

FRACTURES

INTERNATIONALIST TEACH-IN SUMMARIES

30 APRIL-18 JUNE 2025



How do we build liberatory futures?

Summary of FRACTURES session 8, 18 June.

Our eighth conversation was with:

For this final session of the FRACTURES series, we were delighted to host a conversation with:

- **Kali Akuno**, co-founder and director of Cooperation Jackson, USA
- **Blessol Gathoni**, Queer Social Rights Activist and Community Organizer, Kenya
- **Lyn Ossome**, Associate Professor and Director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research, Uganda
- Co-moderator: **Hakima Abbas**, African feminist and popular educator

Content below

- Key points from the session
- Further resources and links
- Key quotes

Key points from the session

- **Decolonisation of mindsets and modes of production** : All speakers spoke to the importance of challenging dominant development paradigms and a colonial mindset. Capitalism's pursuit of endless growth has pushed the planet toward ecological collapse, necessitating a re-evaluation of 'development' itself. Degrowth, ecological stewardship, regenerative technologies, and reclaiming indigenous knowledge systems can craft livable futures attuned to environmental limits. This demands a radical reorientation from extraction and consumption to care, reciprocity, and respect for all life forms.
- **Existing practices of liberation as foundations for futures**: Kali Akuno spoke of the experience of Cooperation Jackson – and its 'Build and Fight' formula – that both challenges reactionary systems and policies and also constructs autonomous projects centered on mutual aid, food sovereignty, digital communication innovations and participatory democracy. When coordinated democratically and across different scales, these diverse experiments could constitute the building blocks of a post-capitalist mode of production. It challenges narratives of leftist inadequacy by emphasising aggregation and federated cooperation over awaiting large-scale

political party revival. It highlights the significance of bottom-up practices that materially meet people's needs while building political power.

- **Queerness as a Decolonial and Anti-Capitalist imaginary:** Blessol Gathoni argued African queer theorising and organising complicates Western liberal human rights frameworks that may have created space for queer voices but also had limits and exclusions. Queerness interrupts colonial and capitalist constructions of identity and kinship, that centered family and neoliberal forms of production, governance and society and which viewed third world populations as labour or resources for the thriving of a white consumer individual. Queerness offers alternative ways to imagine freedom, land stewardship, and relationality – what it is to be African - beyond neoliberal individualism and white supremacy. This approach reveals the inseparability of identity politics from territorial and ecological struggles, broadening the scope of liberation to include marginalized sexualities, restorative practices, forms of community healing and non-normative ways of being.

- **Agrarian and gendered social reproduction struggles as core to liberation:** Lyn Ossome reminded us that the majority of populations in the global South rely on the informal economy, agrarian economies and subsistence means of survival, intertwined with gendered labour largely performed by women. Under neoliberalism, many working people have deeply precarious conditions and live with high levels of emiseration – they are ‘surplus people’ – often subject to state violence. Understanding liberation requires centering these realities, which capitalist industrialisation schemes overlook or undermine, and engaging this population at the heart of our work. Social reproduction—care work and nurturing relationships—is political labour central to sustaining communities (as we saw during COVID) and resisting exploitation. Thus, liberatory futures must embrace food sovereignty, land access, ecological sustainability, and feminist analyses of labour and reproduction.

- **Land as a domain of struggle and freedom:** Both Lyn and Gathoni spoke to how land needs not just to be seen as an economic resources but as a fundamental domain tied to freedom and liberation for historically marginalised peoples. Lyn talked of the role of women in decolonial land struggles in Kenya and Uganda, and today against the necolonial scramble for food, fueled by financial capitalism and speculation. We need to look beyond land as political economy or as neatly fitting into our own ideological frameworks, to being a space for ecological and feminist struggles rooted in care, survival, and embodied resistance. At same time, Lyn warned against simplistic romanticisation of peasant struggles, pointing to internal contradictions, legacies of colonialism and the dangers of prioritising the liberation of one group above another. Freedom must be multi-dimensional and intersectional.

- **Local government as strategic terrain:** The speakers emphasise that while national governments usually serve extractive capitalist interests, local municipal bodies sometimes offer openings for negotiation and experimentation. Cooperation Jackson's work illustrates how marginalised majorities in cities - even within deeply reactionary states and nations - can forge new social institutions, commons, and cooperative economies, engaging dual power strategies

inspired by struggles like the Zapatistas. However, these experiments face continual threats from multinational corporations, neoliberal governments, and environmental crises.

- **Boycotts and non-cooperation as emancipatory tools:** The Q&A discussion raised the importance of refusal tactics such as boycotts and non-cooperation with oppressive states and corporations. Such strategies, combined with grassroots organising and community education, can amplify consciousness and create pressure points for systemic change.
-
- **Internationalism as a practical and necessary praxis:** The interplay between local struggles and global solidarity was repeatedly stressed. Liberation cannot succeed if confined to isolated locales; rather, federated commons, shared resources, and inter-movement dialogue are essential. Drawing on diverse regional experiences—from African agrarian movements to US-based municipal organizing and Rojava's autonomous zones—transnational collaboration strengthens movement capacities to confront capital's global reach and its violent repressions but it must also be conscious of the very different realities and contexts for many groups and peoples.
-
- **Sustaining hope in lived practice:** The discussion began by acknowledging the difficulty of imagining liberatory futures when the present reality is steeped in violence, systemic injustice, and environmental decay. Hope is sometimes presented as a fleeting sentiment, but it can be more powerful if it is grounded in existing, lived practices—historical and ongoing—that challenge capitalist exploitation, colonial legacies, and hegemonic state power.

Further reading and listening

Kali Akuno

- Cooperation Jackson: <https://cooperationjackson.org/intro>
- Books: Jackson Rising Redux: Lessons on Building the Future in the Present" https://www.pmpress.org/index.php?l=product_detail&p=1188 and "Jackson Rising: the Struggle for Economic Democracy and Black Self-Determination in Jackson, MS" <https://darajapress.com/publication/jackson-rising>
- Build and Fight Formula here video series: <https://cooperationjackson.org/announcementsblog/buildandfighteducationalseries>
- Black labour and liberation in the disposable era: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2015/09/04/until-we-win-black-labor-and-liberation-in-the-disposable-era/>
- Some lessons from the practices in Jackson: <https://cooperationjackson.org/blog/npg10yearsofcjdevelopment>

Blessol Gathoni

- White supremacy as cultural cannibalism in 2017: <https://longreads.tni.org/stateofpower/white-supremacy>
- Paraphilanthropy: <https://www.bayoakomolafe.net/post/paraphilanthropy-giving-money-its-freedom-papers>

- Decolonisation is not a metaphor:
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>

Lyn Ossome

- Pedagogies of feminist resistance in Africa:
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/22779760211000939>
- Gender and Development in the Agrarian South:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750x24003474>

Other links shared in the chat:

- The Crack in the Wall, Zapatista: <https://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2015/05/10/the-crack-in-the-wall-first-note-on-zapatista-method/>
- Film on indigenous knowledge and hope for the future, called The Eternal Song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILU6enxwwVg&t=3s&ab_channel=ScienceandNonduality
- Climate socialism: <https://jasonhickel.substack.com/p/climate-socialism>
- We are the Solution campaign for food sovereignty: <https://grain.org/en/article/5333-we-are-the-solution-african-women-organise-for-land-and-seed-sovereignty>
- Conversation with Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, author of Hospicing Modernity and Outgrowing Modernity. <https://www.teamhuman.fm/episodes/322-vanessa-machado-de-oliviera>

And some parting quotes



Hakima Abbas

‘While oppression produces contradiction and contradiction produces struggle, so liberation at once is inevitable and is a constant practice. We’re not talking about pipe dreams or utopias. These are real, existing, and in construction, practices of revolutionary work. So as we sometimes bend under the crush of defeat or the enormity of the systemic change that we need, there are practices that sustain possibility, that show us what is and can be different.’



Kali Akuno

‘We’ve actually gained a lot of traction throughout the world in figuring out how to work in the margins, how to work in the cracks... Imagine a world where all these different things came together, where mutual aid was directly tied to the autonomous food sovereignty work, and then tied to new social digital technology, where we are working collaboratively to plan out and coordinate mutual exchange. That is within our grasp and they’re being experimented on small scales.’

Blessol Gathoni



‘Queerness has wrapped up against the idea of the postcolonial independence struggles that define the African citizen as a person who values the family unit as the most important unit to neoliberal capitalism... Queerness brings the question and recognition of our bodies as the last territory.’

‘We have to keep challenging the western notion of the human... the fantasy where the human is removed from natural resources or from nature. This is the biggest myth of separation that we’ve suffered for the last centuries.’



Lyn Ossome

‘The resistance waged by women are an assertion of women’s awareness of the life-center that land holds, that preservation of nature is fundamentally driven by acts of care.’



Shaun Matsheza

‘The world has been made by people. The world can be unmade and remade by people.’

www.tni.org/fractures

