



# CRITICAL RESISTANCE

TOWARD LIBERATION:  
ORGANIZING FOR  
ABOLITION, DEFENDING  
AGAINST FEAR





**CR uses a transformational and strategic approach to dismantle the prison industrial complex. We:**

- amplify abolitionist reforms;
- shift who is recognized as a movement expert;
- make abolition common sense.

**We create, lift up, and vitalize solutions as we tear down walls, cages, and policing.**



# Dear friends and fellow travelers,

We get requests every day for Critical Resistance (CR) to speak, join an effort, start a chapter, or provide some analysis on fighting the violent systems of policing, imprisonment, surveillance and the rest of the interlocking pieces of the prison industrial complex. There's a strong, impassioned and urgent desire to make abolition visible — as both a strategy and a vision. It's a ripe moment for advancing abolition, and also empowering to see years of concerted organizing and your loyal support coming to fruition.

With four chapters, dedicated membership, hundreds of volunteers, compelling campaigns and projects, and a national bilingual newspaper, CR is energized by this growing demand for organizing. We are ready to build our movement.

With the skills and enthusiasm of our membership, 2016 has been an incredible year of struggle and gains in our efforts to dismantle the prison industrial complex (PIC). Every step of the way in campaigns, projects and analysis, we have forefronted the necessity to invest in health and community resources as we divest from the systems of policing, cages, and surveillance that harm us. CR's work across the country has helped prove that it is possible to dismantle the PIC piece by piece and build up alternatives block by block.

It's been almost twenty years since organizers kicked off the efforts to build a popular, more unified movement against the prison industrial complex with the foundational 1998 conference, "Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex," held in Berkeley, CA. Since then, the analysis, ideas, and, increasingly, the strategies of Critical Resistance have been in high demand. Even more is possible for our movement and our organization. We're hopeful and ready to keep building and growing.

Our history and the momentum of 2016 are inspiring, and thanks in large part to your support. Please join us in celebrating the work of 2016, and looking ahead with the determination and enthusiasm to continue fighting for the healthy, beautiful communities that we must build and defend.

Onward, toward liberation,



Jess Heaney  
*CR Co-Director*



Lily Fahsi-Haskell  
*CR Co-Director*



Mohamed Shekh  
*CR Co-Director*

and the *CR National Fundraising Committee*

**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 reflect communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.**

## About Critical Resistance



Critical Resistance is a national grassroots organization building a movement to abolish the prison industrial complex (PIC). We think of the PIC as the system of surveillance, policing, and imprisonment that government, industry and their interests use as solutions to economic, social, and political problems. Because the PIC is a huge, complicated system, we have to attack it from all different angles using many different strategies.

Our broad abolitionist strategy embraces 3 main frames:

- 1. DISMANTLE**
- 2. CHANGE**
- 3. BUILD**

We fight to dismantle the prison industrial complex, including the systems, cages, practices, and policing that harm, control, and impoverish communities and greater society.

We stride to change common sense, resource allocation, and practices (at all scales) away from harm, punishment, and control, and toward practices that empower communities to address harm and problems at their root cause. We seek to change the ways that society and media frame the issues, as well as who is recognized as an expert on the problems communities face and the solutions that we need.

While doing this, we build: we build practices, skills, relationships and resources that address the needs of our communities. From interpersonal to local community to state and larger-scale, we demand that investments be made that are life-affirming and enable us thrive.



**We are building toward liberation for everyone, most especially people of color, poor people, queer people, immigrants, youth, and other oppressed communities who are targeted by the PIC.**

## Our work reflects the local problems we think are most pressing and local solutions we think are most appropriate.

We are a member-led organization with volunteer members and supporters across the country. Local chapters coordinate and communicate with sister chapters, other members, and national staff that make up CR's national organization.

Chapter projects range from fighting policing in working class communities of color, to community education projects, to grassroots campaigns opposing prison and jail construction. What unites all of these projects is a commitment to working for the eventual elimination of the PIC as well as to taking practical steps to create the communities we envision for ourselves.

### CHAPTERS

Los Angeles, CA (CR-Los Angeles)

New York, NY (CR-New York City)

Oakland, CA (CR-Oakland)

Portland, OR (CR-Portland)



### NATIONAL STAFF

Jess Heaney, Development Director

Lily Fahsi-Haskell, Campaign Director

Mohamed Shehk, Media and Communications Director

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

Our Community Advisors are a movement-building and membership-development resource for our organization that work hand-in-hand with membership and staff. They are different than a traditional "Board" as they do not have decision-making power over the organization nor are responsible for our finances.

#### OUR 2016-17 COMMUNITY ADVISORS

**Avery Gordon**, University of California, Santa Barbara

**Beth Richie**, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Bonnie Kerness**, American Friends Service Committee

**Claude Marks**, Freedom Archives

**Craig Gilmore**, California Prison Moratorium Project

**Darryl Jordan**, Former Director American Friends Service Committee's Third World Coalition

**Dennis Childs**, University of California, San Diego

**Dolores Canales**, California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement

**Eddy Zheng**, Asian Prisoner Support Committee

**Ellen Barry**, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children

**Fahd Amed**, Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)

**Hashim Benford**, Power U

**Jason Lydon**, Black and Pink

**Kai Lumumba Barrow**, Gallery of the Streets

**Lara Kiswani**, Arab Resource and Organizing Center

**Laura Pulido**, University of Southern California

**Layne Mullet**, Decarcerate PA

**Linda Evans**, All of Us or None

**Linda M. Thurston**, War Resisters League

**Mariame Kaba**, Project Nia and Survived & Punished

**Melanie Cervantes**, Dignidad Rebelde

**Mujahid Farid**, Release Aging People in Prison

**Phil Scraton**, Queens College, Belfast

**Ruthie Gilmore**, City University of New York

**Tamika Middleton**, Kindred Southern Healing Justice Collective

**Walt Senterfitt**, public health epidemiologist, Los Angeles Tenants Union, HIV Prevention Justice Alliance

*\*Affiliations listed for identification purposes only.*

# Bringing Our Mission to Life

The core of CR's work is to advance—through grassroots mobilizations, popular education, campaigns and coalitional efforts—a reinvigorated common sense in which the key to health and safety is not aggression, policing and imprisonment, but healing, stability and liberation. Our goal at CR is to continue lifting up visions of freedom and self-determination as we tear down walls, cages, and policing.

## 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

### 1. PROFILES IN ABOLITION SERIES

We kicked off *Profiles in Abolition*, a national series intended to explore critical understanding of prison industrial complex (PIC) abolition and inspire us to take creative and practical steps toward a liberated future—free of policing, imprisonment, or surveillance. We hosted community events in Los Angeles, New York City, Oakland, and Atlanta. The *Profiles in Abolition* initiative has been a vibrant success, bringing together over 2,000 people in four cities to dream of a world where the political horizon is not dominated by cages and policing and to highlight the practical steps people can take to advance abolition together.

### 2. NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP RETREAT

CR members from across the country came together for a weekend in the California countryside to share campaign and organizing strategies, build relationships and unity, become more powerful leaders, and increase the impact of CR.



### 3. WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

We've facilitated over 225 workshops and presentations on topics ranging from the prison industrial complex and abolition to grassroots communities, fellow organizers and decision-makers. CR places a high value on providing engaging workshops and clear presentations that increase popular understanding of the PIC, uplift abolitionist strategy, and inspire people to join the movement to eliminate its harms.



# Carrying Out Our Mission: Campaigns and Projects

**In our grassroots mobilizations, campaigns, and coalitions, CR has demonstrated that we can create, lift up, and vitalize solutions as we tear down walls, cages, and policing. We work to prevent people from being arrested or locked up in prison, to halt prison and jail expansion, and to push for decarceration. We do this by making abolition common sense, shifting who is recognized as a movement expert and amplifying abolitionist reforms.**

“When we look across all our work, we see a strong confrontation against powers that seek to instill fear, inflict violence, and keep us from attaining the world we know is possible. In organizing toward liberation, we must defend against fear and continue to rally for abolition. It is a vision and a strategy.”

—Lily Fahsi-Haskell, Campaign Director



## OAKLAND POWER PROJECTS

“Through the Oakland Power Projects, a solid network of health workers dedicated to abolition have come together and really built community with one another. They have also developed practical workshops that are strongly grounded in an abolitionist politic, to share concrete ways neighbors and community workers can respond to health crises in ways that minimize the risks of harm from policing.

In addition to offering dozens of workshops, one major success of the OPP has been how health workers have been able to share their expertise to strengthen local campaigns like Stop Urban Shield, Justice for Kayla Moore and the Alameda County Jail Fight.

The health workers have harnessed their creativity, knowledge and networks to support communities in responding effectively and responsibly to health crises - not just through the workshops they hold, but also zines, medic kits, guides and referral lists for local health services.” —Diana Wu, CR- Oakland member



## NO NEW SAN FRANCISCO JAIL

“The No New SF Jail campaign has been critical in pushing back against the logic that it is right to jail people—homeless people, Black and Brown people, people who can’t afford bail, trans people, and people with mental health needs. The campaign has undermined the supremacy of the sheriff and district attorney, and created space for long overdue conversations about decarceration. This past year our work majorly impeded the sheriff in reinvigorating plans for jail replacement, as well as calling out the district attorney for advancing a “mental health” jail. CR has helped make these interventions possible, while remaining strong in our demands for decarceration and resources outside of the jail system. —Karyn Smoot, CR- Oakland member



## BEYOND ATTICA + CHALLENGING INCARCERATION

“CR-New York City has made important steps linking prison closures and fights against jail expansion across New York State. With the Beyond Attica Coalition, we organized a powerful rally and press conference demanding the Governor close the prison at Attica, 25 years after the historic rebellion. Although New York prisons have seen gradual reductions in their population, jail expansion in upstate counties has continued in earnest. CR- NYC, in coalition with anti-jail activists from 17 upstate counties and New York City, has worked to unite far-flung rural and urban struggles under a common abolitionist analysis.” —Stephen Jones, CR-New York City Member



## LOS ANGELES NO MORE JAILS

“CR-Los Angeles has been in a ten year campaign against the largest jail system in the world. Imprisonment and policing waste valuable resources, and not nearly enough life-affirming infrastructure is prioritized for our communities. Fighting for reinvestment in resources like community-based substance use treatment and mental health programs would not only strengthen LA communities, but chip away at the perceived need for more jails.

We know that communities do not want nor will benefit from a women’s jail. Fighting this jail decreases the power of the sheriff, and we seek to fight to empower communities and build self-determination.

In 2016 we built relationships with organizers, environmental experts, health professionals, and educators in Antelope Valley, an area in the high desert northeast of LA that is often isolated and generally disconnected from organizers in LA. This is where the women’s jail is slated to be built, so we were able to funnel our resources and information to help build a base of opposition and grow our fight and message against more jails and for abolition.” —Christina Tsao, CR-Los Angeles member



## STOP URBAN SHIELD

“It is strategic to fight the Urban Shield training and weapons expo because it is one of the largest militarized SWAT and police trainings in the country. The way that Urban Shield militarizes emergency preparedness, in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances, make it a serious threat - especially in this current moment of heightened xenophobia, racism and nationalism. In 2016, the Stop Urban Shield Coalition built incredible grassroots power that mobilized hundreds of people to disrupt the Urban Shield weapons expo and halt one of its exercises. We used this power to mount a strong legislative fight that has resulted in concessions by the Alameda County Sheriff’s department, an evaluation of the program organized by the local decision-makers, and growing popular sentiment that it is a controversial and hazardous program.” —Woods Ervin, CR-Oakland member



## MENTAL HEALTH CARE NOT POLICING

“In Portland, there’s been a fair amount of energy in regards to mental health care and policing but most of these conversation still view policing involvement as part of the solution. We know that this doesn’t have to be the case, that police acting as first responders on mental health crisis calls only further harms our community. Our campaign’s abolitionist grounding feels vital in shifting away from our reliance on police and policing and instead building out the community self-determined mental health services that Portland needs. One of the major success of this year has been bringing our campaign more public and building on our goal of a strong “Mental Health Care, Not Policing” coalition. It’s been exciting to hear that this campaign resonated with so many folks who share a similar vision of decoupling mental health care from police first responders.” —Cory Kirshner-Lira, CR-Portland member

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# Prisoner Mail and *The Abolitionist*

**“Thank you for the latest issue of *The Abolitionist*. I particularly liked the amazing news about the Chicago torture survivors, which is the first we are hearing of it. This gives us hope and incentive to continue our struggle.”**

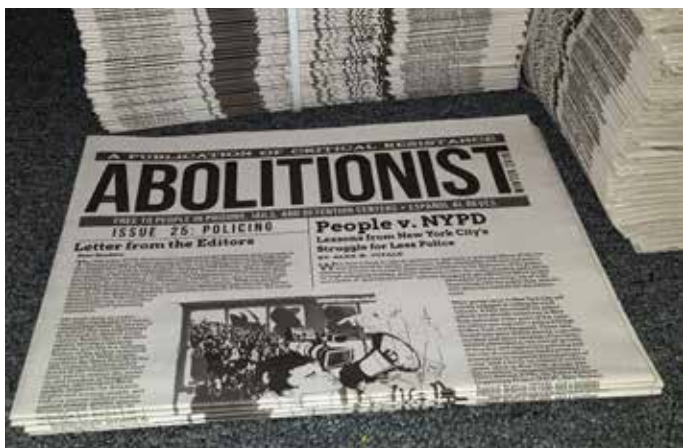
—Reader at Lawton Correctional Facility

Our prisoner mail program and *The Abolitionist* newspaper project are part of an essential abolitionist strategy to organize with and empower people who are fighting behind prison walls. We play a crucial role in amplifying the voices of imprisoned people through politically engaged correspondence with thousands of prisoners across the US via our prisoner mail program and our newspaper, *The Abolitionist*.

We produced three issues of *The Abolitionist* in 2016 and sent a total of 15,000 copies of the paper to readers inside; prisoner subscriptions have doubled in the last three years to a current total of 5,000 imprisoned readers nationwide!

**“I just want to say that the work you guys do at *The Abolitionist* is inspiring. I have been receiving your paper for years now. I feel compelled to act: I would like to join the struggle to abolish the PIC.”**

—Imprisoned newspaper subscriber



**“Someone shared *Issue: 26* with me and I could not put it down.”**

—Reader at Mule Creek State Prison

**“Please send me your paper and anything you have to uplift my people. Your publication helps me out a lot.”**

—Reader at Hampton Roads Regional Jail

Together, CR-PDX, CR-OAK, and CR-NYC have engaged several thousand imprisoned people in writing articles and contributing art work for the paper, and fulfilled requests for political education materials such as CR’s Abolitionist Toolkit, Prison Activist Resource Center’s (PARC) guide, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, and *Instead of Prisons*, two seminal books.



CR members across the country pitched in for our annual end-of-year solidarity postcard mailing, hosting open house events to send 5,200 postcards to the prisoners we communicate with year-round. This annual solidarity program remind people that they aren’t alone, and that we’re in the fight with them, since this set of holidays is really hard on a lot of people doing time. We’ve received dozens of thank you letters and submissions for publication in response.



# Shaping the Media Conversation

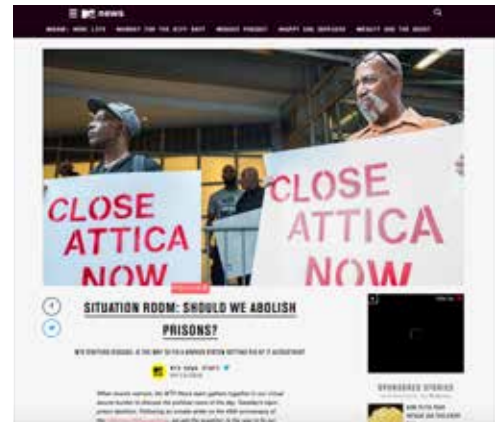
From major national media outlets to small community-based radio stations, Critical Resistance has amplified abolitionist campaigns, liberatory demands, and also carved out space to talk about the harms of imprisonment and policing as a whole in a way that is clear and understandable to local, national, and international audiences.



There was absolutely no mention of the abolition of police or prisons in mainstream headlines at the time of the founding Critical Resistance conference in 1998 or when Critical Resistance officially became an organization in 2001. Now, almost 20 years later, a columnist for The Washington Post writes, “Cop culture, historically rooted deeper in racism than in justice, simply cannot be ‘reformed.’ It must be abolished; the institution where it festers must be dismantled.”

Our years of diligent work and wild dreaming are paying off. This shift in the discussion is a mile marker victory, and it is energizing and somewhat astonishing to see the questions and demands CR has been raising for years entering public discourse in full force through popular outlets.

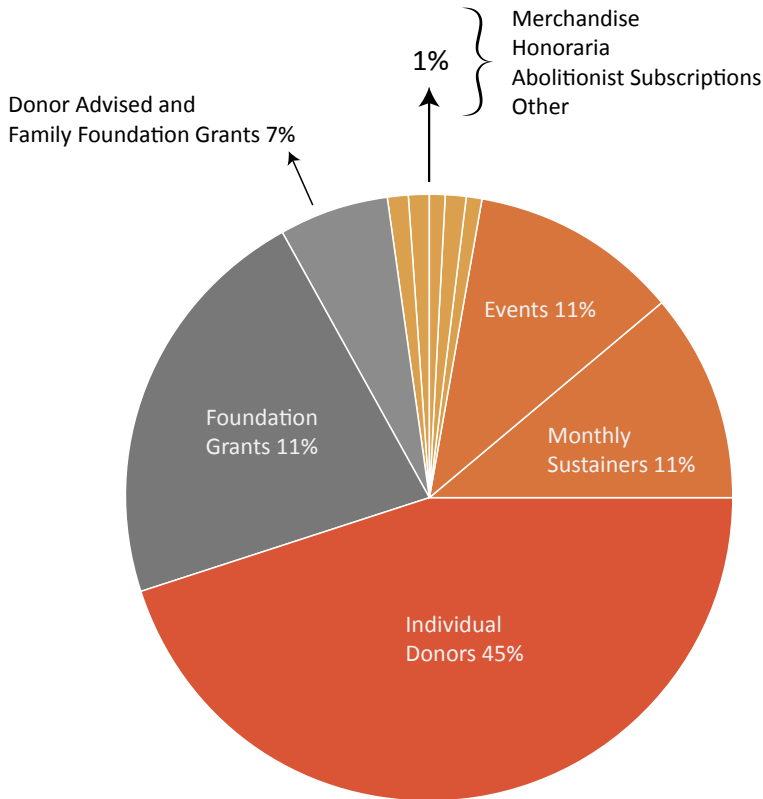
We’ve had 90 features and dozens of interviews covering Critical Resistance, our campaigns, projects and events in media outlets such as *The Nation*, *ABC News*, *Huffington Post*, *Boston Review*, *Truthout*, *VICE Canada*, and the *New York Times*.



# Financial Snapshot

## TOTAL INCOME

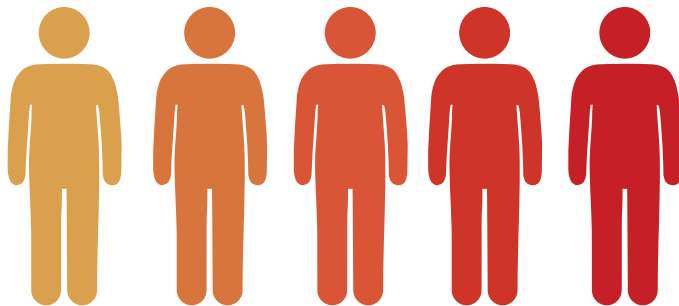
In 2016 Critical Resistance was majority grassroots funded.



## GIVING SCALE

Every penny helps chip away at the prison industrial complex!

**Out of 549 individual donors:**



The smallest gift was \$3

43 people gave over \$500

22 people gave over \$1,000

10 people gave over \$2,000

4 people gave over \$5,000

## TAKE ACTION!

Your support helps keep this work strong and vibrant.

### SHARE THIS REPORT

Share this report with friends, family, and networks, and invite them to join the movement.

### MAKE A GIFT TODAY

You can donate online at [www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org), mail a check to our National Office (see back cover), or call us at 510-444-0484 to donate using your credit card.

### WORKPLACE MATCHING OR MONTHLY GIFTS

Many companies have matching gift program that enable you to increase the value of your gift. Some workplace giving programs can also facilitate monthly donations. Please check your personnel department for these opportunities.

### LEGACY/ESTATE GIVING

A generous way to support Critical Resistance in the future is by remembering us in your estate plans. You can do this by simply including Critical Resistance as a beneficiary of your will or living trust, your retirement plan, bank account or in your life insurance policy.

### HOST A PARTY

Host a party, happy hour, donor briefing or other event to amplify abolition and encourage people to raise resources for CR.

For more information any of these options or to let us know that a gift is on the way, please contact Jess Heaney, Development Director, at (510) 444-0484 or email [jess@criticalresistance.org](mailto:jess@criticalresistance.org)

# Support

In 2016, Critical Resistance was supported by an amazing, broad base, ranging from grassroots individual donors to organizations, colleges, universities, and foundations.

## FOUNDATIONS

Alcibie Alliance  
Akonadi Foundation  
Baldwin Family Foundation  
Ben & Jerry's Foundation  
California Wellness Foundation  
Common Counsel Foundation  
Craigslist Foundation  
Harold K. Raisler Foundation  
Left Tilt Foundation  
Old Stories, New Lives  
Philip and Myn Rootberg Foundation  
Regina and Melanie Myers Fund  
Resist, Inc.  
Sprocket Foundation  
Thendara Foundation  
Women's Foundation of California: the Race, Gender and Human Rights Fund

## EVENT SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

Agape International Spiritual Center  
Alcohol Justice  
Alexandra Shabtai, SPART  
All of Us or None  
American Friends Service Committee  
AnakBayan  
Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)



California Coalition for Women Prisoners  
Dan Siegel and Anne Weills  
Drug Policy Alliance  
EastSide Arts Alliance and Cultural Center  
GABRIELA USA  
Global Women's Strike  
Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin  
International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)  
Justice Now  
Los Angeles Poverty Department  
Omni Oakland Commons  
Parsons First Year at The New School  
Planting Justice  
Project South  
Queer Solidarity Action Team BASAT  
Quinn Delaney and Wayne Jordan  
Racial Justice Action Center  
Southerners on New Ground  
TGI Justice Project (TGIJP)  
The Bridge Program, Antioch University  
The Kessel Family  
The New School Social Justice Initiatives  
Transforming Justice, University of Milwaukee  
UC Berkeley American Cultures Center  
University of San Francisco (USF) School of Education  
USF School of Education White Faculty against Racism  
West Oakland Youth Center

**In addition to financial resources, we were supported by donations of time, passion and creativity from thousands of Critical Resistance organizers and supporters. Thank you!**

# 2017

## FORGING AHEAD AGAINST STATE REPRESSION: ABOLITION AS STRATEGY AND VISION



**As the year begins, we are being met with grave challenges that threaten many of these gains. Our current political climate is one filled with divisiveness and fear mongering. The threats posed to immigrant, Muslim, Black, native and queer communities are very real. We know we must move now to redouble our efforts, continue to fight for liberation and against state repression and its primary tool: the prison industrial complex. In addition to continuing with our campaigns, projects and programming, we are looking forward to:**

## PRISONERS SPEAK OUT: ANALYSIS AND PERSPECTIVES

Knowing that we are entering an era of potentially greater political repression, isolation, and silencing of dissent, it is imperative that we do what we can to share even more of the experiences and analysis of imprisoned people speaking out against the prison industrial complex. In this effort we started a blog to track responses to questionnaires on the current political climate. As of March, responses to our first set of questions, which sought analysis and advice from prisoners on the impacts of the new Trump regime and how we can successfully resist, are still rolling in.



## PROFILES IN ABOLITION VIDEO PROJECT

We are building on the success of the *Profiles in Abolition* event series and the *Profiles in Abolition Video Project*, a free, popular education tool that will be released online! Featured participants include Alicia Garza (co-founder of Black Lives Matter), Angela Y. Davis, Claude Marks (Freedom Archives), Craig Gilmore, Dylan Rodriguez, Laura Whitehorn, Marbre Stahle-Butts (Movement for Black Lives), Mariame Kaba, Ruthie Wilson Gilmore, Soffiyah Elijah, and more. This series of short movies will help us highlight ways that PIC abolition is a practical and necessary strategy to fight state repression.



### SAVE THE DATE

Nov 8th, 2017

**ANGELA DAVIS &  
RUTHIE WILSON  
GILMORE IN  
CONVERSATION**



Chicago, IL

## Critical Resistance's vision is the creation of genuinely healthy, stable communities that respond to harm without relying on imprisonment and punishment.

We call our vision abolition, drawing, in part from the legacy of the abolition of slavery in the 1800s. As PIC abolitionists we understand that the prison industrial complex is not a broken system to be fixed. The system, rather, works precisely as it is designed to—to contain, control, and kill those people representing the greatest threats to state power. Our goal is not to improve the system even further, but to shrink the system into non-existence. We work to build healthy, self-determined communities and promote alternatives to the current system.

Critical Resistance (CR) is building a member-led and member-run grassroots movement to challenge the use of punishment to “cure” complicated social problems. We know that more policing and imprisonment will not make us safer. Instead, we know that things like food, housing, and freedom are what create healthy, stable neighborhoods and communities. We work to prevent people from being arrested or locked up in prison. In all our work, we organize to build power and to stop the devastation that the reliance on imprisonment and policing has brought to ourselves, our families, and our communities.



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