

INTERSECTIONAL

This unit is about intersectionality, a concept coined by the Black feminist intellectual Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. Laid out in an essay titled, “Demarginalizing the Intersection,” Crenshaw argued that for many people of color, it is the intersection of multiple forms of power and inequality that determine their experiences, opportunities, and life chances. Crenshaw sought to use the term to challenge frameworks of oppression that focus on a single determinative cause, like racism, as the source of subordination and inequality. Against this “single-issue” perspective on how systems of power like white supremacy and racism operate, Crenshaw argued that for many people framing the violence and injustices they experience requires that we examine the intersection of multiple systems of domination and power. For example, many Black women experience both racism and misogyny in the workplace as they confront white supremacy, just as the working lives of many undocumented Latinx immigrant workers in the United States is shaped by the intersection of racism and citizenship discrimination. Further still, the violences and social divisions that Black and immigrant trans women confront often occur at the “intersection” of racism, misogyny, transphobia.

As Crenshaw argued for these members of the community, a single-issue framework like racism at the workplace to describe their social experiences or to mount a defense of their lives only denies their intersectional reality. Finally, addressing the antiracist and Black freedom movements in particular, Crenshaw argued that when we advance single-issue frameworks in our movements for liberation-- such as when we restrict our understanding of racism to the experiences of men of color-- we implicitly or inadvertently create strategies that better the social conditions of some in our communities, while maintaining or worsening the marginalization of those in a community who daily face intersectional social oppressions. For Crenshaw, a major aspect of intersectionality is taking the time in our thinking and activism to analyze the frameworks we are using to understand power. Intersectionality teaches us that before we can address and remediate intersectional oppression, we must learn how our own frameworks and analyses of power have limited our understanding of intersectional oppressions. Without learning how our own thinking created intersectional blindspots, we remain in danger of creating ideas and institutions that continue to marginalize.

As we conceptualized our 2021 curriculum, we intentionally started with this section on intersectionality to foster a sense of group intimacy and vulnerability. In order for us to build institutions that truly address the harm we’ve experienced, and prevent harm from happening in the future, we have to trust each other. The Intersectionality section has two subsections: Relationships and Community Care. The first subsection, Relationships, focuses on the frameworks we often use in everyday life to identify ourselves and those around us. The second subsection, Community Care, focuses on the ways that institutions built under racial capitalism fail to meet our needs, and the ways that we can build ideas and institutions that are truly life-giving, connective, and sustaining.

I. RELATIONSHIPS

The first section, “Relationships” focuses on the frameworks we often use in everyday life to identify ourselves and those around us. As you think about the idea of intersectionality, begin by

thinking about how you define your social conditions. Do you experience intersecting oppressions and inequalities, like racism, sexism and/or poverty? If so, can you name some of the social forces, inequalities, and oppressions that make up your intersectional experience? Now think about how others see you and address your life? Do they see and name that intersection or do they focus on only this or that part of your intersectional context. For example, do they only address you as a Black person, or as a Black woman, but fail to see how homophobia or transphobia is also part of what you must navigate? Likewise, think about how you look at those around you or the folks you are doing this study group with. What parts of their identities do you see when you think about the oppression they have faced? What intersections might you be missing or not seeing when you focus on that single, often dominant, oppression?

Readings:

- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 103-147)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 1-44)
- Monami Maulik, “Organizing in Our Communities Post–September 11th” (2001) in *Voices* (pp. 604-605)
- Vito Russo, “Why We Fight” (1988) in *Voices* (pp. 534-547)
- Robin McDuff, Deanne Pernell, and Karen Saunders, “An Open Letter to the Antirape Movement” (1977) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 41-44)
- Daniel Tsang, “Third World Lesbians and Gays Meet” (1980) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 44-46)
- Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color against Violence, “Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex” (2001) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 61-64)
- Rustbelt Radio, “Queering Abolition”
- Audre Lorde, “Learning from the 60s” (1982)

Discussion Questions:

Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 103-147)

- What is a participatory defense campaign? (p.110-111)
- What does “care is the antidote to violence” mean to you? (p.111)

Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 1-44)

- Assata shares some of her family history in these chapters. She talks about her grandparents, her mother, and others. What intersectional identities do you see just within her family? As she describes the diversity in her family, how does this complicate our ideas of Blackness?

Rustbelt Radio, “Queering Abolition”

- Treva Ellison talks about “Queer Abolition” as a way to expand “our geography of the carceral.” How do you currently think about the “geography of the carceral?” What does it mean to expand it? (e.g. relationship dynamics, child protective services, schools, etc.)
- What are some of the logics that the carceral state uses? (e.g. ostracization, punishment, individualization, etc.) Where/ how do we see those show up outside of the physical prison?

- How are they defining queer criminality? How is this an intersectional approach?

Audre Lorde, “Learning from the 60s” (1982)

- In this essay, Audre Lorde writes, “As Black people, if there is one thing we can learn from the 60s, it is how infinitely complex any move for liberation must be.” What does Lorde mean by this?

II. COMMUNITY CARE

Building on the discussions we had last week on the ways that different oppressions materialize in our bodies and communities, this week's discussion will prompt us to think about the ways that institutions built under white supremacy and capitalism fail to meet our needs, and the ways that we can build ideas and institutions that are truly life-giving, connective, and sustaining. What can we create together to care for each other in these moments of perpetual crisis? What can we learn from the people who came before us? This week, we'll begin to think about what it looks like to conceptualize harm on a community level, how we can respond to it, and how we can take care of each other.

Readings:

- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 163-176)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 118-159)
- Angela Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation” (1970) in *Voices* (pp. 494-498)
- Gustavo Madrigal-Piña, “Undocumented and Unafraid” (2011) in *Voices* (pp. 635-636)
- Lesbians against Police Violence, interview with Barbara Lubinski (1979) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 138-139)
- Brian Glick, *War at Home: Covert Action against US Activists and What We Can Do about It* (1992) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 156-159)
- Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, “Copwatch: Keeping an Eye on the Cops” (1995) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 163-164)
- Creative Interventions Toolkit, “Introduction”
- “We Keep Each Other Safe” art, *Trans Day of Resilience* zine

Discussion Questions:

Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 163-176)

- How does Mariame Kaba talk about the importance of experimenting as we organize towards abolition?
- What does Mariame Kaba mean that “the cops are in our heads and hearts?” What do you think the process looks like of getting the cops out of our heads and hearts? (p. 169-170)

Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 118-149)

- How do you relate to Assata's statement, “It has always intrigued me how the world can be so beautiful and so ugly at the same time?” (p. 123-124)

- What does Assata mean by “how many ways racism can manifest itself” and “how many ways people fight against it”? Were the students fighting against racism? (p.136)
- Why does Assata identify with the company? Is this something you’ve experienced before? How did that shift for Assata? (p.149)

Voices of a People’s History of the United States

- Angela Davis, “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation” (1970), p. 494-498.
 - Angela Davis writes, “The announced function of the police, ‘to protect and serve the people,’ becomes the grotesque caricature of protecting and preserving the interests of our oppressors and serving us nothing but injustice.” Have you seen examples of this in your own life? (p. 497)
 - When do you feel the most protected and the most safe?

GREEN

If, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore says, abolition is “life in rehearsal,” then “the stage itself must tell a story.” The stage for our Study and Struggle is the land. Who decides whether land is occupied by fruit trees or nuclear waste? Shade trees or enslaved labor? Free housing or prisons? In the United States, this depends on who owns the land. European colonization brought concepts of capitalism and private property. In Mississippi, settlers dispossessed and displaced Indigenous peoples, most of whom did not have privatized relationships to the land. Settlers surveyed and divided fields, forests, and lakes for sale. Until the abolition of chattel slavery, property owners built cotton plantations that depended on the unfree labor of peoples of African descent. After the Civil War, most Black Mississippians worked as tenant farmers and sharecroppers for white landowners. Tenants could grow small gardens to eat and sell fresh food. But racial capitalism meant the strict surveillance of how renters used the land. A tenant who planted vegetables—instead of cotton—might be evicted by their landlord. A family who tried to raise their own livestock—as Fannie Lou Hamer’s did—might find their cows poisoned. Those who resisted this system were subjected to state and extralegal violence. Police frequently used vagrancy laws to arrest those they considered underemployed, turning them over to white landowners or putting them to work in the profitable and deadly replacement to chattel slavery: the convict labor system. This “slavery by another name” was eventually replaced by the penal farm, shifting profits from private landowners to the state. One of the enduring legacies of these transformations is Mississippi State Prison, known as Parchman Farm.

Parchman encompasses 20,000 acres of the Mississippi Delta on land once occupied by the Choctaw people. It is a site of enduring and unspeakable violence. The land has borne witness to centuries of gendered racial terror and unfree labor. This human suffering wrought by Parchman’s continued existence is inextricable from the harm and environmental degradation to the human and nonhuman world that surrounds it. The once-fertile farmland in the Delta floodplain, that made desirable the plantation which preceded the prison, is permeated with toxins leached from the prison’s water system. These toxins flow into the nearby tributary of rivers surrounding Mound Bayou, one of the first autonomous, all-Black settlements of the post-Reconstruction period. These environmental conditions, which poison people inside the prison and the habitat and people surrounding it, are not atypical. The communities disproportionately impacted by prison conditions often are those whose conditions are also made worse by prisons.

In almost every state, prisons are built on or near toxic sites, producing and accelerating life-destroying conditions for both humans and nonhumans. SCI-Fayette in Pennsylvania sits 500 feet from a 500-acre coal ash dump site and former coal processing waste site. People incarcerated there have reported chronic sore throats, thyroid disorders, cancer, shortness of breath headaches, sores, cysts, tumors, and vision problems. Residents in the nearby town of LaBelle, PA, which is predominantly Black, have reported similar symptoms. Prisons destroy life, human and non-human. For humans to thrive, and earth to survive, they must be abolished. This is why abolition must be green.

III. LAND

We've broken this unit into two sections. The first section, "Land," focuses on the ground beneath our feet. As you study the environmentalisms that sustain prisons and imagine an environmentalism without them, consider the physical space necessary for mass incarceration. On whose stolen land do America's prisons and jails sit? What types of violence were necessary to establish and then to maintain a system of private property? What sorts of historic and current value extraction from the earth can you think of? Who decides whether to use land to build a prison or to grow food? How does the nation-state's promise of exclusivity and security to property owners perpetuate militarism at home and abroad? Why must we be in solidarity with nonhuman relatives with whom we share the land? Have any movements provided blueprints for the present? How can we make sure we do not merely "green" the PIC? What better questions can we ask so as not to repeat past failures to organize?

Readings:

- Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account* (1542) in *Voices* (pp. 35-42)
- Winona LaDuke, "Acceptance Speech for the Green Party's Nomination for Vice President of the United States of America" (1996) in *Voices* (pp. 576-578)
- Dan Berger and Emily K. Hobson, "Utopias and Dystopias" in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 345-348)
- Akinyele Umoja, "Why We Say 'Free the Land'" (1984) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 449-450)
- Winona LaDuke, "We Are Still Here: The Five Hundred Years Celebration" (1991) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 455-457)
- James Yaki Sayles, "War for the Cities" (1978) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 211-214)
- Lucille Clifton, "The Mississippi River Empties Into the Gulf"
- Lucille Clifton, "Generations" (selection)
- Dian Million, "We Are the Land, and the Land is Us," from *Racial Ecologies*
- J.T. Roane, "Towards Usable Histories of the Black Commons," *Black Perspectives*
- *The Red Deal*, Part I (pp. 1-20)
- Son House, "Mississippi County Farm Blues" (1931)
- Bukka White, "Parchman Farm Blues" (1940)

Discussion Questions:

Voices of a People's History of the United States

- Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account* (1542) in *Voices* (pp. 35-42)
 - Why do you think Bartolomé de Las Casas wrote these two accounts? To whom do you think he wrote them?
 - How does the account from Bartolomé de Las Casas change or further your understanding of the consequences of European contact on the native people of the Western Hemisphere?
 - De Las Casas wrote these accounts fifty and sixty years respectively after Columbus initially arrived in Hispanola. Do you think the intervening years may have influenced his perceptions? How and why? What happens when someone writes down an account after most of the consequences of an event are known?

- Winona LaDuke, Acceptance Speech for the Green Party's Nomination for Vice President of the United States of America (August 29, 1996) in *Voices* (pp. 575-578)
 - o What is the "seventh generation" Winona LaDuke describes in reference to sustainability?
 - o Do you think LaDuke is correct when she claims that "there is no real quality of life in America until there is quality of life in the poorest regions of this America"? Why, or why not? How do other voices in the book support her contention?
 - o What does LaDuke mean when she says that American Indians are "the only humans in the Department of Interior treated as a natural resource"?

Dan Berger and Emily K. Hobson, *Remaking Radicalism*

- Part 4: Utopias and Dystopias (pp. 345-348)
 - o Berger and Hobson write that the Survival Gathering in South Dakota in 1980--dubbed the Cowboy-Indian Alliance for its broad-based coalition--recognized that "planetary survival itself was imperiled by the trifecta of environmental devastation, corporate greed, and US militarism." What are some examples from other readings, across time, that come to mind using these three categories?
 - o What are the limitations of both capitalism's and communism's belief in the nation-state as a form of political organization? How does the interconnection between earth, human, and non-human forms exceed and require such formulations?
- Akinyele Umoja, "Why We Say 'Free the Land'" (pp. 449-450)
 - o What is the meaning and significance of the call to "Free the Land"?
- Winona LaDuke, "We Are Still Here: The Five Hundred Years Celebration" (pp. 455-457)
 - o What is the relationship between colonialism and ecological devastation?
 - o According to LaDuke, how is the consumption and devastation of land tied to the consumption and genocide of people?
- James Yaki Sayles, "War for the Cities" 4.C.6. (pp. 449-450)
 - o What are the six points that Sayles makes about the connections between displacement of Afrikan people from cities and the growth of prisons?
 - o What are similarities between the dislocation and relocation that Sayles describes and various forms of settler colonialism you've studied?
 - o How does Sayles' piece help us think about land in relation to various forms of exploitation and colonialism?

***The Red Deal, Part I* (pp. 1-20)**

- Who is the Red Nation and what are their political principles?
- What is the Red Deal? What is its relationship to the Green New Deal?
- If you have the reading from Albert Woodfox's *Solitary* for Session 6, you might compare and contrast the Black Panther Party's 10-point program from that of the Red Nation.
- The Red Nation writes that they are "dedicated to the liberation of Native peoples from capitalism and colonialism." What is the relationship between colonialism and

capitalism? In what ways is the punishment system designed to uphold both? How does discipline relate to dispossession?

- What are some examples of the destruction of nonhuman relatives the Red Nation describes? How are these intertwined with colonialism?
- What is the relationship between “Healing Our Bodies” and “Healing the Planet”? Why is “Ending the Occupation” necessary to both?

Dian Million, “We Are the Land, and the Land is Us,” from *Racial Ecologies*

- What is the relationship between capitalism and settler colonialism?
- Million addresses the state violence carried out by militarized police forces in the interest of “production, consumption, and distribution.” What are the examples Million names?
- How does Million’s exploration of “place” unsettle the “antithetical split” between the “urban” and “rural” as geographical categories?

J.T. Roane, “Towards Usable Histories of the Black Commons,” *Black Perspectives*

- What is the relationship between colonialism and ecological devastation?
- How does the Black commons challenge previous uses of the land based on extraction?
- Do you think Roane writes on merely surviving racial capitalism—or—“survival pending revolution,” in the formulation of the Black Panther Party? Why?

Bukka White, “Parchman Farm Blues” (1940)

- To whom do you imagine the once-incarcerated bluesman Bukka White is singing?
- What do you think his song says about incarceration as an answer to human conflict?

IV. CLIMATE JUSTICE

We’ve broken this unit on Green into two sections. The second, “Climate Justice” emphasizes how fighting environmental degradation and planetary destruction must be a political struggle waged alongside struggles to abolish the prison industrial complex. What is the relationship between capitalism, climate change, and state violence? How do different communities experience climate change? Proposed solutions to the climate crisis are often framed through technological advancements and other reforms that leave in place the very structures which have caused it. How can we understand such solutions alongside similar technological “fixes” for policing, prisons, and other aspects of the punishment system that augment and advance, rather than interrupt, existing structures of violence? How are human relationships to nature structured by white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, racial capitalism, and other forms of hierarchy and domination? Look into where the nearest prisons in your area are sited. What is the connection between the prison and the environment around it? How does that environment shape life for the people inside the prison and the communities that surround it? What would climate justice mean without abolition? What would abolition look like without climate justice?

Readings:

- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This ‘Til We Free Us* (pp. 18-25 and 148-162)
- C.T. Butler and Keith McHenry, “Why Food Not Bombs” (1992) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 364-367)

- First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, “Principles of Environmental Justice” (1991) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 373-375)
- John Trudell, “We Are Power” (1980) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 397-400)
- Youth Greens, “Summary of Youth Green May Gathering” (1989) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 403-405)
- Keala Uchoa, *A Zine About Critical Abolitionist Environmental Justice*
- Julian Brave NoiseCat, “Standing Rock is burning – but our resistance isn't over” (2017)
- Mariangelie Ortiz Ortiz, “Rebuilding Puerto Rico, One House at a Time” (2018)
- *The Red Deal*, Part II (pp. 21-31)
- Monica White, “A Pig and a Garden: Fannie Lou Hamer’s Freedom Farm Cooperative”

Discussion Questions:

Mariame Kaba, *We Do This ‘Til We Free Us*, (p. 18-25 and 148-162)

- Hayes and Kaba note that PIC abolitionists are normally dismissed as “politically inactive academics” with impossible ideas. What do they say is true of abolitionists, instead?
- How does Martin Shkreli’s case illustrate the failure of the PIC to promote “justice,” even when the person going through the system is one who is responsible for massive harm? If the system punishing Shkreli is the same one that killed Tiffany Rushner, what does it mean to applaud in the case of the former while decrying the latter?
- “Cages confine people, but not the conditions that facilitated their harms or the mentalities that perpetuate violence.” How does a quote like this, paired with the authors’ use of Moten and Harney, expand what abolition is calling for? How does separating between “harm” and “crime” broaden our analysis when it comes to conceptions of dangerousness?
- What is the difference between restorative justice and transformative justice? What does each focus on?
- What does Kaba mean by “abolition is not about your fucking feelings”? Where does the instinct for punishment come from, and how does it conflict (or not) with abolition?

Voices of a People’s History of the United States

- Julian Brave NoiseCat, Standing Rock is burning – but our resistance isn't over (2017)
 - For Indigenous people, land and water are regarded as sacred, living ancestors. How does this understanding of the relationship with the land differ from the notion of “property”?
 - How does NoiseCat assert that settler-colonialism is very much alive today? Can you think of further examples of modern-day settler-colonialism in the United States?
- Mariangelie Ortiz Ortiz, “Rebuilding Puerto Rico, One House at a Time” (March 20, 2018)
 - Ortiz criticizes the United States’ inaction in providing aid that was promised. Similarly, activist Naomi Klein described Hurricane Maria as “not just a natural disaster, not just a tragedy, [but] state-sponsored mass killing.” Do you agree with Klein’s assessment? Why or why not?
 - Naomi Klein defines “disaster capitalism” as the practice by a government/regime of taking advantage of a major disaster to adopt economic policies that the

population would be less likely to accept under normal circumstances. How do we see this reflected in post-Maria Puerto Rico, and after other disasters in recent past and present?

Dan Berger and Emily K. Hobson, *Remaking Radicalism*

- C.T. Butler and Keith McHenry, “Why Food Not Bombs (pp. 364-367)
 - o How does this reading reframe scarcity as a question of abundance and unequal distribution?
 - o What are some misconceptions you had about hunger and food distribution before reading this piece? How is food justice related to other forms of liberation?
- John Trudell, “We Are Power” (1980) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 397-400)
 - o What does Trudell identify as power and misnomers of power? Where does our power lie, according to him?
 - o Trudell writes that “I see the bulk of the white people, they do not feel oppressed. They feel powerless. When I go amongst my own people, we do not feel powerless. We feel oppressed.” What does he mean by this distinction between oppression and powerlessness?
 - o He also distinguishes between revolution and liberation; and human, civil, and natural rights. How does he define these differences?

The Red Deal, Part II (p. 21-31)

- How does the “divest” framework of “defund the police” fit with the solutions proscribed in the Red Deal?
- What does MMIWG2S stand for? How does the Red Nation frame it and what do they say is necessary for future MMIWG2 campaigns?
- What is a bordertown? What is their history and how do they operate in perpetuating settler colonialism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy?
- What are some of the bullet points in the “What can you do about it?” sections that you feel able to address now? Note any ways to expand your current organizing to incorporate these points, perhaps by forming new coalitions or by broadening existing work you or your organization are doing. Always begin by researching to find out where the work is already being done.

Monica White, “A Pig and a Garden: Fannie Lou Hamer’s Freedom Farm Cooperative”

- Fannie Lou Hamer declares in the chapter’s opening, “Down where we are, food is used as a political weapon.” What did Hamer mean by this and how did food and land autonomy shape her vision of collective agency and community resilience?
- What were the political and economic conditions that likely informed Hamer’s decision to select Sunflower County as the site for the Freedom Farm Cooperative in 1967?
- How did white politicians, business leaders, and police utilize the law to stymie organizing efforts in Mississippi by SNCC, CORE, and the NAACP? In what ways did Freedom Farm serve as an alternative strategy of resistance to sustain activism?
- What are the lessons that can be learned from Freedom Farm? Discuss what you believe Monica White means when she writes, “The organizing strategies of black farmworkers in the 1960s offer lessons that are important today for families displaced by the automobile industry and for others in urban areas currently struggling to access healthy

food, adequate and affordable housing, clean water, quality education, health care, and employment” (87).

Keala Uchoa, *A Zine About Critical Abolitionist Environmental Justice*

- What does Uchoa identify as the limits of the current environmental justice movement? How do its theories of justice fall short of pursuing the transformation needed to realize an abolitionist world?
- Who does Uchoa bring into the history of the environmental justice movement? How does reshaping EJ history to include those fighting about state and carceral violence reshape our understanding of EJ and abolition?
- What does it mean that “the fossil fuel industry and carceral state are symbiotic”? And how do they work together to repress political action?

RED

This “Red” unit highlights histories of radicalism, primarily those of communist and anarchist perspectives. Although many have heard these words, it is more likely that we have heard them defined by their opponents than advocates. Assata Shakur described the first time she was forced to reckon with this. To impress her peers, she threw around terms like “democracy,” “communism,” and “freedom,” only to find that she could only regurgitate what she heard on television or in passing. The only language she had to describe communism was provided to her from people invested in its failure. That embarrassing event taught her that “only a fool lets their enemies tell them who their enemies are.” This unit is an effort to demystify some of what these concepts mean and give examples as to why they have been so important to revolutionaries and organizers. We encourage readers to try to challenge some of these dominant conceptions of communism and anarchism, and leverage the lessons learned by radicals towards our present struggles.

V. CLASS

Class is a concept that cannot be isolated. Even if we take the simplest understanding of class—the amount of wealth that a person has—we are immediately confronted with the difficulty of drawing meaningful conclusions based on that information alone. What does it mean if the person who has \$100,000 is Black or white? What does that amount mean if their parents already have millions of dollars and what does it mean if their loved ones are in debt? What does it mean if they are a man or a woman, cisgender, trans, or nonbinary? What does it mean if they live in New York City and what does it mean if they live in Tchula, MS? What does it mean if they have \$100,000 because they lost their other \$900,000 on a bad investment, and what does it mean if it is their savings from a lifetime of wage work at the time of their retirement?

Now consider that most people look to employment as another clear indicator of class. The type of work you do, the pay and benefits you receive, the security of your position, the likelihood of getting a new position if you get laid off—each of these are further indicators of your class. But most people also understand that you can be a working-class parent with a “good” job and still have far fewer resources than an unemployed upper-class college graduate who is “broke.” Equally, an hour of housecleaning work does not merit the same pay as an hour of work writing software for an app that connects you to house cleaners. Rich people with enough money to invest in something can reap the profits of someone else’s work to become richer without working at all. Class mobility was, and is, theoretically, unlimited. Yet at no point in the country’s history has it ever been equally likely that a child of a poor family would become rich or that a child of a rich family would end up poor. Class, especially in a modern context, is a competition where the rules are unofficial, unspoken, and frequently changing. Understanding

class requires broadening, updating, and challenging our own assumptions and the ones offered to us.

Readings:

- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 93-103)
- Langston Hughes, "Ballad of Roosevelt" (1934) in *Voices* (pp. 327-328)
- The Omaha Platform of the People's Party of America (1892) in *Voices* (pp. 229-230)
- "Proclamation of the Striking Textile Workers of Lawrence" (1912) in *Voices* (pp. 272-274)
- Roberto Meneses Marquez, "A Day Laborer" (2013) in *Voices* (pp. 636-638)
- Yip Harburg, "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" (1932) in *Voices* (pp. 314-315)
- Woody Guthrie, "Ludlow Massacre" (1946) in *Voices* (pp. 314-315)
- Coretta Scott King, "Statement to House Subcommittee on Equal Opportunity and Full Employment" (1975) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 278-279)
- "Goals of the North Carolina Prisoners' Labor Union" (1974) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 170-173)
- Willie Baptist, "Five Main Slogans: Lessons from the History of the National Union of the Homeless" (1993) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 217-220)
- Black Radical Congress, "A Black Freedom Agenda for the Twenty-First Century" (1998) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 426-429)
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag* zine
- Marilyn Buck, "To Women Who Work"
- Jimmy Boggs, *American Revolution*, Chapters 2-3 (pp. 33-45)
- Phil Ochs, "Links on the Chain" (1965)

Discussion Questions:

Marilyn Buck, "To Women Who Work"

- How do the forces of social class, both for the wealthy and for workers, undermine the idea of free will or agency? Why does the poem use verbs the way that it does?
- What does the poem say about the way class is made invisible? This could involve geography, age, media, or anything else that you might notice.

Voices of a People's History of the United States

- Langston Hughes (1934 and 1940) "Ballad of Roosevelt" (1934) (pp. 327-329)
 - Why did the family from the poem no longer believe Roosevelt would help? What do you think will happen next? Why is it important that we move from being focused on a single family to the collective?
- The Omaha Platform of the People's Party of America (1892) (pp. 229-230)
 - How does the discussion of "imported pauperized labor beat down their wages" connect to the current conditions of the gig economy and outsourcing labor today?

How does this create a new class of individuals who are barred from the “formal” workforce?

- In this excerpt, The Omaha Platform discuss that “the fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few unprecedented in the history of mankind” (229) will eventually destroy humanity, in what ways does this echo the antagonisms we see today between the working class and the billionaire class? What examples come to mind?
- “Proclamation of the Striking Textile Workers of Lawrence” (1912) (pp. 272-274)
 - How do the police work to maintain social and class order?
 - Why is it more beneficial for the ruling class for the government to fund anti-strike anti-worker militias rather than just use that money to fund workers' living wages?
- Roberto Meneses Marquez, “A Day Laborer” (April 30, 2013) (pp. 636-638)
 - How can workers step away from electoral politics and engage in grassroots organizing to help change the material conditions of their lives? Why is grassroots organizing so important for those who fall under poor or working class individuals?
 - How does the ruling class and employers take advantage of an individuals' immigrant status to further exploit them and force them into working in poor and unsafe conditions? How does the citizenship status of some individuals cause them to be at constant threat of economic violence?
- Yip Harburg, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime” (1932) (pp. 314-315)
 - How has the United States used the dream of the collective good, of everyone - especially you - benefiting from your hard work, to deceive people and justify suffering?
 - What do international wars have to do with questions of class and the American dream in the US?
 - The title and the chorus address working class people turning to each other for support. In what ways does that present a legitimate hope for the future, and in what ways might that strategy be limited while we exist in a classed society?
- Woody Guthrie, “Ludlow Massacre” (1946) (pp. 278-279)
 - This song presents the events of the massacre from a first-person perspective. It takes the reader/listener directly into the action. Are there advantages to exploring a historical event like this, rather than, say, through a newspaper article or a history book? Are there limitations or pitfalls with personal or subjective experiences of history?
 - In a democracy, the government aims to represent the will of the people. In this case, what role did the government play? Who else had power in this situation and where did it come from?

Jimmy Boggs, *American Revolution* (pp. 33-45)

- Presented with a dilemma on a global scale, like that of automation and technological advancement causing mass unemployment instead of increasing standards of living, it seems clear that individual workers are not at fault and that we need to take radical action to reorganize how we distribute resources in society. In our own lives, we conceive of unemployment very differently. If we get laid off, it's bad luck or a personal failure. Same goes for a loved one. Our main concern is getting a new job and feeding ourselves and our dependents. If we hear about an unemployed stranger on welfare, we might even be upset that we have to pay taxes to support someone who is probably too lazy to hustle and support themselves. What makes it so difficult to bring political analysis into our daily lives? How do we retrain ourselves to analyze and critique the society that produces suffering instead of attacking the sufferers?
- Walmart, Amazon, and McDonald's are the largest private employers in the world. Sketch out what would happen tomorrow if they figured out a way to profitably automate half of their workers. In a better world, what might happen instead?
- Can you give an example of a form of analysis (an idea/word/phrase/way of thinking) that is outdated but still gets applied regularly?

Remaking Radicalism

- Think about all four documents and their themes. Compare and contrast how the authors frame their struggle. How are they similar? How are they also different?
- Particularly in the section on homelessness, it is emphasized that the movement should be led by those experiencing the oppression directly, as opposed to exterior actors. Why would exterior actors want to co-op these struggles?
- Class factors focally in all four documents. Do you think, as Coretta Scott King mentions, that employment can dissipate ethnic tension and alleviate class distinctions?

VI. REVOLUTION

'I follow three teachers:

don pritts, my spiritual guide, "love without action is just a word."

john brown, my moral guide, "what is needed is action!"

emma goldman, my political guide, "if i can't dance, i don't want to be in your revolution."

— Willem Van Spronsen

Revolution represents a collection of thoughts, hopes, writings, art, and actions of people not willing to accept oppression in the face of destruction. Revolution is a series of committed and ongoing acts to overturn the status quo in the hope that the future can be better if we make it that way. Despite the conventional logic of capitalism, white supremacy, imperialism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity that insist there are no alternative systems that could possibly be employed,

many have organized in pursuit of a revolutionary future. This collection of texts, poems, songs, and letters illustrates that revolution does not look any particular way. The following excerpts are meant to act as a brief introduction to some of the ways that revolution has been dreamt of, articulated, longed for, and organized.

These texts model examples of how we can stay committed to the study and the active process of revolution despite oppressive conditions. They can show how analytical rigor can be contained in everyday language and can help us articulate our own vision for the process of revolution. As you read, please let the following questions anchor your exploration: How does your experience fit into the context of revolution? What would revolution look like to you? How do these figures theorize revolution and how do they live it? Is it similar or different from you? What can we learn, expand, and reject from the readings provided and how can we incorporate them into our daily actions and beliefs?

Readings:

- Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 195-207, 241-243)
- George Jackson, *Soledad Brother* (pp. 214-230 and 233-250) (read more)
- Eugene Debs, Statement to the Court (1918) in *Voices* (pp. 294-298)
- Women's Brigade of the Weather Underground, "Message from Sisters Who Bombed HEW for International Women's Day" (1974) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 101-104)
- Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, "What Kind of Revolutionary Organization Is Useful Today?" (1995) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 419-422)
- Lydia Pelot-Hobbs, "Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons" in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 173-174)
- Martin Sostre, "The New Prisoner"
- Leonard Peltier, "An Eagle's Cry"
- Langston Hughes, "Lenin" (1934)
- Jimmy Boggs, *American Revolution* (pp. 46-60)
- Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (pp. 43-62)
- bell hooks, *All About Love* (pp. 3-14)
- Albert Woodfox, *Solitary* (pp. 67-73)

Discussion Questions

hooks, *All About Love* (pp. 3-14)

- Reading hook's *All About Love* and Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* together presents two different problems that utilize similar methods in order to define familiar terminology that can point to innovative solutions. For example, In *Love*, hooks sees conventional claims that love is "undefinable" as making space for relational dysfunction and 'lovelessness' to infiltrate understandings of what it means to behave lovingly. As such, she claims that if love is instead defined as the aggregation of what we do and how we behave, we can see that intentions that are not matched by some practical action cannot meet the criteria of love. Freire offers this same methodology,

but instead of concerning himself with love explicitly, he directs his attention at freedom and oppression. By rejecting freedom as some idyllic value, Freire begins to define freedom as the ability to transform one's future, and the absence of freedom (oppression) is the act of denying someone that capacity. Both hooks and Freire address conventional definitions, highlight their inadequacies, and suggest new definitions that allow their validity to be tested empirically.

- i) What definitions in your own life do you find inadequate?
- ii) Thinking about the definitions you've just thought of, how can we redefine them so that they are testable? They can be measured in the real world in some way?
- iii) How does this act of reconceptualization stand in as a metaphor or microcosm of revolution? How does living (and subsequently, thinking) differently allow us to create a future that meets our needs?

Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 195-207, 241-243)

- How does Assata mimic hooks' method for analyzing love in her own analysis of revolution? What does she think of vague conceptions of revolution? (pp. 197)
- What are Assata's views on racial solidarity? Is it necessary for revolution? (pp. 200)
- How does Assata differentiate adventurism from revolutionary progress? Why must the revolution be a "people's war"? (pp. 242)
- Why is Assata's language rooted in terminology found in Marxism-Leninism and Maoism?

George Jackson, *Soledad, Brother* (pp. 214-230, 233-250)

- "Tuesday, March 24, 1970" discusses Jackson's views of psychological manipulation in regards to parole board hearings. Do you agree with his views? Why does Jackson think this is the first thing that happens when a prisoner enters Chino?
- In this same letter, how has Jackson already begun to theorize abolition? (p. 221)
- How does Jackson feel about non-violence? What are the two things non-violence presumes about the oppressor and oppressed? (p. 223)
- How does Jackson understand leadership? (pp. 226-227)
- What does Jackson think of 'Black Capitalism'? (p. 237)
- On pages 233-250, Jackson outlines how identity is constructed or sprouts out of the economic material history that unfolds. What does he understand the relation between Blackness and capitalism?

Remaking Radicalism

- Women's Brigade of the Weather Underground, "Message from Sisters Who Bombed HEW for International Women's Day" (1974) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 101-104)

- How does the Weather Underground Organization Women's Unit see the bureaucratic structure of welfare? Why do they feel like its not upholding its slogan to be "People serving People"?
- Why do they recognize women's liberation as a necessary element of revolution?
- Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, "What Kind of Revolutionary Organization Is Useful Today?" (1995) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 419-422)
 - What are the two conventional responses to overcome capitalism? Why are both inadequate?
 - What is the third way proposed by the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation? How does it meet the failures of the previously mentioned strategies?
- Snapshot: Lydia Pelot-Hobbs, "Southern Coalition on Jails and Prisons" (pp. 173-174) in *Remaking Radicalism*
 - How does the SCJP theorize the post-civil rights South? Where role does incarceration play in this analysis?

Jimmy Boggs, *American Revolution* (pp. 46-60)

- What group does Boggs think is "exploding" population-wise in the US? Why does he feel this is the case? What is the significance of labeling them "outsiders"? (p. 50)
- Why are the Outsiders capable of thinking beyond the limits of capitalism? (p. 52)

Leonard Peltier, "An Eagle's Cry"

- How does Peltier's poem theorize human's place in History and Nature? Does it exclude non-natives or include them?

Langston Hughes, "Lenin" (1934)

- What does "Lenin" represent for Hughes? Who does Hughes think Lenin's (communist) message is for? By receiving this message what do they receive?

Voices of a People's History of the United States

- Eugene Debs, Statement to the Court (1918) (pp. 294, 297-298)
 - How does Debs address his opposition, while simultaneously identifying groups he is in solidarity with? Where are these lines drawn? Do these ideas resonate with you? How do your ideas differ? (p. 297)
 - What does revolution achieve in Debs eyes? (p. 298)

Woodfox, *Solitary* (pp. 67-73)

- How does the author theorize "violence"? Why are the BPP not violent? (pp. 68-69)
- Why is unity and solidarity so important to the BPP project of Black liberation? (pp. 68, 70-71)

INTERNATIONALISM

Internationalism—the politics and practice of shared affinities beyond national boundaries—has long been a hallmark of radical movements. From enslaved people fighting their way out of bondage to indentured servants and immigrant workers fending off exploitation to Indigenous peoples fighting to retain land and resources, internationalists have long had to contend with capitalism as a global system. Yet the problems of colonialism and conquest, debt and extraction bond the world in unequal ways. Leftwing movements have recognized the nation-state as an artificial boundary designed to promote antagonism. Internationalism is the practice of solidarity on a shared planet. It is a recognition of the global nature of oppression and the possibility of transformation in an unequal world. Internationalism recognizes that even in a global system the intensity of domination and resistance varies over time and space.

This unit addresses two concepts central to internationalism: Nation and State. As concepts, they are related. Both concepts name ways of creating unity, enforcing division, and expressing power. They might even be used together: “nation-state.” Yet, we seek to explore the productive tension between these two terms in defining what is at stake in an INTERNATIONAL orientation.

Nation can refer to a country, as well as the people who reside there. It can reference ethnic groups and other forms of social difference as well as nationalist projects concerned with determining who allegedly does and does not belong. Nationalism takes root through the distinct visions political constituencies create for themselves. These readings highlight Black and Indigenous nationalisms that have rejected the racism of US nationalism in favor of international solidarity.

State, meanwhile, represents institutions of governance: members of security forces as well as elected officials, and representatives from federal agencies all embody “the state.” Through terms like “state violence,” we seek to identify how forms of governance are used to detain, injure, and exploit people. These readings explore the state’s ability to make war and incarcerate, and the transnational coalitions that people form in the effort to defend themselves against state violence.

This study guide asks how we can use “nation” and “state” to clarify the stakes of governance, to identify forms of affinity and antagonism, and to help foster critical awareness about internationalism as an intellectual and political project.

VII. NATION

We open with the idea of the Nation. The readings here explore nationhood and nationality as sources of unity as well as division. As you read, think about how you understand the concept of nation. What does it mean to (not) belong to a nation? What is the difference between nationalism identified with a state and those, like the Black and Indigenous nationalists here, often framed as outside of the state? What makes the concept of nationhood useful? How is it constricting? How do war, slavery, and migration shape concepts of nationality? Can nationalism lead to internationalism?

Readings:

- Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us* (pp. 176-186)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata* (pp. 173-194)
- Emma Goldman, “Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty” (1908) in *Voices* (pp. 269-272)
- Muhammad Ali, *Speaks Out Against the Vietnam War* (1966) in *Voices* (pp. 430-431)
- Rita Lasar, “To Avoid Another September 11, U.S. Must Join the World” (2002) in *Voices* (pp. 604-606)
- Dan Berger and Emily K. Hobson, *Remaking Radicalism*, “Borders and Maps”
- International Indian Treaty Council, “Decolonization, Liberation, and the International Community” (1977) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 239-242)
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers, “Consciousness + Commitment = Change” (2003) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 309-312)
- Black Hills Alliance position paper (1980) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 369-370)
- Native American Rights Fund/National Indian Law Library, “Declaration of Indian Independence” (1975) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 443-445)
- Ashanti Alston, “Beyond Nationalism But Not Without It” (2001) in *Remaking Radicalism*
- Ida B. Wells, *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900) (pp. 443-445)
- Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* zine
- Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates* zine
- June Jordan, “July 4, 1974”
- Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, “On Violence” (pp. 1-62)

Discussion Questions:

- Journalistic accounts sometimes refer to white supremacists as “nationalists.” US wars have often been waged in the alleged “defense of the nation.” From a rather different perspective, Malcolm X, Kwame Ture, and other freedom movement leaders are sometimes referred to as “Black nationalists” (Alston). Further complicating this question, Angela Davis and Black Panther leaders like Assata Shakur and George Jackson often identify as “internationalists” motivated by “revolutionary nationalism.” Given these differences, how might we define “nationalism”? What about “internationalism”?
- How do geography (Berger and Hobson) and legal standing (International Indian Treaty Council, Coalition of Immokalee Workers, Black Hills Alliance position paper)—as well as the stated political orientations of leaders and thinkers, and the groups with which they identify—shape how we define them with regard to these terms? Use the texts mentioned here to craft your response.
- Drawing on the International Indian Treaty Council and the Native American Rights Fund, what is the connection between decolonization, internationalism, and independence? How do rituals and customs as well as notions of sanction shape how people decide who is authorized to represent them—for Indigenous peoples as well as their interlocutors?
- Based particularly on the readings by Kaba and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, identify some linkages between migration and internationalism.
- Ida B. Wells characterizes the kind of violence white supremacists wielded in the post-Emancipation US as mob rule. Mobs have been depicted as inchoate and unwieldy throughout history, yet Wells makes a more specific argument about how whiteness gets

bound up with policing. What is it? What makes mob rule different from the way protest movements mobilize and wield force? How does Emma Goldman help us make sense of this distinction between the “violence” of a riot or protest and what Wells calls “mob rule”?

- How does social difference shape who has access to capital and social mobility—as well as how people are governed—in any given nation? Reference Rita Lasar and Mariame Kaba in developing your response.

VIII. STATE

Building on our discussions of Nation, we turn now to the State. Defining the state is a difficult challenge, but the readings focus particularly on the institutions of governance that are empowered to use violence—particularly through war. In reading, it will be helpful to think about your own experiences with the state. When and how have you been conscious of state power in action? Why is war such a central component of the American state? How does internationalism reimagine the power or purpose of the state?

Readings:

- George Jackson, *Soledad Brother* (pp. 3-33, 251-266, 300-303) (read more)
- Smedley D. Butler, *War Is a Racket* (1935) in *Voices* (pp. 252-255)
- June Jordan Speaks Out Against the 1991 Gulf War (1991) in *Voices* (pp. 256-257)
- Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, “Principles of Unity” (1983) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 262-265)
- Pledge of Resistance, “The Pledge of Resistance: A Growing Nonviolent Movement for Peace in Central America” (1986) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 274-275)
- African Liberation Day Coalition, “Fight Imperialism and National Oppression from the USA to the USA” (1977) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 279-281)
- Angela Davis, “Keynote Speech Delivered at CAAAV’s Fifteenth Anniversary Fundraiser in New York City” (2001) in *Remaking Radicalism* (pp. 331-334)
- Marilyn Buck, “Remembering a 15 Year Old Palestinian Woman”
- Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin, *Anarchism and the Black Revolution*, “Anarchist Theory and Practice” (pp. 48-69)

Discussion Questions:

- Scholars and activists frequently use the term “state violence” to depict persistent forms of political exploitation and widespread abuses of power. In this formulation, who or what is the “state,” and how do we decide? How is the state different from the nation?
- When is the use of force justified? How do we decide? Draw from readings by Davis and the African Liberation Day Coalition in proposing insights.
- Cite common stated rationales for war. How do Jackson, Butler, and Jordan help us situate these claims in the context of ongoing struggles over land and resources?
- Can we envision a world without war? What might that entail? Use “Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention” and “Pledge of Resistance” to make the case.

- Is war about a nation in conflict with outside adversaries or do domestic agencies and officials participate in war? Use at least three assigned readings from this list in formulating your response.

III. PROJECTS

Collaborate with members of your reading group to translate the insights you have discussed into one more of the following genres:

- zines
- interview/podcast transcripts
- poetry
- first-person narratives
- memoir (ie. *Assata*)
- book chapters/articles
- song lyrics
- “solitary gardens”