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Black August 2020

Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement

12th August 2020

The murder of George Floyd on May 25th of this year ignited revolutionary activity across the U.S.. Precincts, cop cars, and federal buildings are literally burning to the ground, in an escalation which recently seemed unprecedented on U.S. soil. Abolition of both the State and capitalism— the twin demons of white supremacy— has never felt so palpably within reach, and the Black liberation struggle is now the driving force of the revolutionary movement.

The significance of Black August lifts our spirits this year, and as the militant struggle has renewed, we honor the many revolutionaries who have fought against State oppression and white supremacy, including George Jackson, Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain, and Khatari Gauden. August is an important month in the history of Black resistance: from the Haitian Revolution to the Nat Turner Rebellion; from the foundation of the Underground Railroad to the Watts Uprising; from the births of Marcus Garvey, Russell Maroon Shoatz, and Fred Hampton to the death of W.E.B du Bois and the murder of members of the Black Guerrilla Family.

On August 21st, 1971, Black Panther Party Field Marshall and founder of the Black Guerrilla Family George Jackson was mur-

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Retrieved on 14th August 2020 from <https://www.revolutionaryabolition.org/news/black-august-2020/>

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dered while attempting to escape from San Quentin prison in California. Sundiata Tate, one of the San Quentin Six— a group of prisoners accused of participating in this escape attempt— described Black August, the annual commemoration of his death, as a time to “embrace the principles of unity, self-sacrifice, political education, physical training, and resistance.”

RAM celebrates Black August because, as revolutionary abolitionists, we recognize prisons as modern-day plantations. The development of ICE detention facilities further perpetuates captivity and enslavement, while lining the pockets of the same capitalist scum who profit from prisons. These institutions are all firmly rooted in white supremacy, and radical acts of resistance such as those commemorated annually during Black August are alternately absent from and demonized by the State narrative.

In 2020, as police in the U.S. continue to murder Black and Brown people with regularity, our communities are also being ravaged by COVID-19. The homeless are being kicked off of trains and forced onto the streets or into overcrowded shelters, while massive coronavirus outbreaks have swept through prisons nationwide. People trapped behind prison walls are given no protection, even as they are forced to produce anything from face masks to hand sanitizer for people on the outside (whomever among them can afford it, that is). The State has now pulled the plug on pandemic-related financial assistance, leaving thousands even more vulnerable to eviction, food insecurity, and other socioeconomic woes than they were before the virus struck.

The collapse of the State seems imminent. The battle lines have been drawn.

Knowing this, it falls to all of us who hope to see an abolitionist society realized to keep revolutionary history alive, and to honor the memories of people like the Jackson brothers, William Christmas, Hugo Pinel, James McClain, and Khatari Gauden.

As we steel ourselves to continue the struggle in which they and so many others have fallen, we pay homage those who came before us and express gratitude for their sacrifices. We learn from, and are perpetually inspired by, their example. As many freedom fighters remain in prison in the U.S. today, we also endeavor to see them free. They have been caged because they fought for our freedom; now, it is our duty to fight for theirs. For everyone’s.

With dignity, courage, and solidarity, we continue to fight these fascist thugs and the institutions that spawn them— and we will WIN!