Hunger Strikes Continue to Spread Like Wildfire

Building momentum after last year's nationwide prison strike and a spate of uprisings in the closing weeks of last year, 2019 has seen a surge in the use of hunger strikes as a broadly-applied tactic for challenging prison officials, rendering abuse visible, and demanding immediate changes to prison conditions. Recent actions of the sort can be seen challenging the capitalist-policing state's authority in several jurisdictions including: February 15, 2019: Hunger Strike at Suffolk County House of Corrections, Massachusetts; February 8, 2019: Hunger Strike at Yuma County Jail, California; February 2, 2019: Hunger Strike at Tabor Correctional Institution; February 1, 2019: Food Strike at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, Washington; January 25, 2019: Hunger Strike at Western Women's Correctional Facility, New Mexico; January 20, 2019: January 14, 2019: Hunger Strike at Metropolitan Correctional Center, New York; January 9, 2019: Hunger Strike at California State Prison, Corcoran, California; January 2, 2019: Hunger Strike at Polk Correctional Institution, North Carolina; January 1, 2019 (exact date unknown): Hunger Strike at El Paso Processing Center, Texas.* An interesting thing to consider alongside these more well-publicized actions are the likely hundreds if not thousands more people around the country involving themselves in smaller acts of food and "nutritional" refusal, some times as individuals or in groups as small as two. Another important point to emphasize is how prisoner hunger strikes are not just performative actions used to achieve a short term objectives. The principal deprivation of food and nutrition is foremost experienced as a "life or death" struggle. In many instances such acts of refusal symbolize the prisoner's last chance to die with dignity in the face of utter dehumanization and state-enforced social death.

Haitian Prisoners Escape Captivity in a Joyous Blast of Freedom

78 inmates held in a prison in southern Haiti escaped from captivity. The detainees reportedly made their escape from Aquin prison while police were distracted by the massive anti-government protests sweeping the country by storm. A reminder that these violent structures of captivity will fall down: Freedom will come. We cannot tolerate this fascist system any longer.

New Project Maps Prisoner Resistance

Perilous Chronicle is a new digital research project that seeks to document all acts of prisoner unrest across the US and Canada from 2010 through the present. The site already reports on over 200 instances of prisoner unrest over that time period and we are always looking to add additional events. If you have information that you would like to contribute to the project, you can reach them at perilouschronicle@protonmail.com or send us a letter to P.O. Box 381, Tucson, AZ 85702. If you have information about prison resistance that meets the criteria for their site, please write to them with as much information and documentation as possible. Please note that outgoing mail may be monitored and do not send information that may be incriminating to yourself or others. Perilous is a volunteer-run collective and is unable to guarantee a response to your letter.

RESISTANCE!

New York Jail Rhetoric Heats Up!

Despite widespread popular opposition to jail expansion by New Yorkers most impacted by the PIC, Mayor Bill de Blasio still continues to promote his plan for four new "borough-based" jails. These are to be under the guise of "closing" the horrific Rikers Island, which is alleged to be replaced by these four new jails. Despicable, right? In response, abolitionists are arguing that Rikers be shut down immediately and NO NEW JAILS should be built. In fact, a dynamic citywide coalition of community organizers are demanding the city government end its desired jail expansion altogether. Over the last several months, such activists and neighborhood leaders have come together in numerous convergences, disrupting city council meetings, holding protests, conferences, and engaging in on-the-ground campaign building against de Blasio's racist jail expansionist policies. The "New York Jails" movement is arguing that the city invest instead in providing life-affirming services and the reduction of policing and carceral infrastructure. Also NYC, the Metropolitan Detention Center (Brooklyn) has been the site of contestation and major outside protests, after a series of widely publicized abuses and instances of neglect, jail administrators holding prisoners at freezing, death-inducing temperatures. These abuses have been framed by many abolitionists as an entry point into creating larger public conversation about how such violence is inherent to the site of imprisonment in general, and MDC is a microscopic example of a larger systemic problem.
Cynthia Brown Granted Clemency, Resulting in 10-Year Struggle

After 15 years of incarceration for defending her life, Cynthia Brown is finally released. Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam commuted her sentence following ongoing public support for her freedom. She was "freed" on August 7, 2019, in a parole for another ten years. Survived and Punished's Marianne Kaba says: "I think it's a real indication that people are willing to fight for kids of this kind, and they know it's an issue that's real." The focus now is on ensuring Brown's safety and well-being.

Hundreds of Palestinian Prisoners Launch Protest and Hunger Strike

Approximately 1,200 Palestinians imprisoned in the Zion's Ofet Prison launched an open-ended hunger strike in February, in protest against the occupation's abusive violations and harassment. Shabab News Agency reported that 150 Palestinian prisoners were wounded when Israeli Security forces took siege of Ofet Prison, leaving six prisoners with injuries, 40 wounded, with others suffering injuries from rubber bullets and tear gas. In response to the settlers' crack down, prisoners have been refusing to eat and refusing to be administered by their wardens (and their advocates) were represented in the meetings. In other news, Palestinians, regardless of their political affiliations, have been circulating a video denouncing the tactics used by the settlers and their allies.

End Money Bond Movement Gaining Strength in Several States

Chicago and New York are two key states in the struggle to end cash bail, but a nationwide movement has been on the rise. Non-profit organizations and activists, in the closing months of 2018, have held several successful demonstrations against the use of money bonds, including a sit-in demonstration at the Cook County courthouse in Chicago. Activists around the country have been actively working to frame their campaigns in terms of a non-reformist approach to bail.

Prisoner Direct Action Revolts Have Been Confirmed in Numerous Locations So Far This Year, with Over Seven Noted Including, March 11, 2019, Uprising at Maui Community Correctional Center, Hawai; March 8, 2019, Uprising at Crawford County Detention Center, Arkansas; March 4, 2019, Uprising at The Hills Youth and Family Services, Minnesota; January 30, 2019, Attack on Guards at Elmore Correctional Facility, New York; January 20, 2019, Uprising at Lee County Juvenile Detention Center, Iowa; January 6, 2019, Attack on Guard at California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison, Corcoran.

A Momentous National Struggle for tourism Voting Rights in The Works

The anonymous and steady growing Jailhouse Lawyers Speak network (shortened JLS) is building momentum in its grassroots-supported right 2 vote campaign. There organizing is importantly strategic. While the group is abolitionist in its long-term vision, they organize among a coalition of organizations ranging from liberal reformist to radical grassroots action. Those who are fighting for the legal rights of imprisoned peoples to participate in electoral politics. While some might try to argue that this is a reformist struggle at base, it does place question on the basis that we can give our loved ones in prisons and jails the right to vote enables a new base for local interventions in the municipal machinery of the prison industrial complex. It is what Ruthie Gilmore would call a non-reformist their initiative that furthers the longer-term project of PIC abolition. It is also national struggle that for many years has been led by other national organization of imprisoned and formerly imprisoned community organizers, most certainly All of Us Or None.

Update on Vaughn Uprising Trials in Delaware

In Delaware, 2017, prisoners at Vaughn Correctional Building C took over the facility and held several guards & a counselor hostage while demanding improvements to poor and abusive living conditions. The courts have recently dropped charges against most of the remaining defendants in the Vaughn murder trials. Prosecutors will proceed with charges against three of the nine inmates left to stand trial after securing just one murder conviction so far. Solidarity to the remaining defendants. Power to the people!

Queens DA Accountability Coalition Waging Strong Resistance

Bill Perry writes, "Dozens of justice reform advocates spent much of Martin Luther King Jr. Day rallying on the steps in front of the Queens Criminal Court in New Gardens Monday. Braving frigid temperatures, a new coalition of grassroots organizations and advocates from around the five boroughs announced on Jan. 21 the launch the Queens for DA Accountability Coalition in order to fight for decarceration and radical reforms in Queens, now that Queens District Attorney Richard Brown has announced he won't seek re-election to a third term in office. Queens is the fourth-largest county in the United States, with the largest immigrant population, and activists point to Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's stunning upset in last June's Democratic Primary — when she defeated incumbent Congressman Joseph Crowley, the fourth-ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives — as a historic grassroots win to build on. (CNS) Queens for DA Accountability is a network of community activists centering black and brown, TGNC immigrant/migrant, indigenous and other communities most violently impacted by the PIC. The decarceration of Queens, NY is hoped to be achieved by holding its District Attorney and other elected officials accountable to the demands of the people, reducing immediate harm while also fighting to dismantle the broader carceral state.

More Abolitionists Needed for the Fight in Dwight

About an hour and a half's drive from Chicago, anti-police activists and abolitionists are congregating in Dwight on a more frequent basis to challenge the proposed construction of a ICE immigration detention facility. Advocates from across the Midwest spoke out in mass protest and against the proposed construction, which will likely be the home of criminalized migrants targeted and abduced throughout the Great Lakes and upper prairie states. While the town has decided to move ahead with construction, demonstrators vowed that they will not stop until the facility plans are rescinded. This means that future actions may be on the horizon in this rural area, where outside activists may have to put up physical bodies on the line, like the #KNOODAL water protectors, and take on the establishment that is annealed and allotted for construction. There are opportunities for abolitionists to connect several local campaigns against racist state violence given the likely rise in upcoming actions and the #AbolishICE, #SanctuaryNOW, post-#NoCopAcademy, and #abolishJails database campaigns can grow alliances by connecting the costs with this proposed expansion of the PIC in Dwight.