

moment in the protest, local abolitionist activist Benji Hart spoke to the crowd about the need to see struggles against migrant detention as one in the same as struggles against the overarching prison industrial complex. It's all one struggle, and as we abolish ICE and detention we must also look towards a horizon without police and prisons more generally. Tactically, the Chicago protest was really sound and informative. It shut down a handful of major intersections and two main roads (Clark Ave. & Sheridan Ave.) for three hours and broke police blockades three times. Only two arrests were made by police. As the march went down Clark St., a community of largely Mexican and Central American demographics, people walked out of their homes and shops to join the march.

RAM-Philly develops and hosts incredible new Black August Workshop

On August 31st in so-called Illinois, members of the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement Philadelphia Chapter facilitated "What will bring about our freedom," a discussion/workshop on Black anarchism that the organization plans to replicate across the country. The discussion built upon the tradition of Black August revolutionary learning and drew on the works of Zoe Samudzi, William C. Anderson, Russell Maroon Shoatz, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, Kuwasi Balagoon, and Ashanti Alston in addition to the experiences of the Black folks taking part in the discussion. Major discussion points included: The need for an anarchist movement that does not center whiteness, but instead Black autonomy within the mass struggle; How traditions of resistance against the state have been part of the Black freedom tradition long before the first European anarchist arrived in the United States; and The need for Black anarchist collectives. If you are interested in learning more about RAM-Philly's workshop, please write to them by snail mail at Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement, attn: Philadelphia Chapter, 113 Stockholm st #1A Brooklyn NY 11221, or by email at ram-philly@protonmail.com.

Los Angeles Black and Pink chapter formed

Black and Pink is a national queer and trans prisoner-solidarity organization with chapters in several states, including Massachusetts, Illinois, Wisconsin, and New York. The most recent addition to this mass organization is its new Los Angeles chapter. The East LA-based Black and Pink is a PIC abolitionist collective whose work is grounded in the experiences and wisdom of currently and formerly incarcerated people, and primarily led by queer, abolitionist women of color. A statement by the group explains how they are "outraged by the specific violences of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people," and aim to "respond through advocacy, education, direct action, and community building across prison walls." Like other Black and Pink chapters, their pen pal program links free world allies to incarcerated queer and trans folks as a powerful resistance to the violent isolation of the prison system. Queer and Trans prisoners in California and nearby states are invited to mail in requests for pen pals to the following address: Black & Pink LA, 1525 N Alvarado st #26961, Los Angeles, CA 90026

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ABOLITION IN ACTION

Fall 2019



Cities Across the Country Successfully Defeating Jail Expansion

Several major cities have successfully fought off the tide of jail expansion projects in 2019. Some of these struggles have been several years in the making, and the moment to pause and celebrate is well deserved. In Los Angeles there was the successful shutdown of a major proposed jail plan. Through hard fought struggles in Atlanta, the closure of jail was achieved by a grassroots coalition, following the leadership of Black women's abolitionist formations such as Women on the Rise. In San Francisco, abolitionists and other anti-prison activist completed a longstanding campaign to close juvenile hall. With more and more people being introduced to the strategy and vision of abolition, we can hope to see more jail closures and expansion projects halted in the coming years. As No New Jails NYC has been saying with growing support: "The era of jail building is over."

Abolitionists Blockade DOJ Buildings, Making Concrete Demands

The federal Department of Justice (DOJ) recently released a report that outlines the Alabama Department of Corrections' routine violations of the 8th Amendment, which allegedly secures protection from "cruel and unusual punishment." Since the report's release, conditions in Alabama prisons appear to have worsened and its governor has moved forward on plans to build three new men's prisons in the state. On October 1st, activists with the DC Abolition Coalition, the Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons, and others locked themselves to ledgers in front of the DOJ building in D.C. for several hours in solidarity with incarcerated freedom fighters in Alabama prisons. The demands of the Free Alabama Movement's (imprisoned) organizers were upheld by this group of outsiders. These demands include 1) End all collaboration between the DC Jail and ICE; 2) Pass the "Second Look" Amendment; 3) Restore local control of DC parole; and 4) Halt the proposal to construct new jail facilities in D.C. Of the five activists arrested, four were locked down and forcibly removed. One activist was nearly killed when Homeland Security used an angle grinder to cut through the U-lock wrapped around her neck. Another activist was removed from sight while Homeland Security agents cut through his lock box with an angle grinder, providing no protection to his bare arms.

Abolitionist Principles and Campaign Strategies for Anti-Prosecution Organizers is Released

Abolitionists in NYC recently released a toolkit that envisions a route for building a world without prosecutors and prosecution. The toolkit was endorsed by hundreds of groups, and focuses on structural and systemic changes that lessen the power, size, and scope of the prosecuting office, as well as on running campaigns that build the size and strength of abolitionist movements. The organizations that came together to develop this framework were: Community Justice Exchange, CourtWatch MA, Families for Justice as Healing, Project NIA, and Survived and Punished NY. A brief listing of the principles promoted in the document are as follows: 1) Prosecutors are law enforcement. 2) Prosecution is a systemic and structural component of the criminal punishment system. 3) Abolition is opposed to prosecution and asks us to think outside the criminal punishment system for what accountability and healing could look like. 4) Prosecutors are not social workers, therapists, housing advocates, or any other service-oriented role. Giving more resources to death-making institutions cements and increases their power and also cloaks the system in legitimacy. 5) Prosecuting offices cannot be "co-governed" with or by community organizations. 6) Prosecuting offices must be stripped of power and resources.

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

Bend the Bars Conference a Success in Lansing 🍷🍷

Bend the Bars, a day-and-a-half long conference discussing strategies and tactics for supporting the prisoner movement and the struggle for a world without prisons, was held August 23rd and 24th in Lansing, Michigan. The gathering included Michigan Abolition and Prisoner Solidarity (who hosted the event), Jailhouse Lawyers Speak; IDOC Watch; Fight Toxic Prisons; Little Village Solidarity Network; Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee; and media groups Rustbelt Abolition Radio and KiteLine Radio. These folks reflected collectively on the past decade of the changing prison movement and meditated on directions that it may take in the future. Topics discussed in the gathering include: "The National Prison Strikes and the Abolitionist Movement," "Prisoner Resistance and Counter-Insurgency," "Abolition Across Movements / No New Jails," "Fighting Immigrant Detention Centers," "Inside-Outside Solidarity: Prisoner Newsletters in Michigan," and "Abolitionist Horizons."

Self-Organized Prisoner Study Groups Take Off Throughout the Country

Please reach out to South Chicago Anarchist Black Cross Zine Distro and True Leap Publishing & Distribution (Chicago) for free photo-copied and zine-published educational materials on such topics as the prison industrial complex, abolition, prison movement history, transformative justice, Black Studies, Native Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, anarchist theory, organizer's toolkits, jailhouse lawyers guides and legal handbooks, catalogs from books-through-bars groups, and other informational resources. Addresses are: South Chicago ABC Zine Distro - PO Box 721 Homewood, IL 60430 USA, and True Leap Press 408197, Chicago IL 60640. Both groups can provide instructions on how to organize your own study abolitionist movement-building groups.

Hunger Strikes Continue as a Method of Collective Protest

There has been an ongoing surge in collective hunger strikes that form a clear pattern at a national level. From within the belly of the beast there have been countless instances of people placing their bodies on the line to demand everything from access to resources and material sustenance (concrete demands) to an end to "prison slavery" more generally. A short list of facilities where such strikes have occurred this year as of October 2019 include: Clallam Bay Corrections Center, WA; Scotland Correctional Institution, NC; Bossier Medium Security Facility, LA; Adams County Correctional Center, MS; Otero County Processing Center, NM; River Correctional Facility, LA; SCI-Fayette, PA; Yuba County Jail, CA; Robert Presley Detention Center, Riverside, CA; California State Prison, Corcoran; Limestone Correctional Facility, AL; Coordinated Strikes at Two Wisconsin Facilities; River Correctional Facility, LA; Holman Correctional Facility, AL; Suffolk County House of Corrections, MA; Tabor Correctional Institution; Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, WA; Western Women's Correctional Facility, NM; Metropolitan Correctional Center, NY; Green Bay Correctional Institution, WI; Polk Correctional Institution, NC; El Paso Processing Center, TX. (Data courtesy of Perilous Chronicle: <https://perilouschronicle.com>)

Recalling the Practices of 19th Century Slave Resistance

News of prison breaks and escapes are surfacing in the mainstream media more and more lately, possibly as prisoners are increasing seeing the viability of direct action as a method of resistance. Recalling a long tradition of using "escape" as a tactic, which dates back to the resistance of enslaved Africans and other Indigenous peoples to the plantation chattel regime, notable escapes over the past several months include: Four Prisoners Escape from Gallia County Jail, OH (September 29); Two Prisoners Escape from Gallia County Transport Vehicle, OH (September 3); Escape at Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center, CO (May 6); Escape at Maui Community Correctional Center, HI (April 14); Mass Escape at Nash County Detention Center, NC (March 25). (Data courtesy of Perilous Chronicle: <https://perilouschronicle.com>)

Indigenous Political Prisoner Miguel Parafita Is Freed

After four years, five months, and two weeks in prison and 26 days on hunger strike, and with the organizing efforts and solidarity of countless people, anarchist political prisoner Miguel Parafita has been freed. Miguel Parafita is one of the seven political prisoners of the Community Assembly of Eloxochitlán who remained in prison. He, together with 33 others, was falsely accused by the now representative-elect of MORENA in Oaxaca, Elisa Zepeda Lagunas. Since 2014, the Zepeda Lagunas family have utilized their economic and political power to manipulate the legal process of this case in the Mixed District Court of Huautla de Jiménez, Oaxaca. They have extended "due process" and forced the displacement of more than 20 families from the community.

Imprisoned Abolitionist Stephen Wilson Faces Repression for Education Work

Stephen Wilson, who built up a mutual aid structure and study-group network of approximately 80 prisoners at SCI-Smithfield in PA, has been facing ongoing repression in the "hole" (psychiatric observation at SCI-Smithfield), and forced transfers to SCI-Rockview and SCI-Fayette. Outside supporters have been pod mapping, organizing phone zaps, and connecting with Stephen's family to offer support. There is no telling what will happen next but one thing is for certain: this series of events has shown the limits of building inside/outside organizations with only one imprisoned point person as facilitator. What is needed is the cultivation of greater collective leadership, and the collectivization of skills, empowerment, and resources amongst those on the inside as they embark on projects with a public presence (i.e. websites, blogs, social media, etc.). Stephen is currently being held at SCI-Fayette but this is subject to change. Please reach out to Critical Resistance NYC for more information on how to support Stephen's organizing and educating work behind walls. His writing can be found on the website www.abolitioniststudy.group, or on Twitter at the following handle: @agitateorganize

Disruption Emerging as a Popular Abolitionist Strategy

2019 has been a year among years in terms of the growing revitalization of uprisings and insurrection as a strategy used by prisoners who have simply had enough. Instances of collective revolt this year include: Uprising at Prince George Regional Correctional Centre, Canada; Uprising at Wilder John S. Youth Development Center, TN; Uprising at Palmetto Youth Academy, FL; Uprising at George W. Hill Correctional Center, PA; Uprising at Manhattan Detention Complex, NY; Disturbance at New Orleans Juvenile Justice Center, LA; Attack on Guard at Central Utah Correctional Facility, UT; Large Disturbance at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center, LA; Siege on Guards at Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility; Protest at Minnesota Correctional Facility - Shakopee; Disturbance at Alder Conservation Camp, CA; Uprising at DeKalb County Jail, GA; Uprising at Spring Creek Correctional, AK; Uprising at Bell County Detention Center, KY; Disturbance at Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center, CO; Fire and Siege on Guards at Marshall County Correctional Facility, MS; Siege on Guards at Tecumseh State Correctional Institution, NE; Disturbance at Covington County Jail, AL; Uprising at Maui Community Correctional Center, HI; Uprising at Crawford County Detention Center, AR; Uprising at The Hills Youth and Family Services, MN; Siege on Guards at Elmira Correctional Facility, NY; Uprising at Lee County Juvenile Detention Center, IA; Uprising at Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility, OH; Siege on Guard at California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison, Corcoran. (Data courtesy of Perilous Chronicle: <https://perilouschronicle.com>)

Powerful Demos to Close the Camps, National Day of Action

October 12th was the National Day to Close the Camps. Activists and people fed up with the system of migrant detention took to the streets in several states. Especially notable are struggles against migrant children detention centers in Chicago, which have increased in size and capacity to disrupt the everyday flow of public life. Protesters under a #FreeHeartlandKids banner marched to draw attention to liberal non-profit Heartland Alliance's collaboration with ICE and other federal law enforcement, in which they are holding migrant youth in their alleged "shelters" in several North Chicago neighborhood. After blocking a major intersection on Sheridan and Albion, police attacked the march and began making arrests. During a notable