



INTRODUCTION TO COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COLLECTIVE LIBERATION?

CONTENTS

- 3 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COLLECTIVE LIBERATION?**
 - 8 GENDER BINARY & TRANSPHOBIA**
 - 12 PATRIARCHY**
 - 17 RACE**
 - 24 SOCIAL CLASS**
 - 28 DISABILITY**
 - 32 SEXUALITY**
 - 37 RELIGION**
 - 40 BEING AN ALLY**
 - 42 CALLING-IN**
 - 43 BEING INTERSECTIONAL ORGANISERS**
-

Collective liberation means recognising that all of our struggles are intimately connected, and that we must work together to create the kind of world we know is possible. We believe that every person is worthy of dignity and respect, and that within systems of oppression everyone suffers.

Collective Liberation is not just a value, but an action. When we work together across the barriers kept in place to divide us, we strengthen our organising. When combined, our diverse identities and experiences give us the tools to dismantle systems of economic, political and social oppression, and to create a world in which all people are seen as fully human.

This booklet is based on how we understand oppression to manifest today, but understanding oppression is a continuing process. We will continually explore and are open to new ways of understanding how existing institutions and social norms limit our capacity to be truly free.

We hope you will join us in understanding and working to end oppression in our movements and the world.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COLLECTIVE LIBERATION?

OPPRESSION & PRIVILEGE

The societies we are born into have pre-existing social and cultural norms that influence our experiences and how we view the world. We are all privileged in some ways and marginalised in others.

Oppression is the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice. Much oppression is learned through growing up in an unfair world based on centuries of economic, political and social exploitation. While we may not be consciously classist, sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist, it's inevitable that we learn ways of interacting that maintain the status quo.

Some groups are advantaged because other groups are disadvantaged. People from privileged groups often benefit at the expense of people from oppressed groups. A man is more likely to be hired or keep his job because women are

being denied opportunities or unfairly evaluated. Wealthier students have a greater chance of being accepted into prestigious universities because lower income students are less prepared, less encouraged, or less financially able to do so. Oppression and privilege are two sides of the same coin. Understanding both provides a clearer picture of how systemic inequality operates, and uncovers more opportunities to intervene to create change.

Recognising our own privilege does not mean we should bask in guilt. Instead, recognition is an essential step towards dismantling systems of oppression. By being open to learning about our own patterns of domination and showing a willingness to change these, we can create the example that enables other members of dominant groups to do likewise.

“WHEN WE IDENTIFY WHERE OUR PRIVILEGE INTERSECTS WITH SOMEBODY ELSE’S OPPRESSION, WE’LL FIND OUR OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE REAL CHANGE.”

IJEOMA OLUO

LEVELS OF OPPRESSION

Oppression is deeply embedded in our society because it operates on different levels – individual/personal, systemic/institutional and societal/cultural – with members of different social groups being advantaged and disadvantaged across these different levels.

THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

The individual level includes what individuals believe about themselves and how they are treated in interpersonal situations by others. Those from disadvantaged groups may encounter interpersonal bias or violence, be shunned in social interactions, or overlooked in group settings. For example, women report that their ideas are ignored in group meetings while men are credited when making the same point.

THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The institutional level refers to the policies, laws, and customs enacted by governments, companies and social institutions that systematically reflect and produce inequities. For example, research identifies significant disparities in employment prospects among UK graduates, with graduates of colour being much less likely to be employed than their white peers six months after graduation.

THE SOCIETAL/CULTURAL LEVEL

The societal/cultural level encompasses the norms, values and ideology of the dominant culture that reflect and reinforce the belief that one social group is superior to another. The dominant group projects its particular way of seeing reality so successfully that it's view is accepted as common sense, even by those who are in fact disempowered by it. For example, standards of beauty for women are predominately based on white norms, with skin and features that are more European being viewed as the perfected standard of beauty. Those who do not possess these attributes might internalise oppression by an action such as skin bleaching.

Any attempt to dismantle oppression should involve challenging oppression at all the levels on which it operates.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COLLECTIVE LIBERATION?

INTERSECTIONALITY

Different forms of oppression do not exist by themselves but are shaped by and interact with all other forms of oppression and exploitation. For example, a black trans-woman might experience sexism, racism, and transphobia. The type of sexism she experiences will be different because she is black and trans.

Privilege is contextual and relational. For example, men enjoy more positions of power in the world and are at much lower risk of experiencing domestic violence. But a white, middle class, gay male would experience a different type of oppression compared to a white, working class, heterosexual man. Similarly, black men are often less privileged than white men and experience different types of racism than brown women, such as heightened levels of police targeting and brutality.

Because systems of oppression are interwoven, they need to be challenged holistically. Different forms of oppression are able to recreate, reinforce and defend one another. This way of understanding oppression in societies is referred to as intersectionality.

While we focus on confronting one form of domination or exploitation in a particular moment – such as focusing on state oppression and capitalism when we talk about austerity – we can interweave concepts of oppression based on gender, ability and race when we understand that people of colour, women, and disabled people are most impacted by government cuts.

Divide-and-conquer strategies have been prevalent throughout history. We're made to believe that there's only so much freedom to go around. Working on the basis of collective liberation gives space for each person's lived experience with oppression to be heard and validated, and to be put in the context of structural change that needs to be made.



BUILDING INCLUSIVE SPACES

Given the inequality in power, it is often difficult for individuals from marginalised groups to openly share their experiences with people from privileged groups for fear of being discounted. It is important to build spaces where all voices are heard, that allow us to operate in social movement spaces that build power beyond repeating forms of privilege.

We need to let go of the arrogant assumption that our groups are not affected by power and privilege, or that unaddressed systemic oppression does not affect how we operate. Being able to identify and label the forms of oppression is the first step to then envisioning a more just and equitable structure of relations. Also, deepening our knowledge of how systemic oppression operates allows us to better understand how to transform ourselves and our groups, organisations, and communities.

To move to a socially, environmentally, economically and culturally fair alternative, we need to build mass social movements that include people from every sphere of life. We need to build leadership, and take leadership from those most impacted by injustice.



GENDER BINARY & TRANSPHOBIA

WHAT IS THE GENDER BINARY?

The gender binary was created by human society and is a system that artificially divides people into two genders (men and women), seen as opposite and distinct. Some cultures understand gender differently and describe up to 5 different genders.

The gender binary means that gender is assigned to people based on their biological sex, determined by their genitalia at birth, and comes alongside certain roles in society and cultural meaning. Privilege is afforded to

'cisgender' people, whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender and sex are not the same. While sex is about the physical effect of your chromosomes, gender is about how you feel. Gender is a spectrum with any number of possibilities: people can identify with being neither a man or a woman, or only one of those, or both of them, or anything in between. It's really important to understand that a person's gender is defined by that individual alone.

GENDER GLOSSARY

Cisgender – umbrella term for people who identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Transgender – umbrella term for people who don't identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary – describes any gender identity that does not fit the man-woman binary.

Genderqueer – another broad term for people who identify outside of cis gender, maybe no gender, multiple genders, or moving between the genders, meaning how they identify their gender moves and is more fluid.

Genderfluid – someone who doesn't identify as two genders simultaneously but a different gender depending on what they are feeling.

Gender neutral – belonging to neither of the genders within the established gender binary and doesn't have a gender prescription

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GENDER IDENTITY?

Gender expression changes depending on how people choose to "perform" their gender, for example through their clothing or behaviour. However, the way a person chooses to perform gender is separate and distinct from how they may define their gender, which is defined by them alone and may not present itself externally. It's vital that we don't make assumptions about a person's gender based on their appearance. It is good practice in group spaces for everybody to share the gender pronouns which they use (he, she, they etc.) so that people may be referred to how they wish.

Trans people's gender identity often does not align with that which they were assigned at birth. Each trans person will make different choices depending on what's right for them. Some might choose to medically and socially transition away from their assigned sex towards their gender identity, while others won't.

Nonbinary people are those that do not identify exclusively as "man" or "woman". Some identify with neither, both, parts of each, or a fluid and changing mix. Nonbinary is often considered an umbrella term for many other identities, including genderqueer, agender, and genderfluid.

Nonbinary and trans people are diverse. Some may experience body or gender dysphoria, which is a condition that causes physical, mental and/or social discomfort, others don't. Some may identify as trans as their gender differs from the gender they were assigned, others don't. Some may refer to themselves with binary pronouns (he or she), while some will use they or other pronouns like ze/hir or xe/xem.

Intersex people are born with genitalia and/or chromosomes that do not conform to traditional XY-male or XX-female characteristics. Though some intersex people are trans and/or nonbinary, many do not identify that way.

GENDER BINARY & TRANSPHOBIA

WHAT IS CIS PRIVILEGE?

The advantages that cisgender people may experience in a society that does not favour transgender or gender non-confirming people is what we call cis privilege.

Cis privilege can manifest itself in a lot of ways. Here are some examples of circumstances where a cisgender person will not face the barriers that someone who is trans or nonbinary may face:

- Buying something that requires ID and being challenged on the validity of their ID.
- Attending family occasions and facing questions or jokes about their gender identity.
- Using a gym changing room and being challenged on which changing room they are using, or else not having a changing room available for their gender.
- Renting a vehicle and being challenged on the validity of their documents.
- First encounters with new people and facing anxiety and questions around their gender identity.
- Being held in a detention centre or prison and being held in a space which is designed for people of a different gender.
- Filling out forms and not having their gender recognised in the documentation.
- Flirting with someone you haven't met before and facing anxiety and questions around their gender identity.
- Shopping for clothes, shoes or accessories and either being questioned about their purchases or else finding difficulties acquiring what is needed.

OH NO... I USED THE WRONG PRONOUN

Make a conscious effort to use people's correct gender pronouns. But if you don't, make sure to correct yourself, briefly apologise, and don't make a big deal out of it (you risk centering yourself and your own embarrassment if you do).

WHAT DOES TRANSPHOBIC OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

CONTENT WARNING: THIS SECTION INCLUDES REFERENCE TO VIOLENCE AND SUICIDE

Oppression of trans and nonbinary people resulting from a constructed gender binary has clear impacts on trans and nonbinary people's lives. 38% of trans people have experienced physical intimidation and threats, and 81% have experienced silent harassment such as being stared at or whispered about. One in every twenty trans people have been physically assaulted at work. Between 2008 and 2014, there were 1,612 trans people were murdered across 62 countries – that's to one every two days.

These experiences have a wider impact on the lives of trans people. Nearly half of trans people who are not living permanently "out" in their preferred gender stated they are prevented from doing so because they fear it might threaten their employment status. 59% of trans youth said they had deliberately hurt themselves, compared with 8.9% of all 16- to 24-year-olds. 48% of trans people under 26 attempt suicide and 59 per cent have contemplated suicide.

HOW CAN THIS RELATE TO OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION?

Every trans or non-binary person's experience is specific and unique to them and someone's individual experience of oppression can also be additionally affected by race, class, disability, sexuality and immigration status. For example, the experience of a trans person seeking gender reassignment surgery will differ on grounds of their economics status and their ability to access expensive private health care. Trans women of colour are even more likely to experience violence and hate crimes than white trans counterparts. Recognising the way in which the gender binary can intersect with and multiply other forms of oppression is crucial to begin unpicking it.

WHAT IS PATRIARCHY?

Patriarchy is a system of unequal power relations that gives men privileges in all areas of their lives – social, economic, institutional, cultural, political, and spiritual – while women and gender non-conforming people are systemically disadvantaged.

Though patriarchy affects women much more severely, it distorts the humanity of all genders and reduces our ability to be in kinship with one another. Like all other unjust and arbitrary systems of authority and power, patriarchy must be actively challenged in our organising if we are to achieve collective liberation. “Patriarchy has no gender,” thus it’s going to take all people to dismantle it.

“PATRIARCHY IS A POLITICAL-SOCIAL SYSTEM THAT INSISTS THAT MALES ARE INHERENTLY DOMINATING, SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE DEEMED WEAK, ESPECIALLY FEMALES, AND ENDOWED WITH THE RIGHT TO DOMINATE AND RULE OVER THE WEAK AND TO MAINTAIN THAT DOMINANCE THROUGH VARIOUS FORMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE.”

BELL HOOKS

WHAT DOES PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

CONTENT WARNING: THIS SECTION CONTAINS REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In the UK women on average earn significantly less than men. The gender pay gap is currently 13.9% for full time employees and 18% including part time employees. Reasons for this include that women make up a larger portion of lower paid roles, ‘feminised’ sectors such as care and leisure are undervalued, and that most senior positions are held by men.

On average, women do 66 hours a week of unpaid labour (such as childcare, cleaning, and cooking) whereas men do 16 hours a week. For women on maternity leave, this figure rises to 60 hours per week. 54,000 women leave their job early every year due to their treatment after having a baby.

Men hold most of the powerful positions in society. 71% of members of the UK parliament are men and 95% of the Chief

Executives in the top 100 UK companies are men.

In England and Wales, 2 women are killed every week by a partner or former partner, and 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes. Police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call once per minute, but on average a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police.

1 in 5 women aged 16–59 in England and Wales have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 16. Only around 15% of those who experience sexual violence choose to report to the police, and only around 1 in 20 rape cases end in a conviction. While men also experience domestic and sexual violence, in England and Wales 81% of domestic violence victims and survivors and 88% of people who are raped are women.

Sources: Office for National Statistics, www.parliament.uk.

PATRIARCHY

HOW CAN THIS RELATE TO OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION?

Patriarchy doesn't exist in isolation from other forms of oppression, it intersects and exacerbates oppressive experiences. Women of colour experience gendered racism. Movements to ban burqas or other forms of cultural or religious dress target Islamic women, utilising religious discrimination and oppression

to police women's bodies and what they choose to wear. Lesbian and bisexual women experience a specific form of sexualisation and fetishisation in popular culture. Disabled men face a pay gap of 11% with non-disabled men, whereas disabled women face a pay gap of 22% – twice as high.

WHY SHOULD OUR GROUP THINK ABOUT PATRIARCHY?

Sexism often remains unaddressed within activist groups. Although some men feel they are not capable of sexism, simply believing in gender equality does not erase male privilege. Working with progressive men can have its own frustrations as they may feel they are not guilty of sexism – often because of the lack of intention to be sexist – without truly analysing their actions within a framework of dominance.

Addressing patriarchy in our movements is not about guilt or blame, it is about a lifelong learning process to effectively and humbly confront oppression. Since patriarchy pervades society, it is no surprise that it also pervades social movements. If we want to challenge patriarchy, we must understand how our actions and assumptions are influenced by the prevalence of sexism in our consciousness and social relations.

FIVE KEY WAYS PATRIARCHY CAN MANIFEST IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- 1** Women face an uphill battle to prove their intelligence and commitment as political activists. Men are more readily perceived as experts, whereas women have to struggle a lot harder to prove their capabilities, their understanding of political issues, and be taken seriously as committed organisers, researchers, journalists and writers.
- 2** Meetings are dominated by male speakers and leaders, while secretarial work, cooking, childcare, and the emotional labour of supporting community well-being are largely borne by women. This gendered division of labour is a frequently reproduced patriarchal pattern.
- 3** Women continue to be sexually objectified. Women of colour and femme women in particular are fetishised, obscuring the dynamics of racism, fatphobia, and ableism behind “personal preferences.”
- 4** Sexist comments or incidents can leave women and gender non-conforming people feeling humiliated, angry or upset, yet such comments are too often dismissed as harmless. Women discussing sexism can be accused of over-reacting, and women's concerns are belittled unless validated by other men.
- 5** Feminism is not seen as central to campaigning and collective struggle. Instead it is relegated to a special-interest issue. This results in the trivialisation of women's issues, particularly violence against women and reproductive justice.

PATRIARCHY

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Do you make assumptions about people's gender based on the clothes they wear or how they choose to present themselves?
- When a trans or non-binary person is speaking, are all members actively listening?
- How much of the logistical planning work in your group is undertaken by women / non-binary people?
- How much of the cooking and cleaning in your groups is undertaken by women / non-binary people?
- Do the same few men tend to dominate discussions? The facilitator or others in the meeting should consider suggesting a go-round to get more people talking. If you are one of those men, be aware of the space you take up.
- Create an atmosphere that is empowering, especially to new women in the group. Share skills and knowledge in a non-paternalistic manner to build the leadership of women, especially women of colour.
- Realise that something can be hurtful even if you personally don't find it offensive.
- Realise that sexism, in various forms, runs deep and always plays itself out. Don't trivialise women's issues or place the sole responsibility for fighting oppression on the oppressed.
- Understand that it's not just about representation – the fact that a group is dominated by men might be a symptom and not the problem itself. To avoid tokenism, make sure your group gives equal consideration to women's/trans/nonbinary voices in a meaningful manner.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Video: Sex, Gender, and Expanding the Identity Box

www.everydayfeminism.com/2016/08/expanding-the-identity-box/

Comic: What If We Thought Of Gender Like Ice Cream? It Makes Sense, Here's Why

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/09/gender-is-kind-of-like-ice-cream/>

Article: 10 Myths About Non-Binary People It's Time to Unlearn

www.everydayfeminism.com/2014/12/myths-non-binary-people

Video: Why Pronouns Matter For Trans People

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_yBGQqg7kM

Video: What is Social Reproduction? An introduction by Plan C

<http://www.weareplanc.org/blog/what-the-fk-is-social-reproduction/>

RACE

Race is a socially constructed classification of people that is not based on biological truth. There is no gene or cluster of genes shared by all black people or all white people. Instead, racial difference is something humans have created for a social and political purpose.

Europe's history of colonialism is fundamental to the modern constructions of race, establishing the relationship of domination and subordination. Race as a classification of human beings served the

purpose of legitimising the dominance of white people over non-white people.

Britain's justification for the colonial project was famously expressed by Rudyard Kipling, winner of the 1907 Nobel Prize for Literature, in his 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden." The poem says it is a moral responsibility to rule over people who were "half-devil and half child" who therefore needed the discipline, and governance that only a "superior" race could provide.

In the 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) issued a statement asserting that all humans belong to the same species and that "race" is not a biological reality but a myth. But while it may not be a biological reality, the concept of human races is very much real.

"WHITE SUPREMACY IS AN HISTORICALLY BASED, INSTITUTIONALLY PERPETUATED SYSTEM OF EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION OF CONTINENTS, NATIONS, AND PEOPLES OF COLOUR BY WHITE PEOPLES AND NATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING AND DEFENDING A SYSTEM OF WEALTH, POWER AND PRIVILEGE."

COLOURSOFRESISTANCE.ORG

RACISM

Racism is a set of implicit or explicit beliefs, false assumptions, and actions that suppose the inherent superiority of one racial group over another.

Even if you do not perceive yourself to be racist, your life is affected by this structure. We are born into a racist society. Racism is a part of our everyday lives. Where you live, where you go to school, your job, your profession, who you interact with, how people interact with you, your treatment in the healthcare and justice systems are all affected by your race. Today, Black and brown people face harassment, are under and unemployed, over-policed, imprisoned, murdered and displaced from their homes by gentrification, climate change and global capitalism.

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Cultural appropriation is the practice of taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artefacts from another culture without permission.

As the UK is made up of diverse ethnicities, it's unsurprising that people pick up dialects, customs and traditions of the cultural groups that surround them. However, cultural appropriation is different to this, and has little to do with one's exposure to different cultures. Instead, cultural appropriation involves members of a dominant group exploiting culture of less privileged groups, often with little understanding of the roots of such culture and the challenges those who created it faced.

Cultural appropriation can contribute to racial oppression by denigrating a particular culture whilst mimicking it for personal gain. For example, when white person says that they grew dreadlocks so they aren't perceived as the 'pretty one' – connecting dreadlocks with the opposite of 'pretty.' White celebrities are often criticised for adopting elements of black culture because they are trendy, whilst failing to speak up about racism or even to acknowledge that they have profited from a style of clothing or music that was developed by black people.

Even when meant with the best of intent, white people adopting an item closely connected to a particular culture can be insensitive to the experiences of people of colour. For example, a white person may wear an item such as a bindi as a fashion statement, without realising that South Asian immigrant communities are often denigrated or stigmatised for wearing these items that are part of their culture.

WHAT DOES RACIST OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

Institutional racism in the UK manifests across different areas of life. For example, in April 2018 The Independent revealed that black students applying to university are 21 times more likely to have their applications investigated for false or missing information than their white counterparts.

A report by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary found that in 2016/17, black people were at least eight times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched by the police, even though it is statistically less likely for drugs to be found. Black people make 12% of the prison population in England and Wales even though they make up just 3% of the population.

In 2017 the TUC found that Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are

persistently disadvantaged in the labour market. Overall, employment rates for white people (76.1 percent) are significantly higher than for those from a minority ethnic group (64.2 percent).

Their research also showed that the growth of insecure work has made racial inequalities worse. BAME workers are more likely to be in insecure jobs such as zero-hours contracts.

On a global scale, former colonies continue to be exploited, and this exploitation enriches shareholders of large corporations predominantly based in the Global North. They benefit from natural resources which are exploited through mining and extraction as well as land grabs. They also profit from people in the Global South in oppressive working conditions.

Sources: tuc.org.uk, independent.co.uk

"I FEEL THAT IF WE DON'T TAKE SERIOUSLY THE WAYS IN WHICH RACISM IS EMBEDDED IN STRUCTURES OF INSTITUTIONS, IF WE ASSUME THAT THERE MUST BE AN IDENTIFIABLE RACIST WHO IS THE PERPETRATOR, THEN WE WON'T EVER SUCCEED IN ERADICATING RACISM."

ANGELA DAVIS

HOW DO WE PREVENT RACISM IN OUR GROUP?

White privilege can be a barrier to anti-racist movement building – for example, when white people organise actions that involve possible arrest without thinking about how people of colour are treated differently by the police, and often have had experiences of police brutality.

People with white privilege have internalised the idea of whiteness as the norm and non-whiteness as 'other'. To deconstruct white privilege, you will need to listen to others and let go of the idea that your way of organising is the best or only way.

Confronting white privilege requires openly challenging the dynamics of privilege in our groups, and creating forums for addressing oppression. Notice who holds power. Study effective

facilitation and group dynamics to foster more democratic processes.

Ensure racism is not denied, minimised or justified. Deracialising an issue restricts the self-determination of the people who are most impacted by that issue to be defining their own struggle.

Build a process for addressing disputes within your groups, and confront everyday racism in yourself, in your communities and campaigns in a way that does not shame people.

Those impacted by racism have the best understanding of how to address it. People of colour have been leading anti-racist organising for decades, so it's important to look to their leadership and experience.

"HOW CAN WE GET PEOPLE OF COLOUR INTO OUR GROUP?" ... WRONG QUESTION!

We should not aim to "get" people of colour to join "our" groups. The right question is, "How can we be anti-racist activists dedicated to bringing down white supremacy?"

Too often we talk about why more people of colour aren't in the group or the need to "reach out" to people of colour to "diversify" our movement. But multiracial doesn't automatically mean anti-racist. Instead of looking to "recruit" in order to increase diversity, we need to make anti-oppressive groups that people of colour will want to/ are willing to join (and stay in).

USING OUR PRIVILEGE

Guilt doesn't help anyone, and it frequently just inspires navel-gazing. The people who experience the brunt of white supremacy do not benefit from the guilt we feel. Guilt doesn't change police brutality and occupation, nor does it alter a history of colonialism, genocide, and slavery.

Instead, what we have to offer is our daily commitment and actions to resist racism. Only through action, and the mistakes we make and the lessons we learn, can we find ways to work in true solidarity.

"GUILT LEADS TO INACTION. ONLY ACTION, TO RE-INVENT THE EVERYDAY AND MAKE IT SOMETHING ELSE, WILL CHANGE SOCIAL RELATIONS."

CAROL EHRlich

"WHAT I NEED IS FOR PEOPLE TO COME AND WORK WITH US IN THE TRENCHES AND BE THERE ALONGSIDE US. IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING ON THE OUTSIDE AND SAYING 'YES, I SUPPORT YOU!' IT'S ABOUT 'NOT ONLY DO I SUPPORT YOU, BUT I AM HERE WITH YOU, I AM ROLLING UP MY SLEEVES. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?'"

FEMINISTA JONES

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Racism exists everywhere, every day. Learn about the struggles of people of colour in your community, on campus, where you live.
- Study social movements led by people of colour, past and present, and show solidarity to existing organisations working from an anti-racist foundation.
- When organising and protesting we must take care not to undermine the leadership of people of colour already working on an issue. Ask people who have been leading these struggles what kind of solidarity might be most useful.
- Operating from the belief that your own preferred tactics are the “right/best/most radical ways to organise” – doesn’t take into account the differential risks that different tactics may pose others. For example, for people who are undocumented, or targeted by police due to racial profiling.
- Keep an eye out for social power dynamics and work to interrupt these. Point out and address discrepancies in who is talking, whose voices are being heard.
- When a group is lucky enough to have someone speak up about what’s going on, it’s imperative that we listen, believe and trust in the lived experience and take steps to address the impacts of these systems of oppression.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Article: In the UK, we also can’t breathe, Usayd Younis.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/12/police-violence-minorities-uk-2014121773634392384.html>

Article: Britain’s black power movement is at risk of being forgotten, say historians

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/27/britain-black-power-movement-risk-forgotten-historians>

Toolkit: Anti-racist organizing to build the 99% movement, Catalyst Project and Chris Crass

<https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/catalyzing%20liberation%20toolkit.pdf>

Blog Post: Why I’m No Longer Talking To White People About Race, Renie Eddo-Lodge
<http://renieddolodge.co.uk/why-im-no-longer-talking-to-white-people-about-race/>

Video: When were white people invented?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itaBfVdhigE>

Social class is complicated! You might be familiar with the concept of working, middle and upper classes, but more recent analyses of class (such as the Great British Class Survey in 2013) have presented as many as seven different classes. However, while the specific definitions and distinctions may be debated, the existence of class division and its impacts are very real.

WHAT DOES CLASS OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

In the UK, the richest 10% of households own 45% of the nation’s total wealth. In just five years, between 2003 and 2008, the top 0.1% of earners in the UK saw their income nearly double and the top 1% saw their income increase by 50%, whereas income for the remaining 90% of earners remained flat. The average boss of Britain’s 100 largest companies earns in just 4 days what the average person earns in an entire year. A 2014 study from the Institute for Social and Economic Research found that through benefit and tax changes since 2010, the poorest income groups lost the biggest share of their incomes on average. By contrast people within the top half of incomes gained from direct tax cuts. 32% of MPs attended a private, fee paying school, when only 7% of the UK population have done.

The people with the most resources have the lobbying power to influence governments, and create policies that work in their favour. The UK government’s austerity agenda has had the largest impact on the lives of the poor, who have suffered the most from cuts to welfare budgets and to adult social care. At the same time, the most wealthy have seen the benefits of a reduction in corporation tax, inheritance tax and the top rate of income tax. With taxes being the main mechanism for privately controlled wealth being turned back into public wealth, what we are experiencing under austerity is the stripping away of public wealth as means of oppressing the working class.

Vast levels of economic inequality and the disproportionate impacts of political decision making show that class divisions within society persist.

Sources: bbc.co.uk, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, kvv.org.uk/about-workfare, theguardian.com

SOCIAL CLASS

WHAT DOES CLASS PRIVILEGE LOOK LIKE?

Class oppression has existed for a very long time and is enforced by the systemic structures that continue to exist. As with other forms of oppression, class oppression can often go unrecognised, especially by those in the dominant group who enjoy unearned privileges associated with their social position.

Here are a few things that help some people thrive that those from lower social classes are likely to have gone without:

- Not having to worry about food or shelter.
- Having educated parents around to help with homework.
- Being educated in an elite fee-paying school, which gives you confidence and connections.
- Being raised with middle class manners that make it easier to move in influential circles.
- Receiving the benefits of higher quality private healthcare.
- The freedom to focus on studies without having to work through higher education.
- The financial security to feel able to take on significant levels of debt to undertake higher education.
- Well placed family networks and contacts that offer otherwise unavailable opportunities.
- Being able to afford good quality food, clothes and accessories.
- Access to inherited family wealth.
- Financial support from family to obtain higher education or get on the property ladder.
- An upbringing coached in the idea that the world is your oyster, that you can achieve anything you desire or become whoever you want to be.

Class privilege hugely influences a person's financial security, life opportunities, quality of life and access to resources we need to in order to thrive. It provides a safety net, a backup plan and an expanded set of life options all rolled into one.

HOW CAN THIS RELATE TO OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION?

CONTENT WARNING: THIS SECTION CONTAINS REFERENCE TO ABUSE

Class analysis must be combined with feminism, anti-racism, and anti-authoritarian analysis to locate those who are most dispossessed and ensure that our struggles fight for the liberation of all.

Single working class mothers will experience oppression on the basis of their class and gender. Many will not be able to stay in work as a result of child care, and now with changes to Income Support won't be able to take time out to care for their children either.

Some women may stay in abusive relationships for fear of their housing situation. All over the UK, refuges for survivors of domestic violence are closing as a result of austerity measures.

Impoverished black communities face disadvantage and alienation both as a result of their class and their race, which intersect. Feminism and anti-racism can also highlight different types of working class relations. For example, with regards to the traditional role of secretaries, nurses or teachers being women, while restaurant workers and janitors may be people of colour.

Working class men may find it more difficult to compete for jobs against middle class women as they will not have experienced the same privileges and opportunities throughout their lifetime.

Having class privilege can reduce the impact of other oppressions. For example, middle and upper class disabled people are more able to pay for private health and social care. Parents with financial and social capital can get more support for their child with special educational needs. Wealthier people can choose to move house if they are a victim of discrimination or hate crime where they live.

SOCIAL CLASS

WHY SHOULD OUR GROUP THINK ABOUT CLASS?

Those with more class privilege are often more comfortable stepping into leadership roles, feel more comfortable articulating their views in a meeting, and have increased educational opportunities to develop the language to do so. People with more class privilege are conditioned into knowing that their voices are valued and deserve to be heard, and can be more likely to push for and obtain what they want out of a meeting or situation even to the detriment of others and irrespective of the needs of the group.

Groups working for social justice needs to actively work to create a cross-class culture that makes them accessible and inclusive to people from any background as well as enabling people from working class backgrounds to take up positions of leadership within the group.

The way meetings are organised may determine how accessible they are to everyone, including the timing and length of meetings, how they are advertised, and whether child care has been taken into consideration.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Who speaks the most in your groups? Are you making enough room for people in the group from a lower social background to express themselves?
- Do we give equal consideration to participating in local grassroots or community organising as we do volunteering abroad in an “exotic” place?
- Be aware of romanticising working class culture. Growing up in poverty as a lived experience is very different from a dalliance with poverty as a lifestyle choice.
- Avoid jargon and unnecessarily intellectualised language.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Comic: On A Plate (explaining privilege)

<http://thewireless.co.nz/articles/the-pencilsword-on-a-plate>

Article: David Clapson's awful death was the result of grotesque government policies, Frances Ryan

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/09/david-clapson-benefit-sanctions-death-government-policies>

“DIRECT LIVED EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY - AND AUSTERITY - THROUGH CLASS BASED OPPRESSION, IS EQUALLY, IF NOT MORE, IMPORTANT THAN ANY THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ECONOMIC OPPRESSION. THIS MEANS THE “BURDEN OF EXCHANGE”, WHO PUTS IN THE GREATER EFFORT INTO A CONVERSATION, FALLS UPON PRIVILEGED GROUP MEMBERS TO ENSURE ACTIVE LISTENING TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC OPPRESSION AND SO FACILITATING A GENUINE INCLUSION OF THEM. THIS MEANS TAKING CARE NOT TO BE EASILY OFFENDED BY EXPRESSIONS OF EMOTION THAT MAY SIT OUTSIDE OF MIDDLE CLASS SENSIBILITIES AND CALLS FOR AN AWARENESS OF HOW EMOTION CAN SHAPE LANGUAGE, DISCUSSION AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE CONTEXT OF CLASS BASED DIFFERENCES”

WARREN CLARKE - CO-FOUNDER BOYCOTT WORKFARE

Video: Jobcentre sanctions ‘Your money is stopped, you go into freefall’
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/video/2013/mar/22/jobcentre-sanctions-money-stopped-video>

Article: What makes me tired when organising with middle class comrades, Nicole Vosper
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/jun/08/burnout-activism-working-class-organising-with-middle-class-comrades>

Website: The Activist Class Cultures Kit
www.activistclasscultures.org

DISABILITY

Disability is defined in the Equalities Act as “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities”. Although disability activist groups and individuals with disabilities might have different definitions.

The medical model of disability describes the way in which a particular illness, ailment or impairment impacts on an individual's ability to carry out activities. The disability rights movement tends to reject the medical model in favour of social and political understandings of disability. The social model of disability sees individuals with access needs being “disabled” by the structures of an ableist society. For example, the problem isn't that you are a wheelchair user but that this building does not have a lift.

It's important to remember that many disabilities are not visible. It might not be possible, for example, to tell if someone has depression, autism or chronic fatigue, and some disabilities will be visible at some times and not at others. Recognising that invisible disabilities exist, and taking steps to improve access for those who have them is crucial to ensuring spaces, and our society, are open and inclusive.

“DISABLED PEOPLE ARE AN EASY TARGET BECAUSE SOCIETY HAS ACCEPTED THE VIEW THAT GENERALLY SPEAKING DISABLED PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO FULLY PARTICIPATE WITHIN SOCIETY DUE SOLELY TO OUR IMPAIRMENTS. THIS VIEW, SUPPORTED THROUGH NEGATIVE AND PEJORATIVE STEREOTYPING, DISTORTS WHO WE ARE AND THE CAUSES OF THE DISABLING BARRIERS WE FACE.”

DISABLED PEOPLE AGAINST CUTS

WHAT DOES ABLEIST OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

Only 48% of disabled people are in work, compared to nearly 80% of non-disabled people. More striking still, just 6% of people with learning difficulties are in paid employment.

Reasons for this include negative attitudes from employers and recruitment agencies, inaccessible workplaces and inflexible working practices.

On top of lack of employment, disabled people face average extra costs of £570 a month related to their impairment or condition. This includes equipment and adaptive clothing, high energy bills, and high insurance premiums.

Disabled people are not a priority for policy makers, and this has lethal consequences. 38% of people with a learning disability die from avoidable causes, compared with 9% of the general population. Research suggests a lack of training for health professionals could be contributing to 1,200 avoidable deaths of people with a learning disability

happening every year.

Disabled people have faced the brunt of government austerity measures. According to a 2014 Disabled People Against Cuts report, two thirds of people hit by the bedroom tax are disabled. It also claimed that as a result of austerity, 2 in every 5 disabled people aren't getting their basic needs met, including washing, dressing or getting out of the house. Half a million older and disabled people who would have received social care five years ago now receive no local support.

Disabled people are regularly the victims of prejudice, discrimination and hate crime. Recent Scope research uncovered that 53% of disabled people have experienced bullying or harassment at work because of their impairment or condition. One in five disabled people felt they could not disclose their disability to their employer. Dimensions have found that 73% of people with learning disabilities and autism have experienced hate crime.

Sources: dpac.uk.net scope.org.uk, Mencap.org.uk, dimensions-uk.org

DISABILITY

HOW DO WE MAKE OUR GROUP MORE ACCESSIBLE?

How many buildings do you use that have no lift access? How many public spaces are only, or primarily, built around stepped access? How many events have you attended that have had signers, hearing loops or text relay? How many resources have you produced or read that include Braille? How many events have you been to that have had no access breaks?

All of these are important things to consider because they have an effect on people and their ability to engage in activities. It's vital that thought is given to how to improve the accessibility of your activities, not just to those who are already involved, but to those who aren't yet as well. Failing to address access issues can immediately shut the door to people who may want to participate in a group.

Don't feel bad if there's something you haven't thought of, but make sure you listen to people with access needs and do everything you can to make adjustments. For example, an autistic member of your group might experience sensory overload in a room full of small group discussions, but perhaps the group that they're in could sit in a quiet side room.

Language which is discriminatory and oppressive towards disabled people is common and accepted. Words like 'crazy', 'mad' and 'insane' are frequently used in common speech. People joke about friends who are "a bit OCD" or "a bit autistic". Language like this has a damaging impact on the lives of disabled people, and ensuring your group don't use this language in meetings, materials and campaigns is an important first step to building an inclusive and safe space.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Are you organising your events and meetings in rooms that are wheelchair accessible?
- Do you have regular access breaks in long meetings or events?
- Have you thought about having signers for your meetings or events?
- Do you book rooms with hearing loops for your meetings or events?
- Do you ensure there are a range of ways that people can participate in your group?
- Do you ensure you have a person designated for welfare support for any actions or events?
- Does your group actively seek to challenge the workload of members of your group and tackle burnout among your activists?

EXTRA RESOURCES

Video: Things Not To Say To Someone Who Uses A Wheelchair
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLTtk9Mc14>

Video: Things Not To Say to An Autistic Person
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d69tTXOvRq4>

Article: The Ableist Fight Over Plastic Straws, S.E. Smith
<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/the-straw-ban-harms-disabled-people>

Blog post: Disability Politics
<https://stillmyrevolution.org/disability-politics/>

WHAT IS SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual or affectional attraction to another person. Sexual orientation is different from sexual behavior because it refers to feelings and self-concept. People may or may not express their sexual orientation in their behaviors.

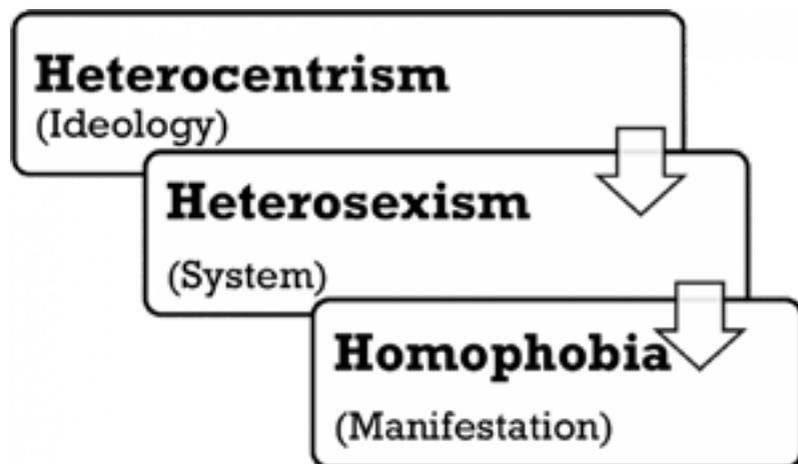
Throughout British history, heterosexuality has been established as the norm of sexual and romantic attraction. People who experience other forms of sexual and romantic attraction have suffered discrimination and oppression as a result of this.

GLOSSARY

Heterocentrism – is the ideology and assumption that all people are heterosexual.

Heterosexism – is the system of oppression that gives privileges to heterosexual people to the disadvantage of those who are not.

Homophobia – is the fear, discomfort, or hatred of non-heterosexual people that is manifested on the individual level.



WHAT DOES HETROSEXIST OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

Discrimination and oppression against sexual minorities has taken many forms. Legislative discrimination has existed for many years in the form of laws and regulations that have restricted people who are not heterosexual from accessing the same rights as heterosexual people.

Over the last fifty years, the UK has seen massive advances for the rights of sexual minorities, but discrimination still exists. LGBTQIA+ awareness training may be given to a high percentage of NHS staff but health outcomes for LGBTQIA+ people as a group are still lower than for heterosexual people. Men who have sex with men are still restricted from donating blood unless they have been celibate for 12 months. Married LGBTQIA+ couples do not have the same pension rights

as married heterosexual couples. Over half of LGBTQIA+ young people suffer homophobic bullying at schools. 25% of young homeless people are LGBTQIA+ due to family estrangement. 42% of young LGBTQIA+ people suffer from anxiety or depression.

The creation and implementation of legislation and the prevailing trend of improvement creates a false sense of progress and the sense that the imbalance and the discrimination have been addressed. Yet many areas and opportunities remain closed off to LGBTQIA+ people. Changing attitudes and legislative protection have worked to mask enduring inequalities and an increase in violence towards LGBTQIA+ people.

"HETEROSEXUALITY - WHATEVER THE CURRENT VERSION OF THAT CONCEPT HAPPENS TO BE - IS UNREMARKABLE BECAUSE IT IS THE STANDARD BY WHICH EVERYTHING ELSE IS MEASURED. THAT IS HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE."

HANNE BLANK

BEYOND THE BINARY - QUEER IDENTITIES

Many of the legislative and societal gains that have been made are in relation to the rights and acceptance of homosexual men and lesbian women, but sexual identities can be much more complex than this. Despite the historically normalised split between the norm of straight identities and the 'other' of homosexual identities, many people do not experience sexuality in such binary ways.

Many people identify as bisexual, which typically refers to somebody who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction to people of other genders, or pansexual, which typically refers to somebody who experiences sexual and/or romantic attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity.

Bisexual or pansexual people often experience oppression through the societal erasure of their identities. As homosexuality becomes more normalised, people and institutions have become accustomed to acknowledging the existence of both heterosexual and homosexual identities. While this is

good progress, bisexual and pansexual identities are often ignored and forced into having semi-closeted homosexual identities. Bisexual and pansexual people face erasure in both the straight and LGBT+ community.

Another identity that is frequently erased is asexuality. Asexuality refers to people who experience limited or no sexual or romantic attraction. Some asexual people do not experience sexual attraction, but do experience romantic attraction, and vice versa. Others will experience sexual attraction only in relation to people they have a romantic relationship with.

In a society which has become increasingly sexualised, there is an expectation that all people will experience sexual attraction. Asexuality is an identity that is almost completely erased from mainstream media, culture and art and asexual people will often be told that their identity does not exist. Asexual people suffer substantially from their lack of visibility, and will often face bullying and discrimination on the grounds of their sexuality.

HOW IS CAN THIS RELATE TO OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION?

Heterosexism and other forms of oppression overlap and intersect. For example, the experience of a black gay man in a city in the UK will be different than that of a white gay man in that same city. A black gay man may experience both homophobia and racism simultaneously. In the same way, the experiences of being a lesbian, old, disabled, poor, trans woman, or any other identity, are unique and different.

Due to the inter-linked nature of the systems of oppression, individuals will experience different types of discrimination and disadvantages as a consequence of expressing a combination of identities. A black lesbian may experience homophobia, racism and sexism. An East Asian man may be disadvantaged by racism in ways that are similar to the ways a gay man is disadvantaged by homophobia and heterosexism.

Understanding the different ways these different forms of oppression intersect with heterosexism is crucial to tackling it.

THE MYTH OF "COMING OUT"

A large part of the discourse around LGBTQIA+ identities surrounds the idea of 'coming out'. Coming out is based on the presumption of heterosexuality until stated otherwise – a problematic notion in and of itself. What is additionally damaging is the belief that coming out is a one time only event, when in fact, any LGBTQIA+ person will have to go through a coming out process on numerous occasions throughout their lives: when meeting new people, moving city, or starting a new job or course.

This can inhibit somebody's ability to form new and trusting relationships, and they can be forced to either repeatedly undergo what can be a traumatic and anxiety-ridden process or else live with others making inaccurate presumptions about their sexuality.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Engage in inclusive practices. Create work, study and living environments in which sexual diversity is included, modeled and valued.
- Use gender inclusive and non-heterosexist language. Do not assume that you know someone's sexual orientation and/or the gender of one's romantic/sexual interests. Use inclusive language even if you know someone is heterosexual. Help educate and encourage others to use inclusive language, as well.
- Speak up against homophobic jokes, comments, slurs or other behaviours when you witness them. If you don't, your silence condones and encourages such behaviours.
- Don't "out" people. Do not force anyone to disclose one's sexual orientation. Also, if you know that someone is LGBTQIA+ or is questioning one's sexual orientation, don't assume that you may tell anyone else. Be sensitive to the fact that some people are "out" in some areas of their lives, but not in others.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Timeline: Key dates for lesbian, gay, bi and trans equality

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/key-dates-lesbian-gay-bi-and-trans-equality>

Article: 3 Differences Between the Terms 'Gay' and 'Queer' – and Why It Matters

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/03/difference-between-gay-queer/>

Freedom to believe and practice one's own religion is a fundamental human right that many people are unable to exercise. While religions are globally practised, they are far from universally respected, with persecution and violence against individuals on the basis of their religion rife in many countries.

Religion plays a very important role in peoples' lives, in identity formation, and in building communities and entire societies. But it has also been associated with stereotypes or negative preconceptions.

For example, popular discourse often links Islam and terrorism, influencing social attitudes and resulting in an obvious resurgence, particularly since 2001, of racial and religious discrimination. It is incredibly problematic when the behaviour of a minority of individuals – a minority who do not reflect the values of the millions of people who practice the faith – are reflected through media and popular culture as the representatives of that faith.

Our movements must not reinforce the religious oppression of society, but embrace inclusivity by accommodating for all spiritual needs. Building an inclusive movement doesn't happen over night. Striving for inclusion is a continual, evolving process that requires us to work hard and think critically, often about ourselves and our movements.



WHAT DOES RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION LOOK LIKE?

While the UK claims to uphold the values of equal treatment, irrespective of religious identity, multiple forms of subtle discrimination take place. Some examples are:

- Students in a school are ridiculed or even physically attacked because they wear articles of faith.
- A city allows only certain religious organisations to register and to have places of worship.
- An organisation organises a meeting, to which all members are invited, but it's taking place on a religious holiday.
- When people who practice a faith are assumed to be homophobic or intolerant in some way.
- When a Jewish member of a social group is accused of inventing the antisemitism that they experience.
- An employer decides not to short list a candidate on the basis of their name, even though they are just as well – or more – qualified than another person without an “unusual” sounding name. A 2012 Parliamentary Inquiry report focusing on black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers, found that many job applicants of an ethnic minority had changed their name or appearance to try to overcome racial and religious prejudices. When they did their employment prospects increased.

In the UK, British Muslims are increasingly facing victimization, including through State sponsored projects such as Prevent which encourage teachers and lecturers to report students who depict radicalized behaviour. While Muslims make up approximately 5% of the national population, nearly 60% of reports under Prevent are in relation to Muslim students.

While Islamophobia and religious discrimination pre-date Brexit, the last few years has seen a rise in religiously aggravated vandalism, hostility, harassment, and physical assaults on individuals belonging to “visible” minorities, who are distinguished by distinctive clothing or other signs of faith and religious identity.

IS IT RACIST?

Racism and religious persecution are often intertwined. In the UK, Islamophobia is both racial and religious prejudice as racial characteristics are used to distinguish Muslims. Because of this, Hindus and Sikhs often experience anti-Muslim hate crimes. Following the 7/7 bombings of 2005, a Sikh Temple or gurdwara in Kent was the first place to be attacked, followed by two others in Merton and Leeds.

In some countries, religious persecution operates through state-sponsored violence and is connected to race. For example, Kurdish people in Turkey face state and cultural oppression on the basis of their ethnicity and their religion.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR GROUP

- Try to ensure the events and meetings you organise don't clash with a religious holiday.
- If you're providing food at an event, have you sought to ensure it is suitable for people with dietary requirements (eg. halal, kosher).
- At events you organise, do you have adequate and suitable space for prayer?
- If an event or meeting falls within Ramadam, you might want to think about the time of day, temperature of the room etc. to help participation for those fasting.

EXTRA RESOURCES

Video: What is Islamophobia?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpmJ8giVY1I>

Article: Jews know what antisemitism is and what it isn't. To invent it would be a sacrilege.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/07/howard-jacobson-jews-know-what-antisemitism-is-and-what-it-isnt-to-invent-it-would-be-a-sacrilege>

Handbook: Preventing Prevent

<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/preventing-prevent-handbooks>

BEING AN ALLY

At the core of the principles of collective liberation is the notion that those who have the direct, lived experience of the every day and structural forms of oppression should be at the forefront of the resistance to those forms of oppression.

However, it's also vital that other people within in society support those struggles and offer practical solidarity. This solidarity is referred to as 'being an ally'.

Being an ally is an active process, whereby you stand with people who are experiencing oppression, take leadership from them and take action to dismantle oppressive systems and structures with them.

LISTENING AND TAKING LEADERSHIP

If you don't experience the form of oppression being discussed, the most effective thing you can do is to sit back, to listen, and to learn from those discussing their experiences of how power, privilege and oppression manifest themselves.

It is vital in solidarity work to take leadership from those most affected by injustice. This helps to centre the voices of those most marginalised and oppressed in campaigns. It also works to ensure that the actions taken in pursuit of social change empower, rather impact negatively upon, the communities that are effected.

For example:

- If you're campaigning around issues of climate justice, have you researched what action indigenous communities on the frontlines of extraction are calling for? Have you looked into what people in small island states and countries facing the worst impacts of climate change think should be the priorities for solidarity?
- If you're campaigning around workers' rights or economic justice, have you spoken with workers' organisations or trade unions to ascertain their position on the issues and what their solutions would be? Have you looked at whether there are claimant led welfare activist groups or worker organised campaigns?

STEP BACK

If, as someone who possesses power and privilege, you find yourself taking leadership roles more often than other people in your activist group, it might be worth considering stepping back and allowing other people to step into those roles.

DO YOUR OWN WORK

Listening and taking leadership from those directly experiencing injustice is important, but it's not the responsibility of people facing oppression to act as your encyclopaedia.

There are loads of resources that have been produced that detail the experiences of people facing oppression – do what you can (acknowledging this amount will be different for everyone) to educate yourself.

DON'T LEAVE CHALLENGING OPPRESSION SOLELY UP TO THOSE WHO FACE IT

For people who suffer oppression, challenging problematic behaviours and resisting systemic forces are daily struggles. Women can't take a break from experiencing patriarchy. People of colour can't step out of systems of racism for a day.

This is emotionally draining, so it's important that people who have power and privilege also challenge oppression, whilst being careful not to speak over those who face oppression. This is a crucial aspect of being an effective ally. Not only are all of our struggles interconnected, but we'll only overcome oppression by working together.

GETTING THINGS WRONG

We will all make mistakes and get things wrong from time to time, and it's important to respond in a productive way.

Being told that you've done something wrong is never easy and is often uncomfortable. Many people's reactions are often to be dismissive or defensive.

It is important to refer back to the principles of liberation in the first place. Listen and take leadership from those experiencing oppression, apologise for your mistakes, acknowledge you understand the issue, and endeavour to make improvements for the future.

People aren't out to trip you up or force you to make mistakes. We're all on a journey of learning together, and being open, reflective and willing to learn is a crucial part of that journey.

We all live in a world that upholds systems of oppression, which means that we all have internalised forms of oppression. It takes time to unlearn these and work towards building safer spaces in our movements. One way towards this is for each of us to be open to being 'called-in'.

CALLING IN VS CALLING OUT

Calling-in is a term that developed in response to the term calling-out. Calling-out is the act of bringing public attention to someone's problematic oppressive behaviour.

Calling-out can be received as shaming, potentially damage relationships, and hinder moving forward constructively. Calling-in aims to address problematic behaviour in a more personal, compassionate way, allowing for learning and development.

However, we still need to be mindful of the levels of compassion we are expecting those experiencing oppression to have towards those who are, albeit sometimes unintentionally, oppressing others.

HOW CAN WE ADDRESS OPPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR?

- Acknowledge the harm.
- Seek out guidance from the person or persons who were impacted.
- Assess whether the oppression is a one-off and unintentional, or part of a larger pattern of problematic behaviour. If it's the first, the issue might be resolved with a compassionate conversation. If it's the second, a process that is patient, transparent and accountable should be designed. The people both responsible and impacted by the behaviour will should involved, as well as skilled moderators.
- Make sure that it's not always the people on the receiving end of problematic behaviour that are doing the emotional labour of setting up mediation processes that address the problems. How can responsibilities be shared by allies?

1. Learn more about oppression through research, self-study and group discussions.
2. Notice which voices are heard most often in meetings, or which are marginalised. Ask people who have spoken a lot to 'step back' and create space for others.
3. Look for what might be invisible. For example, if we are organising for disability rights, do we consider the specific oppressions faced by disabled people of colour?
4. Build alliances. Different groups will have different perspectives on an issue. Building connections and strengthening our understanding of the complexity of particular injustices make our movements stronger.
5. Take leadership from those most impacted by injustice. People with direct experiences of particular injustices are likely to better understand issues and their complexities, and suggest more appropriate solutions.
6. Make time for self-reflection in your group. How are power dynamics manifesting and impacting people in your group? What can the group do to change them?
7. Remember, intersectionality is a process rather than a definable goal. Intersectionality gives us a framework to think about how we can organise with the intention of not replicating and deepening oppressions that exist in society. This takes making mistakes, learning and continuing the journey towards collective liberation.

"IN POLITICAL STRUGGLES THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY 'YOUR' AND 'MY' ISSUES, IF WE SAW EACH FORM OF OPPRESSION AS INTEGRALLY LINKED TO THE OTHERS."

BARBARA SMITH

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read this introduction to collective liberation. We hope it will be useful in planning and running your campaigns on campus. It's important to remember that all of us are on a journey of learning and unlearning when it comes to the topics covered within this booklet.

Remember you can always contact People & Planet for support in all the different areas in this introduction, in addition to planning all the different aspects of your campaign and as letting us know what you're doing so we can publicise everything you're doing to the wider movement.

PEOPLE & PLANET

universities@peopleandplanet.org

01865 403225

peopleandplanet.org

facebook.com/peopleandplanet

Twitter - @peopleandplanet

Instagram - peopleandplanetnetwork

people & planet

student action on world poverty and the environment