

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

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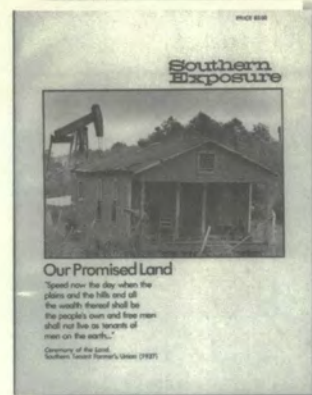
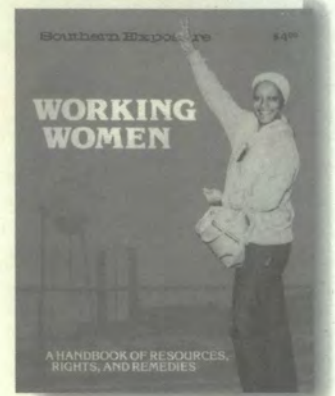


YEARS

**Julian Bond • Anne Braden • John Hope Franklin
Jim Hightower • Rep. Cynthia McKinney • Suzanne
Pharr • Bernice Johnson Reagon • Arturo Rodriguez**

*and 17 other change-makers on
the past and future of the South*





To all the editors, writers, artists, and countless other helpers who have brought us *Southern Exposure* over the last 25 years,

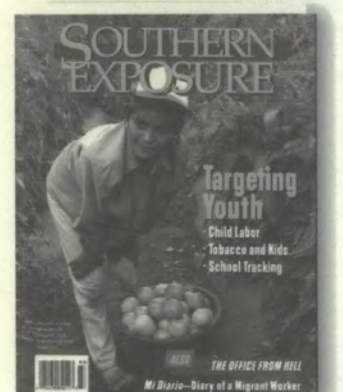
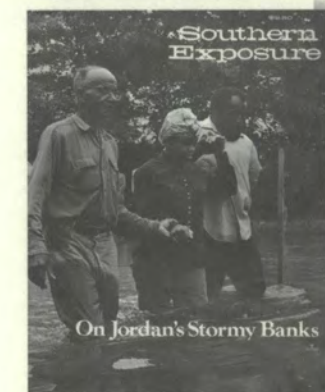
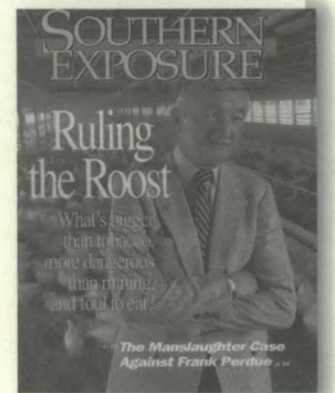
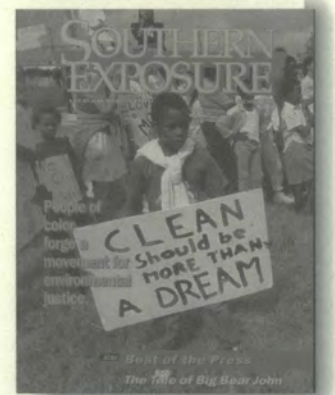
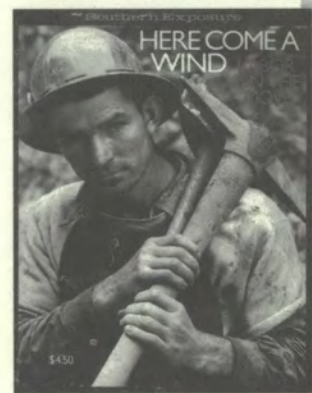
To all our loyal readers, subscribers, and supporters whose generosity has allowed *Southern Exposure* to thrive for a quarter century,

To all those working for justice, fairness, and equality in the South and world, who have been our inspiration and our guiding light as we look to the future,

Keep your eyes on the prize.

Chris Kromm
Editor, *Southern Exposure*

Aqueelah As-Salaam
Director, Institute for Southern Studies



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SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

SPRING 1999 - 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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From the Editor

Of all the scenes from our 25th Anniversary party this past January (which you can catch a glimpse of on pp. 12-16 – the closest you'll ever get to a celebrity spread in *Southern Exposure*), the most intriguing – and moving – for me was hearing from the old-timers.

Intriguing, because I'm a history buff, and hearing about *Southern Exposure* "back in the day" from Leah Wise, Len Stanley, Ron Nixon and Bob Hall gave me the long view I crave, bringing me closer to the good people on whose shoulders I stand. And I wasn't the only person in the room moved by the still-burning passion these *SE* veterans showed for the magazine's guiding values – speaking truth to power, and weaving analysis and action together to create lasting change.

Celebrating *SE*'s rich heritage was more than a nostalgia trip. It was a reminder that anniversaries are as much about where you're going, as they are about where you've been. We came together in January to honor our past, and also to carry that history forward, setting our sights on the *next* 25 years of publishing for change.

That's why, when we asked 25 "change-makers" to write for this issue, we asked them to look forward as well as back; to reflect on how far we've come over the last 25 years, but to also predict what's needed for us to live closer to our ideals in the next quarter century. Particularly inspiring are the voices of the next generation, such as editorial board member Kim Diehl, who feels "a strengthening of spirits ... in the face of incarceration and oppression," and *SE* fiction editor Jordan Green, who commits his energy to *Southern Exposure* because "it is a vessel of struggle, a ragged band of true believers."

Anniversaries are as much about where you're going, as they are about where you've been.

As we wrap up our anniversary season, we're hoping you'll be part of the next 25 years of *Southern Exposure*. If you don't subscribe, now's a good time to join (we'll even throw in a free copy of our new investigative report on farmworkers, "Uprooting Injustice"). If you're already a member, keep subscribing – we can promise that *Southern Exposure* will continue to inform and inspire you about prospects for a better South.

For those of you who want to "expose" others to *SE*, there's something in it for you, too. Sign up a friend (or more), and we'll cut *your* subscription rate to \$16. And if you make a contribution to our 25 More Years Campaign – a bold initiative to bring *SE* to 1,000 more readers by next year – we guarantee you'll enjoy your special-edition *Southern Exposure* poster, as well as the good feeling of helping to increase the reach and impact of the South's leading voice for change.

The fact that *Southern Exposure* has lasted all this time is quite an accomplishment. What better way to celebrate, than to make sure *SE* thrives for another 25 years. Happy birthday, *Southern Exposure!*

—Chris Kromm

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Celebrating 25 Years of *Southern Exposure*

By Chris Kromm

*“The story of *Southern Exposure*,” says Bob Hall, a founder of the magazine and its longest-lasting staff member, “begins with people marching in the streets.”*

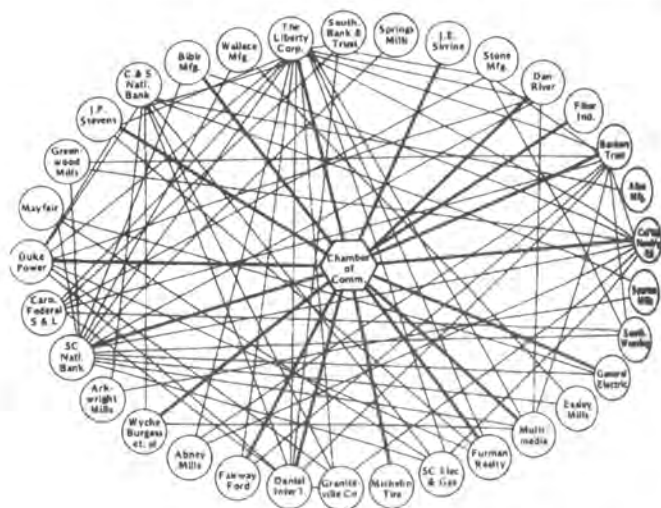
There’s no doubt that *Southern Exposure* was a child of the ‘60s generation. Yet by the time the magazine was launched in 1973, the activist fires that had forged the consciousness of Hall and other civil rights veterans at the Institute for Southern Studies were already beginning to cool. War lingered in Vietnam, Nixon stood tall, and people filled with hope only a few years before began to doubt the prospects for change. “The topography of American political culture in this strangely suspended season,” journalist Andrew Kopkind would write that year, “is strewn with the skeletons of abandoned movements, lowered visions, and dying dreams.”

Just the time to start a progressive journal, the Atlanta-based crew decided. More than ever, they reasoned, Southerners dedicated to change needed a forum to share ideas, a place to find inspiration and take activism in new directions. “It was a way to carry on an edge to critical thinking in the South,” Hall remembers. “To help us answer, ‘How do we look at our region? What’s next? What do we do?’”

Over the next 25 years, through twists and turns of staff, strategy, and format, *Southern Exposure* would always return to these central themes, grappling with – and often offering innovative answers to – the questions of how we view the South, and what could be done to change the region for the better. By combining analysis and action, and using cutting-edge tools such as strategic research and oral history to link the two, *SE* quickly gained a national reputation and began making its mark in Southern history.

Southern *Exposure* became perhaps best known for its strategic research and tough investigations exposing abuses of power, naming names of the interests that were threatening a decent way of life in the region. While the rest of the country dwelled on the South’s “race problem,” *SE* portrayed a more complicated reality, drawing attention to economic players such as reckless corporations and “New South” elites who often escaped scrutiny by the mainstream media.

These investigations took readers into the Kentucky mines and the Carolina mills, the poultry plants and the mega-hog farms, to see firsthand the tragic costs of putting profit before people and the land. But this wasn’t digging up dirt for dirt’s sake – it was an attempt to arm unions, civil rights groups, and other activists with the information they needed to raise awareness, change laws, and create a more just South.



Only in *Southern Exposure* could one find a regular feature like power structure “spider charts” – illustrated maps of the corporate web of influence in society, designed as a tool for action. “Organizers used those spider charts to see con-

nections,” says Jim Overton, who started working with the magazine in the mid-70s. “You could identify corporate allies and targets that could bring change,” a strategy used successfully by many groups connected to the Institute and *SE*.

Southern Exposure’s hard-hitting investigations were balanced by the journal’s cultural side, which aimed to cut through tired stereotypes and offer a portrait of Southern life that emphasized the region’s progressive history and enduring positive traditions. Central to this project of reclaiming the South was the journal’s pioneering use of oral history, which let ordinary people – be they sharecroppers, striking tobacco workers, or the children who integrated Southern schools – speak in their own voice, re-telling history from the “bottom up.”

What the historians found was an unbroken history of Southerners engaged in social change – an eye-opening experience for *SE*’s editors and writers, as well as readers. “We were learning about a legacy of struggle we had not been aware of,” says founding editor Leah Wise, who led interviews and compiled personal histories for early editions of the journal. “It was an amazing discovery.”

“When people talked about their moments of struggle, they remembered it keenly – even while other memories fell by the wayside,” she recalls. “When they were active in changing the world, they were most alive.”

Oral history also had relevance to more recent activism – revealing moments in history of successful cross-racial organizing, and reassuring present-day change-makers that they were part of a proud tradition. “When you learned that you weren’t alone, that served as a kind of springboard for activism,” says David Cecelski, an oral historian who still writes for the magazine. “People really did consider oral history part of an organizing strategy.”

And then there are the issues of *SE* that broke the mold and continue to defy categorization. Special editions on Southern music, folklife, and sports – and offbeat works like an unsung but brilliant issue on Southern buildings – revealed the eclectic curiosity and deep love writers and editors had for a region many of them called



SUE THRASHER, JACQUELYN HALL, AND LEAH WISE (CIRCA 1973) COLLABORATED ON *SOUTHERN EXPOSURE*'S PIONEERING WORK OF ORAL HISTORY, "NO MORE MOANIN'."

home. Copies of "Working Women" and "Elections" became standard organizing "how-to" manuals, while "Generations: Women in the South" – the best-selling issue ever – offered new notions of strategy and history to fill a deep void in our region's self-understanding.

The common thread was that all of these editions helped us understand the South a little bit better, bolstering our courage and determination to fight to make it our own. Each issue was also driven by a relentless drive for excellence – as early-1980s editor Marc Miller notes, "we felt the stakes were too high, not to do the best job we could."

And sometimes, the establishment gatekeepers stood up and took notice. Beginning with the George Polk Award in 1979 (for which, the editors wrote, they were "deeply appreciative – even if the award didn't come with a fat check!"), *Southern Exposure* went on to be honored with some of the most prestigious awards in the business, including the Sidney Hillman and National Magazine Award.

More often, mainstream media paid *SE* the compliment of imitation, using the journal's groundbreaking research to inform their TV and daily paper coverage, with and without attribution.

Not to say *Southern Exposure* didn't make its share of mistakes and missteps. Important stories were missed: for example, the cause of gay and lesbian liberation rarely received full "movement" status, which may explain the magazine's silence on the AIDS crisis which has disproportionately ravaged Southern communities. And the need to maintain a sense of humor in the face of injustice has been a perennial bone of contention voiced by newcomers and old fans alike (see "It's Still the South," p. 46).

SE has also had to learn to adapt to changing times. A shift in political winds during the 1980s made speaking to a broader audience a necessity. The journal went bi-monthly, and reinvented itself again in the latter part of the decade, going back to a quarterly although adopting a popular "magazine" format.

In today's age of hot-wired info, "news you can use" and predatory media conglomerates, *Southern Exposure* once again is entering a new context. But the need for an independent voice, offering reflection, interpretation and strategies for change – in short, asking the basic questions of who are we as a region, and what can we do? – is perhaps stronger than ever.

"Looking back, I think our approach still holds up," Hall says. "It's right on the money."

SE

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The OTHER "Southern Exposures"

Southern Exposure. It's always been a teaser of a title – one that sounds vaguely familiar, even if you've never laid eyes on the magazine. "Is that like *Northern Exposure*?" some ask, often holding their fingers on top of their head to mimic the moose that always seemed to be wandering in the background on the famous TV series. "Oh, that *is* a beautiful magazine!" exclaim others, who go on to discuss drapes, doilies, and other favorite subjects of our glossy high-society rival, *Southern Living*.

Adding to the confusion is the popularity of the name "Southern Exposure," which has blossomed as a favorite moniker for everything from Caribbean resorts to — how shall we say it — "adult oriented" web sites. Here's a guide to a few of the *other* Southern Exposures:

Southern Exposure, by M. Earle Palmer

The words "southern exposure" can lend themselves to lurid connotations, and this late-1960s soft-porn-detective-noir classic delivers on all of them. The blurb on the book's back cover gives you some idea: "When private eye Wayne Temple was hired to investigate the death of a small-town grafter, it seemed like a routine case. But when Wayne started digging around, he opened a Pandora's box of corruption and sexual depravity." It goes downhill from there. (1967, Bee-Line Books, Inc.)



Southern Exposure Precision Aerial Photography

Based in Land O' Lakes, Florida, this high-flying company specializes in "full service aerial photography utilizing Airplane, Helicopter, Helium Blimp and our new 55' Telepod," whatever that is. They even guarantee their work – "weather permitting."

Southern Exposure Swimwear

"Swimwear that has been created for you, the fitness-conscious women and men of the 90's." Not too hard to figure out what they seek to "expose." Come to think of it, our *Southern Exposure* would probably sell a lot more copies if we slapped one of these beefcakes on the cover.



Southern Exposure of Naples, Inc.

Yet more skin from this outfit, a "non-landed, clothing-optional club" located in the Naples, Florida area. The big draw for this sanctuary for the attire-averse appears to be member Jim Keiser, who lives on a "small lake" and makes his grounds available not only to the Southern Exposure club faithful, but to all "visitors who belong to the American Association for Nude Recreation and The Naturist Society." Thanks, Jim.

Southern Exposure, by Stetson Kennedy

A brilliant work of investigative history written at the onset of the Cold War, and the real inspiration for this magazine's title. As magazine founder Bob Hall writes on the back of the recent re-issue of the book: "At the birth of our magazine in 1973 ... *Southern Exposure* emerged as the obvious choice [for a name] ... to carry on a tradition that links analysis to action, that tells the truth and makes clear the imperative for change." (1946, Doubleday & Company; Rev. Ed. 1991, Florida Atlantic University Press).

STETSON KENNEDY – WHO INFILTRATED THE KU KLUX KLAN AND INVESTIGATED THEIR ACTIVITIES UNDERCOVER FOR 10 YEARS – POSES IN KLAN REGALIA WHILE PROMOTING THE BOOK SOUTHERN EXPOSURE IN 1946.

Photo: John DeBiase/courtesy Stetson Kennedy



Making History

A Southern Exposure Timeline

Reading through the pages of *Southern Exposure* is to take a step back into the life and times of a changing region. *Southern Exposure* was frequently the first to report on stories that later took on regional and national significance — from the rise of Southerners in politics, to the burgeoning poultry and hog industries, to the prevalence of “environmental racism” in the siting of toxic waste dumps. Other times, the magazine gave a uniquely critical and Southern spin to events already shaking our country and world. Whether as a harbinger or a Southern sign of the times, there’s little doubt that *Southern Exposure*, in ways big and small, made history. The following timeline — while incomplete — offers a sense of the journal’s pathbreaking writing.

“To have the volunteer army and the weapons factories staffed by poor folks may not be a deceitful conspiracy by the ruling class, but it is certainly not progress.”

— “Military & the South,”
1973



WAR-TORN SOUTH

FALL 1973: With war raging in Vietnam, *Southern Exposure* launches with “The Military and the South.” Inaugural issue documents the South’s disproportionate reliance on military dollars — and the disproportionate share of Southern men going to battle.

POWER POLITICS

WINTER 1973: The energy crisis spurs an investigation of utility companies, including the first “spider charts,” diagramming the web of incestuous relationships between corporate boardrooms. Laid the groundwork for the Georgia Power Project, and utility reform organizing.

SOUTHERN STRATEGIES

WINTER 1973: In the wake of Watergate, issue #2 also features “The Sunshine Syndicate Behind Watergate,” which anticipates the dominance of Southerners in politics that continues today.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

SPRING 1974: A pioneering work of oral history, “No More Moanin’” relates the unbroken history of Southern struggle for social change through the activists’ first-person testimony.

“Unfortunately, most of the people coming along now don’t know anything about the Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union. All the things that the union fought for, that the people on farms have been able to get like social security and minimum wage, they just think that the government just give them that. And when you tell them this is something that we fought for for years, that we went to Congress hoboing our way ... they don’t believe it.”

— Union member George Stith
in “The Southern Tenant
Farmer’s Union” (1974)

NO MORE MOANIN’ VOICES OF SOUTHERN STRUGGLE

THE SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS
UNION
SIT-DOWN STRIKE—JULY/AUG—1936
TEXTILE STRIKE—GASTONIA—1934
COAL MINING UNIONS—TWENTIES—
1890’S AND 1930’S
NEW MARRIAGE COOPERATIVE COLONY—
LOUISIANA—1917-1938



LOST LAND

FALL 1974: "Our Promised Land" contrasts the South's wealth of natural resources with the region's rampant poverty; also includes a report on the loss of land among African-American farmers—an issue eventually investigated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the mid-1990s.

MEDIA EXPOSURE

SPRING 1975: The magazine offers an early warning of the growing concentration of newspapers and other press outlets into a handful of media conglomerates. An update in 1997 found 85% of Southern papers owned by corporate chains.

LOOMS AND LABOR POWER

SPRING 1976: The Institute plays a pivotal role in helping textile workers battle the stubborn J.P. Stevens Co. and win recognition for their union. *Southern Exposure* begins a series of stories that uncover the mill empires and history of labor resistance.

OUR MOTHER'S GARDENS

WINTER 1976: As the women's movement gains steam, writers including Alice Walker and Lee Smith write about Southern women across generations.

LONG JOURNEY HOME

SPRING 1978: Documenting ways of life that were rapidly being destroyed, the book-length "Folklife" edition becomes a seminal resource on Southern culture.

SICK FOR JUSTICE

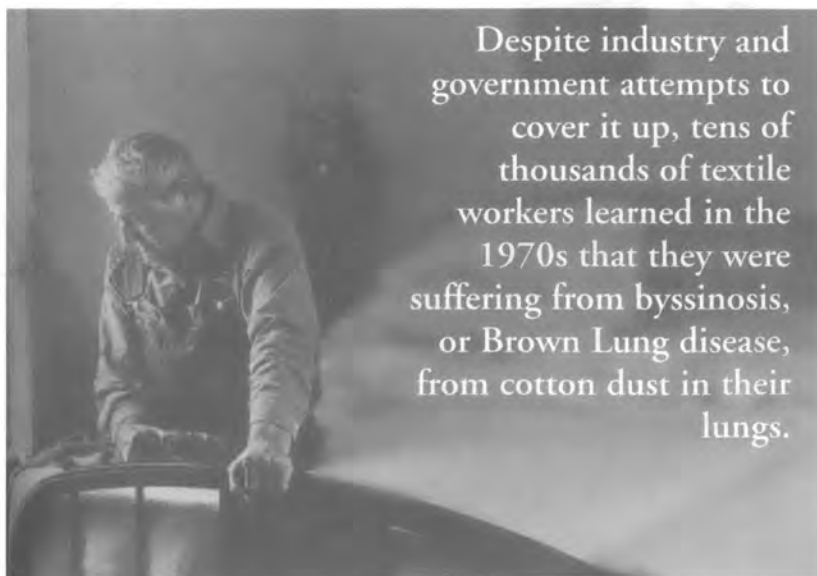
SUMMER 1978: Health issue of the magazine exposes the deadly Brown Lung disease caused by cotton dust in textile plants—later picked up by mainstream papers, leading to federal hearings—and the history of "people's medicine" in the South.



MOVEMENT IN THE MILLS: Largely behind the scenes, the Institute played a key role in assisting worker's organizing for unions, from the Brookside coal mine in Harlan, Kentucky, to the J.P. Stevens textile mill in North Carolina.

"This issue [of *Southern Exposure*] has taken us back into history and deep into the meaning of our own lives. We found ourselves 'in search of our mothers' gardens' ... naming an experience we share across the generations."

— "Generations," Winter 1976



Despite industry and government attempts to cover it up, tens of thousands of textile workers learned in the 1970s that they were suffering from byssinosis, or Brown Lung disease, from cotton dust in their lungs.

“The school board must ... fashion steps which promise realistically to convert promptly to a system without a “white” school and a “Negro” school, but just schools.”

— U.S. Supreme Court, “Just Schools,” Summer 1979



“At its core, the force of the Freedom Movement of the 1950s and '60s emerged from people, huge numbers of people marching with humility and pride along the same path, united by a common vision of humanity, justice and people's power . . . Having their stories told is particularly important now that perceptions of our Freedom Movement are distorted by the entertainment-oriented media, which limits our history to a string of dramatic court decisions or bold actions by a single leader.”

— “Stayed on Freedom,” Spring 1981



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

WINTER 1978: Drawing on writings from over 50 inmates behind bars, issue devoted to Southern prisons asks, “why are we losing the battle against crime?” Answer: “Our present [justice] system promotes rather than eliminates it.”

JUST SCHOOLS

SUMMER 1979: 25 years after the *Brown* decision struck down legal segregation, “Just Schools” tells the story of the courageous people who, with their bodies, actually integrated public schools – and documents the persistence of segregation.

RADIOACTIVE

WINTER 1979: On the heels of the Three Mile Island disaster, “Tower of Babel” issue gets to the “core” of the nuclear reactor problem: profit-driven utilities and lack of government oversight.

THE KLAN'S MARK

SUMMER 1980: “Mark of the Beast” edition documents the resurgence of Klan terror – and the complicity of authorities in hate-group activity. A follow-up report in 1981 on the 1979 Klan killing of five activists in Greensboro helps spur a federal investigation by the justice department into the intimate alliance between the KKK and law enforcement officials.

STAYED ON FREEDOM

SPRING 1981: Landmark history of the Civil Rights struggle – highlighting the “unsung” heroes who made change happen – becomes a standard sourcebook on freedom movement history.

COASTAL AFFAIR

MAY/JUNE 1982: A collection of writing on the history and future of the South's coasts, and the commercial interests determined to erode their natural and cultural beauty.

WAGING PEACE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1982: As the arms race spirals out of control, the magazine once again turns its eyes to the South's reliance on defense spending, and the region's role in the military-industrial complex.

WELCOME TO CANCER ALLEY

MARCH/APRIL 1984: Report on "The Poisoning of Louisiana" is one of the first investigations into the now-infamous "Cancer Alley," a chemical industry hot-spot stretching from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and national case-study in environmental racism.

BLOWING SMOKE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1984: Anticipating the tobacco industry battles of the 1990s, the magazine exposes the Southern "Smoke Ring" that uses deceit to market its cancerous products, especially in the "Third World."

COMING OF AGE

MARCH/JUNE 1985: Drawing on lifetimes of experience, "Older, Wiser, Stronger" tells the stories of Southern elders who have stayed on the move.

DIVIDING AND CONQUERING

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1985: "The Quiet Epidemic" reveals the right's new successful strategy for defeating progressive challengers: gay-baiting. The Christian right would increasingly use "homosexual influence" as a wedge issue in Southern and national campaigns.

Bob Knowlton of Cortez, Florida, organized fishermen to get better prices for their catch from the mid-1930s until 1958. "If things keep going like they are now, I don't believe there'll be any fishing five years from now" Knowlton told *Southern Exposure*. "All those party boats, yachts and kicker boats are racing up and down the bay all the time, and they keep it so stirred up the fish can't even feed. And these condos just keep going up everywhere."

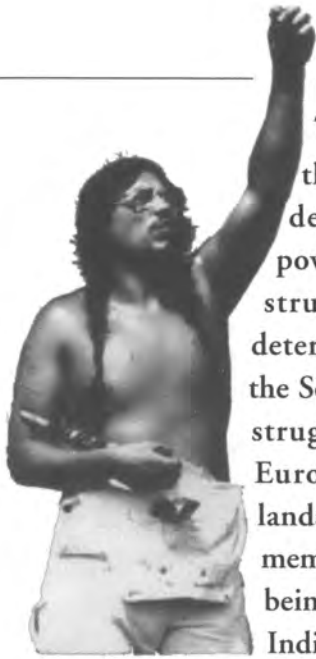
— "Coastal Affair," May/June 1982



A scene from Louisiana's infamous "cancer alley," as reported in 1989 and 1998 in the pages of *SE*.



PIONEER EXTREMIST: Phil Gramm — pictured here during his first Senate campaign race, in 1983 — helped pioneer the right's divide-and-conquer tactic of gay-baiting to defeat progressive candidates.



The voices of native Americans of the South are not pleading; they are demanding. A small but potentially powerful force in the American Indian struggle for self-governance and self-determination, the indigenous people of the South continue to wage their 400-year struggle against the ceaseless efforts of Europeans to remove them from their lands — and from the collective national memory. Many of the current struggles are being waged in the courtroom — and the Indian people are winning.

— “We Are Here Forever,” Nov/Dec 1985



NATIVE SOUTHERNERS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1985: A landmark study of Native Americans in the South, “We Are Here Forever” becomes a standard resource for educators and activists on the region’s native heritage.

BEST OF THE SOUTHERN PRESS

FALL/WINTER 1987: *Southern Exposure* publishes results of the first annual Southern Journalism Awards, one of many Institute projects to “honor reporters who stories broaden the range of issues, voices and sources typically found in the mainstream media.”

NEW SOUTH, NEW LOOK

FALL 1988: *Southern Exposure* launches a new look — featuring Ms. Gay Charleston on the cover of an issue devoted to “Mint Juleps, Wisteria and Queers.”



CHICKEN EMPIRES: SE's

investigation into Frank Perdue and other chicken tycoons won the National Magazine Award, and helped change laws for consumers and poultry workers.

RULING THE ROOST

SUMMER 1989: Classic investigation of the burgeoning poultry industry’s affect on farmers, workers and consumers is nominated for the National Magazine Award for public interest reporting, and spurs successful advocacy for workplace reforms.

THE LION'S SHARE

SUMMER 1991: *SE's* investigation into Food Lion’s harassment of employees, forced overtime policies and child labor infractions draws fire from the company — and \$16.2 million in fines from the Department of Labor, the largest wage-and-hour penalty ever paid by a private employer in U.S. history.

PRIDE IN THE DELTA

FALL 1991: "Fishy Business" shows how Mississippi has replaced cotton with catfish for a new plantation industry, and the historic campaign of workers to reclaim dignity.

NURSING HOMES AND HOGS

FALL 1992: *Southern Exposure* shows how, a decade after the nursing home scandals of the 1980s, they're still fraught with corruption. This issue also features "Hog Wild," an investigation into the corporate hog industry—a story later picked up by mainstream media, leading to government regulation of the industry.

POVERTY, INC.

WINTER 1993: The magazine's expose of the "poverty industry"—the collection of banks, rental shops and other corporations that prey on the poor—wins the John Hancock Award for Excellence in Business and Financial Journalism.

TALKIN' ABOUT MY GENERATION

FALL/WINTER 1995: "Targeting Youth" reveals that child-labor violations "are greater than at any point during the 1930s"—one of the year's "Top Censored Stories" according to Project Censored.

DIXIE RISING

FALL 1996: Over a generation after the official "Southern Strategy" was unveiled, *Southern Exposure* documents the continuing dominance of the South in shaping national politics.

THE GLOBAL SOUTH

SUMMER/FALL 1998: Special globalization issue shows how billions of dollars in tax breaks and other "corporate welfare" have lured multinational corporations, and turned the South into a lynchpin of the world economy.



HOG WILD: The magazine's 1992 exposé of the impact of corporate hog mega-farms on farming communities and the environment was later picked up by daily newspapers, and anticipated a debate that continues to rage in state legislatures.



"We watch as the world's corporations relentlessly scour the globe for cheaper places to set up shop and market their goods to "compete in the global economy." But as the barons of industry set up new operations here, shut down plants there, and restructure everywhere, the citizens and communities of the world are left to wonder: what's in it for us in the globalization game?"

— "The Globalization Game," Summer/Fall 1998

Celebrating 25 years . . .

On January 16, 1999, over 200 people crowded into the Museum of Life and Science in Durham, North Carolina, to help us honor 25 years of award-winning reporting and publishing a voice for change. Some scenes from the celebration:

They made it HAPPEN



Bob Hall, who brainstormed the idea of starting *Southern Exposure*, spoke movingly about the personal and political impact of the magazine.

“Southern Exposure was truly an act of love.”

Of the dozens and dozens of people who have staffed, edited and contributed to *Southern Exposure*, many came to celebrate.



Leah Wise (far left), a founding editor, speaks about working at *Southern Exposure* “back in the day;” Len Stanley (left) was a catalyst for linking the magazine to organizing initiatives. Below: Ron Nixon, an editor in the mid-1990s; Len Stanley; Christina Davis, an editor in the 1980s; Bob Hall; and Leah Wise.



(left) Former editors Jim Overton, Marc Miller, and Joe Pfister; (middle) Long-time Circulation and Finance Director for the magazine, Sharon Ugochukwu; (right) Founding editor Jacquelyn Hall.





Texas radio host and author, Jim Hightower, entertains the audience with his side-splitting humor and shoot-from-the-hip commentary.

“We know it’s hard out there, but they keep talking about how many new jobs there are. You know this – you probably have two or three of them.”



MC Cynthia Brown, a Durham City Council member and Director of Southerners for Economic Justice, opened the ceremony with fitting words from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on his birthday weekend:

“We must recognize that we can’t solve our problem now until there is a radical redistribution of economic and political power . . . this means a revolution of values and other things. We must see now that the evils of racism, economic exploitation, and militarism are all tied together . . . the whole structure of American life must be changed.



Southern Exposure
editor Chris Kromm introduces four SE veterans:

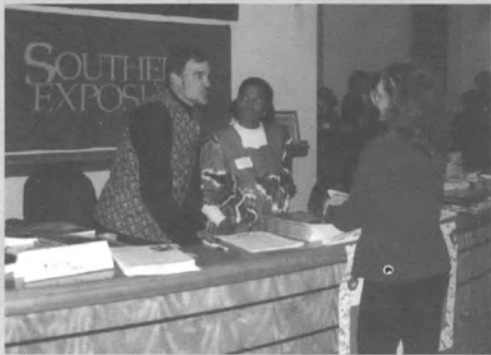
“The magazine has always kept its eyes on the prize of social change.”

25th

celebration



Aqueelah As-Salaam (far left), Director of the Institute for Southern Studies, mugs for the camera with Jim Hightower, Si Kahn, Jenny Knoop, Joe Pfister and NC State Representative Paul Luebke.



Volunteer Marc David and Institute board member Danyelle O'Hara hawk old issues of the magazine.



Ajamu Dillahunt gets a signed book from Jim Hightower.



Jim Davis, who recently became the first African American Sheriff of rural Hoke County, NC amidst bitter racial conflict.



Robin Ellis and Barbara Prear take a break from the action.

Mia Kirsh, Art Director of *Southern Exposure*, with Jeremy Raw and David Richardson.



25 Voices for Change

How has the South changed in the last 25 years? Or has it really changed at all? And what would it take to make a better South than we have today?

To help answer these questions, we asked 25 leading Southern “change-makers” — from activists to academics, poets to politicians — to give us their view from the trenches. We asked each to write on two themes: How has the South changed, and what have those of us interested in progressive change gained in the last 25 years? And second, what are the key challenges we face for creating a better South in the next 25 years?

The following are what these 25 change-makers had to say:



**“I could defeat
Jesse Helms. Easily.
It just takes organizing!”**

Julian Bond

*Julian Bond was a founder of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960, a Representative in the Georgia legislature for 20 years, a founding member of the Institute for Southern Studies, and has been a frequent contributor to **Southern Exposure**. He is now Chairman of the Board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and a lecturer in history at the University of Virginia. The following is from a recent conversation with **Southern Exposure** editor Chris Kromm.*

Probably the most important gain we’ve made [in the last 25 years] is the understanding of

the necessity for coalition. I think that understanding was always there, but as we go along, it just gets hammered home more and more.

If you think of progressives (in the plural), of necessity you’re talking about large numbers of people. And you can’t have large numbers of people unless you put different constituencies together. You have to think about the faith community, minority communities, working people. Sometimes people belong to all three, but it isn’t typical. And we need to bring all three together if we want to build toward a majority. Alone, we’ll make some progress, but not a lot.

I don't think we've done this [made coalitions] very well, on a sustained basis. We've done it issue-by-issue, at different points. We understand what it takes, but we haven't had the ability.

And this is because one important thing we have lost is the ability to organize. Too often, we think that if we announce something, it's the same as doing it. It isn't. We have to organize people — from mobilizing people for marches, to long union campaigns. Why have we lost this? Well, it's something we always knew, just not something we always do.

For example — given the right level of organizing, I could easily defeat Jesse Helms. Easily. There's lots of sentiment against him, it just isn't organized. If we really took our message to people, and mobilized, we could win.

We can never match our opponents dollar for dollar. If we can't, we have to match them body for dollar. In other words, if we can't outspend them, we have to outwork them. And that means organizing.

So far, the right is winning the "values debate." But we can turn that around. To do that, we need publications, like *Southern Exposure*. We need people who have the time to think. The right was the first to realize that ideas count — and, because of their economic superiority, they could make sure their ideas carried the day.

Southern Exposure has exposed people to the good news and the bad news about society and social movements. It's been a wonderful, wonderful resource to people from the merely curious, to people who want to know how they can get involved and create change.

My inspiration for the future is

all the young people who are doing so many things. And the old people, who won't stop.

And the certainty that we're right, and right does prevail in the end. It may take years, but right does prevail.



"A New Crusade for Racial Justice"

Anne Braden

Anne Braden has been a persistent organizer for racial and economic justice since the 1940s. Over the years, she has also been one of the most prolific writers for Southern Exposure. She is on the executive committee of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice and is active in the Kentucky Alliance.

Since *Southern Exposure* began 25 years ago, we have lived through a counter-revolution in this country. The magazine began, I think, in that glow of hope carried over from the upsurges of the '60s. The anti-war movement, new labor organizing, the women's

So drastically have our sights been lowered that we are like frogs that have been boiled slowly.

movement, struggles of lesbians and gays and the disabled were gaining strength. Surely, many people thought, we could achieve our goal of a truly democratic South very soon.

Actually, by 1973, the massive counter-attack on the African-American liberation movement that had started all these movements was well advanced. The movement's cutting edge, SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) had already been destroyed; other organizations were being defanged. Black organizers were being framed and jailed across the South. And powerful voices were already telling whites the lie that what African Americans had gained had taken something away from them, and that they were victims of "reverse discrimination."

All this created an atmosphere that put Ronald Reagan in office in the '80s; the retreat from racial justice was written into law and court decisions; budget cuts devastated programs that helped all working and poor people; and unions were attacked. It was the end of the Second Reconstruction.

So drastically have our sights been lowered that we are like frogs that have been boiled slowly. Now when funds are voted for a few additional Headstart programs, it looks like a great victory. And we need them. But what about re-

vamping our entire education system? What about totally rebuilding our cities? What about the guaranteed annual wage we once talked about?

The good news is that no people's movement is ever really destroyed, and seeds planted in the '60s have grown like sprouts of new life in many Southern communities. The movements I've been most a part of are those that challenged resurgent racism, supported worker rights, built the two Jesse Jackson campaigns and now are organizing against environmental racism and class bias. But there are many others, and *Southern Exposure* has played a key role by reporting them when the mass media told us there was "no Southern movement" anymore.

I think, however, that these many localized movements will not come together in a cohesive force until there is a new crusade for racial justice. We who are white must be a part of this. We must understand that although past struggles created a black middle class, the majority of African Americans live in poverty or on the edge of it. People of color are being blamed for their own problems, and our fastest growing industry is building more prisons to put them in. Now that we understand the South is not just black and white, but multi-ethnic, this becomes even more critical. We must take visible stands that break the wall of white resistance even to admitting that a problem still exists. That means more than the "dialogue" now so popular. It means *acting* every day on specific situations, policies and practices in the communities where we live.



"Lay Claim on Tomorrow"

Pat Bryant

Pat Bryant, a former editor of Southern Exposure magazine, is now a writer, researcher, and activist based in New Orleans.

At the outset, let me applaud the hundreds of thousands of subscribers, and persons who contributed time, money, ideas, art, poems, jokes, photographs, and visions of a better world that have filled *Southern Exposure's* pages since day one. Southern society has been changed, but not nearly as much as we can. Let's continue to *lay claim today on tomorrow*.

There are literally hundreds of organizations and thousands of organizers all over the South that are fighting for justice that simply didn't exist twenty-five years ago. Many of these freedom fighters target poor conditions at a school or school board policies, recreation facilities, dumping families off welfare, job development, tenants' rights, environmental protection, constitutional protection for the criminally accused, worker rights,

While the military-industrial complex is not growing at the alarming rates of the Carter and Reagan years, we certainly have not achieved our vision of the peace-time economy nurtured by the very first edition of *Southern Exposure*.

voting rights, and campaign finance, just to mention a few.

It was not possible for such a multi-faceted movement to exist in the South that preceded the founding of *Southern Exposure* and the Institute for Southern Studies. The iron fists that ruled and divided the South prior to Jim Crow's timely death would not have tolerated progressive collusion on all these fronts.

Let me hasten to add that these different fronts in the progressive movement have made considerable gains in changing the face of capitalism. It is simply not the same world we inherited twenty-five years ago, nor is it the place we envisioned and wanted to be.

While the military-industrial complex is not growing at the alarming rates of the Carter and Reagan years, we certainly have not achieved our vision of the peace-time economy nurtured by the very first edition of *Southern Exposure*.

Industrialists can't locate their operations anywhere they damn please and spew poisons on the weakest and the people of color without challenge, but we are a long way from our vision of a sus-

tainable economic future. Southern tenants and workers exercise rights at levels that didn't exist twenty-five years ago, but workplace democracy and democracy where we live has not been achieved.

Although we have won the access for women and people of color in some of the highest levels of politics, piercing the corporate glass ceiling has been elusive, and the upper reaches of corporate power are still reserved for elite white gentlemen only. The South has become an important battleground for many worker struggles, and unionism is on the rise again. This is the South, yesterday and today.

Through these exciting struggles, freedom fighters envision a more democratic society and struggles for change. These struggles face significant challenges. We must overcome splintering and fragmentation. There is not enough inter-struggle pollination of vision and goals.

We must strategically focus our intellectual power to develop "bridge issues" that intersect with everything else, like housing and the environment. Strategies must be employed to unite progressives at home and abroad.

We must support *Southern Exposure* and the Institute for Southern Studies and create other working-class institutions that are organized to assist freedom fighters in the lifelong quest to determine who we are, where we are going, and how we will get there.

Bon voyage! And lay claim on tomorrow today, for our children's children.



Facing the Right's "Divide and Conquer" Strategy

Mandy Carter

Over the last 30 years, Mandy Carter has dedicated her life to fighting the far-right. She is currently based in Durham, North Carolina as Field Program Consultant for the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum – the only national organization dedicated to the nation's two and a half million African-American gays and lesbians.

As a Southern, out, black lesbian, social justice activist, I see two very specific challenges/opportunities that lie ahead of us.

The first is how the Southern lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) movement can position itself to make social change history by working on issues about sexual orientation *and* at the same time work for social and economic justice—thus becoming a multi-issue and multi-racial movement.

Here in the South, as is true around the country, the radical right has been relentless in going after the LGBT community. The same radical right has also been relentless in going after communities

of color, the poor and women. Yet, we allow them to use the gay issue as a "wedge issue" in communities of color.

We are all pretty much in the same boat—so why cut ourselves off from each other with single-issue organizing? For instance, in communities of color, the radical right has targeted anti-affirmative action, welfare reform, immigration, English-only, school vouchers, ending multi-cultural curricula—and the list goes on.

Something that those of us who are LGBTs of color can do is to act as a bridge between our respective communities of color and the LGBT community/movement.

The second major challenge/opportunity is the formation of a Southern People of Color Network. With the changing demographics of the whole country in general, and in the South in particular, it will be important to do coalition work with *all* our communities of color. What we don't need is a sense of competition or divisiveness from within our respective communities of color and/or outside forces wanting to "divide and conquer."

In particular, we need to address how this plays out in the electoral arena. We need city, county, state and federal political offices that more accurately reflect the "faces and voices" of people of color who live in these respective communities. For example, in 1998 here in Durham, North Carolina, the first ever Latina was appointed to the Durham Human Relations Commission, reflecting the growing Latin community. A Southern People of Color Network has the potential to coordinate, communicate, and organize.

As the saying goes, "So goes the South, so goes this country." I believe that!



Sermon: "Finding and Telling the Truth Takes Persistent Spirits"

Kim Diehl

Kim Diehl — a writer, researcher and activist for social and economic justice from Florida — joined the staff of the Institute for Southern Studies as Research Director in 1997.

The struggle. The movement. The revolution. If someone were to ask me what these words mean, I'd say it's a smile. It's the fire in my stomach and the grin on my face when I hear James Brown sing, "Say it out loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud!" or Aretha singing, "FREEDOM!" or Bob Marley proclaiming, "Thru the powers of the Most High we keep on surfacing!" Nothing makes me happier than reading or singing or hearing the truth. That's what a movement is about — connecting to something larger than yourself that means hope. It's a glorious thing to share and to believe as a group that the truth is as ancient as the first laugh. We as a people know how to treat each other and we know how to shape a free society that takes care of one

That's what a movement is about — connecting to something larger than yourself that means hope. It's a glorious thing to share and to believe as a group that the truth is as ancient as the first laugh.

another. It has been done, and it is how it shall be.

I think the last 25 years have been both saddening and uplifting. On the one hand, the South has incarcerated more people than any other region and people of color are *still* the last hired and first fired. On the other hand, we *still* have radical grassroots organizations fighting welfare deform, apartheid, toxic chemical plants, police brutality, and workplace hazards. People are struggling, winning, and uniting across many fronts. I feel a strengthening of Spirits and with that, unification — the understanding that all injustices are linked, and when gay men and black men are lynched, the hatred behind those evils *must* be fought on the same battlegrounds. There is no other way!

This wave of right-wing "moral" politics and religious ideas is not new, nor is it the answer to this complex world. It's the kudzu of the real struggles in this world. Kudzu covers a tree or bush until it is stifled with green leafy vines so that it no longer functions as a rooted tree, but as a slathered, complicated piece of foliage. "Moral" politics hides the roots,

hides the real problems with false questions. Sex education in schools? Too many homosexuals with special rights? Too many "thugs" in your neighborhood? Heard about some welfare frauds stealing your tax dollars?

These are the wrong questions to be asking. Why do people have to steal food and sell drugs? Why do young people suffer with sexually transmitted diseases without going to doctors? How do anti-gay policies create a ripe environment for hate crimes and lynchings? Can people really live on social welfare, and how much does the government spend on that in comparison to corporate welfare?

Ask these questions and it's clear the Babylon system is falling again. We can see it day after day. The corporate temples crumble with every laid-off worker. Each time an elderly person dies of neglect and hunger at a run-down facility, the health indifference system tumbles. Every time a child is left alone while her mother works her third job of the day, the child careless system fails. Every time a poor urban black male is incarcerated for selling drugs, the incorrections system drowns.

This struggle will not be won with materials, but with our Spirits and our smiles. Finding the truth and telling the truth takes persistent Spirits. *Southern Exposure* continues to thrive after 25 years with the same Spirit of resistance, faith, and zest. It's not a fancy magazine, it doesn't have glossy photos or eye-catching techno-hype graphics. It speaks for itself.

That's what Spirit does — it liberates itself in the face of incarceration and oppression and makes itself heard. *Asé.*



The Chilling Effect of Repression

Ajamu Dillahunt

Ajamu Dillahunt has a long history in African American and labor struggles. He is President of the Raleigh (NC) Postal Workers Union, and a national leader of the Black Workers for Justice.

As we reflect on the previous period and consider prospects for the future, looking back 100 years — instead of 25 — may be more helpful in examining North Carolina in particular, and the South in general. Nov. 10th, 1998, marks the 100th anniversary of the Wilmington Massacre — a coup d'état in Wilmington, North Carolina, that was the culmination of a state-wide white supremacist campaign to end a government led by a multi-racial progressive coalition. Untold numbers were killed, houses and businesses were burned to the ground, and thousands were forced to flee the city. This atrocity elicited no response from the federal government and closed a chapter on the revolutionary Reconstruction period in the

South. A subtle — or not-so-subtle — chilling effect would hang over the state for many decades, and serve as a barrier to active resistance to Jim Crow.

It should be remembered, however, that 1898 was also the year of the ascendancy of a new imperial giant on the world scene, as the U.S. government began to assert its dominance in Cuba, the Phillipines, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. Oppression at home; expansion and oppression abroad. This is the backdrop for the last century of our history, and the repressive responses that followed to the labor movement, civil rights movement, and other efforts for social change in this super-exploited region.

In many respects, the South is almost unrecognizable from 1973. The growth of cities and continuing shifts in the economy have dramatically altered the landscape. The integration of schools and the increase in the number of black elected officials also make for a different picture. This is the portrait of the “New South” that liberals and even the so-called “New Democrats” are so fond of.

Yet just beneath the surface is a growing fire that may result in a political explosion sooner than we think. This is the social dynamite we face: thousands without a safety net forced on workfare; plenty of jobs but precious few at a living wage; over 95% of the workforce [in North Carolina] without the protection of a union privatization and downsizing as part of the globalization of capital; a growing Latino population that is coming under attack; and the criminalization of black youth accompanied by the construction of more prisons.

Activists across the South are organizing and mobilizing in resis-

tance to all of these assaults. In some areas, the movement may be poised to go on the offensive. In this climate, we should be alert to the potential for repression in response to change such Southern reaction reared its head in November, 1979, when the Klan massacred anti-racist and labor activists in Greensboro. More than any temporary effect it had on the movement, it exposed the historic complicity of the government, the owners of capital, and fascists to destroy movements for social change. It was this alliance that spied on and tried to derail the civil rights movement, creating COINTELPRO to destroy the black liberation movement.

The conflicting forces are staggering. On the one hand, there is a frightening momentum towards fascism: the killing of James Byrd in Texas and Mathew Shepard in Wyoming; Guilliani's police riot at the Million Youth March in New York; not to mention fascists organizing in the military and the burning of black churches. As Iraq and the former Yugoslavia command attention, we should never lose sight of Wilmington and Greensboro.

On the positive side is the growing coalition of forces challenging the effects of welfare reform, organizing public employees, building the Labor Party, strengthening the Black Radical Congress, and uniting African-American and Latino workers.

The extent to which progressive forces rally around these efforts — and their ultimate success — will have a tremendous impact on whether or not we go into the next century the way we entered this one.

From Segregation to Privatization

Scott Douglas

Scott Douglas is Executive Director of Greater Birmingham Ministries, an interfaith and interracial organization in Birmingham, AL. He has worked on political prisoner, capital punishment, environmental justice, labor rights and voting rights issues over the last 30 years.

The South, home to 34% of the nation's population, is also home to 48% of the nation's poverty. Some 30% of Southerners live in "poverty areas", compared to 19% in the West, 17% in the Midwest, and 15% in the Northeast. At the same time, the South is home to 53% of the nation's African-American population. Despite New South/Sun Belt boosterism, these data depict the South as the largest contiguous belt of poverty in the nation.

The entire history of the post-war U.S. civil rights movement took place during a rising tide of economic growth, a time when the U.S. was locked in ideological competition with socialist countries and dominated the capitalist world. This global context provided room for the economic and social aspirations of oppressed and marginalized people. Post-war years informed and molded by worldwide struggles for national liberation leveraged important gains in civil rights.

In the South, struggles for the rights of people of color forced the expansion of the public sphere and won the right of participation in public discourse with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. While there have been key organizing victories



Today, the South witnesses segregation — the denial of public access and public dignity based on race — returning in the form of the wholesale privatization of public life.

over the last 25 years in the areas of environmental justice, labor struggles, women's rights, and voting rights, most of the struggles waged must be characterized as defensive — campaigns waged to hold on to the legal and regulatory gains of the last half century.

Preceding this defensiveness was the Southern Strategy launched by Richard Nixon in 1968 to reenergize the social divide, a strategy that fulfilled its goals of shifting national policies

to the right and undercutting the Roosevelt-era coalition. This was followed by new reactionary infrastructure — such as the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition — to stampede the fears of whites, while mounting an aggressive campaign of racism, homophobia and jingoism to check the growth of the human rights movement at home and abroad. With the end of the cold war, new global political realities buttressed an acceleration of global economic concentration that transcended borders.

Now that the front of the train of economic growth has been decoupled from its rear, where organizing for social and economic rights will go is an important question. Today, the South witnesses segregation — the denial of public access and public dignity based on race — returning in the form of the wholesale privatization of public life. While jingoists seek to blame the workers of other countries for the loss of living wage jobs, Southern organizations are facing increased responsibilities of building relationships across borders to instill a sense of mutual solidarity among working people. Fighting back, organizing in the South is seeking to define its struggles by utilizing its own analysis to define the region and what role it plays in national and global struggles for justice, human dignity, and peace.

For these reasons, the increased emphasis on building to scale means building power at the state level, building new multi-constituency coalitions that include an electoral component, and moving to recapture the spirit of Reconstruction, winning new victories, and engaging new allies in order to achieve a better world yet to be seen.



“Cease building walls, begin building bridges”

John Hope Franklin

A renowned historian and educator based in Durham, North Carolina, John Hope Franklin was most recently nominated to head President Clinton’s national Initiative on Race. Dr. Franklin was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995.

Some people think that it is naive to be optimistic about the future of the South. Some think that it is unrealistic. I disagree. I am optimistic about the South primarily because it makes sense.

Twenty-five years ago the South was not nearly as prosperous as it is today, and the racial and class divisions were so sharp that one could be easily lacerated by rubbing against either in the effort to moderate the divisions. Indeed, class and race were blurred largely because if one didn’t work to one’s advantage, the other just might. And one of them *just had to!*

That is what so many of us believed with all our hearts. But that was not so, and it need not be so. I believe that in the last 25 years, we

Equality is a healthy, nourishing practice because it moves us closer to democracy.

have learned some things that are proving to be invaluable as we face another quarter of a century.

First, we have learned that political equality for all Americans — and all Southerners — is a healthy, nourishing practice, because it moves us closer to democracy, which we have always touted but never really practiced. Secondly, we have learned that prosperity and economic well-being create a healthy living space for all, if enjoyed by all. And pockets of poverty and areas where institutions are dysfunctional create conditions that can easily cross racial and class lines and bring sub-standard conditions from which no group can be safely insulated.

Finally, we have learned that one community is vulnerable to the same malpractices, the same social ills, and the same dreadful dislocations as any other community. There is no foolproof way to avoid the contaminations that infect our neighbors, far and near.

These lessons urge us to cease building walls and begin building bridges, to cease glorifying our differences and begin celebrating the things that we have in common. They also call on all of us to engage in the simple ritual of extending to others — of whatever race, class, creed, or other persuasion — the same dignity and respect we have for ourselves.

Tell about the South and about Southerners — and rejoice in their move toward a new, wholesome, healthy millennium!



“Times that call for uncommon courage”

Jordan Green

Jordan Green first learned about Southern Exposure as an intern and researcher at the Institute for Southern Studies. He is now fiction editor of the magazine, founder and publisher at Tilt-A-Whirl Press, and an activist and poet based in Kentucky.

The Institute for Southern Studies [which publishes *Southern Exposure*] is an organization I passionately believe in because it is a vessel of struggle, a ragged band of true believers, and a kick-ass resource that gave me an understanding of the true breadth of my heritage growing up white and poor in the hills of Kentucky. From this experience I was clued in to the beloved community of the civil rights movement, the deep American wellspring of the blues, and the roots solidarity ethos of the labor movement — Miles Horton, Langston Hughes, Hazel Dickens, B.B. King, Stokely Carmichael, Carl Perkins, Muhammad Ali, Tina Turner, MLK, Al Green, John Brown,

Ronnie Dugger, thank you so much, god bless.

I know that all we have of these three traditions that is tangible in these days of cut-throat global capitalism and retro-Jim Crow ignorance is the blues, which is survival. But the other two — civil rights and labor strength — are not done and gone. They are the two things that have redeemed the history of the United States, and as long as we breathe, live, work, and love, they will find resurgence and carry us forward to the realization of our potential.

As a traveling poet and publisher of Tilt-A-Whirl Press, my burning desire is to bring together a family and thrust beautiful voices onto the airwaves because poets are the legislators of the world. Of course, the flip side of being a poet is working-class exile. In September, I got hired by a barn builder who, on my second day, lent me out to work at a sporting clay club in Owen County called Elk Creek Hunt Club. The two guys who run the club turned out to be New Jersey retail kingpins, so for the last two months, I've been driving all over Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio setting up Halloween and Christmas stores.

Let me tell you, life in the labor force is nothing glorious. By the time my generation came of age, the fabled blue collar jobs with good wages and lifelong job security were long gone. I think the job I work is probably pretty typical: long hours with no over-time compensation and, of course, no union representation. Going without a break for food for sometimes six hours at a time. No job security. As for health coverage, the joke amongst workers and bosses alike

is that as soon as you fall off your ladder you're fired; if you get back up again, you're re-hired. You work the hours you can when they need you, then be ready to hit the ground running when things slow down.

And there is definitely a lot of hostility towards black and Latino workers at play. Racism continues to be the crippling hurdle in the struggle of working-class survival. These are dire times, times when you suck up the pain and grief because you have no choice. These are times as dark and misguided as the Jim Crow years, times that call for uncommon courage.

Some signs of these times: The general store on my road now has a sign in Espanol which reads, "Por Favor, Paga Por Tu Comida Antes De Comer," officially bringing Kentucky into the Chicano Diaspora. The second harbinger of the coming millenium is that NASCAR is building a hotel and car racing facility in nearby Gallatin County, ushering in the service economy in rural Kentucky and the death of traditional agriculture.

In light of that, these are my firmest convictions and the best my foresight can determine: black liberation and Chicano political assertion will be brought to bear on a scale not even imagined in the 1960s and they will either deliver those of us who call ourselves white or we will destroy ourselves fighting the inevitable. Secondly, we will emerge as a real roots people with insight into our past and present in the earthy, physical essence of things: musical, hard-working, intelligent, spiritual, sexual, and above all, proud. Our biggest heroes are the civil rights

workers and the Beat poets. The fruits of their passions will ripen. No amount of Republican starvation and punishment policy can turn that around.



"A Sense of Place"

Bob Hall

*Bob Hall got involved with the Institute for Southern Studies as a volunteer — and soon after joining, it was Bob who in 1972 penned the proposal for the Institute to start a journal, and **Southern Exposure** was born. Bob has continued his work of applying research to build grassroots struggles for change, winning a MacArthur "Genius Award" in 1992, and now working at Democracy South, a research and organizing center dedicated to ending the crippling influence of money in politics.*

Twenty-five years ago, astronauts bravely probed the unknown in space, but Southern newspapers were afraid to examine the maneuverings of their towns' power barons. Most publishers, part of the local establishment, had skeletons to hide, and too many editors embraced a very

limited notion of democracy. *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill, who won national praise for criticizing integration, was still defending America's war against Vietnam when the Institute for Southern Studies began.

Southern Exposure and the Institute challenged the silence, the fear, and the status quo with gusto. We helped push "power structure analysis" into the region, helped localize the national debate about "corporate accountability," and helped wage "corporate campaigns" against such deserving targets as textile giant J.P. Stevens and your local utility company. We insisted on seeing the South as more complicated than white vs. black; we talked about class, we saw all the issues intertwined together, and we nurtured (as best we could) the many movements springing from the energy and space liberated by the Freedom Movement.

It was an exciting time. The modern women's and environmental movements were only beginning in the South in the early 1970s. Maynard Jackson became the first black mayor of Atlanta, and other black elected officials were pushing political enfranchisement to its full meaning. *Southern Exposure* and the Institute, through the leadership of Sue Thrasher, Leah Wise and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, used and developed the tool of oral history to raise our consciousness of the legacy given us by everyday freedom fighters — people who learned to use a sense of place as the foundation for expressing their dignity and connectedness, in a song or a labor strike.

Maybe we seemed moralistic and sentimental, but we rightly

sensed the evil consequences of capitalism's march through a region freed of the impediments of legalized racial division and inconvenient customs. Through our sweetly subversive small-paper column, *Facing South* ("Voices of Tradition in a Changing Region"), and in a dozen other ways, we did our best to promote such community-building values as solidarity and neighborliness against the devilish glitter of money as the medium of all worthwhile human interaction.

Today, we face the stress of that money chase, infusing every aspect of our lives. It is still an external force, but it has worked itself so much more deeply into the fabric of our culture, our imagination, our identity, our sense of place — or lack thereof. The same can be said of racism. It is an external force we hardly know how we internalize and enlarge, like the toxic-laced atmosphere that affects every breath we take, yet it becomes so familiar, so routine, it's difficult to know how to confront or change it, even though it's damaging life all around us.

We have better newspapers these days in the South: more investigations, more information about the powers-that-be. And we have more citizen activists, more groups, and more public-interest professionals. As a region, we have made great gains. We are part of a long history of people asserting the best interests of their community, ever-more widely defined, against the narrow interests of the money lords and race splitters.

For this region especially, the challenge remains to build the base for systemic change. The institutional base includes lasting organizations; well-rooted

temples of hope and renewal; mass-membership unions serving a variety of positive self-interests; and multi-dimensional networks or parties with the capacity to focus our wonderful energy.

The "idea base" for change includes the values, analysis, ideology, and vision to guide and sustain radical progressive work, along with the consciousness of being in a long line of change-makers who focus not just on self, but on a community, a people, a sense of place.



"It's not enough to be progressive — we must be aggressive!"

Jim Hightower

*Jim Hightower, former Commissioner of Agriculture in Texas, is a nationally-syndicated radio host and author of the recently published book, **The Only Thing in the Middle of the Road are Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos.***

An important gain for Southern progressive struggles over the last few years has been a sharper focus on fighting the target, rather than fighting each other. The Powers That Be, both economic and political, have long succeeded in splitting us apart — black from anglo, rural from urban, poor from nearly poor. We still have more than our share of internal squabbles — it's often like loading frogs in a wheelbarrow to get us progressives moving together — but more often than not, our recent battles on issues like environmental justice, union busting, runaway corporations, living wages, and hog factories have had us united and our eyes riveted on the corporate greedheads who are trying to run roughshod over all of us.

For the next 25 years, our challenge is to take the terrific progressive energy that is at work throughout the South in these various battles and connect it up into a majority movement. In large part, this involves more old-fashioned, grunt-level organizing — linking folks on one side of town who are fighting Browning Ferris Industries to those on the other side of town who are fighting McDonald's — while also helping the people of Athens, Georgia, meet the people of Athens, Texas, Alabama, and Tennessee, who are fighting the same battles against the same forces of ignorance and arrogance.

But it also involves linking our disparate, diverse, and dispersed battles to the traditional values of our movement. Our fights are not merely for another dollar-an-hour over there or a toxic clean-up over here, but for the advancement of America's founding (and very radical) values: Economic Fairness, Social Justice, and Equal Opportu-

nity for All.

Actually seeking implementation of those core American values is what has distinguished the progressive movement throughout our country's "democratic experiment" — from Shay's Rebellion through Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass, forward with the Populists and Wobblies, down the road with Mother Jones and Martin Luther King, Jr., and on to us today. When it comes to these values, it's not enough to be progressive, we must be aggressive.

The good news is that economic fairness, social justice, and equal opportunity for all are values deeply ingrained in our culture and in most people. They not only help unify us progressives, but they also broaden our reach to those who don't call themselves "progressive," yet actually discover they are when we engage them on issues that embody these values.

The challenge of Southern progressives is to take our issues, ideas, and ideals directly to this broader public and make ours a majority movement based on the self-interest, aspirations, and shared values of workaday people.

This means recognizing that the true political spectrum is not right to left, but top to bottom — and that the vast majority of us are no longer in shouting distance of the powers at the top, no matter whether they call themselves liberal or conservative.

This majority wants the same thing that you and I want: We want our country back! Back from the spoilers and speculators, big shots and bastards who have stolen it. The people are ready for a grassroots rebellion to take America back and begin anew to implement our progressive values.



**Race:
"The Old Categories
are Inadequate"**

Alicia Maria Junco

Alicia Junco has worked with the AFL-CIO in South Carolina, and service employees at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She has recently moved to California and is organizing with residents to implement a community-driven economic development plan for South Los Angeles.

Growing up in South Carolina, my community of Southern-born, white-skinned, Cuban-Americans consisted of my brothers and two cousins. Of course, none of us understood at the time that we presented a challenge to traditional Southern notions about race. But we did understand what and who these notions and labels permitted us to be.

So my five-year-old brother Manolito told people his name was Christopher, and I occasionally tried to convince others that we were not Cuban but Canadian. Twenty-five years ago, there was no space for complications. I was ashamed not only to be Cuban, but I was ashamed not to be white.

I identify myself very clearly now. In some ways people also re-

spond differently to me. Attitudes about race in the South have drastically changed along with Southern populations, but the willingness of anglos to continue to define others in a racist context has not changed. Some anglos congratulate me on the luck of a fair complexion and what they view as guaranteed success via minority status. Leftists congratulate me on my automatic and symbolic revolutionary Cuban status. And other progressives say — or at least think — “Yeah, but you don’t really count.”

Changing attitudes in the South do not begin to dismantle or even address the social and political system that allows anglos, within and outside the movement, to objectify “difference” and consequently hold the power to redefine “difference.”

The old categories are inadequate — not just because the growing number of Latinos in the South add more categories, but because the anglo system of categorizing people will always be racist. The power to identify and control difference presently resides within anglo-dominated culture.

The obstacles Southerners face in defining themselves has an impact on how we organize. Without a change in consciousness, social justice and social change are impossible. One of the greatest obstacles to organizing in the South is not only our inability to overcome racism, but our historic inability to overcome race itself. The same categories that excluded me 25 years ago continue to exclude Southerners from progressive organizing.

I know who I am. That is what counts, not whether or not anglos

have enough visible people of color working with them or that everyone comfortably assumes their anglo-designated category. Change in the South must be accompanied by the creation of a space to legitimately define “difference” from a non-anglo perspective.



“The Fight is for Control”

Kamau Marcharia

Kamau Marcharia has led a long activist life in his native South Carolina, where he is an organizer with Grassroots Leadership, and where he has recently won his first term on the Fairfield County Council.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act and other civil rights legislation brought the illusion of freedom and inclusion for African-Americans. It didn’t bring the reality. While changes in technology that would be impossible to even dream of 25 years ago has happened, there hasn’t been the kind of change in uplifting humanity in the world that we did dream of.

We need government and leadership intervention to ensure that the human rights of all people are protected.

After the end of the Civil War, and the so-called freeing of African Americans from the master’s hand but not from his control, the South won states’ rights and the Federal troops retreated to the North. The war that ended slavery had just ended. Yet black people in the South were again at the mercy of angry white males. African Americans, from that day to this one, continue to live in a system that can only be described as legalized apartheid. And now history seems to be repeating itself.

While prison activism in the 60’s and 70’s brought some needed changes for incarcerated citizens, those gains have been totally overtaken by the increase in African Americans and other people of color going to prison. At this point, 1.9 million African-Americans are in prisons, another 2 million are disenfranchised by their felon status, and there is a 400% increase in the locking up women of color, leaving 10-12 million children motherless.

At the same time, the system has created a wedge issue in our communities by training low income women of color as prison guards over men of color by offering them the best pay and benefits they have ever had. How can we as a community ask women to turn down these jobs?

What are the rallying cries for

many white male Southerners and other white males in power? End affirmative action, cries of reverse discrimination, demonize black youth, reinvent government, and the endless cry that we get government out of our lives—an ominous echo vibrating from the genesis of diseased minds bent on acting out hatred toward African Americans and other people of color. The fight is for control. They want states' rights without any interference from the Federal Government.

The right wing has moved to take back every gain we won in the decades leading up to the 80's. Their success has created a climate that allows hate crimes to flourish, church burnings to occur, schools and other services to be threatened by privatization and the entire political system to move farther to the right.

What was considered mainstream in the mid-seventies is considered left now. We are in the midst of a fight for economic and political justice that is even more difficult than what we faced in the 70's.

What do we need to do?

We need to educate and organize our base. We need for white people to stand up and challenge racism in their own social groups and communities. We need to intervene when we see injustice happening. We need to remember that, in reality, the African-American community has only been allowed to vote within the last 30 years. We need government and leadership intervention to ensure that the human rights of all people are protected. And, in the African-American community, we need to make sure that we choose leaders who are not self-serving, but who will act in what is in the best interest of the whole community.



**Political disenfranchisement:
“One of the next
civil rights issues”**

Cynthia McKinney

In November, 1998, Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA) stunned the pundits when she was elected to her fourth term in the U.S. House – after Georgia’s congressional districts had been re-drawn to eliminate African-American majorities. After election day, she talked with us about redistricting and other civil rights challenges.

I believe the South is very important to the country, as an indicator of where we’re going, or where we need to be going, and at the same time, a reminder of where we’ve been.

Within my life-time my parents experienced denial of access to public facilities, and while that kind of thing only rarely happens today, there is at least legal recourse. My parents had no legal recourse.

I participated in the civil rights movement with my dad. He was one of Atlanta’s first black policemen. Living with his struggle to

All of the glaring inconsistencies of what America stands for were placed in my lap as I listened to my dad, and then as I watched him picket by himself and force change on the city of Atlanta.

enforce the law for all the people of Atlanta, rather than just enforce white law in black Atlanta, was motivation enough. All of the glaring inconsistencies of what America stands for were placed in my lap as I listened to my dad, and then as I watched him picket by himself and force change on the city of Atlanta.

With the Voting Rights Act – which unfortunately is being dismantled – we have seen the color of American democracy begin to look more like America. That change in the South – which was a very turbulent process – really did usher in the acceptance of diversity that we see all over the country now, with the election of Asian Americans to Congress. And in the South, we have seen more African Americans and Latinos run for election and actually win.

So I’ve been a participant in and a beneficiary of the civil rights movement – and by happenstance, my job now is to fight the so-far successful attempt to throw back those gains.

When we have fully one-third of African-American men under the jurisdiction of the penal system, there’s got to be something wrong.

And on top of that kind of victimization, states with high black populations disenfranchise those violators; states with low minority or black populations don't have the same laws.

On the campaign trail, I meet too many black men who would like to vote, but who have made a mistake in their life, and forever cannot vote. That's got to be one of the next civil rights issues in the years ahead.

When the fourth district was redrawn, and every political pundit across this country was prognosticating my demise, we put together the right kind of coalition to ensure victory on election night: progressive whites, environmentalists, gays and lesbians, African-Americans, women's organizations, and labor. The traditional, hard-core constituencies of the Democratic Party came together for me.

Thirty percent of the whites who voted in the election voted for me—a major milestone in Southern politics. However, if my son brings home a 30% grade, he's failed. So the challenge is to get that 30% up to 50%. If we could get it up to 50%, then we wouldn't need all the special laws for protection, because access to opportunity would be assured.

We need to learn to reclaim the spiritual — at least those of us who have lost touch with our spiritual side need to learn to reclaim it personally and in our work.

“Try to live our vision”

Tema Okun

Tema Okun has done almost everything at the Institute for Southern Studies, beginning as a volunteer in the 1970s, when she co-edited an issue of Southern Exposure on Southern sports. She has also served as Executive Director of the Institute and, until a taking a well-deserved vacation this year, Chair of the Board.

What has the movement for change in the South gained in the last 25 years?

When I was starting out as an activist over 20 years ago, there was a lot of emphasis on what we were doing without much attention paid to how we were doing it. Focusing on the “win” at the expense of people in the organization; perpetuating racism or sexism in how we did our work; exploitation or manipulation of those being served; fear of standing up for gay rights because it would cost us our “legitimacy” were some common problems.

I think the communities and organizations doing the best work have figured out this is no way to proceed. I see people trying to do it differently, out of an understanding that we can only build toward our vision of a just world if we try to live our vision as much as we can.

I am also lucky to know a whole group of young people who are inspiring in their political brilliance and insight. I see them at the Institute for Southern Studies, I see them in organizations throughout the region. They bring an astuteness and an analysis far surpassing anything I was capable of when I was starting out. They give me a lot of energy and hope and

they confirm that we can learn from the past.

What are they key challenges to making a better South in the next 25 years?

We have to continue to value how we do our work as much as we value winning on our issues. This is a particular challenge because we operate in a world that rarely rewards those who are trying to bring the “how” into the work. We need to learn to reclaim the spiritual — at least those of us who have lost touch with our spiritual side need to learn to reclaim it personally and in our work (all credit for this realization goes to my friend Claudia Horwitz). We have to be willing to look at racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and how these and other barriers are operating in our communities and organizations. If we can't figure out how to work with each other without perpetuating oppressive dynamics, then I'm not sure there's much point.

Those of us who have been in the South for a long time tend to think of it as a bi-racial region and many of us haven't figured out what it means to be in a region that is now multi-racial.

There's also this history here where white activists are always figuring out how to work in communities of color. I think those of us who are white need to take a serious look at the work we have to do with each other and with other white people. We need to focus on how we're going to build a base of white people who are willing to work across race lines without being the ones to call the shots, without perpetuating racism.

It's also really important to have fun.



“Yours in the Struggle”

John O’Neal

A New Orleans-based actor, writer and activist, John O’Neal was a co-founder of the Free Southern Theater, a cultural arm of the civil rights movement. He is known to Southern Exposure readers for being the conduit for stories of struggle and survival, as told by Junebug Jabbo Jones. A longer version of this essay is published in A Sourcebook on African-American Performance, edited by Annemarie Bean (Routledge, 1999). Reprinted by permission.

I was watching an MTV special recently about the history of rhythm and blues. I was washing dishes and couldn’t see the screen so I couldn’t tell whether it was Curtis Mayfield or someone talking about him. Whoever it was made the outrageous claim that Mayfield’s “message” music *made the movement happen*. A stronger case could be made for the SNCC Freedom Singers, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Guy Carawan, Pete

Seeger, Bernice Reagon, the Free Southern Theater, or even Bob Dylan. All of these were among those involved in and committed to the movement.

There’s no question that Mayfield is an important figure in American popular music, but this assertion is upside down! The movement compelled its artists to remarkable accomplishments just like it drafted its leaders to their roles. Not only did the movement provide the creative impulse that was celebrated in these “message songs,” the movement created the market that the recording industry sought to exploit and gain a measure of influence over.

Artists do make startling predictions sometimes, but our ruminations are still reflections on our experiences. The aesthetic process and its products are inseparable from history, economics, and politics (politics being the process by which we make decisions about our collective life). Along with the greater consideration of the nature and challenges of our spiritual life, politics, history and economics provide the content that art celebrates or cautions us about.

Life is a constant process of change and development. Sometimes things move along in small, hardly perceptible steps. Then sudden, dramatic leaps occur. The temperature of the water over a flame changes slowly in barely noticeable degrees before it suddenly bursts into steam. When society goes through extreme states like this, extraordinary art is one result.

The movement of the ‘60’s was just such a time. In the broad sweep of history I expect that other things like the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the great migration

will prove to be more important. The coming struggle to bring down racism and injustice will be more important still. Yet the movement of the 60s marked a critical period of transition. Much of what happened is reflected in the art from that era.

There is cruel irony in the fact that, despite the transformative impact of the civil rights movement, racism, like a wolf in sheep’s clothing, continues its deadly rampage. By comparative measures, the vast majority of African Americans are worse off in 1997 than we were in 1957. We are more uneducated, more underemployed, more unemployed and more incarcerated. We are less healthy, die younger, and have more inadequate housing. We are more confused, frustrated and hopeless — and nobody seems to care. To borrow from the blues standard, “Nobody loves me but my mother, and she could be jiving too.”

I’m working on a new play right now. Recently I came to the conclusion that this play will be about the movement and will be addressed to my daughter, Wendi, my son, William, and others of their age group. Some of them have claimed the term “Hip-Hop” to describe themselves. They are among the most energetic who affirm the bond between the culture of oppressed people and resistance. I hope the play will help to strengthen the quality of their contribution to the ongoing liberation struggle. If the play is to be effective, those to whom it is addressed must identify with people and themes in the play.

So I asked my son to help me to gather stories from his peers and to lead me in conversation with them. I was pleased that he was

willing to do so and seemed to be proud that I asked. If this first foray into the culture of the "Hip Hop Nation" is mutually beneficial, I will continue on the path. The working title for the play is "yours in the struggle."

I don't know who started it, but somebody in SNCC started closing their letters with "yours in the struggle." The phrase became the epistolary equivalent of a clenched fist raised high in defiance or pressed to the heart with reverence and resolution. "yours in the struggle." It seems to fit the idea for the play. I proceed in the faith that the play will be useful to the hip hop generation. I hope this is useful to them too.

yours in the struggle,
john



"I Think of Bulldozers and Republicans"

Suzanne Pharr

*Suzanne Pharr, a native of Georgia, is on the staff of the Women's Project in Arkansas. She is the author of **Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism** and **In the Time of the Right: Reflections on Liberation**.*

When I think of the changes that have happened in the South over the past 20 years, I think of the place where I grew up. I spent the first 18 years of my life on a farm six miles northeast of Lawrenceville, Georgia, in a community called Hog Mountain. Until the early 1970s, that small community was fairly stable, church and school-centered, and sparsely populated with working-class white people who traveled to Atlanta to work on assembly lines or who worked small farms and businesses. It was yellow-dog Democratic, except for the renegades who defected to Barry Goldwater in the 1960s.

When I think of that community now, I think of bulldozers and Republicans and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. Two years ago, my nephew picked me up at the Atlanta airport, and said he would like to take me on a little tour on the way to my family visit. We stopped outside of Snellville on the road that once ran in front of my grandparents' house, and the house where my seven brothers and sisters were born before my parents staked their own claim to a dirt farm. Not only had the two houses been razed as well as the barn made from stones that came from clearing the fields—but the magnificent giant oaks and the pecan grove were also gone. Nothing was left but raw, red clay in preparation for construction of a Home Depot.

And then we went to the former site of Woodward's Mill, where my family ground corn for the community for over 100 years. I felt we had driven onto a moonscape: every touch of green, every rock had been leveled for the development of the enormous Mall

of Georgia. I was stunned by my sense of loss.

Gwinnett County, the home of my memories and so many of my extended family, has become wall-to-wall housing developments for the prosperous, high-tech industries, redistribution centers for chain stores, strip malls – and its elected officials are Republican. Trees and fields are scarce. Rivers run strange colors. It once managed to maintain much of its white and prosperous demography by voting to keep MARTA (public transit) from coming out there, because that might bring people of color into its many communities.

However, new changes and challenges are coming to Gwinnett County. The black population is growing because many who migrated North are now returning home; former migrant workers are now becoming construction workers and are settling in; Bosnians are in most of the schools; and the sight of Asian people operating stores, running motels, or shopping in malls is not uncommon.

Racial politics are more complex. There are black, brown and white tensions, particularly around jobs and opportunity because so many people are placed in competition with each other for jobs of ever-declining quality.

Schools are multi-racial, a mixture of diverse economic classes, and in this fastest growing region of the nation, they are a battleground between the theocratic right and those who believe that democracy depends on inclusion and equality.

In fact, racial, gender, and economic equality remain central issues in my rapidly growing and changing home-town. We have a working poor that has no safety

net and little hope of adequate work; we still practice racial discrimination and violence; and women are underpaid and subject to violence at home and on the streets.

The South's major challenge for the future is to find ways to save its land from sprawl and industrial pollution while creating jobs that provide everyone a living wage – and to build a true, fully-inclusive democracy that ensures human rights and makes the dignity and worth of everyone a reality.



“And I Come Singing!”

Bernice Johnson Reagon

In 1973, as Southern Exposure began rolling off the presses, Bernice Johnson Reagon – a veteran of the 1960s’ Southern freedom movement – helped found another institution of progressive change: the a capella singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock. Reagon has gone on to receive a PhD in history, and narrated the NPR series on civil rights, Will the Circle Be Unbroken.

Today, I live in the nation’s capital as the group I formed in 1973, Sweet Honey in the Rock, celebrates 25 years. I am aware more than ever that my work as a singer and composer is based in the Southern expression of African-American culture. My sense of being a black cultural Southerner comes from being born in southwest Georgia and from my first work as an activist in Albany, Georgia, during the Civil Rights Movement as a field secretary for SNCC (the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee), and more specifically as a member of the SNCC Freedom Singers.

In 1966, I began to work with the late Anne Romaine on a series of festivals where, in concerts and workshops throughout the South, we presented a sort of live, singing anthology of black and white progressive music culture – traditional and contemporary. We sang songs from the struggle against slavery, against strip mining, for labor organizing, and the freedom songs of the Civil Rights Movement.

The performers on these tours were black and white, young and old, and today it is amazing to see local and regional festivals throughout the South where one can experience performance culture from many racial and ethnic groups.

There are still the Country and Bluegrass festivals that are predominantly white, and the gospel conventions that are predominantly African American or white, depending on the racial makeup of the artists. There are also some wonderful new festivals like the Jazz Festival in New Orleans and the bi-annual National Black Arts Festival based in Atlanta. The old

Piedmont Festival of Atlanta is now new and diverse in its programming and audiences. This would have been unthinkable before the Civil Rights Movement and before the tours that Anne and I started, and that she continued for more than a quarter of a century.

The cultural power and heritage of the South is real. In offering concerts for justice and struggle against oppression of all kinds, Sweet Honey in return has received some experiences that have the power to transform one’s sense of what history really is in this world.

At our last performance in Savannah, Georgia, the concert was held in the First African Baptist Church. We were led by an elder Deacon to the basement where we were shown holes in the floor in the shape of the cross that were breathing holes where slaves making a dash for freedom could hide. That night, that church was hallowed ground for us as we sang out of a consciousness of standing in a 19th century Underground Railroad Station, the kind of space without which many more would not have made it beyond slavery.

Whenever Sweet Honey goes into a community, our sponsors and hosts tell us what is happening on the local level so that we can know more deeply where we are. Many of the issue facing African Americans in the South are not Southern and are not African American – they are national and international.

One is the changing face of AIDS to include the young and the poor and the heterosexual, as well as the homosexual communities. Our black churches have been much too slow to understand the sacred

work of hosting and parenting with those among us who are living and dying from AIDS. African Americans have huge homophobic streaks running through the fabric of our culture. If there is anything that has a chance of forcing us to redress that bigotry, AIDS will.

Another issue is the expansion of the death penalty. The South ranks at the top in viciousness and abuse of human rights in its prison system, with Texas and Alabama vying for top prize in innovations of private prisons, chain gangs and similar abominations. Our people still go to jail the most for the longest times. Those organizations that are engaged in death penalty work are on the cutting edge of challenging access to justice in our society.

It is a great time to be an African-American woman. The South is one of the places where one can find women organizing as women, and sounding out voices on the issues that daily impact our lives. Domestic violence is a public issue for black women; this was not the case when I grew up in southwest Georgia where women were sometimes complimented for the way "she just held her peace through all she had to deal with ..." Women are demanding that the quality of our experience be a marker by which our communities are judged.

I feel blessed that more than 30 years ago, when I joined the Civil Rights Movement, I enjoined the rest of my life with a commitment to being a fighter for justice and freedom and the right to live celebrating my existence, and the existence of my people — and I come singing!



The Southern Paradox

Diane Roberts

Diane Roberts is a regular commentator for National Public Radio, a columnist for the Atlanta-Journal Constitution, and the author of the award-winning The Myth of Aunt Jemima. She teaches English at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

To be Southern is to inhabit paradox.

We live in a territory designated as America's Kingdom of the Weird, a sort of stage for the great national dramas of race, religion, class, and gender. We occupy a region equal parts European and African (with a dash of Native American), where the white folks eat okra and yams and speak with soft cadences that owe as much to West Africa as Scotland; where the black folks borrowed the guitar and the horn of the Europeans to make music that rocked the world, and took the religion forced on them by the masters to make it an instrument of their own liberation.

In the South, we were multicultural before multi-

We are told how prosperous we are — all those banks in Charlotte, all that Coca-Cola in Atlanta — yet we still have the nation's highest proportion of people on food stamps.

culturalism was cool.

Over the past 25 years, the South has become even more so, with Latinos and Asians added to our rich gumbo. In some ways, the South has changed utterly since 1973: no one is shocked that the University of North Carolina's football team has a black quarterback or that Alabama's governor-elect beat the Baptist-endorsed incumbent who championed school prayer.

In 1973, the Republicans' "Southern strategy" looked invincible, even with a Republican president in the White House who cheated on the Constitution; in 1998, the Republicans' "Solid South" is cracking, even with a Democratic president in the White House who cheated on his wife, with Democrats rebuilding their bi-racial coalitions.

Yet we live with the old dangers, the old symbols, juxtaposed with our shiny triumphs in equal rights, education, and economic growth. We are told how prosperous we are — all those banks in Charlotte, all that Coca-Cola in Atlanta — yet we still have the nation's highest proportion of people on food stamps. And we still have the lowest-achieving schools.

Blacks are moving back South, Southern cities are more integrated than those in the North and the West and, thanks to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Klan has even been litigated right out of Alabama. But the Confederate battle flag still flies high over the capitol in South Carolina and blemishes a corner of the Georgia state banner.

Over the past 25 years, many in the South — Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter, John Lewis, Morris Dees, Virginia Foster Durr, Fred Shuttlesworth — have labored to shake up the old class, race, and gender roles that made the South the least democratic part of America.

Countering their efforts even now in the 1990s, cultural vigilante groups like the League of the South thunder that the Civil War had nothing to do with slavery, that the real South is white and “Anglo-Celtic,” that feminism is unnatural and the only hope for the South is for it to secede from the Union once more and do it right this time.

The great strength of the South is that it is not, and never has been, homogeneous. Southern culture is gloriously miscengenous in every sense: the new DNA evidence says yes, Thomas Jefferson *did* have children with his slave Sally Hemings. Jefferson wrote the most beautiful words imaginable about freedom and equality and signally failed to live by them.

This is the curse and the blessing of the South: that we must live with the paradox and burden of our history. We must fight the battles, old and new, acknowledging that, as Faulkner said, here “the past is never dead, it isn’t even past.”



“There’s a growing sense of pride”

Arturo Rodriguez

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Arturo Rodriguez faced the greatest challenge of his long activist career in 1993, when, after the death of the legendary Cesar Chavez, he stepped forward to become the president of the United Farm Workers. While on the road, he talked with Southern Exposure editor Chris Kromm.

One thing that has changed in the last 25 years, is that there’s a real growing sense of pride in being Latino. There’s not the shame, like when I was growing up — being worried about speaking Spanish, or being worried about your culture.

In terms of the culture itself, there’s a lot more activism in the Latino community, throughout San Antonio. The mayor we have now, many city council people, people in the school districts — they are Hispanics.

As a result, in the Hispanic community, there’s this growing real-

ization that we’re just as competent and capable as anybody is in this country. And oftentimes, we’re more willing to contribute to the American Dream, as we call it — but do it in a way that’s going to benefit everybody, that’s going to take advantage of the strengths we have as a culture, and really bring about change. For me, that’s been a dramatic change in the last 25 years.

There’s no question that [anti-immigrant sentiment] makes it harder to organize. But simultaneously, there’s a deeper realization that we Latinos are important. You take the Bush phenomena that just occurred in Texas [1998 election of Republican governor George Bush]. Not that I supported that — but here you have someone who figured out how to reach the Latino community, and knew the importance of it. Now when would you ever have a Republican doing that in the last 25 years? And I think that’s a challenge for us for the future, to ensure that we don’t get misguided, that we understand who really is out to benefit the Hispanic community, who’s really out to bring about change.

Organizing any place is difficult, but it’s really challenging in the South. Change is coming about, but in the South you have some really deeply embedded racism, and refusal to recognize people’s rights, and refusal to treat people as equals, as human beings. There’s a long way to go in erasing that kind of mentality — especially in the rural communities, it’s like a whole ‘nother world. You get there and confront some of these employers, and they have relationships with the judicial system, with the school system, and their

beliefs just permeate the whole climate there.

For example, we've been organizing a big mushroom plant in Quincy, Florida. It's the biggest mushroom plant in the southeastern part of the United States. It's a mostly Hispanic and African-American workforce there. Those workers had fought every step of the way. They finally said in March of 1995 that they had had enough of the abuse. All they did was, during their lunch break, they picked up the UFW flag with the black eagle, and did a little demonstration inside the plant. As a result of that, the president of the company got so angry, he went and fired 80-something workers, had 25 of them arrested. He fired close to 20 percent of his workforce, just to demonstrate to everybody that he was in charge, and that he wouldn't allow this to happen. We're still fighting. That's just an example of what we continue to encounter there.

So it's a *super* challenge to organize in the South. But at the same time, there's a lot of hope, too. I know the union UNITE has been successful in winning key victories there. We continue to make our victories, and although they're small sometimes, they give us the hope and faith that we're going to be able to move forward there.

I think the biggest challenge for us is to ensure that our children have a better future than what we've had. That our children, our future, have an opportunity to be respected, to be treated as equal human beings, to get a decent education, to have opportunities that we did not have in our lifetime, and we need to fight for that.



***Inclusion, coalitions,
and power***

June Rostan

June Rostan is a long-time Southern activist, and currently serves as Director of the Southern Empowerment Project – an organizer training and education center in Tennessee.

Gains: In Appalachia and the upper South we are more conscious of the need to overcome racism in our organizing. Even ten years ago, groups in parts of Appalachia said, "There's less than one percent blacks in our counties." That was supposed to explain all-white groups. Now, organizing groups talk about their attempts to diversify their memberships. The old response is no longer acceptable. Oh, happy day!

I remember in 1987, when we included a day of training on overcoming racism in our organizing school, there were some who deemed such topics not really central to organizing. The work on overcoming racism is as badly needed today as it was then.

After a few years, Southern Empowerment added a session on overcoming homophobia in orga-

nizing. There are now some multi-issue groups willing to work in coalition with gay and lesbian groups, and some where it is possible for openly gay organizers to work. Southern Empowerment itself now includes a gay/lesbian organizing group. Quite a few gay and lesbian organizers paid with their pain and suffering to help bring that about.

In short, our organizing is more inclusive than it used to be, but it took people pushing the envelope to make it happen.

Challenges: The region's demographics are changing rapidly. Communities that used to be black and white are becoming multi-racial. The increase of the Latino population is significant. There is also growth in Asian communities in the South. One of our challenges is to figure out how to build multi-racial organizing groups with people of color in the leadership and with real power. We don't need any more groups with a few people of color in the membership or leadership, but with no power.

Another challenge is for us to move beyond diversity and lip service in overcoming racism and homophobia, both internally in our organizations and externally in our organizing. It would be great to see some predominantly white, working-class organizations do some anti-racist organizing. We must get working-class and low-income people to see class interests as common ground for organizing across racial divides. For that to happen, we whites have to deal with how we benefit from white racism and be willing to help destroy institutional racism.

While we are at it, we should

also re-dedicate ourselves to overcoming sexism and to making sure that women are in leadership and have power in our organizations and the society as a whole. I know we can pull these things off and change the balance of power.

The region would not only feel different, it would be different.



“I’m More Determined than Ever”

Malika Sanders

Malika Sanders grew up in an activist family in Alabama, and has continued the tradition. She is now Director of the 21st Century Leadership Project, which trains and organizes youth in the South for social and economic justice.

Sometimes young African agents of social, economic, environmental, and political change in the South feel like the Children of Israel, just out of physical bondage, wandering in the wilderness, trying to find the promised land. Questioning,

doubting, and wondering about what we have truly gained. This feeling became familiar to me again when I started thinking about the “gains” we’ve made over the last 25 years.

I am exactly 25 years old. Before I officially entered the world and very soon thereafter, I was on picket lines. I have been doing this work as a leader for the last ten years. When I started counting back, it became clear that a lot of the changes happened in the years before this period. Initially, this was a little discouraging—particularly when you take into account the idea that, as a friend of mine puts it, “the solutions of today are the problems of tomorrow.” As I struggle over what our “gains” have been, I become more determined than ever to contribute to the movement for major change within my lifetime.

There have been accomplishments, however, and those who want so much for things in their communities to greatly improve must take a moment to look closely at the social landscape. In many communities, there have been changes in teen pregnancy and school dropout rates, as well as an increase in some opportunities. And while even these accomplishments have been small steps toward the promised land, they have been steady steps.

Also, the analysis of change agents has deepened over the last 25 years. The complex web of racism, classism, sexism, hetero-sexism, capitalism, and other oppressive “isms” is looked at as part of the overall strategy for freedom and justice. In addition, an important lesson that even those of us filled with the passion, idealism, and zeal of youth have to come to

learn and embrace is that freedom is a constant struggle. This knowledge changes how we fight the fight, hopefully for the better.

The challenges we face are numerous. Each day, another tool is invented or recycled – from bills (legislation) to billions (money)—to impede our progress toward transformational change. Technology is both a curse and a blessing, and our charge is to forge ways to make it a blessing more often than a curse. We must seize and use more mediums of communication in order to do this. The whole world would think we were in the middle of a high-powered movement if the media covered half of the things going on in communities across the South.

We must understand the nature of our money: most of the foundations that fund our work were created for charity at best, not transformation. Grassroots fundraising can be done and must be done, if we are to have a people’s movement.

We must find ways to make our institutions responsive to the call for a better way of life. We must fight to make our families, schools, businesses, and places of worship catalysts for social change.

We must connect the individual needs and aspirations of the people of the South to its collective needs and aspirations. We must not forget that transformation starts with us, with our institutions. It is hardly likely that an organization crippled by internal classism will help to greatly improve class-related issues on their block, much less in their city or state. We who dare to change the world around us, must dare to change ourselves.

“The issues are now geared toward economics”

Hollis Watkins, Jr.

Hollis Watkins, Jr. — a youth activist and facilitator based in Durham, NC — wrote these words with his father, Hollis Watkins, a veteran of the civil rights movement and leader of Southern Echo in Jackson, Mississippi.

As one who was reared in the South, I have noticed some changes that have been very critical and crucial to the dynamics of the South that we live in,” says Hollis Watkins. “There are now a large number of blacks who are registered to vote. In light of that,



there are a large number of blacks who hold political offices. You also have a large number of blacks who are attorneys and are business professionals. Plus, there is now a substantial number of blacks who are able to go to predominantly white universities.”

Hollis, who was part of the Freedom Rides, has been a community organizer since he was involved with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the 1960s. I, Hollis Watkins Jr., a youth facilitator, would also like to add to my father’s comments that the racial ties within America are a lot better than they used to be.

My father and I can both agree that there are still challenges that face the South. One is the fact that most blacks elected to office are not accountable, whether by the people or by self-blame, to the needs and interests of the black community. They still have this fear deep down within themselves of whites and the power which whites hold so dominantly. Another challenge is the educational system, where you would have a white student operating (on aver-

Older people need to allow the fear that is buried in them of young people to go, so that younger folks can equally and adequately participate in the development and implementation of organizations.

age) at a 12th grade level and be compared to a black student of the same age operating (again, on average) at levels two to four years behind their white counterpart.

Plus, the criminalization of black youth in our schools leads to several problems. One is that they are unable to have the opportunities to learn as white students do. Secondly, police officers are brought to the school to act upon black students, not teen crime at that school. Third, black males, followed by black females, are mainly placed on the wrong side of a school tracking system that leads towards a life of poverty, prison, and/or miseducated minds that are incapable of doing well in college or in the job market.

Another challenge is around agricultural discrimination, where the government and lending institutions are biased as to who should get loans to raise crops. And black people are losing land and property in large amounts.

We as Southerners must also take care of those we live with. Older people need to allow the fear that is buried in them of young people to go, so that younger folks can equally and adequately participate in the development and implementation of organizations.

In the land of Dixie, the issues are now geared towards economics. Immigrants are the new minority in the South, yet they are where blacks used to be. And unfortunately, whites have not changed their minds on running this country.



“It feels like, just to be able to sustain life is a victory!”

Leah Wise

Leah Wise – a founding editor of Southern Exposure in 1973 — has been on the “ground floor” of many organizations working for change in the South over the last 30 years, including North Carolinians Against Racist and Religious Violence and Southerners for Economic Justice. She is now Coordinator of the Southeast Regional Economic Justice Network. The following is from a recent conversation with Southern Exposure editor Chris Kromm.

When I look back on what kinds of changes I see, what has been a gain is that ... we have slowly been developing more interrelationships, more sense of vision. I can’t say all of [the left] is visionary and linked, but there has been much more motion in that direction. I would say there are many more connections now, with people understanding the nature of capitalism, and being able to talk about it – which back then we could not, openly. You look back at the language, the lan-

I feel like women’s participation has had a lot to do with us getting to this point.

guage was very careful in those days. Where we have progressed, is that some organizers have more of a sense of systemic forces.

I would say that there was this period of time, when the movement went through a real severe fragmentation — ultra-left type stuff. Really, it was the Klan murders in Greensboro [in 1979, of progressive activists] that changed that. Those murders really were a turning point in terms of people coming back, and making connections.

[Another sign] of progress is the leadership of women. It needs a lot more work, but there has been a lot of work done that has surfaced the organizing of women, particularly women of color, and their own methodologies.

A role I think *Southern Exposure* has played well is articulating and uplifting what the work has been here in the South, so we understand ourselves as a region. There is more consciousness of the South’s peculiarities as a region among organizers.

I think people romanticize the past. There was not a huge movement in 1973. It was the Nixon years, a heavy time of setback. I really get irritated with people who were involved in the civil rights movement say, “that was the movement, and there’s nothing now.” Well, it was different. People had a very clear target, and things got inspired in one place and would affect another. But there’s a difference between mobilizing, and organizing – sustaining

bases of power for people. We did make some progress, but there are waves of attacks to undermine it. There’s what’s going on right now in Alabama with the voter fraud cases, the Supreme Court decisions that are wiping out black political representation. The struggle is constant, and there are always shifts undermining the progress we’ve made.

But what’s stronger now is the power of the media, to make people think that everything is fine — that their own life is just an aberration, and something is wrong with them, as individuals. So the powers are much more powerful now. It feels like, if we are just able to sustain life, and maintain joy – wow, what a victory!

Folks are learning to not come at communities and people with formulaic approaches. This is something the left has been extremely guilty of. Instead, people have been learning to start where people are. That’s our biggest challenge. Instead of getting more sophisticated, our work is getting more elemental. That’s what good organizers are learning.

Also, back in the early movement days, there was a lot of spiritual force in the organizing work. People were empowered with song. And people are getting back to that, and I think that’s a real positive direction. This work is transformational work, and it gives us the opportunity to talk about culture, and not simply the economic system or the political system. We should be creating and practicing what we want to be. I feel like women’s participation has had a lot to do with us getting to this point.



“Mass, non-violent direct action: it keeps us close, and it works”

Harmon Wray

Harmon Wray has been an advocate for economic justice, racial equality and criminal justice reform for many years. He is now Executive Director of Restorative Justice Ministries for the United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

The beginning of *Southern Exposure* came just a short time after my unexpected discovery of a radical tradition in Southern history. The early issues of the magazine nurtured my fascination and identification with that alternative tradition and educated me in its dreams, struggles, victories, and losses. I became intimately familiar with the early Tennessee and Kentucky abolitionists; the sometimes-biracial southern Populist and labor movements of the 1880s and 1890s; the Southwestern socialism of the early 1900s; the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, Sharecroppers Union, Highlander Folk School, Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, Southern Conference

for Social Welfare, and other groups.

As I look back over the last 25 years, I am struck by both the discontinuities and the continuities in Southern history, politics, and culture. We now have a black middle class, but the situation for the larger poverty class of blacks (and whites, and increasingly, Spanish-speaking immigrants) is arguably worse now than in 1973. Our fundamentalists no longer bury their heads in the sand and pretend the world isn't there; now they are masters of high-tech machinery and of the political process. But they are still awesome in their arrogance, self-righteousness, and biblical illiteracy.

We may have smarter politicians now, but like our smart bombs, they seem to be colder in their cruelty, and capable of doing more damage, since they are now mostly Republicans or Republicrats and have the corporations with them. Their demagoguery is now targeted on “the criminal element,” the “superpredators,” and the “welfare queens,” instead of the “niggers” and the “pinkos,” but the outcome—a racist police state and gulag society—is not much different from the old-fashioned slavery, sharecropping, peonage, and lynching systems.

We don't have the communists to kick around anymore, so, like the rest of the country, we are prone to kick in the teeth of most black men and women, low-wage workers, gays and lesbians, single mothers, drug users, feminists, welfare recipients, and the group that is the last socially-acceptable recipient of verbal abuse—“rednecks,” or “poor white trash.” As always in our region, potential allies are kept divided, while the dominant white

Let's put criminal justice issues close to the center of our analysis and critique.

power structure exploits everyone and everything else.

What, strategically, is needed for deeper, more radical change in our South, in the nation, in the world? My answer book is very thin, but in it are a few points in large print that I can only suggest:

- Let's not neglect or give up on the Christian churches. They are potent, for good or ill. They claim a radical, homeless, executed, Jewish worker-prophet as their organizer and exemplar. And church is still where a lot of the people are, especially in the South.
- Let's avoid political sectarianism and ideological rigidity. If we can harness the two-edged sword of populism and make it cut in a progressive direction, let's do so. On the other hand, let's always maintain a critical edge against the idolatry of the capitalist market.
- Let's put criminal justice issues close to the center of our analysis and critique. The rapidly growing punishment industry is corporate-driven, racist, militaristic, and our current version of legal slavery, as well as our domestic version of colonialism and social control. Prisons are the human analogue of toxic waste dumps. Most of the “waste” will someday walk out and live among us. We need to make friends.
- Let's explore what it would mean to renew the vision of mass, non-violent, direct action as both a tool for social change and a moral commitment. It gives us spirit, it makes us strong, it keeps us close, and it works.

S

The people who



made it happen

Atlanta, 1973. Seated, more or less: Sue Thrasher, Doyle Niemann, Ginny Boulton, Mary Britting, Leah Wise with Samirra, Pam Beardsley, unknown, Dick Hall with Jason; standing: Bob Hall, Jacquelyn Hall, Chet Briggs, Karen Lane, unknown, Gene Guerrero, Stephanie Coffin (of child), Ed Martin, Adelia Hall. Each had a hand in the first year of *Southern Exposure*.



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An in-depth look at changes in the Southern workforce from the 1960s to the '90s; working conditions in labor pools to confessions of a union buster and a look at what has happened to jobs in the region. (Issue #81) \$5



Fishy Business

The catfish industry is booming—overtaking cotton as the Mississippi Delta's leading crop—but the plantation mentality remains. White profits, black labor; the crippling of a work force; the Delta Pride Strike; workers and activists organize a "second civil rights movement." Also, excerpts from the 1991-1992 Green Index. (Issue #85) \$5



Working Women

A resource guide with a lot of personal testimonies. What are our rights? How do we organize? What are other women doing that works? (Issue #36) \$5

POLITICS

Set of Three: \$10

Elections

A user manual on the electoral process and the political system. Includes a look at the New Right, coalition building strategies for local political control, stories of campaigns won and lost, and the strategies behind them. (Issue #49) \$4



Money and Politics

The Institute for Southern Studies' two-year investigation of special interest influences on politics and cronyism. What do bigshots give and what do they get in return? A look at public financing and other reforms. (Issue #88) \$5



The Globalization Game

Why are Southern states spending billions in giveaways to lure multinational corporations? An analysis of winners, losers of the globalization game—and how citizens can change the rules. (Issue #112) \$5

EXPOSED

Set of four: \$18



Poverty, Inc.

Winner of the 1994 John Hancock Award for Excellence in Business and Financial Journalism and one of Project Censored's top 10 most underreported stories. This issue examines the cycle created by lenders that charge exorbitant rates to poor people and the ways citizens are fighting back. (Issue #93) \$5



Punishing the Poor

This award-winning special section examines mandated state-run "workfare" programs that are punishing the people they were designed to help. Also how Food Lion treats its workers. (Issue #84) \$5



Flowers In Desert Die

The hidden link between the South and Central America: El Salvadoran death squads in Houston, Southern congressmen supporting the contras, and efforts to establish a tropical empire. An essential resource for solidarity groups. (Issue #74) \$5



Law and Disorder

An examination of a war on drugs that means big bucks for police and prisons: lawmen dealing drugs; tenants in public housing fight their own war on drugs; white police as an occupying force in many black communities. (Issue #82) \$5

SOUTHERN MEDIA

Set of five: \$20



Drive-Through South

The 1994 Best of Press Awards. These stories take us cruising with bored teenagers, digging through landfills, exposing hospital scams and

abusive foster homes, and investigating the destruction of vital woodlands. (Issue #98) \$5

Best of the Press

The 1995 Southern Journalism Award excerpts include an expose of Florida's mental health system and the elderly, the child support crisis in North Carolina, the health and ethical dilemmas caused by new reproductive technology, Tennessee's forests, and a special report on the Kmart boycott. (Issue #103) \$5

Best of the Press

The first Southern Journalism Awards (from 1986-87) exposed Houston's police misconduct, the PTL scandal, homelessness in Dallas, teen pregnancy, and more in this special double issue. (Issue #69-70) \$6



Fast Forward—The Southern Media

A full listing of every Southern newspaper and TV station under the control of corporate chains, the white media, and Southerners who take the media into their own hands. (Issue #90) \$5



Southern Media Monopolized

A report on who controls the Southern media and the impact of consolidation on dissident voices, with state by-state listings of press ownership. (Issue # 107) \$5

GETTING ORGANIZED

Set of four: \$15



Falling Apart/Coming Together

A look at how people working for social justice are trying to address race, class, gender, sexual identity and other 'isms. With "God Don't Make Mistakes"—notes from a "professional queer." (Issue #103) \$5



Birth Rights

A guide that links the struggle for abortion with broader issues of reproductive freedom, Granny midwives, parental leave, sterilization abuse, pregnancy police, and the terrorist tactics of Operation Rescue. (Issue #80) \$5

Waging Peace

The people, organizations, and facts you need to know in order to challenge the diversion of national resources from programs that provide true security. Anne Braden's "A Call to Action," racism in the military, the truth about civil defense, profiles of 13 Southern states, plus a resources listing. (Issue #42) \$5

Organizing for Dignity

What have activists working for economic justice learned after welfare reform? Also includes features on pirate radio and Melungeons. (Issue # 111) \$5

RESEARCH REPORTS

from the
INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHERN STUDIES

"Combing Information Power and People Power for Social Change"

The Institute for Southern Studies – publisher of *Southern Exposure* – puts "information power" and "people power" together to change the South. Copies of some of the Institute's latest hard-hitting research reports are available:

NEW – JUST RELEASED!

UPROOTING INJUSTICE FOR FARMWORKERS

"Uprooting Injustice" by Dr. Sandy Smith-Nonini investigates the life-threatening working conditions faced by farmworkers, and offers an in-depth look at the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's historic campaign to win a three-way contract between farmworkers, growers, and the Mt. Olive Pickle Company – which is now the target of a nation-wide boycott due to their refusal to negotiate. The 32-page, bi-lingual report also features a "seed to table" illustration of the pickle-growing process, and a profile of FLOC organizer and McArthur "genius" Baldemar Velasquez. \$5 (\$2.50 for members)



DOWNSIZING IN DIXIE

As economists sing the praises of our "booming economy," "Dislocation and Workforce Equity: The South at Work in the 1990s" is a groundbreaking study of what's really happening to Southern workers. This 28-page report tells what kind of jobs there are; who's working where; and who benefits from insecurity and segregation on the job. The report gives detailed statistics and state-by-state rankings to explode the myths and shows that job growth has not led to more economic security, and that segregation by race and gender is still an issue in need of policy solutions. \$5 (\$2.50 for members)



OUT-OF-PRINT REPORTS: The following reports are sold out, but limited photocopied editions are available for \$3:

"FANNING THE FLAMES"

An investigation into church-burnings in the South.

"LEGISLATING JUSTICE"

A report on state environmental justice laws.

"RULING THE ROOST"

The corporate poultry industry's impact on workers, consumers and farmers.

"THE THIRD OF NOVEMBER"

The real story behind the Klan's November, 1979 murder of activists in Greensboro.

USE THE FORM in the back, CALL (919) 419-8311 x21, or EMAIL iss@i4south.org to order your reports today!

It's Still Southern Exposure:

The magazine's lighter side has showed that activism and humor can go hand-in-hand

By Mary Lee Kerr

As anyone who has been involved in the movement for social justice knows, it's a life cycle with a pattern to it. The young activist starts out serious. After all, it's serious work and there's so much to be done, so much injustice, only so many hours in the day. Then burnout hits. One person can only do so much. The activist searches for ways to keep going strong, to keep balance, to inject healthy humor and distractions that keep the well filled.

Southern Exposure has gone through its own activist life cycle. Starting with serious issues on the military machine, labor organizing, and the utility companies, moving through cultural explorations of music, sports and theater, and on to a balance of hard hitting investigations, political humor, fiction, culture, and tools for change, *SE* has worked to find its level, its balance. The lighter side of the magazine's personality doesn't generally make the headlines. But it's the fun, the humor, the beauty, and the irony that take the edge off the sadness and anger and keep us coming back to read more and do more.

In the earliest *Southern Exposures*, political cartoons provided the leavening for the heavy mixture of investigations, analysis, spider charts and book reviews. In the first issue, "The Military & the South," a massive military watchdog sits on the back of a sweating civilian. On another page, three white men in suits labeled education, military, and industrial march in sync in a fife and drum corp. Not exactly light fare, but enough to provoke a wry smile.



Watchdog

Starting in its second year, some issues of the magazine focused on cultural topics such as literature, folk art, music, dance, theater, history, and sports. "How do we effectively criticize the sports establishment that manages ACC basketball or NFL football," ask "Through the Hoop" editors Tema Okun and Peter Wood, "when we find ourselves glued to the set at playoff time?" Leave it to *SE* to expose the deeper political irony that underlies a seemingly benign pastime.

"Facing South," a regular magazine feature and syndicated column in the late 1970s and early 1980s, covered Southern staples like okra, the Wright Brothers, divorce, and boat build-

ing. One featured Jack Holmes, who became Virginia's first black disk jockey in 1947. Friend to the likes of Duke Ellington and Ray Charles, Holmes was still going strong at age 72 when Institute for Southern Studies writer Frank Roberts interviewed him in 1984.

From the World's Largest Roach to dwarf tossing, "Dateline: The South" captured irony and humor in short takes from each southern state starting in the late 1980s. In one "Dateline," officers in Miramar, Florida stripsearched a grandmother for selling *Playboy* to teen boys in a convenience store, but were nowhere around when her husband was robbed in the store at gunpoint the next night.

In another, the Klan wanted to enter a float titled "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" in the Gainesville, Georgia Christmas parade, prompting local protests. The section makes note of South Carolina's Chitlin' Strut Festival, the mail-order ordination of Teddy the cat as a United Christian minister in Huntsville, Alabama, and the credit cards available from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change.

In 1991, "Still the South" premiered with a feature on stock car racing. The column continues to blend history and first-hand accounts in its coverage of Southern-grown traditions such as miniature golf, hurricanes, fire ants, collard greens and protest music.



Just as its humor is tinged with political meaning, *Southern Exposure's* stories of dark injustice and suffering continue to be tinted with hope, and a belief that change is possible.

SE

Concerned about the future of the South? Know others who are, too?

Then join us in launching *Southern Exposure's*

25 MORE YEARS CAMPAIGN

For 25 years, we've delivered the hard-to-find news, the tough exposés, and the portraits of Southern life to help us all understand this place we call home – and help make it better.

We hope you feel like we do – that *Southern Exposure* has helped change laws and change lives, and is a valuable resource for anyone concerned about freedom, justice and our future. On our 25th Anniversary, you now have three ways to ensure this voice for change continues, and grows — for 25 more years:



Here Come a Wind poster



Generations poster



Our Promised Land poster

1 JOIN NOW! Sign up for a year's worth of *Southern Exposure*, and for a limited time get a **FREE copy of the Institute's new ground-breaking report: "Uprooting Injustice,"** a 32-page investigation into working conditions for North Carolina's farm laborers, and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee's historic Southern organizing campaign.

2 SIGN UP A FRIEND (OR TWO): There's nothing like a friend's recommendation to help us get the word out. And there's something in it for you: **sign up a friend, and we'll cut your subscription to only \$16 – 33% off the regular rate!**

3 BRING SOUTHERN EXPOSURE TO 1,000 MORE PEOPLE: Through our 25 More Years Campaign, we want to reach 1,000 new subscribers by next year. Your support will help us bring *Southern Exposure* to a growing number of activists, educators, policy-makers, and others who care about the South. Contribute now, and you'll **get your choice of one of three beautiful, limited-edition posters of covers from best-selling editions of *Southern Exposure* – "Here Come a Wind;" "Generations;" or "Our Promised Land."**

Here's to 25 MORE YEARS of SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

- I want to sign up for a year's worth of *Southern Exposure* – send my FREE copy of "Uprooting Injustice" (\$24)
- I want to sign up ___ friends at \$24 each – reduce my subscription rate to \$16!
- I want to contribute to the 25 MORE YEARS CAMPAIGN to reach 1,000 new subscribers – and get a FREE *Southern Exposure* poster. Here's my contribution of:
 - \$500 \$250 \$100 \$75

I would like the following 18" x 24" *Southern Exposure* cover poster:

- Here Come a Wind Generations Our Promised Land

- I want to order the following back issues and reports from the *Southern Exposure* library:
Issue # or Report Name _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Email: _____

- Check (payable to the Institute for Southern Studies – please tape the sides of the mailer!)

- Visa MasterCard _____ Exp. Date

Card number: _____

Name on card: _____

SIGN UP MY FRIEND

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↓ TAPE here and along sides to seal any enclosures ↓

Let's start a magazine

How does a magazine get started? First there's the idea. What follows is the original memo, written by then-Institute volunteer Bob Hall, that triggered the launch of *Southern Exposure*. Although later staffers would label it "rather pedestrian," the document is amazing in how accurately it predicted the topics that *Southern Exposure* would cover in its first 25 years. And, as the 10th Anniversary issue of the magazine noted, "given the clutter in this office, we're equally amazed this memo still exists." Some things never change.

Memo Re: Institute for Southern Studies' Journal/Newsletter
From: Bob

This memo outlines some thoughts on a proposed journal/newsletter that I think we need to begin. I am suggesting a quarterly publication to begin January, 1973 along the format of "People's Appalachia," in other words, an 8 1/2 x 11" booklet running roughly 32 pages an issue, possibly more, bound by staples, two column format in 10 point type or larger. I think each issue should have a particular focus or topical thrust with several articles of varying nature on that theme. It should also contain notes on what's going on at the Institute and around the South and a newsletter for the Institute. All the articles, of course, will not be written by staff members. I think we shouldn't be uneasy about doing reprinting of other published materials.

The reasons for publishing such a journal are numerous: (a) it would be a means for reaching new people, for developing an audience and constituency for our ideas and for the Institute in the South in that they could write for and use the journal; (b) a way to get them involved with us can then be a way to get them to subscribe for their own trade-off with other groups, a subscription for their trade-off with other groups; (c) provides a way for us to short-term volunteers by having them focus their work on one theme for one of the issues; (d) would be a way for all of us to discipline our work, to make us think and write on a regular basis and seek out analytical frameworks for what is going on in the South and for community groups and production of a service/product, to make us think and write useful document, issue by issue; (e) would be a way for students as a reference issue (e.g., Southern defense spending covered in that issue) and as good reading; (f) I think such a journal would also help us develop a broader analysis of the South and the movement in the South since it would be a specific product which we can give to people interested in what the Institute is and does; (g) be also as a product which we can give foundation and money people

as evidence of our type of work; it also something that such people usually think we should be doing; (j) subscriptions are a possible source of money, though would be unlikely to cover expenses of publication so would probably be an overall drain;

The type of materials that the journal could include on each topic chosen are: (a) well-documented historical analysis or narratives; (b) statistical summaries and data tables; (c) interviews from oral history project related to topic (e.g., on issue on farm labor in the South could include Mitchell interviews, etc.); (d) clear analyses of present and future situation with regard to topic; (e) bibliographic sources and technical analysis of ruling element related to the issue's topic; (f) essays including alternative models of how things could be, theoretical projections and sketches of future scenarios; (g) descriptions of what projects and groups in the South are doing in certain field; (h) primary documents, old letters, leaflets, posters, etc.; (i) graphics.

The articles should have a good mix of pitch and vocabulary to be aimed at broad audience ranging from concerned liberals, people involved in grass-roots projects, organizers, etc. students and faculty, and new left youth. This journal is something teachers could use when they discuss a subject covered in their class, organizers could give interested people for orientation, and different reform groups could exchange and learn from.

Below are listed some topics which the journal could have as a one-issue focus. The first issue would probably be on Militarism in the South. The first issue would probably be on Militarism in the South, include analytical overview of rise of defense contractors and military installations, an article on political significance of defense militarism, other statistical tables, lists of groups working on anti-militarism in the South, discussion of conversion. Possible that Sherrill and/or some IPS folks might write one of the articles. Etc., etc.--just to give idea.

Some topic to organize issues around:

- (1) Militarism in the South (include Steve C analysis report on Fla. US MC organization, agr. interests in South, etc.)
- (2) Agr. Business and migrant labor in South (include analysis of report on Fla. US MC organization, agr. interests in South, etc.)
- (3) Oral history (special issue on Southern history and a.n. technique)
- (4) Land ownership (two controls, tie into rural economic development and CUC's)
- (5) Atlanta Power Structure (or Urban South Power Elites including staff on military; emphasis on Biblio and methodology also)
- (6) The Southern South (historical, analytical, and current using Forsy's article)
- (7) Black movement in South (what is going on, what can be done) (includes interviews, and bibliographic)
- (8) Anti-Corporate Action (historical, analytical, and current using staff on military; emphasis on Biblio and methodology also)
- (9) The Southern Worker (historical, analytical, and current using staff on military; emphasis on Biblio and methodology also)
- (10) Appalachian Education or Universities (who controls boards, what are students doing, what's with schools, etc.)
- (11) Southern Higher Education or Universities (who controls boards, what are students doing, what's with schools, etc.)
- (12) CUC's and Economic Development (with Cambridge people and labor)
- (13) Electoral Politics in the South (analysis and projections, for and from both black and white perspectives)
- (14) Energy Companies and the Utilities (from coal and oil to TVA and the Southern Textile Industry, include rewrite/editing of Boyte's article in Medical America, staff from our friends)
- (15) The Southern Textile Industry (include rewrite/editing of Boyte's article in Medical America, staff from our friends)
- (16) Southern Prisons (with a little help from Reynolds, etc.)
- (17) International Companies in the South (significance, reform perspective, ideology of Southern, individualism vs. corporate perspective)
- (18) Religion in the South (media who controls, with and without South)
- (19) The Southern Media (who controls, with and without South)
- (20) Bibliography on Southern Studies--special issue
- (21) Tax structure in the South: Area for change (focus on corporate property tax on income, sales tax, urban tax base, etc.)
- (22) Poor People's organizations in the South (who, where, what, how)
- (23) The Southern Gullies (same the Dept. chart their interconnections, point ties to larger northern interests)
- (24) The Southern States: A Profile (summary of each state, fuller than Elizabeth's on N.C., including what Anne wanted)
- (25) Southern Folk Culture (interviews, songs, traditions and lore)

It's six years of good reading!

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE has been published since 1973 by the Institute for Southern Studies. With its combination of investigative reporting, historical perspective, oral histories, photography, and literature, the magazine has earned a national reputation. In the past few years, the magazine has received two Project Censored Awards, the Sidney Hillman Award for courageous reporting on racial injustice, two Alternative Press Awards for best regional publication, a National Magazine Award, and the John Hancock Insurance Company award for economic reporting.

THE INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHERN STUDIES is a nonprofit center working for progressive change in the region. Since its founding in 1970, the Institute has sponsored research, education, and organizing programs to (1) empower grassroots organizations and communities with strong local leadership and well-informed strategies, (2) provide the information, ideas, and historical understanding of Southern social struggles necessary for long-term fundamental change, and (3) nourish communication, cooperation, and understanding among diverse cultural groups.

THE INSTITUTE is supported by foundations and individual members. Annual membership is \$24 and includes a full year of *Southern Exposure* (four issues), the email newsletter GRITS, and discounts on Institute resources and publications. Address all membership correspondence to the Institute, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702, (919) 419-8311 or fax (919) 419-8315 to place credit card orders (MasterCard or Visa). Or email: circulation@i4south.org

Cover Design by Mia Kirsh

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
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