

FIERCE! (www.fierceny.org) is a community organization for Transgender, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two Spirit, Queer, and Questioning (TLGBTSQQ) youth of color in New York City. We are dedicated to exploring and building power in our communities through a mix of leadership development, artistic and cultural activism, political education, and campaign development while taking care of ourselves and each other. We take on the institutions that perpetuate transphobia, homophobia, racism, ethnic conflict, gender bias, economic injustice, ageism, and the spread of HIV, STIs, STDs, and other mental and physical health crises — that make daily survival a terrifying challenge for many TLGBTSQQ youth. FIERCE organizes against the injustices of the criminal “justice” system, housing, employment, education, and healthcare systems. We believe in the ethic of organizing by us, for us. Now that’s FIERCE!

Bluestockings (www.bluestockings.com) is a worker-owned radical bookstore, fair trade cafe, and activist center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Through words, art, food, activism, education, and community, we strive to create a space that welcomes and empowers all people. We actively support movements that challenge hierarchy and all systems of oppression, including but not limited to patriarchy, heterosexism, the gender binary, white supremacy and classism, within society as well as our own movements. We seek to make our space and resources available to such movements for meetings, events, and research. Additionally, we offer educational programming that promotes centered, strategic, and visionary thinking, towards the realization of a society that is infinitely creative, truly democratic, equitable, ecological, and free.

Bluestockings Activist Research Project

Each month Bluestockings Activist Research Project invites organizers and movement researchers to reflect on the work they do and compile a list of books that have helped shape their analysis of social justice issues. The aim of the research project is to highlight the multiple dimensions of analysis that flourish in our movements while also pointing to new lines of inquiry. This is our participation in alternative forms of research that are both collaborative and powerful. *Co-research* is a practice of intellectual production that does not accept a distinction between active researcher and passive research subjects. At its best co-research aims for a productive cooperation that transforms both into active participants in producing knowledge and in transforming themselves. *Militant research* has many meanings. It can be research carried out with the aim of producing knowledge useful for militant or activist ends. Militant research can also be research that is carried in a fashion in keeping with the aims and values of radical militants.* In thinking through the rotating collection of books each month, we ask: what radical possibilities in collective research emerge from the horizontal support that each list offers?

Bluestockings

ACTIVIST RESEARCH PROJECT

MONTHLY PICKS FROM THE FRONTLINES OF STRUGGLE

July 2008: Queer Radicalism and Urban Youth Organizing Compiled by FIERCE!

Michael Abramson, *Palante: Young Lords Party*. McGraw Hill, 1971.

From the back cover of the now out of print book: “The first book to be published on the Young Lords Party, a revolutionary political organization formed in New York City in the summer of 1969 and whose influence has rapidly spread to Puerto Rican communities throughout the country and to Puerto Rico itself.”

Maurianne Adams, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. Routledge, 1997.

A much needed resource that addresses the need to facilitate communication and understanding between members of diverse social groups.

Dan Berger, Chesa Boudin & Kenyon Farrow, *Letters From Young Activists*. Nation Books, 2005.

A collection of impassioned short writings by a diverse group of US activists working for racial, economic, environmental and global justice.

Jaron Browne, Marisa Franco, Jason Negron-Gonzales & Steve Williams, *Towards Land, Work, and Power: Charting a Path of Resistance to U.S.-Led Imperialism*. Unite to Fight Press, 2006.

About organizing by organizers, this book represents an attempt to assess the racist, sexist, homophobic and inherently exploitative system of imperialism on the terrain of San Francisco’s streets.

Martin Duberman, *Stonewall*. Plume, 1994.

This landmark book unforgettably demonstrates that the Stonewall riots were not the beginning - just as they were certainly not the end - of the ongoing struggle for gay and lesbian rights.

Tanya Erzen & Andrea Mcardle, *Zero Tolerance: Quality of Life and the New Police Brutality in New York City*. NYU Press, 2001.

This book develops the connections between the most visible and familiar forms of police brutality that have sparked a new era of grassroots community activism, and the day-to-day violence that accompanies the city’s campaign to police the quality of life.

Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*. Beacon Press, 1997.

A personal/political history of gender as a concept and transgender as an identity and reality.

Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vintage, 1990.

An important study and history of how sexuality has been transformed into a tool of individual and social control.

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum International Publishing Group; 30 Anniversary Edition, 2000.

An important introduction to the theory and practice of popular education and a must for those interested in the on-the-ground process of social transformation.

Amy Gluckman, *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life*. Routledge, 1997.

An investigation of the complex relationship between gay people and the US economy and the reasons why only a small part of the gay community is benefiting from the massive expansion of interest in gay consumers by corporate America.

David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

A basic introduction and history of neoliberalism, the form of capitalism currently dominant on a world scale. An important primer to an economic system that affects billions but is understood by very few.

Daisey Hernandez & Bushra Rehman, *Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. Seal Press, 2002.

Over 25 essays by young women of color redefine feminism as a location to reclaim histories, activate culture, struggle against repression and claim identities.

Fred Ho, *Legacy to Liberation: Politics and Culture Revolutionary of Asian/Pacific America*. AK Press, 2000.

A groundbreaking anthology which documents & analyzes three decades of radical and revolutionary movement building in Asian-America from the 60s to the 90s.

Gordan Brent Ingram, *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*. Bay Press, 1997.

This book links sexuality to the importance of space, a logical development out of the resistance movements and identity politics of the 1970s and 80s. In those years, activists were clearly concerned with making space for circumscribed groups, with creating symbolic and material presence in the public sphere.

Cynthia Kaufman, *Ideas for Action: Relevant Theory for Radical Change*. South End Press, 2003.

Written in an engaging and accessible style, this book gives activists the intellectual tools to turn discontent into a plan of action. Exploring a wide range of political traditions—including Marxism, anarchism, anti-imperialism, poststructuralism, feminism, critical race theory, and environmentalism—Cynthia Kaufman acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of political movements and the ideologies inspired by or generated through them.

Robin Kelly, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Beacon Press, 2003.

This exciting history of renegade intellectuals and artists of the African diaspora throughout the twentieth century begins with the premise that the catalyst for political engagement has rarely been misery, poverty, or oppression. People are drawn to social movements because of hope: their dreams of a new world radically different from the one they inherited.

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Butch Lee, *Jailbreak Out of History: The Re-Biography of Harriet Tubman*. Kersplebedeb, 2000.

90 pages of crucial revisionist history, firmly rerooting Harriet Tubman in the context of patriarchy, race, class, and armed struggle. A fascinating and much needed examination of the woman and her times.

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Crossing Press, 1983.

A timeless classic, Lorde's chronicle of coming of age as a black, lesbian activist in the 50s is "vivid, charming, nostalgic, hilarious, sensual and erotic."

Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor*. Zed Books, 1999.

This now classic book traces the social origins of the sexual division of labor. It was hailed as a major paradigm shift for feminist theory. Years later, Maria Mies' theory of capitalist patriarchy has become even more relevant.

Don Mitchell, *Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. The Guilford Press, 2003.

An historical and geographical study of public space, this book uses labor struggles, anti-abortion protests, homeless advocacy fights and Berkeley's People's Park as case studies of the intersection of political dissent and the urban landscape.

Kim Moody, *From Welfare State to Real Estate: Regime Change in New York City, 1974 to Present*. New Press, 2007.

Kim Moody argues that the city's business elite has tilted the political structure toward an agenda that puts real estate development ahead of human needs. This book offers the first historical narrative of the key turning points in this process, from the redevelopment of Times Square to the current fight over Brooklyn's Atlantic Yards. It looks beneath the skyline to analyze the power struggles that have shaped this global city in the twenty-first century.

Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. University of California; 2nd Edition, 2007.

A bottom-up history of the civil rights movement, this book looks at the social relationships between "ordinary" members of the Black community as the foundation and engine of the movement.

Rinku Sen, *Stir it Up: Lessons in Community Organizing and Advocacy*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.

A how-to manual for transforming social change organizations into successful, creative activist groups ready to take on the challenges posed by Neoliberalism and the global economy.

Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*. Lawrence Hill Books, 2001.

This presents the life story of African American revolutionary Shakur and reads "like a freeze frame of the late 1960s and early 1970s." Offers rare insight into the post-Black Panther militant Black Liberation underground.

Barbara Smith, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Rutgers University Press, 2000.

For anyone who wants to figure out how to reconcile their fight against racism with their battles against sexism and homophobia within their own communities.

Amy Sonnie, *Revolutionary Voices*. Alyson Books, 2000.

Revolutionary Voices celebrates the hues and harmonies of the future of gay and lesbian society, presenting not a collection of stories but a collection of experiences, ideas, dreams, and fantasies expressed through prose, poetry, artwork, letters, diaries, and performance pieces.

Julia Sudbury, *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex*. Routledge, 2005.

This collection of essays provides a new analysis of women's imprisonment, shifting the focus from women's behavior to the role of the state, corporations, and the media in fueling prison expansion.

Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

This book tells the remarkable story of Robert F. Williams—one of the most influential Black activists of the generation that toppled Jim Crow and forever altered the arc of American history.

Kai Wright, *Drifting Toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay, and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York*. Beacon Press, 2008.

Drifting Toward Love is social commentary of young gay men of color desperately searching for life's basic necessities: homes that provide more than shelter and security against more than violence or disease. As these teenagers navigate the rocky waters of adolescence, they wade through pains and passions that are typical of any young person coming of age. But they do so with few resources—material or emotional—in a world where the cards are stacked against their success.

Sharon Zukin, *The Culture of Cities*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1996.

Combining cultural critique, interviews, autobiography and ethnography, the *Culture of Cities* is a compelling account of the public spaces of modernity as they are transformed into new, more troubling landscapes.