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FAMILIES FOR FREEDOM NEWSLETTER 2019 - Vol.1

Womxn's (Her)story Month - LUCY PARSONS

"When the prison, stake or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then."

— Lucy Parsons



Born in Texas in early 1850s, very little is known about Parson's early life. She was likely born to enslaved parents and had African-, Native-, and Mexican heritage, though she obscured her origins throughout her life, often using different surnames. When Parsons was in her 20s, in 1873, she and her white husband left Texas with its harsh anti-miscegenation statutes and moved to Chicago, where they were both involved in anarchist labor organizing.

Parson became well-known as a writer, organizer, and orator within the radical labor movement in Chicago as strikes and

violent reactionary suppression became increasingly frequent. Her husband Albert Parsons was swept up in the police repression following the Haymarket affair, and was eventually executed.

Lucy Parson's uncompromising fight against oppression continued through to the end of her life, always in the face of disapproval from reformists and violent and relentless repression from the police who called her "more dangerous than a thousand rioters."

We also remember another militant anarchist feminist: **Emma Goldman**. Despite their occasionally fierce opposition to one another within the movement, Goldman and Parsons both represent a crucial period in militant struggle and radical feminism in the US.

As an immigrant to the US, Goldman's radicalism made her a target of not only local police repression, but also the deportation system. Goldman was a naturalized citizen who was born in Russia. Then as now, contact with the criminal punishment system put immigrants' status at risk, and Goldman had her citizenship revoked following a conviction and incarceration for her anti-war organizing. The deportation system was put to work to target non-citizens who advocated for revolutionary politics. Goldman was deported to Russia on December 21, 1919.

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Founded in September 2002, Families for Freedom is a New York-based multi-ethnic human rights organization by and for families facing and fighting deportation. We are immigrant prisoners (detainees), former immigrant prisoners, their loved ones, or individuals at risk of deportation.

We come from dozens of countries, across continents. FFF seeks to repeal the laws that are tearing apart our homes and neighborhoods; and to build the power of immigrant communities as communities of color, to provide a guiding voice in the growing movement for immigrant rights as human rights.

2018 ended much like it began, with immigration at the forefront of the national political conversation. What's to be done with the manufactured "crisis," flaring up to perpetuate US tradition of expulsion and exclusion? What does it all mean for us doing immigration work?

A white nationalist fixation on the border produced the largest US government shutdown in history, in pursuit of physically dividing the US from our southern neighbors.

According to TRAC (Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse), the federal government



(Photo: J. Scott Applewhite, AP)

In terms of detention, business continued with the highest average per day number of detainees on record at 50,000 people. For us at Families For Freedom, it means that the number of our members in detention grew, and the amount of people in prolonged detention increased also.

The number of people being detained indefinitely who are challenging their incarceration steadily increased throughout 2018, and will likely continue to grow due to the recent US Supreme Court's March 19 decision which rejected challenges to mandatory detention of certain noncitizens - "aliens" under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Generally speaking, mandatory immigration detention is an exception to the rule that confinement requires an individualized showing of flight risk or dangerousness.

For the approximate 800,000 TPS (Temporary Protected Status) recipients there may also be new challenges or opportunities. An interesting development has been the push for bipartisan legislation considering TPS for Venezuelans from Florida congressmen. However, an injunction on Trump's administration that wishes to

TPS recipients from Haiti, El Salvador, Sudan and Nicaragua is likely to resurface the national debate on TPS programs. As written by federal judge Chen, plaintiffs for the injunction "have raised serious questions" whether the administration's decision to cancel a slew of TPS programs "was influenced by the White House and based on animus against nonwhite, non-European immigrants in violation of Equal Protection guaranteed by the Constitution. The issues are at least serious enough to preserve the status quo." The injunction also put on hold the ending of TPS for Nepal and Honduras recipients. Of note also is that the Deferred Enforced Deportation (DED) for Liberians has been extended for another year.

The ABA published a post with their predictions for the 2019 legal landscape, and we encourage everyone to take a look and understand how these changes will (or won't) affect our ongoing organizing work.

Overall, the amped up processing of noncitizens in criminal and immigration courts has effectively strained many of the available legal resources. The need for clearer political and movement strategies is critical. We move into 2019 continuing to push for mass changes in immigration that dare to affirm noncitizens and all people's rights to a life free of persecution, with freedom and dignity.

Summary of Our 2018 Events



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(Photo: Daniel Gonzalez)

shutdown earlier this year impacted more than 40,000 individual immigration cases. With 5,320 of those cases, New York had the second highest number of individuals impacted by court cancellations. For some of our members fighting cases on the outside who have been waiting to appear in court, this meant they'd have to wait up to a year or more as their cases were postponed and rescheduled. Yet, even with ERO limited in operations, cases of detained people are still proceeding as usual.

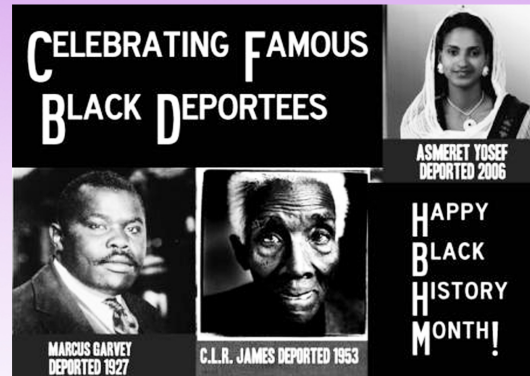
HISTORY & ANALYSIS

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In 1914, Marcus Garvey, alongside Amy Ashwood, founded the first division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Kingston, Jamaica. The goal of the UNIA was to "establish Universal Confraternity among the race," to better the material conditions of Black people of all nationalities, to work toward the independence of African states, and to "establish a central nation for the race." In just a few short years, the vision of the UNIA expanded throughout the Black diaspora and chapters could be found throughout Africa, Latin America, North America, and the Caribbean. The importance that Garvey's ideals placed on universal brotherhood cannot be understated and played a crucial role in the growing movement of Black liberation that sought to build beyond very limiting and divisive colonial borders.

As people fighting for the freedom of movement and the rights of immigrants everywhere, we must understand how this is inextricably connected to the global fight for the liberation of all Black people. The work of Garvey was among the most formative tools and ideological frames of reference for members of the Black diaspora who sought to build extensive networks and bridges for solidarity and material support across national borders.

The UNIA built structures for political education, local organizing, and economic exchange. Among these were publications such as Negro World, which allowed members of the UNIA in to read about the activities of other divisions in Cuba, Panama, Haiti, etc. and the Black Star Line, which allowed those in the diaspora to develop



multinational commercial relationships. These institutions were so widely embraced by Black communities that it did not take long for the United States government to intervene. The government went so far as to hire the first Black FBI agents to infiltrate the UNIA and sabotage its programs. Garvey and other UNIA leaders were subsequently charged and imprisoned for mail fraud associated with the Black Star Line and he was then deported to Jamaica upon his release. Divisions of the UNIA can still be found in a few cities across the North America, Africa, and the Caribbean.

It is important to acknowledge that there are many valid criticisms to be made of Garvey's work; many have argued that adopting capitalist frameworks of economic growth, replicating western projects of nation building, and modeling white American and patriarchal politics of respectability are not productive to the project of Black liberation.

But there are many invaluable lessons to be drawn from a movement that sparked pride among Afro-descended people and galvanized so many to work across national boundaries for the mutual benefit of all Black people. Garvey understood very well that a movement for our liberation that was not global in scope would not yield as much progress as one that united the

diaspora. As we move forward with our own movements in the present day, we must draw from the lessons of those that came before us. It is crucial that we approach our struggles from an international focus because our liberation at home will not come without that of our family and comrades abroad.

Garvey in Harlem, 1922



"The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself but the ends you serve that are for all, in common, will take you into eternity."

- Marcus Garvey

WORDS FROM THE INSIDE

POEM BY PLYMOUTH DETAINEE

Earlier this year, we received a powerful poem by someone currently fighting his detention at an ICE facility. Read below:

Freedom, Liberty, Justice

A poem by Joel Rey

We come to live on an land where they can't trust us.
Who is us.
Us is we.
Most foreigners migrating to escape poverty
Seeking, searching to live norma and free...dom
Most of our homelands are extremely beautiful, from this why
should we run,
Liberty is hard to come by,
Many risk their lives for plenty will die,
To have a chance at a better life,

No justice in their homeland so they won't think twice,
A desperate attempt to save the lives of their family,
Panic, trauma and tragety [sic]
Find a safe haven is calculated stragety. [sic]
What would you do if you was placed in this position,
Not knowing if you dare cross that border you will end up in prison

What's the other decision
Stay in your homeland and end up a victim,
Nah, I will take my chances at a better living,
Even if its blood, sweat, and tears from the beginning,
I'll risk it all, my life for my children,
If we can just get across this bored we'll be winning
Just a few more steps to our freedom,
As we make it we learn immediately liberty here is only for some
And not all, where does that line of justice of justice fall

Did we run from one mess into a land of cultural stress.
A place alway [sic] pronounced to be the best,
But won't even grant us asylum,
Like we have no emotions and feelings their hearts must be numb,
Many of us restrained by even the nasty words of their tongues,
Electronic shackles is a form of their justice, for just us,
But I will forever "Freedom it is a must and the chains and shackles
must bust"

"Deuces" to ICE who are ready to bargain our liberty for a price
Free from detentions are detainees and inmates true intentions
Oppressed are the people, caught in an unjust immigration system
Not knowing when we came here one day we would be a victim,
By enforcement of laws and policies never built to benefit
immigrant families

Take away our freedom and many of us was never found
guilty
Sit us in their jails for weeks, months, years dreaming of
liberty
No justice for us their ways to corrupt and flithy [sic]
We have to get up, stand up and fight in unity
Strengthen our numbers in every oppressed community

Overthrow the conditions and hardship that affect us
directly
Connect with one another to strengthen the movement
We can't communicate in silence, let our voices be heard,
but not violent,
Words are power and sound lets chant freedom and break
the systems barriers down
Liberty is for all on the broadest scope of it we have to
stand tall

"Justice comes from the people" a true value of showing
we are all equal



- Artwork from someone from the inside

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