On Confronting Anti-Blackness in our Communities

Brown and Proud Press
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Who We Are

Brown and Proud Press is a collective of people of color with a myriad of identities. Currently, we are queer chicanxs, working-class hard femmes, mixed, intersex, brown, and gender non-conforming latinxs. We write to resist. We disclose to survive. We share our personal narratives and experiences as a mode of collective healing. We piece them together as a catalyst for social change. Our zine-making began in 2011 as a handful of us struggled with our non-conforming racial identities, navigating this world in our bodies, and our desires to practice self-care within communities that reject it*. Our zine collective values the space we’ve carved over the past few years to hold difficult yet critical dialogue, and we hope that you will find solace and strength within our zines in knowing that you are not alone in your battles.

Writers in this Issue

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* Self-care is difficult for our marginalized communities because of the unrelenting pressure and notion that taking care of ourselves is privileged, a waste of time, or a sign of weakness. These notions trickle down into our communities via white supremacy and oppressive institutions. Don’t believe the hype.
Why We’re Making This Zine

According to research done by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement in 2014, a Black person is killed by law enforcement, security guards, or vigilantes every 28 hours in the United States**. In 2015, 248 Black people have been killed by police, and it’s only November. 17 were trans women of color. That means that a Black man, woman, child, gender non-conforming, or trans person is murdered every 1.2 days. Even with increasing resistance and a firm cognizance of these statistics on a national scale, these numbers are unfortunately not slowing down. As non-Black people of color currently involved in this zine collective, we heed the call from our Black comrades to continuously find ways to show up for Black resistance.

We understand that our Brown communities often have barriers to physically showing up to rallies, marches and actions for Black lives, including working multiple jobs, inadequate access to affordable childcare, language, undocumented status, and chronic illness and pain. However, we also recognize another barrier to showing up for Black resistance is the unfortunate internalized racism and anti-Blackness that has permeated and embedded itself in our Brown families and communities. We also recognize that mainstream Latinx media and culture denies and shames our African roots, but we strive to celebrate and acknowledge our truths and intersections: Afrxlatinx cultures, the African diaspora in central, south American and Caribbean countries, and African immigration to those countries. There is so much work to be done to reverse the harmful homogenization of brown in this society and eradicating the minstrelization of Black caricatures.

**visit mxgm.org to view the full report**
Anti-Blackness has soaked through our minds and practices as the same systems that oppress and harm Black communities also oppress and harm ours, while working overtime to divide and conquer us. We recognize that while our Brown familias are also murdered by the police, that the context of our oppression is very different from that of Black people, and that our freedom depends on Black liberation. Unlearning anti-Blackness and relearning the praxis of liberation is part of our process as Brown people to decolonize ourselves, our minds, and our communities in order to collectively heal from and resist the racial regimes that violate the dignity and humanity of our Black comrades.

We do not have time to attempt to be perfect in these dialogues. We recognize the difficult, uncomfortable, and painful aspects of having these conversations. However, we also recognize that having, or not having, these conversations is a matter of life and death. We are not the first Latinxs, Puerto Riquenxs, Xicanxs or Brown people to have this dialogue, and we are certainly – and hopefully – not the last. We uplift queer, Black women like Monika Estrella Negra in Chicago that initiated “Deconstructing Anti-Blackness” conversations in our Black and Brown communities in the past few years. We thank MOON-ROOT for joining us in this dialogue, and we hope that our shared experiences with challenging, deconstructing and confronting anti-Blackness within ourselves, our families, and our communities, will guide you in your own spaces and dialogues.

- Monica Trinidad
In a beautiful suburban home in Peoria, Arizona, On August 13th, 2001, T. Devi Jagan was found dead, lying prone on her recently bleached kitchen floor.

There were no visible signs of foul play, thus an energetic autopsy was summoned, the results of which we are here today to share with you.

A small mound of ashes was found inside of a perfectly round, dime-sized hole at the base of her neck.

Our mythologist has informed the appropriate authorities to wait and see what happens to the body and have a fire extinguisher at the ready.

A cell phone lay 2 inches to the left of her left thigh, suggesting that the deceased was left handed.

The last call placed from said cell phone was to a phone number in Chicago.

Our team of investigators is contacting the recipient of her final call for more information as to the nature of their conversation.

We peeled an American flag from each of the subject’s dry corneas, and from the left cornea we extracted a crumpled diploma from the University of Guyana; from the right cornea, a Certificate of Naturalization from the United States of America.
By scanning her 1st chakra we can see that a few of the final things she did were the following:

Put a load of laundry in the washer, swept the kitchen,
cleaned the fridge, wiped the counters,
chopped potatoes for chicken curry.

Our subject appears to have constantly kept moving to reduce the sound of howling that often emanated from the tip of her coccyx where there once was a strong root.

At the tip of her coccyx is scorched flesh that smells of sandalwood and the exhaust from a Boeing 737.

Like the local cacti of Arizona, in place of her original root Jagan sprouted new, thinner roots which have spread wide and remained shallow in order to collect what scant energetic nourishment they could receive in this extremely dry climate.

Her thick thighs and muscular calves were strong but show signs of chronic fatigue.

After all, this body carried the weight of blood, bone, lymph, adipose, ancestors, secrets, and a thousand disappointments the nature of which we are not at liberty to disclose at this time out of respect for the family.

And her co-workers.

Her wide, round back was crying for a break from bracing against daily hate,

shouldering the pressure to constantly out-perform still managing to under-perform

At her 4th chakra, around her very healthy heart we see a growth of thick chains which suggest a commitment to expressing gratitude at all costs.
At her 5th chakra, we found 1 locked black box—a tongue programmed to delete from her vocabulary the words hard, help, I hurt,

And a half-sheet of notebook paper on which is written the Serenity prayer

Unbeknownst to our subject something had been growing at the base of her spine, filling her pelvis.

What began as a seed had swelled into a fist-sized bud.

At the time of her tragic death it had become a dark red, many-petaled flower.

Most likely a challenge to her family’s capitalist, colonial crown, borne for generations.

This ranunculus-like, brilliant and bold, flower of resistance, twisted and shot upward, ever emerging finally reaching her tongue seeking voice.

This tongue never forgot the taste of seawall spray in the morning air.

This tongue never forgot the taste of soursop, mango, starfruit, guava picked fresh from the tree in front of her home or taken from the yard of a neighbor.
This tongue
Now dessicated
Sick of Costco garam masala
Will be preserved for further study.
Flowers like the ones that bloomed inside our subject will do what they need to do to survive
This one stiffened her hips Sprouted into her sacrum
drained her low back hijacked her intestines
grew up and into her stomach, unleashed bile into her mouth,
drained the color from her face, the life from her hair
And finally coiled around her trachea, driving tears from the corners of her eyes
The salt of which has been collected and sent for examination.
We call these flowers Phoenix flowers,
their ashes are our words
Ashes to ashes
Then ashes to seed, to root, to stem, to bud,
to brilliant blossom
Well-managed Phoenix flowers pop truths perennially
If you pluck them, one by one, and put them in your mouth
they will drench a parched throat expand and ease aching hips
bring life blood back into all the dry places
but one must let them open. Bloom. Burn.
This just in! Our energetic forensics team has revealed the contents of the black box found at the base of our subject’s throat.

A transcript of her last words reads as follows, and I quote:

I don’t know why everything always has to be about race with you, gyal.

[cough] Listen to me now, America is a land of freedom and opportunity, and people are dying every day to come here. [raspy cough]

Excuse me.

We came to this country with a suitcase, you, and eighty dollars.

If your father and I could make it here, anyone can. You hear me? [cough]

Are you still there? [belabored cough]

Anyway...we love you. We miss you.

Please ca— End transcript.

*During the first Brown Lives for Black Power workshop in Chicago in the summer of 2015. Photo shows the words “Escaped Slaves” scratched out and corrected to “Enslaved Africans”.*
I am still learning how embedded anti-blackness can be and what it means to be in solidarity with black liberation. When taking action to combat anti-blackness, there is a persistent feeling that one is not doing enough, or plugging into movement work in a meaningful and respectful way. As a cis-gendered male born to Argentinian immigrants, raised with socio-economic and pigment privilege, I’ve had immense freedom to navigate spaces without experiencing forms of violence, racism or other forms of oppression.

Racism by fair-skinned Latinos has always been embedded in societies borne from the womb of imperial aspirations, advanced through genocide, enslavement and forced migration. In Argentina, the waves of late-19th and early 20th century European immigrants harbored strong feelings of xenophobia toward the indigenous and afro-descendent communities. Through the present, a finely tailored national narrative of whiteness attempts to erase Argentinian society’s multi-racial composition. Derogatory terms such as “negro” and “indio” have been normalized as part of the lexicon to describe people of color by the self-identifying white population.

In my youth, my maternal grandfather was always outspoken, and had a tendency to perpetuate tired old tropes. I was about 12 when I recall him making sweeping comments about “Los Negros.” It evoked a visceral reaction in me that felt at the time like disgust-- at him. As I told him it wasn’t fair for him to say that, I wasn’t able to contain my visible shock by this unwarranted aggression rooted in a distorted perception of a community of folks I knew he did not know enough about, to ground such ignorance.

Anti-blackness and anti-brownness are closely correlated in my family members, who have highly homogenous chosen
I've introduced my afro-Puerto Rican partner into the family, as well as invited black queer and trans friends into familial spaces. I'm hopeful that these small acts of love have some destabilizing effect and help to deconstruct my family's prejudices.

I continue to untangle my own fears and privileges. I need to engage family and friends directly in discussions about anti-blackness, absence of empathy for deeply marginalized folks and lack of acknowledgement of the systems that have enabled their relative comfort while ensuring other immigrants and people of color's oppression. My inaction and my silence can be as damaging and even as complicit as the prejudices and biases that exist in my community, further upholding the disdain for black life.

I often find myself combatting anti-worker, anti-immigrant, anti-poor and other sentiments that people my family and community have adopted. Yet, sometimes I choose to ignore and evade, and sweep my own discomfort and indignation under the rug. I must continue to push myself to be guided by an ethical praxis and struggle for black liberation, when and where the movement needs me. I'll continue to assert the police be defunded, that prisons be abolished, that community safety be re-envisioned and that public dollars be used to nourish black communities rather than militarize and devastate them.
Growing up in a Mexican household is witnessing as a child how my mother, aunts, and uncles would find my cousins, who have nice curly hair, light colored eyes, and white-complexed skin to be beautiful in comparison to my dark hair, brown eyes, and brown skin. Growing up in my Mexican household means constantly hearing your immediate and extended family telling you that, "Cuando te cases te aseguras de mejorar la raza," implying that marrying a white woman, or at least someone that is lighter than you, will ‘better’ the race. When talking about how to dismantle anti-blackness within our Mexican communities we must acknowledge the internalized racism that births self-hatred amongst our darker skinned raza, a self-hatred that a lot times our people don’t break away from. Dismantling anti-blackness begins by loving one’s own skin, taking pride in our indigenous roots, and resisting assimilation into white-society that would further perpetuate the status quo. Dismantling anti-blackness begins with unlearning every lie we have been taught to believe and learning the similarities between our struggles.
We have nothing to lose but our chains
we cry
with the deepest chord
in our swollen hearts
and linked hands,
souls,
and beings.
We’re fighting for more than to
#stopthecops
It’s about love.
And you can’t stop the revolution.*

*I am an Iranian, Hijab-wearing Muslim woman, and as such, I experience hyper-policing and government surveillance. They flinch when I move, afraid the bomb hidden under my headscarf will explode. There is always an empty seat beside me. I’m on a list at the airport.
It’s not difficult to understand that we are in a shared struggle with our black comrades who are routinely murdered physically and socially, dehumanized and criminalized, used as fillers for concrete walls with bars.
After all, our oppressors are the same—we differ only in the chains used to tie us down.

And yet, as instinctual as it seems to join arms with our black friends and fight in solidarity, reality differs greatly from the natural. Allyship has not, unfortunately, come easy to either side.

We are taught to hate and fear each other. Western Asia was part of the slave trade and one of Iran’s national holidays includes dressing up in blackface (which, may I add, continues to be practiced without question today). Black people in Chicago and Iranians in Iran always ask me the same
questions about each other: “Why are they so savage and violent?” “Aren’t you scared to go back?” The same media that labels blacks as criminals renders Muslims as terrorists.

Of course, it’s hardly surprising that this is happening--our oppressors fear our unity and solidarity. The distance forged between us was intentional--we can never liberate ourselves in isolation. Our shared solidarity is not only useful in being able to learn from each other, it is absolutely necessary and required. Because we will never experience true freedom while everywhere black people are still in chains.

Being Muslim means fighting oppression. The Qur’an requires us to be “persistently standing firm in justice...even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives” (4:135). Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States among black people in particular. Falling victim to anti-black, racist, and white-supremacist rhetoric spewed across media and ingrained in institutions is not only tightening the chains around our own wrists and minds and hearts and isolating a major part of our spiritual community, but it is clearly and simply incompatible with our faith.

In confronting anti-blackness in myself and in my community, I’ve learned that the most powerful thing I can do is to love. To love unconditionally and fully. To tune the harp strings in our hearts and souls in harmony with each other in the fight against capitalism and imperialism and profiting from oppression. They teach us to hate but we will win with love.
Allow me to introduce myself. I won’t say my real name for identity purposes, but I will allow you to refer to me as Cuauhtémcoc [kʰəmˈtɛmoːk].

To start, any Mexica & other Brown people of color can relate to this saying: “once you go Brown, they put you down”, even though some won’t acknowledge it under the fear of accepting reality. To know your ancestry & lineage is a form of rebellion in itself because it challenges colonial minds who try to oppress you with their bogus facts on how they conquered your people, whom you prayed to, how they killed you and so on & forth. You awaken slowly by discovering who your great, great tia was, who she married (if she married) and what stance that family took to fight back against their oppressors. The thing with love is, you don’t need a reason to love. Love isn’t objective; it isn’t obligatory or based on judgment or assumptions. Hate is different. Hate is tiresome & self-destructive. Hate consumes you.

Why I’m saying all of this is because our people have learned it as a tool to oppress each other. Media propaganda, colonized history textbooks, & other tools engage people to enable their own oppression. How this relates to hating Blackness & even denying Afro-lineage is obvious. You eat the oppressor’s lies about your people (believing Spanish was our first language, etc), thus making you angst against your community. Now, feeling superior to those who share the same blood, yet trapped because you live in a P.O.C. community, you try to co-align your values with those of a middle-class, Caucasian man who’s never encountered the oppression you & your people witness firsthand every single day. Internalized oppression manifests time after time. It takes a toll on your mental & psychological health.
How I challenge anti-Blackness is not by shoving my opinion down people’s throats but by implementing feeling into action. Everybody respects a doer more than a sayer. Not everybody will want to listen or manifest words into action, but it takes the oppressed to know they’re oppressed as well. Do not buy into hate & argument. That will only impede your progress towards liberation. RESEARCH facts. PRESENT facts. ACT on facts.

Another way I’ve challenged anti-Blackness in myself is eradicating the n-word from my vocabulary. Everybody has their own opinion to this word & mine is it’s just not useful. Sure it could be used as a term of endearment to some but that word has a lot of history behind it just like a lot of other terms, which triggers some to feel a certain way.

It is associated with anti-Blackness. As a freedom fighter, I must challenge others to act upon the refrainment from that word in shared dialogues. There’re better words to use to call yo’ homies.

To close out, I’d like to give thanks 2 Monica for inviting me to dialogue my reality on what anti-Blackness means to me, and how I challenge it. Also would like to extend a fist in the air for solidarity to Brown and Proud Press & Moonroot.

BLACK & BROWN POWER.
"We do this for RELIA"  
Black Brown Unity Poem

22-year-old murdered by Chicago Police. Don't sleep. This is the beginning of a Black-led/Black-centered action for respect and accountability. #StopTheCops /  
http://www.atasc.org/friends/thoughts-blackbrown-unity-poem
Another Black person has been killed by the police. 
*But brown people are killed by police too.*

Black women make 64 cents to the white man’s dollar. 
*But Latinx women only make 54 cents to the white man’s dollar.*

Chicago school closures disproportionately affected Black children. 
*But they closed schools in Latinx neighborhoods too.*

Sound familiar? If you’ve been a part of a Latinx/Chicanx dominated community since the wake up the Black Lives Matter movement then these statements might ring a few bells. As a Latinx/Mexican/Chicanx who was raised in and currently organizes and socializes in predominantly Mexican communities, these are statements I have heard from friends and that have rolled off my own tongue. These statements, however, are detrimental to the education of our Latinx communities and contribute to the erasure of Black communities.

While it is true that Latinx are also killed at alarming rates by the police, why are we so quick to assert our community’s inclusion in such a horrible statistic before asserting our solidarity with the families of Black victims? While it is true that the average pay of Hispanic women is statistically less than that of Black women, when did we lose sight of the anti-black system at play and become scorekeepers for the oppression olympics? While Black and Brown children are all being
robbed of their right to a public education in Chicago; what on earth compels us to interrupt the voices of Black children speaking out for their right to learn? These are the questions that I had to ask myself in order to do better by my community and these are the questions that all Brown/Mexican/Chicanx/Latinx friends and community members must ask themselves so we can all do better by Black communities.

It is always uncomfortable to admit when we have crossed a line and spoken out of turn on experiences that are not our own, but it is a necessary step in the destruction of anti-Black cultural structures and necessary for the empowerment of Black people. If you participate in an “enlightened” or “conscious” space it is damn near impossible to get anyone to admit that they too have ever messed up and fallen victim to the hateful and divisive tactics of the anti-Black society we all live in. But none of us came out of the womb “enlightened” and the sooner we admit our ignorance, the sooner we can create room to grow, and the sooner we can knock down the reactionary roadblocks that have kept our community from showing greater solidarity in the fight for Black liberation.

With that said, I want to end by saying that I was extremely humbled by the Brown/Mexican/Chicanx/Latinx friends and activists who stood in solidarity with the Black community to #StopTheCops and #FundBlackFutures. The conversations we had as a result of the action have been invaluable to all or our education and to our
friendships. I also want to express that I have the utmost respect for the Black organizers who created the planning space and action roles inclusive of non-Black people. These spaces were full of a love and commitment to one’s community unlike that I’ve ever seen in any other organizing space. I will carry the entire experience with me and undoubtedly utilize it to continue breaking down the anti-black system that pervades the communities I live in. Much love.
The earliest seeds of my politicization came from the pages of books, in the safety of my home, and with my privilege unchecked. I did a book report in second grade on a biography of Sojourner Truth, and I dressed up and recited her “Ain’t I a Woman” speech from memory. I think it was my first example of a woman of color unapologetically claiming space in a world not made for her. Growing up, I had no real conception of race/racism beyond the dominant narrative of the black/white binary. I’ve looked to radical Black queer women activists and political thinkers as role models because they are fierce as hell, but also because when I look at the history of resistance in this country, I can’t find anyone who looks like me. It might be that I do have not had access to those stories, but to some degree it reflects the problematic model minority idea that I both reject and embody at different times.

My parents, Indian immigrants who throughout my childhood were in the process of “making it” in the US, told my siblings and me that we had to work harder than our peers and stay in line because “no one is going to help you in this country.” And even while I raised hell at home with my political beliefs, I heeded their warning and kept my head down and
maintained at least outward respect for authority for much of my life, albeit while silently fuming. The lengths I’m willing to go in my activism have often been cut short by fear and guilt over how hard my parents worked for me to be where I am. Challenging my anti-blackness means disrupting that compulsive respectability, acknowledging the fear, and asking myself why it’s OK for certain bodies to be put on the line for our liberation but not for me to put mine. Confronting anti-blackness in my self means acknowledging that when I conflate my struggles with those of my Black peers, I am complicit in the erasure of Black oppression, labor, and resistance that made it possible for me to even be here. It means not allowing myself to continue to benefit from Black queer feminist thought and the Black Liberation movement without putting in the work too.
My experience with anti-blackness can be traced from attending rock shows where little to none of the performers or people in attendance were black, to attending a community college where there was not ever more than one or two black students & hardly any black instructors/professors in the classroom. What really concerns me is the lack of diversity in the workforce.

My last full-time job consisted of mostly white & middle aged people & a small percentage of Latinx employees (including myself). I worked this office job for what would have been almost two years by November 2015. There were no black people working regularly in the building. A coworker who started around the same time as me, was referred to the company through her former professor at some top tier regional college. The company doesn't bother to offer positions to the public through typical broadcasting sites like Craigslist.com, careerbuilder.com and monster.com. I only found out about the job position, because I met the accountant at that company through a benefit show that we both performed at. Let's face it, lots of opening positions are still obtained through word-of-mouth & friends only. During my first month at the company, I asked a coworker about the lack of black employees at the company and was told that a lot of the current staff has been there for many years and that positions are filled through their friends... Which didn't explain to me why they couldn't have a more inclusive staff, but let me know that white supremacy exists there.

The only black person I saw regularly at my job was someone who only visits the office a few to several times a year. Yes said black person is a prominent figure at the company, but he is totally tokenized by the company. Any other black people who help the company, only visit the office for a very brief period of time, as if they are only present to put in their labor and asked to leave abruptly after the completion of their tasks. I brought up the lack of diversity again right before I dismissed myself from the company & the best answer that one of my supervisors could give me is that the company has had former black employees (two black employees that they could recall in the course of the company's 40 plus years existence). Which, one of the employees were fired. Again, I wasn't satisfied with this very weak answer. I was left wondering how this company can be progressive with very little black representation in their employee roster?! This system doesn't work in the favor of black people.
Being able to resist anti-blackness means that I strive to address the lack of diversity in a work environment. In doing so, not only does this increase employment opportunities for black people in the work force, but it also creates inclusivity for POC to engage in all aspects of the work force, like: being able to perform their work confidently, opportunity for promotion and raise, enjoying company parties & even reaching out for coworker support &/or friendship, to name a few things.

As a non black POC, I choose to be an ally, because I understand that in this hierarchy created by a color cast wheel, I’m seen as less threatening to a white society. White people look at my gente (people) as a nuisance to society: "Illegally" crossing from south of the border, "taking" their jobs (these shitty minimum wage jobs that no one wants) and "stubbornly refusing" to learn English (even though white settlers didn't bother to learn the ways & tongues of the north American indigenous folk that they robbed this land and resources from). Yes there are Afro-latinx, and there visibility isn't fairly represented in Latinx mainstream culture, thus some people correlating Latinx folk with brown skin. White people view black people in a more horrific way. Let’s face it, it’s not just white people carrying on false & negative perceptions of what black people are, but non-black POC have been brain washed (& white washed) to not only have self hate, but carry on these ideals of white supremacy as well.

I can't for sure say that trying to open dialogue with people who don't understand the privilege they have and that systematic oppression exists, can be easy, and I understand that not everyone can take on that kind of challenge (such as my conversation topic on the lack of diversity of employment), but it's important for non-black POC to do what they can at their capacity, to resist anti-blackness in the work force and to strive for diversity in equal employment opportunities. Let's face it non-black POC have some privilege & we need to not forget that we're not free of any discrimination in this white society either.

If black people are not free, then no one is free, because we struggle together, at different degrees.
Mika Muñoz

Basics on confronting anti-Blackness as a brown/chicanx/latinx that might be common sense but maybe aren’t and should be said anyway and may be hard to hear/read

Fighting anti-Blackness means you have to do more work. Trust has been broken over hundreds of years of abuse and manipulation. We have a long, long, history and reality of anti-Blackness.

Listen
Fighting anti-Blackness means we should be listening. There are direct requests that are being made by Black people. Reparations, using the word enslaved Africans instead of ‘slaves.’ These can change and differ.

Be Quiet
Respect Black-only, Black-centered space. Sometimes silence is golden, as non-Black poc we have nothing to input but should support Black power.

Language
Take the use of the n-word by non-Black latinxs in casual conversation: the pervasiveness is daunting and calling it out can be super uncomfortable. If non-Black persyn hears about how wrong it is at least once from someone who looks like them, we have done something small about the matter. If we are scared and uncomfortable we have more work to do, but that is exactly where we need to do work.
Fight anti-Blackness in our language. Is darkness really deplorable that it should be equated with what is negative? We can reverse that by finding other ways to describe sadness, the unknown, or dismal times. Isn’t whiteness and light terror-inducing? Even words that are seemingly meant to insult white people are incredibly racist. Why is a white lie “good”? White trash and white devil mean that trash and devil are intrinsically not white—terribly racist. Why do light skinned, light-eyed babies get acclaimed? Mainstream Spanish-speaking channels seem to round up all the lightest latinxs to be put on telenovelas and TV shows. Turn it off! Let’s make our own media and art about/for us.

Talk
Talk about questions and doubts with other brown people, these are important conversations and with more communication we can only be strengthened. If we learn about Black culture, we can be grateful. It is not Black people’s job to teach us, deal with our incomplete, still problematic selves. Some people might not even want to deal with it and won’t fuck with you, some friends might be patient and forgive you for some mistakes, but they don’t have to.

Research
How have we preserved Spanish/European roots but not been told more about our indigenous and African roots? The colonizers burned Aztec libraries and violently instilled socioeconomic caste systems to mute and undervalue our indigenous and African ancestors. We can strive to research the native lineage of our ancestors and our third root, or the afro-descendent part of our mestizaje that is rich with resistance and is important.

Do you think you that you didn’t personally enslave or harm Black people? Native Americans held enslaved Africans captive way past the emancipation. Did our ancestors partake in the slave terror? In every case, we definitely benefit from lighter skin privilege, and the very foundation that we walk on or rules are set upon were arduously placed— with no acknowledgement—on the backs of Black people.
Do you think Black struggle is different than yours? This is true, our experiences in this society and in relation to institutions is unique but we are being attacked by the same racist capitalist construct. Many immigrants are Black and the media and debate has been stereotypically surrounding brown Latin and South Americans. Statistically, Black immigrants have higher numbers in deportations than other groups. Do we know about entire young Garifuna families immigrating from Honduras at alarming rates? Can we talk about the experience of Blackness in Latin/Central American countries of origin and AfroLatinos in the U.S.?

Knowing the pervasiveness of racism is what makes each instance so upsetting, unbearable, and unacceptable. Not one time more do I want my friends and loved ones to be uncomfortable or have ignorance thwarted at them. I will try with everything I have to stop it from coming from me. Yet, we are born into this set-up, we are soaked in it and internalized racism emanates from us like a foul, unnatural odor. It is our duty to decolonize ourselves of the deadly decaying internalized racism and nurture what is Black and brown love and respect.

**Pro-active/Pro-Black**

We should acknowledge and affirm Black people when we are out in the world. Once outside of a bar I was surrounded by a bunch of latinxs while sitting next to my blatin@ chosen fam. The familiar conversation started about what countries our families immigrated from and if we spoke Spanish. No one asked my friend about her family roots. She’s actually Black and Puerto Rican. This alienating, silencing experience coming from brown folx was not a surprise to her but just as disappointing and saddening. Her sharing with me made me try to figure out how I could have been of better support. Regardless if she wasn’t latinx, there are rich intranational histories of Black migration that could be a part of this staple introductory conversation amongst brown folx who try to connect immigration stories. I love learning about peoples’ grandparents or if they speak any other languages.

Fighting anti-Blackness IS about supporting Black-owned businesses. Do research more which establishments we partake in within this capitalist system. Even supporting businesses that hire mostly Black people.
Fight anti-Blackness by keeping in mind the severely anti-Black society we live in. If there is a Black child in the classroom or playground we should take care of and care for their growth and autonomy. This is not to victimize Black people; no one is asking this of us nor do we deserve special thanks for being pro-Black. Thinking about our privilege and helping to do better is how we should be behaving if we believe in justice and are against evil.

Whitey=waste
I am tired of white supremacy. Fuck whiteness and fuck white people on TV. Fuck their culture being seen as a baseline to which to assimilate to. Fuck people stealing and benefiting from our cultures and brilliance.

For those still hanging out with white people just know every time you stand next to them you are being probably being utilized to validate their cultural diversity, filling their POC quota. As long as you know that they are gaining from just standing next to you and hearing your thoughtful insight, go on ahead. White people are boring and they don’t need you how we need you. We need more brown people to be vehicles of the truth to our communities so as to put a stop to anti-Blackness and eradicate racism on our part. “You do not have to be friends with racists” was the most liberating sentence ever told to me.

qtpoc after the antiBlackness dialogue moderated by Monika Estrella Negra at FedUp Fest in Chicago, summer 2015
It is true that our liberation is bound to one another. When Black people are freer we are freer, because the eradication of oppression as a systemic equation will set us all free. We can abolish prisons and that will abolish detention centers. We can demand reparations and that will set the precedent for justice to so many other communities that are exploited.

Book: 
The Debt: What America owes to Blacks by Randall Robinson
Turns out, someone did the math and calculated the quantifiable amount for reparations...and counting!

Movie: 
Bamboozled Directed by Spike Lee
This movie will train your eye to see the pervasive anti-Blackness in media.

Article: 
“Black Immigrants are Prime Targets for Deportation,” by Tamara Kil Ja Kim Nopper
http://www.blackcommentator.com/54/54_guest_immigrants.html
Born and raised in San Francisco’s Mission District, I grew up around Xicanx activists, organizers, *mujeristas* resisting oppression and colonization in our communities. I was raised by a teen mother studying social work and La Raza Studies in a super progressive city so the theory and practice of Black, Brown, Pan-Asian, and Native solidarity was second-nature to me throughout my life. However, being new to the city of Chicago and taking part in the #StopTheCops & #FundBlackFutures* actions on October 24th allowed me to further reflect on the meaning of brown solidarity for Black lives.

Knowing the hxstory of how brown people have supported Black liberation made it easy for me to decide to put my life on the line for black lives. Although anti-Blackness is pervasive in brown communities – no thanks to colonization and white supremacy – not many of us know the role our collective ancestors have had in supporting Black liberation. My favorite band, Las Cafeteras, drop some knowledge in their song *It’s Movement Time*. Using art as a tool for decolonization, their lyrics tell us that not only did Mexico get rid of the caste system but also abolished legalized slavery in 1829, which only further pissed off whites in Texas (holler!). The singer declares, “the *underground rail road also ran South which led Black folks to freedom with Mexico right there to receive them.*” The song even describes how Black and Brown people fought together on the day that began the war for Mexican independence. It’s also common knowledge that the Black Panthers, Brown Berets, Young Lords, Pan-Asian, and American Indian Movement were all in the struggle
together fighting against the systems that violate us. Thus, participating in the action, having been arrested, and my willingness to die for Black freedom is something I'm willing to do because our brown ancestors did it for Black people. Maybe our ancestors knew that the liberation of all people depended on Black liberation. Maybe they knew that collective resistance would lead us to freedom. Maybe they knew they had "nothing to lose but [their] chains."

Even more so, activist and comrade Page May recently stated at a Black-Palestinian solidarity event, "Solidarity is not the end goal. It’s to dismantle all the racial regimes that oppress us." Above all, the oppression of brown and Black people doesn’t have to look or be the same for us to throw down for black liberation. We don’t even need to actually physically see it happening to know that Black pain is real. Most importantly, as brown people, we just need to know that our Black comrades are suffering, which should be enough to compel us to fight with them. For me, I honor our collective ancestral truth that as brown folx it is our duty to fight for Black liberation – it’s in our blood.

*#StoptheCops and #FundBlackFutures were the hashtags used for a multi-racial direct action against the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in Chicago in the fall of 2015, organized and led by BYP100, an activist member-based organization of young Black people fighting for freedom.*
8 Ways
Brown People Can Show Up
For Black Power Right Now

1. Bring your organization/community members out to the next action protesting police violence against Black people. Search Black Lives Matter (insert city here) on Facebook or in Google search; you will find information.

2. Put a “Black Lives Matter” sign on your lawn or in your window. You can create your own or get your organization to purchase some from Peace Supplies.org (all proceeds go to Black Lives Matter).

3. Start a reading group. We are empowered through knowing our histories together. Get your community or organization together to form a reading group around historical Black and Brown solidarity or revolutionary Black power. Some book examples: Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity by Gaye Theresa Johnson, Sancho’s Journal by David Montejano, or Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur.

4. Create pamphlets/zines/booklets in Spanish on Black Lives Matter and distribute in your communities. It’s understandable that not everyone can be out in the streets for rallies and marches. There are still ways to engage our people in why Black & Brown Unity is critical to all of our liberations. This is just one!

5. Offer free translation services to Black-led organizations challenging police violence. A lot of conferences and general informational meetings are often inaccessible to Spanish-speaking people. Take that particular workload off of Black organizers and offer your

continued...
6. Host a teach-in. Make space before or after your organization’s monthly meeting to talk about the history of Chicanos, Mexicanos or Puerto Ricans organizing with Black power/civil rights movements and why it’s more important now than ever to continue building upon that legacy.

7. Offer your organization or community space to Black organizations & efforts. Meeting & event space is sparse & hard to come by affordably in the city. Reach out to Black-led organizations (in Chicago: Project NIA, Assata’s Daughters, or Love & Protect) & let them know you have free space they can use for future needs.

8. Donate! The most obvious thing to do is often the most forgotten about. Organize fundraisers or donate as often as possible to Black-led, grassroots organizations in your city resisting state violence everyday.
A.V.A is a gay Latino from the south suburbs of Chicago. A.V.A moved to the Southside of Chicago where he currently lives & has been a part of the Chicago DIY punk scene, spreading awareness & helping to create space for POC & transgender and queer diversity. A.V.A hopes to further his activism in new & different ways.

Gabo Banksi is a committed luchador for human dignity, from Chicago and across the Americas. They are content with a steady diet of empanadas and yerba mate, and perpetually ready to raise hell against systems of oppression. They are an organizer, immigrants’ and workers’ rights activist, urban planner and fair housing investigator.

Cuauhtémoc [kəwˈtěmo̱k] is a 21 year old Mexican from Southside of Chicago. He is a recent graduate of IJLA. Poetry and Art. Going through the school-to-prison pipeline has shaped his experiences. What made him interested in this dialogue was how its used to deconstruct the status quo: white supremacy, capitalism, etc.

Tanuja Devi Jagernauth is a Chicago-based writer. An alum of the Voices of Our Nations Arts workshop for writers of color, she writes about being born in Guyana, raised in Arizona, with ancestral roots in India. Follow her on Twitter @tanuja_devi. Peep her blog at tanujadevi.wordpress.org

Hoda Katebi is a Muslim-Iranian feminist from Oklahoma studying International Studies and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago. When she is not pretending to be a student or protesting stupid shit, she is creating content for JooJoo Azad, an alternative fashion blog. Find her at www.joojooazad.com or @hodakatebi.
**Mika Muñoz** is a fierce Xicana of Chicago. Union welder by day, sex-positive-burlesquer by night. Anti-authoritarian, hard femme, POC-nationalist Gemini, Virgo Rising. She enjoys disproving stereotypes, call-out queens, and supporting her beloved QTIPOC familia & community.

**Fátima Noekai** is a Xicana and Xingona committed to decolonization and healing. After graduating with a master’s in social work, Fátima hopes to become a reproductive justice community organizer. Aside from training for the revolution, Fátima loves to laugh, dance, write, read, explore the city, and chill by the lake.

**Fernando Romulo** is a Chicano man who writes about his experience growing up in Chicago working-class neighborhoods. As a future educator, he will build on powerful work to change the educational system into a place that supports an educational philosophy based on cultural relevance, empowering students to organize, and envisioning a world where students are socially conscious and pragmatic.

**Melisa Stephen** is a brown non-binary queer femme living in Rogers Park. They resist white supremacist, colonialist, capitalist, cisheeteropatriarchy by making art and building community with other QTPOC who are down to learn, struggle, and imagine creative alternatives together. Check out their musings and work on Twitter and Instagram @peacecosour.

**Vicko** is an organizer on hiatus, full time graduate student, aspiring middle school teacher, and life-long artist. Reppin’ for the hociconas and the pissed off nerdas who put the "chola" in "scholar". #ScholaRComics
Monica Trinidad is a queer, xicana artist and organizer, born and raised in Chicago. She believes that juxtaposing a restorative, abolitionist framework of radical, grassroots organizing with constantly creating new forms of self-expression through art is critical to challenging white supremacy. She co-founded Brown & Proud Press in 2012.

Twitter | @BPPZINES
Facebook | BROWNANDPROUDPRESS
Tumblr | ONSTRUGGLING
Email | BROWNANDPROUDPRESS@gmail.com

Find back issues: No shame distro, Brown recluse distro, Quimbys bookstore (Chicago), Bluestockings (NYC), Boxcar books (IN), and archived at University of Chicago Library and Barnard Zine Library.

No one is free, until black people are free.
moonroot

resisting anti-Blackness in ourselves and our communities
WHO WE ARE:

MOONROOT is a creative collective of womyn, trans, and genderqueer folks of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, living and loving in diaspora. We are an evolving experiment in building loving, radical community across social and geographic borders that began in 2011. Rooted in a deep desire to resist isolation and invisibility, we are committed to enacting creative possibilities that move all of us towards healing, wholeness, and self-determination. Our zines are just one way we are growing space to share our love, pain, and joy with each other and affirm our existence in a world in which our voices are marginalized, misunderstood, or ignored.

monna wong
Jess Kealiihoalani Toshie Mease
Claudia Leung
mina <3
Sine Hwang Jensen
amy rekha dewan
linda nguyễn

www.moonroot.info | hello@moonroot.info
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WHO WE ARE & WHY WE’RE DOING THIS

We are a collective of women, genderqueer, and trans folks of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. We started MOONROOT to carve a space out for our voices. We wanted to be heard and seen, not necessarily by the mainstream, but by each other. We wanted to love each other, to build communities across geographical distance and diaspora and to resist the silence and isolation that we face because of our identities and to tell each other: YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

When Brown & Proud Press invited us to collaborate on a split zine addressing anti-Blackness, we knew we wanted in. As API folks, we carry varying relationships to power based on ethnicity, class, color, gender, sexuality, and more. We are not a monolith. And we also live in a world and country fundamentally shaped by the anti-Blackness.

We know what it is to face racial oppression and state violence under white supremacy, and understand that our liberation is tied to Black liberation. We also know that we have internalized anti-Black racism and perpetuate it within our own communities.

We want to tell other API women, genderqueer, and trans people that you are not alone.

We want to challenge ourselves and each other to resist anti-Black racism.

We know it is a matter of life and death.
GOALS & INTENTIONS

We have many goals and intentions for this zine.

We want to put forth genuine and honest statements about where we’re at, where we hope to be, and how we can be in meaningful solidarity with Black revolutionaries and challenge anti-Black racism in our communities.

We want to be reflective and active.

We want to focus on concrete actions, recognizing multiple manifestations of “the work” that include more than physically showing up to a protest.

We want to be expansive in acknowledging the interconnectedness of our struggles for liberation, recognizing that we are not the same but that we are not free until all of us are free.

We want to inspire ourselves and each other to continually struggle for liberation—for ourselves, our communities,
Solidarity Beyond a Movement Moment: Reflections on Confronting Anti-Blackness in South Asian and Asian American Communities

Anti-Blackness has become the phrase of the day. After the murder of Michael Brown, and the mainstream visibility of the phrase “Black Lives Matter,” many API and Asian American organizations have taken on the work of “confronting anti-Blackness” in our Asian American and API communities.

Confronting anti-Blackness in our communities is incredibly important, but it cannot be a phase. I want to think through how we truly commit to the work of building deep solidarity amongst Black, API, and South Asian communities for the long haul. How we build movement, and not just respond to a moment.

To give credit where credit is due: these reflections and observations have all been built in struggle, community and love with so many people. These reflections come from working with East Coast Solidarity Summer to do trainings on anti-Blackness with South Asian young people; drawing connections between queer South Asian struggles and Black liberation with the Queer South Asian National Network; working on the ground with Hmong and Asian people in solidarity in Madison, WI with Young Gifted and Black and Freedom, Inc.; and writing and thinking about the shared histories, resistances and divide and conquer tactics experienced by Black and API people in the U.S. I am grateful to be surrounded by brilliant community who are also thinking through how we do this work and do it well.

Drawing from different iterations of this work – different strategies, organizations, and cities – here are some strategies that I’ve been reflecting on:
1) Build genuine and deep relationships.
Organizing isn’t just about direct action – at its best, organizing is also about building chosen family. Take the time to build real relationships with your political comrades. Organizing is about investing in people as much as it is about confronting power. Invest in relationships.

2) Commit for the long haul – not for the moment.
Confronting anti-Blackness isn’t work that will be done in 5 years. You can’t host one workshop and consider the work done. Confronting the racism that lives deeply embedded in our communities – and that we have often been rewarded for – is a daily practice, and a constantly renewed commitment. Build relationships that are for the movement, not the moment. Commit to undoing racism in every facet of your organization, your life, your work.

3) Make your solidarity selfish.
Understand that doing solidarity work isn’t about being a “good activist.” As much as our work should come from a place of deep love, solidarity work is also strategic. Build your own analysis. Build your community’s analysis. Working towards Black liberation is how you get free, too. If your community has experienced racial profiling, police brutality, fear, lack of safety - they do in fact have a deep investment in Black liberation. Your work is to make those connections visible.

4) Do the work before moments of crisis.
Moments of crisis are just that – crisis. It’s hard to build deep, genuine and trusting relationships as the world is falling apart. It’s hard to educate your community in the hour before the big march.
If you are serious about building deep solidarity, do the work in the quiet times. That’s when you are most able to build relationships for the movement, not just for the moment. Those are the relationships that you mobilize in moments of crisis. The work behind the very visible APIs4BlackLives mantra was years deep – there are countless hours of political education, writing, talking and organizing that made APIs4BlackLives the powerful organizing tool that it is now.

5) **Show up for the day-to-day work of organizing, not just the big actions.** The movement isn’t just on the day that you shut down the police station and risk arrest. Direct actions are incredibly important, but they don’t happen in a vacuum. Write op-eds and letters to the editor. Hold political education spaces and workshops. Raise money – raise lots of money. Do the non-sexy, unrecognized work, daily grind of organizing, and understand that work as just as important and necessary as the large, shut down actions.

6) **Don’t wait for directions.** There’s a saying that we’re all throwing around now: that we have to “take leadership from Black people.” And this is true. However, asking someone to provide leadership for you is also a burden. If you have genuine relationships, have done your own work and built your own analysis, you should know what work needs to be done, especially in your own communities. Do the work. Be ready to be held accountable, and be accountable. But don’t wait for someone else to tell you what to do. Being in accountable relationships doesn’t mean that you don’t do your own work.
7) Learn your own history, and don’t tokenize Black history and organizing as the one true path to liberation. My introduction to liberation history was through learning about the Black Freedom Struggle. That said, holding up Black histories as the only movement histories in this country is also anti-Blackness – we can’t hold past and current movements to such high standards that they become infallible. That is tokenization; that is taking away people’s space to make mistakes, learn and grow. Black organizing in this country has been and continues to be incredibly powerful. But not knowing other histories of organizing means that we tokenize the histories of Black people as the only path to liberation, and hold Black work to a level of perfection that is not fair. We need to honor Black struggle and know API and other histories too.
We stand on the doorstep of the Oakland Police Department today as a group of Asians putting our bodies on the line in response to a national call to shut down institutions that perpetrate the war on Black people.

We understand that our liberation depends on the liberation of black people and echo the demands that have come out of Ferguson.

As Asian Americans, we enjoy many rights that were fought for and won by Black liberation movements. Today, we too have the power to stand on the side of justice.

We can create harmony by building strong relationships between Black and Asian communities and standing together for Black Lives.

Which side are you on?
Mina: You recently moved cross country, from Baltimore to the Bay area! What have you observed to be some of the differences in the solidarity movements for Black liberation in Baltimore and the Bay area? How could we learn from them both? What are some of the best practices you've been a part of or witnessed?

Sine: When it comes to creating cultures of resistance and solidarity, I’ve learned that relationships are key. Often our ideas about solidarity remain in the abstract, not in the connections we build with each other everyday and our material realities. It’s been interesting to witness the similarities and differences between Baltimore and the Bay Area. I moved to Baltimore city—which is more than 60% Black—as a teenager, and feel really grateful to have been politicized around racial justice there. I was blessed to be surrounded by histories of Black resistance to slavery and racism and Black-led organizations who carry on that legacy—groups like Baltimore Algebra Project, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, Pleasant Hope Baptist Church, and others. I came more into awareness of white supremacy and antiblackness through a group called Baltimore Racial Justice Action. Along my path I have been honored to learn from many Black visionary organizers.

At the same time, Baltimore is less than 3% Asian and less than 1% Pacific Islander and the majority of those affected by poverty and the Prison Industrial Complex are Black. When I was coming up, a few Asians were involved in movement organizing throughout Baltimore, but there wasn’t a collective awareness. In general, there wasn’t a lot of visibility of progressive Asian voices and growing up, there wasn’t an active and organized pan-Asian left to provide a space for political discussion or a structure for organized action across Asian communities.
The Ferguson Uprising following the murder of Michael Brown acted as a catalyst for the formation of Asians into a more cohesive group. The rapid pace of organizing and the national attention forced everyone to evaluate what they were doing to contribute to liberation from white supremacy and resist anti-Black racism. Folks wanted to organize themselves to support the movement and be visible not as individuals but as Asians, especially to counter the tired narratives of Asian-Black conflict in the mainstream media. At the same time, some Asian storeowners aligned themselves with policing and owning interests and we wanted to talk about that too. A group of Asians who wanted to support Black-led organizing and work within Asian communities started to form and has since continued to grow, especially since the Baltimore Uprising.

As a newcomer, I’ll be learning to understand the Bay Area for a long time. In my first few months here, I’ve noticed it feels both different and familiar. There is a lot of visibility of Asian and Asian American communities including a long legacy of Asian American radical resistance to white supremacy rooted in a history of Third World solidarity. There are also many opportunities to interact with elder radicals from the Asian American movement and younger generations of activists. The intergenerational nature of the movement here is so central to what makes me feel like I’m part of a vibrant and growing movement for liberation. I also see how organizers working within identity-based organizations don’t get trapped within those
A long history of solidarity work has led to trust between particular Black, Asian, and other POC organizers. These relationships that fuel radical change take time to build.

Sine: You are currently organizing with API Resistance in DC, which like Baltimore has a small API population. What has been your experience doing API solidarity work with local Black liberation movement(s)?

Mina: Engaging in organizing work here in DC has been a very steep learning curve for me, and I am grateful that it has introduced me to many rad folks who hold me accountable and who continue to teach me a lot about this work.

To give a little background, DC’s API population is around 4%. Some of this population has lived in DC for decades, for example the remaining Chinese families in the rapidly gentrifying Chinatown. Around half of the Chinese population in Chinatown live in one apartment complex, Museum Square. Currently,
together with their Black neighbors, these tenants are fighting back against the threats of displacement by their landlord who refused to renew the Section 8 contract and is trying to demolish the complex to build luxury apartments. Other APIs in DC are newer to the city, and many of them move in and out. I myself am not from DC, and am complicit in the gentrification that is displacing Black and people of color communities all across the district. The issue of gentrification is of course very tied to the fight for Black liberation and also directly tied to racist policing in DC. This is definitely something I have to hold myself accountable for as I organize here in a historically predominantly Black city.

In this context, API Resistance was created out of a void in a moment of crisis. When Michael Brown was murdered and Officer Darren Wilson was not indicted, Black organizers led marches down the streets of DC and organized numerous direct actions. API folks joined these actions, but there was no organized API presence/mobilization.

Out of this void, API Resistance was started in December 2014 as a space for API folks to do long-term organizing and strategizing around meaningful API solidarity against racist police brutality in DC, and has grown into a collective whose mission it is to challenge anti-Black racism, white supremacy, imperialism and capitalism. Our work is grounded in the analysis that API liberation is bound with Black liberation. Now that we have created API Resistance, we need to make sure that it grows and continues, because we know that this struggle is for the long-haul. To be intentional about sustaining the group and engaging in meaningful solidarity with local Black liberation
movements, one of the things we continue to focus on is building relationships, both among ourselves in API Resistance as well as with Black organizers and Black-led groups. I am grateful for OGs in the Bay Area like Alex Tom (of the Chinese Progressive Association - SF) for offering us advice, one of which was to remember that effective solidarity work is based on strong relationships and trust. When I was feeling in a rush to organize in DC a visible solidarity action such as the shut-down of the Oakland Police Department HQ that Asians 4 Black Lives helped organize, Alex reminded me that the action (and other work of Asians 4 Black Lives) was possible and successful because of the decades-long relationships between Asian organizers and Black organizers in the Bay Area.

As a new group with many members who are not from DC, it is extra important that we are following the leadership of Black and long-term DC residents and building strong relationships over time. One of the things we are currently working on are the Weeks of Action being led by the Black Lives Matter SpokesCouncil. The Weeks of Action challenge the “5 pillars of Anti-Black White Supremacy In DC” in a framework created by Aaron Goggans, a local BLM DMV organizer.

At the same time, constantly asking for directions from Black organizers can burden them, taking up their time and energy. We have to be aware of and respect their processes, especially as many Black-led groups in DC are focusing on organizing within the Black community. When there are no specific asks in that moment, instead of continually asking Black

Constantly asking for directions from Black organizers can burden them, taking up their time and energy. We have to be aware of and respect their processes.
organizers what to do, we focus on the 3 main components below that Erika Totten, a local BLM DMV organizer, offered us when API Resistance was beginning. I am continually learning that there is always more work to be done in these 3 tasks.

- Show up for and support local Black-led actions and events
- Fundraise for local Black-led organizations
- Educate, organize, confront antiblackness in our own communities, and build our own infrastructure (through training, fundraising, healing work etc.)

There are many more ways we can continue to grow.

Thinking about what you just described, Sine, I would love to see API Resistance grow to become more intergenerational, and also to create more infrastructure and resources for radical API organizing in DC like what exists in the Bay Area. There are many more ways we can continue to grow, and I am grateful to be a part of this organizing in DC alongside many amazing organizers, visionaries and revolutionaries.

Mina: When we were planning for the Igniting a Model Minority Mutiny (IMMM) Network Gathering for the Allied Media Conference this year, you reminded us via Almah that solidarity work is not supposed to be comfortable, that we should be feeling a stretch. What do you think are some ways for us to continue making sure we are stretching and learning?

Sine: Almah LaVon, a Black femme visionary writer and facilitator, worked with us to shape the IMMM network gathering. She shared a quote by Black feminist Bernice Johnson Reagon where she reflects on solidarity work with white women (the statement is reprinted in Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology). Johnson wrote “I feel as if I’m gonna keel over any
minute and die. That is often what it feels like if you’re really doing coalition work. Most of the time you feel threatened to the core and if you don’t, you’re not really doing no coalescing.” She also wrote, “You don’t go into coalition because you just like it. The only reason you would consider trying to team up with somebody who could possibly kill you, is because that’s the only way you can figure you can stay alive.” That was an important reminder and grounding for me because I think sometimes we lament because doing solidarity work requires so much of us—to be able to think and act outside of our experience. In that way, it “threatens us to the core.” It also emphasizes that we need to develop this solidarity for the liberation of ALL our communities, not out of charity. We’re fighting for our own liberation as we fight for others.

I think being aware and learning resilience to the feeling of being “threatened to the core” helps build our capacity to continue to be accountable and grow. A lot of times, out of fear or insecurity, we may choose to turn away from truth that hurts or be shortsighted in the way we see our interests in conflict with the interests of other communities and therefore, no way to move forward in solidarity. But I think challenging and believing in ourselves to be the “leaders we are looking for” (as Grace Lee and Jimmy Boggs talked about) is the way to stay on a revolutionary path. This is something I’ve struggled with as I’ve grown as an organizer and will continue to struggle with. You have to meet people where they’re at (including yourself) and having mentors in my life who’ve treated me that way has shown me how radical transformation can unfold internally and externally.

We need to develop this solidarity for the liberation of ALL our communities, not out of charity.
Asian-American Political Alliance

We Asian-Americans believe that American society has been, and still is, fundamentally a racist society, and that historically we have accommodated ourselves to this society in order to survive.

We Asian-Americans believe that heretofore we have been relating to white standards of acceptability, and affirm the right of self-definition and self-determination.

We Asian-Americans support all non-white liberation movements and believe that all minorities in order to be truly liberated must have complete control over the political, economic, and educational institutions within their respective communities.

We Asian-Americans oppose the imperialistic policies being pursued by the American government.
OPEN LETTER TO OUR SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY ON BLACK SOLIDARITY: PLEASE SHARE

To our loved Southeast Asian people,

WE HAVE BEEN WITNESS TO SEVERE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST THE BLACK COMMUNITY, AND WE HAVE HEALING AND ORGANIZING TO DO:

On Monday November 24th, a St. Louis County prosecutor announced that Mike Brown’s killer will not be indicted. We are heartbroken with rage and sadness that another Black child was murdered in the street and no one will be held accountable. And again today, justice has been denied as the system chooses to hold no one accountable in the murder of Eric Garner by the NYPD. We cry for the families of Mike Brown and Eric Garner as they are forced to find peace through their own means and struggle. We are pained to our core that the community’s truth is so violently and publicly stripped away through legal system processes that weren’t built to honor our truth.

WE NEED TO DO OUR WORK OF CONNECTING OUR STRUGGLES TO THOSE OF OUR BLACK SISTERS, BROTHERS, AND KINFOLK:

On Monday, our world stopped. But for many in our community, it didn’t. We know what it means for our lives to be taken by armed bodies of US government while no one pays attention, here and in our homelands. We know what it means to be forced to find
peace with our trauma, and find justice on our own without
solidarity from the outside world. We know what it means for the
truth of our experience to be stripped from us by the system, and
then have to live with our truth in the shadows and be invisible
in our intergenerational trauma and pain. As Black communities
charge genocide, war and state violence on their lives and futures
by the forces that are meant to protect them, we know deeply
the meaning of these very words and experiences as we carry the
weight and history of mass human rights violations against our
people from one side of the world to the other.

AS A SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY, LET
US REMEMBER OUR DEEP RESILIENCE AND
COLLECTIVE HEALING THROUGH OUR OWN
STRUGGLES, AND OFFER OURSELVES, OUR LOVE,
AND OUR SOLIDARITY TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY:

Our solidarity work must begin with organizing and transforming
ourselves, our families, and our loved ones by understanding
how anti-black racism has impacted our own community. Let us
feel the division and injustice that systemic colorism and anti-
blackness has done to our community, as we are taught to value
those of us who are light-skinned over those of us who are dark-
skinned. Let us see that the struggle of Black communities against
police and state violence directly impacts our community’s
survival as we face that violence as well. Let us be clear through
this understanding that while our oppressions are connected,
our oppression is not the same. Black bodies are systemically and
historically dehumanized in this country in ways we will never
face. We must now also own our failure as a Southeast Asian
community to be in solidarity with the Black community in times
of crisis and movement. And we must do better, right now.
WE MUST READY OUR MINDS AND HEARTS FOR A BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT THAT ALL OF OUR LIVES DEPEND ON, BECAUSE OUR LIBERATION AS SOUTHEAST ASIANS MUST DEMAND THAT PEOPLE AND THE SYSTEM TRULY BELIEVE THAT BLACK LIVES MATTER:

Now is the time for us to show up and unveil the raw truth of our beings as Southeast Asian survivors and warriors, and bring it with our Black family. We will not remain calm. We will not believe that property is more valuable than life. We will not turn our heads as Black people are shot every 28 hours by police or vigilantes in this country. We will respect and follow the leadership of those most marginalized on the ground - Black youth, Black queer folk, Black trans folk, Black mothers, and Black sisters. We will be guided by those who have been in the streets for over 100 days using their voices and bodies to demand justice and dignity. It is no longer enough to watch. We will roll up our sleeves, hit the streets, and do our part to make the world stop and SHUT IT DOWN!

In love,

Your family of the Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEAFN)

Mekong NYC
Freedom, Inc.
Providence Youth Student Movement
1Love Movement
ManForward
SOY-Shades of Yellow
VAYLA New Orleans

(Published December 3, 2014
https://www.facebook.com/SEAfreedomnetwork/posts/913801081978402)
YURI KOCHIYAMA
MAY 19, 1921 – JUNE 1, 2014
PRACTICED DIRECT ACTION.
SHARED HER HOME
WROTE POSTCARDS TO MALCOLM X
DEMANDED REPARATIONS.

GRACE LEE BOGGS
JUNE 27, 1915 – OCT 5, 2015
ASKED HARD QUESTIONS.
HUMANIZED THE REVOLUTION
FOUGHT FOR BLACK POWER
BUILT COMMUNITY GARDENS
Reflections on organizing Vietnamese nail salon workers in East Oakland:

Nail salon workers in East Oakland are predominantly Vietnamese women because the industry represents an accessible economic opportunity.

Nail salon clients in East Oakland are predominantly Black women because getting yours nails done is an affordable form of getting pampered.

At the crossroads of the nail salon, Vietnamese workers and Black clients get to share with each other how they arrived in East Oakland.

For Black folks, we learned that the Amtrak train of the 50’s and 60’s brought folks from the sharecropping South to Oakland to work in the naval supply stations.

For Viet folks, the end of the Vietnam war in late 70s brought large waves of refugees to America. Many of them ended up in California.
This forced resettlement of the Vietnamese diaspora was a result of US imperialism as was the migration of Black folks who were forced to leave the South’s discrimination for better economic opportunity.

When these two very different communities converse with one another over the nail counter, they not only realize their histories and struggles arriving in East Oakland are similar, but also their people and history share the same oppressor.

After these conversations, the Vietnamese women told me:
“If it weren’t for the Civil Rights Movement and Black movement leaders like MLK, we wouldn’t be able to exercise the privileges they do today as US citizens.”

For that, they tell me, we have much to owe Black people.

While liberation needs to be more than transactions of you-helped-me-so-I’m-going-to-help-you… these nail salon counter conversations are getting somewhere.

-- Tracy
A Super-Short Reading List on Challenging Anti-Blackness in Asian Communities.
Sine Hwang Jensen

1. History

- The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Ellen Wu)
- Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture of Revolutionary Asian Pacific America (Fred Ho)
- Afro Asia: Revolutionary Political and Cultural Connections between African Americans and Asian Americans (Fred Ho and Bill Mullen)
- Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles (Laura Pulido)
- Black Desi Secret History: blackdesisecrethistory.org
- The Karma of Brown Folk (Vijay Prashad)

2. Activism and Organizing

Sasha W. is the Organizing Director at the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) and a trainer/consultant through SHIFT: Transformative Consulting Cooperative. Sasha has been organizing with Asians for Black Lives (Madison), as part of the larger APIs4BlackLives movement. You can read more about Sasha’s writing and consulting at www.tospeaksasong.com.

Sina is a dreamer and schemer working as a librarian at the uc berkeley ethnic studies library.

Cynthia Fong is a Bay Area native who grew up in Richmond and El Cerrito. She was stolen from the motherland when she was young, forced to survive and find her way in this new land. Newly returned to the Bay, she seeks community, growth and love.

Cynthia Fong

Mina is an immigrant with roots in yokohama and hong kong. she is currently loving, healing and resisting in washington dc.

MINA

Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEAFN): We are Southeast Asian grassroots organizing groups/individuals/organizations formed to increase our power as an organized base in the United States.

www.facebook.com/SEAfreedomnetwork

Tracy Nguyen is an American-born Vietnamese, queer woman organizing, reflecting, and making films in the Bay Area.

Tracy Nguyen