

# Annotated Bibliography

Per entry:

- Citation for the source
- What kind of source it is
- a 2-sentence summary of the source
- A 1-sentence description of how will this source help you answer your research question?

# Research Question & Thesis

Research Question: How did government repression of Black radical movements in the 1960s and 1970s shape the ideas and strategies of contemporary prison abolitionists?

Contemporary prison abolitionists share a distinctive approach to knowledge — one that centers lived experience and community wisdom over institutional expertise. This epistemological stance developed historically in response to the systematic destruction of earlier Black radical movements, and it explains some of abolition's most recognizable features: its distrust of reform, its confidence in communities, and its refusal to offer a single blueprint for what should replace prisons.

# Example - Context

Bloom, Joshua, and Waldo E. Martin Jr. *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. University of California Press, 2013.

Bloom and Martin tell the full organizational history of the Black Panther Party, arguing that the Party rose and fell largely because of how the U.S. government chose to repress or accommodate Black radical politics at different moments. A central part of their story is the BPP's deep connections to revolutionary movements in Cuba, Vietnam, and China, which they show were core to what the Panthers believed, not just symbolic gestures.

This source provides essential background on the radical organizational world that government repression dismantled, helping establish what was lost before abolition emerged in its place.

# Example - Method

Gordon, Peter E. "What Is Intellectual History? A Frankly Polemical Introduction to a Difficult Genre." *Modern Intellectual History* 19.4 (2022): 1–17.

Gordon explains what makes intellectual history distinctive as a method: it insists on reading ideas in context, neither treating them as purely abstract nor reducing them to simple reflections of social conditions. He argues that good intellectual history takes seriously both the internal logic of an argument and the historical circumstances that made certain questions urgent and certain answers possible. This piece provides the methodological foundation for reading abolitionist thought as a product of its historical moment rather than simply evaluating whether its arguments are philosophically correct.

# Example - Theoretical

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Routledge, 1990.

Collins argues that Black women have developed a distinctive way of knowing the world — one that validates lived experience, values dialogue, and measures truth by its connection to real people's lives rather than by formal academic or professional credentials. She shows how this approach to knowledge emerged directly from Black women's historical exclusion from mainstream institutions while remaining essential to the communities those institutions ignored. This piece provides the theoretical framework for the article's central claim that contemporary abolitionism inherited this way of knowing, which explains why abolitionists reason and argue the way they do.

# Example - Related

Shelby, Tommie. "The Idea of Prison Abolition." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 38.3 (2010): 232–271.

Shelby examines prison abolition as a political philosophy, arguing that while abolitionists make powerful criticisms of mass incarceration, they have not yet provided sufficient justification for the positive claim that prisons should be eliminated entirely. He evaluates abolitionist arguments on their philosophical merits, asking whether they hold up independent of empirical questions about what alternatives might look like. This piece is useful as a foil: where Shelby asks whether abolition is philosophically defensible, this article asks instead how abolitionist ideas developed historically and why they take the shape they do.