Letter from the Editors

Beloved Readers of The Abolitionist,

We welcome you to issue 39, printed in June 2023, featuring articles focused on reproductive justice and prison industrial complex (PIC). The overturning of Roe v Wade has sparked a new wave of injustices and violations of reproductive rights. Women, Black Trans women, and other marginalized communities are seeing a dire need for access to abortions, and we at Critical Resistance (CR) hold reproductive justice as a cornerstone of our work. We are committed to fighting against the criminalization of abortion and other reproductive rights, recognizing the interconnectedness of reproductive rights and the PIC. As part of our commitment to self-determination and collective liberation, we offer this issue of The Abolitionist to do just that.

Issue 39 situates the most recent attacks on reproductive rights within a wider web of social control and gender oppression orchestrated by the PIC. ForInstance, some of the state legislation that criminalizes abortion and other reproductive rights and gender-based health decisions also deputize civilians to enforce these laws and police campus communities, and women in menarcheal-cycle and birth-control tracking digital applications can be used in court against people seeking abortions. Each article of Issue 39 features section then, examine, the reality that is not only used to strip away body autonomy and control reproductive labor, but also how we can use PIC abolition as a lens and strategy to disrupt some of the biopolitical conditions that reinforce the PIC emerging within reproductive justice struggles in this current moment.

While the right for pregnant people to exercise self-determination over their pregnancies has been eroding throughout this generation, most recent decision overturning Roe v Wade and the subsequent tidal wave of local and state initiatives to criminalize abortion are occurring. It is no coincidence that the PIC’s dragnet is widening at the same time of economic crisis and intensified climate collapse, and amidst a confluence of racial and gender control and rise of fascism in the US. The overturning of Roe and the cascade of abortion bans are not random or new treatments to a racial and capitalist system that is part of a concerted effort to re-establish and maintain right-wing power. These restrictions historically and presently are used to target Black, Indigenous, and migrant, disabled, queer, gender-non-conforming and transgender lives and bodies most especially.

Body autonomy, gender affirmation, and reproductive rights are all cornerstones of PIC abolition and feminist politic. Whether talking about labor struggles (issue #38), reproductive justice (issue #39), or control units (issue #40, printing December 2023), maintaining PIC abolition’s feminist foundations allows us to see through the devastation and fear of our current conditions that is our collective duty to fight for and protect the people most vulnerable to premature death in our communities, and that another world is possible if we unite and fight together.

We hope this issue of The Abolitionist ignites your freedom fights and challenges us to check out our submission guidelines on the Call for Content on page 24 and then write to us. Also, consider the call for art celebrating 25 years of Critical Resistance’s Women’s Day of Action Prisoner Solidarity postcard mailing on page 20, or submitting feedback on The Abolitionist newspaper on page 21 so we can work to improve the project our readers submitted Working Us surveys after reading the previous issue 38 on labor struggles, thank you! All surveys are being processed and shared with Stevie and her Work Us research team as they come in.

Yours in struggle, with radical love-

Critical Resistance & The Abolitionist Editorial Collective

Our Bodies, Our Right!

“Your Body, Your Right!” by Meredith Stern, Susunarth Artists’ Cooperative.

THE ABOLITIONIST

SPRING-SUMMER 2023 • ISSUE 39

Critical Resistance (CR) seeks to build an international movement to end the prison industrial complex (PIC) by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it represent communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.

CONTRIBUTORS

Adonis Rose
Amanda Irey
Ash Williams
Azadeh Zohrabi
Debora Vera & Mapuche political prisoners
Devin Mergenthaler
Diana Block
Erla Miles Cloud
Lisand Infante
María Thomas
Maximiliano Calabotta
Moonlight Pulido
Raymond White
Roderick Lear
Rumba Yambio
Sophia Gumbs
Stevie Wilson
Stomp Down Studies
Tarshel Mesbash
Tateheeda Shackur
Tien Estell
Zoán Tanís Dávila Roldán

THE ABOLITIONIST EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Ava Rose
Billy Ray Boyer
Dylan Brown
Jess Ho
Mar Golub
Molly Forzig
Nick Defendi
Rehana Lerandeau
Susana Draper

THE ABOLITIONIST DESIGNER

Williams Ramirez

THE ABOLITIONIST TRANSLATOR

Leilani Celetano

THE ABOLITIONIST COPY EDITORS

Alexis Demandante
Alicia Abbaguro
Anna Stratton
Chris Gang
Conrad Wolfe
Grace Van Orden
Hannah Opperman
Julia Duray
Kristen Haven
Letecia Garcia
Louise Rosler
Madelyn Pawlowski
Raymond White

THE ABOLITIONIST ARTISTS

The Activist History Review
Brooke Anderson
Dinah True
Dignidad Rebelde
Espirales: Puerto Rico

THE ABOLITIONIST REVIEW

Stevie Wilson
Josh McPhie
Justseeds Artists’ Cooperative
Kyla Salisbury
Kim Dinh
Library of Congress
Maya Lewis
Melanie Cervantes
Meredith Stern
Michelle Sayles
Rachel Romero
Shyama Kuver