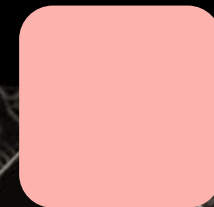
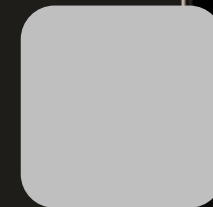
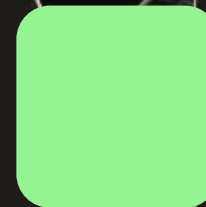


Abolition Social Work

**Social Work
Abolition**

ABOLITION

craig fortier

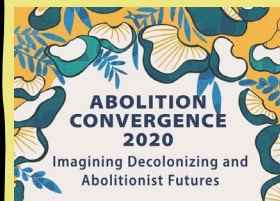


About Me



Academic

Unsettling the Commons; Abolition Social Work



Activist

Abolition Toronto; No One Is Illegal-Toronto



Community

Field of Dreamers Cooperative Softball Association



Teaching

Emergent Encounters; Social Work; Social Movements



RUTH WILSON GILMORE'S TWO QUESTIONS

a) So many more agencies and people (i.e. store clerks, teachers, social workers, nurses, day care workers, food workers, etc.) have absorbed functions of policing as part of their day-to-day job.

b) The police force has absorbed more and more the roles of social workers as their budgets have ballooned and other sectors of society have seen drastic cuts



RUTH WILSON GILMORE'S TWO QUESTIONS

1) What makes peoples lives vulnerable?

2) What are the process by which we seek to deal with harm in our society?



SPACES OF SOCIAL WORK



**CARCERAL
&
EXTRACTIVE**

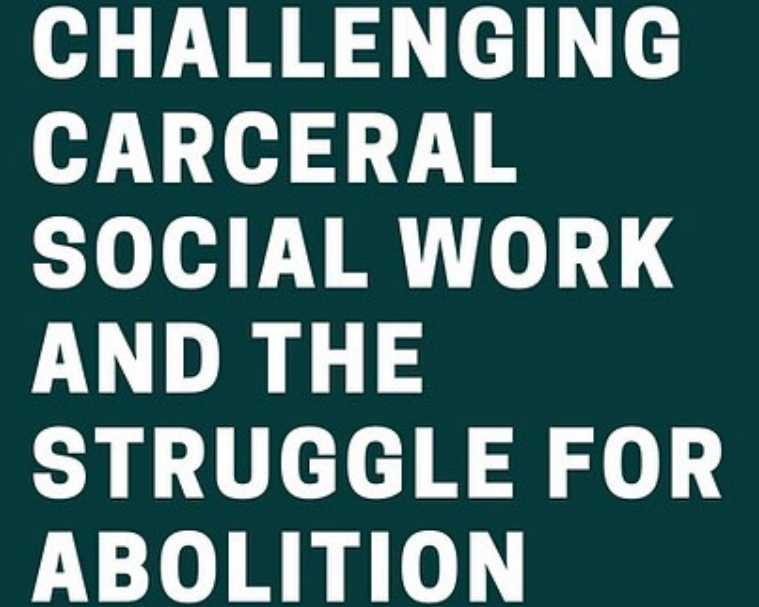
**SERVICE
&
BAND AID**

**MUTUAL AID
&
SOCIAL
SOLIDARITY**

CARCERAL & EXTRACTIVE



1. **SURVEILLANCE** – work to monitor and report on communities.
2. **CONTAINMENT** – work to force communities to abide by classist/racist/sexist/ableist rules
3. **DISPOSSESSION** – removal of people from community, family, support networks
4. **PUNISHMENT** – cooperation with formal and informal networks of carceral punishment
5. **COERCION** – work that happens to someone without their consent, knowledge, or understanding

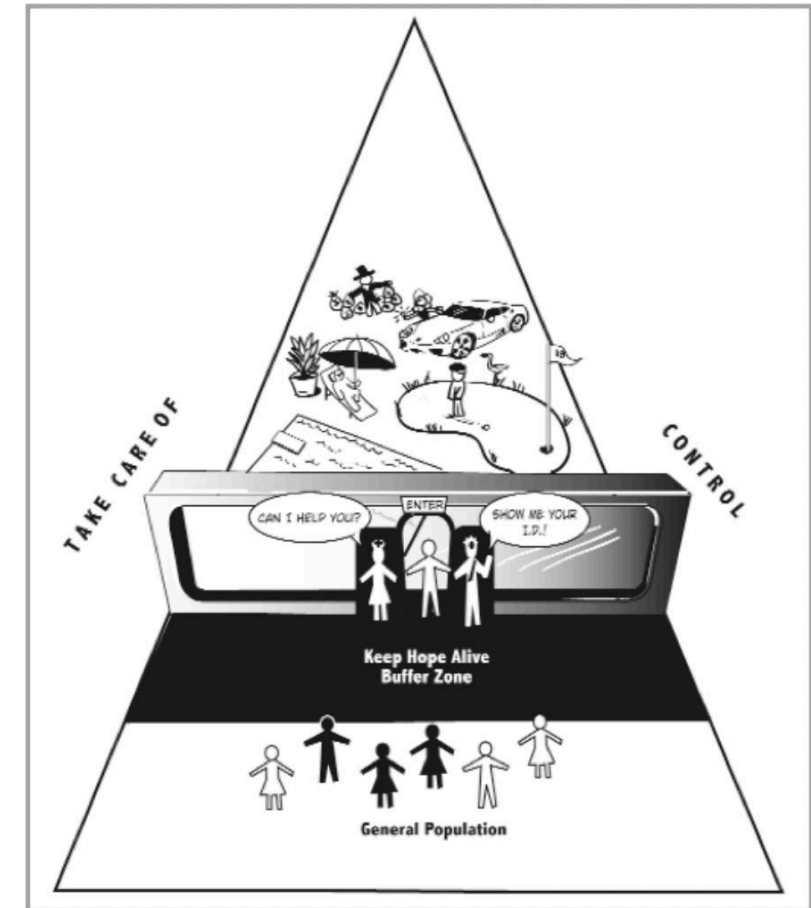


**CHALLENGING
CARCERAL
SOCIAL WORK
AND THE
STRUGGLE FOR
ABOLITION**



SERVICE & BAND-AIDS

1. **NPIC** – advancing neoliberal policies through the non-profit industrial complex
2. **BUFFER ZONE** – acting as a buffer zone between poor/disabled/racialized etc. folks and those with political power (the advocacy fallacy)
3. **BAND AIDS** –cycles of burnout (for workers) and loss of hope/belief because people's lived conditions don't change.
4. **CO-OPTATION** – community members are asked to sit on endless boards, participate in numerous studies/inquiries, sit through long and tedious town halls/meetings without seeing change take place.
5. **PROFESSIONALIZATION** – creating social distance between social workers (as experts) and community.



The Buffer Zone

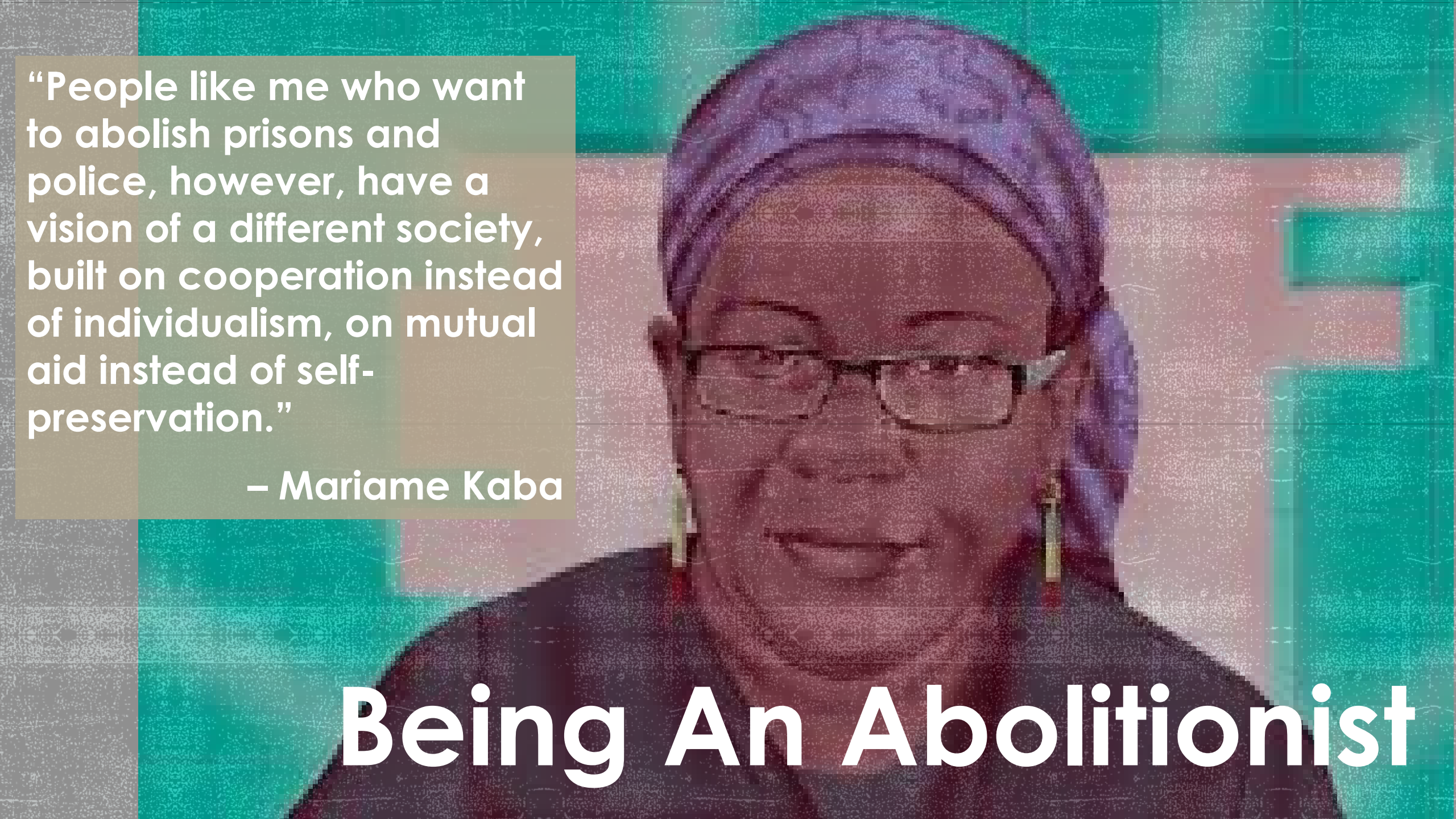
Image: Paul Kivel 2004



MUTUAL AID & SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

1. **COMMUNITY LED** – community takes a leadership role in determining healing, change, and addressing social problems.
2. **MUTUALITY** – social workers understand that their own well-being is tied to the well-being of others – and both provide and accept support/help as needed.
3. **DECENTRALIZED** – social workers resist/transform/reject professional associations and dogmatic forms of education.
4. **ANTI-CAPITALIST** – social workers refuse to cooperate with neoliberal policies/institutions and join movements against capitalism.
5. **ABOLITIONIST** – social workers refuse work that is implicitly carceral – they work with community to address problems in alternative ways.



A portrait of Mariame Kaba, a Black woman with short, curly black hair, wearing glasses and a black top. She is smiling slightly. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a white door and a teal wall. A semi-transparent teal box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing a quote and her name.

“People like me who want to abolish prisons and police, however, have a vision of a different society, built on cooperation instead of individualism, on mutual aid instead of self-preservation.”

– Mariame Kaba

Being An Abolitionist

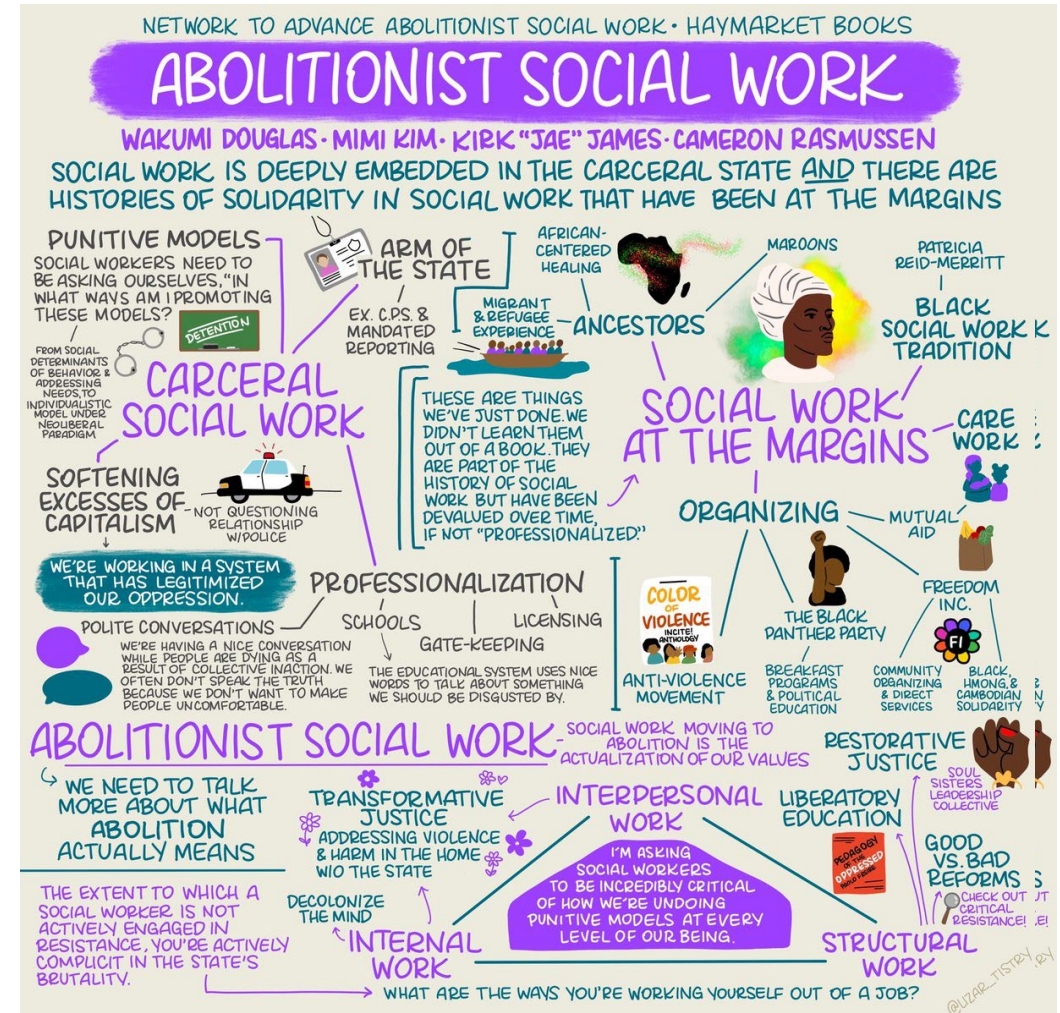
BEING AN ABOLITIONIST SOCIAL WORK ...

- Social workers were proposed as **alternative to cops** – for mental health calls – following the 2020 BLM Uprisings.
- Social workers were proposed as **educators for cops** to improve their skills at dealing with people who are in crisis.
- Abolitionist social workers suggested that just hiring social workers **did not deal with the root of the problem** – which is a society that uses surveillance, violence, and control against racialized communities.



... MEANS BEING OPEN TO SOCIAL WORK ABOLITION

- How do we create responsive, community-based alternatives to current social work models?
- Will more inclusive social work spaces produce different results?
- Is it time to push back against professional bodies and try to create new networks of relationships between community and social workers?





Within – The spaces of contradiction, of survival, of mutual support that exists in the world we live in today.

Against – The forces we assemble to struggle against the dominant structure of power and their agents.

Beyond – The spaces and projects we create that help us to imagine and bring to life new ways of being.

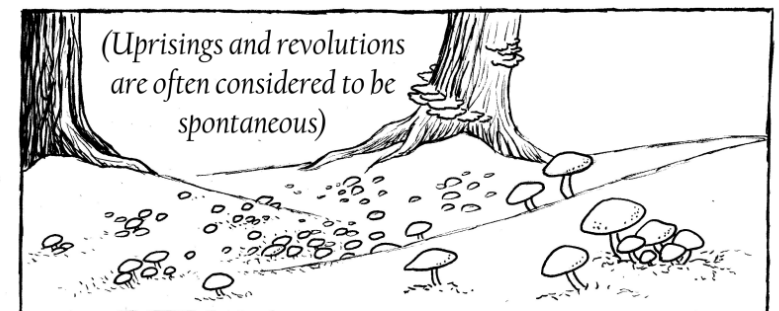
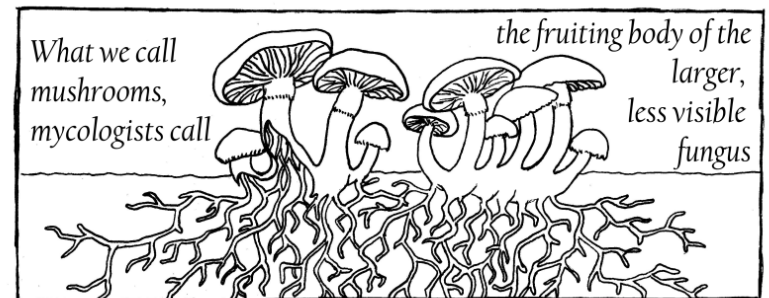
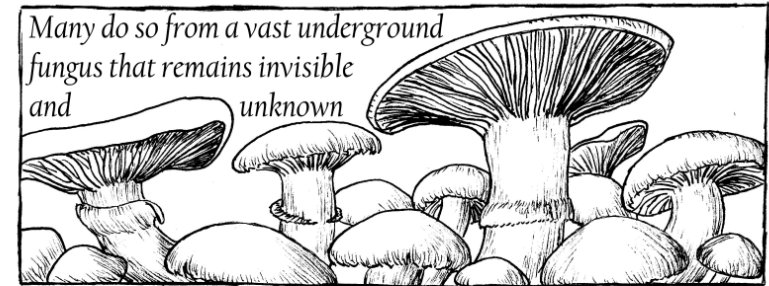
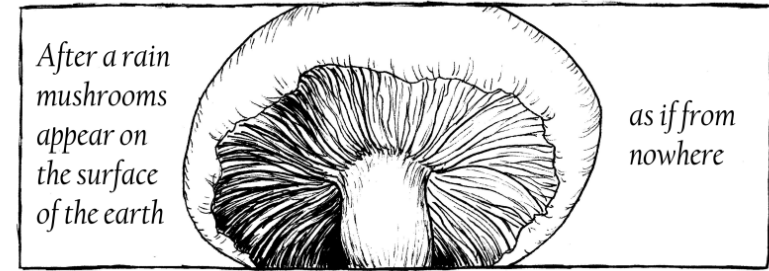
within / against / beyond

BUILDING THE MYCORRHIZAL NETWORK

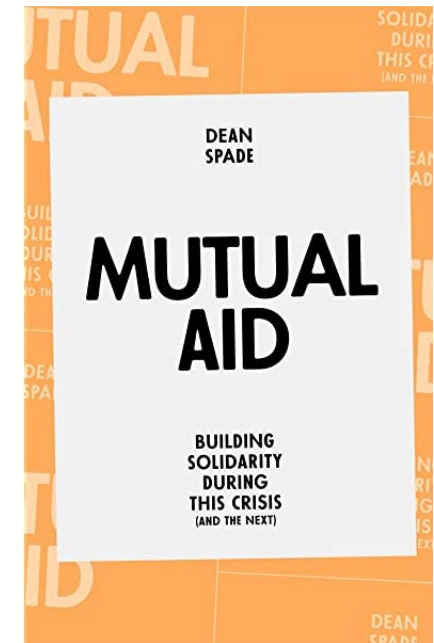
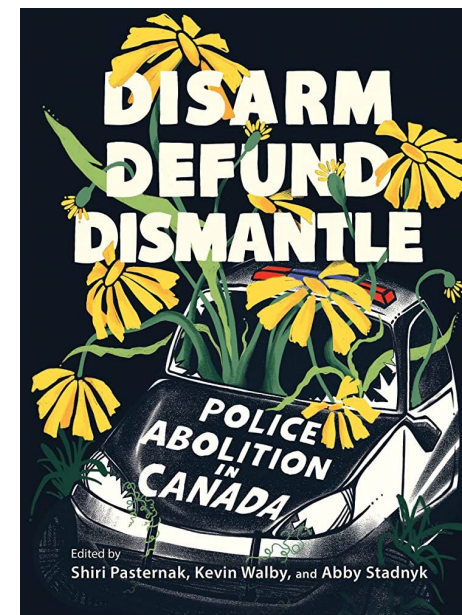
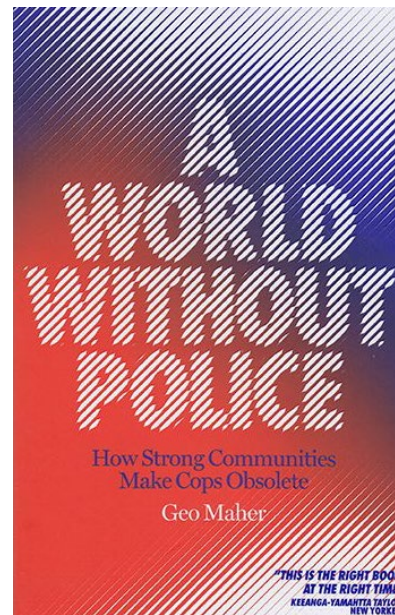
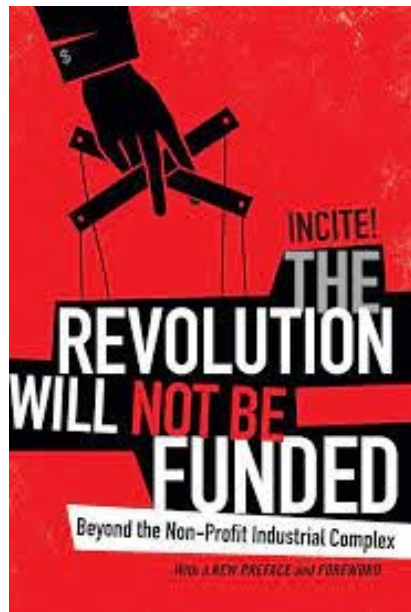
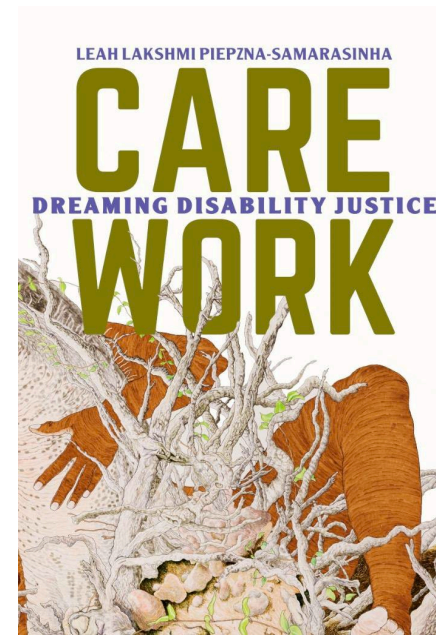
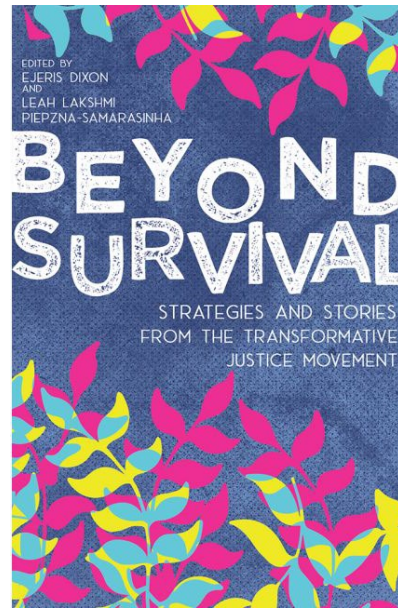
- ★ Social movements are most visible as **reactions** to **acute** events.
- ★ But they are, in fact, the outgrowth of years of **relationships, collective practices, and radical imaginings**.
- ★ To lay the groundwork for transformative change requires **collaboration, patience, and tending to these relationships**.

abolitionist social work is meant to help foster these possibilities.

Mushroomed:



More
RESOURCES





discussion