

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

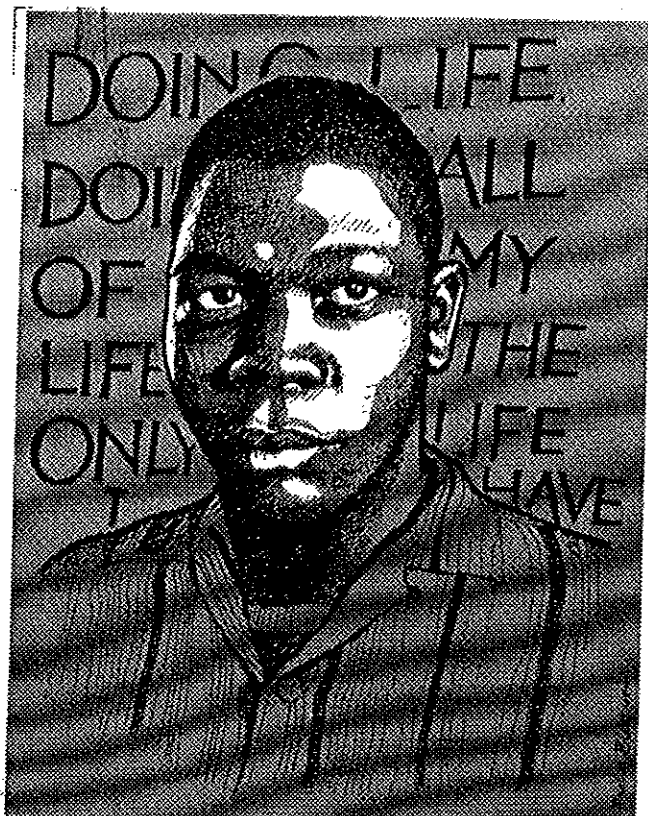
MANY HANDS, VOICES, AND MINDS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TOOLKIT.

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Rachel Burger CFF

MANY PEOPLE'S WISDOM WAS CAUGHT by our mini disc recorder and helped shape the tone of the kit. Thanks to: Dan Berger, Rose Braz, Mimi Budnick, Melissa Burch, Masai Ehehosi, Linda Evans, Craig Gilmore, Pilar Maschi, Brigette Sarabi, Julia Sudbury, and Linda Thurston.

DURING THE SUMMER OF 2003, Jason Glick interned with Critical Resistance and helped us push this project through to completion. His research, interview skills, and good humor about never ending editing have left a definite mark on this kit.

INTRODUCTION

THIS TOOLKIT EMERGED OUT OF DISCUSSIONS THAT BEGAN IN BOSTON IN MARCH 2002. Members of Critical Resistance (CR) and partner organizations gathered for a roundtable discussion on abolitionist organizing strategies. One of the things that we agreed we needed to strengthen our work was a set of ideas, exercises, and resources to share with the people we organize with that would explain the idea of abolishing the prison industrial complex (PIC) and would help us take concrete steps toward that goal.

The kit is not a step-by-step guide to PIC abolition. It is a kit designed primarily for U.S.-based community organizers already working toward abolition and our allies. However, we hope it will be useful even for people who may not have thought much about abolition or who feel unsure about how useful it is as a goal.

We have put the toolkit together to be used as a whole or in pieces, depending on the situation. It could be used to help structure a roundtable discussion, like the one we had in Boston. You could pull out individual information sheets or exercises to use in a workshop. The kit could be used as a set of training materials to help people understand the idea of PIC abolition. It could also work as a set of materials to help strengthen ongoing abolitionist organizing.

Inside the toolkit, you'll find general information sheets to help make the connections between PIC abolition and other social justice struggles. You will find strategies for talking about and planning for abolitionist work. You will find exercises to try out some of those strategies. You will find ideas about alternatives to the PIC. You will find definitions of the terms we use. You will find lists about other things to read and people to call for more ideas. The quotes found in sidebars throughout the kit are pulled from interviews with abolitionist and anti-PIC organizers and from statements written by survivors of violence who do work against the PIC. The survivor statements can be found in full in the appendix, and we hope to make a CD of the interviews available soon. (If you'd like a copy, please contact us.)

Finally, this toolkit is not an ending point, but a place to start thinking about these issues. It is a living document that you should add to continually as you discover more ideas and materials that help you take concrete steps toward PIC abolition. If you come across an exercise that you think gets to the heart of the issue, send it our way. If you hear about a great group working to end the PIC, let us know. If you develop pamphlets or talking points or keywords that make doing this work easier, give us a call. We need as many tools as we can get to fight this fight. Please use the feedback forms at the end of this kit to help us keep making it a more useful tool. Make as many copies of that form as you like and keep the feedback coming.

CR ABOLITION TOOLKIT WORKGROUP

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CRITICAL RESISTANCE MISSION STATEMENT

Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). We do this 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.

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