

I haven't shown the film to an audience in a while. Mimi and I edited a shortened version for Kentucky Educational Television but the film has never been on national. We tried for American Experience, etc. A friend who had many programs on national television said that it was because Anne Braden did not renounce far left politics in the film. But occasionally I am asked to talk about the film. The time before this was the democratic club at Circle C Ranch. But I want to talk far more directly with you than I did them about Anne and Carl and their ideas. I do think Anne would want us to be more troubled. After all, there's no way to find unity except through struggle.

There are 2 major reactions to what I've heard from socialists (and mind you I think socialist is frequently used as a polite way to say communist).

1. Anne was a hero who paid dearly for our cause. Anne was not a martyr. She had a full long life. The film says it's possible to be fully engaged in politics without misery – to have friendships and love and feel a part of a broad community. To feel solidarity and connection to a greater good. I think it was Ira Grupper who asked Anne to write about a particularly troubling time and she wrote: "This a great time to organize." Anne was an optimist and we must be. We simply must figure out ways to sustain ourselves joyfully in political life with our comrades. And we don't have become respected elders if we don't want to be. Anne stuffed envelopes on through. I celebrate this.
2. And this is more specific. When Mimi and I first showed the film in about 2008, a member of the audience asked us to comment on the narrowing of Anne's life from the mass Civil Rights Movement to the campaign against Police Brutality. Was this a sign of her aging and concentrating on the local? At that time, what could be seen as a narrow fight is now a mass movement that has emerged with power and strength on the streets of this country. I've thought about that often.

What did Anne (and Carl) raise that might trouble us and make us think differently – since that is the only way they would want to be celebrated.

Anne looked at every movement through the lenses of race and class: not ecology, environmental racism. Not war but war against the poor and people of color. She says in the film that the biggest fault line in the 60's and now, is that we have a mostly people of color justice movement and a mostly white peace movement. And that they were the same. Do you agree?

Anne disliked liberals. She believed that liberals inevitably sell out. The Southern Organizing Committee included many small organizations with people of color in leadership. One was the Jesus People Against Pollution (an environmental justice group in Mississippi). I'm not sure that she would join a political organization that was predominantly white and with mainly white people in leadership.

Anne was clear about class. I'm not sure that Anne would totally agree with white allyship (in the way it is described by the Harvard School of Business). She always spoke about the direct

impact of racism on the working class as a whole and especially white women. She believed that it's possible to join a beloved multiracial community – she had that level of trust in people's commitment (well -- aside from liberals).

Anne was never anti-communist. She refused to answer that are you now and have you ever been question about the Communist Party to the end. She also did not talk bad about any organization that was committed to class and racial change. And you know, she and Carl had been assaulted by the government for their political beliefs. They were also social pariahs in their own city. And they were ostracized by sections of the mass civil rights movement – not allowed to participate in Mississippi Freedom Summer. Later the New Communist Movement took away the newspaper they created. But she did not indulge in sectarian politics.

I can't remember one conversation with Anne about national electoral politics. (I know that was before Trump, but she never spoke about for example Ronald Reagan. It was the Reagan administration and only around reverse discrimination in his Justice Department not voting.) While she directly participated in local elections, I can't remember her telling people to go vote as a solution for anything.

Have I raised any questions, comments, criticisms about your political work and involvement? Anne always met people where they were. She cared deeply about relationships and was intensely curious. I celebrate that openness to difference.

I'm going to pass this along to Kate Fosl without whom we couldn't have made this film -- who knew Anne well enough to write a wonderful book based on oral history interviews and was committed to telling the deep and true story of her life.