

INTERWOVEN BLACK / ASIAN SOLIDARITY SERIES



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. &
THICH NHAT HANH 1968
Chicago, IL

INTERWOVEN
HISTORIES



FUR KICHIYAMA
New York, NY

FACILITATOR GUIDE

INTERWOVEN SOLIDARITY

SERIES: **i n t r o d u c t i o n**

In 2020, the Interwoven team designed and facilitated a multi-week Black/Asian solidarity workshop series. The overarching question of the series was: *how can we, as Black and Asian people living in the U.S., see our struggles and liberation, as deeply interconnected?*

In this facilitator guide we have included five workshop agendas for folks interested in hosting a Black/Asian solidarity series within their own communities. The agendas are basic outlines with examples of experiential activities for each session. We have also included a resource list at the end with some readings and templates that may be useful.

These are suggestions, but many components are customizable and may need to be adjusted based on the needs of your specific group. For example, you might decide to facilitate your series in person, which may require different materials. You also might decide to focus on what Black/Asian solidarity looks like within a specific context (i.e. abolitionist organizing, addressing climate change and US imperialism, organizing students in Philadelphia, etc). You are invited and encouraged to take what is useful and infuse your own experiences, stories, activities, and brilliance. The agendas are organized as follows:

INTERWOVEN art + culture
INTERWOVEN histories
INTERWOVEN healing
INTERWOVEN actions
INTERWOVEN visions
INTERWOVEN resources



[bit.ly/interwoven
facilitatorguide](https://bit.ly/interwovenfacilitatorguide)

*We recognize that “Black” and “Asian” are imperfect terms that are used to describe many different peoples, cultures, histories, languages, and experiences. In this facilitator guide and zine we use these terms to encompass a range and diversity of identities: Black, African American, multiracial Black and Asian, West Asian, Central Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, East Asian, Pacific Islander, and more.

INTERWOVEN

art & culture

The main intention of this session is to support participants to introduce themselves and build relationships with one another as Black and/or Asian people with many intersecting identities. Each participant is invited to share a work of art and/or culture that is meaningful to them. As they listen to one another, they are also invited to share any connections or things that resonate. This practice supports the group to build awareness around the many ways in which their lives are interwoven already.

Timing

2-2.5 hours

Guiding Questions

- 1.What brought you to this space and what do you hope to leave this series with?
- 2.What feelings are coming up for you around being in this Black and Asian space?
- 3.What are some group practices that will support you to be able to stay present?
- 4.What is an aspect of your experience of being Black and/or Asian that you would like this group to know about?
- 5.What are some connections or places of resonance between your experience and the stories shared by others in the group?

Preparation for Participants

Invite participants to select a work of art or culture (e.g. a painting, poem, song, textile, dance, etc.) that represents some aspect(s) of their experience of being Black and/or Asian that they would like the group to know about. During the session there will be an art and culture share where they will each have a few minutes to share all or a part of the piece they chose and to explain why they chose it.

Agenda

- **Welcoming + Grounding:** Begin the series with music, poetry, meditation, chatbox questions, games, or whatever you think will support folks in the group to land and feel welcome.
- **Check-ins: Hopes, Feelings, Support**
 - a. Random Pairshare:
 - i. *What brought you to this space and what do you hope to leave this series with?*
 - ii. *What feelings are coming up for you around sharing your art and culture intro?*
 - iii. *What is one way your pairshare partner could support you in your sharing?*
 - b. Large Group Sharing:
 - i. Invite a folks to share a few words out loud or in the chat about what brought them to the space and/or how they are feeling.
- **Updates + Framing for Interwoven Series**
 - a. Introduce the facilitation team
 - b. Share hopes and visions for the series
 - c. Co-create a list of group practices that will support participants to stay present and take care of themselves/each other throughout the workshop series
- **Art + Culture Share:** Folks will share their art and culture intros in response to the prompt: *what is an aspect of your experience of being Black and/or Asian that you would like this group to know about?*
 - a. Divide the time you have evenly among all participants (2-5 mins each) and time each sharing.
 - b. Either put a speaking order in the chat or invite the person who shares to choose who goes next.
 - c. Take a 5-10 min break halfway through the workshop to give folks time to take care of their bodies.
 - d. Remind folks that deep listening is as important as sharing in the space, and to do what they need to do to be present. You can also invite the group to take a few deep breaths between each sharing.
 - e. Invite folks to take note of any connections or things that resonate with them as other people give their intros, and to share a few words about those connections in the chat after each sharing.

- **Journaling:** Give folks a few minutes to journal about anything that stood out or resonated with them.
- **Closing:**
 - a. Invite folks to reach out to someone else in the group after the session to share the connections they made as a way to continue relationship building outside of the group sessions.
 - b. Close with a few words, a meditation, a song, some deep breaths together, etc.

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histories

In this session, participants are invited to reflect on the histories of conflict and solidarity between Black and Asian people in the US. The main intention is for folks to deepen their understanding of the ways in which Black and Asian individuals and communities have both colluded with and powerfully resisted being systematically separated from one another. This session was inspired by James Baldwin, who said: “people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them.”

Timing

2–2.5 hours

Guiding Questions

1. What has Black/Asian conflict, tension, collaboration, and solidarity looked like in our personal and collective histories?
2. What do these moments have to teach us about what is necessary for deep, ongoing solidarity between our communities in the present and future?

Preparation for Participants: Invite participants to reflect on the following prompts:

1. *What’s a meaningful moment in your personal history (including the experiences of your ancestors) where as an Asian and/or Black person/community, you intersected with the other?*
 - a. *What feelings come up for you now reflecting on this?*
 - b. *What may have influenced that moment and your/your people’s experiences or stories about Black or Asian folks?*
2. *What’s a moment in our collective history where it has been clear that Black/Asian destinies have always been interwoven, whether in solidarity or in conflict with each other? What stands out for you about that moment?*
3. **Facilitator Note:** It might be helpful to do your own research on the history of Black and Asian solidarity within your specific context (e.g. food sovereignty, anti-war movements, etc), and to send out a few specific examples with these reflection prompts.

Agenda

- **Welcoming Intro + Framing:** You can acknowledge here the potential duality that folks might feel of both hopefulness in learning the stories of solidarity between Black and/or Asian peoples, as well as the grief and rage in learning about the stories of conflict, violence, and separation. Remind folks that reflecting on these histories might bring up a variety of strong emotions, and that everyone should feel welcome to do what they need to do to take care of themselves.
- **Check-ins: Homework Reflection**
 - a. Random Trios:
 - i. Individual Sharing: Each share about the personal and/or collective historical moment that you reflected on in preparation for this session and why you chose it
 - ii. As a trio: Listening to all the responses, what are some clear throughlines and connections in many or all of the moments? What's still messy? What can we learn from these contradictions?
 - b. Large Group Debrief:
 - i. Take a few initial reactions to prime the pump for folks to share more later.
- **People's Museum of Interwoven Black Asian Liberation, Part 1**
 - a. Facilitators Share Link: People's Museum Template (find here: bit.ly/interwovenresources)
 - b. Working Individually: Invite folks to find an image online that evokes the moment they researched or reflected on for their homework, and to paste that image into a slide in the People's Museum template. Invite them to also include a date or year if they have it, and a few sentences about what the moment is and why it is meaningful to them.
- **Break**

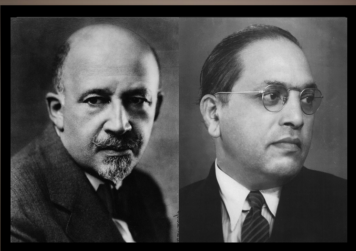
- **People's Museum of Interwoven Black Asian Liberation, Part 2**
 - a. Gallery Scroll: Give participants some time to individually scroll through and take in the gallery that they made together. Invite them to add to any of the slides (in the notes section) if they have more info/context for a specific event.
 - b. Large Group Debrief: Invite folks back for a large group debrief of the activity. Feel free to go deeper into a range of what the activity brought up for people, getting a mix of different feelings that might be present in the space. Potential prompts:
 - *How was that for you?*
 - *How did your feelings change throughout this activity?*
 - *What was inspiring? What was challenging?*
 - *What is the wisdom from our histories that we can ground ourselves in today?*
- **Racial Affinity Pairs:** Assign folks to breakout rooms with 2-3 people who share a similar racial identity. Invite folks to process this activity with their group, using the prompts:
 - *What was hard or uncomfortable about this activity and conversation as a person with your racial identity?*
 - *What is something you still have questions about?*
 - *What will you do with this question or with this new learning, wisdom, or awareness?*
- **Closing:** Give folks a few minutes to journal about anything that stood out for them, or anything that feels uncomfortable or unsettled.

INTERWOVEN PEOPLE'S MUSEUM

B.R. AMBEDKAR & W.E.B. DUBOIS

1940S, Atlanta & Bombay

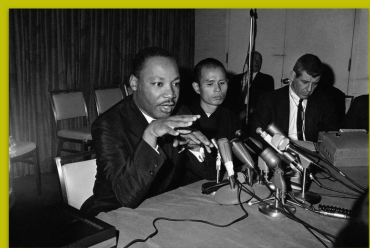
B.R. Ambedkar and W.E.B. Dubois were in touch with each other about the similarities between the Black struggle in the US and the Dalit struggle in India. Ambedkar contacted Du Bois about the National Negro Congress and their petition to the UN to secure minority rights. Dubois was interested in India's role in the international anti-colonial project.



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. & THICH NHAT HANH

1960s, Chicago, IL

Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh met in Chicago in 1966 to organize and discuss a movement to end the Vietnam War. After this meeting, MLK began to speak out against the war even though he was asked not to by his friends and comrades. Many feared that speaking out against the war was unsafe and that it would distract from their efforts to advance the Civil Rights movement. Dr. King saw the importance of including movements for peace movements and anti-imperialism within the Civil Rights movement.



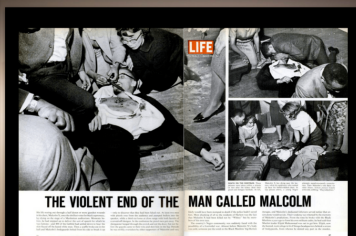
YURI KOCHIYAMA & MALCOLM X

1960s, New York, NY

Kochiyama is a Japanese American WWII prison camp survivor and political activist who held Malcolm X's head when he was assassinated in 1965.

After the war Kochiyama moved to Harlem where she lived with her family among many Puerto Rican and Black neighbors. There she became involved with the Harlem Parents Committee, and advocated for safer schools and unionized jobs for people of color.

As founder of Asian Americans for Action, she worked to build an Asian American movement that linked itself to the struggle for Black liberation. She met Malcolm X in 1963, and became a member of his organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity.



"The People's Museum of Interwoven Black/Asian Liberation"
(for full template visit bit.ly/interwovenresources)

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h e a l i n g

The previous session can begin to unearth some of the complexities of building trust between Black and Asian communities, who have long histories of violence and oppression operating upon and between them. The main intention of this session on healing is to provide a space for participants to get to face these difficult dynamics together, and to share about the things that ache or feel challenging about building solidarity. Participants are invited to share their own stories and reflections and to practice deep listening in order to build awareness of and empathy for one another. This exchange of listening and sharing takes place both in racial affinity groups as well as in the interracial Black and Asian space.

Timing

2-2.5 hours

Guiding Questions

- 1.What do you want people to know about you as a Black and/or Asian person?
- 2.What feels exciting and what feels challenging for you personally about building solidarity with Black and/or Asian people?
- 3.What is the healing that will support you to move through these challenging feelings?

Preparation for Participants

- 1.Invite folks to reflect on the following prompt: What has been an important healing moment in your life as a Black or Asian person? What is a learning or intention from this experience that you would like to bring into our session on Wednesday?
- 2.In addition to the prompt, we also invited folks to send us an image that represented their family, chosen family, and/or ancestors ahead of time to be included in an ancestor altar.
- 3.**Facilitator Note:** As facilitators, feel free to bring yourself into the space by sharing healing practices or rituals that have been important for you and your people/community.

Agenda

- **Welcoming Intro + Grounding:** You can open the space with a ritual or healing practice that is important to you and your facilitation team. For example, we began with lighting a candle, revealing the ancestor altar that we made with everyone's photos, and playing an invocation which was sung by one of our facilitators. While the group listened to the invocation, we invited participants to speak out loud, in a word or phrase, an intention for the session.
- **Practices for Deep Listening:** Let folks know that in this session they will be invited to share more of their personal stories and experiences, and to practice deep listening with one another. Invite them to co-create a list of practices that will support them to maximize their ability to listen with openness and without judgment. Some practices might include:
 - a. Start with a few deep breaths and notice how you feel in your body
 - b. Listen without interruption and without judgement
 - c. Agree to confidentiality
 - d. Listen with presence and focused attention
 - e. Avoid responding with your own feelings, comments, or advice
 - f. Give affirmation in a way that feels genuine to you: you could nod, say "I hear you", say "yea". Feel free to check-in with the person sharing about what feels affirming to them.
 - g. Encourage emotional release if it comes up (i.e. laughing, yawning, shaking, crying, sighing, louder speech). These are natural ways that humans can heal tension + hurts stored in our bodies.
 - h. Thank your partner for listening/sharing
- **Check-ins (Racial Affinity Pairs):** Assign folks to breakout rooms with 1-2 people who share a similar racial identity. Invite folks to split the time and respond to the following:
 - *What is the healing you are longing for in your relationships with Black and/or Asian folks? What does it look like or feel like?*

- **Black and Asian Racial Affinity Groups:** Create breakout groups for folks who identify as Black and folks who identify as Asian. This is an opportunity for folks who share a racial identity to have a little more space to share about what is challenging for them in the work of cross-racial solidarity. If there are folks in your cohort that identify as both Black and Asian, you can create a separate affinity group for them or invite them to choose the group they want to be in. Here is a potential agenda for an affinity group:
 - Intro Game or Go Around Question
 - Journal:
 - *What feelings come up when you think about building solidarity with Black and/or Asian folks? What feels exciting/challenging?*
 - *What is something you want folks to remember about you as an Asian and/or Black person? How would you summarize this in a word or phrase?*
 - Listening & Sharing Circle: Open up the space for folks to share anything they journaled about.
 - Closing go around: Have folks share how they are feeling through a movement or gesture.
- **Break**
- **Large Group Sharing:** After the break you can bring all participants back together into the Black/Asian space. You could facilitate this in many ways. We invited everyone to turn their videos off, and then asked for two volunteers at a time to turn their videos on and to each take a turn saying to each other a word or phrase about what they want folks to remember about them as an Asian and/or Black person. We repeated this process until everyone had shared. This was a very powerful experience. Alternatively, you could make this an open sharing/listening circle.
- **Closing:** You could close by returning to the healing practice/ritual you opened the space with. We returned to the ancestor altar, and took a few deep breaths together with the altar before blowing the candle out and reading this simple blessing by Larry Ward:
 - *"History is already different because you are here. The world has already been changed because you showed up today. "*

INTERWOVEN

a c t i o n s

This session is designed to support participants to be able to take bigger and bolder actions—such as calling legislators, marching at protests, leading organizational changes, talking with family members, etc.—towards Black/Asian solidarity. Since taking action is an embodied practice rather than an intellectual exercise, the facilitation team designed this session with role plays and other experiential exercises to support participants to grow their awareness about what happens in their bodies and minds in moments when they are called into action. Participants are also supported to unpack and move through the feelings—fear, anxiety, perfectionism, despair, etc.—that might get in the way.

Timing:

2–2.5 hours

Guiding Questions

- 1.What are the feelings that come up in the moments when we are called into action? How do these feelings help us or get in the way?
- 2.What would support each of us to grow as Black/Asian solidarity leaders and move through our discomfort towards bolder actions?
- 3.For/with whom are we willing to do the challenging personal work required to take bigger actions towards Black/Asian solidarity?

Preparation for Participants

- 1.Let folks know that the next session just so happens to be on the same day as a virtual action for Black & Asian solidarity (which you will role play) that will take place in the same zoom room. Invite folks to get creative and make a sign with messages, quotes, colors, words, and/or images, for the virtual action.
- 2.You can also invite folks to find a moment to connect and drop down into their inherent sacredness and enoughness. You can give them some examples (i.e. taking a walk and feeling the sun on their faces, getting an extra hour of sleep, etc.)

Agenda

- **Welcoming + Game:** Begin with a team building activity that supports participants to speak out loud, get into their bodies, and work together. We did two rounds of a counting game:
 - a. Round 1: Invite participants to count together from one to ten. Ask them to make a gesture to represent each number as they count.
 - b. Round 2: Invite participants to now count from one to ten as a group. The rules: Eyes must be closed, only one person can speak at a time, no one can say two consecutive numbers, if 2 people speak at the same time the group has to start back at one.
- **Check-ins (Action Teams):** Assign folks to breakout rooms with 3-5 people. Invite them to:
 - a. Share the signs they made for the virtual action
 - b. Come up with a collective chant to say as group during the virtual action
- **Scenario Role Play (Virtual Action for Black/Asian Solidarity):** Setup a role play of a virtual action for Black/Asian Solidarity. As facilitators, feel free to get as creative as you want with this. You can identify a specific theme for the action, make virtual backgrounds with images from real marches/protests, play music, bring props, give short speeches, etc.
 - a. **Chants:** Invite each team to share their posters and chants with the large group.
 - b. **The Interruption:** As the last team shares their chant, two "interrupters" (planned ahead of time), begin to pushback with discouraging words (i.e. Why are you supporting Asian/Black lives? We need to be caring for ourselves!'). The level of pushback depends on what you think will support your group in their learning and growth, and to be in their discomfort zone but not their alarm zone. Create some space for folks to respond in the moment.
 - c. **Breakout Action Teams:** Send folks back into their breakout action teams to work together to strategize some potential responses to the interrupters
 - d. **Large Group Debrief:** Invite each group to share some of the responses they came up with. Ask for a few volunteers to role play their responses with the interrupters.

- **Break**

- **Reflection/Journaling:** *Reflect back on the moment of the interruption or another time when you felt called to action to address your own people. Perhaps this was a hot spot or moment of tension. What was the weather like that day? What was the energy of the space? What colors or scents were there? Where were your hands or feet? Bring that memory as vividly to mind as you can. What was your initial reaction? Specifically, what was happening in your body? What did you do/not do?*
- **Racial Affinity Trios:** Assign folks to breakout rooms with 2-3 people who share a similar racial identity. Invite folks to split the time and respond to the following:
 - a. *What was happening in your body?*
 - b. *What action did you take or not take? How might those be connected?*
- **Large Group Sharing:** Create shared slides or a document with two columns, one for “feelings” and one for “actions”. Invite folks to populate the columns based on what they discussed.
- **Debrief:**
 - a. *How are your feelings connected to the action you took or didn't take?*
 - b. *What wisdom was your body sharing in that moment?*
 - c. *What supported you to move through the tensions/discomfort into action?*
 - d. **Facilitator Note:** Remind folks that awareness about our feelings and how they show up in our bodies supports us to take action in a grounded way, and can give us clues about how to show up. Close this section by inviting folks to choose an action on the slide they want to try.
- **Closing: Grounding Practice or Journaling**
 - *Think of a person for/with whom you are willing to do the challenging and uncomfortable personal work required to take bigger actions towards Black and Asian solidarity. Who do you want to dedicate this transformational work to?*

INTERWOVEN

visions

This final session was designed to support participants to bring together all the threads of their explorations and weave together their visions for the future of Black and Asian solidarity. Participants are given time to reflect on what they learned throughout the series and how they would like to use their own gifts and superpowers to bring their visions of solidarity to life. They are also given time to appreciate themselves and one another, and to celebrate the community that they created together.

Timing

2-2.5 hours

Guiding Questions

1. What is your vision for the future of Black and Asian solidarity? What are the implications of our solidarity for our world at this time?
2. How can our strategic minds and visionary hearts combine to contribute to a more just, future world that works for everyone?
3. What are the most restorative ways that we, as Black and/or Asian people, can support one another?
4. What insights and wisdom has your participation in this solidarity series uncovered for you?

Preparation for Participants: Invite participants to get together with two other folks from the cohort (you can assign trios ahead of time) and have a conversation via group text, phone call, zoom meeting, email exchange, etc., on one or more of the following prompts:

1. *What insights and wisdom has our work together uncovered for you?*
2. *What are the most regenerative and restorative ways that we can support each other at different levels (i.e. internal, interpersonal, community, global)?*
3. *What are the implications of our combined creativity & power for our present world?*
4. *What are the ways our solidarity can contribute to a more just, future world?*

Agenda

- **Welcoming + Intro Activity:** Consider beginning this session with an activity that helps set the tone as visionary, playful, and celebratory. We wanted to get folks dancing so we invited them to take a few moments to think about an adjective that comes to mind when they think of the future (could be inspired by the pre-session convos). Then we put on some music and opened the floor for folks to share their adjectives and for the group to respond by doing a dance move that represents that adjective.
- **Solidarity Superheroes:** This section was designed to support participants to imagine a future world where they are successfully using their superpowers to dismantle systemic oppression, build Black/Asian solidarity, and manifest their collective liberation.
 - a. **Framing:** *Maybe it is easy for you to imagine the future broadly, or maybe it is a little tougher. Often the future is depicted in science fiction or stories where we as Black and Asian folks are rarely the lead characters. So we wanted to spend tonight **being the lead characters**--imagining ourselves as superheroes in a new, more liberated world.*
 - b. **Journaling:** You can lead a short visioning meditation/visualization and then invite participants to journal about their vision for this future world and how they might use their individual superpowers to manifest this world.
 - c. **Small Breakout Groups:** Assign folks to breakout rooms in their homework trios. Invite them to do the following:
 - Individually share about their superpowers
 - Collectively create a short skit to demonstrate a moment in the future where their superhero team combines their powers to make an impact. Invite folks to get as creative and daring as they would like (i.e. change your virtual backgrounds, use costumes/props/found objects, etc).

- **Large group:** Invite a few groups (number depends on time) to share their skit with the cohort. Remind folks that this might mean taking a risk to be visible and show more sides of themselves to the group. After a few groups go, you can debrief the activity with the following questions:
 - *How was it for you to dream into a world of less oppression and imagine yourself in that world?*
 - *What's newly revealed to you about the future and our group's power as Black and/or Asian folks in it?*
 - *What shifts for us if we imagine that sense of power, bigness, freedom from oppression as something we can already touch into in the present vs something totally far off to strive for?*
- **Break**
- **Large Group Sharing Circle:** Create an open space for folks to share in the large group about what the experience of the solidarity series was like for them, what they are taking away, and what they might do differently in the future. We used the following prompts to support folks to share:
 - *What is something you want to celebrate about your participation in the series? What is something you want to appreciate about someone else in the series?*
 - *What's something you want to continue to learn more about after this series?*
 - *What's something you will do differently after participating in this series?*
- In addition to this sharing circle, we also invited folks to share their learnings and feedback with us through an evaluation form (see p.22) that we sent out after the last session.
- **Closing Celebration:** You did it!! End in a way that will support the group to celebrate! It could be an open mic, DJ dance party, game, collective meal, etc. We chose to dance together to our collaborative playlist (see p.22).

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resources

bit.ly/interwovenresources

Interwoven Workshop Series Resources:

1. [Interwoven People's Museum of Black and Asian Liberation Template](#) | Created by Interwoven facilitation team, 2020
2. [Interwoven Workshop Series Evaluation](#) | Created by Interwoven facilitation team, 2020
3. [Interwoven Black and Asian Solidarity Playlist](#) | Assembled by Interwoven cohort, 2020

Black/Asian History:

1. ["The History Of Solidarity Between Asian And Black Americans"](#) | NPR interview, 2021
2. ["The history of tensions – and solidarity – between Black and Asian American communities, explained"](#) | Vox, 2021
3. ["Black and Asian Solidarity in American History: The Power of Unity Exemplified by 5 Major Events"](#) | Anika Raju, 2021
4. ["Divide and Conquer: The Model Minority Myth and Anti-Blackness Post-War and Now"](#) | A panel hosted by Tsuru for Solidarity, 2020
5. [The Intimacies of Four Continents](#) | Lisa Lowe, 2015
6. [A Different Asian American Timeline](#) | ChangeLab
7. [People's Museum of Interwoven Black and Asian Liberation](#) | A presentation by the Interwoven cohort, 2020
8. [The Secret History of South Asian and African American Solidarity](#) | Compiled by Anirvan Chatterjee, 2020

Contemporary Solidarities:

- ["What does Asian and Black racial solidarity look like?"](#) | LA Times, 2021
- ["Black & Asian Solidarity with Alicia Garza and Shaw San Liu"](#) | Black Diplomats, 2021
- [How a Shared Goal to Dismantle White Supremacy Is Fueling Black-Asian Solidarity](#) | Time, 2021
- ["Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing"](#) | Andrea Smith, 2016

Resource Lists/Collections:

- [Black/Asian Solidarity](#) | A resource page by The Cross Cultural Solidarity History Project
- [Books on Black/Brown Solidarity](#) | A reading list by The Cross Cultural Solidarity History Project
- ["Black and Asian Feminist Solidarities"](#) | A reading list by Black Women Radicals and the Asian American Feminist Collective, 2020
- ["Towards A Politics of Afro-Asian Solidarity"](#) | Syllabus by Diane Wong, 2019
- [Anti-Racism & Solidarities Resource Collection](#) | From Hua Foundation in Toronto

