



ILLUSTRATION: LIZ COULBOURN

Culture

6 Books to Understand What Revolution Looks Like

Because the Biden-Harris administration can't solve all of our problems.

BY TAYLOR CRUMPTON

NOVEMBER 13, 2020

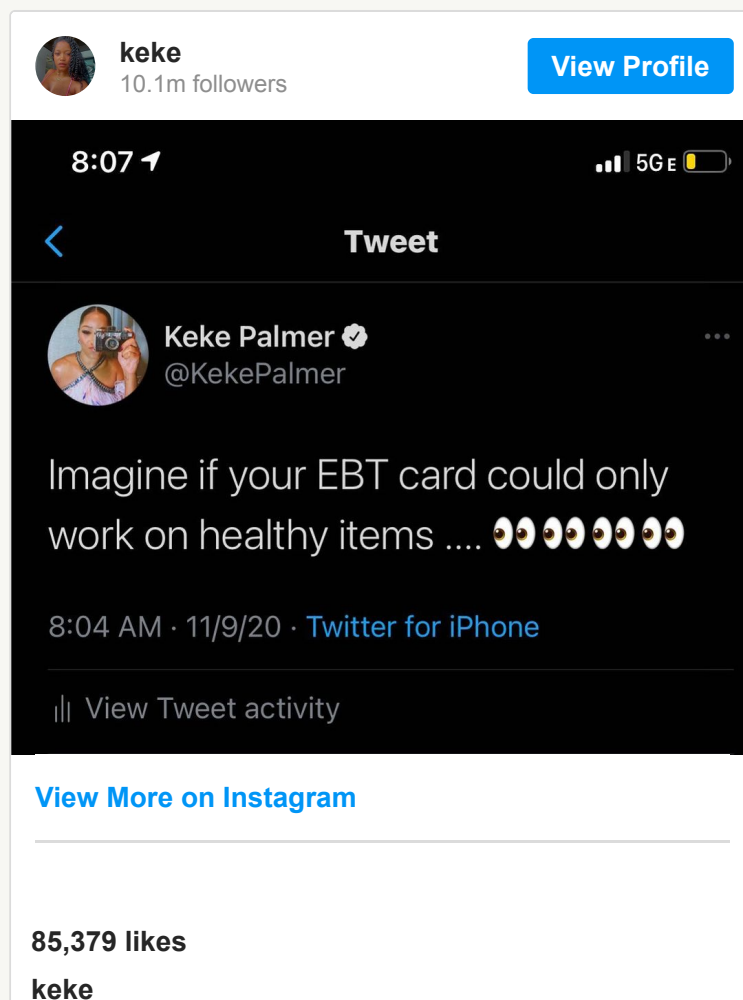
Cultural critic and writer Taylor Crumpton shares a list of suggested books to better equip those interested in America's socioeconomic disparities, the welfare system, and revolutionary practices.

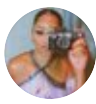
Regardless of who occupies the White House, there's still work to be done. Remember the #BlackLivesMatter movement started in 2013 under the Obama administration. Historical representation in electoral politics does not improve the economic conditions of marginalized communities who are subjected to systematic oppression. Local, state, and federal social policies reflect the nation's **social contract**, where the language of institutional racism is used to justify the reduced livelihoods of communities of color. For example, **the welfare policies of the Roosevelt administration** ensured the alleviation of the

white working class, to the determinant of Black communities, who were intentionally excluded from the New Deal.

Decades later, millions of American citizens look towards the **Biden-Harris administration** to provide financial aid for the country's growing unemployed and homeless **communities, disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic**. For **celebrities**, a small percentage of the American population who lost revenue from sales and touring, but maintained their class status; their celebratory experiences of the 2020 presidential election were **out of touch** with the majority of Americans.

Two days after Biden was declared the president-elect, KeKe Palmer tweeted a potential policy idea for the new President-Elect and Vice-President Elect to address, "**Imagine if your EBT card could only work on healthy items.**" Minutes after posting, the 27-year old actress deleted the tweet after criticism from users on the social media site and attempted to clarify her previous idea in a series of follow up tweets. "Hey @KamalaHarris I know you just started but me and my friends were talking about it and we think EBT cards should swipe free on all items considered HEALTHY XoXo" Followed by "To clarify my tweet was pertaining to issues w/ healthy foods being 2 expensive & thinking it should be free for those w/ EBT cards. This was not a suggestion for solving all low-income issues. Solely a hopeful solution 4 those with EBT that want to run it up w/ meat & produce."





Keke Palmer ✓
@KekePalmer



Hey @KamalaHarris I know you just started but me and my friends were talking about it and we think EBT cards should swipe free on all items considered HEALTHY. Xoxo

2:36 PM · Nov 9, 2020



Despite campaign promises, the Biden-Harris administration does not possess the capability to undo generations of oppressive social policies. The power to do that inherently lives within the power of marginalized people who enacted every movement of social change in the nation's history.

Here are several books — all available at independent book stores — that document revolutionary actions to bring forth equity.

The Battle for Welfare Rights Politics and Poverty in Modern America By Felicia Kornbluh

[Buy Here](#)

Often overlooked in the nation's history of social movements is the National Welfare Rights Organization, an anti-poverty movement spearheaded by Black women who organized tens of thousands of low-income citizens across the nation to advocate for structural improvements in the nation's welfare system. Although predominantly composed of poor Black women, NWRO's impact spread across racial and socioeconomic lines because of its ideological belief that women and poor people deserved to be treated with "dignity and respect" and anti-capitalist analysis of the country's economic system that perpetuated systematic inequalities. The welfare rights movement pioneered models of community-based organizing that were adopted by women's rights movements, along with other social movements of the 1970s.

How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective Edited by Keeanga-Yamahтта Taylor

[Buy Here](#)

Before professor Kimberlé Crenshaw **coined the term** "intersectionality" in 1989, a collective of radical Black feminists articulated the interwoven systems of oppression that

includes race, class, and gender for Black women. These women were known as the Combahee River Collective, an influential social group prominent in the nation's antiwar and feminist eras, who addressed existing social movements' incapability to center the voices of Black women. In the edited version of their collective statement of beliefs, Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor Ph.D. interviewed elders of the CRC alongside well-known Black feminist activists of the contemporary generation in an inter-generational conversation about Black feminism and the steps needed to achieve Black liberation.

All About Love: New Visions by bell hooks

[Buy Here](#)

bell hooks wrote, "Indeed, all the great movements for social justice in our society have strongly emphasized a love ethic," on page 11 of the aforementioned text to signify the importance of love not only in the nation's social movements but also on the overall health and well-being of individuals. Throughout the text, the renowned scholar advised readers about the ramifications of a "loveless generation" on society's future. Her argument towards a compassionate love is rooted in the restoration of a community that has divided itself along with man-made barriers, that maintained a hierarchical structure of power.

Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good by adrienne maree brown

[Buy Here](#)

Described as "politics of healing and happiness that explores the dour myth that changing the world is just another form of work," pleasure activism is brown's contribution to the scholarship of Black feminism. The Detroit-based doula/healer encouraged readers to view movements for social justice as an experience of pleasure, instead of communal feelings of sorrow and pain — a societal reflex to being subjugated to state violence. Activism is not a monolith. brown's text incorporated a multi-dimensional approach in which individuals can bring forth orgasms in the erotic sense, and also in their communities and societies. This book is a multi-hyphenate journey for one's mind, body, and spirit.

My Mother Was a Freedom Fighter by Aja Monet

[Buy Here](#)

Every generation inherits the previous aspirations, dreams, and hopes for an equitable future. Before we were born, predecessors prayed and fought for our sustained existence. Within us, lies the blood of known and unknown ancestors who strived to create you.

Monet's book of poetry is an ode to "freedom fighters," the unsung heroes in our families, neighborhoods, and extended homes. American capitalism emphasizes the narrative of individualism, in order to distance marginalized people from each other, yet the collective notion of this text reminds individuals of their lineage, heritage, and delicate thread that interweaves the experiences of women of color.

Are Prisons Obsolete? by Angela Davis

[Buy Here](#)

Embedded in the nation's cultural, political, and social institutions is the prison industrial complex, a capitalist-driven system of oppression where individuals from marginalized communities are removed of their autonomy and subjected to constant surveillance from agents of the state (law enforcement officials). A disproportionate amount of the nation's prison population are individuals in need of social and human services, like housing, medical care, and mental health treatment; not as laborers for institutions and companies who utilize profits or fight forest fires like the state of California. Davis argues for the abolishing of prisons, in efforts to eliminate an insidious entity that maintains revenue on the continuous enslavement of marginalized people.

KEYWORDS **POLITICS** **RACISM** **FEMINISM** **BLACK LIVES MATTER**
