

Outline — Lineages of Organizing Listening Program Birmingham, AL

For our nation to successfully resist authoritarianism, the pushback in every locality must be grounded in the human rights struggles of that particular locality.

In order to leave our children a democracy and a liveable planet, we must re-learn our forgotten history, bring in and rely on the young, and join hands across all sectors of the freedom struggle.

The key is the fight against racism.

The method is relationships built on respect and love.

Come join us!

Main idea:

In order to resist Trump administration policies and oppression, in addition to nationally-initiated demonstrations, every locality needs to be organizing at the ground level, creating cross-sector solidarity among the individuals and organizations that compose the resistance community as a whole. One way of doing this is by lifting the histories of the various “Lineages of Organizing” to be found in each local community’s movement for human rights.

It is important that we connect today’s work against authoritarianism with the history of Birmingham’s past struggles, grounding our present work in the study and sharing of this history, much of it largely erased or forgotten, that is nonetheless embodied in present-day Birmingham, sometimes in the actual people who carried out the organizing of earlier decades who have much to teach and to share.

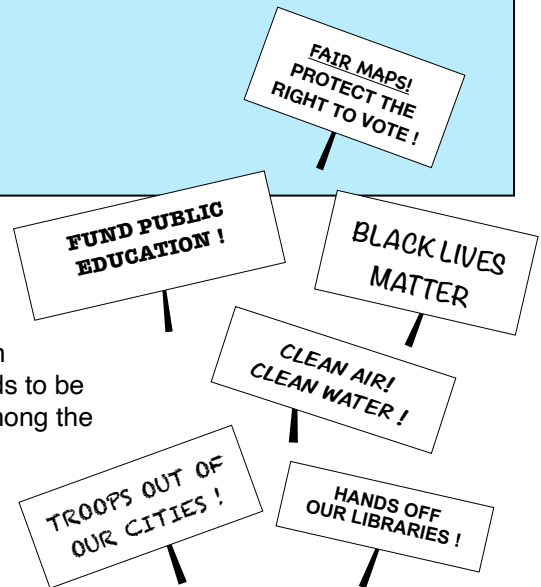
Newer lineages of struggle are equally important as they point toward the inclusion needed for today’s and tomorrow’s coalition-building. Bringing in young people and others with as yet little organizing experience is vital, not only in helping them locate their place in the work, but also in renewing and re-energizing the movement for true democracy.

Main principle:

Recognizing that racism is the main tool in the oppressor’s toolkit for thwarting every democratic initiative toward securing a higher quality of life for all, we emphasize the importance of centering the fight against racism in our work to bring Birmingham’s organizers and organizations together for common goals.

Main tool:

One-to-one conversations between individuals representing the multiple issues of struggle and the multiple generations of organizers in our city, are the basic building blocks of the program. In these conversations, we take the time to have an in-depth talk, in person if possible or via Zoom, sharing how each of us came to our commitment to racial and economic justice, which Lineages of Organizing (see list below) inspired us or brought us into the struggle, and what vision of the future motivates us to continue. The goal of these conversations is that the participants will know one another better, and will be more likely to lend one another support around community issues. Modeling and training in doing one-to-one’s is available in the program.



How it works:

This formative period of the program is the time for ensuring that representatives of as many as possible of Birmingham's organizing lineages are contacted and invited. Each contact is potentially key to further growing the network. As the program goes on, grassroots-level relationships take root, strengthening the basis for the working-class- and people-of-color-led coalition-building needed for progressive change in our city and region.

Birmingham's Lineages of Organizing include these and others — who should be added to this list?:

- labor organizing — from the interracial organizing of the United Mine Workers in the Birmingham District from the 1890's through the first decades of the twentieth century; and from the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers and the Sharecroppers Union of the 1930's; all the way to today's Amazon and Starbucks union organizing drives
- radical organizing history — Community Party, ILD (International Labor Defense), Southern Negro Youth Congress
- New Deal-era organizing — anti-lynching / voter registration / hunger relief / tenants rights
- Southern Conference Movement — SCHW, SCEF, SOC, Lineages of Organizing Listening Program
- Civil Rights Movement / foot soldiers — AL Christian Movement for Human Rights, SCLC, churches
- anti-racism — Alabama Black Liberation Front, Birmingham Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression, Black Lives Matter Birmingham Chapter
- environmental justice / environmental preservation / climate change — GASP
- immigrant rights — ACIJ, HICA, Birmingham Migra Watch, Shut Down Etowah
- LGBTQ+ rights — Central Alabama Pride, TAKE Resource Center, Magic City Acceptance Center
- women's rights / reproductive rights / radical feminism — Burdock Book Collective
- abolitionism — Bham SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice)
- death penalty — Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty in AL
- housing — Firehouse Ministries, First Light, Pathways
- money bail system — Faith & Works In Defense of Black Lives Bail Fund
- police brutality — Cell A65, Bham Stands, White Birminghamians for Black Lives
- economic issues — AL Arise, Poor People's Campaign, Greater Birmingham Ministries
- students and youth
- faith community — Faith in Action, Faith & Works, progressive ministers, denominations, and congregations
- civil liberties — NAACP, ACLU
- mutual aid / human needs provision — Margins, Be a Blessing Birmingham
- peace / human needs over military spending — Mary's House
- artists, musicians, rappers, theater
- disability rights
- library defense
- historical preservation — BCRI, Jefferson County Memorial Project, Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium
- educators and scientists / public education / research funding
- Social Security and Medicaid workers and recipients
- healthcare workers
- recipients of discriminatory healthcare
- anti-authoritarianism — Indivisible, Birmingham DSA, 50501

You are needed and invited to help create and participate in the Lineages of Organizing Listening Program! For more information and to become involved:

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