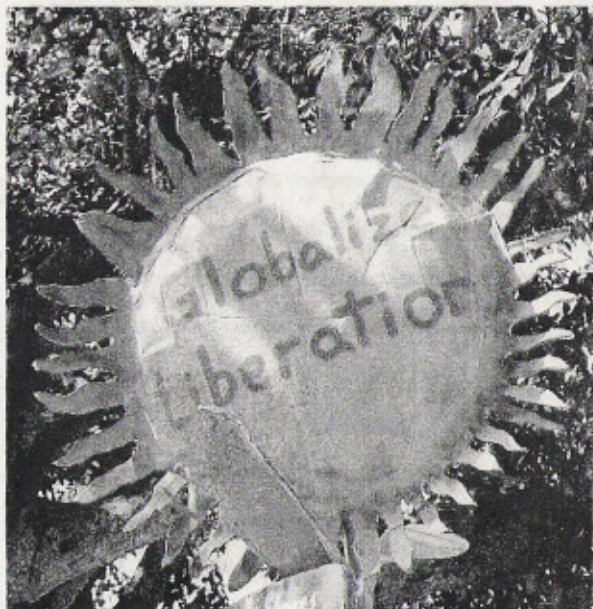


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One day I decided, enough. I could not read another book, hear another lecture, see another movie or write another paper about the injustices of the *profit over people* ideology that was taking over the world. I needed to act. I went to the WTO protests in Cancun, not knowing what to expect. I simply wanted to be a part of the struggle, learn how people were organizing, and take a proactive role in creating a world of peace, justice, freedom and sustainability. In the convergence space, I found intelligent, hardworking organizers who were cultivating a model of a self-government. On the streets, I found a diverse group of people, farmers, teachers, musicians, families and students from all over the world, living, breathing and sweating strength and resistance. In the movement I have found many movements who come together at mobilizations to harmonize their voices in a call for respect, accountability, freedom, justice and peace. When we re-claim the streets, there is carnival; a celebration of life that resists the policies that bring death to the people, the plant and democracy. The carnival sustains many of us; we taste freedom and cannot let it go. We see our struggles, as part of the larger struggle.

I went to the Free Trade Area of The Americas (FTAA) protests in November, 2003 in Miami to continue with my commitment to organizing for Global Justice. I have written and compiled the work within this booklet as a participant in the Global Justice Movement. I am not representing the movement itself, nor any particular group.

All questions and comments are welcomed.

coryfh@comcast.net

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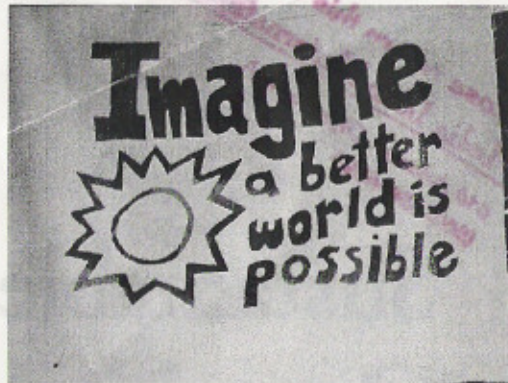
# Sustainable Organizing

*Direct-Action Mobilizations and  
Organizing for Revolutionary  
Social Change*



Cory Fischer-Hoffman





This is dedicated to all peoples in the struggle for freedom, to the amazing organizers who are making it happen, and to Adam, who reminds me that this is a process.

And,

To my parents, who loved me so well that I could not help but fall in love with freedom, and resist fear.

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*"We are the variable, we are the unknown. We are the tribes that will not be assimilated into the abyss of whiteness, that keep alive a way with the Earth that is complex and varied but also the only way for us to go on living. We are the slave rebellions and their descendents that turned it all upside down claiming freedom and democracy as our own. Breathing life into those lofty documents that were never meant to truly live through the people. We are the unions that brought us the 8-hour day, the weekend, the power of the strike. We are the ones that put our bodies in front of the war machines again and again. We are the travelers that cross borders because we know the borders only serve them. We are the ones that forced the epidemics of rape, incest and domestic violence out of the dirty little closet of secrets into a movement for the eradication of oppression. We are the ones that claim our bodies and sexuality for pleasure, for joy, for ourselves. We are the newly arrived immigrants to a country founded savagely by immigrants on another peoples land, challenging the idea that human beings can be illegal. We are the artists, poets, dancers, writers and music-makers that give form to the visions, that act as translators to the dreams. We are the ones that claim our children's future as sacred. And we are the people, the ones that live life despite everything for the gift that it is. And if that weren't amazing enough we are just one small part of a river of resistance that flows around the world and is breathtaking in its vision and scope."*

*-Ellen Marie Hinchecliffe*



## WORKS CITED (Parts II & III)

### PART II-

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"The Mask Factory" (p.46)

### PART III-

"Beyond Miami: The Future of the ACG Movement" by Matt Gaines, For the Sage Miami zine and general interest. December 5th, 2003.

"The Vision Thing" by, Naomi Klein. Printed in the July, 10, 2000 issue of *The Nation Magazine*.

<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20000710&cs=klein>

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[http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/hist\\_texts/structurelessness.html](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/hist_texts/structurelessness.html)

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## A Letter to Oly Bloc (my affinity Group):

I am writing about the convergence model and mass direct-action mobilizations in the context of affecting revolutionary social change. It is an interesting time to be writing about this...In many ways the original goal of stopping the meetings is no longer attainable due to the paramilitary forces and severe repression. But, in the convergence model we have found the power of solidarity, meeting face to face, doing public education and outreach, having trainings and workshops, and important coalition building. All of these things are valuable for building a revolutionary movement.

But the direct-action aspects are getting fuzzier; in Miami: we did not disrupt the meetings, we did not form a united, cohesive, clear anti-FTAA/pro-democracy action, we were not able to hold space. We did illegitimize their structures by bearing the brunt of police repression and brutality- we exposed their system for the violent machine that it is. And they are under real political pressure to justify their unjustifiable actions. So the successes are there.

I remember the spokes meeting on the 20th- Starhawk gave her famous "we won" speech: she is very good at that speech. I was sitting there, my face still hurt from being hit that morning, I felt poisoned and exhausted-100 were arrested, 200- injured- and there would be no relief to the poor people of the world, nor a concrete change in the dominant power structures. I thought to myself "this is winning?" Now, don't get me wrong: brave freedom fighters and justice seekers coming together in protest of injustice and in the hopes of creating a more free world- is inherently a victory...But we are a movement that has its goals set on affecting real change in the world, reshaping the structures that govern our economy, and our lives.

Revolution is a process, always. And if the global justice movement is to truly be a revolutionary movement- we must see ourselves in that process, measure our development and reassess our goals. Former goals of stopping the meeting seem somewhat unattainable- partially because we have, perhaps grown out of it, and partially because we have been pushed out of it by heavily armed forces.

I think that Miami was a historical moment for the movement, because it might have been the last mobilization of its type, and we might be evolving into something altogether different. Maybe for lack of other places to go- this is where we will be.

I do want to bring people's attention to the serious critiques of the conference-stalking model, and encourage people to address them at the presentation you do. (I assure you that if you do not address them, than they will be addressed for you!)

Personally, I don't think that the critiques are substantial enough to stop organizing these types of mobilizations, but there are some really valid concerns about this model.

On an up note- some amazing things that have come out of Miami:

There is organizing being done around improving the conditions in the Miami-Dade women's jail facilities. There is a new "translocal" listserv and movement to keep supporting the grassroots groups from the "root cause" march: this is revolutionary! This group is doing follow-up on the FTAA events, in order to provide space for concerns from Overtown community members: i.e.-vandalism, racism, police brutality, etc... (I wholeheartedly encourage you 'all to take this on- or at least look into it!)

Some comrades have moved to Overtown! They will stay there for the next 3 months, at least, and work daily at maintaining the community garden- and mentoring locals- to maintain it after they leave. Indy media and Legal team people are getting an apartment in Overtown- they are committed to helping people with their criminal cases and will be there as well to assist the civil law suits that are beginning to form. This means that over 50 activists are staying in Miami to continue social justice work- and to keep relationships with local organizers!!!

Thank you to all for being presente in Miami- and in the struggle.

-Cory



places, these times often developed into informal settings for decision-making. The grounds operations council became exclusive, and we paid a price for our power, as well.

Most of us weren't sleeping much, we were stressed, and in meetings most of the day. I felt overburdened, and frustrated. When I would see people that appeared not to be participating, I began to resent them and feel entitled to my privileges. And thus is born an oppressive system. It is no surprise that we participate in setting up oppressive structures, we are all products of them, and they are what we know best. But, in the global justice movement we want to create structures that are radically different from the ones that have been governing us, throughout life. We don't want people handing orders down. We want to be equal participants in a group, so that our concerns and visions can be taken seriously.

Now, it must be reminded that an enormous amount of work needs to be put into getting the space ready. We essentially turn an empty warehouse into an up and running information and coordination center, ready for welcoming, trainings, workshops and artwork, with cooking, cleaning, and maintenance thrown into the mix. This often takes place in a week, so time is often limited. Lunch is a precious moment for a meeting, and deciding to purchase toilet paper and light bulbs hardly seem like a controversial decision. We want to avoid a controlling over-structured elitist model as well as a non-transparent, non-accountable unstructured model. We want to abolish authoritarianism and still recognize responsibility.

The convergence model comprised of the Spokes and Grounds Operations Councils looks to achieve that model. The models are corruptible, and being that structural power and privilege contribute to who is shaping them, they run a higher risk. In order to achieve genuine collective self-governance, we must consciously work to sidestep elitism, exclusivity, non-transparency, privilege and inequality. The grounds operations council can amorphous into an exclusive club, and everyone in the movement loses when it does. We have come to a place in the movement where we are interested in not only being consciousness-raisers, but we want to affect real change. Jo Freeman, author of "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" notes that it is at this point, when the informal and seemingly structurelessness of organizations are often anti-democratic, because the informal structures that have risen to replace formal ones are non-transparent, and non-accountable. A way to avoid this is by making power transparent, being clear about who is holding the keys, and what groups are making decisions. It is important too, that in rejecting privilege that we do not do-away with legitimate responsibilities. This anarchist movement is past a structureless mess where the real decision makers aren't accountable to the group. In striving for genuine collective self-governance, we are actively refining a non-hierarchical, antiauthoritarian model that is based on transparency and accountability.

# PART I

## Direct-Action: Mobilizing for Revolutionary Social Change





## Non-Hierarchical & Anti-Authoritarian

In the global justice movement, we have been cultivating a non-hierarchical and anti-authoritarian model of organization. This model evolves differently at each mobilization, but it generally replicates the Grounds Operations Council outlined in Part II. In Miami in November 2003, at the anti-FTAA mobilization, I was a facilitator for the space and welcome working groups. I saw the convergence center progress from one big empty warehouse to a functional space for orientations, workshops, trainings and meetings. My experiences gave me practical knowledge for organizing as well as insights into organizational structures, power and oppression.

The main reason why I was one of the members of the Operations Council was completely based on my ability to be at the mobilization early. I had the flexibility in my schedule to arrive early; I didn't have to work at a paid job. I had a cell phone, which became critical through the organizing. I could be at the warehouse for 21 hours- without sleeping; which precludes parents who have children to care for, and people who can't or don't want to pull off continuous all-nighters. There were certain qualities, both personal and based on inequitable structures that allowed me to be an organizer during the mobilization.

The power that came with being a member of the operations council was both overt and covert. The obvious power imbalances were that I had keys, I had a platform for my voice, through meetings and orientations, I was connected with the other facilitators, I knew whom to contact to find out information or get a job done and I was empowered to make unilateral decisions, including asking people to leave. I was also privileged within our structures. There were rules that didn't apply to some people, "organizers" were saved stashes of food, we had created a support system, and I felt acknowledged and appreciated for my work. Through the relationships that we built, we were communicating outside of meetings, going out to lunch together, and staying at the same





## The Vision Thing by: Naomi Klein

"When critics say that the protesters lack vision, what they are really saying is that they lack an overarching revolutionary philosophy--like Marxism, democratic socialism, deep ecology or social anarchy--on which they all agree. That is absolutely true, and for this we should be extraordinarily thankful. At the moment, the anticorporate street activists are ringed by would-be leaders, anxious for the opportunity to enlist them as foot soldiers for their particular cause. At one end there is Michael Lerner and his conference at the Riverside Church, waiting to welcome all that inchoate energy in Seattle and Washington inside the framework of his "Politics of Meaning." At the other, there is John Zerzan in Eugene, Oregon, who isn't interested in Lerner's call for "healing" but sees the rioting and property destruction as the first step toward the collapse of industrialization and a return to "anarcho-primitivism"--a pre-agrarian hunter-gatherer utopia. In between there are dozens of other visionaries, from the disciples of Murray Bookchin and his theory of social ecology, to certain sectarian Marxists who are convinced the revolution starts tomorrow, to devotees of Kalle Lasn, editor of *Adbusters*, and his watered-down version of revolution through "culture-jamming." And then there is the unimaginative pragmatism coming from some union leaders who, before Seattle, were ready to tack social clauses onto existing trade agreements and call it a day.

It is to this young movement's credit that it has as yet fended off all of these agendas and has rejected everyone's generously donated manifesto, holding out for an acceptably democratic, representative process to take its resistance to the next stage. Perhaps its true challenge is not finding a vision but rather resisting the urge to settle on one too quickly. If it succeeds in warding off the teams of visionaries-in-waiting, there will be some short-term public relations problems. Serial protesting will burn some people out. Street intersections will declare autonomy. And yes, young activists will offer themselves up like lambs--dressed, frequently enough, in actual lamb costumes--to the *New York Times* Op-Ed page for ridicule.

But so what? Already, this decentralized, multiheaded swarm of a movement has succeeded in educating and radicalizing a generation of activists around the world. Before it signs on to anyone's ten-point plan, it deserves the chance to see if, out of its chaotic network of hubs and spokes, something new, something entirely its own, can emerge."

## Direct Action: Mobilizing for Revolutionary Social Change

The intention of this booklet is to provide an organizing framework for mass direct-action mobilizations. This could be seen as a flexible structure for future organizing, or a background on how mobilizations have been organized in the past. Hopefully, it will be a combination of the two. Since the 1999 WTO Ministerial in Seattle, a popular movement has risen up to challenge corporate globalization. One of the movement's tactics is non-violent direct action. In order for these actions to take place, a great deal of work is put into coordinating and planning. Exploring group process is a vital part of building a sustainable movement. However, it is important to evaluate group process and organizing strategies in the context of the ultimate objectives of actions. Whereas Part II of this booklet offers valuable information on what types of structures facilitate organizing for mass mobilizations, the intention of this section is to outline the importance that these direct-action mobilizations play in the larger goal of creating a more just, sustainable, and democratic world.

During the 1999, WTO Ministerial in Seattle, uplifting chants of "this is what democracy looks like" reverberated through the streets. So, what should democracy look like? Democracy is collective self-governing. Democracy is essentially a process of collective decision-making. People self-govern, directly or through representatives. When the decision-making process is transparent, it enables the people to determine whether they are being represented. Structures of participation, representation, accountability and transparency operate in order to foster the basic principles of freedom and equity, which are elements of democracy.

Since democracy is found mostly in the decision-making process, it is essentially a model that is always in a phase of development. Since its birth, democracy has been both growing and regressing in areas of the world. The United States, and perhaps no state in existence has been able to truly achieve collective self-government based on principles of freedom and equity. In societies there are going to be differing views. What makes a society democratic is a process in which different factions can represent themselves through decision-making. When a particular faction represents their interests as the interests of the masses, and they dominate the decision-making, it endangers a country's ability to function as a democracy. Elite interests' influence in politics, low voter participation, and high rates in inequality are important barriers to forming a democratic society. In the United States there is an electoral process, in which people can vote for representatives. Voter turnout rate has been consistently lower than 50% in Presidential races, and even lower in non-



presidential elections.(1) People under the age of 18, convicted felons, and undocumented persons cannot vote. Therefore a large percent of the population, and disproportionate amount of people of color living within the United States has already been disqualified for this type of political participation. The representatives that we vote for are supposed to speak for the interests of their constituents; in fact they are accountable to their constituents through a 2, 4, or 6-year electoral-term. Elections are the time when citizens can judge their representative's responsiveness. If voters feel misrepresented they can elect someone else to represent them. Voting is a historic, valuable and even, symbolic part of the democratic process. But, it isn't the only way to interact with policy makers. Lobbyists and interest groups can influence decisions through campaign contribution and other types of support. Since it is often those who have access to resources, who have the ability to influence politics, politics are generally shaped around the interests of the owning class. Perhaps, in this sense politics have always been corrupt but we are now living in a time when a full deregulation on people's participation in policy making is being institutionalized. Corporations who are shedding their accountability are being given unprecedented control to dictate policy. Interests other than corporate interests are being abandoned. Voting doesn't offer space to propose our own agendas. Self-government is impossible when a particular faction of society is making decisions through a non-transparent process. Just as there are market failures, democracy too, can suffer. Political dissent, protest, and civil disobedience are powerful tools for making the failure of democracy visible. Through struggle we work to achieve genuine self-government.

Non-violent direct action is a tactic that that looks to bring attention to social injustices and is generally characterized by its public, confrontational, disruptive and sometimes illegal nature. Martin Luther King rationalizes this tactic because, "Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such a creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored."(2) Direct action can take place in small groups, at lunch counters, in the wilderness of Montana, protecting the Buffalo or in large coordinated efforts. The type of direct-action that this book speaks to is the mass mobilizations that have acted as a counterforce during the Summits and Ministerials of the institutions of corporate capitalism.

Non-violent direct action takes politics into the streets. This is often a response to the failure of democracy through decision-making processes. When addressing mass street actions, Noam Chomsky notes, "A functioning democracy is not supposed to happen in the streets. It's supposed to happen in decision-making. This is a reflection of the undermining of democracy and the popular reaction to it."(3) Corporations' primary interest is profit, therefore;

While some white/European anarchists and anti-authoritarians consistently speak out against racism in the movement and work for a diverse Anarchist movement, their numbers are too few. So, peoples of color, who are largely ignored and/or dismissed in the broader anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement when we attempt to address the problem of racism, consequently, have no alternative but to organize ourselves as an autonomous force. Indeed, we believe that is why so many peoples of color have responded favorably to the call for the conference. This does not mean that we will refuse to work with white activists, just that we declare our independence.

The conference will be held at a time when peoples of color all over the world are catching hell—subjected to low-wages, unemployment, substandard housing and health care, inferior schools, police brutality, racial profiling, mass imprisonment of the poor, gay bashing, and more. These issues and problems must be seriously addressed if the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement is to grow among peoples of color. The ideology and political principles of anarchism and anti-authoritarianism must be popularized in order for substantial numbers of peoples of color to embrace our politics.

In short, peoples of color need to see that anarchism and anti-authoritarianism are relevant to organizing on the every day material issues in our lives. It cannot remain what it presently is: an abstract political ideology for middle class white people. It must begin to reflect our histories and our issues.

Anarchist/anti-authoritarian peoples of color do not have the luxury of engaging in abstract politics that do not concretely address the issues and problems in our communities. Therefore, we must form a united, non-sectarian front to fight the problems that we have in common. Within this front, the various races, nationalities, ethnic groups, etc. should retain their autonomy. While we may not agree on everything, may even have intense debates on occasion, we must unite around those life and death issues that we do agree on, and not let ethnic rivalry, political outlook, or personal animosities divide us.

### III. Revolutionary Principles of Unity

1. We oppose any forms of capitalism and class oppression and support the liberation of the poor and the workers.
2. We oppose any form of racism or white cultural chauvinism in the Anarchist movement, and call for unity and recognition of our right to autonomy.
3. We oppose the oppression of women, homosexuals, gays, transgender peoples and other sexual minorities in society.
4. We oppose all forms of colonialism and imperialism in the Third and Fourth Worlds and support the struggles of all oppressed peoples in the West.
5. We call for an immediate moratorium of the death penalty and the dismantling of the prison structure.
6. We oppose nation-state wars and the building of a fascist police state based on hysteria over "terrorism."
7. We want decent housing, food, clothing and other essentials for all, not just the rich.
8. We call for a social revolution to erect a new society entirely.

NOTE: This is strictly a tentative proposal and platform and can be freely changed by a majority vote of the membership at any time.



## Why We Need to build an Anarchist People of Color Movement

Part I of Draft Proposal for An Anarchist People of Color United Front  
*Submitted by the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers  
 (BANCO)*

Our histories as distinct peoples of color on this continent and internationally are vastly different from white people; we have been enslaved, exploited, subjected to systematic racism, genocide, and other continuing forms of terror. This cannot all be boiled down into a mere "class issue for industrial workers", like most white radicals still claim. We are today oppressed as workers and common people by the state and corporations, but also as larger victims of racial and colonial oppression.

Many peoples of color have also experienced racism even within the broader anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement, whose members are primarily whites/Europeans throughout the world. Much of the discrimination has been the exclusion of peoples of color from the movement and ignoring our issues, but some of this has taken the form of hostile white chauvinism, giving weak rationalizations in defense of white domination of the movement. In the United States, for example, anarchist/anti-authoritarian peoples of color who make legitimate claims of autonomy within the broader movement are frequently accused by white/European anarchists and anti-authoritarians of being "nationalists" who want to divide the movement, even lumping us together with non-white ethnic politicians, businessmen, and reactionary religious or cultural nationalists, claiming we are all in favor of our own "ruling class", a nation-state, or are somehow acquiescent to racism. Yet, peoples of color did not create white racism, nor do we benefit from it, so we know this is false. Anarchism's lack of diversity undercuts the whole movement, and it must change. We must organize.

One blatant example of the racism/racial exclusion within the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement in the United States was the failure of the predominantly white organizers of the 1999 anti-globalization demonstrations in Seattle to get substantial numbers of peoples of color to participate. Some said this was because Seattle did not have a large Black/POC community. However, this was inexcusable, particularly, at the WTO protests held later in Washington, D.C, which is a predominantly Black and Latin city, and yet very few Black/Latino community activists were recruited!

they cannot represent human society, which has needs beyond profit. Since real power does not lie in the hands of representatives, pressure needs to be placed on the corporations and institutions that disguise a profit-driven agenda as an acceptable representation of human need. Street actions bring attention to the misrepresentation of human need and the power imbalance that allows a policy of "profit before people."

The destruction resulting from these institutions and policies do not go unnoticed. Groups who react by announcing a "Call to Action." The calls to action are generally information blurbs about what the action is in response to and what it is that is being called for. One call to action for the FTAA Ministerial in Miami proclaimed "We, the undersigned groups and loose associations, are calling for creative, decentralized, autonomous actions...we encourage all civil disobedience, direct action, and logistical support groups to get in touch so that we may begin coordinating our efforts as best we can and in as timely a manner as possible." (4) The coordination and organizational structures that need to be in place in order to have a smooth street action are highlighted in Part II. The need for social change, and the recognition of the role that struggle has played in achieving it helps to put these mass direct-action mobilizations in a historical context. Understanding how mobilizations work also helps demystify the chaos that can be perceived by those unfamiliar with direct-action.

Historically, organized labor, environmentalists, civil rights and peace activists have used non-violent direct action to effect policy. Today's global justice activists are middle-aged pagans, independent media techies, food not bombs cooks, eco-gardeners, skillful artists, puppet-makers, and carpenters, herbalists and medics, musicians and street performers and beautifully dreadlocked and pierced punk-youth galore. A model is being cultivated, to foster the collective self-government that is strived for, politically. Organizing these various groups is effectively done through a decentralized spokes model. A handful of people form an Affinity group, (generally before the mobilizations). These affinity groups can become a cluster or form a larger Bloc. Some examples of this are the Pagan cluster, the Eco-bloc and the Black Bloc. Affinity groups send representatives to a Spokes council meeting, in which decisions are made through a collective, self-governing, consensus model. This allows groups to coordinate without sacrificing autonomy. There are many diverse groups that have different political goals, varying levels of risks, and diverse tactical approaches, coordination is key and solidarity a necessity for remaining a united movement.

Solidarity with groups who are not a central part of the direct action, yet allies in the struggle, and sometimes on the streets is an important part of movement-building. Union members and Non-governmental organizations play





important roles in rallying bodies, contributing resources, educating the movement, and helping to keep the movement open to less radical participants. In Miami, union members were punished for letting direct action participants into their rally. We recognize that solidarity is our strength and we must work to maintain it when it is undermined. Jon Sweeny, director of the AFL-CIO came to the convergence space in Miami, to pledge solidarity to the direct-action folks. These coalitions are helping to build a strong base. The strength also comes from NGO's who provide valuable research about the institutions and agreements of the global economy. They continue to work on these campaigns long after mobilizations are over, and they help to provide resources that enable us to get space and supplies for organizing.

Supplies are needed to get a convergence space ready to provide workshops, trainings, orientation information, medical support, art supplies, bike repair, a kitchen that provides free food, and space for meetings, especially the spokes-meetings to plan for street actions. Workshops and trainings require careful preparations and planning. There are generally legal trainings, medic trainings, non-violent direct action trainings, and anti-oppression workshops. The legal trainings offer "know-your rights" aspects, and a more in depth training on how to be a legal observer on the streets. The medical training is in basic Red Cross and Black cross (street-medic) first-aid. This includes learning how to treat pepper spray, tear-gas, concussion grenades, rubber and wooden bullets, tasers, dehydration, hyperventilation and other common street injuries. Non-violent direct action trainings allow groups to enact scenes, as if they were facing a line a riot cops, they learn how to stay grounded, and they can experiment with techniques. The goal is staying safe, calm and alert on the streets. There are also group art projects, magic rituals, drum circles, gardening and plenty of cooking and cleaning. How all of this is organized is explained, throughout the pages of this book. However it is important to note that the structures of organization are rooted in an anti-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, structure. How the movement organizes is substantively different from the institutions that they oppose.

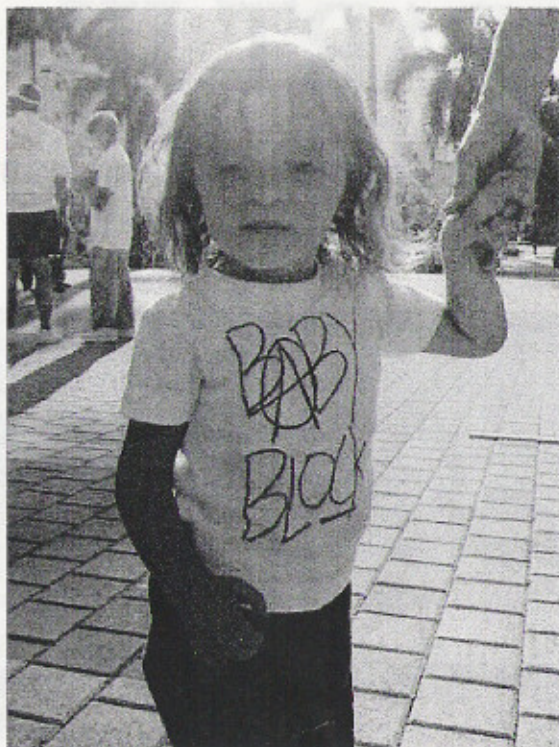
## NEED FOR A NEW MODEL

An Excerpt from "Beyond Miami" By, Matt Gaines

So the movement now finds itself at an interesting crossroads, faced with numerous questions that it must fundamentally address in order to proceed in any coherent and organized fashion. What makes the Anti-Corporate Globalization Movement unique and distinct from most other social movements is its nonhierarchical, autonomous structure, wherein small affinity groups function as isolated, mobile units of approximately four to ten people with their own decision-making processes at large-scale political mobilizations like the recent Miami protests. Any kind of overarching leadership structure to control and direct the movements and actions of demonstrators is entirely lacking, which, of course, has an entire spectrum of related costs and benefits. To be sure, there are large national and international labor, environmental, human rights, and other organizations which are recognized as providing the main impetus behind organizing these events, and, in addition, prominent spokespersons are also associated with the movement. But on the streets, though we like to chant slogans like

"The People/United/Will Never Be Defeated!", we are one large disorganized mass of people. Up against a tremendously well-disciplined, authoritarian, hierarchical military regiment of repressive state agents, who by their very nature are armed with an array of both lethal and non-lethal weapons that could easily overpower numerous small nations, we are doomed to failure. Until this basic fact is acknowledged, the dynamics and outcomes of every future battle will be dictated by the terms of the police, and we will remain trapped in a state of paralysis and immobility. In part, the ineptitude of the movement at this particular level of engaging in conflict with the state stems from an adherence to liberalism, holding positivist outlooks about the world, and maintaining a firm belief in the principles of nonviolence and morality as bases for achieving social change. What these perspectives fail to recognize is that an economic system organized around private property and an ever-increasing profit imperative is fundamentally nonresponsive to moral persuasion in any way, shape, or form. So the future options available to the ACG Movement are in reality quite straightforward. Either the movement adopts tactically innovative and creative forms of protest that have some actual potential of disrupting the ability of trade representatives to hold their nondemocratic meetings in secret, or we should pursue a strategy that moves away from the summit/ministerial approach to following the elite across the globe and trying to organize around their schedules.





The institutions focused on are different mechanisms of the same machine and ideology. There can be pressure placed on particular institutions or agreements that culminate in the mobilizations against them, but there are particular players that the Global Justice movement often spotlights. These are institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), birthed out of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). There is the G-8: The U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Japan, and Russia who have summits in which policy is set for the world. And there are the agreements such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA.) Other players are the Multinational Corporations themselves, and the neo-liberal economic agenda that is offering an ideological justification for putting profit before people.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), more commonly known as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs came into the picture after World War II. Each had a role to play in creating a new era for the Global economy. The World Bank was to provide loans to re-construct post-war Europe, and later extend to development projects in the Third World. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was to provide liquidity and sustain the international payment system. And the GATT (which has evolved into the WTO) was to work on lowering trade barriers among nations. Fast-forward half a century later, the intentions of these institutions have remained, but we now have fifty years of evidence on what their effects are.

The World Trade Organization (WTO), formed in the 1995 Uruguay Round of GATT has been successful at eliminating trade barriers on industrialized goods, which gives developed countries a comparative advantage over non-developed countries, but they have yet to remove barriers on Agriculture, which would give less developed countries the comparative advantage. The recent WTO collapse in Cancun was centered on that very issue; with the dictum on the street "the WTO kills farmers." The WTO is also characterized by its secret proceedings for determining "barriers to trade" in which judgments are made that can override laws passed by citizens of countries involved. The WTO is notorious for disallowing laws that would have protected endangered species or banned products made with child labor.(5)

Since the Marshall Plan granted interest-free money for the reconstruction of Europe, the World Bank looked to provide loans for developing countries. The World Bank made substantial loans to third world countries for development projects. Some of the money was filtered into environmentally destructive development projects and some of it ended up in private bank accounts of Third World dictators, such as Marcos in the Philippines.



Despite huge loans, the development projects proved unsuccessful and many Third World countries went into debt. Third-World debt is a serious issue, as these institutions are making countries prioritize paying interest over providing basic needs.

The Debt crisis has centralized lending with the International Monetary Fund. The IMF provides loans to cover immediate obligations to foreign creditors. Private and public lenders (including the World Bank) will generally not lend to third-world countries without an IMF loan agreement. The International Monetary Fund gives loans on the condition that countries adopt Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). Structural Adjustment Program is a development plan that has come out of the neo-liberal model of development, which will be addressed shortly. SAPs push for a decrease in government spending on public goods, privatization of the public sector, and liberalization of policies on trade and investment, establishment of an export-based economy, raising of interest rates, and elimination of subsidies on consumer goods such as food or medicine. The UN estimates that six million children die each year as a result of policies imposed by the IMF and World Bank.(6)

These are the groups and institutions driving the global economy. They are egged on by greedy corporate elites and given ideological backing by a clergy of neo-liberal thinkers. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Adam Smith initiated an economic philosophy based on individualism that is called Liberalism. He was writing about a very different time, system and economy and so, he saw free trade as the best road to development. The use of terms such as "free" trade, and even the way in which these policies are discussed, which are generally in terms of helping developing nations can be confusing and misleading. This individualist thinking had a revival (hence the "neo")- with Reagan's supply-side economics and trickle-down theory. The argument goes that if government barriers that restrict the flow of capital are removed, then investors are "free" to make huge profits that will trickle down to other sectors of the economy. If these theories held true, the third world countries that adopted the SAP-founded in them would have seen an improvement in the living conditions within their countries. If the theories don't hold up rich investors have found another way to maximize profits. Joseph Stiglitz former Chief economist and vice president of the World Bank wrote, "Policies like market liberalization were pushed...before there was a strong body of either theory or evidence that they promoted growth."(7) Neo-liberal policies are directed at increasing profits, which are unconvincingly believed to benefit the poor in the long run.

Neo-liberal thinking offers moral and intellectual justifications for the policies of the World Bank, IMF and WTO. Trade Agreements like NAFTA and the FTAA, which include a form of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (Chapter 11 of NAFTA) help to give neo-liberalism a legal

# PART III

## Convergence Model: Critiques and Commentary





foundation. These trade agreements look to create a barrier-free trading blocs in which the flow of not only goods, but services, under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), are unrestricted by governments. These agreements include clauses about intellectual property, allowing drug companies from rich countries to get patents on medicines and have a monopoly on distribution, which means poor people are essentially denied access to these medications. NAFTA passed in 1993, and the FTAA along with CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement) are being pushed for 2005, or sooner. It is important, now more than ever to mobilize against these forces before the neo-liberalism is legally and irreversibly institutionalized. These types of trade agreements are barriers to the creation of more democratic institutions.

Non-violent direct-action serves many important roles for the attainment of affecting social change. Non-violent direct-action

- Is a popular education tool
- Allows space to embody alternatives
- Is important for coalition building and,
- Illustrates a show of force.

Economic institutions are not the most riveting or glamorous topics on the news. Before these mobilizations very few people had even heard of the WTO. The media tend to flock to mobilizations in search of graffiti and broken Starbucks' windows, and sometimes they find it, but wrapped in with the mayhem of the streets there are strong political messages that get out to the public. As a result of the 'battle in Seattle' and subsequent actions, information on these global institutions have reached outside of the academics and radicals and have found their ways into dinner conversations and school paper topics. High schoolers have opinions on NAFTA and the WTO. As the locations for these ministerials are varied, the opportunity to build trust as a people's movement also presents itself. In Miami, during the FTAA Ministerial a mass leafleting campaign was accomplished. Over 2,000 fliers were distributed to local business and residents explaining why the FTAA was a threat to people, the planet, and democracy. This mass public education campaign would be worthwhile in of itself, even if no direct-action took place. By meeting people, and inviting them to join us, we can get be a voice for social justice, and we can encourage the openness that, as a movement we strive for.

A part of that is showing what it is that we stand for, and embodying the alternatives that we envision. We do this through collective self-governance and a consensus decision-making model. (See page 44) There is no one person, "in-charge" and in striving for equality, we actively work against oppression and hierarchies. We work to provide free food, medical attention, housing and trainings. Since we believe that food, medical attention, housing and education are human rights, and should be provided to those who cannot afford them, we work to provide them for free so that we are actively creating the world that we strive for. A theme that has been



spreading throughout the Americas and was alive on the Streets in Cancun, is the theme of carnival and celebration. Part of the struggle for justice is in reclaiming our humanity, free from comodification, the importance of carnival and celebration. Street actions have been full of colorful puppets, and beautiful signs, drumming and dancing, costumes and street theatre. These things represent the creativity and the fun, although we are serious about our ideals and politics, we are human and know how to have fun. This celebration gets confused, I think, and people disregard these actions as immature and unserious but this art is a direct response to neoliberalism's attack on our humanity, and it is quite fitting. There are those of us who desire to be seen beyond our economic value, who want to live in a world that is just as concerned with joy and celebration as it is concerned with wealth and industry. The environmental movement has been an invaluable contributor to the embodiment of alternatives. In Cancun, the eco-bloc built an eco-village with a composting toilet and sustainable energy sources; in Miami they built a community garden and a gray-water drainage system. These contributions give weight to the alternatives that we propose, as we illustrate their uses.

The power of the show of force shouldn't be underestimated nor misunderstood. When large numbers of people join to push society into a new direction, there is an imminent threat to the existing power structures. This threat has become so clear that cities are putting millions of dollars into security for these mobilizations. Miami got \$8.5 million in Federal funding for Security at the 2003, FTAA Ministerial.(8) Quite simply, we are not being ignored. One of the goals of mobilizations is to "derail" the meetings; make our efforts in the streets affect their ability to make decisions in our name. This can mean making so much noise outside, that they are forced to hear us inside. This means shutting down the city to bring attention to their misconduct; or stopping delegates from entering the meetings, slowing them down and causing disruptions. Although mass mobilizations are important for many reasons, time and time again this show of force is what absorbs the attention. Just because this is what is focused on in the media, and scoffed at in the meetings, this is not the extent to which non-violent direct action mobilizations work to bring about social change. However, it is an important part. As we average the independent media's and police's reports of how many people are actually in the streets, we can measure over time, how the movement is growing, what factors led to more people coming out, what less.

Although the street battles often consume too much of the media, the focus on them is both symbolic and practical. Repression on peaceful protesters highlights the violence inherent in our system, and forces a napping military might out to the streets and exposes the force that is needed to "defend" the power structures that are. On a practical level, one can really get hurt, from pepper-spray, to rubber bullets, concussion grenades and tasers it is worth thinking about this before you go to the streets. The weapons that are being used to suppress protest can go from an annoying ouch to in some cases

## Internet Resources

<http://rantcollective.org/>  
Root Activists Network of Trainers Collective

<http://starhawk.org/activism/activism-resources.html>  
Starhawk's activism page

<http://www.blackcrosscollective.org/>  
Black cross collective

<http://www.ic.org/pnp/ocac/>  
Info on consensus

<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/>  
United for Peace and Justice Organization

<http://www.trainingforchange.org/tools.html>  
Descriptions of exercises to be used during trainings

<http://www.foodnotbombs.net/>  
Food Not Bombs

<http://www.indymedia.org/>  
Independent Media

<http://www.globalexchange.org/>  
great information resource

<http://www.lawcollective.org/>  
Just Cause Legal Collective

<http://www.nlg.org/>  
National Lawyer's Guild

<http://www.infoshop.org/>  
Anarchist and anti-authoritarian info

<http://www.zmag.org/>  
Independent monthly critical of US policy

<http://www.commondreams.org/>  
News and views from the progressive community



## A NOTE ON MASKS



There is often times a lot of questions regarding masks, both by media, observers and people within the movement. Wearing a mask during street action can offer some protection from gas and pepper spray. But there are other reasons such as not wanting to reveal identity, and making a statement of equality and solidarity. Some people feel that by wearing a mask it is a statement of solidarity with the Zapatistas.

*"We will remain faceless because we refuse the spectacle of celebrity, because we are everyone, because the carnival beckons, because the world is upside down, because we are everywhere. By wearing masks we show that who we are is not as important as what we want, and what we want is everything for everyone."*

*-The mask factory (Quebec city)*



*"It would seem evident that masks conceal and silence quiets. But the truth is that masks also reveal and that silences speak. To conceal and to quiet, to reveal and to speak, masks and silences."*

*- Subcommandante Marcos.*

permanent scarring or other damage and these weapons, although not designed to be lethal, have in fact, and can kill people. For these reasons there is a growing police vs. protester mentality that carries with it both obstacles and validity. In Miami, where Amnesty International, the ACLU, the AFL-CIO and others are calling for Congressional Investigations into the excessive use of force, (9) a growing number of people are witnessing police repression that is applauded by policy-makers. Retiree's and Union members have been quoted saying that they once had a vast amount of respect for the "badge" but that after seeing them attack crowd with no provocation, they were outraged. Police repression of protests in Miami, have rallied organizations to involve Congress in Investigations, have exposed thousands of Union members and local residents to the realities of a police state, have brought attention to the unacceptable conditions in the Dade-County jails, and will, no doubt, keep people talking about the FTAA.

As mobilizations end, listservs remain active, alliances strengthen and friendships grow: these are all important in building a revolutionary movement. Seattle marked the coalition between labor organizers and environmentalist. The coalition building that takes place after mobilizations is the most important work. An organization called the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment (ASJE) is perfect example of that union. In Miami, local grassroots empowerment organizations like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the Miami Workers Center, and PowerU comprised primarily of people of color and immigrants organized a three-day march in which they highlighted the FTAA's effect on poor people throughout the hemisphere. Dan Leahy, director of ASJE wrote in an e-mail- "I hope all of us will study the organization, discipline, movement building approach of this Root Cause March and do our best to duplicate it throughout the country." This march was truly a historic event in building the movement, which, in the United States, has mostly been a white middle and upper class movement. In Cancun, the relationships were transnational. Organizers and activists learned how people coordinate in other countries, and saw the diverse ways that people are organizing in resistance to the forces of Global capitalism. This coalition building is valuable in of itself to helping the movement grow but it also creates potential for a revolutionary platform.

At a labor rally in Seattle, Union members were talking about the environmental degradation as a result of NAFTA; this is revolutionary. Anti-poverty groups are demanding food that isn't genetically modified. Animal rights groups are calling for economic accountability, and many of us who devote much of our lives to fighting single one-issue campaigns are given the opportunity to broaden our vision to a comprehensive revolutionary program.



This means that we leave mobilizations and return to labor organizing, experimenting with sustainable fuel-alternatives, or working with grassroots Welfare Rights groups, but we take with us a vision that encompasses more than our particular struggle. A representative from the AFL-CIO said that positive experiences at these marches have really been a radicalizing force for some labor members. The pagan cluster has been actively working with the anarchist groups to share magic and ideas of non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian organizing. No doubt, both are needed to pull off this revolution.

Often times there is a belief that activists on the street have no clear vision, and that their staunch opposition is meaningless if they don't have a blue-print of what direction to move on. There are many perspectives on what to do on particular issues, such as cancel third world debt, abolish intellectual property rights, include progressive clauses on protection for worker's rights and the environment into trade agreements, instate a progressive taxation system, push for universal health care and transfer power from unaccountable bureaucrats to the people whose lives these decision affect. Building a movement with a broader vision of systemic change is a process. But it is taking form, as activist George Monbiot points out "we are beginning to move on from the playing of games and the staging of parties...we are coming to develop a more mature analysis, a better grasp of tactics, an understanding of the need for policy. We are, in other words, beginning for the first time, to look like a revolutionary movement." (10)

As the institutions of corporate global capitalism are fortified by trade agreements and inequitable unilateralism the democracy of Sovereign states is being eroded. So, like the neighborhood clubs, who have fought for their community interests there is a growing movement of people who are insisting upon accountability; a foundation of democracy- in a global climate that is giving more and more power to private, unaccountable entities. Throughout history, an elite few have been making choices for the masses; a dynamic that has given birth to much struggle. Now, as corporations become truly multinational they are less affected by the politics of particular countries. If a corporation is in conflict with either the people or governments of particular countries, they can pick up and move business elsewhere. Multi-national corporations are therefore not held responsible to government's rulings and they are writing the trade agreements to expedite this disassociation from any accountability. In fact, Chapter 11 of NAFTA gives corporations an unprecedented amount of power, by enabling investors to sue sovereign states for anticipated lost profits as a result of laws or regulations that might impede profit.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and compromise with synthesis.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask if there are any objections or reservations to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

Difficulties in reaching consensus

If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

**Non-support** ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")

**Reservations** ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")

**Standing aside** ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it.")

**Blocking** ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)

**Withdrawing from the group.** Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

*If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up with each affinity group will have to be worked through as soon as the group forms.*

Roles in a consensus meeting

There are several roles which, if filled, can help consensus decision making run smoothly. The facilitator(s) aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point-at hand; makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached. Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behavior, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.

A vibes-watcher is someone besides the facilitator who watches and comments on individual and group feelings and patterns of participation. Vibes-watchers need to be especially tuned in to the sexism of group dynamics.

A recorder can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation and a time-keeper keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision. This is especially true when it comes to finding compromise agreements to seemingly contradictory positions.



# Consensus Decision-Making

Consensus is based on the principle that every voice is worth hearing, every concern is justified. If a proposal makes a few people, even one person, deeply unhappy - then there is a valid reason for that unhappiness, and if we ignore it, we are likely to make a mistake.

## What is consensus?

Consensus is a process for group decision-making. It is a method by which an entire group of people can come to an agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of community and trust.

## Consensus vs. voting

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several. Consensus, on the other hand, is a process of synthesizing many diverse elements together.

Voting is a win or lose model, in which people are more often concerned with the numbers it takes to "win" than with the issue itself. Voting does not take into account individual feelings or needs. In essence, it is a quantitative, rather than qualitative, method of decision-making.

With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

A group committed to consensus may utilize other forms of decision making (individual, compromise, majority rules) when appropriate; however, a group that has adopted a consensus model will use that process for any item that brings up a lot of emotions, is something that concerns people's ethics, politics, morals or other areas where there is much investment.

## What does consensus mean?

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence does come up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus takes more time and member skill, but uses lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building. For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has 1) common values, 2) some skill in group process and conflict resolution, or a commitment to let these be facilitated, 3) commitment and responsibility to the group by its members and 4) sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

## Forming the consensus proposals

During discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

So, a company can sue a government for passing an order to discontinue using harmful and toxic products if that company's profit has been threatened as a result of the order.(11) Since corporations are distancing themselves from governments, citizens' groups are pushed even further from holding corporations accountable through their pressure on government. Consumer movements, are transnational. So, demanding sweatshop free, fair-trade, organic products can help corporations design more people-friendly models. Consumer movements however, tend to have a narrow vision. The Global Justice movement sees itself as a people's movement, emphasizing human need and struggle beyond consumer demands, and a call to recognize some human interests as outside the realm of commodification, and consumption.

A people's movement is separate from governments who make decisions based on their parties' or own personal political gains. A people's movement is what is needed to truly dismantle the "what's good for business" attitude that is dominating global policy. Politics are broken worldwide, and so, taking to the streets is an essential part of breathing life into democracy. Politicians, in the United States and everywhere are making choices for their own political gains; they are not representing the interests of the people they claim to represent. This is happening in some places as a result of their own corrupt systems (Bush Administration), and in other places because institutions like the IMF and World Bank have hindered their ability to support their own growing social movements (perhaps Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil?).

This puts the Global Justice movement in a tough predicament. If it is to truly be a people's movement it must be careful not to align itself with particular countries which are most likely marginalizing the social movements within their states. Countries that stand up to US hegemony are helping to rearrange the US dominated power structure, but they are not necessarily, and as history has shown us, most likely not representing the poor people in their country any more than the US government represents the poor people of the United States. The answer is not an anti-politics of non-voting, and non-supporting of programs that offer relief to poor people. Due to the "debt-crisis" poor countries are having their agendas set for them by Washington bureaucrats and half of the world's population is lacking even minimal sovereignty- as there are not even "in-theory" people who are accountable to their needs.(12) It is essential to participate in politics in order to sway policy towards offering relief to poor people everywhere and to learn about ways to support the existing social justice movements within poor countries. Social movements in poor countries do not have influential governments to appeal to, but a growing international people's movement.

The Global Justice movement of the United States is indebted to the international grassroots movements that we are learning from. The Global



Justice movement has joined in Solidarity with the already existing, well-organized and growing people's movements of the world. In this deep solidarity "There are, to be sure, universal ideals that underlie the human struggle for freedom everywhere, but democracy's forms are as various as the struggles through which it is won and as distinctive as the myriad cultures that win it." (13) And because of this, we must recognize that campesinos, fighting for their livelihood on a daily basis is different from privileged Americans facing police repression but twice a year. I highlight the difference because it is real, in relation to urgency and legitimacy. This is when the term Solidarity must show its strength as to appreciate different tactics, due to different circumstances, and as to allow space for privileged people to fight injustices and for their own liberation.

The US movement does have to address its role as a social movement from an Imperialist Country. And members within have to be careful of our own potential to be elites claiming to represent the masses. The description of the global justice movement as predominantly white upper-middle class does not represent the revolutionary movement growing in the United States. It is misrepresentative of the local grassroots groups working to reverse the war on the poor, the people of color youth who are facilitating anti-oppression work and assessment of privilege within our own movement, immigrants rights groups who are organizing nation-wide actions despite high political risks. These are all members of this movement, and their work should not be placed outside of revolutionary activism. It is true, however; who can afford to travel, take time off of work, and feel safe in a space of mostly white faces is very representative of the inequalities that exist, and the work that lies ahead.

This is a young movement, still in an early developmental stage. They are beginning to form strong revolutionary platforms for change. Instead of the anti-globalization movement they have reclaimed their aims as the global justice movement. They are internationalists who believe in the globalization of liberation. The diversity of the movement is their strength, and their visions vary. It is perhaps pre-mature for manifestos, as many are still brainstorming. The movement is conscious about process and maintains a commitment to an inclusive vision. This care is not a sign of weakness but a show of strength. Although visions vary, the movement could echo the Zapatistas in the core of the struggle: "shelter, land, work, food, health, education, independence, democracy, liberty, justice and peace." (14) We work for the ability of all people's to have access to basic needs and we strive to stretch principles of liberty justice and peace throughout the world. We see mass mobilizations as a way of building the movement, bringing attention to injustices and becoming part of the struggle. "There's been a long struggle...to try to extend the realm of democratic freedoms, and it's won plenty of victories. A lot of them have been won exactly this way, not by gifts but by confrontation and struggle." (15) The struggle continues through political compromise

### Personal

- Challenge and critique other groups and individuals in constructive ways and in a spirit of respect
- Listen without getting defensive. Be open in thinking, not rigid in positions
- Don't make assumptions no matter what a person looks like or what groups they belong to
- Don't assume tactics are the only way to measure militancy or radicalness
- Refrain from personal attacks, even with people whom strongly disagree. (Focus on how you feel, not what they did.)
- Understand that even though we may disagree we have come to our politics, strategies and choice of tactics through thoughtful and intelligent consideration of issues, circumstances and experiences.

### Street

- Do not intentionally put people at risk who have not chosen it
- Do not turn people over to the police
- Do not let people within our own groups interfere with other groups
- Respect the work of all medics, legal observers, independent media people
- Share food, water, medical and other supplies
- Support everyone who is hurt, gassed, shot or beaten.
- Respect other groups' rights to do a certain type of protest at certain times and places. If you choose to participate, do so within the tone and tactics they set. If you do not agree, do not participate in that protest or bring another protest into that time and space.
- Understand that our actions and tactics have repercussions that go beyond ourselves and our immediate groups. And that some tactics overrun the space of others.
- If you choose to negotiate with the police, never do so for other groups to which you are not a part.

### Media

- Do not denounce other demonstrators.
- Talk about your strategy, not others.
- Acknowledge other groups' existence and role they play in creating change
- Acknowledge that we sometimes disagree about strategy and tactics.
- Avoid using the word violence
- Condemn police repression and brutality
- Share media contacts and do not monopolize the media's attention

**Jail Solidarity:** No one is free until everybody is free.





## Solidarity in Practice

drafted in September 2001 in Washington DC

Revised 9/23/03

We are very different groups. We are not necessarily immediate allies nor are we each other's greatest enemy. There are many things on which we do not agree. But, we will be in the streets together. We know that the police and media are trying to divide us in order to crush our movements. Solidarity is the way in which our diversity becomes our strength, we build our movements and we protect each others' bodies, lives and rights.

We believe we have some things in common. We believe in basic human rights and the need to live with respect and dignity. We believe we must protect this planet our air, water, earth and food or we will all die. We believe these global corporate and political institutions are serving only the interests of the rich. We all agree it's time for fundamental and radical change.

As we take to the streets together, let us work to be in solidarity with one another. The following suggestions offer ways in which we can make our solidarity real.



and reformist measures, but the claim to direct-action must remain autonomous and principled in a people's movement for collective self-government.

Despite my own fantasies about joining with the Zapatistas or the Landless rural workers of Brazil, I remind myself: I am not a landless rural worker from Brazil. And we have our own struggles here, in the belly of the beast. It is true that privilege and power set different tones of social struggle, but disempowering whites, privileged people, and American citizens from participating in these struggles stands in the way of people's liberation. In order to do this work, we must take with us a consciousness of our privilege, our access to resources, and the comparable (although moving in a scary direction) political protection we have, as activists in this country. We may get pepper-sprayed, beaten, unfairly charged, or followed, and have enormous and inaccurate FBI files, but these illegal abuses do not compare to having our families tortured or being murdered. It is adamant that as privileged people, we recognize the risks that others take by their involvement. And it is in this understanding that the complexity magnifies, of acknowledging privilege, wanting to be effective, and not claiming to represent all people's struggles. Only an open line of communication and an active interest in a commitment to anti-oppression can address these complexities as we move forward.



"Hasta La Victoria Siempre"

-Che Guevara



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### The Food Not Bombs Story

Food Not Bombs is one of the fastest growing revolutionary movements active today and is gaining momentum. There are hundreds of autonomous chapters sharing free vegetarian food with hungry people and protesting war and poverty throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia. Food Not Bombs is organizing for an end to the occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. We also support actions against the globalization of the economy, restrictions to the movements of people and the destruction of the earth.

The first group was formed in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1980 by anti-nuclear activists. Food Not Bombs is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to nonviolence. Food Not Bombs has no formal leaders and strives to include everyone in its decision making process. Each group recovers food that would otherwise be thrown out and makes fresh hot vegetarian meals that are served in city parks to anyone without restriction. The groups also serve free vegetarian meals at protests and other events. The San Francisco Chapter has been arrested over 1,000 times in an effort to silence its protest against the Mayor's anti-homeless policies. Amnesty International states it may adopt those Food Not Bombs volunteers that are imprisoned as "Prisoners of Conscience" and will work for their unconditional release.

Food Not Bombs works in coalition with groups like Earth First!, The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Anarchist Black Cross, the IWW, Homes Not Jails, Anti Racist Action, In Defense of Animals, the Free Radio Movement and other organizations on the cutting edge of positive social change and resistance to the new global austerity program. One collective publishes a movement wide newsletter called A Food Not Bombs Menu. There is also a German language Menu. Food Not Bombs Publishing in Takoma Park, Maryland publishes books like *On Conflict and Consensus*, which has been an important guide for group democracy. We hope you will join us in taking direct action towards creating a world free from domination, coercion and violence.





The National Lawyer's Guild, and the Just Cause Law Collective along with other legal support people have helped with the legal aspects of direct-action and civil disobedience. They provide "Know Your Rights" workshops for activists, before they take to the streets.

They provide Legal Observer Trainings, and they help with jail support and trials after the mobilizations take place.



*Don't let them tell us when we have won. Don't let them determine what we have gained. We make friendships across borders, we hear each other's stories, and add each one to our struggle.*



*We plant seeds of resistance, we saturate our roots in solidarity, and we will harvest revolution."*





## First Aid for Radicals and Activists

Fight the power, do not harm

We hope that the information available on this web site will help you to be safer and stronger in your activism. Remember that we do this work because it is important and fun - and at least some danger is essential to life.

We are prepared to discuss first aid for demonstrations or other health care issues with any interested activists or groups. While we do trainings outside of Portland, OR (our home base), we are also happy to try to put groups in contact with local health care workers.







The Independent Media Center is a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth. We work out of a love and inspiration for people who continue to work for a better world, despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity.

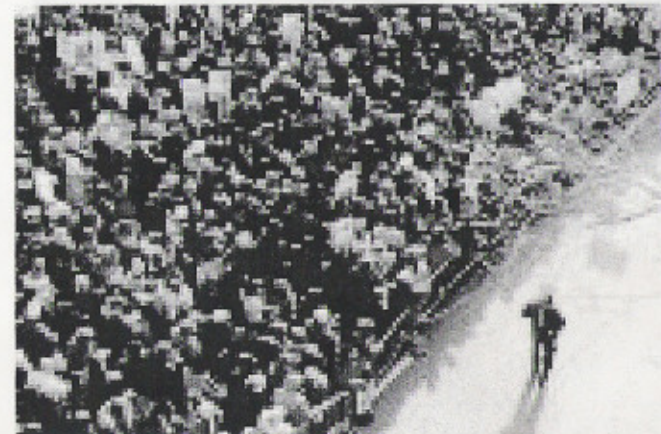
### History

The Independent Media Center ([www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)), was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists in 1999 for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. The center acted as a clearinghouse of information for journalists, and provided up-to-the-minute reports, photos, audio and video footage through its website. Using the collected footage, the Seattle Independent Media Center ([seattle.indymedia.org](http://seattle.indymedia.org)) produced a series of five documentaries, uplinked every day to satellite and distributed throughout the United States to public access stations.

The center also produced its own newspaper, distributed throughout Seattle and to other cities via the internet, as well as hundreds of audio segments, transmitted through the web and Studio X, a 24-hour micro and internet radio station based in Seattle. The site, which uses a democratic open-publishing system, logged more than 2 million hits, and was featured on America Online, Yahoo, CNN, BBC Online, and numerous other sites. Through a decentralized and autonomous network, hundreds of media activists setup independent media centers in London, Canada, Mexico City, Prague, Belgium, France, and Italy over the next year. IMCs have since been established on every continent, with more to come.

# PART II

## Convergence Model: Organizing Direct-Action Mobilizations





TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS WORKING GROUP

It is customary for there to be Legal, medic and non-violent direct-action trainings.

Other possible workshops and trainings could include...

- Anti-oppression workshops
- Buddhist centering
- Facilitation, consensus training
- Security trainings
- Conflict resolution trainings
- Jail Solidarity trainings
- Particular art workshops
- Yoga or meditation
- Music or chanting
- Zine-making
- Vegan cooking
- Teach-ins
- Story-telling, sharing of past action experiences

Possible Schedule (this was roughly the schedule in Miami)

Hours of operation 9am-12am

- 9:00- breakfast served
- 9:00-10:00- Grounds operations council meeting
- 10:00-12:30- trainings/workshops session 1
- 12:30-1:00- daily orientation
- 1:00- lunch served
- 2:00-4:30- trainings and workshops session 2
- 5:00-5:45- General Assembly
- 6:00- Dinner is served
- 8:00- Spokes council meeting

Smaller ad hoc groups or working groups will most likely schedule their own working groups' meetings throughout the day, or whenever there is space. Often times people continue working past the hours of operation, but the space is no longer staffed.





## SPACE WORKING GROUP

When establishing convergence space things to consider are...

- Adequate room for trainings, workshops and spokes meetings
- Smaller, more private rooms for meetings
- Spaces where working groups could establish themselves
- Spaces that could accommodate whatever particular needs are: imc, kitchen, medical
- Spaces that offer strong security possibilities
- Spaces that have an escape route for high-risk people

## WELCOME, SECURITY & VIBES WATCHER

The Welcome desk and security stations have to be staffed all day.

The Welcome Desk is most helpful when it provides information about

- Housing
- Rides (a ride board)
- Food not bombs serving schedule, and other food options
- Legal information
- Phone books
- A message board
- Maps
- Political information (propaganda)
- Information on the local community
- Schedules and lists of trainings and workshops
- Contact information for working groups
- Centralized information on policies/procedures, how to check messages, floor plan, light switches, inventory, desk log, needs/tasks list and any other pertinent information.

General Assembly is where people who are not members of working groups can come to find out about what working groups are doing and how they can get connected. The General Assembly is not a decision-making body; it is place to get information.

It is important to have trained Security to handle police raids or any other conflict that comes up. It is important for security to always be staffed by people who can remain calm through various situations. The vibes-watcher will work with security to help keep safe-space. This means addressing oppression issues, sexual assault and rumors. The vibes-watcher working group is responsible for helping to create a respectful environment.

## The Convergence Model

Since the 1999, WTO protests in Seattle mass direct-action mobilizations have been organized around a convergence model. This model is generally built around a space (structure) and decentralized but coordinated working groups that are involved in the mobilization. Since on-site preparation for mobilizations is generally only a little over a week, it is important to have an organizational plan so that people can get to work. There is always a lot to get done!

The names used to describe this model are not the official names by any stretch, and all aspects of this model are flexible. Each mobilization is different and calls for its own unique methods and structures. The convergence model is an organizational model where working groups can coordinate their efforts yet have autonomy to make decisions in respect to their particular area of focus. This model helps to keep groups informed about the mobilization as a whole while allowing smaller groups to work efficiently and autonomously of the larger body. The initial organizing requires people to arrive early in order to help get the space ready for action. Actions can be only one day, however; a lot of work is put in to getting space ready so that people can coordinate for a strong, safe, and powerful action.

The groups who organize before the action could be called the "grounds operations council." The ops council would consist of working groups from various different fields. Each working group could then send a representative to a daily coordinating meeting. In this meeting, representatives make announcements pertinent to the entire ops council and make proposals that need to be consensed upon by the entire ops council. Since each working group is meeting regularly, they will make a lot of decisions within their particular working groups.

Many of the strengths of this model have been noted. This model allows groups to stay informed so that there is a consciousness of the whole while making decisions about particular aspects of organizing. It gives space for working groups to make decisions, that need to be made quickly but it also provides a decision-making body for bigger proposals that require coordination among different working groups.



## What A Direct Action Campaign Can Do

- **Point a Spotlight:** Raise public awareness about an institution, program or injustice. Bring hidden wrongs to light. Example: Campaigns against WTO, IMF/World Bank; genetically engineered foods.
  - **Delegitimize Organizations, Institutions and Programs:** Withdraw consent from the functioning of unjust bodies, laws, programs. Interfere with their operations. Raise their social costs. Examples: U.S. Civil Rights Movement, antinuclear activism, etc.
  - **Build a Movement:** Provide opportunities for people to engage in action, experience solidarity and support, take greater risks, deepen commitment. Examples: almost any powerful action.
  - **Educate and Inform:** Both those in the movement and those who hear of actions: Almost every good action.
  - **Strengthen Voices of Reform:** It may not be our intention or goal, but when thousands of people are out in the streets, institutions are more likely to listen to "respectable" critics within. Examples: calls for more "transparency" within WTO and World Bank; de facto legalization of needle exchange in SF.
- The Two Main Ways Direct Action Works:*
- **Interfering with the operations of injustice:** examples: WTO blockade, burning draft cards, stopping troop trains, pulling up genetically modified crops.
  - **Embodying an alternative:** Address a problem legally or illegally: Examples: Squats, Needle Exchange programs, feeding the homeless.



However, by the time that the action day comes around, members of working groups have a clearer picture of how the space is functioning, and what needs to be done to maintain it. By having decisions made in a body that has not had the experience of watching the preparations evolve, decisions could be made that are misrepresentative of the practical needs of the space. For this reason, ops continue to operate autonomous of spokes council, even after many more people have arrived.

The nice thing about ops is that it creates a structure for people to get work done and coordinate. Not all people coming to the mobilizations are interested in participating in the organizing of the space or lots of pre-action preparations. Some people prefer to take workshops or spend time preparing with their affinity groups. Through their participation in spokes they have input on how the action is planned. For a lot of people, that is why they are there, and they don't have interest in joining a working group. For other people, the movement building process is just as important as the action, and they prefer to be an integral part of establishing organizational structures that reflect an anti-authoritarian, anti-oppressive, inclusive, do-it-yourself model. In this process we embody alternative models, different from the customary non-participatory hierarchical ones.

Another strength of this structure is that if someone is arrested or injured from one of the working groups, the entire structure does not fall apart, because it isn't dependent on one person. This is important because, many participants of working groups are in the actions, and therefore risk injury and arrest. Not only is a hierarchical model non-conducive to the principles of the movement but also it is impractical due to the risks that individuals take during actions.

The ops council continue to meet after the action is over, some groups may stay for a while continuing on post-action work. There is a lot of clean-up and closing work that needs to get done as well. Since these working groups have not historically stayed constant through various mobilizations, the roles are rotational which helps to further decentralize power. Post-action check-ins are also important for evaluating how the mobilization went, and suggestions about how things could be done or not be done in the future.



## GROUNDS OPERATIONS COUNCIL

With these working groups, FOOD people would make decisions regarding menu items, without having to coordinate with the legal team. All trainings and workshops would be organized through the trainings and workshops working groups, so that medics wouldn't have to ask everybody if they could schedule a training at a particular time. These working groups would send representatives to daily ops council coordination meetings. Issues such as hours of operation of convergence space, space layout, particular scheduling aspects, policies, and concerns with other working groups would be brought up at the ops council meetings. Most of the decisions would be made outside of the ops council. Often times, representatives from working groups bring their decisions to the ops council for a final stamp of approval or to make sure that they have not overlooked particular factors when making that decision.

The ops council is also a place in which accountability is assumed for different aspects of the mobilization. If something comes up pertaining to a particular working group, it is clear who to go. The daily ops council coordination meetings are for announcements, decision-making, and accountability checks. This model allows for decentralization, communication, coordination, autonomy and accountability.

As time passes and it gets closer and closer to action, planning shifts from the ops council to the spokes council. The spokes council is a body of representatives from Affinity groups that make decisions through a consensus model. Spokes councils and ops council have the same model, however; whereas ops council makes decisions related to the preparation and operation of structures throughout the mobilization, spokes is focused more on action plans. The spokes council is a more representative body and so, the ops council can bring proposals to spokes in an effort to get more people involved in the decision-making. Ideally, when a new person arrives they would join a working group. Since decisions get made in working groups and through representa-

### Nonviolence in Direct Action Campaigns Is About:

- **Vision:** We embody the world we want to create, we use means consistent with our ends. We engage in imaginative action. We expect to win.
- **Choices:** We do not let structures of force limit our choices. We expand the choices of our opponents.
- **Patterns:** We understand the patterns of violence and control so we can make choices about our responses. We learn how to de-escalate tension and potential conflict in order to expand our range of choices in any situation.
- **Communication:** We communicate with each other, with our potential allies and with our opposition, and develop our communication skills.
- **Energy:** We look at situations energetically and learn skills for shifting and directing energy.
- **Inclusiveness:** We focus on expanding our movement and increasing opportunities for people of diverse needs and awareness to take part. We resolve our internal conflicts through discussion and negotiation. **Respect for diversity:** We respect our own differences, needs, cultures, life circumstances, politics and views as well as differences of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, physical challenges, etc.

### Political Analysis

#### By ACT UP

Power itself is not derived through violence, though in governmental form it is usually violent in nature. Governmental power is often maintained through oppression and the tacit compliance of the majority of the governed. Any significant withdrawal of that compliance will restrict or dissolve governmental control. Apathy in the face of injustice is a form of violence. Struggle and conflict are often necessary to correct injustice.

Our struggle is not easy, and we must not think of nonviolence as a "safe" way to fight oppression. The strength of nonviolence comes from our willingness to take personal risk without threatening other people.

It is essential that we separate the individual from the role she/he plays. The "enemy" is the system that casts people in oppressive roles.



## What is an Affinity Group?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously together on direct action or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organization.

Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organizing and action. The affinity group model was first used by anarchists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th century, and was re-introduced to radical direct action by anti-nuclear activists during the 1970s, who used decentralized non-violent direct action to blockade roads, occupy spaces and disrupt "business as usual" for the nuclear and war makers of the US. Affinity groups have a long and interesting past, owing much to the anarchists and workers of Spain and the anarchists and radicals today who use affinity groups, non-hierarchical structures, and consensus decision making in direct action and organizing

### HOW TO START AN AFFINITY GROUP

An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and activists, or it could be a week long relationship based around a single action. Either way, it is important to join an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests.

If you are forming an affinity group in your city or town, find friends or fellow activists who have similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to similar actions. Also, look for people who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

**LEGAL**-training legal observers, providing "Know your rights" clinics and information, offering legal advice to people who seek it, coordinating with legal support people from each affinity group, coordinating jail support, staffing a 24-hour hotline to report arrests and get legal information, helping to establish a post-action legal plan for arrestees.

**INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER**-provide space and equipment for everyone to be a reporter, do orientations, provide relevant trainings, and have phone lines for breaking news

**CORPORATE MEDIA LIASONS**-coordinate press conferences, train and staff media wranglers to meet and greet press, keep press away from those who choose not to be filmed

**OUTREACH**-organize fliering campaigns, work with local organizations, coordinate community education, and community communication, research good local events for fliering, provide a post-action forum for communication

**DIRECT ACTION FRAMEWORK**-scout, organize logistics, present well-thought out possible plan(s) for the day of action

**TACTICAL COMMUNICATION**-establish both low and high tech communication systems for the day(s) of action

**SPOKES**-find skilled facilitators for each spokes meeting, help facilitators build an agenda, help to find translators, organize any supplies needed for spokes meetings

**FINANCES**-encourage groups to bring their own funds, fundraise, keep track of all finances, if empowered by ops council: make decisions regarding fun





## WORKING GROUPS

And their roles and responsibilities

**SPACE-** layout of the space, decorating, maintenance, guidelines, procedures, cleaning etc...

**WELCOME-** orientation, staffing "welcome desk", answering the phone, helping to get people connected to working groups, keep a running "tasks" list, centralize information from ops council, organize General Assembly meeting

**TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS-**space scheduling, coordinating with working groups for doing workshops, encourage people to bring their skills to the group, doing follow-up on how trainings and workshops went- and providing feedback to those who ran them

**SECURITY-**staff security posts, do cop-watch, coordinate security trainings, form lock-down and other circumstantial procedures, implement basic guidelines

**VIBES WATCHER-**conflict resolution, safe-space keeper, coordinate anti-oppression workshops, and create safe space territorially or emotionally, rumor control

**HOUSING-** helping to find housing, coordinating transportation (perhaps)

**ART and PUPPUTES-**gather supplies, and provide space for people to create banners and other creative manifestations, encourage people to participate in art projects

**FOOD-**(Food Not Bombs has been amazing at:) collecting donations, setting up a kitchen, staffing the kitchen for cooking and cleaning: feeding lots of people

**MEDICS-** gathering medical supplies, having a separate medical space, offering street-med training, providing pre-, post-, and during action medical care



If you are looking to join an affinity group at a mass action, first find out what affinity groups open to new members and which ones are closed. For many people, affinity groups are based on trusting relationships based around years of friendship and work, thus they might not want people they don't know in their affinity group. Once you find which affinity groups are open, look for ones that have an issue interest or action tactic that you are drawn to, like a Free Tibet affinity group or a blockade affinity group.

### WHAT AN AFFINITY GROUP CAN DO

Anything!!! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to drop a banner, blockade a road, provide back-up for other affinity groups, do street theater, block traffic riding bikes, organize a tree sit, change the message on a massive billboard, play music in a radical marching band or sing in a revolutionary choir, etc... There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an action. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group who brings food and water to people on the streets.

What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organization or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. Thus, there are an endless amount of possibilities for what affinity groups can do. Be creative and remember: direct action gets the goods!



## Direct Action Roles for Affinity Groups

### DURING ACTION

- People risking arrest: intending to risk arrest and commit civil disobedience
- Direct Support People: risking arrest by staying with those locked down as long as possible and necessary and providing a human shield to those locked down.
- Police Liaison: maintains communication between police and demonstrators.
- Peacekeepers/monitors: another "layer" of human shield protection for the demonstration, specializing in nonviolent de-escalation techniques.
- Deployment Team: helpers for getting people locked down and in place.
- Diversion Team: to draw attention away from the people most vulnerable
- Media spokesperson
- Media outreach
- Communication team
- Demonstrators/Sign-holders/Chanters/Singers/ Hand out literature etc.
- Videographer(s)
- Still photographer
- Medic/EMT/Medical Team
- Legal Observers)
- Jail Support Contact person
- For lock-downs: an off-site key holder

## Direct Action Roles for Affinity Groups

### BEFORE ACTION

- Coordinator, campaigner or organizer
- Fundraisers
- Researchers: to learn about the target and gather facts for the campaign.
- Scouting the site or route
- Outreach and organizing
- Logistics and support
- Meeting facilitator
- Artists, Painters, Sewers to make props, signs, banners, political theatre, etc.
- Media outreach: Send out media advisory and media release
- Media kits: write, gather and photocopy contents.
- Writers: write materials, flyers, media kit contents, web site, etc.

### AFTER ACTION

- Legal Support
- Lawyer
- Documentarian/Historian/Archivist
- Fundraisers
- Public speakers
- Letter writers to decision-makers and newspaper editorial boards

