

RADICAL FUTURES TOOLKIT SERIES



Queer Liberation

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What is Queer Liberation!

Queer liberation requires the dismantling of all systems that police, punish, or pathologise queerness - including capitalism, white supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy and imperialism.

This future demands...

Collective transformation of society so that all queer people can live, love, work and exist without oppression.

Mutual aid networks, free gender-affirming care, harm reduction, chosen families

A reality where every queer kid can grow up safe, supported and free - where their identities are celebrated, bodily autonomy is respected, and where joy, experimentation and gender play are protected, not punished.

Anti-imperialism and ongoing colonial violence

Liberation isn't real if it's built on borders, war, or empire. Anti-imperialism is a central component of Queer Liberation because many forms of ongoing colonial violence deeply shape queer lives, especially Indigenous, POC and migrant communities

What this looks like across the world:

Border regimes & immigration policies criminalising and deporting LGBTQIA+ migrants, especially those fleeing wars, climate disasters, and occupations rooted in colonial legacies.

Western-imposed gender norms erasing or criminalising

pre-colonial gender diversity (e.g. two-spirit identities in Turtle Island, hijras in South Asia, fa'afafine in Samoa), used to legitimise land theft and resource extraction.

Militarised occupation & settler colonialism, e.g. in Palestine, where pinkwashing is used to deflect and legitimise the Zionist entity's genocide of Indigenous people.

Queer liberation as anti-imperialist struggle

It's important to remember that contrary to mainstream narratives, the global criminalisation of queerness is not native to many cultures - it was in many instances, exported or emboldened by colonial powers.

Colonialism introduced anti-LGBTQIA+ laws

Many countries with laws banning homosexuality still have versions of **British colonial penal codes**

These laws imposed **white, Christian, binary gender norms** on diverse cultural and gender systems

What is Homonationalism?

Coined by Jasbir Puar, Homonationalism helps us understand how LGBTQIA+ rights can be weaponised to

serve nationalist, racist or imperial agendas – instead of challenging them.

Examples include:

Framing groups of marginalised people as inherently ‘backwards’ in their stance on homosexuality

Using LGBTQIA+ rights as justification for war, occupation or border regimes

Pinkwashing by settler states (e.g. Israel) to mask colonial violence.

Pinkwashing

For these reasons, when we talk about Queer liberation - we envision a future that is anti-colonial and anti-racist. We reject any version of 'progress' that reinforces policing, borders, war, or empire.

Queer identity is continuously co-opted by imperialist powers for their own ends. Many Queer activists call this out as Pinkwashing: "the exploitation of LGBTQI+ culture and identities for public relations purposes."

Elias Jahshan's What is Pinkwashing? shado Knowledge Page provides an overview of this concept, how it has evolved and why it is used by Israel to bolster its settler-colonial project.

You can also find out more by reading Decolonize Palestine's pinkwashing page.



Queer Anti-Imperialism

Queer anti-imperialism shows up in both global movements and everyday survival. It means opposing the systems – borders, militaries, colonial governments – that criminalise, displace and disappear our communities.

In practice, it looks like:

Mutual aid + community care by QTBIPOC groups, resisting state abandonment and rebuilding what colonial and imperial systems tried to destroy

Anti-pinkwashing campaigns that reject corporation co-optation of Pride and expose how states use LGBTQIA+ rights to justify violence

Examples include:

No Pride in Detention / No Pride in War campaigns which link queer and migrant justice by protesting corporate Pride sponsorships by arms dealers, border forces and police.

Organising groups like **Queers for Palestine** organise teach-ins, protests, and actions to advance anti-colonial queer solidarity.

Sex Worker Liberation

In a queer liberated future, sex work is work – and it's decriminalised. Like all workers, sex workers should have the right to organise, utilise labour rights, access healthcare, and work safely without fear.

Many sex workers are queer, trans, disabled or migrants – excluded from traditional workplaces and targeted by state violence. But this isn't the only reason that queer liberation is entangled with sex worker liberation – it's also because they both challenge oppressive colonial, patriarchal and capitalist societal structures.

Why decriminalisation?

Decriminalisation puts sex workers in control of their own work, with protections under labor law and the ability to form trade unions. It removes the criminal penalties for sex work, while keeping laws against exploitation.

It enables workers to:

Organise for rights and safety

Access healthcare without fear

Live and work without eviction, arrest or deportation

Unlike Legalisation, which maintains heavy state control, surveillance & zoning, creating a two-tier system that still criminalises the most marginalised.

Sex Worker Liberation

Learn more:

Decrim Now is a grassroots group of sex workers, feminists, trade unionists and allies campaigning for the decriminalisation of sex work; alongside an end to benefits sanctions, rent caps, trans, migrant and disability justice, and abortion rights.

As part of the campaign, Decrim Now lobby Parliament to change the existing laws surrounding sex work. If you want to support the global call for the full decriminalisation of sex work, use Decrim Now's template email to demand your MP stands up for decriminalisation.

Read shado's Knowledge Page What is the Decriminalisation of Sex Work?

There Is No Queer Liberation Without Trans Liberation

Transphobia is not just social – it's structural, upheld by governments, media, and legal systems that enforce colonial ideas of gender and sex.

From the UK Supreme Court's 2025 ruling narrowing the legal definition of "woman," to global rollbacks on healthcare and rising anti-trans violence – it has never been clearer that there is no true queer liberation without trans liberation.

As Josie Giles writes, real liberation calls for:

- Trans healthcare beyond the broken GIC system
- Resources to end trans poverty
- Abolition, not criminalisation

A shift from asking for "rights" to building true freedom

Read: *Trans in the UK: What the Hell Are We Going to Do?* by Josie Giles

Liberation won't come from politicians or institutions – it

comes from solidarity across movements and collective struggle led by the most marginalised.

As we fight these regressive policies, it's vital to remember our movements are part of a longer arc of resistance. Leslie Feinberg reminded us of this in 2003:

"The present and past are the trajectory of the future. But the arc of history does not bend towards justice automatically – as the great Abolitionist Frederick Douglass observed, without struggle there is no progress."

THORN

*Trans Hookers
Resistance Network*

The full decriminalisation of sex work is a critical component of a liberated trans future. In our current reality, many trans+ people engage in sex work due to lack of access to healthcare, secure housing or a stable income – and precarious working conditions make them even more likely to be disproportionately harmed by the law and targeted by police.

The efforts of organisations like the Trans Hookers Resistance Network (THORN) offer insight into what a liberated future can look like. This includes creation of social spaces and political organising by and for trans sex workers.

THORN

*Trans Hookers
Resistance Network*

Their work includes:

- Sex Workers Rights Workshops: equipping folks with knowledge about their rights as sex workers.
- DIY hormones + self-sourced healthcare info: informing people so they understand how to navigate their health journey and exercise bodily autonomy, signposting helpful resources & support
- groups that provide mutual aid and online resources.
- THNX (Trans Harm Reduction & Needle Exchange)
- A free needle exchange and harm reduction chats for trans, gender-nonconforming, genderqueer & non-binary folk (run by Safe Only CiC & The Love Tank CiC)

THORN shows us what trans liberation looks like in action: community-led care, resistance, and radical imagination.

Border abolition & queerness

In our current world, borders are tools of colonial violence – used to criminalise movement, exploit labour, and police gender and sexuality.

- Queer and trans migrants often face intertwined barriers: borders, racism, criminalisation, and stigma. Many flee persecution and discrimination only to face hostile immigration systems that punish them for trying to live freely.
- Visa restrictions push people into informal labour without protections
- & Fear of deportation keeps people silent about abuse and violence

In a Queer liberated future:

- Movement is free, migration is not criminalised

- Borders do not determine who deserves care
- & Queer migrants live and love without fear of exile or erasure

Global Movements Already Building This Future:

- Empower (Thailand): community-led sex worker advocacy
- SWEAT (South Africa): fighting criminalisation and abuse
- All India Network of Sex Workers: organising for dignity & rights

Gender affirming care

In a queer liberated future, gender-affirming care is accessible, compassionate, and affirming at every stage of life. It enables everyone to live authentically and without fear of being erased or pathologised.

Gender-affirming care is a range of healthcare practices (which can include medical, psychological, and social support) that are designed to help align individuals' bodies and life with their gender identity. It should be available to all, regardless of age or stage in life.

It can include:

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

*Gender-affirming surgeries
(e.g. mastectomies, genital reconstruction)*

Mental health support for navigating gender identity

Gender affirming care

Critical Perspectives on The UK's Gender Clinic System:

Currently, the UK's Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) system is cruelly gatekeeping essential gender-affirming care with excessive wait times.

Josie Giles' "Wages for Transition" outlines a critical perspective on the UK's gender clinic system, advocating for greater access to gender-affirming care and depathologisation of transness.

She emphasises that trans people should not be forced to jump through bureaucratic

hoops just to receive care that affirms their gender.

Her analysis remains vital for understanding the changes we need in the healthcare system to ensure a liberated trans future: The solution is not simply more funding, but the radical dismantling of this system. We need a future where gender-affirming care is not reliant on psychiatric assessments, where community-based care is accessible, and where trans people are trusted to make decisions about their own bodies and lives.

Intersex People and Queer Liberation

Queer liberation must include the fight for bodily autonomy and the right to self-determination for all people – and this is particularly important for Intersex people.

What does “intersex” mean?

Intersex people are born with natural variations in sex traits like chromosomes, genitals, or hormones. These variations don't fit narrow definitions of “male” or “female”, and shouldn't be pathologised.

What a liberated intersex future includes:

- No more non-consensual surgeries
- Intersex children growing up with love, affirmation, and full bodily autonomy
- Healthcare and education systems respecting intersex people and teaching about natural sex diversity.
- Legal recognition and protections to ensure intersex people can live openly and safely.
- Intersex-led spaces, art,

- storytelling and activism shaping policy, culture and community care.

Resources to learn more:

- InterACT Advocates: youth-focused legal advocacy and storytelling - <https://interactadvocates.org/>
- Intersex Justice Project: a US-based group led by Black intersex people <https://intersexjusticeproject.org/>
- @pidgeon: Artist, activist & intersex educator

Asexual People and Queer Liberation

Queer liberation means affirming all ways of being, including those that exist outside of sexual or romantic norms. This must include **asexual (ace)** and **aromantic (aro)** people.

What does “asexual” mean?
Asexuality is a sexual orientation where a person experiences little or no sexual attraction. It exists on a spectrum – some ace people are also aromantic, some are not.

What a liberated ace/aro future includes:

- Community spaces where ace and aro people are seen, heard, and celebrated
- Education that challenges the idea that sexual attraction is a universal or necessary experience
- Healthcare that affirms ace people's needs without pathologising them
- Legal recognition for chosen family, friendship, and non-romantic partnerships
- Ace-led storytelling, culture, art,

- and activism shaping how we define love, care, and connection

Resources to learn more:

- **AVEN (Asexuality Visibility and Education Network)**
- **@acedadadvice**: Creator of The Ace Workbook, teaching folks about asexual, aromantic and agender communities.
- **“Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex” by Angela Chen**: an accessible and personal exploration of asexuality

Reproductive Justice & Community Care

Reproductive justice is critical to queer liberation.

It includes:

- The right to have children – or not
- The right to raise our families in safety
- The right to access care without coercion, stigma, or state violence

While Reproductive Health focuses on 'service delivery' and Reproductive Rights on legal access, Reproductive Justice is about collective action to dismantle forms of institutionalised discrimination that block people – especially queer, trans, Black, Brown, disabled and poor folks – from making real, free choices about their bodies and futures.

That includes creating care outside of state control:

- DIY clinics, abortion

- decriminalisation, HRT swaps, legalising telemedicine abortion globally
- Queer doulas and full-spectrum care workers
- Peer-led mental health, sex ed & disability justice collectives that are intersectional and trans-inclusive.

These aren't just survival strategies – they are blueprints for a liberated future grounded in bodily autonomy, mutual aid, and solidarity.

Learn more:

- Reciprocity's Abortion Utopia Toolkit
- shado's Knowledge Page: What is Reproductive Justice?
- @SisterSong: Women of Colour Reproductive Justice Collective

Queer Kinship & the Abolition of the Nuclear Family

In our current world, the nuclear family system of social organisation isolates individuals, enforces rigid gender roles and shifts the state's supposed responsibility for care onto families – especially women and marginalised groups.

Why Abolish the Nuclear Family?

- The state uses the nuclear family to avoid providing real social welfare
- It forces caregiving into unpaid, isolating roles
- It marginalises alternative forms of kinship and collective care

Queer kinship challenges the idea that family must be based on biological ties or traditional gender roles. It offers a vision where care, love, and community are chosen and shared. Whether it's chosen families offering each other emotional, financial or social support, care collectives, mutual aid groups, community-run clinics, or alternative family structures, it manifests in many ways.

Sophie Lewis' book *Abolish the Family* calls for a radical reimagining of family structures and a move towards a more communal and equitable system of care, love, and social organisation.

For more on collective forms of caregiving and solidarity, check out Alva Gotby's book *They Call It Love: The Politics of Emotional Life*.

Further reading & resources

Must Read Books

Homonationalism: A Queer Reading of the Right by Jasbir K. Puar. Understanding how LGBTQ+ rights are co-opted by nationalist & xenophobic movements.

Family Abolition and the Queer Family by Jason Lydon. Rethinking family structures through a queer lens.

Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights by Juno Mac and Molly Smith. A feminist and queer perspective on sex worker rights and criminalisation.

Saving Our Own Lives, by Shira Hassan. Stories of marginalised communities building support outside oppressive systems.

The Transgender Issue by Shon Faye. Exploring the politics of transgender liberation.

Abolish the Family by Sophie Lewis. A radical call for reimagining family structures.

Ace by Angela Chen. Exploring asexuality, desire and the meaning of sex.

A Short History of Trans Misogyny by Jules Gill-Peterson.

The Care We Dream Of: Liberatory and Transformative Approaches to LGBTQ+ Health

Abortion Beyond the Law by Naomi Braine.

Further reading & resources

Trans Political & Mutual Aid Groups

- Belfast Trans
- Black Trans Alliance
- Five For Five
- Trans Actual
- Trans Aid Cymru
- We Exist
- TransHarmReduction.org
- Transplus at 56 Dean Street
- Trans Services at Spectra CIC
- Trans Fem Social
- Dalston Solidarity Cafe
- THORN (Trans Hookers
Resistance Network)

Definitions

Homonationalism: A concept coined by Jasbir Puar, homonationalism refers to the way in which LGBTQIA+ rights are weaponised by nationalist, racist, and imperialist agendas. It frames certain groups as 'backward' in their views on homosexuality and uses LGBTQIA+ rights as a justification for state violence, military intervention, and border control.

Family abolition: The radical reimagining of family structures that challenges the nuclear family as a central site of oppression. Family abolition calls for dismantling systems that enforce rigid, heteronormative, and capitalist ideas of the family, advocating instead for collective, community-based caregiving that is based on mutual solidarity and support. It recognises the nuclear family's

role in sustaining capitalist and patriarchal systems of power and inequality.

Heteronormativity: The societal belief that heterosexuality is the default, natural, and superior sexual orientation. Heteronormativity enforces rigid gender roles, prescribes a binary view of gender, and marginalises non-heterosexual identities. It reinforces traditional family structures and erases the existence of queer and non-binary people.

Reproductive Justice: A framework that extends beyond reproductive rights, focusing on collective action to ensure that everyone has the ability to have children, not have children, and parent children in safe and supportive environments. It advocates for the dismantling

Definitions

of systems that prevent marginalised communities from accessing full reproductive autonomy and care.

Queer Kinship: A form of kinship that goes beyond the traditional nuclear family model, focusing on alternative, chosen family structures. Queer kinship emphasises the creation of support networks based on mutual care, solidarity, and love, often filling in the gaps left by heteronormative family systems. It recognises that kinship can be based on relationships of care and emotional support, not solely on biology or marriage.

Asexuality: A sexual orientation where a person experiences little or no sexual attraction to others. Asexual people may still engage in romantic

relationships and experience emotional intimacy, but they do not feel sexual desire. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and individuals may identify as graysexual (experiencing sexual attraction infrequently) or demisexual (experiencing sexual attraction only after a deep emotional bond).

Aromanticism: A romantic orientation in which a person experiences little or no romantic attraction to others. Aromantic individuals may still form deep emotional connections and friendships but do not seek or experience romantic love. Aromanticism is a spectrum, and aromantic people may have varying levels of desire for romantic relationships or intimacy.

Definitions

Intersexuality: A term used to describe individuals born with physical sex characteristics (such as chromosomes, gonads, or genitals) that do not fit typical definitions of male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female, both, neither, or in ways that are fluid. The intersex community advocates for bodily autonomy, the end of involuntary medical interventions, and recognition of diverse experiences of sex and gender.

Gender affirming care: A range of healthcare services designed to support a person in aligning their gender identity with their body and expression. This care may include hormone replacement therapy (HRT), gender-affirming surgeries,

mental health support, and social services. It should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, and is rooted in respect for individual autonomy and self-determination, rejecting the pathologisation of non-cisgender identities.