

## Session Four: Feminist, queer, anti-racist approaches to abolition

1. 'Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex' in *Abolition Now! Ten Years of Strategy and Struggle Against the Prison Industrial Complex*. Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (2008)

Available from:

<https://incite-national.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CR-INCITE-statement-2008discussion.pdf> [6 pages].

2. 'Rethinking Antiviolence Strategies: Lessons from the Black Women's Movement in Britain'  
Julia Sudbury (2006)

Available from [12 pages]:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/ylo4injtkek2dfy/Sudbury\\_rethinking\\_antiviolence\\_strategies.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ylo4injtkek2dfy/Sudbury_rethinking_antiviolence_strategies.pdf?dl=0)

3. 'How Anti-Violence Activism Taught Me to Become a Prison Abolitionist' in *Feminist Wire*  
Beth Richie (2014)

Available from:

<http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/01/how-anti-violence-activism-taught-me-to-become-a-prison-abolitionist/> [2 pages]

4. 'Building an Abolitionist Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We've Got' in *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. Morgan Bassichis, Alexander Lee and Dean Spade (2011)

Available from:

<http://www.deanspade.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Building-an-Abolitionist-Trans-Queer-Movement-With-Everything-Weve-Got.pdf> [10 pages]

5. 'Fault lines in the fight against racism and antisemitism'  
Liz Fekete (2020)

Available from:

<http://www.irr.org.uk/news/fault-lines-in-the-fight-against-racism-and-antisemitism>

## Why these readings?

The questions, 'what about the rapists?' and, 'what about the murders?' are raised when abolition is being discussed. It is important to acknowledge these questions and not dismiss or shy away from them, as they usually come from a place of genuine concern. Questions of how to prevent and respond to violence are fundamental to abolitionist organising and practice.

It is also important to approach this session with extra sensitivity as people may find discussions around sexual/gender/racial violence particularly challenging or triggering, especially for those who have experienced trauma. It can be helpful to encourage participants to be mindful of their own needs and boundaries, as well as those of others, when approaching these topics.

Mainstream responses to gender-based violence and individual instances of racist violence often involve the criminal justice system, despite its known failings. People may have strong feelings and attachments to criminal justice responses to sexual/gender-based/racist violence. They may also have connections or alliances with organisations and advocates of a pro-criminal justice approach (e.g. calling for more police on the streets, longer sentences, new laws).

People may be surprised to learn that many of the leading abolitionist organisers are those who are seeking specifically to address gender and sexual violence. The readings for this week highlight that work, particularly done by women of colour and queer/trans people, and highlight the need to bring together an abolitionist and anti-violence frame.

## Questions to discuss:

1. Why is it important to consider state and interpersonal violence together?
2. The INCITE! Critical Resistance statement was written in 2001 in the US context. How relevant is the statement to the UK & Ireland context, now?
3. Why does Julia Sudbury argue for a rethinking of anti-violence strategies? What broader changes would be needed to enact the kinds of strategies outlined by Julia Sudbury?



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4. What are the problems with the way existing systems (e.g: policing, prisons, border security) respond to harm, particularly gender/sexual harm?
5. What are the risks in re-conceptualising racism as 'hate crime'? What approaches could be used to address racist violence without using police routes?
6. How could our society better support survivors of violence without inflicting harm or violence on others?
7. What lessons can be learned from the last reading 'Building an Abolitionist Trans and Queer Movement with Everything We've Got'?

*We suggest picking two or three of these questions to focus on.*