

# Activist Training Institute

*“The People are the Makers of History”*

Weekend Retreat

July 10-12, 2009

**Friday July 10th**

# AGENDA / SCHEDULE

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## FRIDAY

5:30-6:30 pm	Dinner	BCNC
6:30 - 9 pm	Review Schedule, Agenda, Objectives Group Values Life Spots	
9 pm	Travel to Plymouth	

## SATURDAY

8 am	Breakfast	
9 am	Vision of a Better World AA History & Race in US AA Today The 4 "I's"	
12:15 pm	Lunch	
1:15 pm	Social Movements	
5:10 pm	Break	
7 pm	Dinner	
8 pm	Fun	

## SUNDAY

8 am	Breakfast	
9 am	Organizing	
12 noon	Depart Lunch	

# ATI GOALS

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**#1: Build a commitment to organizing and activism work in Boston**

**#2: Build and grow a multigenerational community of Asian American social justice-minded activists**

**# 3 Build organizing skills**

**#4 Deepen political analysis of issues & movement – building**

# RETREAT OBJECTIVES

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## ATI participants & ATI team will:

1. get to know each other in multiple settings
2. develop mutually-supportive norms and practices
3. have fun together!

## ATI participants will:

1. identify issues / structures in US society that call for change
2. arrive at some common vision and values
3. construct a narrative around Asian American history and racism
4. see a presentation on the larger context of race in development of US
5. discuss how the Asian American historic narrative applies today
6. apply framework of 4 "I's" / layers of oppression and social change
7. explore a definition of social movements, their components, and examples
8. identify their own learning styles
9. look at examples of how organizing has impacted our lives
10. compare and contrast organizing with other change strategies
11. examine a definition of community organizing

## PROPOSED GROUP VALUES

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We agree...

1. to respect one another
2. to be fully present and engaged
3. that we all come with good intentions
4. to be responsible for our own and others' personal growth.

## GROUP VALUES ACTIVITY

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1. Consider the group values presented by the facilitators.
2. Divide into pairs. Draw a value out of a hat and do a mini-skit representing a violation of this value. You have 5 minutes to prepare and up to one minute to present.
3. The group will guess which value you are representing.
4. Present your skit!

1. Think of 2 profound experiences in your life:
  - when you experienced something that was really wrong
  - when you experienced something that gave you hope

Represent these 2 experiences visually on 2 pieces of paper--> be creative!

You have 20 minutes.

2. Be prepared to share.

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# VISION OF A BETTER WORLD

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## 1. Watch **video clips on systems**

2. Work as a group to draw a picture of your ideal world and include the answer to some of these questions in your picture:.

- What rights/things should be guaranteed to all human beings?  
Environment? Living Beings?
- How would we treat each other?
- How is society structured?
- How would society deal with problems?
  - For example: crime, inequality, -isms

## ASIAN AMERICAN HISTORY

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1. Walk around and scan the panel-- note three themes.
2. Divide into three groups based on the three themes. Answer the questions provided (on next page) and use them as a guide to construct a narrative of history in this theme.
3. Be prepared to report back to the group and then work to create one overarching “story.”

# PANELS QUESTIONS

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## **Labor**

- What was the situation with labor in the U.S. during the late 1800's?
- What forces resulted in Chinese, Mexicans, and other groups coming to the U.S.?
- How has need for labor become connected with immigration (both past and present)?
- What is the story being told by these panels?

## **Biology**

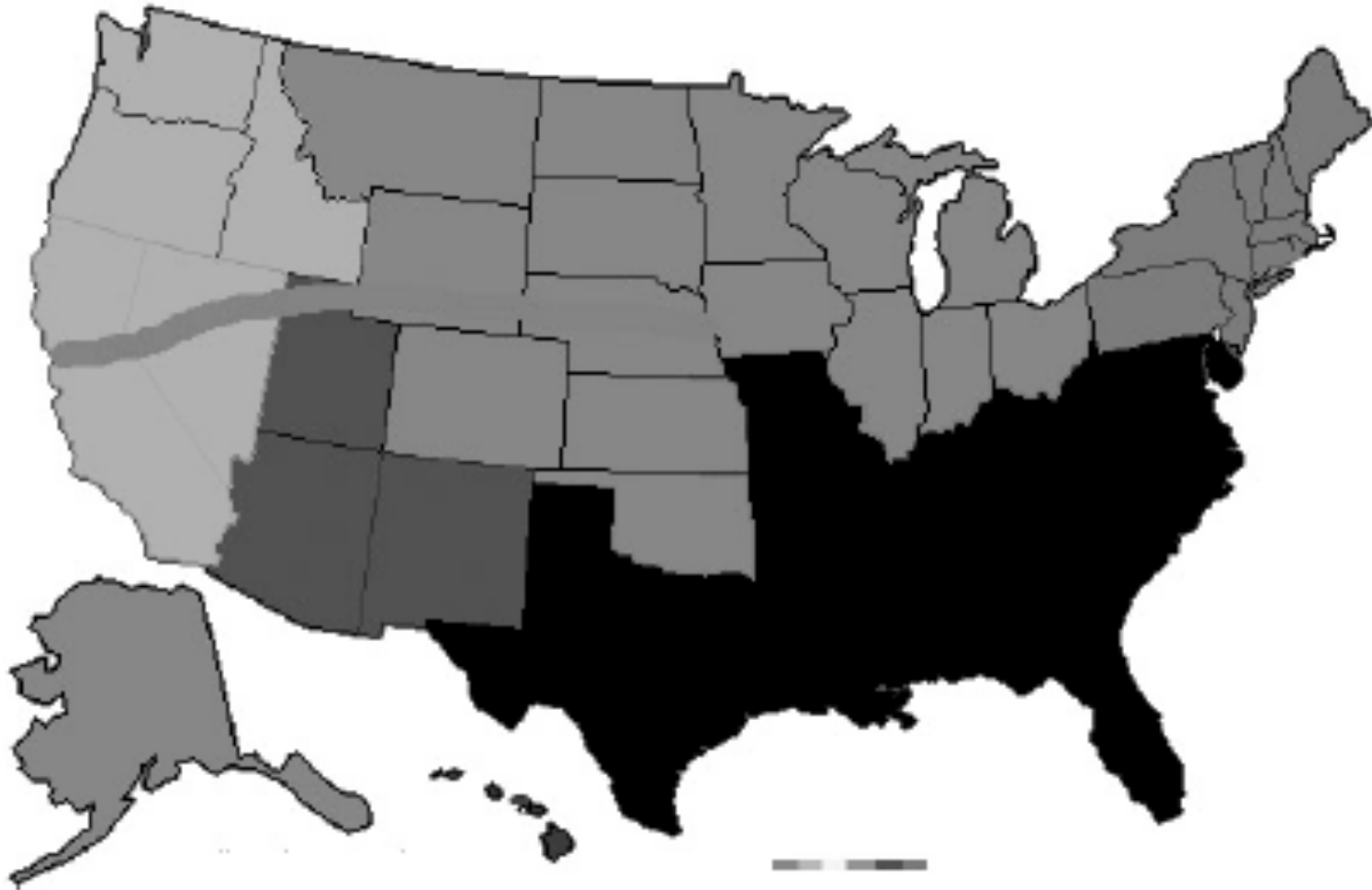
- How was/is science used to create and perpetuate ideas of racial hierarchy?
- What was the impact of setting up racial hierarchies (between white people and people of color and among people of color themselves)?
- How have images and words been used to influence how we think about other races (both past and present)?
- What is the story being told by these panels?

## **Laws/Legislation**

- What has the general sentiment towards immigration and labor of immigrants been throughout U.S. history? Why?
- How did people of the time justify the enactment of these laws?
- Looking at these laws, examine how citizenship and immigration policy gets used as a form of exclusion and inclusion.
- What is the story being told by these panels?

# RACE AND BUILDING THE U.S.

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1. The Four I's:
  - Institutional
  - Ideological/ cultural
  - Interpersonal
  - Individual/ internalized
2. Talk to a partner about how this framework applies to your life spots or other personal experiences.

## THE FOUR I'S (cont'd)

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### Working definitions of the Four I's

- Institutional— level of social structures and how society is organized.
- Ideological/ cultural—level of ideas, norms, standards, beliefs that are pervasive in a society.
- Interpersonal—level of what occurs between and among people.
- Individual/ internalized—level of when ideas, norms, standards get internalized by the individual and become a part of one's own belief system.

## I-HOTEL CASE STUDY

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As you watch this film, look for:

- What are the grievances that the community had against the way the city and companies were handling the I-Hotel?
- What was people's vision of a better world?
- How did people organize to fight eviction?
- What was the "feeling/impression" of the Asian American Movement that you got from watching the video?

*Social Movement:*

*A large-scale sustained mobilization of masses of individuals and organizations united in common action by a common issue or vision against the status quo.*

## **Car metaphor from SOUL**

### **Components**

Road = Social Conditions

Passengers = Masses of People

Drivers = Leadership

Roadmap = Strategy

Engine = Grassroots Organizations

Car Body = Coalition and Networks

Steering Wheel = Parties

Headlights = Unifying Vision

Stereo = Culture

Wheels = Range of Tactics

## ASSATA SHAKUR CHANT

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*“It is our duty to fight for our freedom.*

*It is our duty to win.*

*We must love each other and protect each other.*

*We have nothing to lose but our chains.”*

## *Learning Styles*

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- Everyone has a different way of learning
- We also have different ways of viewing things.
- This exercise will give us a little understanding of each other and how we process information
- We hope that this information will provide a supportive learning environment

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Sunday

July 12, 2009

1. Listen to the statement read aloud.
2. If the statement is true for you, move to the YES wall. If the statement is not true for you, move to the NO wall.
3. Listen to the fact that relates to each statement.



## *RAINING ROCKS*

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Once upon a time there was a little town in the mountains called Swisstown. One winter, a villager taking a walk in the hills finds a man lying in the snow – he has been hit by a falling rock. The villager, being a very caring person, uses her jacket to bandage the injured man and carries him back down to the village.

The next day two more people are hit by falling rocks and they are rescued by other villagers. The next day, four people are hurt, then eight, then twenty. Life becomes dangerous for all villagers, because rocks keep falling down. A couple of villagers sneak up the mountain and discover that the rocks are being thrown by a millionaire, Filthy Richbanks, and his friends who hope to build a luxurious hotel and golf course in Swisstown. They are throwing the rocks hoping to get rid of the villagers so they can take over the land.

The Red Cross shows up in town. They set up a huge rescue operation. They set up a clinic to heal the injured, send dogs to find injured people who are lost outside, a shelter for those whose homes are destroyed, and social workers to help people deal with the traumatic effects of the falling rocks. Finally, the Red Cross makes a giant net to place over Swisstown to stop the rocks from falling.

One day, the net breaks and rocks fall on the village, injuring hundreds and destroying homes, schools, and stores. The Red Cross is working furiously to heal and provide shelter. From then on, rescue work becomes an important part of the villagers' lives. Everyone becomes involved in helping those hurt by the falling rocks.

Three months later, at a town meeting, a group of villagers get together to make a proposal. They are sick and tired of the falling rocks, of their people being hurt, and they want to change the situation. They propose that the villagers unite and go up the mountain to demand that Filthy Richbanks stop dropping the rocks.

The mayor and other politicians disagree, saying Swisstown needs everyone to stay in town and keep the rescue effort going. If anyone leaves, they might not be able to continue tending to these injured by rocks. The town is split in two groups – those who want to stay and keep up the rescue effort going, and those who want to march up the mountain and confront Filthy Richbanks.

1. Your team is one of the characters in the story.  
Answer questions of strategy for your character.
2. Pick a spokesperson to share with the larger group.



Organizing is a powerful strategy that mobilizes the collective strength and wisdom of people to address grievances and make change. It is long-term in its orientation and systemic in its potential impact.

We'll go around and ask everyone to say one or more things responding to:

I liked....

How about...?

### Next Sessions

August 8 – Organizing & Base Building

September 12 – Leadership Development

October 3 – Strategy / Campaign Development