
By Woods Ervin

The attack on the US Capitol in Washington on January 6, 2021 shocked many in the US, mobilizing a call to eject Trump immediately and hold those who stormed the building accountable. It is easy to be tempted into thinking that this was an anomaly and that as the Trump presidency ends, the US can return to business as usual. In reality, a fascistic movement has been brewing for quite some time.

There’s a historical relationship between the instability of capitalism and the emergence of a particularly violent white supremacy. Even though we’re now in a specific formation of capitalism — neoliberalism — the pattern still applies. The repeating story is: Capitalism is in crisis, and a current of militant, often white supremacist authoritarianism emerges in an effort to secure racial capitalism. This tendency is global in vision; it currently has emerged in Brazil, Hungary, India, and the Philippines. However, its Trumpist form is particularly American in character, rooted in the settler colonial racist and anti-immigrant US project.

The movement that attacked the capitol on January 6 is anchored in the US tendency toward militarism and white supremacy, as well as our current economic conditions and posture as developed by a long-standing neoliberal terrain. The movement is also animated by the US’ sweeping use of imprisonment and policing in daily life as a response to social, economic, and political problems. By investigating the connections between fascism and neoliberalism, organizers on the left and prison industrial complex (PIC) abolitionists can assess the shifting conditions we must navigate in order to achieve liberation.

Neoliberalism

As seen in Critical Resistance’s definitions on page 4 of this issue, neoliberalism has been the primary orientation of the US economy since the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. Many corporatists shrank and relocated manufacturing jobs in response to the demands of organized labor, leaving large parts of the population unemployed or at risk of unemployment, forced to engage in survival by any means possible. Neoliberals have simultaneously used an austerity approach and gutted the welfare state—defunding public housing, parks, schools, social programs, and deregulating those sectors to allow for private corporations to contract with the government. Additional actions include putting public tax dollars toward public/private partnerships, tax cuts for the wealthy, and bailouts for big corporations when the economy crashes.

Neoliberalism is a non-partisan political ideology; Republicans and Democrats alike have fine-tuned its execution. In making his case for neoliberal economics, Ronald Reagan insisted “government is the problem” and worked to remove government restrictions to make way for the “invisible hand” of the “free” market to generate and then “trickle down” wealth from the rich to the poor. Fast forward to the Bush era, where we saw some of the chickens come home to roost. The dot-com bubble burst, meaning the US’ imagined economic growth coming out of the global expansion in the 1990s started to wind down. Many of us are familiar with the Obama era recession of 2009: The squeezing, large-scale loss of jobs and funds resulted in deep emigration of the general population, forcing people into even more precarious work.

As the Biden administration enters into office, Biden’s neoliberal allegiance is crystal clear, with his proposed COVID-19 debt relief package already cutting from the initial promised amount. And though we can make a little bit go a long way, even the promised one-time payment of $1,400 isn’t much. Without strong organizing, the US government’s primary position on austerity over the next four years looks to remain the same.

In order to understand the connection between neoliberalism and fascism, we must consider the violent character of neoliberalism and its support of authoritarianism, both in the US and abroad. As neoliberalism emerged, so did a growing resentment across the political spectrum. In the absence of a more liberal program, it further ripened conditions for authoritarianism to foster. In other words, neoliberalism creates conditions where a cycle of state and extra-legal violence can thrive. The slashing of the social welfare net, as well as the rise in unemployment of the working class and the shrinking of the middle class, creates the conditions of powerlessness and inequality. This then produces a particularly violent white supremacy. Even though we’re now in a specific formation of capitalism — neoliberalism — the pattern still applies. The repeating story is: Capitalism is in crisis, and a current of militant, often white supremacist authoritarianism emerges in an effort to secure racial capitalism. This tendency is global in vision; it currently has emerged in Brazil, Hungary, India, and the Philippines. However, its Trumpist form is particularly American in character, rooted in the settler colonial racist and anti-immigrant US project.

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We hope this issue nourishes your commitment to prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition during these trying times. As the editorial collective worked on Issue 34, COVID-19 surged through prisons, jails, and detention. An estimated 1 in 5 prisoners have been infected, four times more than the general population; the rates of COVID-19 related deaths for prisoners rose from 1,700 in December to 2,459 by March, according to the Marshall Project. As more concerned communities and public health experts continue to insist mass releases will stop the spread and dignity death toll, state by state decision makers have yet toudge while lives hang in the balance. In California, the majority of the people who were killed by the virus were already granted parole but were still locked up, while in Alabama the Parole Board has decreased parole hearings by about 50 percent, dropping parole grants to historic lows.

During this time, the Trump presidency broke a 130-year tradition of pausing executions amid presidential turn-over, instead he exited the White House with a last-minute killing spree of executing five more prisoners, totaling 19 since July. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have since took office resurrecting the moderate, pro-cop, pro-cages agenda, positioning neoliberal reformism as the antidote to Trumpism’s fascist tendencies, still upholding the PIC and military as the solutions to the various social, economic and political problems exacerbated during the pandemic. As the neoliberal blocs to gain back lost legitimacy from federal negligence during the crisis, we at Critical Resistance (CR) have been discussing: what are the connections between neoliberalism and fascism, and what do they mean for PIC abolition now and in the future? Are these ideologies truly at odds in the ways we are encouraged to think, especially during the 2020 US presidential election? Issue 34 presents a features section that explores the interrelations between fascism and neoliberalism with a set of articles packed with analysis, reflection and resources for organizing and beyond this moment. We hope this issue works to propel our collective and individual work that extends its life or scope.

As always, we strongly encourage our readers to contribute to The Abolitionist. Check our Call for Content with submission guidelines and deadlines on page 21 to contribute to our next issues, #35 out in July 2021, or #36 to be published by December.

Continuing our new paper structure of features with recurring columns, Issue 34 also includes a return of 9971 with Stephen Wilson, Kites to the Editors, the Inside-Outside Fishing Line, and the “Abby” Throwback in tow. These turbulent times set an ever-shifting landscape. Please keep in mind how quickly news is moving and changing when reading our news-based columns, like CR Updates and Movement Highlights, as well as our political prisoner updates—Until All Are Free.

Yours in struggle,
Critical Resistance & The Abolitionist Collective

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desperation, division, and increased violence—by the state and within our communities. The state’s disavowal to take responsibility for the needs of the people feeds into the people’s disillusionment with government, creating a perfect storm for a populist, fascist leader, party, or forces. The heart of this problem is that the regressive forces reemerge and so on. Neoliberalism has created conditions of despair and disillusion. Through “organized abandonment,” as coined by Ruthie Gilmore, in this way, neoliberalism facilitated Trumpism and its fascist tendencies to rise with political efficacy in the 21st century.

Once more, it is a mistake to fall into any mis- conception that populism and authoritarianism are at odds with one another, as suggest- ed by this moment’s two-party rivalry in the US. The quite direct connection between neoliberalism and fascism is clear: As neoliberalism emerged, global social capitalism was underway, at which point the CIA out- sized the first democratically elected Marxist pres- ident in the world—Salvador Allende in Chile. The US-backed military coup replaced Allende with Augusto Pinochet and delivered University of Chile law graduate Augusto Pinochet to power in 1973. Milton Friedman as Pinochet’s consultant. One month later, Pinochet’s regime announced a national economic plan based on the neoliberal principles of privatization, deregulation, and individualism. Chile was sub- jected to the first round of Friedman’s neoliberal policies, but even while the country was tortured more than 40,000 people, executed more than 2,000, exiled more than 200,000, and disappeared countless leftists. Turning to Criti- cal Resistance’s definitions of both neoliberalism and fascism, we see the overlap in the use of military dictatorship and coups as both a fascist characteristic and a tactic used in maintaining neoliberal regimes to secure imperial dominance and eliminate dissent.

White Supremacy & Fascism

When running for president, Donald Trump shocked the progressive US with his “Make America Great Again” campaign slogan, while simultaneously galvanizing white nationalists. This backlash to US militarism, with a vitri- fied era of enslavement and genocide struck fear in communities of color and the left but empowered the white supremacist community, which is in flux. It also depended on a strong, resourced, repressive po- licing system rooted in hyper-militarism, and the racialization of the US to the means that the communities must to maintain the power. The US committed to a narrative of its aims for fighting fascism, and that continues through the present. However, the legacy of Trump’s “organizing” as the US became a global/political/economic super- power in the 1950s tells a different story.

How did we get to the US’ fascist present? The endless racist wars launched by the US, most recently in Iraq and Syria, were required as a cul- ture of consistent white supremacist national- ism that became the cauldron that brought us to the current period. The emergence of the Tea Party in response to neoliberal economics policies of the 1980s and 1990s, the white su- premacist bloc forged by Ronald Reagan in col- laboration with England’s Margaret Thatcher, and backlash to the election of the first Black president are the roots of what became the Trumpist hard-right faction of the Grand Old Party (GOP). While there were localized efforts to fight against these ground forces early on, the lack of coordinated organizing from the left and the centrist demonization of Antifa, or anti- fascin, allowed these factions to go relatively unchecked while the crumbling GOP revitalized itself with a Trump Presidency.

Neoliberalism has created conditions of despair and disillusion. Through “organized abandonment,” as coined by Ruthie Gilmore, in this way, neoliberalism facilitated Trumpism and its fascist tendencies to rise with political efficacy in the 21st century.

Given too many parallels to 1930s Germany, we would do well to not breathe a sigh of relief as Biden enters office. It is important to remember that the Nazi Party initially attempted to seize power in 1923, a decade prior to actually succeeding. We must organize swiftly and decisively to stop the Trumpist reorganization if we’re serious about the struggle against the fascists. We can address these conditions with more austerity .

The PIC & Abolition and what comes next

As I am writing this, deeper and deeper investiga- tion surfaces as to the extent to which the mobilization of power during the Capitol insurrection included toppling Confederate statues across the country. That attacked the Capitol was colluding with and made up of cops and former military personnel, capable of planning, organizing, and executing and logistically, with Republican members in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Given the economic and social conditions of the time, and the hegemony of the US-aligned Republican party would organize them- selves to secure power. The US is increasing in militarization as we experience the continued other recession, and neoliberalism only knows to address these conditions with more austerity.

Austerity requires heavy police force, as large numbers of the US population experience a drastic inequality thrust upon them and the abandonment by their representatives in office. This is also out of history’s playbook: Policing and imprisonment are rooted in slavery. During the Civil War, the Confederate rebellion and the Confederate Peace Delegation, both through the Oakland Chapter and at-large, for nearly a decade. In the fall of 2020, the bill was signed into law by former US Vice President Harris’ long history with law- and-order policing and imprisonment should make a wary call to those deliberately setting up on our orga- nizing. Biden is circulating rhetoric to move for- ward on “domestic terrorism” legislation. An- archists and socialist-leader organizers were arrested and then, eventually, the arrest of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Tay- lor in Louisville. Abolitionists are fighting po- licing “both-and”-and-making gains across the country, arguing that public funds must be spent on the people and not on more police. By highlighting how imprisoned people have been left behind, we also highlight con- straining the viciousness of how we treat our citizens as well as the need for immediate mass release. Organizers, not the state, worked to move more marginalized communities from relief— doing more than the government did to ensure the care of the people.

Looking forward, we must continue the diligent work of rooting out neoliberalism, white su- premacism, militarism, and the PIC from our commu- nities, and we must seriously contest their legitimacy and remove them from positions of power. We must expand our organizing to address the whole of our enemies and win over those who can be won, de-platform those who must be de-plat- erned, and eradicate the structures of policing, intelligence, and warfare. In this way, we can ensure a future. The work of building true safety, peace, and liberation through abolition remains an ev- er-present need for us to take on with rigor and seriousness. Onwards.

Author Bio: Woods Ervin (they/them) is a Black, transgender organiser originally from Memphis, TN. Ervin is also a core member of the historic Oakland Critical Resistance, both through the Oakland Chapter and at-large, for nearly a decade. In the fall of 2020, the bill was signed into law by former US Vice President Harris’ long history with law- and-order policing and imprisonment should make a wary call to those deliberately setting up on our orga- nizing. Biden is circulating rhetoric to move for- ward on “domestic terrorism” legislation. An- archists and socialist-leader organizers were arrested and then, eventually, the arrest of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Tay- lor in Louisville. Abolitionists are fighting po- licing “both-and”-and-making gains across the country, arguing that public funds must be spent on the people and not on more police. By highlighting how imprisoned people have been left behind, we also highlight con- straining the viciousness of how we treat our citizens as well as the need for immediate mass release. Organizers, not the state, worked to move more marginalized communities from relief— doing more than the government did to ensure the care of the people.

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What is Fascism? What is Neoliberalism?
Definitions

By Critical Resistance National Anti-Policing Workgroup and The Abolitionist Editorial Collective

FASCISM

Fascism is an aggressive political ideology and system, and a form of far-right populism. Fascism is a reactionary political rooted in authoritarian nationalism, hetero-patriarchy, hyper-militarism, determinism, exclusion, elitism, and supremacy. Fascism is most commonly associated with World War-era dictatorships, but includes a much broader historic reach and impact in global politics. Fascism is a reaction to liberalism, Marxism, socialism, communism, Third World and Indigenous self-determination, anarchism, anti-authoritarian politics, feminism, and queerness. Fascism is most accurately placed on the far-right of the traditional left-right political spectrum.

NEOLIBERALISM

Marking the era since the 1970s, neoliberalism refers to a stage of “free-market” capitalism, which is a collection of liberal economic policies based on the eighteenth-century ideologies of Adam Smith. Five pillars of neoliberalism include: “free-market” rule of the economy; gutting of public expenditure for social services; the social welfare net; privatization of the public sector; deregulation of government oversight concerning corporate interests; and the elimination of “social control” or community leadership, by upholding ultra-individualistic notions of responsibility and championing the pursuit of individual self-interest at the expense of the collective. Moreover, fascism enters into the community by redistributing resources into the hands of corporations and wealthy elites and maintains a positive view of state spending on militarism and social control priorities, like the prison industrial complex (PIC). Referring to what Critical Resistance co-founder Ruthie Gilmore has termed “organized abandonment,” neoliberalism uses the PIC’s tools—including surveillance, criminalization, and imprisonment—as substitutes for the structural change required to repair the long history of racial, gender, and economic oppression in the US.

Historic origins and context

Neoliberalism evolved during second half of the twentieth century in response to domestic and global challenges to colonialism, racial capitalism, and structural discrimination mounted by the variety of anti-colonial, civil rights, and Black power movements in the early 1960s. Following the gradual successes of increased access to public resources for Black people, communities of color, and workers from the racial and economic justice movements in the US and globally, the state, in turn, diverted public spending to schools, hospitals, social benefits, and entitlements. This collection of economic and social policies gained traction in the US under the Reagan Administration and became popularly known as “Reaganomics.” Similar changes took place globally over the past five decades through “structural adjustment programs” imposed on nations of the Global South by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as more regionally-specific economic mandates in the 1990s, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the wake of structural economic oppression, exclusion, and growing deindustrialization, the state justified these devestations through demonizing, scapegoating, and projecting moral failure and individual irresponsibility onto communities of color. Unfortunately, neoliberalism helps maintain the status quo of racial capitalism, by entrenching poverty and marginalization of communities of color within the US and imposing economic dependence upon wealthy imperial countries—like the US—in the Global South.

More on neoliberalism and the PIC

Editors’ Note: The following is excerpted and summarized from Epicenter: Chicago: Reclaiming a City from Neoliberalism by Andrea J. Ritchie in collaboration with Black Lives Matter Chicago. Published by Political Research Associates in 2019.

In the 1970s through the early 2000s across the US, public officials responded to mounting protests and urban rebellions fueled by the crises of capitalism by declaring “war on crime,” “war on drugs,” “war on welfare,” and a series of “law and order” agendas that further exacerbated economic conditions of widespread poverty and unemployment in Black and Brown communities, through increased policing, prison expansion, and sentence enhancements. These criminalization policies compounded the ongoing legacies of structural exclusion of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and working-class immigrants and marginalize terms. Politicians, including the Clinton and President Joe Biden, painting themselves as the “law and order” advocates, reified “law and order” agenda that further exacerbated economic conditions.”

Fascist Emergency Playbook

By Ejeris Dixon

Editors’ Note: Throughout 2020, movement strategists have been speaking at virtual events sharpening organizers’ collective analysis to better make sense of our current political moment. One brilliant strategist, Ejeris Dixon, Executive Director of the organization Vision Change Win, has been leading conversations on how to resist fascism, helping the left recognize the strategies used in what she calls “the Fascism Emergency Playbook.” As an organizing resource and tool, we’ve compiled some of her analysis from an op-ed she wrote in April 2020 in Truthout called “Fascists are Using COVID-19 to Advance Their Agenda. It’s Up to Us to Stop Them,” along with notes from a talk she gave during a Center for Political Education class in August 2020 “Road to Rebellion.”

Over the past few years, we’ve watched the rise of a global fascist movement in the US, Russia, India, Brazil, and Europe, and many other countries. And while scholars and writers currently debate whether to call Trump an authoritarian, autocrat or a fascist, it’s clear that he draws from the CPE and the concept of the “fascist emergency playbook,” which he uses to further consolidate power, cement, or create emergencies to increase their power and further their agenda.

Here’s the fascist emergency playbook:

• Use the emergency to restrict civil liberties — particularly rights regarding movement, protest, freedom of the press, a right to a trial, and freedom to gather;
• Use the emergency to suspend government institutions, such as courts, electoral process, institutional checks and balances, and reduce access to elections and other forms of participatory governance;
• Promote a sense of fear and individual helplessness, particularly in relation to the state, to reduce outcry and to create a culture where people consent to the power of the fascist state;
• Replace democratic institutions with authoritarian institutions using the emergency as justification;
• Create scapegoats for the emergency, such as immigrants, people of color, or other peopie, or ethnic and religious minorities to distract public attention from the failures of the state and the loss of civil liberties.

A Pathway Towards Liberation

Despite these grim circumstances, fate has handed us a society-changing opportunity wrapped within a tremendous challenge. We must think in terms of both addressing increased repression and moving towards a more liberated future?
Our playbook:
1. Temporary broad alliances
2. Emotionally- and spiritually-captivating vision
3. Deep relationships and solidarity across communities
4. Navigating pain, grief, and discomfort
5. Multi-tactic, multi-year strategy

Here are the questions [...] we need to answer in order to move forward with a visionary organizing agenda that not only survives emboldened authoritarian movements but also moves us towards liberation:

- How will we address harm and violence within our communities? What is the role of the state (if any) in navigating harm or violence?
- How will we build movements with space for democratic participation? What are the current sick, chronically ill, disabled, survivors, those who are poor, Black, Indigenous, and people of color, queer and trans people, currently incarcerated folks, migrants, those who are targeted and criminalized, and so many more? How do we make room to discuss issues of power and privilege and move through conflict without it suspending or ending other forms of political work?
- With in-person organizing radically shifting or temporarily stopping — what does mass resistance, mass resistance, and base-building organizing look like? What new tactics will we use to create the sense of community that in-person movement building created?
- Do we believe in governments? If not, what systems do we propose to create more equitable change and redistribute resources? If so, what is liberatory governance and what does it require of us as individuals and of the state?
- With so many people on the left disinvested and dissatisfied with both the Democrats and the Republican political parties — is it time for another party? Should we be building more power within the Democratic Party? What is our connection to large-scale political struggle and independent political power?

- How will we push ourselves to build the movements we need and increase time for rest, collective care, and our health? How can we do this and increase our discipline, rigor, and accountability to each other?

Excerpted Author Bio from Truthout: Ejeris Dixon is an organizer and grassroots political strategist with 20 years of experience working in racial justice, LGBTQ+, anti-violence, and economic justice movements. She currently works as the Founding Director of Vision Change Win, where she partners with organizations to build their capacity and deepen their impact. She is the author of many articles, including ‘Building Community Safety: Practical Steps Towards Liberatory Transformation,’ which is featured in Truthout’s anthology ‘Who Do You Serve, Who Do You Protect? Police Violence and Resistance in the United States.’ Dixon discusses the Intersections of State Violence and Solidarity at the CCC Memo’s podcast with Kelly Hayes. Catch the conversation here: https://truthout.org/audio/we-surrender-nothing-and-no-one-a-playbook-for-solidarity-amid-fascist-terror/

Cross-Racial Solidarity & the Call to End Hostilities

By The Abolitionist Editorial Collective with Todd Ashker, featuring a re-print by the Short Corridor Collective

What can we do in the face of authoritarianism and fascism? The Abolitionist Editorial Collective thought it important to include an organizing tool for cross-racial solidarity and collaboration for imprisoned people in Issue 34. In 2011, prisoners in California came together to resist one of the most severe forms of repression—solitary confinement. The Short Corridor Collective, made up of Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (SHU) prisoners, intentionally built relationships across prison-manufactured racial and geographic lines in order to challenge the state’s use of solitary confinement and gang validation as torture and repression. The Short Corridor Collective’s courageous action inspired prisoners in countless prisons to work together, waging three wide-spread hunger strikes in 2011 and 2013. A year after the first strike in 2011, the Short Corridor Collective issued a statement calling for an end to conflict and a durability between different groups of prisoners throughout the state of CA, from maximum security prisons to county jails. The statement asked prisoners to unite beginning October 10, 2012. Still to this day, the Agreement to End Hostilities is a beacon for cross-racial solidarity against authoritarianism and state violence.

In addition to re-printing the Agreement to End Hostilities as an organizing resource for prisoner today, we also share a shortened reflection recently circulated by the San Francisco Bay View newspaper in January 2021 from Todd Ashker, a while prisoner representative of the Short Corridor Collective. Since the 2011 and 2013 hunger strikes, Todd continued to apply pressure on California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to reform solitary confinement by being the lead plaintiff in a class action lawsuit. Settled in 2016, and known as “The Ashker Settlement,” the case ended CA’s de jure practice of indefinite solitary confinement. Todd and hundreds of other Pelican Bay SHU prisoners, who were transferred to other prisons and moved to general population. In 2020, two of Todd’s fellow members of the Short Corridor Collective, both Black prisoner representatives, were paroled. First Paul Redd, who was granted early time-served and has been out of prison since May 2020, and second Siata Nambamu Jama is on medical parole but still imprisoned at CA Community Health Facility in Stockton, CA.

In regard to the relevance of the Agreement to our current political moment in 2021, Todd Ashker, in a letter to The Abolitionist Editorial Collective, wrote to Critical Resistance:

“Fascism and white nationalism are dicey subjects in today’s system. And, based on the sense of such that I have felt the vibes from, these past several months, there is a sense of growing resentment and deepening division(s) behind these walls. Which is not a surprise, being that the majority of whites in the system are from the working-class poor, while also being serious believers in various types (I would say) of ‘white nationalism;’ many seem to take some offense with having ‘Black lives matter’ in the media, etc. – which I have always recognized. But the focus on ‘difference’ is a big cause of deepening division. I don’t see anything much changing unless/until people change the focus from that of ‘difference’ to one of ‘commonality.’ We are very fortunate to have the 2012 Agreement to End Hostilities still being recognized.”

Agreement to End Hostilities

By the Short Corridor Collective

August 12, 2012
To whom it may concern and all California Prisoners:
Greetings from the entire PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives. We are hereby presenting this mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor. Wherein, we have arrived at a mutual agreement concerning the following points:

1. If we really want to bring about substantive meaningful changes to the CDCR system in a manner beneficial to all solid individuals, who have never been broken by CDCR’s torture tactics intended to coerce one to become a state informant via debriefing, that now is the time for us to collectively seize this moment in time and put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups.

2. Therefore, beginning on October 10, 2012, all hostilities between our racial groups, in SHU, Ad Seg, General Population, and County Jails, will officially cease. This means that from this date on, all racial group hostilities need to be at an end... and if personal issues arise between individuals, people need to do all they can to exhaust all diplomatic means to settle such disputes; do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues!!

3. We also want to warn those in the General Population that IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) de factoi inmates amongst the solid GP prisoners with orders from IGI to be informers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups’ mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes [i.e., forcing CDCR to open up all GP main lines, and return to a rehabilitative-type system of meaningful programs/privileges, including lifer conjugal visits, etc. via peaceful protest activity/noncooperation e.g., hunger strike, no labor, etc. etc.]. People need to be aware and vigilant to such tactics, and refuse to allow such IGI inmate snitches to create chaos and reignite hostilities amongst our racial groups. We can no longer play into IGI, IBU, OCS, and SSU’s old manipulative divide and conquer tactics!!!

In conclusion, we must all hold strong to our mutual agreement from this point on and focus on time, nutrition, and energy on mutual causes beneficial to all of us [i.e., prisoners], and our best interests. We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit!!

Continued on next page
Because the reality is that collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole… We send our love and respect to all those of like mind and heart… onward in struggle and solidarity…

We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit! Because the reality is that collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole…

Presented by the PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Collective:
Todd Ashker, C58191
Arturo Castellanos, C17275
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Danny Truxell, B7656
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Raymond Chavo Perez, K12922

James Mario Perez, B48186

[NOTE: All names and the statement must be verified when used & posted on any website or media, or non-media, publications]

Carpe Diem: A Reflection on the Agreement to End Hostilities by Todd Ashker – distributed January 7, 2021

Our fight in solidarity to demand the release – not transfers – of our elders and other unjustly imprisoned loved ones cannot be realized without the support and condemnation of the state’s policies, and thereby igniting the fires of critically necessary collective peaceful action behind the walls, and collectively hold the power of the people to demand and achieve the long-overdue reforms to our justice system, including the support of thousands behind the walls of the prisoner class of all races and groups, gain the right to vote and thereby ability to play a role in choosing our leaders and rights and dignity for all, the end to the torture, and better conditions systemwide.

We have achieved positive reforms and successfully ended state-sanctioned torture and related conditions. The following three massive non-violent hunger-strike actions that totaled 98 days without food and thousands were released from solitary confinement…

The prisoner class is not powerless. We have proven this! The Ashker, et al., Class Action Settlement Agreement – including the critically important Compliance Monitoring provisions – exposed the global support and condemnation of the state’s policies, and thousands were released from solitary confinement to general population prisons. Here we’ve discovered that CDCR’s level IV prisons are GP (general population) in name only, operating as modified SHUs. Thus, our struggle continues! A key to amplifying such power is the prisoner class smiling power, the class collective peaceful action behind the walls, and thereby igniting the fires of critically necessary outside support. With respect to the people, in addition to those of the prisoner class, we hold the power through standing our ground while speaking truth to power. We have the power to force changes that are necessary to exercise our rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – this is why the ultimate goal of our struggle is to dismantle the vast and complex ways the PIC is structured to ensure decades of torture of those serving grossly disproportionate prison sentences. CDCR resists the most logical way to end state-sanctioned torture and mayhem, often intentionally, for the purposes of supporting CDCR’s and CCPoa’s own agenda, such as manufacturing the violence relied upon by prisoncrats and lawmakers to justify the billions given for the “prison building boom” between 1983 and 2005.

The people and history will be the judge! With solidarity and respect,
Todd Ashker.

Author Information: You can write to Todd at: Todd Ashker, C58191, KVSP ASU-2/94, Box #1506, Delano, CA, 93215. Keep in mind that Todd, like most imprisoned organizers, regularly experiences repression by CDCR and may not receive certain mail.

Locked Out 2020: Estimates of People Denied Voting Rights Due to a Felony Conviction

A Report by The Sentencing Project

Editors’ Note: Given that voting suppression is core to authoritarianism and fascist regimes, The Abolitionist Editorial Collective wants to highlight timely data on the disenfranchisement of prisoners for this issue. In October 2020, The Sentencing Project, a national, non-profit organization engaged in research and advocacy on issues of the criminal legal system, released a report that reveals the rates at which people with felony convictions were denied suffrage in different states during the 2016 election. Given that each state has different restrictions on voting, the report shares a state-by-state comparison and analysis with updates on felony disenfranchisement and voting restoration since the 2016 election. The report reveals that, despite reforms in half the states of the US in the past 25 years expanding voting access to people with felony convictions, 8.2 million Americans remain disenfranchised, or 2.3 percent of the voting age population. The report also exposes the varying factors of race and gender on disenfranchisement of people with felony convictions. In the final summary, we report that, at the time of the final summary, it is explained:

“When we break these figures down by race and ethnicity, it is clear that disparities in the criminal [legal] system are linked to disparities in political representation. The distribution of disenfranchised individuals shown [...] also bears repeating: about one-fourth of all people with felony convictions is Caucasian, and about 4 million adults who live in their communities are banned from voting. Of this total, 1.3 million are African Americans.”

Additionally, Criminal Justice Reform offers this research with the understanding that oppressive state-designations such as “felon” are criminalizing titles used to dehumanize people, to legitimate punishment, and to frame people as primary sources of violence, rather than the state that terrorizes us. We reject the very idea of the felon. As prison industrial complex (PIC) advocates strive to seek to resist and dismantle the vast and complex ways the PIC strips power away from people and communities. This ultimate goal, we understand that the right to vote and participate in democratic processes is essential to people’s power. Thus, we support prisoners and formerly incarcerated comm-

Continued on next page
munities to have full access to this power. As part of our work to abolish the entire PIC and not extend its life or scope in any way, abolitionists must be aware of and work to reduce barriers to exercising political power, especially for communities most impacted by imprisonment, policing, and surveillance.

We’ve included the key findings from the Overview section of the report for review. A full copy of the report can be downloaded from The Sentencing Project’s website: www.sentencingproject.org

Overview – Key Findings

- As of 2020, an estimated 5.17 million people are disenfranchised due to a felony conviction, a figure that has declined by almost 15 percent since 2016, as states enacted new policies to curtail this practice. There were an estimated 11.7 million people disenfranchised in 1976, 3.34 million in 1996, 5.85 million in 2010, and 6.31 million in 2016.
- One out of 44 adults—2.27 percent of the total US voting eligible population—is disenfranchised due to a current or previous felony conviction.
- Individuals who have completed their sentences are 11 of the 11 states that disenfranchise at least some people post-sentence make up most (43 percent) of the entire disenfranchised population, totaling 2.23 million people.
- Rates of disenfranchisement vary dramatically by state due to broad variations in voting prohibitions.

In three states—Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee—20 percent of the adult population, one of every 13 people, is disenfranchised.

- We estimate that nearly 900,000 Floridians who have completed their sentences remain disenfranchised. In 2018, 18 Florida referenda that promised to restore their voting rights. Florida thus remains the nation’s disenfranchisement leader in absolute numbers, with over 1.1 million people currently banned from voting—often because they cannot afford to pay court-ordered monetary sanctions or because the state is not obligated to tell them the amount of their sanction.

- One in 16 African Americans of voting age is disenfranchised, a rate 3.7 times greater than that of non-African Americans. Over 6.2 percent of the adult African American population is disenfranchised, compared to 17 percent of the non-African American population.

- African American disenfranchisement rates vary significantly by state. For example, in 2019, the state permanently disenfranchised more than one in seven African Americans.

- In 2013, officials removed the five-year waiting period to regain voting eligibility. Apart from some disqualifying offenses, people who complete sentences for first-time, non-violent felony convictions have a maximum waiting period of five years, including those on probation and parole.

- In 2018, California voters passed an amendment to restore voting rights to individuals who have completed sentences for first-time, non-violent felony convictions. In 2019, the state permanently disenfranchised persons with two or more felony convictions. In 2019, Arizona removed the requirement to pay outstanding fines before rights are automatically restored for people with a first-time felony conviction only.

- Delaware—in 2013, officials removed the five-year waiting period to regain voting eligibility. Apart from some disqualifying offenses, people convicted of a felony are now eligible to vote upon completion of sentence and supervision.

- In 2016, lawmakers restored voting rights to people who were imprisoned in jail, but not in prison. That year, 22 states removed the requirement to pay out-of-pocket fines and fees to have voting rights restored.

- In 2018, Governor Cuomo restored voting rights to people who completed their sentences.

- In 2019, officials decided to restore voting rights after five years to people who complete sentences for first-time, non-violent felony convictions.

The Sentencing Project works for a fair and effective US criminal justice system by producing groundbreaking research to promote reform in policy, address unjust racial disparities and practices, and to advocate for alternatives to incarceration. For more information, visit their website: sentencingproject.org.

The photo essay shows images and articles from the BPF’s national newspaper to highlight their wide-ranging goals and analyses in the fight against fascism. This essay highlights past organizing to draw connections and to build upon our rich movement history.

We start with a transcribed interview with BPP Chairwoman Bobby Seale, conducted by the anti-imperialist Welsh journalist Colin Edwards for This Week in which Seale explains the goals and purpose of the conference for a United Front Against Fascism. These articles are provided courtesy of The Freedom Archives, a non-profit educational archive located in San Francisco dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of historic organizations, periodicals, and individuals documenting progressive movements and culture from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Bobby Seale (BS): “The United Front Against Fascism will take place on July 18, 19, and 20 in and is...
Expressions of Fascism and Collective Resistance in Brazil: The Dispute of the Present

By Augusto Jobim, Fernanda Martins, Manoel Alves and Sofia Rolim from Trama Colectiva, Brazil

Editors’ Note: Key Terms and Context
The Abolitionist
Editorial Collective thought it helpful to include some notes on key terms so that readers who are not familiar with the Brazilian political context would be better supported when reading this piece.

Favelas are poor, oppressed communities located within, or on the outskirts of, Brazil’s largest cities.

Quilombos began as communities created by escaped enslaved peoples who had escaped captivity during institutionalized slavery in Brazil. Quilombos were based on a type of territorial organization that existed in Southern Africa during the almost four centuries of colonialism, quilombos functioned as community spaces in which relationships were formed. Quilombos were and are spaces of resistance for Black communities. Today, they guarantee Black communities a relationship to their territorial legacy in Brazil.

Polifamilia is a term created by Trama Colectiva to describe how fascism is currently operating in Brazil and is the focus of this piece.

Many communities in Brazil have been living through, and surviving, various forms of continuous and overlapping violence. In daily life, the favelas, Indigenous lands, and quilombos are the sites where people survive permanent policing and occupation brutalize the lives of the people that call these areas home. The current fascist regime imposes its dynamics of violence on the daily lives of all people; however, we understand that it is also in these spaces, constituted by deep community ties, that a struggle and active resistance provide the opportunity to tell stories of the living.

We recently created the group Trama Colectiva to promote dialogue on the specific configurations of fascism in Brazilian society. We are a group of Brazilian teachers, researchers, and people linked to social movements who are united by the desire to generate dialogues and approximations with international abolitionist initiatives. We also participate in the favelas’ survival and resistance for their involvement with the Rio de Janeiro police force.

To represent the complexity of fascist nuances in all that is happening in Brazil, we have always been present in the country’s ethos, we arrived at the concept of polifamilia as a tactical expression of intervention in Brazil. First, to speak of the police force in Brazil is to speak, above all, of the militarists that organize our society in different ways. Po- lifamilia, we believe, unites by the desire to generate dialogues and people linked to social movements who are united by the desire to generate dialogues and approximations with international abolitionist initiatives.

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Building Abolitionist Alternatives in Borderlands: Histories of Resistance and Carceral Economies of the US-Mexico Border

By Cesar Lopez with Rory Elliott

January 8, 2021 — Rory Elliott, of The Abolitionist and Critical Resistance Portland, interviewed Cesar Lopez of Nogales, Arizona to hear how communities of this region of the border continue to resist the border wall, deportation, militarization, and resource extraction. They discuss base building, mutual aid, the school-to-prison pipeline, and how presidential administrations from Bush to Biden affect policies on immigration, asylum, and deportation.

As a community organizer in Nogales, Lopez utilizes popular education, cultural empowerment, and environmental stewardship practices to build spaces for radical imagination and local youth leadership to flourish. Cesar is the Farm Director for Santa Cruz Farm, a member of the Nogales Compost Cooperative, and a member of the cross-border community group, Colectivo Colmena of Ambos Nogales.

Can you give a bit of background of yourself and of the work you engage with?

Cesar Lopez (CL): I’m from Nogales on the US side. Nogales sits on Tohono O’odham territory and is a town split by the border. The Mexican side has a population of around 750,000, and the US side has almost always been 25,000 people.

I arrived home five years ago carrying intentions to create a movement in sustainability where people, mainly youth from low-income communities, get opportunities beyond the barrios of Tucson. The daily threat of deportation and adverse conditions more generally led us to set up a crisis response apparatus called, in Spanish, “Red de Protección,” or “Protection Network.” Components of these protection networks could be a collective of women that sell food to fundraiser—to pay off bills because somebody had a medical emergency, lost their home in a fire, or has been detained. Other pieces include ensuring that everybody is legally represented before a stop ever happens, and that everybody in the network is getting a WhatsApp message to track the person who was picked up and know who is going to register and be officially elected. In practice, there are currently two ways in which the mandates operate: gathering the collective around a name that is effectively a pre-candidate, mobilizing votes for that name during the campaign, or spreading the idea of collective candidacy and encouraging the mandate collectively if won.

Regardless of how the shared mandate is adopted, its goal is to act as a direct channel for an intervention in public power in a collective way that adds distinct capabilities and brings multiple perspectives and knowledges.

The conception of polifamilicia represents a complex expression of fascism and also serves as a base for how to resist this form of political violence. For us, collective mandates have been a form of action that builds collective resistance by reimagining the terms of what can be said and claimed in an institutional sphere. The way that has been historically considered “marginal risk” is taking the center of public debates and occurring as an explicit confrontation with the border, which has been utilized to annullate the people on the margins. Collective mandates demonstrate our refusal to die, our resistance to imposed violence, and, substantially, are another creative contour to produce other forms of life.

How do you feel that this work—border resistance, expansive intra-community mutual aid projects, food sovereignty, and border activism—will shift under the Biden administration if at all?

CL: I honestly don’t think there will be a big shift in immigration policy during the Biden administration unless there is a lot of pressure—through protests and by grassroots movements for change. We have seen that it is definitely not priority number one. Justice and dignity in terms of immigration was not a priority for Biden when he worked with the Obama Administration. Biden doesn’t have a good record with keeping families together. The Obama Administration, which included Biden, has no record of that being their priority.

People will come to Nogales, in Sonora, Mexico, on some sort of sponsored spring break tour, coordinated by businesses that aren’t even based here on the Mexican or US side. It’s a lucrative project where people can build their social consciousness and show growing immigrant shelters and poor neighborhoods in Mexico and so forth, quickly exposing itself as a poverty tour. They’ll help the locals that they engage with to a certain extent, but there is no sustainability. Never a tree planted when it comes to the non-profit world.

I believe that under a liberal administration, poverty tourism is going to grow, which I see as a manifestation of settler colonialization.

To historicize, can you talk a bit about some of these protection networks and how they relate to Indigenous traditions of resistance, specifically a tradition of collective action and necessity of opposing both US and Mexican states and their imposed borders?

CL: There has always been resistance to efforts that oppress people and separate them from their families, their land, and from the places that oppress people and separate them from their neighborhoods empowering their parents, their siblings, and their networks.

We started doing these campaigns around 2008, while doing immigration work and green job sustainability in the barrios of Tucson. The daily threat of deportation and adverse conditions more generally led us to set up a crisis response apparatus called, in Spanish, “Red de Protección,” or “Protection Network.” Components of these protection networks could be a collective of women that sell food to fundraiser—to pay off bills because somebody had a medical emergency, lost their home in a fire, or has been detained. Other pieces include ensuring that everybody is legally represented before a stop ever happens, and that everybody in the network is getting a WhatsApp message to track the person who was picked up and know who is going to get their one call. And if detained, making sure that they know their rights and don’t sign a deportation order right away.

On the outside, they got a whole network that’s going to start a big letter writing campaign. The whole idea is to get a hundred letters from the pastor, the soccer coach, the teacher, that all talk about this person helping the soccer team, expressing that, “this person goes to English as Second Language (ESL) classes,” or “this person is the father of three and is the breadwinner,” etc. We have also fundraised thousands of dollars repeatedly to get our people out of detention. The ability to run a campaign to get people out has been really affected by the Trump administration. We were able to do it with Bush and with Obama—to build continual pressure so local ICE agents would allow them to stay here while they fought their case. And that’s been the case of many of our immigrants.

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Land and Freedom: Building Autonomous Community as Resistance to Authoritarianism in Cherán, Michoacán, Mexico (Part II)

By Yunuén Torres with Susana Draper

We would like to share with you the second installment of our conversation with Yunuén Torres, member of the First Youth Council of the 2011 uprising and self-determination process of the people of Cherán in Michoacán, Mexico. In this second piece, Yunuén tells us about how her community looks after itself and the dynamics between those who inhabit that territory have changed through a community-building process since the uprising.

Could you tell us about what justice means for you, how it relates to your people’s ancestral memory, how it is defined by the community itself, and how it has evolved since the uprising?

Yunuén: When considering “justice,” there is a bigger focus regarding trust. In 2011, police were disavowed, because we (the Indigenous people) realized there were people we didn’t know (police, cartels, and political parties) … who were enforcing an idea of justice or author- ity upon the community with sheer violence. Before the 2011 uprising, you’d trust the police—when you hear the word “po- lice,” you distrust it; it does not represent some- one you can walk up to, because you doubt it. You are unsure whether they are going to assist you or screw you, as we say down here. This distrust in police, in addition to the violence in our community that was happening (due to the cartel and loggers), partially led to the uprising itself.

Since the uprising, we’ve built a new path we are walking on right now, which we inhabit through memory, through our people’s knowledge. The methods we are sharing and applying come from our grandparents, who, in their times, wit- nessed how communities organized and functioned. The issue of security was based on a vol- unluntary participation of community members; that is, you trusted a justice apparatus or a way of facing the responsibilities that come with trust, who live in our same community, who are our neighbors, our family.

We are currently trying to build trust in the ronda comunitaria because there is a vol- untary participation of the community. As a result, reclaiming the figure of a community-based system of govern- ment, the ronda comunitaria or community patrol—which stems from this traditional way of voluntary participation—was very important for us. [It was equally important for us] to know that the people in whom we delegate these safe- guarding tasks of all the territory are people we trust, who live in our same community, who are our neighbors, our family.

We have a sustained participation of the community members, but this also allows for others to be also citizens and towns and nations connected, too. This has been a sanctuary highway many, many times. In the 80’s, these communities participated quietly in the movement for sanctuary to assist those mov- ing north to safety while the US was denying asylum and bombing most of Central America. When you talk about it, all along the border, and through Latin America supported bringing peo- ple here to safety.

It reminds me of the wars that the Yoeme Ya- qui tribe had against the Mexican government and the Anglo ranchers in Sonora. They were also coming to this area to cross the border and bring people to safety who were wounded in the struggle. There are whole histories of folks doing- that here. These protocols networks and are made up of relationships and work that’s been built up around here for a long time.

Right now, we see a whole lot of resistance to the border wall, for instance, but there is a distinc- tion now. What we’re talking about is our efforts being globalized. I may not know anybody 40 miles directly east of me holding down a protest on the rez or I may know some people there and the organization is totally new to me. But they are doing the same thing in their own way and doing it because the border sits on their land. They are doing it because a lot of us have grown up with and have become familiar with how the police operate and justice because the border wall is itself a prison. It’s not that it’s creating a prison around people - the border wall is a physical thing as well as a mental one. It’s the way we are talking about losing thousands of mothers and fathers to imprisonment and possibly deporta- tion now. What we’re talking about is our efforts being globalized. I may not know anybody 40 miles directly east of me holding down a protest on the rez or I may know some people there and the organization is totally new to me. But they are doing the same thing in their own way and doing it because the border sits on their land. They are doing it because a lot of us have grown up with and have become familiar with how the police operate and justice because the border wall is itself a prison. It’s not that it’s creating a prison around people.

Further, there is still this “demand” for these border patrol agents - there are jobs available. If you see border patrol agents, you can tell they are young people from other neighborhoods who maybe want to get an easy degree or get a job that pays a little bit better. They are there because of the same school-to-prison pipeline that’s been built. There are a lot of young people without those sorts of alternative opportunities. Without a deeper education that’s widely avail- able—that’s about people and relates to them, that relates to their existence amongst other—then it’s going to be easier to make a dec- ision to take a job that’s basically you hunting your own people down, imprisoning them, and separating them from their families. Sometimes people take the option they are left with.

How do you see a connection between the work you do and prison industrial complex abolition?

CL: I believe that there needs to be a different way of living that’s about the advancement of peace and not the advancement of violence – a way that no longer reinforces the oppression that a lot of us have grown up with and have become socialized to, not even realizing the ways that we are supporting that violence. The whole idea is building from the bottom up; it’s one of many steps that needs to be done in order to build back and—because I’ve been talking about violence—construct a culture of peace. And that can only be experienced when we have what we need. So, in terms of education, when we share the idea that we should not have violence in our interactions, when we believe that we should not have vio- lence in our interactions, or have violence inflict- ed upon us in our world, it becomes very difficult to believe that people should be in prison.

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I see the work I do as an alternative. Not neces- sarily an alternative to detention, but an alterna- tive path rooted in base-building. Building where you are at and engaging with your com- munity, as a way to work, negotiate and keep the dignity within what you are doing, all the while building youth leadership.
Whoever speaks, we are significant. For instance, the assembly was granted in 2015 and became part of the structure of community government. Such was the case that we are constantly developing.

How is a sense of “safety” or “security” created in Cherán? How does the collective memory of Cherán help build community self-determination and collective security and care?

Yunué: In terms of safeguarding and the participation of all community members, we understand and are pretty much aware of everything. In fact, there is a place where a council meets to address the subjects of honor and justice, with their own challenges and direct implications, which is also a space designed for community work and collaboration recovered from our community memory and whose meaning is represented by the word kataperakua, meaning where we all may fall or fit. We are offering this space while recognizing its challenges and the many aspects that have to be taken into consideration because this is such a space. It is said that sometimes evil comes from within. And we see ourselves there, together, many times on the lookout for what may happen, capable of working it all out this way. Luckily, in our movement, what were once considered “crimes” have become mere street fighting or intrafamilial issues. Nevertheless, if we refer to matters of honor that have such a cultural profile, it is necessary for us to think about how the challenge of addressing the kind of justice we are trying to build from here can or cannot be linked to a right that is administered from the outside. It’s an intricate subject that we are constantly developing.

And this is quite complex internally: A community’s determination, as well as the fact that we have no jails, must be acknowledged and respected from the outside. It’s an intricate subject that we are constantly developing. A major result of the loggers coming in to Cherán was that sexual assault and rape became more common, and this was one of the reasons why we trusted the loggers. You also mentioned experiencing sexual violence from outsiders since the uprising. Could you tell us how specifically gender violence has changed throughout these past nine years?

Yunué: Since the beginning of the uprising, [gender-based violence] was an issue that has decreased enormously, because we assumed that everybody has the right to decide their own safety. It was very important for us to make us feel safe.

Related to some of the violence that was happening before, is the issue of women’s participation in the community and the fact that women were consulted from another town. Another female comrade was surprised that I was confident enough to talk with the patrol about it and that they believed it. In Cherán, the question is how Cherán is what Cherán is used to. These are things that should not happen here, and when someone comes for a visit, they should abide by the rules we follow here in our community. This makes a huge difference, since you can trust someone, we deposit our confidence [in them] to look after us, to look after all our communities.

Women now are also getting involved in participatory councils, where they develop activities in different spaces—you can see a new level of trust and how women venture in and take on these challenges. This has an impact on the internal life of families, given the fact that a female comrade has equal footing and her word has the same validity. These are changes that have slowly been implemented, changes that are being carried out as we walk on. It is also about “changing chips”: As women, this is a difficult endeavor. Changing old ways that have always been there, deeply rooted since colonial patriarchy, but which are slowly being reconstructed and evolving in such a way that we, as women, are beginning to understand other dynamics. Let me give you an example: Why do women have to be in charge of cooking during a festivity? This has been changing. But, how do you change certain patterns so that you don’t have to always serve your male comrades? This is really hard on women over forty. It is a sensitive issue, but they are slowly beginning to understand that we all have the same responsibilities and the capacity to respond in different spaces. And so we are walking down on that road.

You mentioned one method of communication you use in Cherán is the community radio station, Fogata. Before, you explained to us how Fogata has been inspired by the community’s tradition of bonfires, and how the community radio station is helping connect communication during the pandemic. Can you tell us more about the community’s bonfire tradition (fogata) and its significance for building community self-determination?

Yunué: The bonfire is a construction typical in every home that was taken out to the streets; it offers resistance to cold but is also a place where we cook, and the word is the same. It is very important because here the bonfire has a customary function, where the person present, whatever their age, could have their say and be listened to. When someone speaks, they are obliged to listen and respect what is being said. Therefore, what is taken out into the streets and left in street corners is imbued with this value, but it also becomes part of the foundation of our organization in Cherán. We debate and propose at a grassroots level, and this is shared in neighborhood assemblies, which then pass it on to the community.

The appointment of those who will be part of the government structure also stems from this process: The appointment must come from the bonfire, it cannot be an individual act, and neither can you self-appoint to any position. The proposal comes from a result of seeing something in that person who is being proposed as representative. The assembly then makes its decision and our representatives become elected. The bonfire has a very specific function as the basis of this whole organization. Consequently, when the idea of the community radio came up to accompany this movement, that name was chosen because the radio was doing precisely that: Communicating what was happening in the streets of Cherán. What’s more, the name accompanies the very existence of the radio and its raison d’être, the need of timely internal communication. It was the mechanism that responded to that need, sharing the microphone with the very people of Cherán.

Cherán has been autonomous for only nine years, yet there have been so many changes. Are there any other lessons you would like to uplift?

Yunué: Things always have to be resolved as a community, and building community does not merely involve those spaces where we are Indigenous, but also urban spaces. For all of us who inhabit this world, this preoccupation for the other must become a more sensitive issue. Assuming that someone else’s problem can also be yours—that’s where the ability to collaborate, to help, comes from, in order for our contexts to change. It is paramount to understand the knowledge shared, the values of our indigenous and mestizo culture. I also believe that this idea of collaboration without expecting anything in return, of keeping an eye on the other, also helps. This has meant a lot to us. And that is what is changing: Assuming your neighbor’s issues as yours, as something you can contribute to—not being in trouble, it’s none of my business.” It is indeed everyone’s business, for we are all inhabiting the same spaces. That’s what it is all about: Building community from our own places.
R
Recently, the nation took a breath and sighed. Some in relief, others in frustration. If yours was one of relief, then you were likely a Biden/ Harris supporter. If it was frustration, well, you sure as hell didn’t feel like America had taken the holy anticipated leap into greatness. For me, it was everything the year 2020 turned out to be: devastatingly important. I caught myself listening to arguments on C-SPAN concerning adoption rights for same-sex couples in Pennsylvania. I was glued to the TV as the legacy of slavery ripped through the nation’s sacred fabric yet again. But you see, as with any game, it becomes dangerous when you lose yourself in it. Scary as well. Malcolm X warned of this. I began thinking along party lines and not for myself, and definitely not for people of color or LGBTQIA+ folks. I was struggling to think that if you’re for Trump, you’re likely racist deep down and believe sexual assault was really “locker room talk” and Charlottesville, racists. We do not believe this word should be used by people who are not a part of the trans-femme community, thus have changed the spelling. We, along with the author, encourage abolitionists to be particularly mindful of how the term “transphobic” is used to perpetuate and legitimize violence, especially violence against queer, transgender and gender-non-conforming peoples.

BATTLE DATING ON THE INSIDE

By Leo Cardez

America has a mental health problem. No, there is this more evident than in America’s prison system, where research reveals up to 40 percent of all prisoners have a diagnosed mental health condition; 14 percent are identified as serious mental issues (SMI). Prisons and jails have become de facto mental health facilities creating a systematic failure by the state to deliver the necessary care to mentally ill prisoners. SMI prisoners are treated, but those with milder conditions (depression, anxiety, stress, lack of appetite or sleep, etc.) are relegated to the back...
Leo Cardez is the penname of an individual who became an abolitionist. They didn’t call themselves abolitionists within that community that I first learned about, but those many years ago, suffering from a deep depression, they were first taught to me. It was about centering the needs of the most vulnerable and finding ways to adapt, such as breathing techniques and meditation. The point is I did something—I stopped pretending to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning of a longer conversation we had, and for the first time I understood that my personal battle with mental health didn’t have to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning of a longer conversation we had, and for the first time I understood that my personal battle with mental health didn’t have to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning.

I'm a college grad, veteran, and successful community organizer. Before I ever read any abolitionist theory, I already had some abolitionist ideas. Before I called myself an abolitionist, parts of it already were. I was thinking about the system itself was the problem. Abolitionist theory created new possibilities. It opened new doors for me from progressive to abolitionist. Not real change. It never occurred to me that we could do away with the entire system. That the system itself was the problem. Abolitionist theory gave me a framework. A new way of seeing and being. It wasn’t a tough leap for me from progressive to abolitionist.

Practicing abolition is harder, especially behind the walls. Abolition is not supposed to be an individual exercise. It is about community, about connection. And that is what makes it hard in prison. We are conditioned and encouraged to separate, isolate, and differentiate. Abolition is not supposed to be an individual exercise. It is about community, about connection. And that is what makes it hard in prison. We are conditioned and encouraged to separate, isolate, and differentiate.

Leo Cardez

Author Bio: Leo Cardez is the penname of an imprisoned writer in Illinois.

10971: A Column on Abolitionist Study with Stephen Wilson

Editors’ Note: Stephen Wilson is a Black, queer abolitionist writing, (dis)organizing, and building study groups and community behind the walls in Pennsylvania. After a severe surge of COVID-19 cascaded through Pennsylvania prisons in December 2020, Stevie was sent to the hole. For this issue’s 10971 column, Stevie requested we share an interview he did in 2020 with Ian Alexander, his friend and comrade on the outside. The interview extensively covers some of Stevie’s work and advice setting up study groups. We will print the interview in two parts, first in this issue and the remaining in a future issue.

Ian Alexander (IA): When and how did you become an abolitionist in your thinking, and how did you become an abolitionist in your practice?

Stephen Wilson (SW): These questions reminded me of some anecdotal advice Mariama Kaba gave organizers first encountering a community or group. She talked about how important it is to be a listener, to observe what is already there. Often, we enter communities revved up to teach and show and convey. But if we took the time to observe and learn, we would see that there are effective ways to adapt, such as breathing techniques and meditation. The point is I did something—I stopped pretending to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning of a longer conversation we had, and for the first time I understood that my personal battle with mental health didn’t have to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning of a longer conversation we had, and for the first time I understood that my personal battle with mental health didn’t have to be a skeleton in my closet. Yet this talk was only the beginning.

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IA: What were some of your hurdles, struggles, and frustrations early on? How did you overcome those — and how have you still had to fight to overcome them?

SW: I knew that in order for me to deepen my practice I needed a community. So I began to reach out to others, and finding that I must extend my practice, I passed out literature and formed discussion groups. And none of this would have worked if I hadn’t been really...
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1A: How do you start a study group in a prison? As I said before, without materials there is no study group, so it is important that we find sources for materials. That is step one. Sometimes you already know what you are looking for. You may want to study specific fiction or non-fiction, so you contact a zine distro or press to request materials relevant to the topic. If you don’t have a particular topic, you can request a catalogue from a distribution list or cliche. It is important to order a catalogue.

It is important to talk to participants or potential participants about what they are interested in. If you feel some other prisoners feel more important, it is important to start with the people are. Even though I feel patriarchy is a problem, this way of thinking is more important, so it is important to present seeds and tend to them while you can. This is one area we need to do lots of work on the inside. We have to create a network of people inside who can create and sustain study groups.

1B: What makes a good abolitionist teacher? SW: Being a notice is important. We have to be good at finding a niche. At Smithfield, I had spent years cultivating relationships and a reputation for sincere concern for others. This made it easier for me when I began groups. People already knew and trusted me. When I came to Fayette, I didn’t have that history. There were people here who knew whom I was talking about. I had to establish trust with them. But I spent time noticing who was doing what. I noticed who was in the dayroom listening. I listened to conversations. And people watched me, so a few prisoners and I told them. We had been talking with other abolitionists. They heard pepped their interests. They also saw what was happening. Nothing speaks as much. They saw me practicing abo.

It was leadership that was grounded in the internal work of abolition. As I said before, prisoners believe nothing they hear and half of what they see.” So people are looking and they are saying: “Believe nothing you hear and half of what you see.” So people are looking and they are saying: “Believe nothing you hear and half of what you see.”

1C: How has COVID-19 impacted your work? SW: COVID-19 affected our ability to meet face to face as much as we would like to. But it didn’t stop us from studying. We issue composition notebooks to everyone. We provide copies of the articles in this magazine and write questions for the participants. Participants can submit their answer by writing in their copybooks and turning them in for feedback. We are able to comment on each other’s work.

It became much more like the inside/outside study groups we have in which we read and discuss materials with outside allies. The point is that study never stopped. Moreover, I found that youth kept coming back. I had to do the morning patrols and still need to grow. The barber told me he explained this to the barber shop, I struck up a conversation with a barber and asked him if he knew Maroon. He didn’t, but the other barber told him and he talked with him. I gave the barber some materials, including Maroon’s “The Dragon vs. The Hydra.” I told him to send my love to Maroon the next time he talked with him. I told him that I couldn’t spend time talking to Maroon about his work. That was enough to explain this to the barber.

The point is that we, organizers and activists, our behavior and strategy varies in response to different forces. By far the worst force is economy. It is in the context of how far we can go in the political economy of our society. Some people want to have their say. Some people want to have their say. Some people want to have their say. Some people want to have their say. Some people want to have their say. Some people want to have their say.
It’s been 500 years, generations of Native Americans have lived under the oppressive conditions here. The conditions here are so dire that people with Measure 11 charges have to utilize the chapel. Everything in there is sacred to Native people. We constantly aren’t allowed to access to medicine bags to all sorts of Native American property, from dream catchers to eagle feathers, to all sorts of religious materials, it’s a big deal, and they make us send them out or confiscate them. If you go into a prison in the Department of Corrections in Oregon, you send religious item boxes, where members and volunteers wrote to over 10,225 out of the 13,000+ people imprisoned in Oregon. In this letter-writing campaign, many prisoners suggested that CR PDX consider organizing a letter-writing campaign against Measure 11.

Evan Coral (EC): What are conditions like right now at Columbia River Correctional Institution (CRCI) and Oregon prisons more broadly?

Stanley Leonard (SL): The conditions here are very horrible. Basically, we are being housed to be killed because we’re getting no medical treatment, and not getting help when it comes to this COVID-19. We’ve had a few people already pass away because of it. We’ve had people taken out to hospitals because of it.

CRCI is set up like a dorm. The beds are less than three feet apart. The closeness of the beds is constantly spreading COVID. Every time someone goes to ask for a test or tries to get medical attention from a guard or a nurse, they tell us no and to put a kite [internal jail request] in. We have to wait anywhere from 4 to 5 days just to get a response from medical.

There was a guy that was in here crying, begging for medical attention. I ended up getting into it with one of the guards because this person was crying for medical attention and he kept being told no by nurses and staff, that he had to put kites in. So, I’m sitting here arguing with them, and they’re like, “What concern is it of yours?” I said that it’s my concern because it’s my health and my safety also. I said the people that are in here who aren’t COVID-positive are going to become positive, and who’s to say they aren’t going to die? It is my concern.

I can use me as an example. I’ve gotten different degrees, different good behavior acknowledgments, and I’ve pursued my education as far as bettering myself during my time inside. I’ve been down for a long time. This is my twenty-seventh year. I’ve done a lot of restorative justice programs, nonviolent communication, business classes, all this type of stuff—and I can’t even get a second look for a governor’s release, or even be considered for release, with 22 months left of a sentence of over 20 years. If I were to catch COVID-19, I’d die. That’s it. I got severe health issues that meet the criteria for early release during COVID-19, but because of Measure 11, they won’t release me.

A lot of people don’t realize that DOC is not a department of corrections, but a department of corrections. If you go to a DOC parking lot, you’ll see the most corruption, period. You get everything from small petty things to the biggest transactions. You know this is a warehouse for them to make money off of prisoners. So, you pay prisoners a dollar-something of an hour or a dollar-something a day and you are making millions of dollars. Oregon Correctional Enterprises (OCE) makes millions of dollars of dollars and they barely pay any of their prisoners a dollar-something an hour.

In Oregon, usually the DOC can go into your sentence and amend it, but in Oregon, they decided they won’t release people with Measure 11 charges, even as this COVID-19 pandemic goes on.

So, I’m sitting here arguing with them, and they’re like, “What concern is it of yours?” I said that it’s my concern because it’s my health and my safety also. I said the people that are in here who aren’t COVID-positive are going to become positive, and who’s to say they aren’t going to die? It is my concern.

In 1994, Measure 11, a “one strike and you’re out” law, was passed. Measure 11 applies mandatory prison minimum sentences to certain person-to-person felonies with no possibility for any reduction in sentence, such as for good behavior. Under Measure 11, youth who are 15 and older who are charged with these felonies are tried as adults. Since its passing, Measure 11 has been responsible for a large percentage in the growth of Oregon prison populations. In fact, prisoners with Measure 11 charges currently make up about 40% of Oregon’s prison population across the state’s 14 prisons, according to the Oregon Justice Resource Center.

In mid-2020, Critical Resistance Portland (CR PDX) launched the “Write Them All” campaign, where members and volunteers wrote to over 10,225 out of the 13,000+ people imprisoned in Oregon. In this letter-writing campaign, many prisoners suggested that CR PDX consider organizing a letter-writing campaign against Measure 11.

Evan Coral (EC): How are prisoners developing solidarity and organizing with each other and organizing inside under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Stanley Leonard (SL): It’s been 500 years, generations of Native people being shot down, ridiculed, and stumped on. When it comes to our people trying to get religious items inside prison, we get riducled, we get attacked all the time. The courts are committed to a certain way that the world works, which is a certain stratification of class and race. And they don’t want to disrupt that because that’s how they perpetuate and reproduce themselves.

SL: Exactly.

EC: I think you make an excellent point about their commitment to imprisonment as well as their commitment to a larger socio-economic structure. They could release people to save millions of dollars. Oregon Correctional Enterprises (OCE) is set up like a dorm. The beds are less than three feet apart. The closeness of the beds is constantly spreading COVID. People are leaning on each other, people understand the power of that pipe; it’s very sacred to Native people. We constantly aren’t allowed to perform ceremonies and are told we have to utilize the chapel. Everything in there is all Christian-based. Everything. So, it offends a lot of Native people. Even the Muslims that go to the chapel are offended because there is nothing related to a Muslim in there.

For example, we got religious item boxes, where we keep our eagle feathers, our medicines—sage, lavender, cedar, copal, medicine bags—all this stuff that is sacred to us. Little pebbles or an animal tooth or a claw. A lot of times, guards will come in and search our stuff and dump them out or break our eagle feathers. There have been numerous cases where this has gone on in the Department of Corrections in Oregon. If we keep pushing and pushing, they’ll make it unbearable. If we get into an argument with them, they throw us in the hole. I’ve known people who have taken their religious box and dumped everything as a offering back to the fire because of it being degraded.

EC: How are prisoners developing solidarity with each other and organizing inside under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic?

SL: There’s more unity, comradery, and more cooperation among us than ever before. I’ve noticed that rather than there has been before because of this pandemic. People are leaning on each other, people are helping each other out and officers aren’t really making much trouble. They are just more concerned. Collette Peters, director of the Oregon Department of Corrections, preaches about the importance of prisoners, but yet any time we do this, we get punished. The staff bunks you in your cell or takes your TV for a year.
sharing canteen or sharing a cup of coffee with somebody. They don’t want us to make progress; they want us to take steps back instead of taking steps forward. The more strength and unity in here, the more they are on edge.

In prisons, there is a huge racial aspect and a large amount of racial tension. There has been none of that since this pandemic. It’s more people helping each other, more empathy, more sympathy, more understanding and compassion. I mean, we’re practicing. A lot of these guys don’t know about restorative justice, but a lot of that work is being practiced. They don’t know that they are actually practicing it, because it starts within ourselves to become more positive, with more understanding of how each other operates, how each other needs. In here, it’s a community, just like it’s communities out there. So, it’s getting communities in here and out there to understand each other and connect as one.

They don’t want us to make progress; they want us to take steps back instead of taking steps forward. The more strength and unity in here, the more they are on edge.

EC: What are some ways we can push that forward?
SL: We as advocates need to become more in tune with what’s going on in the institutions because there are a lot of people who are passing away and a lot of people who are getting sick because of negligence. There are a lot of people who don’t have the voice, who don’t have the strength to stand up for themselves. Because if you stand up to them, they beat you down. But at the same time, they’re not used to people standing up and fighting them because of the wrong they are doing.

It’s important for people to be getting more involved. Being more willing to connect with people in here to listen and understand the strength and the sorrows that are also going on in here. Understanding what we have to endure. Understanding how much we have to go through, like retaliation. More people need to understand that some people are shown favoritism over others through a racist system day-to-day, and because of policies like Measure 1.

“Mass incarceration” has become a misleading, largely useless, and potentially dangerous term—a newly designated keyword, if you will, in the steadily expanding political vocabulary of post-racialism. We must ask ourselves what “mass incarceration” has actually come to mean, for what uses this phrase is being deployed, and whether, in our incessant and perhaps under-examined use of this phrase, some of us are becoming unwitting accomplices to the very regime of US state violence to which we profess to be radically opposed.

Who, exactly, is the “mass” in “mass incarceration”? If it is not the case—really, not even remotely, astronomically the case—that Euro-descended people and those racially marked as “white” are being criminalized, policed, and incarcerated en masse, that is, if the common-sense usage of “mass incarceration” already presumes casual and official white innocence and de-criminalization, then isn’t this phrase closer to being a clumsy, liberal, racist euphemism for mass Black incarceration—and, in many geographies, mass Brown incarceration?

There is an emerging liberal-to-progressive commonsense about US policing, criminalization, and human capture that uses the language of “mass incarceration” within a sometimes stemingly and superficially simple, justice-seeking, self-satisfied and self-satisfied suffering, and racial disparity. Norms of fundamental unfairness, systemic racial bias, and institutional dysfunction form the basis for numerous conversations advocating for the modest, largely through the internal auditing, aggressive legal and policy reform agenda rests on two widely shared premises: 1) That the current structure of US incarceration is bloated beyond reasonable, justifiable, and comprehensible statistical measure clearly demonstrates the problem.

Put another way, there is no “mass incarceration”. The persistent use of this term is more than a semantic error; it is a political and conceptual sleight-of-hand with grave consequences. If language guides thought, action, and social vision, then there is an urgent need to dispose of this useless and potentially dangerous phrase and speak truth through a more descriptive, thoughtful activist vocabulary.

The twenty-year history of the entrance of “mass incarceration” into the popular vocabulary illustrates the lurching dilemma at hand. While its etymological origins can be traced further back in time, the contemporary use of the phrase emerged in the mid-1990s, owing in significant part to the work of the National Criminal Justice Commission (NCJC) between 1994 and 1996. The NCJC generated a comprehensive analysis of what it then deemed “the largest and most frenetic correctional buildup of any country in the history of the world” and summarized its findings in the widely cited text The Real War on Crime, published by the mega-trade press HarperCollins. The terms “mass incarceration”, “mass imprisonment”, and similar ones persisted through the 1990s and early 2000s, surfacing in academic, activist, and public policy rhetoric as well as in influential texts like Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind’s 2002 anthology Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment and, of course, Michelle Alexander’s widely read, deeply flawed 2010 book The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.

Since the publication of Alexander’s text, “mass incarceration” has not only entered the post-racial lexicon as a euphemism for racist criminalization and targeted, asymmetrical imprisonment, it has also been absorbed into the operative language of the US government and its highest-profile representatives. Let us briefly consider three prominent examples of this creeping co-optation, spanning ten months in 2014-2015.

US Attorney General Eric Holder’s keynote address on “over-incarceration” at NYU Law School in September 2014 was one of the early indications of a reformist shift in the US state’s internal deliberations on national criminal legal policy. Crucially, Holder’s speech occurs just one month after the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, amid an unfolding national revolt against anti-Black racist police violence. Against this burgeoning climate of anti-racist protest, Holder pandered to law enforcement in the same breath that he decries the “rise in incarceration and the escalating costs it has imposed on our country”.

We can all be proud of the progress that’s been made at reducing the crime rate over the past two decades – thanks to the tireless work of prosecutors and the bravery of law enforcement officials across America.

Soon after Holder’s resignation from the Attorney General post, freshly declared presidential candidate Hillary Clinton calls for a new era of
Dylan Rodríguez is a Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Riverside. He is currently supporting UC students in the United States. He echo chamber of the NAACP crowd. Obama's subsequent historical mischaracterization of policing under US apartheid is peculiar at best: Historically, in fact, the African American community oftentimes was under-policed rather than over-policed. One very obvious interest in containing the African American community so it couldn't leave segregated areas, but within those areas there wasn't enough police presence. Herein lies the punchline of the multicultur- alist state's co-optation of the "mass incarceration" rhetoric and its conjoined reform agenda. As Obama et al. sing alongside the liberal-progres- sive chorus demanding an end to "Mass Incarceration," they simultaneously advocate for a redistribution of state resources away from imprisonment and toward policing. For Obama, the sad echoes of racial injustice system and mounting popular revolt against the default prestige of the badge-and-gun "is hiring more police officers. This is a strengthening and re-legitimation of police power, in turn, implicitly promises to kill and, in a sense, "free" them. Obama declar- ing, "there is nothing lurking beneath this still-heap of the "progressive" Philadelphia Attorney General Larry Krasner with Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro were dashed by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) in their efforts to free the "progressive" Philadelphia Attorney General Josh Shapiro were dashed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in December. On December 16, supporters of longtime political prisoner Aramis Ayala won an inc- cremental victory against the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) in their efforts to free the freedom fighter. Efforts to replace the philosophical crosshairs on those fitting the profile of the "real criminals" as it should be. Mass incarceration makes our community so it couldn't leave segregated areas, but within those areas there wasn't enough police presence. There is something lurking beneath this still-emerging liberal-progressive narrative that invites us to consider how this rhetoric is becoming more aesthetic, institutional, and militarized regime of US law-and-order policing. The historical rhythm of US nation-building and intensify even as the thing being called "mass incarceration" is subjected to reformist racism and anti-Black policing strategies such as those seen in places like Ferguson, MO, and Baltimore, MD. Yet at the very same time, in response to this climate of protest and uprising, the statecraft of criminal legal reform is premised on a strengthening and re-legitimation of policing and imprisonment. As the phrase "mass incarceration" is absorbed into the operative lan- guage of the state, does it not become necessary to consider the meaning of an "accomplice to the racist state as an ef- fective language of opposition to it?"

Author Bio: Dylan Rodríguez is a Professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at UC Riverside. He is a co-founding member Critical Resistance and continues to lead abolishitionist theory, analysis, and critique in the University of California system. He is currently supporting UC students organizing to get cops off of UC campuses.

**Russell Maroon Shoats** has contracted COVID-19 inside of a Pennsylvania prison. Mar- noon is also battling stage 4 colon cancer and is therefore at a high risk of developing severe infections. Over 1000 prisoners in Penn- sylvania system. He is currently supporting UC students organizing to get cops off of UC campuses.

**Lore Elisabeth**, imprisoned in Federal De- fensive Center in Pueblo, Colorado, tested positive for COVID-19 in a prison cell — one out of every five incarcerated peo- ple in the United States.

**San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin, 35, of Weather Underground political radical and activist, one of 39 years, David Gilbert, is seeking clemency for his father from NY governor David Paterson.**

**Andrew Cuomo. Gilbert is 76 years old. He is serving a 75 years to life sentence for felony murder in a robbery that never happened.**

**Ambrose T. Page III, 88, a leader in the "Black Power" movement and mentor to the late Malcolm X, died in Columbus, Ohio, on March 27.**

**Mark Charles, a geologist and writer, has been critical of the Black Lives Matter movement.**

**Andrew Cuomo. Gilbert is 76 years old. He is serving a 75 years to life sentence for felony murder in a robbery that never happened.**

**In my duty to fight for our Freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We must love our friends and our neighbors, and all living things.**

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**continued on next page**
manner and robbery, and he is not eligible for parole until 2056, when he would be 112 years old. Gilbert is confined at Shawangunk Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison in Ulster County, 80 miles south of Albany, NY. He is one of the oldest and longest serving prisoners among the state’s roughly 38,000 prisoners. As of November 20, there were 101 reported positive cases of COVID-19 out of 353 tests among inmates at Shawangunk, including 1 death.

• Abdulrahman Odeh has been released! We celebrate the freedom of this Palestinian American political prisoner, a member of the Holy Land Fund 5 (HLFS), as he returns home after 15 years behind bars. Odeh’s sentence was the shortest of the HLFS, members of a Muslim charity group designated a “terrorist organization” in 2004. Free the rest of the HLFS and free them all!

• Welcome home, Jeremy Hammond! The hacker prisoner was released from prison to a halfway house on November 17. Hammond was convicted in 2012 for allegedly disclosing information about a private security firm, and also spent time imprisoned as a grand jury resistor in investigations surrounding Wikileaks. To learn more about Jeremy’s story, read his piece “A Prisoner’s Experience Behind Bars During Covid-19,” and to offer support, visit freejeremy.net. Free them all!

• 84-year-old Sundiata Acoli has been denied parole. This is functionally a death sentence for the Black liberation fighter, who will not be seen by the 3-person parole board for another 10 or more years. Acoli was arrested in collaboration with Assata Shakur and has been imprisoned ever since. Free Sundiata!

• Leonard Peltier update: Nashville attorney Kevin Sharp is pushing a new clemency effort for this member of the American Indian Movement, who has been imprisoned for 40 years. These efforts follow the denial of Peltier’s application for clemency by both Obama and Trump.

• Ed Poindexter’s supporters are calling for the compassionate release of the 75-year-old political prisoner serving a life sentence in Nebraska. Poindexter, who suffers from diabetes and other health problems, is seeking compassionate release on the grounds that his age and health would put him at a high risk of death should he contract COVID-19. He is on a waiting list for commutation.

• Take Action Now! Write, email, and call the Nebraska Board of Pardons to request that they commute Ed’s sentence.

• WRITE

Nebraska Board of Pardons
PO. Box 95007
Lincoln, NE 68509

EMAIL: ne.pardonsboard@nebraska.gov

CALL: Governor Pete Ricketts: 402-471-2244
Secretary of State Robert B. Evnen: 402-471-2554

ATTorney General Doug Peterson: 402-471-2683

CRITICAL RESISTANCE (CR) Updates and Movement Highlights

How do we sharpen our efforts toward prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition without knowing our advances? This column is meant to keep our movement partners and readers updated on abolitionist campaign progress between issues of The Abolitionist. Here you will find what CR has been doing and the movement news that caught our attention.

NATIONAL AND CHAPTER UPDATES ON CR'S WORK

Critical Resistance Portland (CR PDX):

#WriteThemAll

CR PDX created a robust prisoner correspondence program during 2020. Having launched the #WriteThemAll Campaign back in 2020, inspired by the Mississippi Freedom Letters Campaign, CR PDX aims to send a letter to every person imprisoned in Oregon state prisons. The number of prisoners in Oregon’s state institutions fluctuates around 14,000. As of January 2021, the chapter has sent out over 10,225 letters offering solidarity and connecting prisoners to other organizations and resources. We are in the process of building a road map on how to build this up to 1 letter per day in collaboration with other PIC abolitionist organizations across the country.

Stimulus Checks

After leading dozens of volunteers to help CR mail stimulus check forms to our entire list of imprisoned readers plus everyone from the push to demands of CA Governor Newsom release prisoners to stop COVID-19 deaths, Action organized by Critical Resistance Oakland, No Justice Under Capitalism and Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CUNITY) - Continued on next page

Welcome home, Jay Chase! The NATO 3 political prisoner was released on November 6 after serving over 9 years in prison. He is now back in Chicago and supporters are trying to get him the medical care and insurance he needs. For now, there is a need to bridge the gap on expenses until insurance kicks in. Contributions to this effort can be made at gotfundme.com/ijay-chase-of-the-nato3-is-free.

• Urgent medical alert for former Black Panther Kamau Sadiki (formerly known as Freddie Hilton), who is at risk of having his foot amputated. Sadiki has spent more than four decades fighting for Black people. At seventeen, he joined the NYC Black Panther Party. He has been imprisoned since 2002 for refusing to aid in the capture of: Assata Shakur. Learn more about his story at freekamau.com

• Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (KB7): Charges of trespassing and destruction of property were handed down in December for the seven Catho-
lic Worker peace activists, ranging between 58 to 81 years of age, who broke into the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base and carried out a symbolic act of protest against nuclear weap-
ons in 2019. During a pandemic that is week-
ing havoc on all prisoners and disproportionately harming older people, six of them have been sentenced to up to 33 months in prison. The seventh member of the KB7 is scheduled to be sentenced in February.

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In what need, community members contact the Zachary Project to request funds. Each year around Zachary’s birthday in January, we update him daily on the reach and impact of Zachary’s memory and dedication to anti-capitalist collective care. We know Zachary kept close relationshipships with many readers of The Abolitionist, if you would like to receive updates on the Zach-

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Throughout the pandemic, CR has also raised funds for the Zachary Project, a mutual aid resource for Bay Area community members facing particular hardship during the pandemic. The money solicited is to be distributed in honor of our beloved late comrade, CR Oakland member and The Abolitionist author Zachary Ontiveros

Continued on next page

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Welcome home, Jay Chase! The NATO 3 political prisoner was released on November 6 after serving over 9 years in prison. He is now back in Chicago and supporters are trying to get him the medical care and insurance he needs. For now, there is a need to bridge the gap on expenses until insurance kicks in. Contributions to this effort can be made at gotfundme.com/ijay-chase-of-the-nato3-is-free.

• Urgent medical alert for former Black Panther Kamau Sadiki (formerly known as Freddie Hilton), who is at risk of having his foot amputated. Sadiki has spent more than four decades fighting for Black people. At seventeen, he joined the NYC Black Panther Party. He has been imprisoned since 2002 for refusing to aid in the capture of: Assata Shakur. Learn more about his story at freekamau.com

• Kings Bay Plowshares 7 (KB7): Charges of trespassing and destruction of property were handed down in December for the seven Catho-
lic Worker peace activists, ranging between 58 to 81 years of age, who broke into the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base and carried out a symbolic act of protest against nuclear weap-
ons in 2019. During a pandemic that is week-
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Continued on next page
VID-19 outbreak at the Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF).

By the start of February, at least 195 prisoners were killed by COVID-19, Governor Newsom and the CA Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) announced. The state has faced criticism for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic within prisons, with reports of overcrowding, inadequate medical care, and insufficient protective measures. The CDCR has implemented various strategies to mitigate the spread of the virus, including quarantines and isolation protocols, but the situation remains dire for many incarcerated individuals.

Critical Resistance La (CR LA): Critical Resistance LA is busy pushing for abolition across Los Angeles. We are working in coalition with others to take on policing, surveillance, and incarceration. We must build people power. While CRLA is reconfiguring our volunteers, we are excited to start hosting public-facing events in the near future.

Critical Resistance New York (CR NYC): Hunger Strike against ICE

On November 13, ten immigrant prisoners under ICE custody at the Bergen County Jail in New Jersey started a hunger strike to demand their immediate release and protest against the unlivable conditions inside and the systematic medical neglect taking place. Prisoners with health conditions organized to demand their rights to get their health records, which are required in order to be able to qualify for release under the Frailty Act claim legislation. Since the start of the strike, three people have been released. Members of CR along with groups under the umbrella of Abolish ICE New Jersey & New York supported the strikes in different forms, holding rallies outside of the jail along with the strikers’ families and friends.

CR National: Critical Resistance national staff wrapped up a two-year strategic planning process for the organization and is currently rolling out a new strategic plan to our members. The plan is designed to push the organization to develop several new strategic campaigns against the FIC, to tighten in existing programs, projects, and commitments; and to strengthen leadership development and political unity within our staff and membership.

Mutual Aid for Prisoners to Resist COVID-19

The AbolitionistEditorial Collective, with the leadership and vision from our comrades and columnist Stevie Wilson, raised $3400 to distribute PPE supplies to prisoners to protect themselves against the virus. CR held the fundraising campaign to continue to protect prisoners and others as the state refuses to do so.

The Abolitionist Newspaper Launch Events Return!

After revamping The Abolitionist newspaper in 2020, the editorial collective brought back launch events to celebrate the release of a new issue, generate more public engagement with the project, and increase paid subscriptions from non-imprisoned supporters in order to sponsor and sustain from our subscriptions for more prisoners. Over 400 people registered for December’s issue 33 launch event, helping us surpass our subscription goal of 200 new paid subscribers (we sold about 225 copies of the paid subscribers event feature Issue 33 authors Sarah Hamid, Linda Evans, Katie Tastrom and Yunuen Torres, and was moderated by former CR member and Abby columnist Liz Senior. Street Wisdom joined us by recording a short statement before the event and CR staff and members read aloud some of the prisoner submissions from the Kites to the Editor. We were able to provide live Spanish translation and ASL interpretation of the event, as well as closed captioning. Write in your editorial collective at the address below if you are interested in reading a transcript of the event and if you would like to support a launch event for a future issue.

The Abolitionist

Ann: Launch Events
1904 Franklin St, Suite 504
Oakland, CA 94612

MOVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

WEST COAST

Calls for solidarity with prisoners to stop outbreaks in CA

CCWF is calling for solidarity with prisoners in order to stop the continued surges of COVID-19 in jails and prisons, especially the outbreak at CCWF. Decarcerate Alameda County also has made urgent solidarity calls due to huge spikes and complex issues in Santa Rita Jail outbreaks. No Justice Under Capitalism is demanding the California governor grant mass release to stop outbreak. Critical Resistance New York (CRNY) is calling on CDCR to stop transfers of prisoners, which has caused COVID-19 outbreaks inside.

LA Police Commission defies community call for a ban on facial recognition

Even with this loss, The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition continues their fight against the surveillance technology LAPD uses and invests in, especially facial recognition tech. 931 emails were sent in opposition to the use of such tech and called for an all-out ban, while only 12 were sent in support of LAPD.

#FreeThemAllIWVA is a collective of people across Washington state demanding the abolition of all imprisonment and policing. Their demands of the WA State are:
1. Decarcerate: Reduce the prison population in Washington State
2. Defund the Department of Corrections
3. IN-vest in Community Care NOT CAGES
4. Reject home/electronic surveillance: Support community re-entry

THE SOUTH

#30DayEconomicBlackout

The Free Alabama Movement (FAM), founded and operated by Black communities, sought to expose the Alabama Department of Corrections, and organize a statewide prison strike. striker and boycott a list of companies that exploit prisoners. The companies are Union Supply Co, JPay, Access Corrections, Securus Technologies and Alabama Correctional Industries. FAM has also called for the founding of a National Freedom Movement, pulling together organizers inside and outside of prisons in multiple states. Read more about the Alabama Movement in our “Featured Movement Highlight” on 20.

The People’s First 100 Days

Southern Movement Assembly, a movement of over 100 local organizations across the South, have launched a campaign from January 1 through April 10 to grow southern movement power. In their call to organize SAMA said, “No matter who is in the White House, social movements cannot wait for the government to respond to the crisis we face. We believe the people should set the tone, define the issues, and create our own priorities.”

Abolitionist Scholar and Organizer fired from University of Mississippi

Garrett Felber was suddenly fired from the university in retaliation for his scholarship and contributions to dismantling the carceral state. Hundreds of CR alumni, former students, and organizers have pledged to boycott the university until Felber is reinstated. Growing suppression in academia to abolition is apparent.

MIDWEST

Keystone XL Pipeline cancelled

After years of grassroots organizing and resistance, the Biden Administration was pushed to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline, a huge win for Indigenous and environmental activists.

St. Louis City Jail Revolt

Over 100 prisoners in St. Louis City Jail in Missouri revolted in early February due to growing concerns around COVID-19 in the jail, as over 600 prisoners tested positive and only restrictions—not care—have increased. Half of the protesters were moved to solitary confinement and the other half have been transferred.

EAST COAST

People’s Campaign for Parele Justice

A coalition of 16 grassroots organizations supported by 250 groups across New York state launched a People’s Campaign for Parole Justice, with primary goals of the campaign being decarceration and family reunification. The coalition’s three demands are elder parole, fair and timely parole, and fair & fully staffed parole board.

Produce market strike in the Bronx ends in victory

After a week-long strike, union members gained a new contract guaranteeing them higher wages over the next three years and a 40 cent per hour contribution to employee healthcare.

INTERNATIONAL

The Waikeria Uprising

In New Zealand, 16 prisoners at the notorious Waikeria prison held a 6-day uprising. A manifesto provided to People Against Prison Aotearoa reads in part, “We are not rioting. We are protesting. We are calling for accountability toward corrections officers – none whatsoever – yet they show up here in force armed with guns and dogs to intimidate us. We’re the ones that are making a stand on their matter for our future people. Showing intimidation to us will only fuel the fire of future violence. We will not tolerate being intimidated any more... We are Tonga Whakawhā, we are Māori people forced into a European system. Prisons do not work!”

Israel used medical apartheid practices in COVID-19 vaccine roll-out

As much of the Western world praises Israel’s vaccination rate, Palestinian organizations and allies point out the hypocrisy of such applause. Israel has excluded the 5 million Palestinians it occupies, even as it vaccinates Jewish settlers who illegally live on occupied Palestinian land.

Stop the War in Yemen

On January 24, a global day of action was held to highlight the ongoing war in Yemen. Anti-war activists in Ontario, Canada, held a non-violent civil disobedience protest blocking trucks carrying armored vehicles bound for Saudi Arabia. In multiple cities throughout the US, anti-war activists called on the Biden Administration to end US involvement in the war.♦
WHAT IS THE NATIONAL FREEDOM MOVEMENT?

The National Freedom Movement (NFM) is an inside-based, inside-led direct-action formation of imprisoned people in men’s and women’s prisons who are organizing to create meaningful change in the US prison system. NFM’s leadership is composed exclusively of organizations, organizers, activists and advocates who are fighting from inside US prisons. NFM is open to creating partnerships and alliances with outside-based advocates, activists, and organizations who share the NFM’s collective goals and aspirations. Currently, the NFM has representation in at least 10 states, and is striving to create one direct action coalition throughout all 50 states.

WHAT IS NFM’S ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE?

NFM’s primary purpose is to unify the 2.5 million imprisoned people throughout the US so that we can be direct participants in the ongoing fight for human rights, freedom and justice, and change in the US’s prison system. NFM will launch simultaneous direct-action campaigns that will challenge this corrupt, inhumane, punitive, and brutally abusive system at its core.

WHAT IS THE NFM’S MAIN GOAL?

The NFM’s overriding goal is to create a path to freedom for all 2.5 million people imprisoned. Our national liberation will not come about without active participation from the inside, and our issues and human rights violations will not be heard without us having a seat at the table.

NFM’S "ONE MILLION FAMILIES FOR PAROLE" DAY OF ACTION

On Saturday, April 3, 2021, the National Freedom Movement, in conjunction with other organizations, activists, and advocates from around the US, will join the call to action for the “One Million Families for Parole” rally at parole boards, department of corrections headquarters, and state capitols across the country.

The parole system of the US is broken, failing to respond to the humanitarian crisis taking place in prisons across the country, leaving countless lives in danger. In the midst of a global pandemic and a humanitarian crisis throughout US jails, prisons, and other places of imprisonment, parole boards have exacerbated the crisis by denying parole due to bad parole laws and for political and financial reasons.

To bring our loved ones home, and for real change to occur, we must unite across the nation and demand changes to this ineffective parole system. Federal parole must be reinstated, a mandatory parole criteria must be implemented nationwide, and demand clemency for prisoners who are serving 20 years or more, including those with long sentences for “corrections,” an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic has to be immediately instituted to save lives, and, among other demands, a 3-year limit on parole supervision must be implemented so that people who have successfully integrated back into society can get their lives back.

Participating states thus far include Alabama, Mississippi, Indiana, New York, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio, and California.

Anyone interested in participating in this event or assisting in the planning and organizing should contact us immediately at: info@nationalfreedovement@gmail.com.

ATTENTION PRISONERS!

Are you in a prison, jail, or detention center?

Free subscriptions help us send the paper to thousands of prisoners for free.

ARE YOU LOCKED UP?

Sign up for a free subscription!

Name: _______________________________ 
Prisoner Number: _______________________
Mailing Address: _________________________________
*Return your slip to:
Critical Resistance
Attn: Abby subscription
PO Box 904
Oakland, CA 94612

ARE YOU NOT LOCKED UP, BUT WANT TO SUPPORT?

Sign up for a paid subscription!

USR: $10 for 3 issues / year, supports 2 readers (you + one prisoner) 
USR: $15-$50 for 3 issues / year, support multiple readers (you + 2-9 prisoners)

Paid Subscription Options:

Credit card type: ___________ 
Card Number: ___________ 
Expiration Date: ___________ 
CSV: ___________ 
Billing Address: _________________________________ 
Mailing Address (if different): _________________________________
Email: _________________________________

why

The U.S. and Israel have closely cooperated in the development of their prison systems over the course of the last sixty years. Together, they have instigated many similar methods of carceral control, including interrogation, solitary confinement, child imprisonment, family separation, sexual violations and surveillance techniques.

Art Against Imprisonment will shine a light on the multiple forms of creativity that people trapped in Israel and U.S. prisons use to break through isolation and invisibility. This exhibit is a small testament to your imagination and artistry. We hope it will inspire understanding and solidarity between our movements against imprisonment and for the freedom of all held captive inside prisons.

Art Against Imprisonment is an international collective of prisoners, organizers, and advocates who are fighting against an oppressive, inhumane, and abusive system of human control.

Art Against Imprisonment is pleased to present "FROM PALESTINE TO THE U.S.: Unicode for Liberation," a new exhibit of art created by prisoners in Israel’s detention centers and the US’s jails and prisons.

The exhibition features work by prisoners from 12 countries, including Palestine, Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, China, Turkey, Guatemala, Yemen, and Iraq. The artists use a variety of techniques to create works of art that challenge the oppressive and abusive systems in which they are held.

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Why The Request

If you have or can create art (visual or written) that reflects your experiences, your resistance and/or your solidarity with Palestinian prisoners, we would be honored to feature your work.

Submissions accepted on a rolling basis.

Send submissions to: Freedom Archives, 522 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Contact us at: info@freedomarchives.org

hosted by:

Addameer (Palestinian Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association based in Ramallah, Palestine)
Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)
California Coalition of Women Prisoners (CCWP)
Freedom Archives
Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM)
US Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
CALL FOR CONTENT
Help shape the content of The Abolitionist
Make your voice heard in our paper!
Submit content by writing a piece for either our Features section or one of our columns!

The features section in Issue 35, to be released in July 2021, will focus on “Liberation in the Mind and Body.” Issue 36’s Features will focus on “Paths Toward Freedom,” or strategies for getting people out of cages which will be released by December 2021.

Send us an essay, article, research, a poem, a story, a play, a comic, art, personal reflection, or questions on these topics for our upcoming Features sections!

- **Issue 35 Submission Deadline:** Friday, April 30, 2021
- **Issue 36 Submission Deadline:** Friday, August 27, 2021

There are many ways for you to shape the content of the paper, either by submitting a piece to our Features section or supporting one of our columns. Check out all of the ways you can write a piece for our next issues!

1. **Write a piece for Features**
   - Pieces can be in each of these different forms of writing—from the theoretical, to the reflective, and action-oriented—but they will all have a common focus, theme, or topic of consideration. You could submit:
     - A theoretical piece on either defunding policing or “paths toward freedom.”
     - A reflective piece or sample of cultural expression on defunding policing or “paths toward freedom.”
     - A piece about an example of organizing (past or present) or a resource related to defunding policing or “paths toward freedom.”

2. **Writing Suggestion:** Share your thoughts with us on the guiding questions from Ejeris Dixon’s reprint on page 5, make connections to either focus on defunding the police or “paths toward freedom,” and we could then include your piece in our upcoming features.

2. **Send a Kite to the Editors**
   - Want to share your thoughts on issue 34, and have your thoughts printed in the next issue of the paper or posted on our website? Kites to the Editors are direct responses to content (articles and art) from previous issues of The Abolitionist. These are meant to be short notes (fewer than 500 words) from our readers expressing their opinions, reactions, disagreements, or thoughts on content in the paper. See page 12 for examples of Kites to the Editors in Issue 34.

3. **Kites Suggestion:** Turn back to Ejeris Dixon’s suggested guiding questions on page 5 of this issue and write us your response as a “Kite to the Editors.”

More approaches to writing Kites to the Editors:
- Elaborate on something that you agreed with in an article and explain why you agreed with it.
- Elaborate on something that you disagreed with in an article and explain why you disagreed with it.
- Relate an article to other things you have read, watched, heard, or experienced.
- Write a note to the editors sharing questions that you have about the pieces you read and needed in this political moment and which you would like Critical Resistance to answer.

Send submissions to the Kites to the Editors:

The Abolitionist
Att: Kites to the Editors
1904 Franklin St., Suite 504
Oakland, CA 94612

3. Request to be an author of an Inside-Outside Fishing Line
   - For the Inside-Outside Fishing Line, we partner an imprisoned author with an outside organizer to exchange ideas on a political topic or question relevant to building an international movement to abolish the PIC. The conversation or “fishing line” can be exchanged through written or phone correspondence. We will then either print your correspondence or edit it to make a collaborative piece between the two authors. Check out page 15 for an example Inside-Outside Fishing Line.
   - If you’re interested in being an author inside for this column, write to us to pitch:
     1. what your fishing line exchange would be about
     2. and whether you have an organizer outside of prison as someone with whom you’d like to exchange ideas.
   - Please make sure to name a specific topic you’d like to discuss with another author or a set of guiding questions you think the conversation will cover.

Send submissions to the Fishing Line column to:

The Abolitionist Newspaper
Att: Fishing Line
1904 Franklin St.
Oakland, CA 94612

4. **Contribute a report or an update on organizing inside for our Movement Highlights column**
   - Do you have any updates on resistance inside that you think our readers should know about? Submit an organizing update dated to Movement Highlights.

   In this section, we have short reports on current actions that are working toward the abolition of the PIC. Submissions to Movement Highlights may include campaign, protests, work strikes, direct actions, civil disobedience, hunger strikes, lawsuits, emerging demands, community bail funds, mutual aid, or other actions.

   In general, we will not consider actions that are related to individual cases as we instead prioritize collective action. See page # for examples of Movement Highlights.

5. Write a poem or song lyrics. It can relate to the features or any other topic of your choice!

6. **Make visual art** to complement the Features section or one of our columns.

7. **Create a political cartoon** for our Features focus (Defund Policing for Issue 35 or Paths Toward Freedom for Issue 36) or let us work with us to become a regular political cartoonist for the paper!

8. **Reflect on how use the Abby in your study and that reflection for our 9771 column** or submit questions on study that you want Stevie to address in future columns.

Due to the high volume of mail we receive regularly, we cannot guarantee that all submissions will be printed in an issue, or that we can respond to all submissions. However, we are committed to reviewing all submissions and considering them for potential publication. Please make sure you read our Submission Guidelines before working on a submission to ensure your piece aligns with how we decide what to print.

If you’re not sure how to address your submission to best fit within the paper, write your submission to our Oakland office and our Project Coordinator will make sure the editorial team gets back to you.

Send your submission to:

The Abolitionist
1904 Franklin St., Suite 504
Oakland, CA 94612

What is The Abolitionist’s revised structure?

Starting with our previous issue #33, The Abolitionist newspaper has a new structure. Instead of themes for centerpieces, we will feature an examination of pieces that mirror different aspects of prax- is—the cyclical process of change through theory, action, and reflection. This year’s issues include:

- Issue 34, Features focused on neoliberalism and fascism, and included a theoretical or analytical piece (pg. 1), a reflective piece (pg. 2), and a few examples of organizing or grassroots resources related to understanding or resisting neoliberalism and/or fascism (pgs. 6-11). The columns do not all center neoliberalism and fascism.

The Abolitionist Editorial Collective remains committed to every issue being bilingual in English and Spanish.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
Send us your writing and artwork!
We accept articles, letters, creative writing, poetry, interviews, and artwork (in English and Spanish).

Ideas for Articles and Artwork
- Examples of current prisoner organizing
- Practical steps toward prison industrial complex abolition
- Ways to help yourself and others physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually heal as you take the path toward freedom.
- Updates on what’s happening at the prison you’re in (for example: working conditions, health concerns, lockdowns)
- Legal strategies and important cases that impact prisoners
- Alternatives to policing, punishment, imprisonment, and surveillance
- Experiences of life after imprisonment (or before!)
- Creative or reflective writing with an abo- litionist message
- Freedom dreams and imaginative pieces with radical vision
- Your opinion about a piece published in a recent issue
- Reflections on how you’ve used the paper (in your conversations, work, study groups, etc.)
- Empowering, liberatory artwork that shows resistance and community power (and that will print well!)

Length
- Articles should not be more than 1500 words (about five handwritten pages)
- Letters should not be more than 250 words

How to Submit
- If you want your name and address printed with your article, please include it as you would like it printed. If you do not wish to have your name or address included, please let us know that when you submit your piece.
- If possible, send a copy of your submission, not the original.

Writing Suggestions
- Even if writing is difficult for you, your ideas are worth the struggle. Try reading your piece out loud to yourself or sharing it with someone else. Doing this might help you clarify the ideas in your submission.

Note on Editing:
The Editorial Collective edits for both content and grammar. The collective will do some editing of your submission and will send you a copy of the piece before printing it. Given that institutional mail can be slow and purposefully delayed at times (or even disappeared) please make note in your submission of phrases or sections you would like the editorial collective to print as if is that the case.

WINTER 2021
THE ABOLITIONIST
21
"Black Panther Party’s United Front Against Fascism”

"El Frente Unido del Partido Pantera Negra contra el Fascismo”

A PHOTO ESSAY WITH THE FREEDOM ARCHIVES

Front page of the May 1969 issue of the Black Panther Party newspaper, titled “Fascism in America.”

Portada del número de mayo de 1969 del periódico del Partido Pantera Negra, titulado “Fascismo en estados unidos”.

Original call from the BBP for their “Revolutionary conference for a United Front Against Fascism, held in Oakland, CA, in 1969.” Part of the text reads, “Fascism, the power of finance capital itself ... The freedom of all political prisoners and political freedom for all proletarian-type organizations, the freedom and political work of all students, farmer peasants, workers, and the lumpen must be developed into a national force: a front which has a common revolutionary ideology and political program which answers the basic desires and needs of all people in fascist, capitalistic, racist america.”

Llamado original del PPN para su “Conferencia revolucionaria por un Frente Unido contra el Fascismo, celebrada en Oakland, CA, en 1969.” Parte del texto dice: “El fascismo, el poder del capital financiero mismo... La libertad de todos los presos políticos y la libertad política de todas las organizaciones de tipo proletario, la libertad y el trabajo político de todos los estudiantes, campesinos, obreros y el lumpen deben convertirse en una fuerza nacional: un frente con una ideología revolucionaria y un programa político comunes que respondan a los deseos y necesidades básicas de todos en estos estados unidos fascistas, capitalistas y racistas”.

Flyer for the UPAF conference.

Volante de la conferencia del Frente Unido contra el Fascismo.
"Fascism Is," by Southern California BPP chapter member Masai, appeared in the July 1969 issue of the national paper.

"The fascist regime said thousands of students were destroying the campus when tear gas was sprayed over the UC. This picture shows the fascist power structure to be a damn lie."