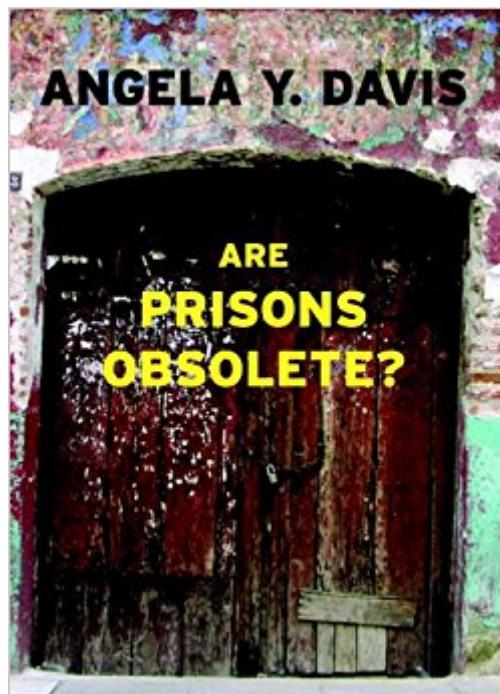


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# Are Prisons Obsolete?



## **Synopsis**

With her characteristic brilliance, grace and radical audacity, Angela Y. Davis has put the case for the latest abolition movement in American life: the abolition of the prison. As she quite correctly notes, American life is replete with abolition movements, and when they were engaged in these struggles, their chances of success seemed almost unthinkable. For generations of Americans, the abolition of slavery was sheerest illusion. Similarly, the entrenched system of racial segregation seemed to last forever, and generations lived in the midst of the practice, with few predicting its passage from custom. The brutal, exploitative (dare one say lucrative?) convict-lease system that succeeded formal slavery reaped millions to southern jurisdictions (and untold miseries for tens of thousands of men, and women). Few predicted its passing from the American penal landscape. Davis expertly argues how social movements transformed these social, political and cultural institutions, and made such practices untenable. In *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, Professor Davis seeks to illustrate that the time for the prison is approaching an end. She argues forthrightly for "decarceration", and argues for the transformation of the society as a whole.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"In this brilliant, thoroughly researched book, Angela Davis swings a wrecking ball into the racist and sexist underpinnings of the American prison system. Her arguments are well wrought and

restrained, leveling an unflinching critique of how and why more than 2 million Americans are presently behind bars, and the corporations who profit from their suffering. Davis explores the biases that criminalize communities of color, politically disenfranchising huge chunks of minority voters in the process. Uncompromising in her vision, Davis calls not merely for prison reform, but for nothing short of 'new terrains of justice.' Another invaluable work in the Open Media Series by one of America's last truly fearless public intellectuals." Cynthia McKinney, former Congresswoman from Georgia

Over the last forty-odd years, ANGELA YVONNE DAVIS has been active in numerous organizations challenging prison-related repression. Born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1944, Davis studied at Brandeis University, the Sorbonne, and with Herbert Marcuse at the Goethe Institute. Her advocacy on behalf of political prisoners, and her alleged connection to the Marin County courthouse incident, led to three capital charges, sixteen months in jail awaiting trial, and a highly publicized acquittal in 1972. In 1998, Davis was one of the twenty-five organizers of the historic Berkeley, California conference "Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex." She is the author of many books, including *Are Prisons Obsolete?* and *The Meaning of Freedom*. She currently teaches in the History of Consciousness Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Pivotal reading for anyone attempting to understand the mess that is our prison industrial complex and the way that racism weaves its way throughout its various structures and dysfunctions. Ms. Davis is accessible but challenging to read stretching us to imagine our approach to "prison reform" much differently. I particularly appreciate the way she shines a light on past practices, like slavery and segregation, and reminds us that we once thought those were "necessary evils" too. Even though she wrote it a while ago, it still has valuable lessons to teach.

I used this book to help guide me on a college paper. I found the book to be interesting. Good read, very informal. Would recommend to anyone interested on the subject.

Great And Timely Service, Thanks A Bunch..... Best Regards, Joe

Great read!

This book is so clear, brilliant and powerful, it will knock you over with a feather. An incredible analysis - I can't believe this book isn't more well known. I've never read anything better on the topic but would love other suggestions.

Excellent writing Anglea Davis is dynamic with factual points that make you realize the harsh realities of the prison system in America and what it has done to potentially destroy a race of people and create a subculture behind bars.

This was a very theory heavy but thought invoking analysis of prison abolition and the state of our Prison Industry today. I have had friends and family that were incarcerated that told me about a lot of about things she shed light on in this book. Prison isn't justice it's about free labor and profit. I think this should be required reading especially in the Black community.

I teach Restorative Justice at the university level, and our students need to understand how un-democratic and perniciously vile the prison system has been to persons of color and therefore think seriously about flipping our current prison system on its ear to revamp or eliminate. Angela Davis is brilliant in her historical overview and assessment of the past and current criminal justice system, and her suggestions towards a way forward should be instituted yesterday! A wholly superior work.

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