




FIRST WE ABOLISH ICE

a manifesto for immigrant liberation

composed by the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance






Given that the rebirth of the movement dedicated to abolishing ICE has erupted from the confines of social media and into the occupation of federal buildings (and even leaked into the political platforms of Democrats across the country) we at the California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance (CIYJA) think it is vital for those of us who are directly impacted to define what a world without Poli-ICE could look like.

First and foremost, we must acknowledge we sit on occupied lands. The mainstream fight for legitimacy in this country as undocumented people in the past focused on the acceptance of migrants into a culture of white supremacy and settler colonial mentality. After all, the "Dreamer" narrative stems from a willingness to comply and assimilate into whiteness and western-fixated measurements of success. Though many migrants who flee their homelands are Indigenous and fleeing anti-Indigenous governments, the mainstream immigrant rights movement has failed to make space and bring light to these issues. As such, we acknowledge that we must defer to Indigenous peoples whose lands we occupy for permission to stay, and establish a platform for globally displaced Indigenous communities to speak their truth and ultimately reclaim the land that was stolen from them.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that ICE and detention centers exist as an extension of the carceral state, which in turn serves the purpose of ethnic cleansing. It is nothing new that the United States should weaponize its propaganda of criminalization to justify the splitting of families and to force communities of color into labor camps run by private companies like CORE Civic and GEO Group¹. For-profit private companies have an ongoing war that they have waged particularly against the Black community, and have more recently begun replicating to profit off of the migrant community at large.

As such, if we can fight for a world in which ICE is abolished, we must also be willing to fight for a world in which all prisons go away with it. We cannot choose to ignore the fact that the prison industrial complex (PIC) serves as the blueprint for the apparatus locking migrant children in cages today. If we fail to abolish it, Black families will continue to be torn apart, and the carceral state will thrive. If we fail to advocate for a compassionate alternative, then it will simply replicate itself in other ways against other communities.

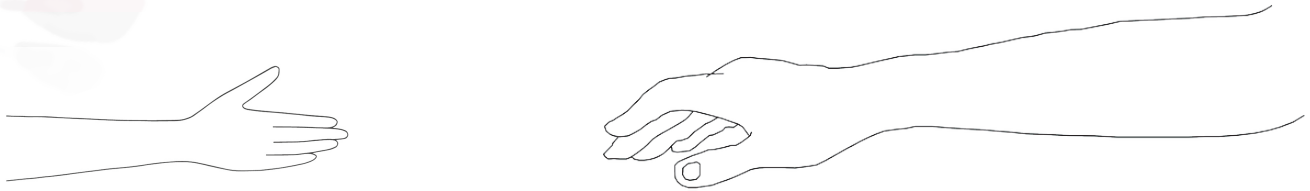


The following is a manifesto for all those who dare dream and fight for a world without cages, without borders, and for the liberation for all exploited peoples on this earth.

ON ABOLISHING ICE

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was established in 2003 after George W. Bush's propaganda of patriotism led to other state-funded human atrocities, such as the age of modern surveillance and the Iraq War. In retrospect, we as a collective millennial generation denounced these atrocities as inhumane and continue to play active roles in ensuring they end. It's time we extend those efforts towards abolishing ICE.

Under the Department of Homeland Security, ICE became the police force for the ongoing nativist campaign to criminalize and dehumanize immigrant communities exploiting the chaos of 9/11. With little to no oversight, ICE has engaged in human rights violations that range from sexual assault to kidnapping children from the grasps of their parents to hold as political prisoners. Trumpism has allowed ICE's mechanism to function at its full potential, after having received an expansion from Barack Obama since its creation that was supported by Democrats such as the Clintons².

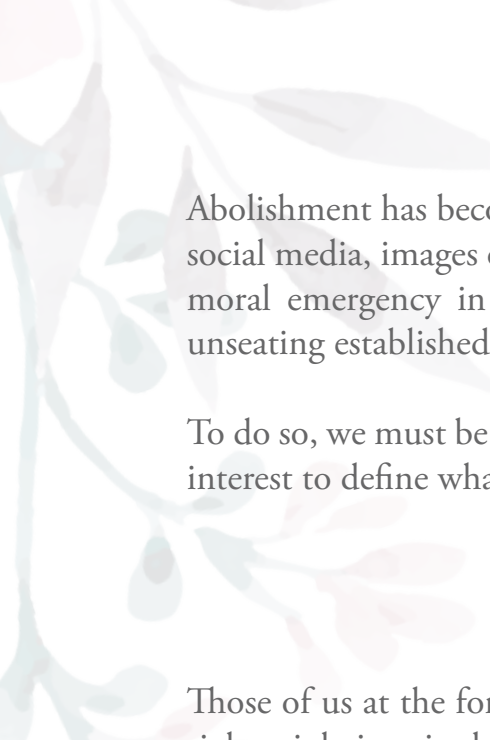


Since then, ICE has embedded its violence across the country by turning all law enforcement agencies into its oppressive tentacles. Already accustomed to enforcing laws built upon white anxieties against people of color, sheriffs and police officers across the country seamlessly collaborated with ICE by detaining undocumented immigrants or notifying ICE whenever an undocumented person was being released from county jail. This created a system that doubly punished undocumented immigrants they criminalized, entangled them into the prison industrial complex, and then removed them from the country after exploiting their labor.

In California, we put a stop to this senseless relationship by pushing forth policies that halted any collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE. The inkling for law enforcement to continue robbing migrants of due process proved much too great for sheriffs, as they now push forth loopholes that undermine what the people of California have demanded. We believe that when law enforcers refuse to follow the will of the people, it is our moral duty to rise up and abolish them.

[1] Samantha Michaels, Maddinson Pauly. "Private Companies Are About to Cash In on Trump's Deportation Regime." *Mother Jones*. (2008). <https://www.motherjones.com/crime-justice/2017/12/private-prison-companies-are-about-to-cash-in-on-trumps-deportation-regime/>

[2] Jorge Rivas. "Here Are Some of the Democrats Who Paved the Way for the Family Separation Crisis." *Splinter News* online (2018). <https://splinternews.com/here-are-some-of-the-democrats-who-paved-the-way-for-th-1826963453>



Abolishment has become the moral cry of our generation. With the expanding access to social media, images of children in cages began to circulate amidst the masses, flagging a moral emergency in the United States. From grassroots organizers to rising Leftists unseating established Democrats, the time to abolish ICE is now.

To do so, we must be clear in our demands so as to not give agency to the state or private interest to define what that abolishment looks like.

The following is a compassionate liberating model to detention and deportation.

Those of us at the forefront are not shocked by the inhumanity of ICE and the human rights violations in detention centers. In fact, these violations have been going on for the past decade with almost no public backlash against the state for allowing these atrocities. Given the lack of interest from citizens to ensure their country liberated all of our people under Obama's deportation spree, we took community defense into our own hands. We developed deportation defense as a community-led liberation model, from which we can build a world where ICE is abolished.


At its core, deportation defense campaigns are aimed at providing liberating models for undocumented immigrants in detention, so that they may fight their legal case outside of cages, where they are not provided access to legal representation. At CIYJA, we and our partners have been successfully liberating our community members out of detention, through extensive campaigns that pressure ICE officials to use **prosecutorial discretion** to allow immigrants to fight their legal cases outside of detention. Once released, we plug community members with legal representation, and ensure they have access to resources that allow them to thrive and reintegrate into life out of detention. We then follow up when they have immigration court dates, to both ensure they are attending and to accompany them to ensure that ICE does not attempt to send them to immigration prisons again.

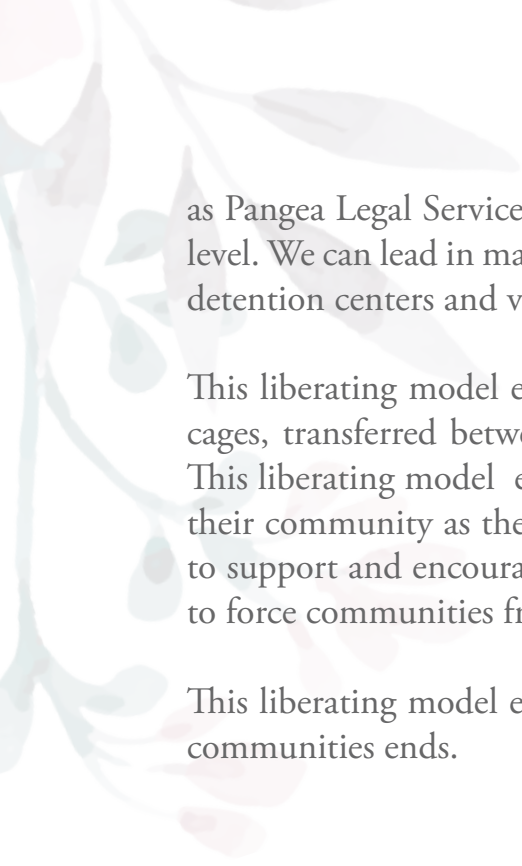
prosecutorial discretion

Refers to ICE's ability to use their executive powers to release any person they have incarcerated.

In this way, we have managed to abolish the cages around individual people for a more compassionate alternative that ensures the safety of our immigrant community as they are prayed on by ICE. Through abolishment, we can extend this model to all immigrants currently detained.

Organizations such as CIYJA, Not1More, Immigrant Youth Coalition, Freedom For Immigrants, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, and legal services providers such






as Pangea Legal Services and Centro Legal have been practicing these models at a local level. We can lead in making this a national and compassionate strategy to replace private detention centers and violent immigration enforcement.

This liberating model ensures that our community members are not catted around in cages, transferred between privately owned detention centers to federal penitentiaries. This liberating model ensures that no family separation occurs, because folks remain in their community as they fight their right to remain in the country. With a community to support and encourage their legal fight, there is no need for militarized enforcement to force communities from their homes and workplaces.

This liberating model ensures the dehumanization that is happening to our immigrant communities ends.



ON OPENING BORDERS

Undocumented people have been made stateless and disenfranchised by both this country and the ones we fled. Often, the acceptance of U.S. imperialism by the neo-liberal politicians in our countries of origin led to the political and economical short fallings that forced us to flee in search for safety. Once in the United States, we were then dehumanized through criminalization and racialized immigration enforcement. This has shaped understandings of citizenship as a token for complacency towards a specific nationalist agenda. In the United States, that nationalism has exceeded nationality and focuses instead on whiteness.

From the Chinese Exclusion Act to the recent Muslim Ban legitimized by the Supreme Court, immigration limitations and enforcement have often been racially charged. One cannot deny the role white nationalism played in pushing out non-white migrants from this country. This can be seen in the ways the United States refuses to investigate the rise of Russian mothers entering the country to give birth to white Russian babies while simultaneously it rips the children of Central American (Indigenous) asylees from their arms³.



As such, we believe all immigration policies to be deeply rooted in white nationalist ideologies hidden behind feigned concerns over public safety and homeland security. As those condemned to be creating public and homeland uncertainty, we see right through the lies of such propaganda being espoused by the likes of Trump and Obama before him.

When they say animals, we see simply young immigrants navigating the brims of this country attempting to survive. When they say invaders, we see refugees wishing their homelands could provide the safety we believed existed in the United States. Our lived-experiences and the people who surround us provide the nuance necessary for us to understand that all policies being drafted to settle public uproar never take into consideration the people they're being created around.

To fight for migrant liberation is to openly challenge the notion of citizenship and

[3] Cyanthia MacFadden, Sarah Fitzpatrick, Tracy Connor, Anna R. Schechter. "Birth Tourism Brings Russian Baby Boom to Miami." *NBC News* online. (2018). <https://www.nbc-news.com/news/us-news/birth-tourism-brings-russian-baby-boom-miami-n836121>

statehood, all of which are used to spread nationalist inclings that antagonize those on the fringes. To fight for migrant liberation is to ask the United States, Germany, Russia, China, and all superpowers of the world to stop meddling in the economic and political processes of the Global South.

*This is why we make a case for
opened borders*

On initiating the legal fight against California's sanctuary policies, Jeff Sessions attempted to delegitimize those of us who fight for the freedom of movement and migration as "opened borders radicals"⁴. Truthfully, the only opened border radicals in this country are those capitalist interests that have constantly disrupted the political processes of the countries migrants have fled. Given that these capitalist interests are often in the name of centralizing the natural resources of the world for the easiest access of white United States citizens, the nation-state supports in their efforts.

Anything from the United States' support of the occupation of Palestine⁵ to the support of the far-right dictator of Honduras⁶ lays the framework for this understanding. It then follows that the United States has no moral right to refuse to adopt open border policies to accept the refugees of the lands they've devastated with political medlings and deprived of opportunities to prosper.

In an ever globalizing world that social media has connected more than ever before, it is the moral responsibility of all humans to ensure dignity and respect is made accessible to all who inhabit this earth. We are, afterall, a species capable of communicating with each other to establish trust and companionship. It is misguidance that has led our moral character to be taken over by nationalism which, even in its most passive form, denies us the privilege of belonging to the global community.

Collaboration, understanding, and belonging is human nature to us. Let us expand our understanding of belonging beyond the nation-state, and see ourselves as a species capable of abolishing cages and creating compassion—a species that celebrates the cultural richness of our multi-ethnic world, which refuses to homogenize the world under one culture while simultaneously erasing the rest.

[4] Nick Miller. "Attorney General Jeff Sessions calls California 'Open Border Radicals'." *Capital Public Radio* (2018).

[5] "US Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *PBS News Hours* online (2006). https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/middle_east-jan-june06-us_05-11

[6] Tracy Wilkinson. "Trump Administration Recofnizes Honduran President's Reelection." *LA Times* print (2017).

ON ENDING GLOBAL CAPITALISM

Above all else, we recognize the fight for migrant liberation is directly pitted against global capitalism. Through it, imperialist powers that have devastated global natural resources for the purpose of centralizing and then limiting who has access to them.

Capitalists have successfully convinced an entire world that free will is somehow correlated with a free, unregulated market. This unregulated market could then extract all natural resources from nonwhite homelands with the promise of establishing a free people. Such was its propaganda during the Cold War.

Whenever the people of these lands would resist, the United States facilitated the political disruption necessary for far-right political puppets to take hold of the people—such was the case in Central America as it was in Southeast Asian countries⁷. At the same time, communist powers supported militias to cease control over the people utilizing Leftist ideologies. Though it provided the framework for various people to rise up against an established order, both communism and capitalism were used to lay ruin of our homelands.



Many of our parents are refugees from the Cold War fought outside of the white world.

This same structure has then been used to marginalize the displaced refugees once here for the purpose of creating a class of laborers of color that the United States can exploit. It is then able to dispose of these folks through deportation should the population become less white.

[7] Cole Kazadin. "The Violence Central Americans Are Fleeing Was Stoked by US." *VICE News* (2018).

*This is why we must openly challenge
global capitalism*

The exploitation of the human body must end, which means relentlessly unregulated capitalism must be a thing of the past. Labor movements have historically challenged this apparatus, and intersecting the labor movement with agricultural migrant laborers has even led to death⁸. Private interest murdering to stall any such collaboration only highlights the importance of that work. Just as those criminalized and imprisoned in the United States have been forced to become industrial slaves, so have migrant workers become slaves for the agricultural⁹ and urban elite.

As we work to create a world in which no human being is seen as disposable labor, we must ensure there is health access for all poor and working class people, regardless of their legal status. We must ensure all have access to shelter and nutrition.

As a movement, we must denounce any and all privileges built on the suffering and exploitation of the masses. This means refusing the creation of an **undocumented elite** that absorbs all resources for the purpose of creating an urban, educated class of immigrants. We must build with our agricultural communities to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect amidst the labor that feeds the entire nation.

undocumented elite

The so-called "hi-pros."

Beyond the U.S. border, we must ensure that private interests no longer get the legal support of any nation-state. We must stand with poor people globally and denounce any and all private interests that exploit global natural resources. We must ensure these interest don't violate other people's dignity when it becomes illegal to do it to poor folks within these borders.

If poor liberation is not a global movement, we risk pushing labor violations to the Global South.

[8] Cesar Chavez. "Eulogy for Rufino Contreras." *UFW.org* (1979).

[9] Mark Bitman. "California Central Valley, Land of a Billion Vegetables." *New York Times* (2012).

IN CONCLUSION

In closing, the liberation of migrants should not begin and end within any given border. It should be a stateless movement to end the suffering of globally impoverished people. If it must begin with the abolition of ICE, it must then proceed to abolish all cages. It should aim to be a global push to end nationalism in all its shapes and forms. It should be a promise that as stateless peoples, we owe no allegiance to a flag but to each other and all global communities displaced by nation-states.

Migrant liberation should create a world which respects the cultural richness that thrive at each corner of our planet. It should be an invitation to exchange ideas and customs to ensure global prosperity. It should not rest until it ends the attempt from any one culture to dominate the rest. It should end the justification of economic systems built around egotistical rule.

Migrant liberation should mean that migration is a choice, not a necessity for survival.