Abolition Revolution, Aviah Sarah Day & Shanice Octavia McBean, (2022) Pluto Press, paperback ISBN 97807 45346519 £7.49, eBook 97807 45346533 £4.99

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The murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests that followed created space for more radical conversations about police and state violence. Whilst penal abolition has a longer history, these pivotal moments caused an abolitionist resurgence that shifted public consciousness. The murder of Sarah Everard in 2021 refocussed the interests of the burgeoning abolitionist movement onto the UK and grasped the nation's attention. It is in the aftermath of these events, and the continuing collective awareness of abolitionist practice, that Day and McBean's contribution to the UK's post-2020 canon of abolitionist texts, *Abolition Revolution,* comes to be.

Abolition Revolution offers a crucial perspective on resistance to state power and violence in Britain. Day and McBean begin the book by tracing their trajectory to abolitionism. Initially meeting through their involvement in *Sisters Uncut*[1]*,* the authors ground the book in their experiences of Black feminist campaigning and activism. The book connects various struggles including anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism, anti-racism and feminism within historical and contemporary social movements. However, it is the intrinsic and maintained focus on resistance, uniting sometimes seemingly disconnected moments of struggle, that provides a unique perspective on abolitionist organising and history in Britain. The rooting of the authors' personal experiences of activism within the book continually emphasises – there is no abolition without action.

The book connects complex histories of resistance to state violence and power, colonialism, racism and classism. Each individual thesis is designed as a tool for communal study, organising and critical reflection. Split into an introductory section and five subsequent parts, each thesis explores one main subject from race and policing to student revolts to Islamophobia. Central to each thesis is resistance. Calls to action run throughout as Day and McBean detail how we can work to resist state power, carceral systems, racism and colonialism. This call to action is not perfunctory, but emotive and practical, as the authors emphasise the ways to actively resist, through withdrawing consent from policing, physically defending communities from fascists, abolishing borders and redistributing wealth. This is coupled with an urgent need to form communities of care, through mutual aid groups, adoption of harm reduction approaches and strategic direct action. The structure and design therefore mirror the delivery of one of the books most poignant messages - the need for collective and community action.

Through deft historical research, Day and McBean connect rich histories of resistance, emphasising the need for international solidarity and the connected nature of global

[1] , Sisters Uncut is a Black feminist direct-action group originally founded in 2014 in response to austerity cuts to domestic violence services

struggles. The book focusses on Britain, although it might be more accurate to say England, as there is notably less engagement with the Scottish and Welsh contexts. However, the authors highlight how enduring legacies of Empire continue to bond and elucidate international connections through carceral mechanisms such as policing. Whilst policing throughout the colonies was reflective of, and reactive to, the resistance it encountered, Day and McBean illustrate the similarities and origins of policing within former colonial nations using examples such as Ireland, Nigeria and India. The authors trace how colonial policing upheld and (re)produced systems of racial hierarchies in the pursuit of colonialist capitalist expansion, the legacies of which persist today. Through this historical contextualisation, and other contemporaneous examples, the authors persuasively lay out the fundamentality of social control, specifically of racialised and working-class groups, by the police, before powerfully reinforcing the fallacy of police reform and convincingly arguing for alternatives.

However, it is Day and McBean's ability to find connections between movements, and to look for what unites struggles, that makes this book an incredibly important read, and one that challenges the boundaries of abolitionism. Whilst there are some moments where this can feel an overly ambitious endeavour for short standalone theses, Day and McBean create these links best when they draw on their own experiences of organising. Touching upon their involvement in the Kill the Bill[2] movement, they candidly articulate the challenges, and rewards, that came from uniting with previously disconnected groups, such as with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) communities, to create stronger resistance movements based on solidarity. Accentuating the importance of listening and learning, they relay the discovered commonalities shared between groups under capitalism, and the importance of recognising and expanding networks and methods of resistance, such as bringing together rural and urban communities. In this way, the book reaffirms the changing nature of abolitionist praxis to meaningfully include intersectionality in action as well as theory, to be malleable to inclusivity and to be adaptable to change.

This application of intersectional practice is also applied retrospectively when exploring the 1780 Gordon Riots. The authors trace how, in socio-economic circumstances depressingly familiar to today, riots began due to racial prejudice against Catholic, Irish and immigrant communities. Through an emerging class consciousness, the riots focus diverted towards the political establishment and criminal justice system in response to rising costs of living and levels of poverty. Despite an impassioned show of resistance to the political class, the riots were quashed. Although, as Day and McBean relay: 'How much more powerful might it have been if that anti-establishment spirit had developed into an anti-imperialist movement that welcomed Catholics, Irish and immigrants into the fight?' (pp 98). Day and McBean carefully draw upon contemporary examples of resistance - The Battle of Cable Street and the London Makhnovist squatters – seemingly distinct, moment of resistance, however bridged through working class solidarity, to emphasise the strength of class consciousness in building community

[2] Kill the Bill movement was an organised response from a coalition of activist groups to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

solidarity and challenging carceral logics. Although the challenge of true intersectional inclusive solidarity persists, they effectively express the necessity of this to achieving a revolutionary and abolitionist vision.

Conclusively, Day and McBean's contribution to the field of abolitionism is thoughtful, original, well researched and timely. Reading through an impressive history of resistance to Empire, state violence, fascism and carceral systems brings both a hopeful invigoration and an urgent necessity to the need to address the real and underlying causes of harm in society. For seasoned abolitionists, or those who are curious, this will be an affirming and rejuvenating read. And for others who may be more sceptical, Day and McBean's ardent and reasoned arguments may just convince you of the reasons why we all need to join the Abolition Revolution.