's prisons to live with their children and receive increased social services. To make this plan

RADICAL LINEAGE	CONTEMPORARY DESCENDANT
<p>"Trickle up" change! We know that when those in power say they will "come back" for those at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, it will never happen. Marginalization is increased when a part of a marginalized group makes it over the line into the mainstream, leaving others behind and reaffirming the status quo. We've all seen painful examples of this in LGBT politics time after time—from the abandonment of transgender folks in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) to the idea that gay marriage is the first step toward universal healthcare. Instead, we know that freedom and justice for the most oppressed people means freedom and justice for everyone, and that we have to start at the bottom. The changes required to improve the daily material and spiritual lives of low-income queer and transgender people of color would by default include large-scale transformation of our entire economic, education, healthcare, and legal systems. When you put those with the fewest resources and those facing multiple systems of oppression at the center of analysis and organizing, everybody benefits.</p>	<p>Queers for Economic Justice in New York City and the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project in San Francisco are two great examples of "trickle up" change—by focusing on queers on welfare, in the shelter system, and in prison systems, these groups demand social and economic justice for those with the fewest resources and the smallest investment in maintaining the system as it is.</p>
<p>Be careful of all those welcome mats! Learning from history and other social-justice movements is a key principle. Other movements and other moments have been drained of their original power and purpose and appropriated for purposes opposing their principles, either by governments working to dilute and derail transformation or by corporations looking to turn civil unrest into a fashion statement (or both). Looking back critically at where other movements have done right and gone</p>	<p>Critical Resistance is a great example of this commitment. In the group's focus on prison abolition (instead of reform), its members examine their strategies and potential proposals through the question "Will we regret this in ten years?" This question is about taking a long-term view and assessing a potential opportunity (such as any given proposal to "improve" or "reform" prisons or sentencing laws) against their commitment to abolishing—not expanding or even maintaining—the prison industrial</p>

These radical lineages have nurtured and guided transformative branches of queer and trans organizing working at the intersections of identities and struggles for collective liberation. These branches have redefined what count as queer and trans issues, losses, victories, and strategies—putting struggles against policing, imprisonment, borders, globalization, violence, and economic exploitation at the center of struggles for gender and sexual self-determination. Exploding the false division between struggles for (implicitly white and middle-class) sexual and gender justice and (implicitly straight) racial and economic justice, there is a groundswell of radical queer and trans organizing that’s changing all the rules—you just have to know where to find it. In the chart below, we draw out a few specific strands of these diverse radical lineages that have paved the way for this work. In the first column, we highlight a value that has emerged from these radical lineages. In the second column, we lift up specific organizations striving to embody these values today.²³

Deepening the Path of Those Who Came Before

RADICAL LINEAGE	CONTEMPORARY DESCENDANT
<p>Liberation is a collective process! The conventional nonprofit hierarchical structure is actually a very recent phenomenon, and one that is modeled off corporations. Radical organizations, particularly feminist and women of color-led organizations, have often prioritized working collectively—where group awareness, consensus, and wholeness is valued over majority rule and individual leadership. Collectivism at its best takes up the concerns of the few as the concerns of the whole. For example, when one member of a group or community cannot attend an event or meeting because the building is not wheelchair accessible, it becomes a moment for all to examine and challenge ableism in our culture—instead of just dismissing it as a “problem” that affects only people who use wheelchairs.</p>	<p>The Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), among many other organizations, has shown just how powerful working collectively can be—with their staff and volunteers, majority people of color, majority trans and gender-nonconforming governing collective, SRLP is showing the world that how we do our work is a vital part of the work, and that doing things collectively helps us to create the world we want to see as we’re building it.</p>

work, the bill called for millions of dollars in new prison construction. The message of “improving the lives of women prisoners” and creating more “humane” prisons—rhetoric that is consistently used by those in power to distract us from the fundamentally violent conditions of a capitalist police state—appealed to liberal, well-intentioned feminist researchers, advocates, and legislators. Anti-prison organizations such as Oakland-based Justice Now and others working in solidarity with the resounding sentiment of people in women’s prisons, pointed out that this strategy was actually just a back door to creating 4,500 new prison beds for women in California, yet again expanding opportunities to criminalize poor women and transgender people in one of the nation’s most imprisoning states.¹⁹

• The Hero Mindset

The United States loves its heroes and its narratives—Horatio Alger, rags-to-riches, “pull yourself up by your bootstraps,” streets “paved with gold,” the rugged frontiersman, the benevolent philanthropist, and Obama as savior, among others. These narratives hide the uneven concentration of wealth, resources, and opportunity among different groups of people—the ways in which not *everybody* can just do anything if they put their minds to it and work hard enough. In the second half of the twentieth century, this individualistic and celebrity-obsessed culture had a deep impact on social movements and how we write narratives. Stories of mass struggle became stories of individuals overcoming great odds. The rise of the nonprofit as a key vehicle for social change bolstered this trend, giving incentives to charismatic leaders (often executive directors, often people with privilege) to frame struggles in ways that prioritize symbolic victories (big court cases, sensationalistic media coverage) and ignore the daily work of building a base and a movement for the long haul. This trend also compromises the accountability of leaders and organizations to their constituencies, and devalues activism in the trenches.

EXAMPLE: Rosa Parks is one of the most well-known symbols of resistance during the African American Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. She is remembered primarily for “sparking” the Montgomery Bus Boycott and as the “mother of the civil rights movement.”²⁰ In popular mythology, Ms. Parks was an ordinary woman who simply decided one day that she would not give up her seat to a white person in a “lonely act of defiance.”²¹ In reality, Ms. Parks was

an experienced civil rights activist who received political education and civil disobedience training at the well-known leftist Highlander Folk School, which still exists today. Ms. Parks's refusal to give up her seat was far from a "lonely act," but was rather just one in a series of civil disobediences by civil rights leaders to target segregation in public services. The Civil Rights Movement of the period was a product of the labor and brilliance of countless New-World African enslaved people, African American people, and their allies working since before the founding of the United States, not simply attributable to any one person. The portrayal of mass struggles as individual acts hides a deeper understanding of oppression and the need for broad resistance.

EXAMPLE: Oprah's well-publicized giveaways²²—as well as a range of television shows that feature "big wins" such as makeovers, new houses, and new cars—have helped to create the image of social change in our society as individual acts of "charity" rather than concerted efforts by mass groups of people to change relationships of power. These portrayals affirm the false idea that we live in a meritocracy in which any one individual's perseverance and hard work are the only keys needed to wealth and success. Such portrayals hide realities like the racial wealth divide and other conditions that produce and maintain inequality on a group level, ensuring that most people will not rise above or fall below their place in the economy, regardless of their individual actions. In reality, real social change that alters the relationships of power throughout history have actually come about when large groups of people have worked together toward a common goal.

Together, the tactics that we describe above function as a strategy of *counter-revolution*—an attempt to squash the collective health and political will of oppressed people, and to buy off people with privilege in order to support the status quo. This is a profoundly traumatic process that deepened centuries of pain, loss, and harm experienced by people of color, immigrants, queer and trans people, women, and others marked as "disposable." For many of us, this included losing our lives and our loved ones to the devastating government-sanctioned HIV/AIDS pandemic and ongoing attacks from family, neighbors, and government officials.

Perhaps one of the most painful features of this period has been the separating of oppressed communities and movements from one another. Even though our communities are all overlapping and our struggles for

liberation are fundamentally linked, the "divide and conquer" strategy of the "New World Order" has taught us to think of our identities and struggles as separate and competing. In particular, it was useful to maintaining harmful systems and conditions to create a false divide between purportedly separate ("white") gay issues and ("straight") people of color, immigrant, and working-class issues to prevent deep partnerships across multiple lines of difference for social transformation. In this context, the most visible and well-funded arms of LGBT organizing got caught up in fighting for small-scale reforms and battles to be recognized as "equal" and "visible" under the law and in the media without building the sustained power and self-determination of oppressed communities. Instead of trying to change the system, the official LGBT agenda fought to just be welcomed into it, in exchange for helping to keep other oppressed people at the bottom.

But thankfully that's not the end of the story. As we describe below, this period also nurtured powerful strands of radical queer and trans politics organizing at the intersections of oppressions and struggles and in the legacy of the revolutionary freedom fighters of an earlier generation.

II. Reclaiming a Radical Legacy

Despite the powerful and destructive impacts that the renewed forces of neoliberal globalization and the "New World Order" have had on our communities and our social movements, there are and always have been radical politics and movements to challenge the exploitation that the United States is founded upon. These politics have been developed in communities of color and in poor and working-class, immigrant, queer, disability, and feminist communities in both "colonized" and "colonizing" nations, from the Black Panther Party in Oakland to the Zapatistas in Chiapas to the Audre Lorde Project in New York. As the story of Stonewall teaches us, our movements didn't start out in the courtroom; they started out in the streets! Informing both the strategies of our movements as well as our everyday decisions about how we live our lives and form our relationships, these radical politics offer queer communities and movements a way out of the murderous politics that are masked as invitations to "inclusion" and "equality" within fundamentally exclusive, unequal systems. Sometimes these spaces for transformation are easier to spot than others—but you can find them everywhere, from church halls to lecture halls, from the lessons of our grandmothers to the lessons we learn surviving in the world, from the post-revolutionary Cuba to post-Katrina New Orleans.