



**THE REVOLUTION
WILL NOT BE FUNDED**
BEYOND THE NON-PROFIT
INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



EDITED BY
INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded

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beyond the non-profit industrial complex

edited by
INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence

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The Revolution Will Not Be Funded

»»Andrea Smith

introduction

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded

IN 2004, INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE LEARNED the hard way that the revolution will not be funded. INCITE! began in 2000, with the purpose of supporting a movement of feminists of color organizing against all forms of violence—from interpersonal to state violence. When we first organized, we were generally funded through individual donations. However, by 2002, we found ourselves increasingly more successful in securing foundation grants to support our work. We took a stand against state funding since we perceived that antiviolence organizations who had state funding had been co-opted. It never occurred to us to look at foundation funding in the same way. However, in a trip to India (funded, ironically, by the Ford Foundation), we met with many non-funded organizations that criticized us for receiving foundation grants. When we saw that groups with much less access to resources were able to do amazing work without funding, we began to question our reliance on foundation grants.

Our growing suspicions about foundation grants were confirmed when, in February 2004, INCITE! received an e-mail from the Ford Foundation with the subject line “Congratulations!” and an offer of “a one-year or two-year grant of \$100,000” to cover our general operating expenses in response to a grant proposal the Ford Foundation had solicited from us. Excited about the news, we committed to two major projects: the Sisterfire multimedia tour, which was organized for 2004, and the third Color of Violence conference, to be held in New Orleans in 2005. Then, unexpectedly on July 30, 2004, the Ford Foundation sent another letter, explaining that it had reversed its decision because of our organization’s statement of support for the Palestinian liberation struggle. Apparently, during the board approval process, a board member decided to investigate INCITE! further and disapproved of what s/he found on our website. INCITE! quickly learned from firsthand experience the deleterious effects foundations can have on radical social justice movements. However, we also learned that social jus-

tice organizations do not always need the foundation support they think they do. Strapped with this sudden loss of funding but committed to organizing two major projects, INCITE! members started raising money through grassroots fundraising—house parties, individual calls, T-shirt sales, and so on—and we were able to quickly raise the money we lost when the Ford Foundation rescinded their grant offer.

This story is not an isolated incident of a social justice organization finding itself in a precarious state as a result of foundation funding (specifically, a lack thereof). Since the late 1970s, social justice organizations within the US have operated largely within the 501(c)(3) non-profit model, in which donations made to an organization are tax deductible, in order to avail themselves of foundation grants. Despite the legacy of grassroots, mass-movement building we have inherited from the 1960s and 70s, contemporary activists often experience difficulty developing, or even imagining, structures for organizing outside this model. At the same time, however, social justice organizations across the country are critically rethinking their investment in the 501(c)(3) system. Funding cuts from foundations affected by the current economic crisis and increased surveillance by the Department of Homeland Security have encouraged social justice organizations to assess opportunities for funding social change that do not rely so heavily upon state structures. *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* represents a collaborative effort to address these issues and envision new possibilities and models for future organizing. Several key issues are explored:

- *How did the 501(c)(3), or non-profit, model develop, and for what reasons? How did this model impact the direction of social justice organizing?*
- *How has funding from foundations impacted the course of social justice movements?*
- *How does 501(c)(3) status impact the relationship of social justice organizations to the state and give it opportunities to co-opt movements?*
- *Are there ways the non-profit model can be used to support more radical visions for social change?*
- *What alternatives to 501(c)(3) are there for building viable social justice movements in the US?*
- *What models for organizing outside the non-profit/NGO (nongovernmental organization) model exist outside the US that may help us?*

This anthology is not primarily concerned with particular types of non-profits or foundations, but the non-profit industrial complex (or the NPIC, to be defined later in the introduction) as a whole and the way in which capitalist interests and the state use non-profits to

- *monitor and control social justice movements;*
- *divert public monies into private hands through foundations;*
- *manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism;*
- *redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society;*
- *allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through “philanthropic” work;*
- *encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them*

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded offers no simple answers to these questions, but hopes to continue a conversation about how to think beyond state-proctored models like the non-profit system for organizing political projects for social change. The contributors are a multigenerational assembly of organizers working inside and outside the NPIC from a variety of—even conflicting—perspectives. Before assessing these issues, however, we need to understand how the non-profit system became the predominant model within social movements today.

history of the non-profit system

Prior to the Civil War, individuals, not organizations, did most charity work. However, in the face of accelerating industrialization and accompanying social ills, such as increased poverty, community breakdown to facilitate the flow of labor, and violence, local organizations (generally headed by community elites) developed to assist those seen to be “deserving” of assistance, such as widows and children. These charities focused on individual poverty rather than poverty on the systemic level. Charities did not campaign for higher wages, for instance, but worked to ameliorate the impact of low wages on communities. As this charity movement spread, local charity organizations began to organize on the national level. In 1874, members of private charity organizations, religious agencies, and public officials from several northeastern states established the National Conference of Charities and Corrections to discuss mutual concerns (later renamed the National Conference on Social Welfare).¹

This system of charitable giving increased exponentially during the early 1900s when the first multimillionaire robber barons, such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Russell Sage, created new institutions that would exist in perpetuity and support charitable giving in order to shield their earnings from taxation.² Before the 1950s, charities were generally unregulated because few states imposed taxes on corporations; only the largest foundations with the wealthiest donors required charitable deductions. The first such foundation was organized by Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, who, using the \$70 million left to her by railroad giant Russell Sage started the Russell Sage Foundation in 1907. She was followed by Rockefeller in 1910 and Carnegie in 1911. By 1955, donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations totaled \$7.7 billion, according to the American Association of Fundraising Counsel Trust for Philanthropy. By 1978, that total had grown to \$39 billion. In 1998, the last year of available data, total giving had risen to \$175 billion.³

Along with the growth in donations came a huge swell in the number of non-profit organizations. In many cases, these foundations served as tax shelters so that corporations could avoid taxes and descendants could receive their inheritance without paying estate taxes. Early on, many of these organizations employed those who had been part of the charity movement, but, unlike their charity movement predecessors, these foundations' purviews would be general, rather than specific, and their governance would rely on private, self-perpetuating boards of trustees or directors. From their inception, foundations focused on research and dissemination of information designed ostensibly to ameliorate social issues—in a manner, however, that did not challenge capitalism. For instance, in 1913, Colorado miners went on strike against Colorado Fuel and Iron, an enterprise of which 40 percent was owned by Rockefeller. Eventually, this strike erupted into open warfare, with the Colorado militia murdering several strikers during the Ludlow Massacre of April 20, 1914. During that same time, Jerome Greene, the Rockefeller Foundation secretary, identified research and information to quiet social and political unrest as a foundation priority. The rationale behind this strategy was that while individual workers deserved social relief, organized workers in the form of unions were a threat to society. So the Rockefeller Foundation heavily advertised its relief work for individual workers while at the same time promoting a pro-Rockefeller spin to the massacre. For instance, it sponsored speakers to claim that no massacre had happened and tried to block the publication of reports that were critical of Rockefeller.⁴ According to Frederick Gates, who helped run the Rockefeller Foundation, the “danger is not the combination of capital, it is not the Mexican situation, it is the labor monopoly; and the danger of the labor monopoly lies in its use of armed force, its organized and deliberate war on society.”⁵

Even in this earliest stage of foundation development, critics noted the potential danger of large private foundations. In 1916, the US Commission on Industrial Rela-

tions (also known as the Walsh Commission) filed a report on labor issues with Congress warning that foundations were a “grave menace”⁶ because they concentrated wealth and power in the service of ideology which supported the interests of their capitalist benefactors. According to Samuel Gompers’s testimony in the commission’s report, “In the effort to undertake to be an all-pervading machinery for the molding of the minds of the people...in the constant industrial struggle for human betterment...[foundations] should be prohibited from exercising their functions, either by law or regulation.”⁷

The Walsh report called on Congress to more strictly regulate foundations, which it did not do, given the state’s historic relationship with capital. However, the resulting negative publicity encouraged foundations to fund intermediaries, such as universities, rather than doing research themselves, so that the results of such research would be more convincingly objective.⁸

During the Great Depression, the societal influence of foundations was curtailed by economic crisis. However, after World War II, particularly with the emergence of the Ford Foundation (founded in 1936), foundations regained prominence, and focused on how they could further the interests of US-style democracy domestically and abroad.⁹ The Ford Foundation became particularly prominent, not only for philanthropic giving, but for its active involvement in trying to engineer social change and shape the development of social justice movements. For instance, foundations, particularly Ford, became involved in the civil rights movement, often steering it into more conservative directions, as the essay from Robert L. Allen in this collection demonstrates. At the same time, however, this civil rights involvement also aroused the ire of the Right, particularly in the South, who then called on Congress to more strictly regulate foundations. Right-wing organizations such as the Heritage Foundation claimed that tax dollars were going to subsidize left-wing causes, while on the left, progressives such as Allen were arguing that foundations were pushing social justice movements into more conservative directions.¹⁰ Thus foundations earned critics from all sides.

Leading the Right’s assault on liberal foundations was Congressman Wright Patman of Texas, who conducted a study of foundations, beginning in 1962. In reports he sent to the House of Representatives, Patman contended that economic power was consolidating in the hands of foundations; foundations were being used to escape estate taxes, compensate relatives, and pay annuities to themselves; the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) lacked proper oversight over foundations; foundations were controlling business to give them a competitive advantage over small businesses; and foundations were spending too much of their money overseas.¹¹ In the early 1960s, foundations were growing at a rate of 1,200 per year, and financial magazines routinely promoted foundations as tax-shelter tools.¹² In response,

Congress passed the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which reversed the previous state policy of only minimally regulating foundations. This act imposed a 4 percent excise tax on foundations' net investment income, put restrictions on the ability of foundations to engage in business operations (thus curtailing the abilities of corporations to operate tax-free as ostensible foundations), and required foundations to annually spend at least 6 percent of net investment income (reduced to 5 percent in 1988) to prevent them from growing without serving their ostensible charitable purposes. Additionally, the act required foundations to provide more comprehensive information disclosures on their operations in annual reports to be filed with the IRS and made available to citizens at foundation offices.¹³

Notwithstanding its attack on foundations, the Right also developed its own foundations. As Michael Shuman of the Institute of Policy Studies notes, while right-wing foundations actually give away *less* money than liberal foundations, the former use their funds more effectively. Progressive funders generally give money to specific issue-oriented campaigns, whereas right-wing foundations see the need to fund the intellectual projects that enable the Right to develop a comprehensive framework for presenting its issues to the public. These think tanks, research projects, journals, etcetera, may not have had an immediate short-term impact, but, in the long run, they altered the public consciousness.

This kind of investment by the Right in public policy has paid off handsomely. Its long-term support of conservative public scholars enables them to develop and promote numerous "new Ideas."...With ample funding, they have successfully pounded their message into heads of millions, sowing confusion, apathy, and opposition to public regulation of private corporations.¹⁴

Right-wing foundations pour millions of dollars into funding think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation to help craft an ideological package that has fundamentally reshaped the consciousness of the public. Heritage Foundation president Edwin Feulner talks about the foresight of right-wing funders such as Richard Scaife, who saw the importance of political education. "Right-wing victories," he notes, "started more than twenty years ago when Dick Scaife had the vision to see the need for a conservative intellectual movement in America...These organizations built the intellectual case that was necessary before political leaders like Newt Gingrich could translate their ideas into practical political alternatives."¹⁵

The rise of foundation support accompanied the rise of groups that organized as formal 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, because foundations could make tax-deductible donations to non-profits, particularly after the federal government began to regulate foundation giving more strictly in 1969. According to the IRS, non-profits are "religious, charitable, scientific, or educational" organizations whose receipts are tax-exempt, and whose contributions are tax deductible

for the donors. This tax-exempt status was created by Congress as part of the Revenue Act of 1913, passed after ratification of the 16th Amendment, which instituted the income tax. Generally, organizations must secure 501(c)(3) status to receive foundation grants, and they are prohibited from direct involvement in political advocacy. In 1953, the IRS estimated that about 50,000 organizations had received charity status. By 1978, that number had risen nearly sixfold. Today, charities number more than 730,000, according to the latest IRS count. As of 1998, there were 734,000 501(c)(3) organizations in the United States alone.¹⁶ Today, foundations have assets of \$500 billion and give around \$33.6 billion annually,¹⁷ and there are 837,027 non-profits, excluding religious organizations.¹⁸

During the late 1960s, radical movements for social change were transforming the shape of the United States while Third World liberation movements were challenging Western imperialism. Foundations began to take a role in shaping this organizing so that social protest would not challenge the capitalist status quo. Robert L. Allen, as early as 1969, warned of the co-optation of the Black Power movement by foundations. In his germinal work, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, reprinted in part in this anthology, Allen documents how the Ford Foundation's support of certain Black civil rights and Black Power organizations such as CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) actually helped shift the movement's emphasis—through the recruitment of key movement leaders—from liberation to Black capitalism. Similarly, Madonna Thunder Hawk describes how the offer of well-paying jobs in the non-profit sector seduced many Native activists into diverting their energy from organizing to social service delivery and program development. As Joan Roefels notes in *Foundations and Public Policy* (2003), large private foundations tended to fund racial justice organizations that focused on policy and legal reform, a strategy that effectively redirected activist efforts from radical change to social reform. It also helped to professionalize these movements, since only those with advanced degrees could do this kind of work, thus minimizing the importance of mass-based grassroots organizing. Waldemar Nielsen, in his 1972 study of the big foundations at the time, noted that funding patterns indicated that “philanthropic interest in the black [*sic*] derives from the long tradition of humanitarian concern for his [*sic*] ‘plight’ rather than from an ideological comment to the principle of racial equality.”¹⁹ Observing that the majority of foundation funding for racial issues went into higher education, Nielsen notes,

Reminiscent of the ideas of Booker T. Washington, it is commonly believed that the most fruitful way to solve the problems of the blacks is to open educational opportunities to them; by climbing the rungs of the educational and occupational ladder, they will eventually achieve full economic, political, and social equality within the system. Moreover, once educational opportunities

have been opened, the primary responsibility for his advancement rests upon the black man—on his own ambition, determination, and effort.²⁰

So, essentially, foundations provide a cover for white supremacy. Reminiscent of Rockefeller's strategy, people of color deserve individual relief but people of color organized to end white supremacy become a menace to society.

Another strategy developed to sublimate revolutionary movements into reformist ones was "leadership training" both domestically and internationally, whereby potential organizers were recruited to develop the skills to become policy-makers and bureaucrats instead of organizers.²¹ As the essay on the NGOization of the Palestinian liberation movement in this volume shows, this strategy of "leadership development" is still being used to transform liberation struggles. As Howard Dressner, secretary of the Ford Foundation, stated in 1969,

American society is being strained at one extreme by those who would destroy what they oppose or do not understand, and at the other by forces that would repress variety and punish dissent. We are in great need of more—not fewer—instruments *for necessary social change under law, for ready, informed response to deep-seated problems without chaos, for accommodation of a variety of views without deafening anarchy* [emphasis added]. Foundations have served as such an instrument.²²

Meanwhile, Robert Arno's edited volume, *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism*, charged that foundations

have a corrosive influence on a democratic society; they represent relatively unregulated and unaccountable concentrations of power and wealth which buy talent, promote causes, and in effect, establish an agenda of what merits society's attention. They serve as "cooling-out" agencies, delaying and preventing more radical, structural change. They help maintain an economic and political order, international in scope, which benefits the ruling-class interests of philanthropists.²³

As the essays in this volume will demonstrate, these critiques of foundations and non-profits still ring true today.

what is the non-profit industrial complex?

Dylan Rodríguez defines the non-profit industrial complex as "a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements." He and Ruth Wilson Gilmore argue that the NPIC is the natural corollary to the prison industrial complex (PIC). While the PIC overtly represses dissent the NPIC manages and controls dissent by incorporating it into the state apparatus, functioning as a

“shadow state” constituted by a network of institutions that do much of what government agencies are supposed to do with tax money in the areas of education and social services. The NPIC functions as an alibi that allows government to make war, expand punishment, and proliferate market economies under the veil of partnership between the public and private sectors.

Christine E. Ahn looks more closely at the role of foundations in particular. She argues that foundations are *theoretically* a correction for the ills of capitalism. However, if we look at where the actual funding goes (including who governs these institutions), we can see that most of this country’s “charity”—whether individual, corporate, or foundation—is not directed toward programs, services, and institutions that benefit the poor or disenfranchised, and certainly not toward effecting social change. When wealthy people create foundations, they’re exempt from paying taxes on their wealth. Thus foundations essentially rob the public of monies that should be owed to them and give back very little of what is taken in lost taxes. In addition, their funds are derived from profits resulting from the exploitation of labor. That is, corporations become rich by exploiting their workers. Corporate profits are then put into foundations in order to provide “relief” to workers that are the result of corporate practices in the first place. Rather than thinking of foundations as a source of income for which we should be grateful, Ahn suggests we reimagine them as a target for accountability, just as we might organize to hold corporations or the state accountable to the public good.

how the npic impacts movements

It is easy to critique the larger foundations, but what about smaller foundations without large endowments? Are large foundations the only problem? This question is addressed by Tiffany Lethabo King and Ewuare Osayande’s work. While Ahn discusses strategies for holding foundations accountable, King and Osayande contend that this effort to reform foundations basically serves to protect elitism within social justice movements. They further argue that even self-described “alternatives” to foundation funding (such as individual giving through major donors) are still based on the same logic—that wealthy people should be the donors, and thus, inevitably, the controllers of social justice struggles. Ultimately, even these funding strategies disadvantage people-of-color organizations which do not have the same access to wealthy donors as do white-dominated organizations.

Thus, regardless of the intentions of particular foundations, the framework of funding, in which organizations expect to be funded by benefactors rather than by their constituents, negatively impacts social movements as well. Sista II Sista and Sisters in Action for Power describe how their respective initial efforts to

become a non-profit ultimately shifted their focus from organizing to corporate management. When Sisters in Action for Power realized the detrimental impact the NPIC had on its work, it began to explore how its organization could reject this corporate model and instead develop structures that more closely model the vision of the society it is trying to build. This step necessitated the development of organizing strategies within an integrated mind-body-spirit framework that respects organizing processes as much as outcomes. Aware that such approaches are often antithetical to foundations' requirements that focus on short-term campaign outcomes, Sisters in Action for Power explains why it nonetheless chose to engage in campaigns to develop leadership in young women of color through a holistic framework.

Madonna Thunder Hawk reminds us that many radical movements for change are able to accomplish much—if not more—outside the non-profit system. Her essay discusses her involvement with Women of All Red Nations (formed in connection with the American Indian Movement), which did incredible work without a single foundation grant. Mindful that many contemporary activists feel they cannot do their work without starting a non-profit first, Thunder Hawk also observes that foundations only give money to more well-established NGOs who have the “expertise.” But, more often than not, she warns, these purported experts are generally not part of the communities they advocate for and hence do not contribute to building grassroots leadership, particularly in indigenous communities.

In this way, the NPIC contributes to a mode of organizing that is ultimately unsustainable. To radically change society, we must build mass movements that can topple systems of domination, such as capitalism. However, the NPIC encourages us to think of social justice organizing as a career; that is, you do the work if you can get paid for it. However, a mass movement requires the involvement of millions of people, most of whom cannot get paid. By trying to do grassroots organizing through this careerist model, we are essentially asking a few people to work more than full-time to make up for the work that needs to be done by millions.

In addition, the NPIC promotes a social movement culture that is non-collaborative, narrowly focused, and competitive. To retain the support of benefactors, groups must compete with each other for funding by promoting only their own work, whether or not their organizing strategies are successful. This culture prevents activists from having collaborative dialogues where we can honestly share our failures as well as our successes. In addition, after being forced to frame everything we do as a “success,” we become stuck in having to repeat the same strategies because we insisted to funders they were successful, even if they were not. Consequently, we become inflexible rather than fluid and ever changing in our strategies, which is what a movement for social transformation really requires. And as we become more concerned with attracting funders than with organizing mass-based movements, we start niche marketing the work of our organizations. Framing our organizations

as working on a particular issue or a particular strategy, we lose perspective on the larger goals of our work. Thus, niche marketing encourages us to build a fractured movement rather than mass-based movements for social change.

Project South suggests that a fatal error made by many activists is presuming that one needs money to organize. While fundraising is part of organizing, fundraising is not a precondition for organizing. Project South describes how they integrate fundraising into organizing so that those who fulfill fundraising positions in Project South are trained organizers, not fundraisers.

Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo, Alisa Bierria, and Paul Kivel trace the impact of the NPIC on the antiviolence movement. Rojas notes that the antiviolence movement became co-opted by the state through federal and state funding. Her work builds on the analysis of Suzanne Pharr, who notes that the move toward developing antiviolence organizations through the non-profit system coincided with Reaganomics. At the same time that Reagan was slashing government services, the women's movement organized itself into non-profits to provide the services the government was no longer providing. Consequently, the antiviolence movement essentially became a surrogate for the state.²⁴ Likewise, Bierria observes an antiviolence movement focused less on grassroots organizing and more on professionalization and social service delivery as a direct result of increased government and foundation funding. Instead of imagining domestic violence survivors who could organize on their own behalf, antiviolence organizations viewed them only as clients in need of services. Kivel argues that the NPIC assigns social service professionals a particular function within the capitalist system of managing dissent. Still, he does not suggest that there should be no social services agencies at all—rather, that social service agencies should also engage social justice organizing or must be accountable to social movements if they are to further, rather than impede, social justice.

The impact of the NPIC on the antiviolence movement has been particularly disastrous because most of the government funding it receives has been through the Department of Justice, especially with the advent of the Violence Against Women Act. As a result, antiviolence organizations have focused primarily on criminal justice solutions to ending violence that reinforce the prison industrial complex; in fact, many antiviolence organizations are now located within police departments. Women of color, who must address both gender violence within their communities and state violence against their communities, have been particularly impacted by the direction the mainstream antiviolence movement has taken. This NGOization of the antiviolence movement is also actively exported to other countries, following a model Gayatri Spivak calls “saving brown women from brown men”²⁵ which tends to pathologize communities in the Third World for their “backward” attitudes toward women. The goal becomes to “save” Third

World women from the extreme patriarchy in their community without looking at how patriarchy is connected to white supremacy and colonialism. Thus, for instance, mainstream feminist groups will support the bombing in Afghanistan to save Afghan women from the Taliban as if US empire actually liberates women. (In addition to the essays in this volume, further analysis of the co-optation of the antiviolence movement can be found in INCITE!'s previous book, *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology* [2006]).

Women of color have also been particularly impacted by the role of foundations in the women's health and reproductive justice movements. Foundations have been active in supporting the population control movement, which blames the reproductive capabilities of women of color and Third World women for almost all social ills, including poverty, war, and environmental destruction. For instance, John D. Rockefeller III founded the Population Council in 1952 to foster international population control policies under the notion that overpopulation causes unrest, and hence, revolution.²⁶ The Population Council supported mass population control efforts in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s.²⁷ And in the last six months of 1976, the Population Council supported the sterilization of 6.5 million people in India through the use of police raids to round up men and women, with thousands dying from infections caused by the unsanitary conditions under which the sterilizations were performed. In one village alone, all the young men were sterilized.²⁸

Today, what Betsy Hartmann terms the "population establishment"²⁹ spends billions of dollars each year on population programs, policy setting, and (mis)education. Certainly, Third World/women of color want family planning services, but many of the programs foisted upon them have been implemented without concern for their health. For instance, before Norplant (a long-acting hormonal contraceptive) was introduced in the US, the Population Council inserted it into nearly half a million women in Indonesia, often without providing counseling on side effects (which include menstrual irregularity, nausea, and anxiety) and without telling them that there had been no long-term studies on the drug's effects. Many were not told that it needed to be removed after five years to avoid an increased risk of ectopic pregnancy.³⁰ Thirty-five hundred women in India were implanted with Norplant 2 in trials that began in the 1980s, without being warned about possible side effects or screened to determine if they were suitable candidates. These programs were finally discontinued due to concerns about "teratogenicity and carcinogenicity." In both cases, women who wanted the implant removed had great difficulty finding doctors who could do so.³¹ (Similarly, in the US, many doctors can insert Norplant, but not so many know how to remove it).

The Pew Foundation, the largest environmental grantmaker in the United States, spent over \$13 million to increase public support for population control at

the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development.³² Population control is one of Pew's top priorities; organized through the Global Stewardship Initiative, it targets are environmental organizations, domestic affairs and foreign policy initiatives, and religious organizations.³³ In conjunction with the Park Ridge Center, in February 1994, Pew organized a forum in Chicago on religious perspectives on population, consumption, and the environment. In May 1994, it hosted a consultation that brought together thinkers from major world religions to deliberate on population issues,³⁴ issuing a statement to contradict the Vatican's antichoice position.³⁵ As a lead-in to the Cairo conference, Pew targeted churches to support a Cairo consensus on population by organizing focus groups with different constituencies, including various religious groups. It identified the "problem" constituencies as those who "accept overpopulation as a problem in terms of unequal distribution of resources and mismanagement of resources—not numbers of people."³⁶ Pew then targeted the "elites" of religious communities who would understand its construction of the problems of overpopulation.³⁷ Its efforts met with success; in 1993, a Pew survey of 30 US denominations found that 43 percent had an official statement on population.³⁸ Church leaders in both evangelical and liberal denominations came out in support of the Cairo conference, lauding its steps forward on women's reproductive health issues. Through this work, Pew had, in the words of Hartmann, managed to "manufacture consensus" over the Cairo conference.³⁹ Through its vast financial resources, Pew has been able to change the agenda of environmental organizations and programs in order to suit its own vision for the world.⁴⁰

non-profits and global organizing

Globally, both foundations and non-profits/NGOs have received widespread criticism for their implicit or explicit support of First World interests and free-market capitalism. Numerous foundations and non-profits have directly colluded with the Central Intelligence Agency. For instance, foundations have supported and continue to support CIA programs in educational exchanges with east Africa and Eastern Europe to maintain a US presence in these areas without the consent of Congress.⁴¹ The CIA also employs political scientists and collaborates with professors in sponsoring university institutes. These institutes were created on the advice of foundations that assumed scholars would be more likely to cooperate with intelligence work if it were done in an academic location. These scholars also helped recruit potential allies among foreign students.⁴² Additionally, the CIA directed funding through foundations to support cultural arts to recruit leftist cultural workers, and showcase US cultural achievements globally. Since the State Department could not fund such activities directly, they

had to be funneled through foundations.⁴³ Gerald Colby and Charlotte Dennett's book *Thy Will Be Done* also charges that John D. Rockefeller III funded missionary agencies that collaborated with the CIA for several decades in Latin America. These missionaries/agents would befriend indigenous peoples in Latin America, collaborate with them to translate the Bible into indigenous languages, and then use these intermediaries to funnel intelligence information to the CIA to facilitate resource extraction and destabilize leftist regimes.⁴⁴ Critics further charge that the Ford Foundation funded programs to revitalize Indian religions in India to counter the spread of communism. This tactic has the impact of defusing opposition from a leftist framework, but also fuels religious fundamentalism and the rise of Hindu Right nationalism.⁴⁵

Foundations have also been directly involved in squelching revolutionary movements in the Third World. The Ford Foundation was actively involved through its various programs in diverting the antiapartheid movement in South Africa from an anticapitalist to a pro-capitalist movement.⁴⁶ Cyril Ramaphosa, a secretary-general of the African National Congress who led a 1987 miners strike praised by the Ford Foundation,⁴⁷ signed a \$900 million contract with Anglo American, a corporation that accounts for 25 percent of South Africa's gross domestic product and controls much of South Africa's gold and diamond mining. The goal of this collaboration is to bring "blacks into the mainstream economy" rather than to challenge the economic status quo.⁴⁸ As demonstrated in "The NGOization of the Palestine Liberation Movement," a series of interviews with four longtime activists, these same strategies are being used by NGOs to deradicalize the struggle in Palestine.

James Petras makes some similar arguments in his 1994 essay "NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism." Petras notes that despite claiming to be nongovernmental organizations, they actually support government interests. NGOs, he writes,

receive funds from overseas governments, work as private sub-contractors of local governments and/or are subsidized by corporate funded private foundations with close working relations with the state....Their programs are not accountable to local people, but to overseas donors who "review" and "over-see" the performance of the NGOs according to their criteria and interests. The NGO officials are self-appointed and one of their key tasks is designing proposals that will secure funding. In many cases this requires that NGO leaders find out the issues the Western funding elites fund, and shape proposals accordingly.⁴⁹

For example, he notes that NGOs direct organizing efforts away from dealing with exploitation by the World Bank to supporting micro-credit projects that place the solution to poverty on individual initiative rather than changing global economic systems. He adamantly opposes even "progressive" NGOs, arguing

that they divert resources from the people, they subordinate movement leadership to NGO leadership, and they do not put their lives on the lines.

Progressive NGOs use peasants and the poor for their research projects, they benefit from the publication—nothing comes back to the movements not even copies of the studies done in their names! Moreover, peasant leaders ask why the NGOs never risk their neck after their educational seminars? Why do they not study the rich and powerful—why us?...The NGOs should stop being NGOs and convert themselves into members of socio-political movements.... The fundamental question is whether a new generation of organic intellectuals can emerge from the burgeoning radical social movements which can avoid the NGO temptation and become integral members of the next revolutionary wave.⁵⁰

reformulating the role of non-profits

In contrast to Petras, contributors Adjoa Florência Jones de Almeida and Paula X. Rojas suggest alternative possibilities for understanding the proper relationship between non-profits and social movements as informed by the role of non-profits in mass movements in other countries. Jones de Almeida and Rojas point out that in many countries, social movements are not necessarily dominated by non-profits. Instead, movement building is funded and determined by the constituents. These movements may make strategic alliances with non-profits or develop their own non-profits as intermediaries to fund specific aspects of their work. But a key difference is that these non-profits are accountable to social movements; they are not seen as part of the movement themselves. Furthermore, the goal is to sustain movements, not non-profits that support movements. Within the US, Ruth Wilson Gilmore suggests that many organizations can be effective even with 501(c)(3) status if they have a clear mission and purpose—and if they are funded by their constituents. She further suggests it is central to remember that our focus should not be on organizational (or career) preservation, but on furthering the movement of which an organization is a part. Eric Tang also concludes that while non-profits can have a role to support the movement, they cannot be an end unto themselves. He argues that the revolution will not be funded—we must create autonomous movements. But once we develop that mass movement, non-profits could serve as buffers that protect autonomous movements from government repression.

Most of the essays in this anthology were presented in 2004 at *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*, a conference organized by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. Co-organized by the Women of Color Collective of the University of California, Santa Barbara, this historic international gathering provided an opportunity for activists

and organizers to share their struggles of organizing within the context of the non-profit system. While providing no simple answers, it did encourage a conversation on new ways to think about organizing and activism.

These essays do not necessarily represent the views of INCITE! and they do not necessarily agree with one other. Nevertheless, they provide a space for social justice organizers and activists to begin thinking of ways to build movements that either do not rely primarily on the non-profit model or position themselves differently within this system. We hope it will continue a conversation that may move us forward in developing new strategies for revolutionary work.

notes

- 1 Sheila Slaughter and Edward Silva, "Looking Backwards: How Foundations Formulated Ideology in the Progressive Period," in *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism*, ed. Robert Arnove (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 55–86.
- 2 James Allen Smith, "The Evolving Role of American Foundations," in *Philanthropy and the Non-profit Sector in a Changing America*, ed. Charles Clotfelter and Thomas Erlich (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), 34–51.
- 3 Thomas J. Billitteri, "Donors Big and Small Propelled Philanthropy in the 20th Century," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy Gifts and Grants*, January 13, 2000, <http://philanthropy.com/free/articles/v12/i06/06002901.htm>.
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- 4 Thomas Atwood, "The Road to Ludlow" (paper), <http://archive.rockefeller.edu/publications/resrep/andrews.pdf>.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Barbara Howe, "The Emergency of Scientific Philanthropy, 1900–1920: Origins, Issues and Outcomes," in *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism* (see note 1), 25–54.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Sheila Slaughter and Edward Silva, "Looking Backwards: How Foundations Formulated Ideology in the Progressive Period," in *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism* (see note 1), 55–86.
- 9 James Allen Smith, "The Evolving Role of American Foundations," in *Philanthropy and the Nonprofit Sector in a Changing America*, ed. by Charles Clotfelter and Thomas Erlich (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), 34–51.
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- 11 John Edie, "Congress and Foundations: Historical Summary," in *America's Wealthy and the Future of Foundations*, ed. Teresa Odendahl (New Haven, CT: The Foundation Center, 1987), 43–64.
- 12 Billitteri, "Donors Big and Small."
- 13 Joan Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 15.
- 14 Michael Shuman, "Why Progressive Foundations Give Too Little to Too Many," *Nation*, 12/19 January 1998, 12.
- 15 Karen Rothmyer, "What's Conspiracy Got to Do with It?" *Nation*, 23 February 1998, 20.
- 16 Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*, 19.

- 17 Steve Gunderson, "Foundations: Architects of Social Change," *eJournal USA*, May 2006, <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0506/ijse/gunderson.htm>.
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 - 19 Waldemar Neilsen, *The Big Foundations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 358.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, 359.
 - 21 Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*, 127.
 - 22 *Ibid.*
 - 23 Robert Arno, ed., *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 1.
 - 24 Suzanne Pharr, plenary address, The Revolution Will Not Be Funded conference, University of California, Santa Barbara, April 30, 2004.
 - 25 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 92–93.
 - 26 Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*, 31.
 - 27 Reprinted in Dale Hathaway-Sunseed, "A Critical Look at the Population Crisis in Latin America" (paper, University of California, Santa Cruz, spring 1979). The efforts these men supported led to 30 percent of women being sterilized in Puerto Rico and 44 percent in Brasil, despite the fact that sterilization was illegal in Brasil. Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control* (Boston: South End Press, 1995), 248, 250.
 - 28 Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*, 254.
 - 29 *Ibid.*, 113–124. Hartmann identifies the major players as USAID, the UN Fund for Population Activities, governments of other developed countries (particularly Japan), the World Bank—which has forced Third World countries to adopt population policies contingent upon release of structural adjustment loans), the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the Population Council, various consulting firms and academic centers, foundations (particularly the Ted Turner and Pew Charitable Trusts) and various pressure groups (that is, Zero Population Growth and the Population Action International as well as environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club).
 - 30 *Ibid.*, 29–30.
 - 31 Ammu Joseph, "India's Population Bomb," *Ms.* 3, no. 3 (November/December 1992): 12.
 - 32 Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*, 148.
 - 33 Pew Global Stewardship Initiative, white paper, July 1993, 12.
 - 34 Martin Marty, "Population and Development," *Second Opinion*, no. 20 (April 1995): 51–52. See also "Varied Religious Strands on Population," *Christian Century* 111 (July 27–August 3, 1994): 714–715.
 - 35 "Morals and Human Numbers," *Christian Century* 111 (April 20, 1994): 409–410.
 - 36 Pew Charitable Trust, *Report of Findings from Focus Groups on Population, Consumption and the Environment*, July 1993, 64.
 - 37 *Ibid.*
 - 38 Pew Charitable Trust, *Global Stewardship* 1, no. 3 (March 1994): 1.
 - 39 Contrary to impressions left by the media, Carol Benson Holst points out that there are many people who were very critical of the Cairo program. For instance, her former organization, Ministry for Justice in Population Concerns, which was funded by Pew, issued a statement that was not allowed to be read at the plenary, calling the program "nothing but an insult to women, men and children of the South who will receive an ever-growing dose of population assistance, while their issues of life and death will await the Social Development Summit of 1995." Ramona Morgan Brown and Carol Benson Holst, "IPCD's Suppressed Voices May Be Our Future Hope," *Ministry for Justice in Population Concerns*, October–December 1994, 1.
- Consequently, Pew (which had funded the organization knowing it was concerned primarily with the relationship between social justice and population growth) defunded the organization because it "was too accommodating to people of color." *Ministry for Justice in Population Concerns, Notice of Phase-Out*, January 1, 1995. Pew's March 1994 newsletter also

dismissed the concerns women of color had about the racist implications of population control as "rumor mongering." *Global Stewardship* 1, no. 3 (March 1994): 3. For another critical view of Cairo, see Charon Asetoyer, "Whom to Target for the North's Profits," *Wicozanni Wowapi*, Fall 1994, 2-3. She writes: "Early into the conference, it became obvious that the issues facing third world countries such as development, structural adjustment, and capacity building was not high on the list of issues that the 'Super Powers' wanted to address. It was clear that the issues facing world population were going to be addressed from the top down with little regard for how this may affect developing countries." While it had first seemed Pew was concerned about justice issues, it became clear that they were only interested insofar as it furthered their population agenda. Other church-based organizations have privately questioned Pew's stance on this issue, but cannot do so publicly if they do not want to jeopardize their funding. See Brown and Holst, "IPCD's Suppressed Voices."

- 40 Stephen Greene, "Who's Driving the Environmental Movement?" *Chronicle of Philanthropy* 6 (January 25, 1994): 6-10.
- 41 Barry Karl and Alice Karl, "Foundations and the Government: A Tale of Conflict and Consensus," in *Philanthropy and the Nonprofit Sector in a Changing America*, ed. Charles Clotfelter and Thomas Erlich (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), 52-72.
- 42 Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*, 39.
- 43 Ibid., 86.
- 44 Gerard Colby and Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).
- 45 Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*, 86.
- 46 Ibid., 141.
- 47 Ibid., 174.
- 48 Donald McNeil, "Once Bitter Enemies, Now Business Partners; South African Blacks Buy Into Industry," *New York Times*, September 24, 1996.
- 49 James Petras, "NGOs: In the Service of Imperialism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 29, no. 4 (1999): 429-440.
- 50 Ibid.

»part i

The Rise of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex

»Dylan Rodríguez

the political logic of the non-profit industrial complex

PERHAPS NEVER BEFORE HAS THE STRUGGLE TO MOUNT VIABLE movements of radical social transformation in the United States been more desperate, urgent, or difficult. In the aftermath of the 1960s mass-movement era, the edifices of state repression have themselves undergone substantive transformation, even as classical techniques of politically formed state violence—colonization and protocolonial occupation, racist policing, assassination, political and mass-based imprisonment—remain fairly constant in the US production of global order. Here, I am specifically concerned with the emergence of the US prison industrial complex (PIC) and its relationship to the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC), the industrialized incorporation of pro-state liberal and progressive campaigns and movements into a spectrum of government-proctored non-profit organizations. In my view, these overlapping developments—the rise of a racially constituted prison regime unprecedented in scale, and the almost simultaneous structural consolidation of a non-profit industrial complex—have exerted a form and content to US-based resistance struggles which enmeshes them in the social arrangement that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal names an “industry of fear.” In a 1998 correspondence to the 3,000-plus participants in the conference Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex, he writes,

Americans live in a cavern of fear, a psychic, numbing force manufactured by the so-called entertainment industry, reified by the psychological industry, and buttressed by the coercion industry (i.e., the courts, police, prisons, and the like). The social psychology of America is being fed by a media that threatens all with an army of psychopathic, deviant, sadistic madmen bent on ravishing a helpless, prone citizenry. The state’s coercive apparatus of “public safety” is erected as a needed protective counter-point.¹

I wish to pay special attention to Abu-Jamal’s illustration of the social fabrication of fear as a necessary political and cultural condition for the rise of the US non-profit industrial complex, which has, in turn, *enabled and complemented* the massive institutional production of the US prison industrial complex. As I understand it, the NPIC is the set of symbiotic relationships that link together political

and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements, since about the mid-1970s. Abu-Jamal's "cavern of fear" illuminates the repressive and popular broadly racist common sense that both haunts and constitutes the political imagination of many contemporary progressive, radical, and even self-professed "revolutionary" social change activists. Why, in other words, does the political imagination of the US non-profit and nongovernmental organization (NGO)-enabled Left generally refuse to embrace the urgent and incomplete *historical* work of a radical counter-state, anti-white supremacist, *prison/penal/slave abolitionist* movement? I am especially concerned with how the political assimilation of the non-profit sector into the progressive dreams of a "democratic" global civil society (the broad premise of the liberal-progressive antiglobalization movement) already presumes (and therefore fortifies) existing structures of social liquidation, including biological and social death. Does Abu-Jamal's "cavern of fear" also echo the durable historical racial phobias of the US social order generally? Does the specter of an authentic *radical freedom* no longer structured by the assumptions underlying the historical "freedoms" invested in white American political identity—including the perversions and mystifications of such concepts as "democracy," "civil rights," "the vote," and even "equality"—logically suggest the *end of white civil society*, which is to say a collapsing of the very sociocultural foundations of the United States itself? Perhaps it is the fear of a radically transformed, feminist/queer/anti-racist *liberation* of Black, Brown, and Red bodies, no longer *presumed to be permanently subordinated* to structures of criminalization, colonization, (state and state-ordained) bodily violence, and domestic warfare, that logically threatens the very existence of the still white-dominant US Left: perhaps it is, in part, the Left's fear of an unleashed *bodily proximity* to currently criminalized, colonized, and normatively violated peoples that compels it to retain the staunchly anti-abolitionist political limits of the NPIC. The persistence of such a racial fear—in effect, the fear of a radical freedom that obliterates the cultural and material ascendancy of "white freedom"—is neither new nor unusual in the history of the US Left. We are invoking, after all, the vision of a movement of liberation that abolishes (and transforms) the cultural, economic, and political structures of a white civil society that continues to largely define the terms, languages, and limits of US-based progressive (and even "radical") campaigns, political discourses, and local/global movements.

This polemical essay attempts to dislodge some of the theoretical and operational assumptions underlying the glut of foundation-funded "establishment Left" organizations in the United States. The Left's investment in the essential political logic of civil society—specifically, the inherent legitimacy of racist state

violence in upholding a white freedom, social “peace,” and “law and order” that is fundamentally designed to maintain brutal inequalities in the putative free world—is *sympiotic with (and not oppositional to)* the policing and incarceration of marginalized, racially pathologized communities, as well as the state’s *ongoing absorption* of organized dissent through the non-profit structure. While this alleged Left frequently considers its array of incorporated, “legitimate” organizations and institutions as the fortified bulwark of a progressive “social justice” orientation in civil society, I am concerned with the ways in which the broad assimilation of such organizations into a non-profit industrial complex actually *enables* more vicious forms of state repression.

the velvet purse of state repression

It may be appropriate to initiate this discussion with a critical reflection on the accelerated incorporation of progressive social change struggles into a structure of state accreditation and owning-class surveillance since the 1970s. Robert L. Allen’s classic book *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* was among the first works to offer a sustained political analysis of how liberal white philanthropic organizations—including the Rockefeller, Ford, and Mellon foundations—*facilitated* the violent state repression of radical and revolutionary elements within the Black liberation movements of the late 1960s and early 70s. Allen argues that it was precisely because of philanthropy’s overtures toward the movement’s more moderate and explicitly reformist elements—especially those advocating versions of “Black capitalism” and “political self-determination” through participation in electoral politics—that radical Black liberationists and revolutionaries were more easily criminalized and liquidated.² Allen’s account, which appears in this collection, proves instructive for a current critique of the state-corporate alliance that keeps the lid on what is left of Black liberationist politics, along with the cohort of radical struggles encompassed by what was once called the US “Third World” Left. Perhaps as important, Allen’s analysis may provide a critical analytical framework through which to understand the problem of white ascendancy and liberal white supremacy within the dominant spheres of the NPIC, which has become virtually synonymous with the broader political category of a US Left.

The massive repression of the Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, and other US-based Third World liberation movements during and beyond the 1960s and 70s was founded on a coalescence of official and illicit/illegal forms of state and state-sanctioned violence: police-led racist violence (including false imprisonment, home invasions, assassinations, and political harassment), white civilian reaction (lynchings, vigilante movements, new electoral blocs, and a complementary surge of

white nationalist organizations), and the proliferation of racially formed (and racially executed) juridical measures to criminalize and imprison entire populations of poor and working class Black, Brown, and Indigenous people has been—and continues to be—a fundamental legacy of this era. Responding to the liberation-movement era's momentary disruption of a naturalized American apartheid and taken-for-granted domestic colonialism, a new coalition of prominent owning-class white philanthropists, lawmakers, state bureaucrats, local and federal police, and ordinary white civilians (from across the already delimited US political spectrum of "liberal" to "conservative") scrambled to restore the coherence and stability of white civil society in the midst of a fundamental challenge from activists and radical movement intellectuals who envisioned substantive transformation in the very foundations of US "society" itself. One outcome of this movement toward "White Reconstruction" was the invention, development, and refinement of repressive policing technologies across the local and federal scales, a labor that encompassed a wide variety of organizing and deployment strategies. The notorious Counterintelligence Program (COINTEL-PRO) of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) remains the most historically prominent incident of the undeclared warfare waged by the state against domestic populations, insurrections, and suspected revolutionaries. But the spectacle of Hooverite repression obscures the broader—and far more important—convergence of state and capitalist/philanthropic forces in the absorption of progressive social change struggles that defined this era and its current legacies.

During this era, US civil society—encompassing the private sector, non-profit organizations and NGOs, faith communities, the mass media and its consumers—partnered with the law-and-order state through the reactionary white populist sentimentality enlivened by the respective presidential campaigns of Republican Party presidential nominees Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon. It was Goldwater's eloquent articulation of the meaning of "freedom," defined against a racially coded (though nonetheless transparent) imagery of oncoming "mob" rule and urban "jungle" savagery, poised to liquidate white social existence, that carried his message into popular currency. Goldwater's political and cultural conviction was to *defend* white civil society from its racially depicted aggressors—a white supremacist discourse of self-defense that remains a central facet of the US state and US political life generally. Though his bid for the presidency failed, Goldwater's message succeeded as the catalyst for the imminent movement of White Reconstruction in the aftermath of US apartheid's nominal disestablishment, and in the face of liberal reformist changes to US civil rights law. Accepting the 1964 Republican presidential nomination, Goldwater famously pronounced,

Tonight there is violence in our streets, corruption in our highest offices, aimlessness among our youth, anxiety among our elders and there is a virtual despair among the many who look beyond material success for the inner meaning of their lives....Security from domestic violence, no less than from foreign aggression, is the most elementary and fundamental purpose of any government, and a government that cannot fulfill that purpose is one that cannot long command the loyalty of its citizens. History shows us—demonstrates that nothing—nothing prepares the way for tyranny more than the failure of public officials to keep the streets from bullies and marauders.³

On the one hand, the subsequent exponential growth of the US policing apparatus closely followed the white populist political schema of the Goldwater-Nixon law-and-order bloc.⁴ Law and order was essentially the harbinger of White Reconstruction, mobilizing an apparatus of state violence to protect *and recuperate* the vindicated white national body from the allegedly imminent aggressions and violations of its racial Others. White civil society, accustomed to generally unilateral and exclusive access to the cultural, economic, and political capital necessary for individual and collective self-determination, encountered reflections of its own undoing at this moment. The politics of law and order thus significantly encompassed white supremacist desire for surveilling, policing, caging, and (preemptively) socially liquidating those who embodied the gathering storm of dissidence—organized and disarticulated, radical and protopolitical.

In this historical context, COINTELPRO's illegal and unconstitutional abuses of state power, unabashed use of strategic and deadly violence, and development of invasive, terrorizing surveillance technologies might be seen as *paradigmatic* of the contemporary era's revived white supremacist hegemony.⁵ Contrary to the widespread assumption that COINTELPRO was somehow excessive, episodic, and extraordinary in its deployment of (formally illegal and unconstitutional) state violence, J. Edgar Hoover's venerated racist-state strategy simply reflected the imperative of white civil society's impulse toward *self-preservation* in this moment.⁶ Elaborating the white populist vision of Goldwater and his political descendants, the consolidation of this white nationalist bloc—which eventually incorporated “liberals” as well as reactionaries and conservatives—was simply the *political* reconsolidation of a white civil society that had momentarily strolled with the specter of its own incoherence.

Goldwater's epoch-shaping presidential campaign in 1964 set up the political premises and popular *racial* vernacular for much of what followed in the restoration of white civil society in the 1970s and later. In significant part through the reorganization of a US state that strategically mobilized around an internally complex, substantively dynamic white supremacist conception of “security from domestic violence,” the “law and order” state has materialized on the ground

and has generated a *popular consensus* around its modes of dominance: punitive racist criminal justice, paramilitary policing, and strategically deployed domestic warfare regimes have become an American way of life. This popularized and institutionalized “law and order” state has built this popular consensus in part through a symbiosis with the non-profit liberal foundation structure, which, in turn, has helped *collapse* various sites of potential political radicalism into nonantagonistic social service and pro-state reformist initiatives. Vast expenditures of state capacity, from police expansion to school militarization, and the multiplication of state-formed popular cultural productions (from the virtual universalization of the “tough on crime” electoral campaign message to the explosion of pro-police discourses in Hollywood film, television dramas, and popular “reality” shows) have conveyed several overlapping political messages, which have accomplished several mutually reinforcing tasks of the White Reconstructionist agenda that are relevant to our discussion here: (1) the staunch criminalization of particular political practices embodied by radical and otherwise critically “dissenting” activists, intellectuals, and ordinary people of color; this is to say, when *racially pathologized bodies* take on political activities critical of US state violence (say, normalized police brutality/homicide, militarized misogyny, or colonialist occupation) or attempt to dislodge the presumed stability and “peace” of white civil society (through militant antiracist organizing or progressive anti-(state) racial violence campaigns), they are subjected to the enormous weight of a *state and cultural* apparatus that defines them as “criminals” (e.g., terrorists, rioters, gang members) and, therefore, as essentially *opportunistic, misled, apolitical*, or even *amoral* social actors; (2) the fundamental political constriction—through everything from restrictive tax laws on community-based organizations to the arbitrary enforcement of repressive laws banning certain forms of public congregation (for example, the California “antigang” statutes that have effectively criminalized Black and Brown public existence on a massive scale)—of the appropriate avenues and protocols of agitation for social change, which drastically delimits the form and substance that socially transformative and liberationist activisms can assume in both the short and long terms; and (3) the state-facilitated and fundamentally *punitive* bureaucratization of social change and dissent, which tends to create an *institutionalized* inside/outside to aspiring social movements by funneling activists into the hierarchical rituals and restrictive professionalism of discrete campaigns, think tanks, and organizations, outside of which it is usually profoundly difficult to organize a critical mass of political movement (due in significant part to the two aforementioned developments).

In this context, the structural and political limitations of current grassroots and progressive organizing in the United States has become stunningly evident

in light of the veritable explosion of private foundations as primary institutions through which to harness and restrict the potentials of US-based progressive activists. Heavily dependent on the funding of such ostensibly liberal and progressive financial bodies as the Mellon, Ford, and Soros foundations, the very existence of many social justice organizations has often come to rest more on the effectiveness of professional (and amateur) grant writers than on skilled—much less “radical”—political educators and organizers. A 1997 *Atlantic Monthly* article entitled “Citizen 501(c)(3)” states, for example, that the net worth of such foundations was over \$200 billion as of 1996, a growth of more than 400 percent since 1981. The article’s author, Nicholas Lemann, goes on to write that in the United States, the raw size of private foundations, “along with their desire to affect the course of events in the United States and the world, has made foundations one of the handful of major [political] actors in our society—but they are the one that draws the least public attention.”⁷ As the foundation lifeline has sustained the NPIC’s emergence into a primary component of US political life, the assimilation of political resistance projects into quasi-entrepreneurial, corporate-style ventures occurs under the threat of unruliness and antisocial “deviance” that rules Abu-Jamal’s US “cavern of fear”: arguably, forms of sustained grassroots social movement that *do not* rely on the material assets and institutionalized legitimacy of the NPIC have become largely *unimaginable* within the political culture of the current US Left. If anything, this culture is generally disciplined and ruled by the fundamental imperative to preserve the integrity and coherence of US white civil society, and the “ruling class” of philanthropic organizations and foundations may, at times, almost unilaterally determine whether certain activist commitments and practices are appropriate to their consensus vision of American “democracy.”

The self-narrative of multibillionaire philanthropist George Soros—whom the PBS program *NOW* described as “the only American citizen with his own foreign policy”⁸ brings candor and clarity to the societal mission of one well-known liberal philanthropic funder-patron:

When I had made more money than I needed, I decided to set up a foundation. I reflected on what it was I really cared about. Having lived through both Nazi persecution and Communist oppression, I came to the conclusion that what was paramount for me was an open society. So I called the foundation the Open Society Fund, and I defined its objectives as opening up closed societies, making open societies more viable, and promoting a critical mode of thinking. That was in 1979....By now I have established a network of foundations that extends across more than twenty-five countries (not including China, where we shut down in 1989).⁹

Soros's conception of the "Open Society," fueled by his avowed disdain for laissez-faire capitalism, communism, and Nazism, privileges political dissent that works firmly within the constraints of bourgeois liberal democracy. The imperative to protect—and, in Soros's case, to selectively enable with funding—dissenting political projects emerges from the presumption that existing social, cultural, political, and economic institutions are in some way perfectible, and that such dissenting projects must not deviate from the unnamed "values" which serve as the ideological glue of civil society. Perhaps most important, the Open Society is premised on the idea that clashing political projects can and must be brought (forced?) into a vague state of reconciliation with one another.

Instead of there being a dichotomy between open and closed, I see the open society as occupying a middle ground, where the rights of the individual are safeguarded *but where there are some shared values that hold society together* [emphasis added]. I envisage the open society as a society open to improvement. We start with the recognition of our own fallibility, which extends not only to our mental constructs but also to our institutions. What is imperfect can be improved, by a process of trial and error. The open society not only allows this process but actually encourages it, by insisting on freedom of expression and protecting dissent. The open society offers a vista of limitless progress....

The Open Society merely provides a framework within which different views about social and political issues can be reconciled; it does not offer a firm view on social goals. If it did, it would not be an open society.¹⁰

Crucially, the formulaic, naïve vision of Soros's Open Society finds its condition of possibility in untied foundation purse strings, as "dissent" flowers into viability on the strength of a generous grant or two. The essential conservatism of Soros's manifesto obtains "common-sense" status within the liberal/progressive foundation industry by virtue of financial force, as his patronage reigns hegemonic among numerous organizations and emergent social movements.

Most important, the Open Society's narrative of reconciliation and societal perfection marginalizes radical forms of dissent which voice an *irreconcilable* antagonism to white supremacist patriarchy, neoliberalism, racialized state violence, and other structures of domination. Antonio Gramsci's prescient reflection on the formation of the hegemonic state as simultaneously an organizational, repressive, and *pedagogical* apparatus is instructive: "The State does have and request consent, but it also 'educates' this consent, by means of the political and syndical associations; these, however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class."¹¹

Certainly, the historical record demonstrates that Soros and other foundation grants have enabled a breathtaking number of "left-of-center" campaigns and projects in the last 20 years. The question I wish to introduce here, how-

ever, is whether this enabling also exerts a disciplinary or repressive force on contemporary social movement organizations while nurturing a particular ideological and structural *allegiance* to state authority that preempts political radicalisms.

Social movement theorists John McCarthy, David Britt, and Mark Wolfson argue that the “channeling mechanisms” embodied by the non-profit industry “may now far outweigh the effect of direct social control by states in explaining the structural isomorphism, orthodox tactics, and moderate goals of much collective action in modern America.”¹² That is, the overall bureaucratic formality and hierarchical (frequently elitist) structuring of the NPIC has institutionalized more than just a series of hoops through which aspiring social change activists must jump—these institutional characteristics, in fact, *dictate the political vistas of NPIC organizations themselves*. The form of the US Left is inseparable from its political content. The most obvious element of this kinder, gentler, industrialized repression is its bureaucratic incorporation of social change organizations into a “tangle of incentives”—such as postal privileges, tax-exempt status, and quick access to philanthropic funding apparatuses—made possible by state bestowal of “not-for-profit” status. Increasingly, avowedly progressive, radical, leftist, and even some self-declared “revolutionary” groups have found assimilation into this state-sanctioned organizational paradigm a practical route to institutionalization. Incorporation facilitates the establishment of a relatively stable financial and operational infrastructure while avoiding the transience, messiness, and possible legal complications of working under decentralized, informal, or “underground” auspices. The emergence of this state-proctored social movement industry “suggests an historical movement away from direct, cruder forms [of state repression], toward more subtle forms of state social control of social movements.”¹³

Indeed, the US state learned from its encounters with the crest of radical and revolutionary liberationist movements of the 1960s and early 70s that endless, spectacular exercises of military and police repression against activists of color on the domestic front could potentially provoke broader local and global support for such struggles—it was in part because they were so dramatically subjected to violent and racist US state repression that Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, and other domestic liberationists were seen by significant sectors of the US and international public as legitimate freedom fighters, whose survival of the racist state pivoted on the mobilization of a global political solidarity. On the other hand, the US state has found in its coalition with the NPIC a far less spectacular, generally demilitarized, and still highly effective apparatus of political discipline and repression that (to this point) has not provoked a significant critical mass of opposition or political outrage.

Central to this sublimated state discipline and surveillance are the myriad regulatory mechanisms that serve to both accredit and disqualify non-profit social change groups. The Internal Revenue Service, tax laws of individual states, the US Postal Service, and independent auditors help keep bureaucratic order within—and the political lid on—what many theorists refer to as the post-1960s emergence of “new social movements.” McCarthy, Britt, and Wolfson conclude that this historical development has rather sweeping consequences for the entirety of civil society:

Another consequence of the growth of this system is a blurring of the boundaries between the state and society, between the civil and the political. Our analysis suggests that a decreasing proportion of local groups remain unpenetrated by the laws and regulations of the central state....Some analysts see civil space declining as the result of a fusion of the private and political by the activists of the “new” social movements who politicize more and more civil structures in the pursuit of more comprehensive moral and political goals. Our analysis views the construction as more the consequence of state penetration of the civil, and the consequences in more traditional terms—a narrowing and taming of the potential for broad dissent.¹⁴

The NPIC thus serves as the medium through which the state continues to exert a fundamental dominance over the political intercourse of the US Left, as well as US civil society more generally. Even and especially as organizations linked to the NPIC assert their relative autonomy from, and independence of, state influence, they remain fundamentally tethered to the state through extended structures of financial and political accountability. Jennifer Wolch’s notion of a “shadow state” crystallizes this symbiosis between the state and social change organizations, gesturing toward a broader conception of the state’s disciplinary power and surveillance capacities. According to Wolch, the structural and political interaction between the state and the non-profit industrial complex manifests as more than a relation of patronage, ideological repression, or institutional subordination. In excess of the expected organizational deference to state rules and regulations, social change groups are *constituted* by the operational paradigms of conventional state institutions, generating a reflection of state power in the same organizations that originally emerged to resist the very same state.

In the United States, voluntary groups have gained resources and political clout by becoming a shadow state apparatus, but are increasingly subject to state-imposed regulation of their behavior....To the extent that the shadow state is emerging in particular places, there are implications for how voluntary organizations operate. The increasing importance of state funding for many voluntary organizations has been accompanied by deepening penetration by the state into voluntary group organization, management, and goals. We argue that the transformation of the voluntary sector into a shadow state apparatus could ultimately shackle its potential to create progressive social change.¹⁵

the npic as political “epistemology”: the cooptation of political imagination

More insidious than the raw structural constraints exerted by the foundation/state/non-profit nexus is the way in which this new industry grounds an epistemology—literally, a *way of knowing* social change and resistance praxis—that is difficult to escape or rupture. To revisit Abu-Jamal’s conception of the US “cavern of fear,” the non-profit industrial complex has facilitated a bureaucratized *management of fear* that mitigates against the radical break with owning-class capital (read: foundation support) and hegemonic common sense (read: law and order) that might otherwise be posited as the necessary precondition for generating counter-hegemonic struggles. The racial and white supremacist fears of American civil society, in other words, *tend to be respected and institutionally assimilated* by a Left that fundamentally operates through the bureaucratic structure of the NPIC. As the distance between state authority and civil society collapses, the civic spaces for resistance and radical political experimentation disappear and disperse into places unheard, unseen, and untouched by the presumed audiences of the non-profit industry: arguably, the most vibrant sites of radical and proto-radical activity and organizing against racist US state violence and white supremacist civil society are condensing among populations that the NPIC cannot easily or fully incorporate. Organized, under-organized, and ad hoc movements of imprisoned, homeless, and undocumented people, as well as activists committed to working beneath and relatively autonomous of the NPIC’s political apparatus, may well embody the beginnings of an alternative US-based praxis that displaces the NPIC’s apparent domination of political discourse and possibility. Such a revitalization of radical political vision is both urgent and necessary in the current moment, especially when the US state’s constant global displays of violence and impunity seem to imply that authentically radical challenges to its realms of domination are all but doomed.

Even a brief historical assessment of the social movement history reveals the devastating impact of state violence on the political imagination and organizing practices of progressive and radical political workers in the United States. Noam Chomsky, for example, argues that the watershed year of 1968 signified a turn in the institutional and discursive trajectory of state violence and repression, departing from the spectacular, peculiar imagery of more traditionally brutal repressive techniques. Framing the state’s partial movement away from technologies of violent public spectacle (assassinations, militarized police raids and “riot control,” and so forth) to a more complex, surreptitious, multidimensional apparatus of coercion, Chomsky’s elaboration of a new “culture of terrorism” echoes Abu-Jamal’s “cavern of fear.” While Chomsky’s critique focuses on an analysis