

BEYOND THE BARS

Connecting The Struggles



Friday, March 4, 2016
LERNER HALL

A Community Collaborative Event

“Prisons do not disappear social problems, they disappear human beings. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.”

I think the importance of doing activist work is precisely because it allows you to give back and to consider yourself not as a single individual who may have achieved whatever but to be a part of an ongoing historical movement.”

- Angela Davis

“It is a political moment that’s opening up opportunities to envision a world where people can actually live in dignity. So whether that’s abolishing a criminal justice system that feeds off the labor and the lives of black and brown people, whether that’s abolishing an economic system that thrives on exploitation, poverty and misery: this is the time for us to not just dream about what could be, but also start to build alternatives that we want to see.”

- Alicia Garza

“Do you see law and order? There is nothing but disorder, and instead of law there is the illusion of security. It is an illusion because it is built on a long history of injustices: racism, criminality, and the genocide of millions. Many people say it is insane to resist the system, but actually, it is insane not to.”

- Mumia Abu-Jamal

“ELLA’S SONG”

Bernice Johnson Reagon,
Sweet Honey and the Rock

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

Until the killing of black men, black mothers’ sons
Is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers’ sons

That which touches me most is that I had a chance to work with people
Passing on to others that which was passed on to me

To me young people come first, they have the courage where we fail
And if I can but shed some light as they carry us through the gale

The older I get the better I know that the secret of my going on
Is when the reins are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the storm

Not needing to clutch for power, not needing the light just to shine on me
I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny

Struggling myself don’t mean a whole lot, I’ve come to realize
That teaching others to stand up and fight is the only way my struggle survives

I’m a woman who speaks in a voice and I must be heard
At times I can be quite difficult, I’ll bow to no man’s word

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

Conference Schedule

MARCH 4TH

Conference Kickoff Event

Lerner Hall, 7:30 - 9:30 pm

SATURDAY MARCH 5TH

Connecting the Struggles - Morning Plenaries and Afternoon Panels

CSSW, 10:00 am - 5:30 pm

SUNDAY MARCH 6TH

Building the Grassroots - Organizing Workshops

CSSW, 11:00 am - 5:30 pm

PROGRAM

Impact Repertory Theatre

Welcome

The Beyond the Bars Fellows

The Criminal Justice Caucus at
Columbia School of Social Work

The Center for Justice at Columbia University

Alicia Garza (Virtual Remarks)

A Conversation on Connecting the Struggles

Cory Greene, Abraham Paulos, Delaine Powerful and
Danielle Sered, moderated by Michelle Fine

Mumia Abu-Jamal (Virtual Remarks)

Theater for Social Change

Angela Davis

**This event is organized in collaboration with students, faculty and
community members across New York City.**

SPEAKER BIOS



Angela Davis

Through her activism and scholarship over the last decades, Angela Davis has been deeply involved in our nation's quest for social justice. Her work as an educator – both at the university level and in the larger public sphere – has always emphasized the importance of building communities of struggle for economic, racial, and gender justice. Professor

Davis' teaching career has taken her to San Francisco State University, Mills College, and UC Berkeley. She also has taught at UCLA, Vassar, the Claremont Colleges, and Stanford University. She spent the last fifteen years at the University of California Santa Cruz where she is now Distinguished Professor Emerita of History of Consciousness, an interdisciplinary Ph.D program, and of Feminist Studies. Angela Davis is the author of eight books and has lectured throughout the United States as well as in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America. In recent years a persistent theme of her work has been the range of social problems associated with incarceration and the generalized criminalization of those communities that are most affected by poverty and racial discrimination. She draws upon her own experiences in the early seventies as a person who spent eighteen months in jail and on trial, after being placed on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted List." She has also conducted extensive research on numerous issues related to race, gender and imprisonment. Her most recent books are *Abolition Democracy* and *Are Prisons Obsolete?* about the abolition of the prison industrial complex, and a new edition of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Angela Davis is a founding member Critical Resistance, a national organization dedicated to the dismantling of the prison industrial complex. Internationally, she is affiliated with Sisters Inside, an abolitionist organization based in Queensland, Australia that works in solidarity with women in prison. Like many other educators, Professor Davis is especially concerned with the general tendency to devote more resources and attention to the prison system than to educational institutions. Having helped to popularize the notion of a "prison industrial complex," she now urges her audiences to think seriously about the future possibility of a world without prisons and to help forge a 21st century abolitionist movement.



Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an imprisoned radio journalist, former Black Panther, and author of two best-selling books, *Live From Death Row* and *Death Blossoms*, which address prison life from a critical and spiritual perspective. In 1981 he was elected president of the Association of Black Journalists (Philadelphia chapter). That same year he was arrested for allegedly killing

a white police officer in Philadelphia. He was convicted and sentenced to death in 1982, in a process that has been described as an epic miscarriage of justice. After spending more than 28 years on death row, in 2011 his death sentence was vacated when the Supreme Court allowed to stand the decisions of four federal judges who had earlier declared his death sentence unconstitutional. He is now serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. In spite of his three-decade-long imprisonment, most of which was spent in solitary confinement on Death Row, Abu-Jamal has relentlessly fought for his freedom and for his profession. From prison he has written 8 books and thousands of radio commentaries (www.prisonradio.org/). He holds a BA from Goddard College and an MA from California State University, Dominguez Hills. His books have sold more than 100,000 copies and have been translated into seven languages. www.bringmumiahome.com ★ www.freemumia.com ★ www.emajonline.com ★ www.mumiaabujamal.com

Alicia Garza



Alicia Garza is an organizer, writer, and freedom dreamer living and working in Oakland, CA. She is the Special Projects Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance, the nation's leading voice for dignity and fairness for the millions of domestic workers in the United States, most of whom are women. She is also the co-creator of #BlackLivesMatter, a national organizing project

focused on combatting anti-Black state sanctioned violence. Alicia's work challenges us to celebrate the contributions of Black queer women's work within popular narratives of Black movements, and reminds us that the Black radical tradition is long, complex and international. Her activism reflects organizational strategies and visions that connect emerging social movements without diminishing the specificity of the structural violence facing Black lives. She has been the recipient of numerous awards for her organizing work, including the Root 100 2015 list of African American achievers and influencers between the ages of 25 and 45, and was featured in the Politico 50 guide to the thinkers, doers and visionaries transforming American politics in 2015.

HOST

Malik Yoba



Probably best known for his roles as an actor in the 1993 Disney classic, *Cool Runnings*, and the hit Fox television series *Empire* and *New York Undercover*, Malik Yoba has proven himself to be much more than what first meets the eye. As an actor, writer, director, producer, musician, activist, educator, inspirational speaker, entrepreneur and author, Yoba tackles his quest to live a purpose filled life and not only entertain but also educate young people in communities across the world on the value of accountability, integrity and leadership. Born in the South Bronx and later raised in Harlem NY, Yoba is not a product of his environment, but a progression. Living his life as an example to young people in inner cities across the country and abroad that those very streets, which breed, apathy, hatred and violence, can give birth to positive ideas and upward mobility. Shot by a stranger and left for dead at the age of 15, Yoba had already realized he had a passion and gift for moving others and raising consciousness. That near death experience in high school solidified his belief in personal and social responsibility and spurred him toward a life of volunteerism, community activism, service and entrepreneurship. He has made it his life's mission ever since to use the arts as his weapon of choice. In 2013 Yoba co-founded *iconic32*, a lifestyle company/innovation studio that uses pop culture to promote social good via consulting and an e-commerce platform.

PANELISTS

Cory Greene



Cory Greene is a formerly incarcerated organizer with *How Our Lives Link Altogether! (H.O.L.L.A!)* and the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions (CNUS). Cory is also a PhD candidate at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

Abraham Paulos



Abraham joined *Families for Freedom*, as a member, after he faced mandatory detention and deportation for a crime he did not commit. He is still at risk and his experience moved him to aggressively advocate for others. Abraham is an Eritrean refugee, born in Sudan and raised in Chicago. He is a graduate of George Washington University with a degree in International Affairs and is currently finishing a Masters in Human Rights at the New School University. Abraham is deeply committed to social justice and has worked for a number of years advocating for human rights.

Delaine Powerful



Delaine Powerful is NYC chapter co-chair of Black Youth Project activist based membership organization of 18-35 year olds fighting for the political, social, economic, and educational freedom of all Black people. She currently does reproductive justice and sexual and reproductive health education with the TORCH program, a youth focused program at the National Institute for Reproductive Health. She is also 1 of 200 Women Deliver Young Leaders Fellows across the globe, doing sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy at the international level.

Danielle Sered



Danielle Sered founded and directs Common Justice, an innovative alternative to incarceration and victim service program for serious and violent felonies, and a demonstration project of the Vera Institute of Justice. She has served as deputy director of Vera's Adolescent Reentry Initiative and led the youth programs at the Harlem Community Justice Center. She sits on the Advisory Council to the New York State Office of Victims Services, Diversity Advisory Committee to the federal Office for Victims of Crime, New York State Governor's Council on Reentry and Community Reintegration, and Advisory Board to the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice. Common Justice received the Award for Innovation in Victim Services from Attorney General Holder and the federal Office for Victims of Crime.

MODERATOR

Michelle Fine



Michelle Fine is a Distinguished Professor of Critical Psychology, Women's Studies, American Studies and Urban Education at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Fine taught at the University of Pennsylvania from 1981 – 1991, and then came to the Graduate Center. She has authored many "classics" – books and articles on high school push outs, adolescent sexuality – called the "missing discourse of desire," the national evaluation of the impact of college in prison, the struggles and strength of the children of incarcerated adults, the wisdom of Muslim American youth. A pioneer in the field of youth Participatory Action Research, and a founding faculty member of the Public Science Project, Fine has been involved with a series of participatory studies with youth and elders, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated college students and youth working at the intersections of movements for educational, immigration and juvenile justice.

Impact Repertory Theatre



We are youth activists who view the creative arts and leadership training as a way to develop ourselves and change the world in a positive way. We believe that we must be the message that we bring through hard work, focus, discipline, unity and the principles of S.O.S. safe space, outstanding effort and service to our family, friends and community.

Theater for Social Change (TSC)



Theater for Social Change is a performance ensemble based in Harlem that uses theater to raise awareness about the impact of mass incarceration on women, families, and communities. TSC's original performances are based on ensemble member's life stories and experiences with the criminal justice system and as returning citizens, with a focus on eliminating barriers to higher education and advocating for reform. The ensemble performs regularly at venues ranging from national conferences to correctional facilities.

CO-SPONSORS

Columbia University School of Social Work
Columbia School of General Studies, Student Life
Criminal Justice Initiative: Supporting Children, Families and Communities
Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University
Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The Center for Institutional and Social Change at Columbia Law School
The Heyman Center for the Humanities at Columbia University
The Institute for Research in African American Studies (IRAAS)
The Policy Caucus at CSSW
The Latinx Caucus at CSSW
The Education Caucus at CSSW
The Queer Caucus at CSSW
The Black Caucus at CSSW
The Social Work & Administration Management (SWAM) Caucus at CSSW

SPECIAL THANKS

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Columbia Social Work Events Management
Columbia University Events Management

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

The Criminal Justice Caucus

The Criminal Justice Caucus seeks to provide a forum for CSSW students to access a spectrum of issues related to the social issue of criminal justice in order to build awareness, raise consciousness, and enhance practice competencies. Through the use and facilitation of film, lectures, debate, panels, and trainings, the caucus will provide essential context and information about prison expansion in the United States, in which currently one in one hundred adults is in jail or prison; about 10 million children have a parent in jail or prison; and one in nine African American men between the ages of 20 and 34 are in jail or prison. We believe it is the right and responsibility of all social work students to access critical dialogue, both inside and outside of the classroom, about the needs of people affected by incarceration; this client population crosses lines of generation, race, gender, religion, economic status, political belief, ability, sexual orientation, and others. Student voices contribute to building solutions that meet the needs of people in prison, jail, on parole, on probation, victims of crime, children of incarcerated people and their families.

The Beyond the Bars Fellows

The Beyond the Bars Fellowship offers students and community members an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of mass incarceration and social change, and to collaborate with social justice organizers, activists, and academics to plan the annual Beyond the Bars Conference. This interdisciplinary leadership program aims to bring together a diverse group of Fellows to further develop their leadership skills – Fellows gain a theoretical and practical understanding of mass incarceration – inclusive of its origins, and wide spread personal and societal consequence. Fellows are also introduced to various models of social change while having an opportunity to interact and learn from community activists, organizers and academics. In addition, Fellows work together with the Center for Justice and the Criminal Justice Caucus to organize the annual Beyond the Bars Conference on mass incarceration. The Fellowship is made up of both student and community members. Our aim is to work collaboratively with the University and community towards social change.

The Center for Justice at Columbia University

The mission of the Center for Justice is to engage the University's many disciplines in working together with community partners to contribute towards ending mass incarceration and to support new approaches to justice and safety through education, research and policy change. It works in partnership with schools, departments, centers and institutes across Columbia, other universities, government agencies, community organizations, advocates and those directly affected by the criminal justice system. Visit centerforjustice.columbia.edu for more information.