

# Paul Kivel's Newsletter



GETTING TOGETHER  
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

When the first edition of *Uprooting Racism* was published in the early nineties, there were books about racism, but few that documented how white people benefited from and participated in perpetuating it, let alone the way that racism influenced the workings of our institutions. Fifteen years later there are a massive number of studies demonstrating the workings of racism in everything from its devastating impact on the lives and opportunities of people of color to how white people gain from it and how it is perpetuated in the everyday practices and policies of our organizations and institutions.

For example, one recent study documents the routine extrajudicial killing of black people by police, security guards and others. Although there was a great deal of national attention given to the murder of unarmed 16-year-old Trayvon Martin by a security guard in January, according to a [recent report](#) by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, there have been at least 120 murders of black people since the beginning of this year - approximately one every 36 hours. Similar unprovoked, extrajudicial murders take place against Latin@s, Native Americans, Muslims and recent immigrants.

Despite this, within the white community there is a culture of denial and minimization about the existence of racism. I often hear references to a "post-racial" society, a belief that the civil rights movement and subsequent legislation "took care of all that," and a feeling that having a black man as president proves that we have moved beyond race in the United States.

We as white people need to put our shoulders to the task of working with people of color to uproot racism and build healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. As I discuss in more detail in the book, it is inadequate to say "I am not prejudiced," and morally evasive to say "I treat everyone the same." In a world in which racism continues to be one of the bedrocks of our organizations and institutions, and most people of color are confronted every single day with the repercussions of discrimination, harassment and exploitation, we must ask ourselves: *What do I stand*

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for? Who do I stand with? Do I stand for racial justice, the end of discrimination and racial violence and a society truly based on equal opportunity? Do I stand with people of color and white allies in the struggle to uproot racism?

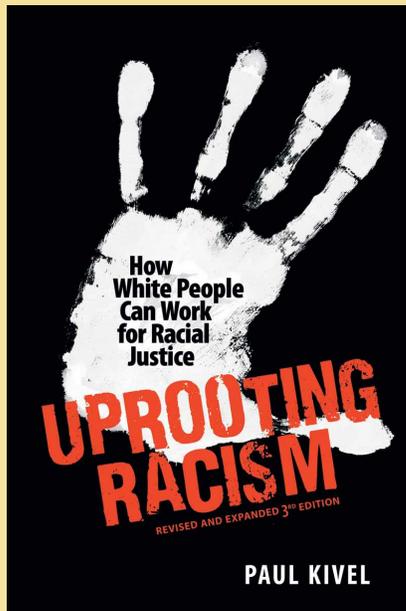
These are the challenging questions I offer to you as you begin to read this book. I hope *Uprooting Racism* helps you to be clearer and more effective in answering them.

## New Edition

# Uprooting Racism: How White People can Work for Social Justice

## Newly Revised and Expanded Third Edition!

by Paul Kivel



The articles in this newsletter are from the news edition of *Uprooting Racism*. *Uprooting Racism* explores the manifestations of racism in politics, work, community, and family life. It moves beyond the definition and unlearning of racism to address the many areas of privilege for white people, and suggests ways for individuals and groups to challenge the structures of racism. *Uprooting Racism's* welcoming style helps readers look at how we learn racism, what effects it has on our lives, its costs and benefits to white people, and what we can do about it.

In addition to updating existing chapters, the new edition of *Uprooting Racism* explores the ways entrenched racism has been revealed in the new economy, the prison industrial complex, health care policy, and increased attacks on Arabs, Muslims, and recent immigrants.

Special features include exercises, questions, and suggestions to engage, challenge assumptions, and motivate the reader towards social action. The new edition includes an index and an updated bibliography.

### **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Social Justice**

**Price per Unit (piece): \$19.95**

**Now: \$15.95**

**You Save: \$4.00**

Buy the book online [here](#).

To learn more about the expanded edition of this book, watch a short video of Paul [here](#).

# Web of Control

People in the ruling class - those who are at the top of the economic pyramid - have never wanted to deal directly with people at the bottom of the pyramid, but have wanted to prevent them from organizing for power. Therefore, they have created a space that buffers them from the rest of the population. I call this the *buffer zone*. The buffer zone consists of all the jobs that carry out the agenda of the ruling class without ruling-class presence. The buffer zone has three primary purposes: to take care of people at the bottom of the pyramid, to keep hope alive, and to maintain the system by controlling those who want to make changes.

Each sphere of the buffer zone contributes to an overall *web of control* that is devastating to communities of color and serves to keep them out of mainstream institutions. School teachers, counselors and administrators often monitor youth of color closely, isolating them in "special needs" classes, writing them up as behavior and discipline problems, suspending them readily and then blaming their families for not caring and their communities for being dysfunctional. Social workers monitor and intervene in families of color much more readily than they do in white families. Social service providers are more likely to intervene quickly in the affairs of families of color by calling the police, child welfare and protective services. Apartment owners, real estate agents, bank loan officers, security guards, Bureau of Indian Affairs staff, youth recreation program staff, public and state parks staff, small business owners, store clerks - there are literally tens of thousands of white people whose jobs have the function of monitoring people of color and limiting where they can be and what they can do.

**[Read more about the web of control and how those of us in the buffer zone can hold ourselves and each other accountable here.](#)**

## Allies, Collaborators and Agents

An ally takes an active but strategic role in confronting racism. A collaborator, on the other hand, is someone who follows the rules (which are set up to benefit white people), doesn't make waves and makes sure that most people of color don't have the information and resources they need to move ahead. Collaborators don't have to be overtly racist (although some are) because the organizations or institutions around them maintain racism without their active contribution. They simply collude with the status quo rather than challenging it. A collaborator says, "I'm just doing my job, just getting by, just raising my family. Racism doesn't affect me." But they continue enjoying the benefits of being white and ignore the costs of racism.

In reality, most of us are agents - more actively complicit in perpetuating racism than collaborators. Many of us find ourselves in situations in which, because of racism, we have more status, seniority, experience or inside connections than people of color. This may be in the PTA, in a civic group, in a congregation, in a recreational program, on the job, at school or in a neighborhood.

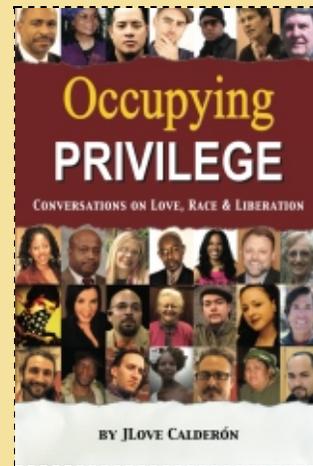
**[Read more about collaborators and agents and how we can be allies here.](#)**

# Bibliography and Other Resources

To keep the resources from *Uprooting Racism* up-to-date, I provide an online bibliography and other resources at [PaulKivel.com](http://PaulKivel.com). Below is a sample of what you will find there.

## Books

- *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the US Racial Wealth Divide* by Lui, Meizhu, et. al.
- *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* by Becky Thompson
- *Memoir of a Race Traitor* by Mab Segrest
- *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva
- *Accountability and White Anti-racist Organizing by White Men Challenging Racism: 35 Personal Stories* by Cooper Thompson, et al. eds. Bonnie Cushing et al.
- *Fire in the Heart: How White Activists Embrace Racial Justice* by Mark R. Warren
- *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-non-Indigenous Relationships* by Lynne Davis, ed.



*Occupy Privilege: Conversations on Love, Race and Liberation* by JLove Calderon

## Magazines

- Colorlines - [colorlines.com](http://colorlines.com)
- Rethinking Schools - [rethinkingschools.org](http://rethinkingschools.org)
- Teaching Tolerance - [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org)

## Films and Film Distributors

- California Newsreel - [newsreel.org](http://newsreel.org)
- Media Education Foundation - [mediaed.org](http://mediaed.org)



**Anne Braden: Southern Patriot (1924-2006)** is an inquiry into the extraordinary if

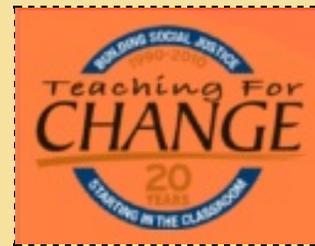
largely unsung life of Anne Braden, organizer, agitator, Southerner, journalist, feminist, teacher and mentor described as "one of the great figures of our time" by noted historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall.

Branded a communist and seditionist for buying a house in Louisville for an African American family in Cold War 1954, Anne Braden dedicated her life to awakening the consciousness of whites to the legacy of racial injustice, and demonstrated that racism is a social construct that can be deconstructed.

In this documentary Braden's reflections on the history and significance of six decades of racial justice organizing are interspersed with commentary and analysis from civil rights leaders, historians, community organizers, educators, environmental advocates, friends and foes.

## Organizations and Websites

- Evaluation Tools for Racial Equity - [evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org](http://evaluationtoolsforracialequity.org)
- National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights - [nnirr.org](http://nnirr.org)
- Poverty & Race Research Action Council - [prrac.org](http://prrac.org)
- SURJ-Showing Up for Racial Justice - [showingupforracialjustice.org](http://showingupforracialjustice.org)



Teaching for Change: Building social justice starting in the classroom - [teachingforchange.org](http://teachingforchange.org)

**[Full bibliography and other resources available here.](#)**

## Organizational Change and Accountability

Those of us who are educators, trainers and consultants on issues of diversity and multiculturalism and who are committed to the struggle for racial justice need to ask ourselves some hard questions:

1. What is our role when affirmative action is being attacked by politicians and devastated by the courts, violence against Muslims and immigrants is increasing and welfare mothers and young men of color are being blamed for a variety of social ills?
2. What is our role when large-scale unemployment, environmental degradation, deterioration of public services and the deflation of the housing bubble have disproportionately affected the jobs, housing and living conditions of people of color?

**[Find out more about how diversity trainers and professionals can be accountable to communities of color here.](#)**

## Featured Exercises

The newest edition of *Uprooting Racism* is full of questions and actions to consider on your

journey to becoming an ally for racial justice. Below is a sample of what you will find in the book.

## Recent Immigrants: questions and actions

1. Were your foreparents legal immigrants to the US when people of color were excluded?
2. In what ways do you benefit from the work of immigrants, including those who are undocumented, for clothes, meat, vegetables, fruit, electronic goods and other household items?
3. In what ways do you benefit from the work of immigrants for services such as domestic work, gardening, childcare, elder care, nursing, transportation (taxi, bus and van services), hotel room services and restaurant work?
4. How can you challenge those who argue that immigrants are dangerous to our communities and deserve to be racially profiles, criminalized and punished?
5. In what ways can you support just, non-racist immigration reform?

## Land and Housing: questions and actions

1. if you find yourself in a city, neighborhood, suburb or school that is predominantly white, ask yourself whose land you are on and how did white people gain control of it?
2. How was white ownership maintained?
3. What means have white people used to keep people of color out? How do they still maintain control?
4. How is where you live different, in environmental quality, safety, infrastructure, or beauty, than where people of color live?
5. Even if where you live is currently integrated, It might have racial discrimination and violence as part of its history. Find out about the history of the community you live in. What impact does that history continue to have on land use or land accessibility today?

## Conferences and Trainings for Allies



### Highlander Center National Training

SEPTEMBER 1-2 in New Market, TN

**Saturday:** institutes on popular education, cultural organizing, participatory action research, and language justice; childrens program, scrumptious lunch and dinner, and dancing under the stars to music from around the world.

**Sunday:** Issue roundtables, another delicious lunch, author/activist discussions, music, movies, and a ground breaking for a new sleeping lodge for highlander guests!



## Facing Race

November 15-17 in Baltimore, MD

Facing Race is the largest national gathering of leaders, educators, journalists, artists, and activists on racial justice. Sessions address topics such as the 2012 election, economy, arts & culture, education reform, multiracial organizing, immigrant rights, and the development of racial justice leadership and training models. Workshops offer attendees a chance to develop hands-on strategies for positive social

change. And this year we are especially excited to welcome keynote speaker Junot Díaz!

## 14th Annual White Privilege Conference

### The Color of Money: Reclaiming Our Humanit

April 10-13, 2013 in Seattle, WA

[Event website here](#)

## 2013 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE)

May 28-June 1 in New Orleans, LA

[Registration information here](#)

## SURJ Training at Highlander Center in July



In late July SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice), a national network of organizations and individuals focused on education, training, and mobilization of white people for racial justice conducted a training for groups from around the country who are organizing white people to become activists for racial justice. To learn more about SURJ check out there website [here](#).

