

Study and Struggle Curriculum

The first iteration of the Study and Struggle program ran from September to December 2020. Our Critical Conversations series, hosted by Haymarket Books in the first week of each month, covered the themes for the upcoming month. Smaller study groups met biweekly on the second and fourth weeks of the month.

All of this material is still available to study! Each session includes: required readings, supplementary materials, recommended materials, discussion questions, an exercise related to each session's topic, and a reading guide. We recommend that everyone read the required readings and that each person in the group select at least one of the supplementary materials to read, watch, or listen to. If you want to learn more, check out the recommended materials, too! The reading guide will help explain some of the main ideas. The discussion questions and exercises can help structure each reading group meeting, but each group should feel free to structure their time however they see fit.

September

Date: September 1st, 2020

Critical Conversations: [Abolition as Study and Deconstructing Racial Capitalism](#).

Click [here](#) for transcript.

Participants: Derecka Purnell, Rachel Herzing, Stevie Wilson, and Rukia Lumumba

Session 1: Abolition as Study

Key Questions:

- Why do we study?
- Why do we read the past?
- What is important from our history?
- What is the relationship of study to struggle?
- What do we mean by study? What forms of study are there?
- What is abolition as study?
- What is abolition as practice?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Introduction: Prison Reform or Prison Abolition?"
- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Imprisonment and Reform"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Introduction: When History Sleeps: A Beginning"
- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "Chapter 1"

Supplementary Materials:

- Article: Robin D.G. Kelley, "Black Study, Black Struggle"
- Podcast: Rustbelt Abolition Radio with Stevie Wilson
- Poem: Audre Lorde, "A Litany for Survival"
- Primary Source: Fred Hampton, "Power Anywhere There's People" (1969)

Recommended Materials:

- Jalil Mutaquim, *We Are Our Own Liberators: Selected Prison Writings*, "FROLINAN Handbook for Revolutionary Nationalist Cadres"

- George Jackson, *Blood In My Eye*:
 - “In order to develop revolutionary consciousness, we must learn how revolutionary consciousness can be raised to the highest point of stimuli from the vanguard elements” (p. 12)
 - “Prisoners must be reached and made to understand that they are victims of social injustice. This is my task working from within (while I’m here, my persuasion is that the war goes on no matter where one may find himself on bourgeois-dominated soil). The sheer numbers of the prisoner class and the terms of their existence make them a mighty reservoir of revolutionary potential. Working alone and from within a steel-enclosed society, there is very little that people like myself can do to awake the restrained potential revolutionary outside the walls. That is part of the task of the ‘Prison Movement’ ” (p. 108)

Session 2: Deconstructing Racial Capitalism

Key Questions:

- What is racial capitalism?
- How do we talk about racial capitalism in relation to the Prison Industrial Complex?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, “Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “The Negro Question: Red Dreams of Black Liberation”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “A Day of Reckoning: Dreams of Reparations”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism”

Supplementary Materials:

- Book: Jalil Mutaquim, *We Are Our Own Liberators: Selected Prison Writings*, “A Revolutionary Class Perspective: In Refutation of Black Capitalism”
- Podcast: Intercepted with Ruth Wilson Gilmore
- Video: Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Geographies of Racial Capitalism”
- Visual Art: Monica Trinidad
- Primary Source: Gates v. Collier (Parchman Decision, 1972)

Recommended Materials:

- Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983; Chapel Hill, 2000), Introduction by Robin D. G. Kelley and Chapter 1
- George L. Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, “Toward the United Front,” 105-113
- “It isn’t revolutionary or materialist to disconnect things. To disconnect revolutionary consciousness from revolutionary activity, to build consciousness with political activity and educational issue-making alone is idealistic rather than materialist. The effect has been reformist rather than revolution” (p. 26)

- Dan Berger, Mariame Kaba, and David Stein, “What Abolitionists Do”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, “What Is Racial Capitalism and Why Does It Matter?”
- David Oshinsky, *Worse Than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York, 1996), Chapters 5-6
- “The Folsom Prisoners Manifesto” (1970)
- Attica Prison Liberation Faction, “Manifesto of Demands” (1971)
- National Prison Strike Demands (2018)
- Breaking Down the Prison Industrial Complex, Critical Resistance
- SSJ Think Tank on Racial Capitalism

October

Date: September 29th, 2020

Critical Conversations: [Abolition, Intersectionality, and Care.](#)

Click [here](#) for transcript.

Participants: Victoria Law, Andrea Ritchie, Pauline Rogers, and Dean Spade

Session 3: Abolition as Intersectional

Key Questions:

- What does intersectionality mean?
- Why is intersectionality important for understanding imprisonment and migration controls?
- Why is intersectionality important for building abolitionist movements?
- How do heteronormativity and binary gender norms contribute to the prison industrial complex?
- What does it mean to be queer?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, “How Gender Structures the Prison System”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “This Battlefield Called Life: Black Feminist Dreams”
- “Combahee River Collective Statement”

Supplemental Materials:

- Book: Victoria Law, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*, “Overview”
- Book: Victoria Law, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women*, “Sexual Abuse”
- Article: Sarah Lamble, *Captive Genders*, “Transforming Carceral Logics: 10 Reasons to Dismantle the Prison Industrial Complex Through Queer/Trans Analysis and Action”
- Podcast: The Abolition Suite Vol. 3 with Andrea Ritchie
- Poem: Nikki Giovanni, “Revolutionary Dreams”

Recommended Materials:

- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “Until Black Women Are Free, None of Us Will Be Free”
- Martha Escobar, “No One Is Criminal” in *Abolition NOW!*
- Victoria Law, “Against Carceral Feminism”

- Talila A. Lewis and Dustin Gibson, “The Prison Strike Challenges Ableism and Defends Disability Rights”
- Namrata Verghese, “Queer Liberation Is an Abolitionist Affair”
- Qwo-Li Driskill, “Shaking Our Shells: Cherokee Two-Spirits Rebalancing the World”
- Liat Ben-Moshe, “Deinstitutionalization: A Case Study in Carceral Abolition,” *Scapegoat 7*
- INCITE! Women of Color against Violence-Critical Resistance Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex
- Fannie Lou Hamer, Testimony before Credentials Committee, Democratic National Convention (1964)
- Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”

Session 4: Abolition as Care

Key Questions:

- What is mutual aid? What has it looked like in your life? What can you imagine it as?
- What are the differences between restorative and transformative justice?
- What do we understand as restorative? What has the potential to be transformative?
- What does community mean?
- How do we reimagine communities as central to the continuum of care?
- How do we build care webs for ourselves and our community?
- If you had the chance to develop your own care web and care programs what would it look like? What would you provide that isn’t currently available through our local/state/federal government?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, “The Prison Industrial Complex”
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, “Care Webs: Experiments in Creating Collective Access”

Supplementary Materials:

- Book: Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, “Making Space Accessible Is an Act of Love for Our Communities”
- Article: Dean Spade, “Solidarity Not Charity: Mutual Aid for Mobilization and Survival”
- Video: ASA Freedom Course, “ ‘Mutual Aid’ Is a People’s Movement”
- Poem: Ross Gay, “A Small Needful Fact”
- Primary Source: Black Panther Party Free Breakfast Program, 168-170

Recommended Materials:

- Chana Kai Lee, *For Freedom’s Sake*, “The Mississippi Freedom Labor Union”
- Activist Files Ep. 12 “Transformative justice in an era of mass criminalization” with Mariame Kaba and Victoria Law
- Mia Mingus, “Medical Industrial Complex Visual”

- Saidiya Hartman, “The Death Toll”

November

Date: October 27th, 2020

Critical Conversations: [Deconstructing Settler Colonialism and Borders](#). Click [here](#) for transcript.

Participants: Kelly Lytle Hernández, Nick Estes, Harsha Walia, and Lorena Quiroz

Session 5: Deconstructing Settler Colonialism

Key Questions:

- What is settler colonialism?
- What does settler colonialism have to do with territory and nation-state borders?
- What is the relationship between settler colonialism and the prison industrial complex?
- How can we understand the relationship between settler colonialism and racial capitalism? How can we make these connections clearer?
- How can our movements for abolition better incorporate the analytic of settler colonialism into our organizing, coalition-building, and strategizing?

Required Readings:

- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*, “Introduction”
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, “Dreams of the New Land”

Supplementary Materials:

- Book: Lorgia García-Peña, *Borders of Dominicanidad*, "Of Bandits and Wenches: The US Occupation (1916-1924) and the Criminalization of Dominican Blackness"
- Article: Nick Estes, "The Empire of All Maladies"
- Podcast: The Red Nation, "Abolition and Covid-19" with Nicol-°s Cruz, Mohamed Shehk, Emmy Rakete, and Ruth Wilson Gilmore
- Poem: Shailja Patel, "Migrant Song"
- Visual Art: Dylan Miners, “No Bans on Stolen Lands”
- Primary Source: American Indian Movement (AIM) Trail of Broke Treaties (1972)
- Primary Source: The Red Nation, "10 Point Program" (2015)

Recommended Materials:

- Jalil Mutaquim, *We Are Our Own Liberators: Selected Prison Writings*, "A Case Against United States Domestic (Neo) Colonialism: for the National POW Amnesty Campaign"
- A. Naomi Paik, *Rightlessness: Testimony and Redress in U.S. Prison Camps since World War II*
- Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, "Chapter 1"
- Rustbelt Abolition Radio with Kelly Lytle Hernández

Session 6: Deconstructing Borders

Key Questions:

- What is the relationship between abolition and no borders politics?
- What function do border walls, border militarization and internal Border Patrol checkpoints serve?
- How is ending deportation a necessary part of abolitionist politics?

Required Readings:

- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates*, "Not Imprisonment in a Legal Sense"
- Harsha Walia, *Undoing Border Imperialism*, "What Is Border Imperialism"

Supplementary Materials:

- Book: Jason de Leon, *Land of Open Graves*, "Prevention Through Deterrence"
- Article: Tania Unzueta, "We Fell in Love in a Hopeless Place: A Grassroots History from #Not1More to Abolish ICE"
- Podcast: Rustbelt Abolition Radio, "No Walls, No Cages: From Migrant Justice to Abolition"
- Primary Source: O'odham Solidarity Against Borders
- Primary Source: No More Deaths/No Más Muerte

Recommended Materials:

- Margo Tamez, *Beyond Walls and Cages*, "The Texas-Mexico Border Wall and Nde Memory"
- K-Sue Park, "Self-Deportation Nation"
- César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, "Abolish Immigration Prisons"

December

Date: December 1st, 2020

Critical Conversations: [Movement Building and Transnational Freedom Struggles](#).

Click [here](#) for transcript.

Participants: Angela Y. Davis, Medhin Paolos, Lorgia García Peña, and Makani Themba

Session 7: Abolition and Transnational Freedom Struggles

Key Questions:

- How do we build from places of transnational solidarity? What challenges might we encounter, and how can we overcome them?
- How is solidarity maintained across privilege, region, and context?

Required Readings:

- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Roaring from the East: Third World Dreaming"
- Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, "Ferguson Reminds Us of the Importance of a Global Context"
- Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, "On Palestine, G4S, and the Prison-Industrial Complex"

Supplementary Materials:

- Book: Julia Erin Wood, " 'What That Meant to Me': SNCC Women, the 1964 Guinea Trip, and Black Internationalism" in *To Turn the Whole World Over: Black Women and Internationalism*, eds. Keisha Blain and Tiffany M. Gill (Urbana, 2019)
- Article: Da'Shaun Harrison, Eva, Bisan, and Osama, "From Atlanta to Palestine: Our Struggles Are Intertwined"
- Podcast: Rustbelt Abolition Radio with Liliana Cabrera from Yo No Fui
- Poem: Miguel James, "Contra la policía" (trans. Guillermo Parra)
- Poem: Mahmoud Darwish, "Identity Card"
- Primary Source: The Global Prison Abolitionist Coalition, "Statement of Purpose"

Recommended Materials:

- George L. Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, 3-7
- Jalil Mutaqim, *We Are Our Own Liberators: Selected Prison Writings*, "The National and International Struggle: Toward a New Global Revolutionary Pan-Afrikan Strategy"
- "Confronting COVID-19 in prisons and black neighborhoods is a real task for militants against the genocide of black people - report 1"

Session 8: Abolition as Movement Building

Key Questions:

- What is coalition versus movement building?
- What does accountability look like in movement building?
- What does the proliferation of nonprofits mean for movement building?
- How can we shape movements outside the contours of oppression to support abolition work?
- What are the conditions (political, socioeconomic, cultural) necessary for movement building?
- What does it mean to be in movement? What are the prerequisites for a movement?

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete*, "Abolitionist Alternatives"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, "Keeping It Surreal: Dreams of the Marvelous"
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*, " 'When History Wakes': A New Beginning"

Supplemental Materials:

- Book: George L. Jackson, *Blood in My Eye*, 41-45
- Book: Jalil A. Mutaqim, *We Are Our Own Liberators: Selected Prison Writings*, "The Mass And Popular Movement"
- Article: "Black Liberation and The Abolition of the Prison Industrial Complex: An interview with Rachel Herzing"
- Article: Mariame Kaba, "Police 'Reforms' You Should Always Oppose"
- Podcast: Rebel Steps with Mariame Kaba
- Poem: Wendy Trevino, *Cruel Fiction*, "Revolutionary Letter"

- Poem: Aurora Levins Morales, "V'ahavta"
- Primary Source: COFO v. Rainey (1964)

Recommended Materials:

- Rules of Black Panther Party
- *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*, "Introduction"
- Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*
- Mizue Aizeiki, "Mass Deportation Under the Homeland Security State: Anti-Violence Advocates Join the Fight Against Criminalization of Immigrants"
- Developing Mass Protagonism
- Mumia Abu Jamal, "Mumia Abu Jamal on 'An Abolitionist Life' "