

Some history and theoretical assumptions regarding class, left groups, capitalism, and racialized peoples:

- The success of activist organizations depends on strong and trustworthy relationships between white activist groups and racialized groups.
- White* activists have the privilege of choice as to whether they engage with racism.
- The Left has a history of both self-serving and patronizing behaviour in its participation in the struggles within racialized communities.
- Influential Left political traditions in North America are Eurocentric. Eurocentrism leads to assumptions around race and culture, as well as the obscuring of other traditions of thought on social struggle and harmony.
- A major objective of Left movements should be to build trust with racialized communities.

*Using the term “White”:

The term “White” generally refers to people of European descent; however, its meaning and history are much more complex. To be “White” has always meant being part of society’s dominant group, holding power and privilege (often invisible to the holders) that other groups do not.

The definition of White changes over time; at one point in history, for example, Italians in North America were not considered “White” no matter their skin colour.

Though the term sometimes causes discomfort, we use it consciously in order to acknowledge the reality of ongoing White supremacy in our society. To avoid use of the word “White” is to attempt to erase the reality of White privilege.

Observations and analyses of racism:

- Racialized groups are hyper-exploited – they suffer oppression in addition to and outside of class.
- Racism is fostered and exacerbated by the patterns of economic exclusion and exploitation of capitalism.
- Racism drives certain racialized groups out of wage labour, into chronic unemployment, out of educational opportunities, resulting in disproportionate representation in the prison system.
- White skin privilege is a reality and racial segregation is present under capitalism.
 - White people benefit both consciously and unconsciously from structural racism in institutions. Lack of recognition and action of this reinforces both privilege and oppression.
- Racism reinforces white skin privilege both in institutions and personal relationships.
- There is geographic, cultural, and economic segregation in our cities and communities.
- Settler privilege is a reality in colonial-capitalist states.
- White supremacy influences definitions of citizenship and nationality.
- Racism is a psychological, social and economic relationship.
- There is an elite within racialized communities. Those elites still suffer racism.
- Racism is experienced differently by different racialized groups.

Notes on addressing racism in the practice of struggle and solidarity:

- White skin privilege leads to organizational privilege, both in resources and influence.
- White activists have a responsibility to educate themselves about the histories of struggle of racialized peoples.
- Guilt and romanticism lead white activists to fear engaging in debate with racialized communities.

- White activist groups tend to wait for initiative or permission from racialized communities instead of taking their own initiative when it comes to racialized political struggles.
- Relationships of solidarity in the struggle against oppression and racism are complicated by national identity and citizenship status.
- There can be solidarity in difference. There is no necessity for complete agreement on all issues in order to engage in solidarity work.
- Issues of privilege and oppression are found both in institutions and in the practice of individuals. The struggle against racism has to be grounded in our daily lives.

Helpful practices in coalitions and solidarity work:

- Avoid practices of organizing and decision-making that conflict with those of the communities with whom we are allies
- Avoid attitudes and behaviours that reproduce larger social relations of inequity
- Offer material and strategic support that respects the leadership, knowledge and decision-making practices of those with whom we are allies.
- Engage in practices that encourage reciprocal learning with consideration of privilege.
- Avoid inconsistent commitment.
- Build trust and show a desire to understand history and systemic oppression.
- When appropriate, participate in traditions and ceremonies that represent key cultural aspects of relationship-building in the communities with whom we are allies.
- Avoid defensive emotional responses to accusations of racism.
- Seek out opportunities to learn about and participate with racialized communities outside of political objectives.

This is a place to start.

A long history of racial segregation and colonialism continues to shape privilege and oppression in our communities. Solidarity Halifax sees education about the political and economic history that continues to shape social relationships, and fighting ignorance and racism within our own communities, as necessary preconditions for a healthy and genuine reconciliation between all peoples.

Recognizing the intersections between economic oppression and racism, and recognizing the Left's failures to properly or effectively address racism both within itself and within society at large, Solidarity Halifax proposes the following considerations for anti-capitalist organizing.

We expect these to constantly be a work in progress.

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We are organizing in the

Halifax Regional Municipality

and across Nova Scotia to create space for respectful

dialogue, debate, activism and education

on alternatives to capitalism.

Capitalism is an oppressive economic system that puts

profits ahead of the needs of people

and the planet. It is a system in which great wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few. To oppose capitalism is to

demand something better

for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

 SolidarityHalifax

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Guideposts for

Anti-Racist Organizing

against
capitalism

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