

The background features three large, overlapping circles. The top circle is orange with a yellow highlight on its upper right edge. The bottom-left circle is purple with a pink highlight on its lower left edge. The bottom-right circle is blue with a teal highlight on its lower left edge.

# RADICAL BOOKS

that aren't a slog

leftist book  
recommendations  
for  
newly radical folks

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leftist book recommendations for newly  
radical folks

Author: Violet B. Fox

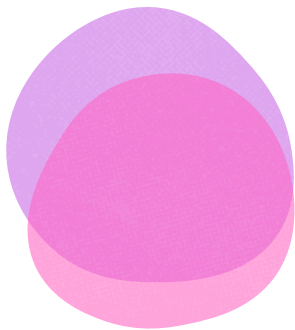
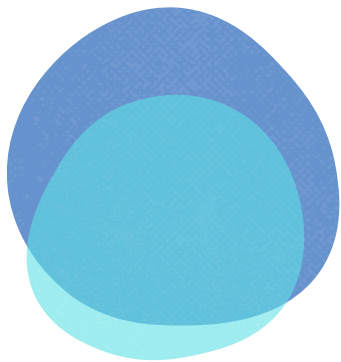
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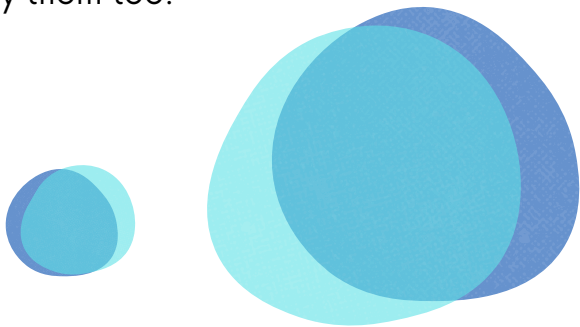


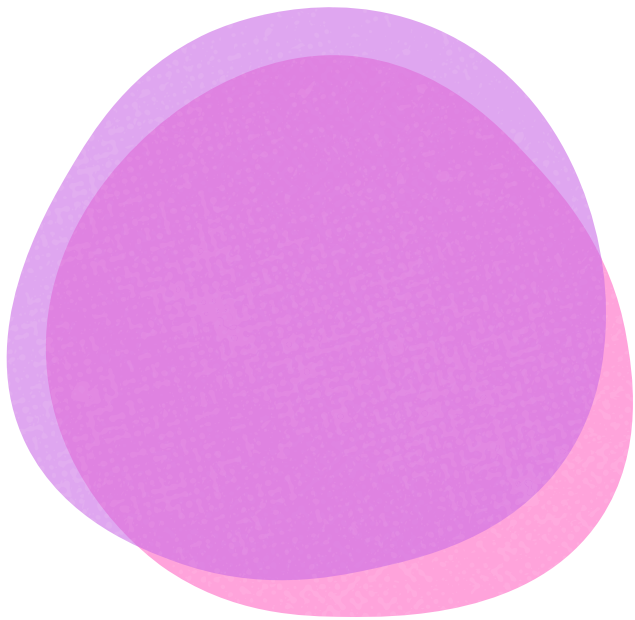


Welcome, my radical friends! When you do a web search for “radical books,” what comes up is giant lists of stuff like Das Kapital. It’s always a lot of dense theory by dead white men. Even the “leftist 101” lists are absolutely not 101 level! Look, I’m a leftist librarian, but I’m never going to sit down and read Bakunin, sorry, man. ˘\\_ (ツ) \\_ /˘

Is theory important? Sure. But you gotta give people a way to get acclimated to leftist ideas before you throw a bunch of theory at them.

This zine is a list of 17 books that helped shift my perspective to the left. These books have two things in common: 1. they encouraged me to imagine new ways of being in the world, and 2. I found them particularly engaging and fun to read. I hope you enjoy them too!





NONFICTION

# HOW TO HIDE AN EMPIRE

A HISTORY OF THE GREATER UNITED STATES

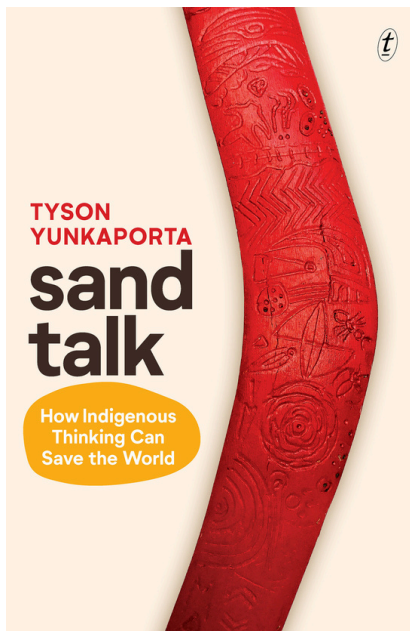
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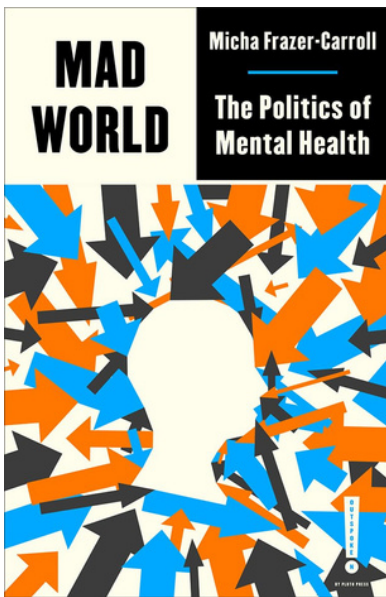
**DANIEL  
IMMERWAHR**

PICADOR

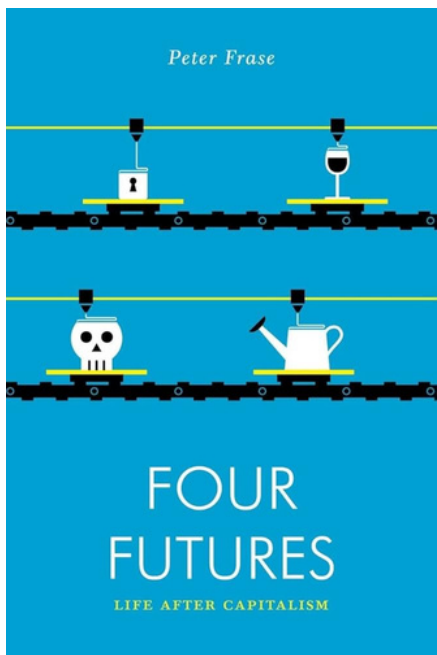
How to Hide an Empire : A History of the Greater United States / Daniel Immerwahr (2019). Very readable, very fun, I want every U.S. resident to read it. It'll make you think twice every time you see the "logo map" of the continental U.S.



Sand Talk : How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World / Tyson Yunkaporta (2020). An Aboriginal Australian on Indigenous approaches to sustainability and relationships. Very powerful and moving.



Mad World : the Politics of Mental Health / Micha Frazer-Carroll (2023). How can we understand mental illness in its political context? How can we imagine beyond “awareness” campaigns to what true support and healing would look like?



Four Futures : Life After Capitalism / Peter Frase (2016). Draws from speculative fictions to imagine utopias and dystopias we might be headed for. Very evocative.

"These essays are the heart, the bones,  
and the blood of Disability Rights."  
—Gaelynn Lea, musician and activist

# Disability Visibility

FIRST-PERSON STORIES FROM  
THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

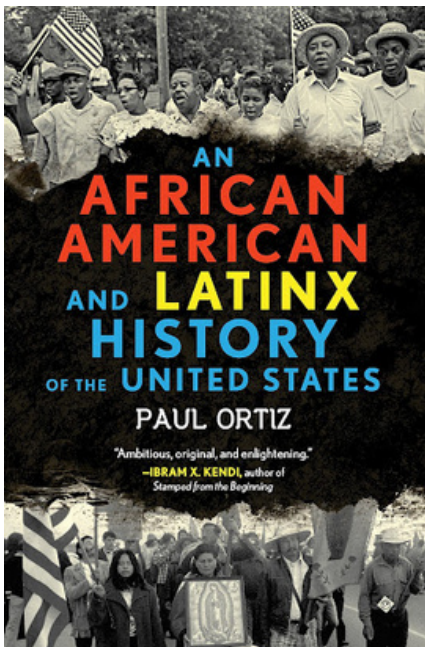
EDITED BY

**Alice Wong**

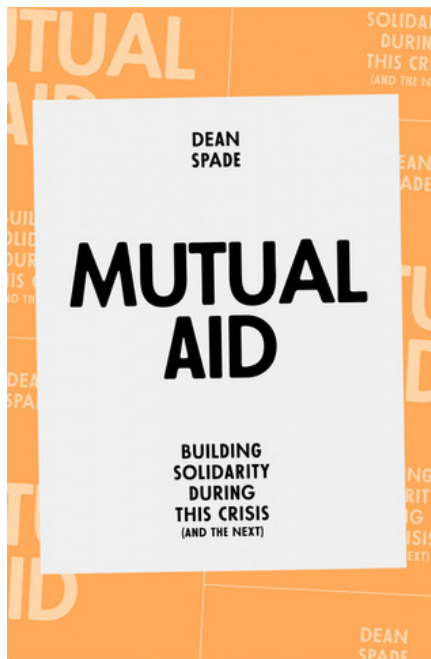
Disability Visibility : First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century / Alice Wong (2020). Excellent anthology that invites readers into the rich diversity of the experiences of disabled people.



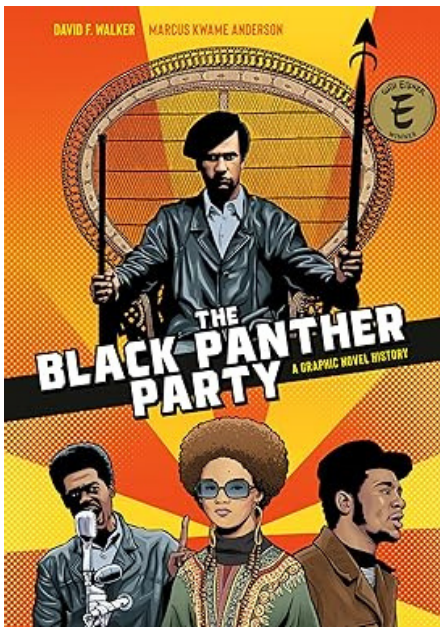
Fight Like Hell : The Untold History of American Labor / Kim Kelly (2023). Histories from a wide range of workers (factory employees, farm laborers, flight attendants) gaining their rights through collective action. Why didn't we learn this in school?? (You know why.)



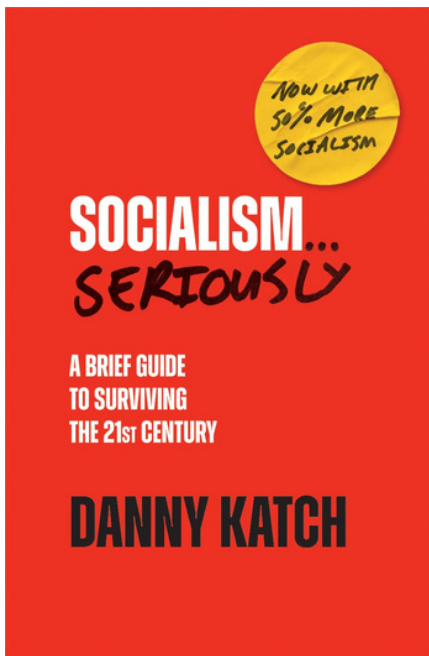
An African American and Latinx History of the United States / Paul Ortiz (2018). I loved the intertwining stories of the actions of grassroots organizers from African American, Indigenous, and Latinx communities.



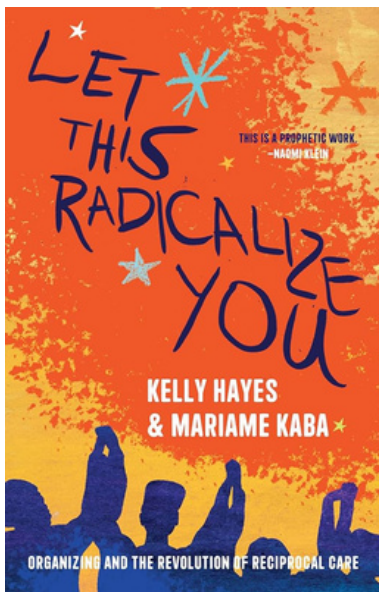
Mutual Aid : Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next) / Dean Spade (2020). A quick read and a great introduction to organizing, with topics such as making decisions in groups and dealing with burnout.



The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History / David F. Walker and Marcus Kwame Anderson (2021). A beautiful introduction to the groundbreaking work done by the Black Panthers. Highlights the cyclical nature of radical history so we're prepared for what's coming next.



Socialism... Seriously : A Brief Guide to Surviving the 21st Century / Danny Katch (2023). Clever and witty! The book explores the potentials of a socialist society and explains some of the distinctions between socialist flavors.



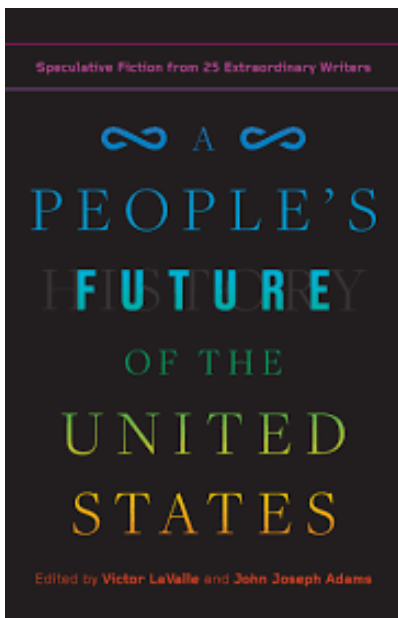
Let This Radicalize You : Organizing and the Revolution of Reciprocal Care / Kelly Hayes and Mariame Kaba (2023). Everyone you know is reading it, and for good reason!! Full of hard-won wisdom and thoughtful inspiration for activists and new (or potential) organizers.



# SPECULATIVE FICTION



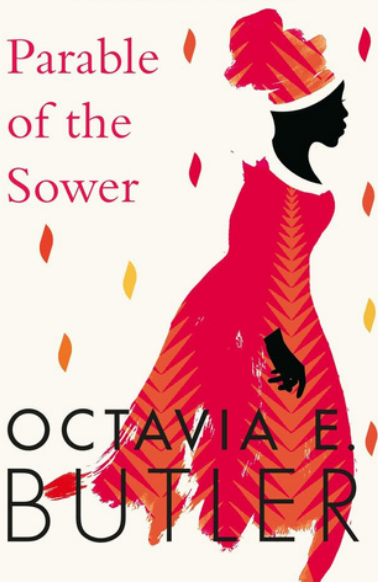
Thyme Travellers : An Anthology of Palestinian Speculative Fiction / Sonia Sulaiman (2024). Really loved these short stories from people in the Palestinian diaspora. Each story highlights aspects of the Palestinian identity and imagines futures beyond the tragedy of displacement.



A People's Future of the United States : Speculative Fiction from 25 Extraordinary Writers / Victor LaValle and John Joseph Adams (2019). An inventive and exciting collection of short stories that focus on marginalized people and our potential futures.

'Brilliant, endlessly rich . . . pairs well with *1984*  
or *The Handmaid's Tale*' John Green

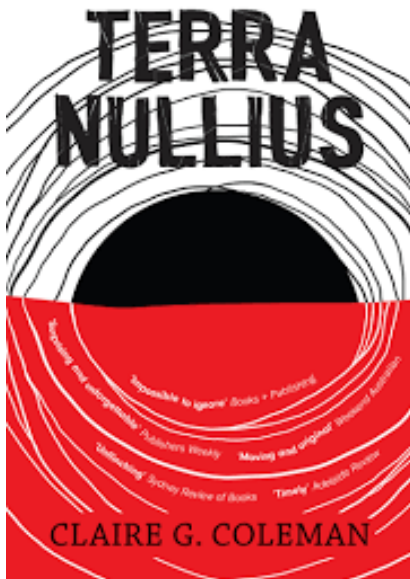
# Parable of the Sower



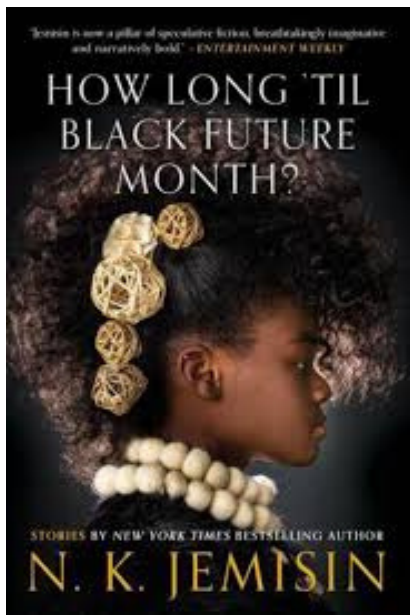
OCTAVIA E.  
BUTLER

Parable of the Sower / Octavia E. Butler (1993). If I could shove one book in your hand, it'd be this one. How does one survive intense income inequity and the ravages of climate change? By dreaming of something worth striving for.

The bestselling and award-winning novel



Terra Nullius / Claire G. Coleman (2017). Indigenous Australian-authored speculative fiction novel that blew me out of the water. Emotionally rough echoes of the residential school system, but so worth it. There's an exciting twist, so avoid spoilers.



How Long 'til Black Future Month? / N.K. Jemisin (2018). Anything by N.K. Jemisin could be on this list, but this short story collection is a terrific introduction to her ingenious style. Parallel universes, dragons, the magic of cooking—there's so much to love.

"A transformative marvel. I. Loved. This. Book."

—TJ KLUNE



LIGHT  
FROM  
UNCOMMON  
STARS

RYKA AOKI

Light From Uncommon Stars / Ryka Aoki (2021). A truly delightful science fiction/fantasy novel, exploring threats faced by queer people of color and immigrant communities, but also the possibilities of love and joy.

I invite you to join me as I continue my political education and explorations—I've still got a lot to learn. I'd love to hear what you thought if you read any of these books and I'd be excited for your recommendations for the next iteration of this zine! Find me on Bluesky or connect via email at [violetfox@gmail.com](mailto:violetfox@gmail.com).

The graphic consists of three overlapping circles. The largest circle in the background is a light teal color. Overlapping its right side is a medium-sized circle in a medium blue color. Overlapping the bottom of the medium blue circle is a smaller circle in a darker blue color. The text 'KEEP READING, KEEP GROWING' is centered over these circles.

KEEP READING,  
KEEP GROWING