

2023



A collective zine



These pages hold tender reflections on a summer of study, movement, and creation by the dreamers and schemers of the 2023 Youth Public History Institute.

With full hearts and curious minds, our hands joined together, our sights set on building a brighter future and a more just world, we offer this collection of art, poetry, and prose rooted in the spirit and hope of abolition.

Bearing witness to the brilliance of these participants, learning from the collaborators of this institute, and walking beside the YPHI community has been a joy, and is a gift I will treasure always.

**With gratitude,
Zahra Khan
YPHI Coordinator
Project NIA**

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SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE 2023 YOUTH PUBLIC HISTORY INSTITUTE

Mariame Kaba

Over many years, I've had occasion to facilitate walking tours with young people. These experiences always fuel my passion for teaching and learning about history. However, in past summer youth programs I helped organize, we didn't focus on tours or archives.

The 2023 Youth Public History Institute (YPHI) would be different. This time, walking tours, archives and storytelling would be the fundamental modalities emphasized.

I planned the YPHI with a few questions in mind:

- 1. Could a group of young people develop a walking tour together over the course of a three-week summer institute?*
- 2. What skills could participants learn and practice through making a walking tour?*
- 3. How could I bring an abolitionist pedagogy to learning about local carceral histories?*

I enjoy walking tours. When I traveled more, I looked for the best ones to join in whatever city I visited. Over the past couple of decades, I've also been creating tours in the cities where I've lived. I facilitated them for family and friends who would visit me.

Then I started offering public tours as part of exhibitions I curated or to raise funds for particular causes. In the past 10 years, I've worked with others to document my tours so that they are publicly accessible for others to create and facilitate their own.

Walking tours are excellent ways to engage various people in discussions and the discovery of local histories. Walking and talking together, we tell stories and can more honestly confront hard truths.

YPHI invited 16-24-year-olds interested in prisons, policing and surveillance, research & social justice to collaborate on creating a walking tour. By the end of the institute, I hoped participants would:

- *Learn how to create a walking tour*
- *Develop research and storytelling skills*
- *Identify key landmarks and histories of policing, prisons and surveillance in NYC*
- *Understand the value of public history*
- *Deepen appreciation for and commitment to social justice*

With these objectives in mind, I hired Zahra as YPHI's coordinator to recruit participants and help plan and organize the institute. Zahra brought her unmatched enthusiasm and talents to this project.

I reached out to comrades to join me in creating and co-facilitating a curriculum for the YPHI. Sarah & Kei are essential partners with experience in creating walking tours, archiving history and fighting for the abolition of the prison industrial complex (PIC).

Our participants also benefited from the knowledge and expertise shared by Hugh, Fatima, Genevieve, librarians and archivists at the Municipal Archives & NYPL.

While I started with some ideas of how to structure the program and what to include, meetings & conversations with partners sharpened them. In the end, we created an affirming, generative, and intellectually stimulating experience together. I believe we met our objectives.

I want to thank everyone who made the YPHI possible including Vanessa who invited us to use space at City College, the Mellon Foundation and Project NIA's individual donors who provided needed funds. Speaking for myself, I loved learning from the young people in this institute and could not think of a better way to spend part of my summer. I'll let the participants of YPHI speak for themselves from here.

Enjoy the zine.

In solidarity.
NYC, August 2023

An illustration of several hands holding a yellow string against a blue background. The hands are drawn with simple brown outlines and are positioned around the string, which is being held taut. The background is a textured blue wash. The overall style is that of a hand-drawn poster or graphic.

Call it allegiance, citizenship, patriotism, or whatever, is tied to who is **[excluded]** vs. who is included. It is about how you can distinguish yourself from the **[lesser]**. In other words, it is tied to a **[perceived]** supremacy.

[Americanness]

MAHIR SADAD

Most of the universe is made up of the unknown.

Astrophysics has given this substance the name "Dark Matter."

Dark matter is thought to make up 85% of the universe, but how scientists understand it in terms of other forms of matter is largely unknown.

Perhaps it holds unforeseen knowledge of the cosmos...

"Dark Matter."

CHASE LOUDEN

In my experience, participating in the YPHI has been a transformative experience.

I have learned much about the history of NYC, myself, and the lineage of struggle here in the city. New York City was founded on slavery, and much of the city's economy during the colonial period was built on the slave trade.

Slaves built the infrastructure, and slave markets fueled much of the city's wealth. New York was a hub for abolitionist organizing as well.

The story of slavery in New York is one of exploitation and resistance. It is a story that isn't well known.

American history is often told through the lens of great individuals rather than through more profound, complex interweaving stories.

The story of slavery is often told through the actions of a few great individuals such as Abraham Lincoln, William Lloyd Garrison, Harriet Tubman, or Frederick Douglass.

The networks of support that existed through the underground railroad or the abolitionist movement should be more emphasized and understood as incredibly important in their own right.

For example, the first mutual aid organization in the country was started by the Dorcas Society in 1828 to help provide clothes for black students attending the New York African Free Schools.

Freed peoples, former slaves, and abolitionists have developed support networks for their communities and themselves.

It was crucial for their survival, and their history is largely unknown in the popular consciousness.

The YPHI provided a support network and care that I had never experienced or had before in a research program and made me feel as if the program was meticulously planned from minute to minute. I appreciate the thought and understanding put into the planning.

Of course, I only experienced the final project, and nearly all of the planning work was unseen by me. Most of our support networks and the care we give and receive may be known and felt by experiencing it, but it's not seen or felt by the state or formal institutions.

It remains hidden and unseen.

Perhaps many of the stories of care and resistance against slavery went unseen by historians and contemporary writers.

The world built by Western imperialism and colonialism is dark and bleak, and in our times of crisis, the world seems devoid of something better on the horizon. Through the lineage and bedrock of care networks, futurity shines like stars, piercing through the vast darkness and emptiness of the universe.

There may be an emergent strategy for our own dark matter. Our care networks are like capillaries to the cells. They are small and unsung but vital to reaching the most minuscule units of life. Perhaps this strategy can hold unforeseen knowledge for our own cosmopolitics...

Tales of an abolitionist Reflection

Bri/Bri Bri/Briana Ruiz (they/elle)

My involvement in the Youth Public History Institute began in July 2023. This was a period in my life where I was curious about wanting to explore being part of abolitionist youth-centered spaces. My interest in the program stemmed from connecting storytelling and public memory with anti-carceral abolitionist organizing.

The ability to have a digital and physical historical walking tour resonated with me as I was thinking about what it means to make these narratives accessible for participants, honoring the spaces that carcerality and colonization of land have displaced, and centering the historical abolitionist practices and movements created by QTBIPOC organizers and freedom fighters.

While I have made ancestral oral history with my family on learning about and honoring the herbalists and freedom fighters in my lineage and holding others and myself accountable, I wanted to shift in connecting this experience to my abolitionist organizing since it is significant to give space, to research, and to honor the narratives of people directly impacted by carcerality.

Many of their stories are erased by the carceral system; therefore, public memory can be a tool for confronting and resisting those oppressive narratives while liberating those oppressed under the carceral structure.

I also wanted to find other like-minded folx within the city who were committed to this type of abolitionist work and learn and grow with them on this journey.

As I began the program, I was excited that this container space was outside academia or a corporate job. I find these institutions draining, performative, invasive, harmful, and implementing carceral tactics of policing and surveillance of folx.

The constraints of these institutions and their complacency to structural oppression can be detrimental to the abolitionist work. It creates barriers such as limited funding and resources, accessibility needs, and policing the dialogues and narratives trying to be formed. Fortunately, the YPHI space was the opposite; it was a safe, affirming, respectful, and loving environment.

Aside from the main room, we had a second room with daily delicious breakfast and lunch, reading materials, and playful toys to stimulate the mind and imagination (I have a newfound love for bendable fidget toys).

I loved the sweet affirmations, resourceful, and grounding emails from Zahra, and Kaba centering community guidelines on the very first day of the institute. I appreciated the forms of care and rest that were instilled in the program and how all folx, from staff to students, checked in on one another about needs and emotions.

This work is beyond difficult with grappling with so much intergenerational trauma from the carceral system, hours of researching historical events and stories, and navigating our personal lives.

Thus, it makes a significant impact with this space being one where we can co-create transparency, consent, disrupting power dynamics, and safety to be one's authentic self.

"Queer History of a Forgotten Prison" (which was so pivotal in the group's research on the stories of people incarcerated in that prison). I loved how all three of these events had the common idea of how storytelling is to honor the humanity of folx and the emotions that come with it.

Throughout this process, I was rethinking and evolving my thoughts about what it means to practice and embody empathy, consent, and active listening, and to see the world through the lens of these individuals and their abolitionist values. While actions may differ in organizing against carcerality, their values are interconnected with the idea of dismantling forms of policing and prisons.

Therefore, walking tours showcase how abolition and storytelling coincide with disrupting carcerality and centering liberation narratives. This understanding led the group I was involved with throughout the program to focus on the Women's House of Detention, a women's prison in Greenwich Village that existed from 1932 to 1974.

Our group explored the directions we wanted to take to tell the story of this carceral structure and the experiences of those affected by it. This led to us crafting a story about liberation fought by grassroots collectives and organizers and the resistance towards the liberation through state-sanctioned violence and carceral agendas by the police, surveillance, and the prison itself.

We researched specific sites and developed a walking tour starting from the House of Detention, Shiloh Presbyterian Church, Washington Square Park, NYU Weinstein Hall, 129 MacDougal Street, and back to the present-day Jefferson Market Garden prison. I also want to highlight other significant sites our group researched and learned stories about, such as Minetta Land, Little Africa, Stonewall Inn, Eve Adams' Tearoom, Thompson Square Park, Star House, and Gay Street.

This deep dive into the prison allowed me to learn about the vast intergenerational history of resistance and abolitionist practices from women, queer, and trans people of color, from the stories of Rose Butler, Young Lords, Black Panthers, Angela Davis, Gay Liberation Front (GLF), Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR).

Reading Rose Butler's story was intense; she was an enslaved Black woman being publicly executed in front of a crowd of 10,000 people at Washington Square Park due to trying to escape from enslavement and defending herself against abusers.

Additionally, she could not tell her story in court as her abusers violated her consent and were coercing her to lie.

The long-lasting violence of enslavement that Butler and many Black folks endured evolved into the carceral system, and how that system of oppression is a form of state-sanctioned violence against Black and Brown folks, survivors and victims of abuse, sex workers, immigrants and migrants in detention, folks with accessibility conditions, students of color in school being policed, low income, and unhoused people.

you can jail revolutionaries, but not the revolution

Thinking of Butler's story means committing to honoring their truths and consent and understanding what that means for other marginalized people as we fight against carcerality.

It also blew me away hearing about the organizing tactics of Angela Davis, Afeni Shakur, Lumumba Shakur, and Joan Bird. They organized group bail funds, connecting with other radical grassroots collectives, sharing their experiences with the public, and doing protests, rallies, and zine-making to spread awareness of the prison.

I remember reading "The RAT: Women's Takeover Anniversary," a radical liberation zine providing insights into the various movements and intersections of queerness, abolition, anti-war, and communism.

On Issue #18, one of the incarcerated women in the House of Detention said the following: "The pigs don't realize that placing revolutionaries and potential revolutionaries in prison only further inspires and deepens our love for the people..."

Whether behind or up against the walls of facism 'the spirit of the people will overcome the man's technology.' I've heard you can jail revolutionaries, but not the revolution. The revolution has begun in the prison. What now, you mother-fucking vampire fascist pigs?" (RAT 19) Literally, I have no words when I read this out loud in the group presentation, I simply only have a commitment to forward revolutionary abolitionist efforts in the face of combating these mother-fucking vampire fascist pigs.

Coming out of this program, a collective vision I want to co-build is a QTBIPOC community-led freedom school for youth, parents, and community members of color focused on abolition, transformative justice, disability justice, Earth-based healing, and storytelling.

Being involved in this program furthered that goal as it allowed me to enhance my storytelling and research skills, understand public history, and how I can further support abolitionist practices to dismantle policing, incarceration, and surveillance.

I do want to think about what this means, to do abolitionist storytelling in the context of my ancestral homeland of Quisqueya (Dominican Republic), and how my learning here can connect with the current abolition work being done. Specifically, working with others to make this accessible in Spanish, honoring the sacred land through some form of abolitionist herbalism, connecting to solidarity and liberation for Ayiti (Haiti), and healing ancestral intergenerational trauma.

I thank all the wonderful people within the program, such as Mariame Kaba, Zahra, Kei, Sarah, all the guest speakers, and all the magnificent youth comrades and friends, for this life-changing opportunity. Let's continue to plant those abolitionists' seeds and nourish them to bloom and grow!

I do have a very lengthy thank you section for folk who supported me on this journey:

I met Princess in late 2021 after undergoing so much grief and needing to re-think my commitment and accountability in my healing journey and relationship to community and abolition.

Princess is a healer, therapist, warrior, martial artist, spiritual herbalist, grassroots organizer, mentor, and comrade who has an abundance of wisdom, knowledge, experience in healing modalities, and love for committing to communal and ancestral healing.

I was invited to join their Luya Healing and Herbs program, a spiritual life coaching program embodying healing work incorporating plant medicines, ancestral practices, animal spirit guides, living by the lunar and solar cycles, and blending the various elements.

As I entered my third stage of Luya Healing, we focused on three seeds to manifest and work towards.

One of those seeds was expanding my dream of a QTBIPOC Abolitionist Freedom School through involvement in youth abolitionist programs and forming connections with other abolitionists.

While the dream is still being nurtured, the seed grew into an entire forest, with me being able to be a part of YPHI and doing excellent work with amazing comrades and friends. Princess and I learned and taught one another beautiful lessons.

I thank them for showing me the significance of healing ancestrally, with community, and with the land in our struggles for liberation in the abolitionist movement.

Thank Princess for everything within these 2 years!

Ju (they/them):

I met Ju at the 2022 May Day Festival (which was one year before I got news about acceptance to YPHI).

From then on, we've blossomed such a loving friendship in our time at the Bushwick Grows Community Farm, Comida Para El Pueblo, picnics at Prospect Park, Combo Chimbita concerts, and their delightful musical performances.

Every time I hear their music, specifically their song "lo que tú tocas" (which is available on Spotify @Chispa), it's so healing to listen to the power of growing these tiny seeds and dreaming up the ecosystems that will sustain community, the land, and movements.

We would discuss our dreams of being in spaces centered on abolition, land liberation, storytelling, and/or music. And to see these seeds we planted grow into healthy ecosystems while committing to YPHI or Ju's QTBIPOC music production classes, makes me feel so in awe of the beauty of having friendships centered on themes of abolitionist care.

Ju is pure nourishment to this universe with the beautiful previous tender seeds they plant in their music, yummy food dishes, farming and gardening, and the loving connections they form with folx.

I also want to shout out the beautiful cuties at Bushwick Grows, such as Cami (they/she), Genesis (they/he/she), Dio (he/him), Steph (she/they), Mario, and Darcell (they/them) for their beautiful existence and energy. I thank you Ju for teaching me to dream with the land, community, and the healing ancestral sounds as we make those abolitionist visions a reality.

Mateo (he/they) and Ting (she/her):

I met both Mateo and Ting last year during spectacular BIPOC Rock Climbing Nights that they host with other extraordinary individuals; a space that is curated by and for BIPOC folx to connect climbers, share knowledge, and build an accessible and inclusive community.

Mateo and Ting are such loving, caring, and beautiful beings who bring so much light to the space. I sincerely enjoy our abolitionist conversations and the connections to queer liberation.

I remember during Pride month at BIPOC Rock Climbing Night, Mateo spoke about the organizing work of Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and many other TGNC radical organizers and asked participants about their commitment towards QTBIPOC liberation and how we honor the work and lives of folx in this growing movement.

They both are always supportive and affirming of these abolitionist dreams. I thank them for their queer love and for constantly reminding me, as a neuroqueer, of the interconnection between queer liberation and abolition.

To be queer for me is a commitment to abolishing the carceral structures and tactics that confine and oppress queer folx, while cultivating safe and accountable spaces, similar to what I feel from BIPOC Rock Climbing Night.

Ram (they/them):

Ram is someone I met 2 years ago, and it's been an absolute blessing and joy to see the abundance, authenticity, care, and consent they walk within this universe.

I sincerely enjoy our intimate conversations through text, voice notes, and video on connecting abolition to our collective healing journeys.

I appreciate their commitment to how they incorporate body movement and ancestral healing modalities to honor their emotions as we engage in these struggles and harms that the schooling and carceral system creates.

It's allowed me to re-think and apply ways I show up for myself and others in this abolitionist work emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Additionally, Ram amazes me with all the phenomenal, transformative, and abolitionist teaching work they do with their students in providing all types of resources, tools, and a nurturing environment for them to thrive and feel safe.

Thank you so much, Ram, for your existence as an embodiment of abolitionist teaching, and you are so deserving of all the love and care you offer students, community, and loved ones.

Mak (she/they):

Mak is another wonderful being I met in 2022, and I love how we communicate in our long and adventurous voice notes and text messages on themes of abolition and transformative justice.

I really appreciate the care and compassion they show for the community, honorable ancestors, and themselves. I appreciate their thoughtful insights on the interconnections of relationships as we commit to this abolitionist movement.

The interconnection of communities, grassroots, the land, and abolitionist practices is vital to understanding how individualism and abolition cannot co-exist, rather it takes collective accountability and overlapping ideas and actions to sustain this movement long-term. Thank you so much!

Liv (they/them) and Haven Boxing:

The amount of endless gratitude I have for Liv is too big to contain in my heart. With our queer boxing incorporating body autonomy, safety, consent, care, joy, and bodily healing, it made for a loving space and relationship.

We would spend hours talking about how we want safety to look like in this world through an abolitionist lens, and how queerness and transness are integral to that vision.

Thank you so much for those talks and the training Liv, as it's something I hold dear to my heart. I thank the lovely folk at Haven Boxing for continuing this feeling by acting upon what it means to feel safe with our bodies, centering QT-BIPOC liberation, being accessible and anti-capitalist, and unlearning the policing we do upon ourselves and others.

Piper Anderson (she/her) and Kim Dacosta (she/her):

I first learned about prison abolition and Mariame Kaba's work back in my undergrad year at the NYU Gallatin course taught by Piper Anderson called Lyrics on Lockdown, a course designed to create a high school curriculum on the history and impact of Rikers Island and the current movement to close it down.

It was life-changing being able to hear Kaba's words and the impact that Piper's teaching had on my life with wanting to learn and commit to abolitionists' struggles, practices, and organizing.

Kim's teaching and mentoring were warm and caring as I got to explore the intersection of abolition with several of my interests and experiences in my life. Her care and support led me down a rabbit hole of the various intersections of prison abolition with NYC community grassroots organizing, land justice, disability justice, immigration and migration, school-to-prison pipeline, transformative and restorative justice, and current storytelling and public history.

Dhamar (she/her), Crystal (she/they), Rosa (they/them), Dre (they/them), Valeria (she/her), and Marcus (they/them):

I deeply appreciate how the love and joy of these queer platonic connections based on abolitionist care practices have been so fulfilling. Our talks on abolition light my spirit up as we think and act upon what abolition looks like in our intimate connection. Thank you all!

Parents, Younger Brother, and the Land: It's a challenge navigating life with two Scorpio parents and their own baggage, and a blessing too in the sense of seeing them for their totality and resonating with the amazing parts of them that align with my own visions and identities.

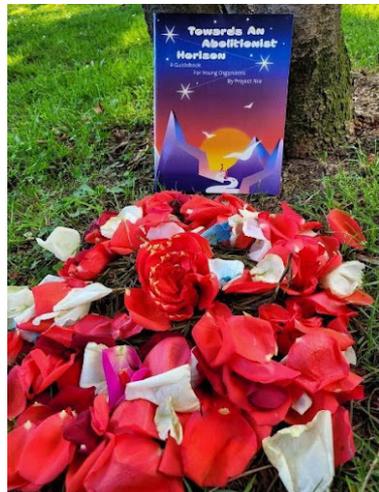
I resonate with a younger version of my dad, the late teens-early 20s version, where he was doing community organizing in his barrio in Quisqueya during the post-dictatorship. My dad and community members would engage in accessible popular education sessions on communism, potlucks, mutual aid, and farming.

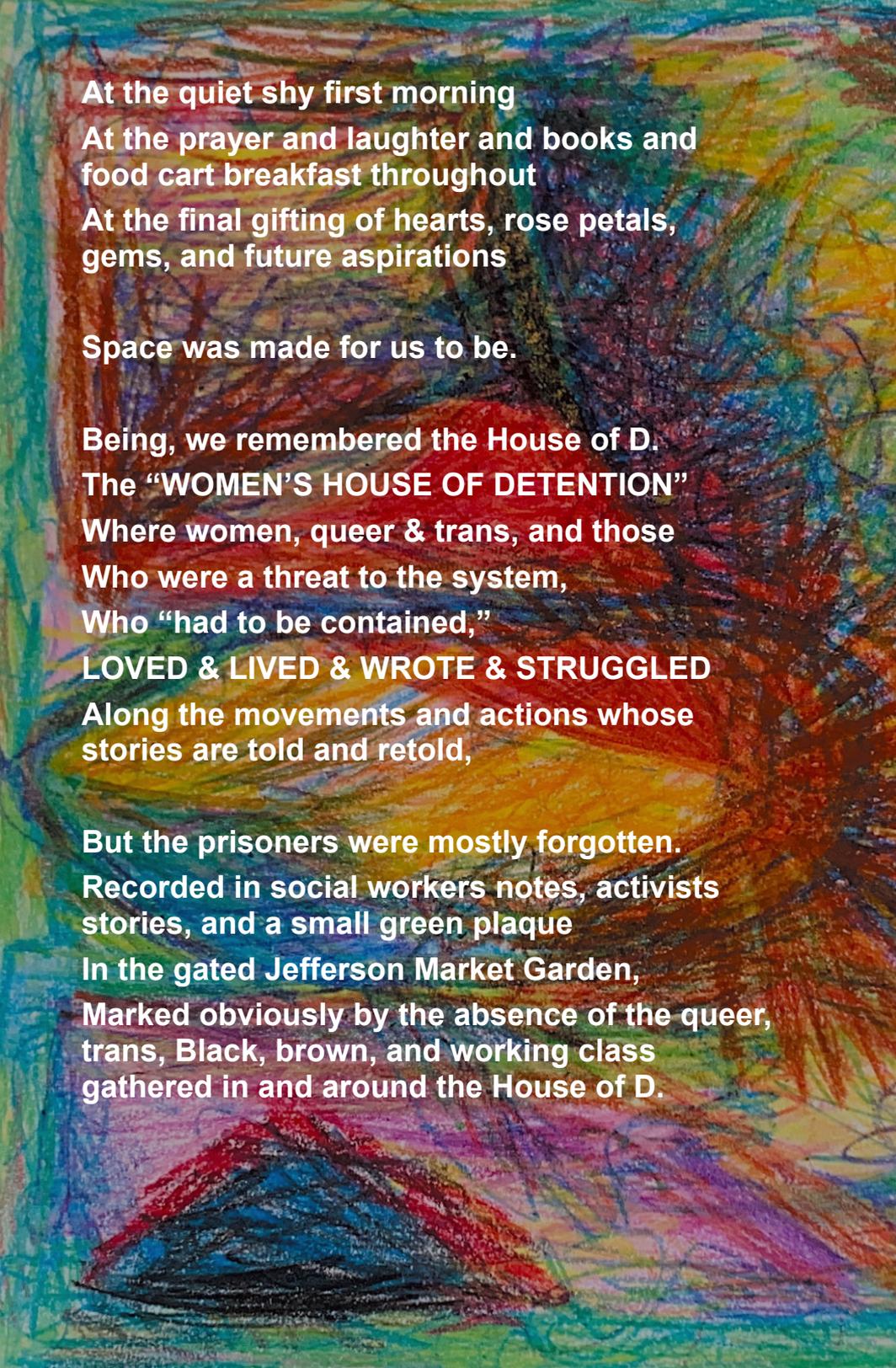
As for my mom, I resonate with her nurturing and empathetic spirit. Someone who reminds me about the significance of self and communal love, and how my validation is not based on these draining systems of oppression (academia and jobs). I appreciate her telling me to go about those radical dreams and to connect with like-minded folx who also want to build alongside those dreams. I deeply cherish and thank those versions of my parents.

Granted, I do acknowledge my privilege as a masc-presenting able-bodied Dominican person, and what it means to support and show up for others who are experiencing the harms of patriarchy/machismo in family ties. Shout out to my Younger Brother, who reminds me of reconnecting to that neuro inner child healing through playfulness within these movements.

And the biggest of thanks and love for the land: Lenape land, Turtle Island, Madre Tierra, Pachamama, and Quisqueya. The beauty of setting up rose rituals and making plant and animal comrades/allies (roses, rosemary, red-tailed hawks, ducks, robins, crows, brown rabbits, skunks, herons, and butterflies), has taught me to cultivate a reciprocal, consensual, grounding, and loving connection with the land, which in turn is a reflection of the practices and ideals applied within the abolitionist movement.

Thank you all,
abrazos y amor :)



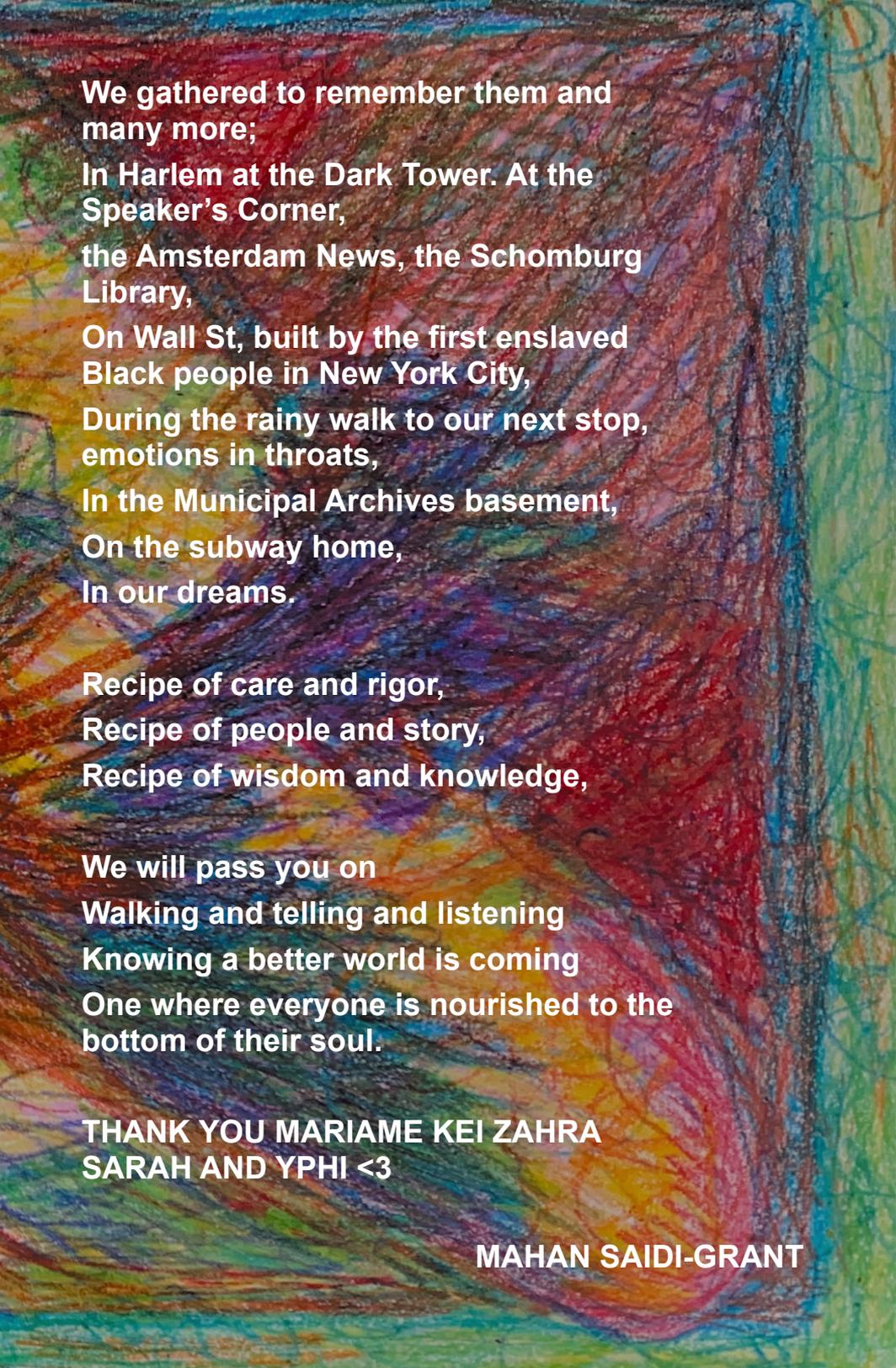


At the quiet shy first morning
At the prayer and laughter and books and
food cart breakfast throughout
At the final gifting of hearts, rose petals,
gems, and future aspirations

Space was made for us to be.

Being, we remembered the House of D.
The “WOMEN’S HOUSE OF DETENTION”
Where women, queer & trans, and those
Who were a threat to the system,
Who “had to be contained,”
LOVED & LIVED & WROTE & STRUGGLED
Along the movements and actions whose
stories are told and retold,

But the prisoners were mostly forgotten.
Recorded in social workers notes, activists
stories, and a small green plaque
In the gated Jefferson Market Garden,
Marked obviously by the absence of the queer,
trans, Black, brown, and working class
gathered in and around the House of D.



We gathered to remember them and
many more;
In Harlem at the Dark Tower. At the
Speaker's Corner,
the Amsterdam News, the Schomburg
Library,
On Wall St, built by the first enslaved
Black people in New York City,
During the rainy walk to our next stop,
emotions in throats,
In the Municipal Archives basement,
On the subway home,
In our dreams.

Recipe of care and rigor,
Recipe of people and story,
Recipe of wisdom and knowledge,

We will pass you on
Walking and telling and listening
Knowing a better world is coming
One where everyone is nourished to the
bottom of their soul.

THANK YOU MARIAME KEI ZAHRA
SARAH AND YPHI <3

MAHAN SAIDI-GRANT



SARAH CUK

Gold Carson Sánchez

Walking

Around

Harlem for

Hours

Today

standing in the spot where
it happened, rerouting
anticipation, letting
my internal organs engorge,

the abuser and fascist and all
those who trespass against me,
fitting six thousand people
in the halls of my home,

shrinking the gap between
my values and my speech
and actions, watching the firefly
night sky freak-show, ignoring

reconsidering sweeping the dirt
off the tomb, gathering my hair
at the base of my neck, switching
positions for a day, threatening

to call everyone I know, and weeping

WHAT DOES ABOLITION MEAN?

SOLIDARITY



ORGANIZING &



FUNDING



"ABOLITION IS NOT ABSENCE, IT IS PRESENCE."
-RUTH WILSON GILMORE

BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, NOT HARMFUL SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

SHRINKING THE GAP BETWEEN VALUES & ACTION

ROOTING OURSELVES



IN LOVE.



CARE FOR OTHERS & OURSELVES

LEARNING



& ASKING QUESTIONS



MUTUAL AID



The idea of prison abolition is nothing new to me

Mariah Morgan

The idea of prison abolition is nothing new to me. I was fortunate enough to have grown up in a multiracial working class family which valued anti racism fightback and organizing. The values my family instilled in me when I was younger made imagining a world without traditional policing or surveillance possible. Even though my family encouraged these thoughts I had never really delved deeply into the ideas of prison abolition within my research, or for school work.

The summer before YPHI, I was in 12th grade and I had to take, like most students, a class called participation in government. We discussed different topics connected to our city, New York, such as gentrification, redlining and policing. We studied the ever expanding police budget, compared to other resources, and examined how police have been institutionalized to deal with our problems caused by the evil nature of capitalism. At the end of the year, we were encouraged to reimagine a new society and discuss how we would run our societies. I was so excited for this assignment, more than any other one I ever had the whole year. I would get a chance to really think about a different world in a serious way, and to be able to use my politics as a guide.

We were assigned in groups and I was given the topic of safety. I knew if my part was to persuade people to support no police, I had to pull out the facts. I focused on countries like Norway and Switzerland, which in the 80s-90s had similar rates of recidivism to the United States, but after revolutionizing their police system so that prisons have a focus on rehabilitation and not punishment, their recidivism rates have become some of the lowest in the world.

Contrary to prisons in the United States, prisons in Norway invest monetarily and physically into the people incarcerated.

They teach them real world skills, such as schooling, anti violence and drug counseling, how to build and maintain relationships, and recreational activities. They are also allowed to see their families, which I at first had never given thought to, until I realized how often prisons use transfer of inmates as punishment. When inmates aren't allowed to keep connections with family or friends they become disconnected from their humanity and are more likely to hang in the same groups they were in before, because they have little to no support.

After my group and I presented, several of my classmates raised their hands. They quickly shared how ridiculous my idea of no police sounded to them: "People are crazy, who's gonna protect us?" "That's not realistic!" "What about someone who gets raped, are we just going to let people go?" I knew people were going to be hesitant about this idea, but as I thought about it more I wondered to myself how I was going to do this.

"People are crazy,
who's gonna protect us?"

"That's not realistic!"

Earlier in the year, my teacher had noticed the work I was doing within my school, such as walkouts, protests, discussion groups, and student government.

She encouraged me to apply to the Youth Public History Institute and I did. Throughout this internship, I got to learn the history of slavery and policing in New York City, and the role black women played in fighting for abolition. How people, even back then, had always been organizing against injustice and the evils of capitalism and racism.

Even in times of extreme oppression, Black people found ways to resist and fight back. For instance, David Ruggles was an integral part of the Underground Railroad, and he dedicated his life openly to fighting against slave catchers and secretly helped enslaved Black people escape to freedom.

There was Williana Jones Burroughs, a Black communist who helped fight for Black people to get access to equitable housing, or even Billie Holiday, whose song “Strange Fruit” is a moving piece about the lynching, murder and terrorising of Black people by racists. Even after being badgered and policed by the government to stop singing the song, Holiday refused, and stayed firm.

Mariame Kaba discussed the different ways in which we as a society have been reliant on police and encouraged us to think about other ways we can care for each other without them.

“what about victims of violent crimes such as rape?”

Now I think back to the question of “what about victims of violent crimes such as rape?” I think after this internship I have begun to answer it for myself. The question of safety is a big one, and not one to be overlooked. It is, however, a fact that 60% of rapes/sexual assaults are not reported to police, according to a statistical average of the past 5 years. Only about 6% of rapists ever serve time, and that is excluding unreported rapes.

Black and Brown people, women, trans women, and poor people have never been protected in our society, and specifically by the police. In fact, we have consistently and historically been terrorized, harassed, berated, bullied and gaslighted by these very same institutions who insist on the same reformist propaganda. We need to understand that within our current economic system, rape isn't persecuted. In our society the true way to prevent rape is by fighting sexism, teaching young boys respect, and sharing ideas of consent. We need to invest in restorative justice and value community.

To conclude, this internship has opened my eyes in so many ways. It has made me reassess my own ideas about what fighting back looks like, what safety is, how admirable the people who came before us are. Without learning this history, we will never be able to envision a different future. It's important that we take the time to educate ourselves, especially with a topic as nuanced as this. I also think it's important to highlight the constant struggle Black people have had against the shifting forms of oppression, and that in fighting against big institutions like the police, Black people must be at the forefront and share their lived experience and history of antiracism.



My
YPHI
Experience

Eve Glazier

My time participating in the YPHI has altered my brain chemistry so that I now automatically organize information into walking tours. In this spirit, I decided to map out a little walking tour that reflects my YPHI experience.

Warning: Unless you're interested in walking 10.5 miles across most of Manhattan, this is more of a symbolic walking tour than one that is actually meant to be walked.

CCNY, Spitzer School of Architecture:

CCNY was our home base for the program. Many presentations were given here, many cheesy ice-breakers were facilitated here, many meals were shared here. I walked into the classroom where the program took place with no idea what to expect from the three weeks ahead.

As the days went by, initial awkward small talk turned into meaningful conversations, which turned into sappy, heartfelt goodbyes by the end of the program.

We filled the once-empty walls of the architecture building with colorful sticky notes and butcher paper as we mapped out our individual and collective historical timelines, reflected on walking tours we took, and planned out our own walking tours.



Schomburg Center

Of the many walking tours we had the joy of participating in, one of the most impactful walks for me was the Radical Black Women of Harlem Walking Tour.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was the anchor point of this tour. Based in central Harlem, many of the routes we walked on the tour are routes I take frequently as I go about daily life—to visit my partner, to go to the grocery store, to go to the library.

But now, the streets light up with historical depth and vibrance. I hear Claudia Jones and Lorraine Hansberry lecturing about Black Feminist communism on a street corner. I see Williana Jones Burroughs, who ran the communist Harlem Workers School, leading tenant organizing to defend her neighbors from evictions.

I hear the resonance of music, comradeship, and conversation coming from the “dark tower” where A’lelia Walker hosted salons frequented by Black artists and intellectuals. This radical history cannot be tamed by neoliberal development and gentrification that colors much of the current landscape. Walking the footsteps of these radical Black women propels me to continue their revolutionary genealogies.

Barnard College

I’m fresh out of four years of school here, so Barnard was not an unfamiliar site for me. But our visit to Barnard at the end of the second week of YPHI made me realize how much I had changed through participating in the program. When I stepped off of this campus earlier this year, I felt deflated by the intense, individualistic, consumerist culture that institutions like this foster.

Throughout my time in YPHI, I got to practice a radically different way of knowledge-seeking and knowledge-producing that is based in collectivity, collaboration, and mutual care, rooted in a shared desire for a better world.



New York Public Library, Steven A. Schwarzman building

As a major self-proclaimed archives nerd, I was most looking forward to our scheduled visits to the municipal archives and the New York Public Library.

I generally think of archives as silent places where you sit in solitude— just you and the records. In the YPHI we did it differently. We looked at documents together.

The rooms buzzed with our reactions, our questions for the archivists, and our collective scheming about how the information we were finding might shape the narrative arc of our tours. It was a total re-imagination of what archival spaces can look like.

I am tremendously grateful for the labor of the archivists (shoutout to Sarah!) who made it possible to find the information we needed to make our walking tours. After the program, I feel inspired and affirmed in my aspirations of becoming an archivist!

City Hall

We ended up at City Hall at several points during YPHI—it showed up in several walking tours we took because of its history (and present) as a site of deep anti-Black, carceral violence (and also resistance to such violence). City Hall was a particularly central site for me because my group (Team Megatron!) decided to create a tour focused on the 1857 police riots as a lens through which to trace a broader history of policing in NYC.

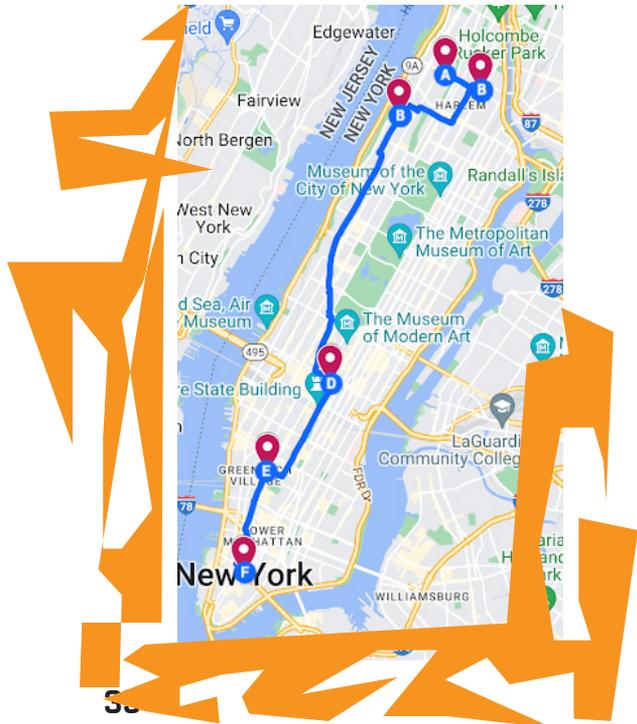
The major escalation of the 1857 riots—a brawl between the NYC municipal police and the state-sponsored Metropolitan police competing for control over the NYC streets—occurred on the steps in front of city hall on June 17th, 1857. I knew absolutely nothing about the 1857 police riots before YPHI.

Through Team Megatron's brilliant research, my understanding of the NYPD's lineage is so much richer. The resonance between the NYPD's historical investments in slavery, white supremacy, and capitalism and its contemporary violence is all the more clear.

Though our research probably generated more questions than answers, I feel equipped with the skills and relational connections to continue pursuing these inquiries and connecting them to my organizing for police abolition.

Final thoughts

On the last day of the program, my comrade and co-participant Chase said something along the lines of, "one day, someone might make a historical walking tour about the YPHI." I think the value of walking tours as a medium of conveying history is that the act of walking history allows us to better understand how we make history as we move through the present. With each step we take (physical or metaphorical), we are cultivating, shaping, and rehearsing new futures that will one day be histories.



Waking Up the City that Never Sleeps

By Onyekachi Okeke

People say that New York City is the city that never sleeps. They also say that it's the Big Apple, financial capital of the world, a global village. It's the city that countless people dream about coming to, and establishing here what they will call home. A lifelong dream, a sweet reverie. Well, what if I told you that three centuries ago, that sweet reverie was a living, never-ending nightmare, one too abominable and grizzly to even delve into, one that the city that never sleeps conveniently chooses to remain asleep for.

In July of this year, I had the upmost privilege to participate in a two and a half week internship with the Youth Public History Institute headed by none other than Mariame Kaba, abolitionist trailblazer, and met many other like-minded young people who were eagerly searching for ways to connect, organize, and unearth the hidden secrets of New York history buried deeply within the foundations of time. I too, was excited and desired to explore, especially since I had worked in prison abolition many months prior and wanted an opportunity to get started again.

I never could have anticipated discovering the perpetual immensely oppressive and murderous relationship New York had with Black Americans.

Did you know that the 1863 draft riots of Lower Manhattan was in fact a deviously crafted plan of the wealthiest White New Yorkers (government politicians and businessmen) to whip up ire and animosity in thousands of poor White men, women and children to unleash their vengeance and rage against hundreds of Black residents? That these week-long riots, centered on hunting, tormenting and slaughtering Black Americans was one of the greatest and most notorious incidents of White mob violence in the history of the US?

Did you know that NY's famous banks such as JP Morgan Chase, CitiBank, Wall Street etc. that we all know and rely on got their beginnings in the slave trade?

Have you heard of Seneca Village, a once affluent and robust, healthy Black community that was torn down, completely bulldozed over, displacing hundreds of Black residents and taking away their lands and homes, to make one of the world's most renowned parks, our "beloved" Central Park?

Or that if you were to walk down the streets of West Harlem today, you will find the 6,000 seat hall of Marcus and Amy Ashwood Garvey that they used to give speeches to active listeners and launch Garveyism to their millions of staunch supporters worldwide, or see the street corners where Malcolm X drew thousands with his powerful words, or the elegant "Dark Tower" in which A'Lelia Walker, Madame CJ Walker's daughter, hosted extravagant invite-only parties for her friends.

How about the revolutionaries of the Harlem Renaissance like Langston Hughes, Lorraine Hansberry, Ida B. Wells, Zora Neale Hurston and many more leaders were all friends and lived within mere blocks of each other in the bustling streets of Harlem? They stood together, planned together, and worked in unison against the consistent surveillance, monitoring, brutalizing at the hands of police and other weapons of institutional racism.

Although I was born and raised in the Bronx, New York, I had never known of the vast legacy of NY. Unlike the whitewashed, cheapened "historical events" told in the perspectives of those in control, that we are force-fed in the classroom setting, we had the chance to discover true, unadulterated history through our walking tours, archival research, daily discussions, group work and much more. I learned about how Black revolutionaries would pool together their resources to assist each other in supporting Black enslaved people in escaping into freedom, and how they taught White abolitionists about the true meaning of abolition and how there was a divide amongst white abolitionists in terms of how they viewed Black freed and enslaved people (many merely pushed for an end to slavery and sending all freed people to Liberia, while others sought for full equal rights and full integration for Black people).

Currently, we are living in a time and place in which elected officials across the fifty states of America are pushing and striving towards rewriting history. History is turned into political talking points, and people who have not the slightest idea of what their precious country has truly done throughout its two hundred and forty-seven years of existence (per the signing of the Declaration of Independence). In certain states, the government authorities are banning books, removing classes from school curricula, passing laws to combat “wokeism”-- as if they truly know what “wokeism” even is...

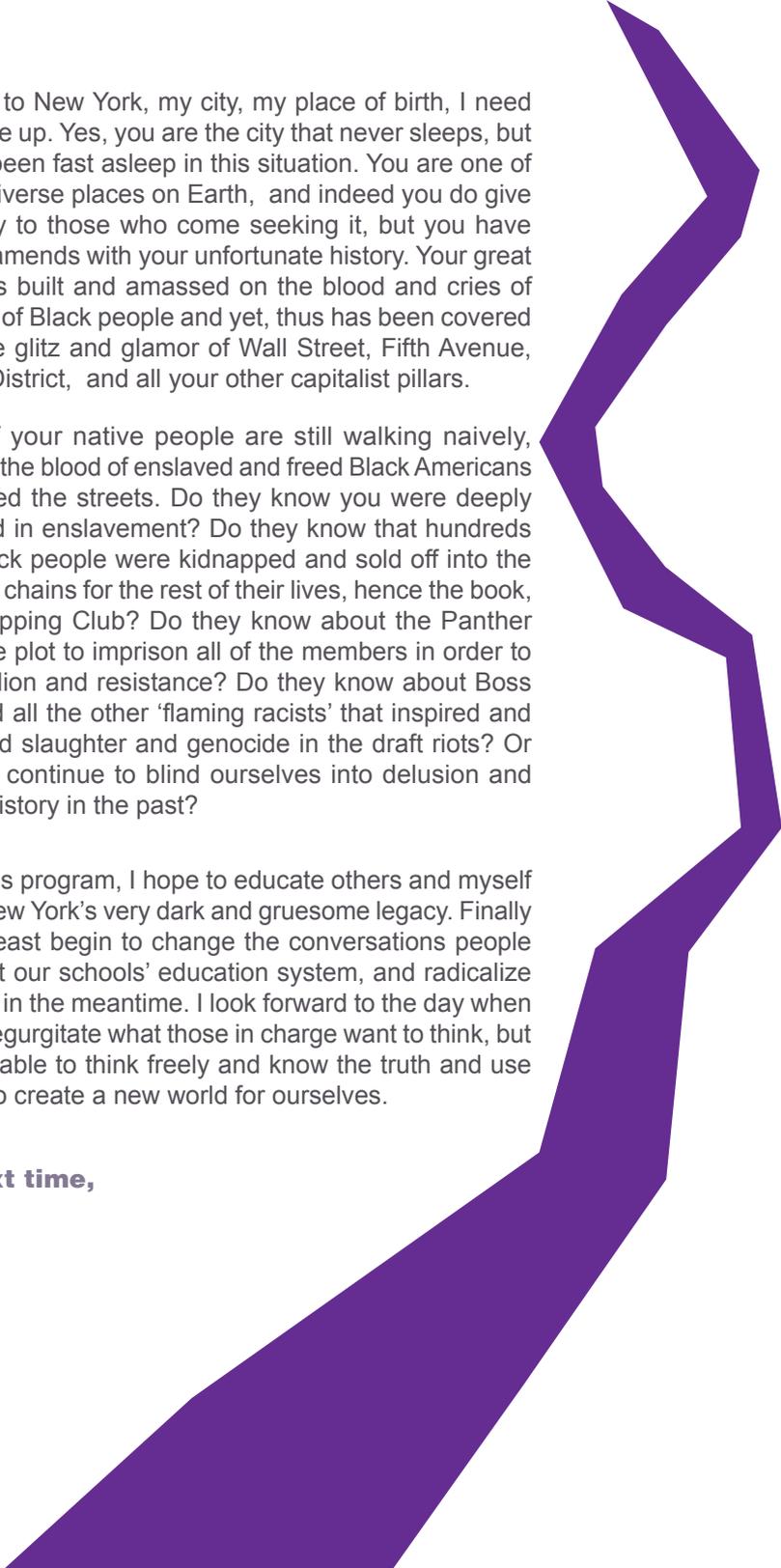
They are telling us that certain people’s histories cannot be taught, that we should simply forget about it entirely and continue living in a whitewashed bubble in which we believe that we live on the “greatest country on Earth” and its original sins are all in the past, and we should only forget about it and “move on”. What I say to these opposing voices, is what (and whose) history do you want to be taught? Maybe you think you have won over the masses, especially those who are ignorant of the devastation America has committed against its own people, but there is a generation rising up ready to take back the control you have usurped through the four hundred years of your institutions of enslavement, prisons, and policing. But there are youth like me, people who are radicalized and know that the status quo of the world is not our status quo. People who dream of and envision a better future for all, and will not accept whatever crumbs and falsified “alternative facts” that those in control want to feed us. We are here to expose, uproot, tear down, liberate, educate, and rebuild. And we’re not going to rebuild on the same faulty foundation (hence why reform does not work) but we are creating and establishing our own foundations, foundations of love, and mutual aid, foundations of freedom and liberation, equity and accessible to all, foundations in which those who have been “othered” and marginalized will regain their footing in society, and the ladder for social climbing will no longer exist. We have been given the tools necessary through our predecessors, the revolutionaries fighting and resisting since the early days of this country’s birth and know better so we do better. We do this until we free us... in the words of our beloved revolutionary, M.K. (Mariame Kaba)

And lastly, to New York, my city, my place of birth, I need you to wake up. Yes, you are the city that never sleeps, but you have been fast asleep in this situation. You are one of the most diverse places on Earth, and indeed you do give opportunity to those who come seeking it, but you have not made amends with your unfortunate history. Your great wealth was built and amassed on the blood and cries of thousands of Black people and yet, thus has been covered up with the glitz and glamor of Wall Street, Fifth Avenue, Financial District, and all your other capitalist pillars.

Millions of your native people are still walking naively, ignorant of the blood of enslaved and freed Black Americans that watered the streets. Do they know you were deeply entrenched in enslavement? Do they know that hundreds of free Black people were kidnapped and sold off into the South, into chains for the rest of their lives, hence the book, *The Kidnapping Club*? Do they know about the Panther 21, and the plot to imprison all of the members in order to quell rebellion and resistance? Do they know about Boss Tweed and all the other 'flaming racists' that inspired and encouraged slaughter and genocide in the draft riots? Or should we continue to blind ourselves into delusion and keep our history in the past?

Leaving this program, I hope to educate others and myself more on New York's very dark and gruesome legacy. Finally it may at least begin to change the conversations people have about our schools' education system, and radicalize a few folks in the meantime. I look forward to the day when we won't regurgitate what those in charge want to think, but we will be able to think freely and know the truth and use that truth to create a new world for ourselves.

**Until next time,
O.O**

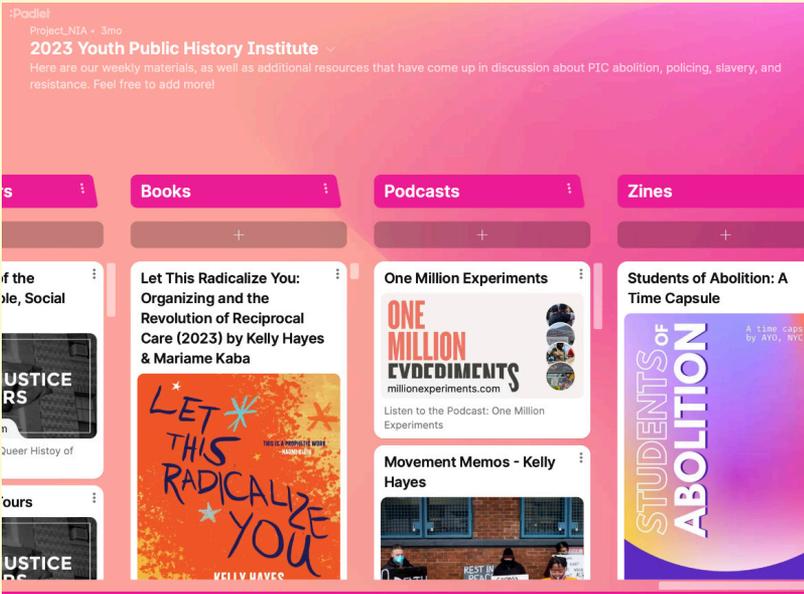


YPHI Resources

To check out the incredible resources from the summer institute, go to

<https://bit.ly/2023YPHIpadlet>

or scan the QR code.



To view the walking tours created by the 2023 YPHI cohort, scan these QR codes or click the following links:

1857 Police Riot Walking Tour

<https://1857-police-riot.glitch.me/>



Women's House of D

<https://womenshouseofd.glitch.me/>



