January Dialogue for movement workers, organizers, activists

- keeping emotionality – to feel it to my core and not intellectualize it
- getting caught up in activist identity, feeling “sceney”, social capital – in a way that it wasn’t in MLKs time, it was a big sacrifice for white folks to be involved
- real purpose and connection – why are we really there
- Stanford student freeway closure was amazing to see
- What excites me doesn’t fit into rules of organizing – if not photo op, media – that’s not what drives what I want to do, figuring out how to navigate
- When white supremacy is coming out of all our pores, time to really reflect on it
- impacts of urgency
- noticing times when I’m surprised where I’m at, am I pushing myself in ways I want to, feeling shoulds – what authentically do I have time for?
- Wonderful to be in kid spaces
- Shut downs and level of spectacle, keeping one door open so it’s not a felony – to what degree is it symbolic?
- Wanting to push myself to do radical action, what does it mean to sacrifice?
- There’s specific ally roles, and, is it self-segregating?
- How to respond to a call, and what is the call now?
- Spaces needing to be humanized – are people talking with each other?
- Need for a party
- Always miscommunications and egos
- White organizers reluctant to talk to black organizers
- Reverence, not wanting to cross lines, don’t take black organizers' time
- Feeling not good enough, or not wanting to take up space, be quiet and seen not heard – relate to whiteness and gender
- The march organizers deliberately has disabled and children in front, then Black group then 3rd world, then white allies
- Affinity groups are trusted action response relationships
- Ego constantly having to check
- How am I relating to other white people who are not involved?
- At SURJ meeting, white people called to put bodies on line, and need to be thinking about how are we making inroads for other white people – how to do both/and
- Not getting insular
- How to engage with white folks who are interested
- I enjoy resisting – it is empowering
- How to engage with folks beyond the tunnel, in gentle and disruptive ways
- Reaching out to senior citizen community
- Where are moments where we are able to have a conversation? Not just take a photo and take off
- Wanting to disrupt types of segregation – not wanting to tokenize
- When race is up, we become hyperaware and hypersensitive, whole system activated, hard to get grounded and centered
• An incredibly easy place to go to, be angry at other white people
• Easy to say my liberation is tied up in yours, different to feel it
• How urgency changes way we communicate
• SURJ: white people should be feeling uncomfortable
• We can get caught up in right way to “do” racial justice, what is problematic
• Feeling less capable of being bold
• Over last month there has been clear leadership
• Muckiness comes in afterwards, sitting with each other as comrades
• What is accountability? Relation between ways show up and privilege – always watching for what I’m not seeing, massive white privilege I’m not seeing, makes me terrified to organize something
• Accountability risk and relationship-building
• Feeling separate from friends in black organizing groups, we don’t talk about organizing
• Hyper-vigilance, trauma defense
• Layers of socialization makes me feel stuck
• Discouragement around demands – and symbolic actions
• Privilege at play with being against a reformist-based demands, principled revolutionary
• Different kinds of discomfort – pushing up against ourselves, pushing an edge and pushing edge of what’s possible – distinguish with what intuitively feels off or wrong
• Convenience, justice will not be convenient, but who are we making it inconvenient for? Crucial question
• Trust
• Creating as many spaces as possible to engage
• If we’re grounded and centered then can build relationships
• Black Panthers, Black Power gutted from Oakland, where it was born
• Shaking up relationships
• Anti-eviction action at foreclosed homes auction – working at the door, an African American man got upset and said “you think black lives matter – why not let us speak for ourselves?”
• Date of federal building action, people had been waiting for 3 years for social security date
• Where are the sacrifices being made?
• How are we building together? Tenderness and fear of failure
• Anger after Castro action
• Where is our ability to be playful and reflexive
• Learn from mistakes, create new strategy
• What’s being asked of us by black leadership – know those parameters and being able to play within them
• What’s responding to call and what’s cooptation
• Down with rage - Rage and agency
• Pattern of anger towards those closer to you
• The more I don’t say /express anger the more it shows up in personal health ways
• First hurdle having emotions, second feeling agency around them
• Understanding risk around arrest and paid work
• Humanizing and relationship-building, continue the slow work and relationships
• Looking forward to next phase, not as many symbolic actions and shut downs, vision evolving and wanting to be part of those conversations
• I have not sacrificed have only gained and learned from this movement
• I forget to acknowledge the beautiful things that are happening that I am and am not participating in
• Actions may always be both heeding a call and cooptation
• Noticing ego, not let it block me from participating
• Some of my slow burn projects have let fall, not sure how it all happens
• As a learning and a gift, calling in and out gently or roughly