

ACCOUNTABILITY

THE IDEA THAT IF SOMEONE DOES SOMETHING WRONG, THEY SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE IS OFTEN A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND POPULAR SUPPORT FOR THE PIC. IN THIS KIT, WE USE THE TERM DIFFERENTLY. TRUE ACCOUNTABILITY MEANS MAKING SURE THAT RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN PEOPLE OR GROUPS ARE MET. IT ALSO MEANS THAT EACH SIDE'S NEEDS GET MET.

Within the PIC, punishment is commonly thought of as a tool for creating accountability. Usually the state, through the district attorney, the police, and the courts, claims to use the PIC to hold people accountable for their crimes. This means that they will be held responsible (to the state), given a punishment, and serve out that punishment.

We suggest that accountability has many parts. First, there is the accountability of people to each other, or individuals acting from a sense of responsibility to other individuals. There is also the accountability of groups of people to other groups and to individuals, or the group or society having a responsibility to those groups or individuals. In a broader model of accountability, society as a whole should be responsible to see that the basic needs of individuals and groups are met, and should not stand in the way of those needs being met.

With this model of accountability, responsibility for harm rests not only on a person who caused the harm, but also on the groups of people around them that respond to it, and, the steps taken to address the harm that meet the needs of everyone involved (not just the state). This model of accountability also seeks to provide support both to the harmed and to the person who caused the harm.

SELF-DETERMINATION

SELF-DETERMINATION IS THE IDEA THAT COMMUNITIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DEALINGS WITHOUT BEING CONTROLLED OR RESTRAINED BY OUTSIDE OR GOVERNMENT FORCES.

Community affairs could include economic practices, systems for dealing with harm, housing and education values and policies, political structures, geographical boundaries, and relations with other communities.

To exercise self-determination means that members of a community are accountable to each other, and, most probably, that they have a way to make sure power is shared fairly. Self-determination as a principle was made popular through the struggles of oppressed people, primarily people of color in the US and internationally, for control of resources, power, and land.

Abolitionist efforts to bring an end to the PIC mean supporting oppressed peoples' rights to self-determination by seeking to abolish those racist institutions of domination (prisons, police, state/government armed forces, the CIA and FBI). They also mean bringing our desires, efforts and resources to those communities who are directly affected by the PIC's most aggressive and punishing institutions.

Many fighters for self-determination see imprisoning entire families as a form of genocide. They also see the media-assisted criminalization of both youth and resistance as low-intensity warfare by the government. This warfare is aimed at preventing the rise of liberation and movements for self-determination that can shake the very foundations of the U.S. from within. They see the police as domestic armies. They see the drug war as a plan to paint people of color as dangerous people who have nothing to contribute to society and, therefore, must be removed.

The PIC deliberately and fanatically prevents self-determination. Currently, most communities - especially poor communities and communities of color - don't have a say in how their resources are spent or how resources are spent on them. A concern for self-determination is one way of expressing the political desire to stop the attacks by parts of the PIC - cops, sentencing, environmentally destructive industries, economic exploitation, war-making.

Self-determination is also a guiding principle for abolition. While there might not be a detailed program for how society will work without prisons, police, or detention, the ideal of self-determination gives us a guide for how decisions could be made and for how to begin that work now.

(see also *Liberation Movements and the PIC* in the appendix)

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS A SET OF IDEAS AND A SET OF PRACTICES. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE DEFINES CRIME AS HARM THAT IS DONE BOTH AT THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.

With that in mind, the goal of restorative justice programs and practices is to repair and prevent harm by addressing the needs of all involved in an incident. It focuses on the accused, the accuser or survivor and the communities in which they live, work, or learn (see Alternative Practices section for specific examples).

In the United States, experiments with restorative justice have been mixed. Since many restorative justice practices have their roots in native traditions, their use has not always taken into account cultural features that might not translate well into mainstream US culture. However, restorative justice ideas and strategies can be very helpful in thinking about alternative ways of addressing harm and providing frameworks for programs that are not linked to the state's punishment system.

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

WHO:

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE'S (AFSC) CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

WHAT THEY DO:

"The AFSC works with many groups nationwide to create a system that is not based on prisons, jails, and executions, but on the needs of both victims of crime and perpetrators."

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

AFSC is explicitly abolitionist. They have a long and respected history of organizing for social justice that does not rely on punishment or repression, but that rather stems from strategies that are based on healing and restoration. They have programs around the country (California, Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Arizona, and New York State). The national office in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, coordinates the national work.

CONTACT:

AFSC

1501 Cherry Street Philadelphia PA 19102-1479

phone. 215.241.7130

web. www.afsc.org

That's why as an organization we've never really focused on the drug law reform. Because we've also opposed that false dichotomy between the good prisoners vs. the bad prisoners. The nonviolent drug offenders are the worthy ones and everyone else are the bad guys. We just won't participate in that, but in terms of the question: do we worry about what we work on will make things worse later on? Absolutely. It's like trying to stop the construction of these prisons—is that going to lead to overcrowding? Yeah. And is that going to be hard on prisoners? Absolutely. And we talk with a lot of prisoners about it. It's like, this could mean things actually get worse for awhile. But the longterm goal is: if they don't have a place to put more prisoners, they got to let you out. They've got to make some changes.

BRIDGETTE SARABI

WHO:

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS (ABC)

WHAT THEY DO:

Support work for political prisoners from anarchist perspective.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

While our efforts may not always be completely politically aligned with ABC, their work in support of political prisoners and to bringing public attention to political prisoner cases is among the most important in this country. They connect many people to political prisoners through letter-writing campaigns, prisoner visits, and a series of publications. They also have been an effective public voice for both for abolition and the cause of political prisoners. Their website, American Gulag, is a great resource for a range of prison issues.

CONTACT:

Chicago Anarchist Black Cross
c/o WCF, PO Box 81961 Chicago, IL 60681 USA
web. <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~mai/gulag/abc.html>

WHO:

Bar None

WHAT THEY DO:

Prisoner support, community education and outreach.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

They are an explicitly abolitionist group dedicated to providing prisoner support. They provide consistent correspondence with prisoners around the country and use their community activities (such as the Pelican Bay Prisoners' Art Show) as opportunities to make an abolitionist vision common sense.

CONTACT:

Bar None
PO Box 1 Arcata, CA 95518
phone. 707.476.8724

WHO:

CALIFORNIA PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT (CAPMP)

WHAT THEY DO:

CAPMP is a volunteer organization in Oakland CA that challenges the construction of new prisons in the state. They help rural communities (where most prisons are sited) ignite their own campaigns against prison construction. By building urban-rural alliances against prisons, they are able to link issues that are often kept separate (such as criminalization and environmental justice). They publish a handbook for towns to oppose prison construction and offer direct campaign support to activists throughout CA.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

Their work effectively links the harm prisons do to host towns (particularly environmental and economic devastation) to the harm prisons do to the communities prisoners come from (which we talk about throughout this kit). They are also a good example of a group that keeps a very low overhead (all volunteer, no office space) which allows them to be flexible in their contributions to the work of other organizations. CAPMP doesn't explicitly identify as abolitionist, but organizes from an abolitionist perspective. Their work intentionally aims to build unlikely coalitions against prison expansion (i.e. trying to find links between ranchers and farm workers in rural California), which is not only necessary to stop such projects, but shows that prisons don't benefit anyone. They are a great example of an organization that intentionally maintains a relatively small size and overhead, showing a way to organize that doesn't require huge amounts of administrative energy.

CONTACT:

Prison Moratorium Project
PO Box 339 Berkeley CA 94701
phone. 510.595.4674
email. califpmp@igc.org
web. <http://www.prisonactivist.org/pmp/>

And another thing is, I'm very into locally, communities, whether it's a block or a neighborhood, to take leadership, man. Take your neighborhood back. Start it from the smallest little block or area. We need to deal with our own shit; we need to start being accountable to each other. Not relying on police, or not relying on the state to make our own decisions. So I don't know, I'll do it in the littlest ways.

PILAR MASCHI

WHO:

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES (CCA)

WHAT THEY DO:

Develop alternatives to imprisonment and provide services for people who have contact with the criminal justice system.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

Although they primarily work with young people, CCA also works with adults to provide a safe space and programming including programs for court-appointed youth, mentoring and after-school programs, and programs for women in treatment. While their language is very focused on "crime" and on trying to help youth and adults live "productive" lives, they are also committed to showing the connections between alternatives to imprisonment and safety. Their ability to demonstrate how keeping people out of prison can make communities safer (and their emphasis on safety being important for both "offenders" and "victims") is important to the kinds of abolitionist strategies we've discussed.

CONTACT:

Center for Community Alternatives (CCA)
115 East Jefferson St., Suite 300 Syracuse, NY 13202
phone. 315.422.5638 web. www.communityalternatives.org

WHO:

DIRECT ACTION FOR RIGHTS AND EQUALITY (DARE)

WHAT THEY DO:

"Organize low income families in communities of color to win economic, social, and political justice."

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

All of DARE's main campaigns (Behind the Walls, Jobs with Dignity, and Police Accountability) are noteworthy in that they are truly grassroots efforts that are generated and run by DARE's members (low income, people of color) based on the issues that affect their everyday lives. Their leadership institute is also noteworthy in its method of more experienced members training less experienced members in organizing strategies. The Behind the Walls campaign is perhaps most closely aligned to our vision. While the members working on this campaign are not self-identified abolitionists, they continue to make efforts to place their work (primarily on conditions of confinement) within a context of up-ending the larger system. Representatives have also participated in Critical Resistance's NE abolition roundtable discussion and have worked in coalition with CR to continue stretching their analysis to include ideas about abolition.

CONTACT:

Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE)
340 Lockwood St. Providence, RI 02907
phone. 401.351.6960 web. www.daretowin.org

WHO:

E HO'OPAKELE (PROJECT RESCUE)

WHAT THEY DO:

They are a community based organization that presents an alternative to current systems of punishment. They implement "a restorative justice process to more effectively deal with the rehabilitation of our community members who have made mistakes in their lives which have gotten them involved in the judicial process. Our aspiration is to implement a complementing alternative to the existing judicial process with cases that would be better served by a more holistic therapeutic vehicle."

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

While they will still do some work with the existing criminal justice system in Hawaii (receiving referrals from prisons, probation and parole), they also receive referrals from community elders and are really trying to set up a model that doesn't rely on separation and isolation, but one that relies on reintegration and restoration. Using the alternative methods of Ho'oponopono and Pu'uhonua (see alternatives section), E Ho'opakele is creating a model that is based on rehabilitation and healing. We also like them, because one of the tenets of their mission is, " Stop the building of a new prison or anything disguised as a prison."

CONTACT:

E Ho'opakele
171 King Avenue Hilo, Hawaii 96720
phone. 808.935.4915

WHO:

GENERATION FIVE

WHAT THEY DO:

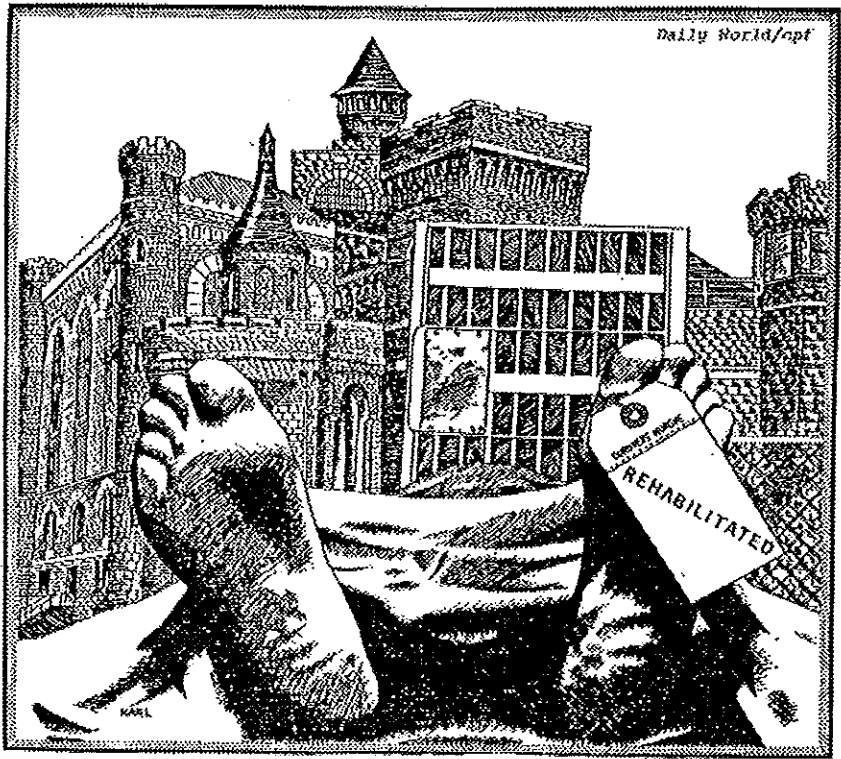
They work to end child sexual abuse.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

They are a model of a program that while not explicitly abolitionist, engages in work that has abolitionist aims. Generation Five takes a holistic approach to the issue of child sexual abuse and understands it as an effect of the social systems in which we live. As such, they work to bring healing and restoration to both the abuser and the survivor. Generation Five also bases its work in a restorative justice approach, attempting "to infuse justice into community frameworks rather than pulling "offending" people out and placing them in prison."

CONTACT:

Generation Five
2 Massasoit St. San Francisco, CA 94110
phone. 415.285.6658
web. www.generationfive.org



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WHO:

HARM REDUCTION COALITION

WHAT THEY DO:

Provide training and materials to serve drug users and communities affected by drug-related harm, as well as community organizing and coalition building around these issues.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

From their website: "With American drug treatment and prevention policy rooted in criminal law enforcement and incarceration, most approaches to drug-related problems help only a tiny fraction of the people who use illicit drugs. We recognize that families and communities (especially communities of color) are frequently devastated not only by addiction, but also by arrest and incarceration, the lack of available drug treatment, infectious disease, poor housing, unemployment, etc." The Harm Reduction Coalition provides a great model of "meeting people where they're at" and plays a significant role in reshaping common notions of what makes our communities safe and secure.

CONTACT:

Harm Reduction Coalition

East Coast Office
22 West 27th St., 5th Floor
New York, NY 10001
phone. 212.213.6576

West Coast Office
1440 Broadway, Suite 510
Oakland, CA 94612
phone. 510.444.6969

web. www.harmreduction.org

WHO:

INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE

WHAT THEY DO:

They are a national organization of radical feminists of color working to end violence against women of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue and grassroots organizing.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

INCITE! is somewhat unique among groups working on issues of violence against women in that they are also explicitly opposed to the reliance on the prison industrial complex as a solution for ending violence against women. As such, they search for strategies and engage in dialogues that look for abolitionist approaches to the difficult issue of ending violence against women. Critical Resistance and INCITE! have jointly authored a statement on gender violence and the prison industrial complex.

CONTACT:

Incite!

P.O. Box 6861 Minneapolis, MN 55406

phone. 415.553.3837

web. www.incite-national.org

WHO:

Justice Now

WHAT THEY DO:

Provide direct legal services to women prisoners in California. They are developing Building a World without Prisons abolition campaign with women prisoners.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

They achieve a balance between providing services that meet prisoners' immediate needs (such as those around conditions of confinement or medical neglect) and an abolitionist agenda that privileges getting as many women out of prisons as possible. Justice NOW is also a teaching law clinic that provides law students and undergraduates, and high schoolers interested in the law with an education in what it means to be activist attorneys. The co-founders of Justice Now serve as excellent models of lawyers who use the law toward activist ends.

CONTACT:

Justice Now

1322 Webster St., Suite 210 Oakland, CA 94612

phone. 510.839.7654

web. www.jnow.org

WHO:

JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE

WHAT THEY DO:

"The Justice Policy Institute is a non-profit research and policy organization dedicated to ending society's reliance on incarceration and promoting effective and just solutions to social problems".

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

The Justice Policy Institute provides us with the ammunition we need to do our organizing more effectively. They help us get the fact and figures we need to support what our experiences tell us is true. They are also great at bringing media attention to the fight against the PIC. Their publications are a good source of information about PIC issues across the country.

CONTACT:

Justice Policy Institute
4455 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite B-500 Washington, DC, 20008
phone..202.363.7847 fax. 202.363.8677
web. <http://www.riseup.net/jpi/>

WHO:

KENSINGTON WELFARE RIGHTS UNION

WHAT THEY DO:

" The Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU) is a multi-racial organization of, by and for poor and homeless people. We believe that we have a right to thrive—not just barely survive. KWRU is dedicated to organizing of welfare recipients, the homeless, the working poor and all people concerned with economic justice."

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

KWRU was started by welfare recipients for welfare recipients in direct response to issues that threatened their communities. They provide opportunities for people who have been silenced and made invisible, to participate in the public forums where the decisions that directly affect them get made. They help people get the basic necessities that are so crucial to stability and survival—food, clothing, medical care, housing, utilities. They are building the movement by bringing in partners, while never forgetting that any movement against poverty must be led by the poor.

CONTACT:

Kensington Welfare Rights Union
NUHHCE, ASFCME, AFL-CIO
PO Box 50678 Philadelphia, PA 19132-9720
phone. (215) 203-1945 fax. (215) 203-1950
email. kwru@kwru.org
web. <http://www.kwru.org>

WHO:

MAYA ANGELOU PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (MAPCS)

WHAT THEY DO:

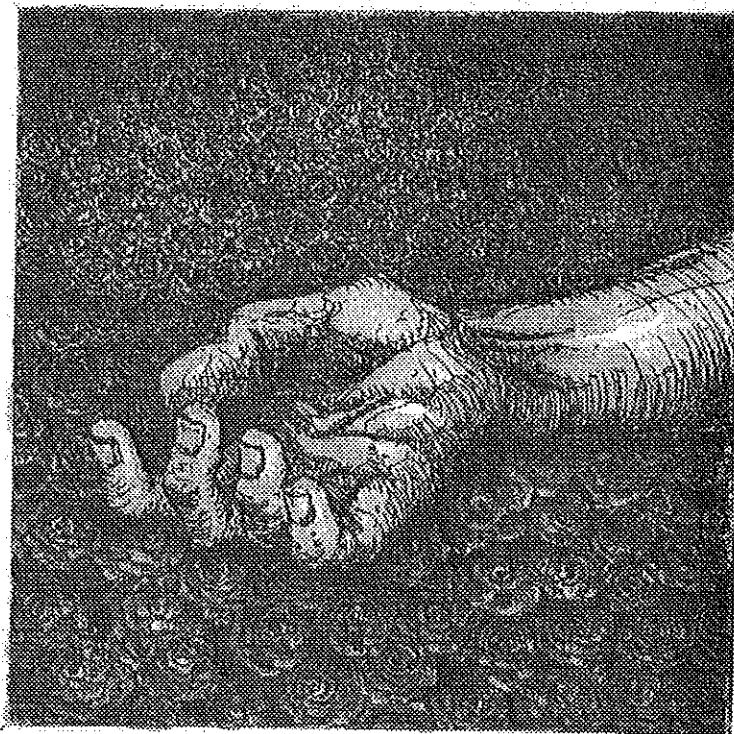
MAPCS, run by the See Forever Foundation, is a public charter high school for court-appointed and at-risk youth. The school offers a comprehensive program to its students, including academic training, employment and business training in one of two foundation-run nonprofit businesses, after school mentoring, and residential support for those who need it.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

The model used by MAPCS understands that merely addressing academic performance among at-risk and court appointed youth does not do nearly enough. The school helps its students gain employment experience and business skills while providing for the needs of their fellow students and community members through the part-time work that each student is required to do either in their catering program (Untouchable Taste Catering, which also provides meals to the student body) or in the Student Technology Center (which provides computer training to both students and neighborhood adults). Students are provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner at school, and there is limited housing for students who need a safe, stable place to live. This holistic approach parallels our idea that basic needs must be met as a foundation for building a world without walls.

CONTACT:

Maya Angelou Public Charter School
1851 9th St. NW Washington, DC 20001
phone. 202.939.9080 fax. 202.939.9084
web. www.seeforever.org



WHO:

PRISON ACTIVIST RESOURCE CENTER (PARC)

WHAT THEY DO:

They provide curricula, resource directories, and research and organizing materials as support for educators, activists, prisoners, and prisoners' families. They help build networks and produce materials that fundamentally challenge the rapid expansion of the prison industrial complex.

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

PARC is a crucial resource for the anti-prison movement. Their resource directory serves to connect prisoners, prisoners' families, activists, students, and educators with projects and services across the country. They are an important source for information about political prisoners and the struggles for their liberation. They are a clearinghouse for the wealth of information out there to help us fight the PIC.

CONTACT:

PARC

PO Box 339 Berkeley CA 94701

phone. 510.893.4648 fax. 510.893.4607

web. www.prisonactivist.org

WHO:

WESTERN PRISON PROJECT

WHAT THEY DO:

"The Western Prison Project exists to coordinate a progressive response to the criminal justice system, and to build a grassroots, multi-racial movement that achieves prison reform and reduces the over-reliance on incarceration in the western states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and Nevada."

WHY THEY'RE LISTED HERE:

Western Prison Project is a great model of grassroots organizing and leadership development. They do not identify themselves as abolitionists, yet the work they take up strikes at the heart of the PIC (including recent efforts on a prison moratorium in Oregon). They organize mainly with prisoners, former prisoners, and family members, and are greatly respected throughout activist circles. They produce a quarterly newsletter that provides excellent information and analysis, as well as fact sheets and reports that are accessible and easy to use in organizing.

CONTACT:

Western Prison Project

P.O. Box 40085 Portland, OR 97240

phone. 503.335.8449 fax. 503.232.1922

email. info@westernprisonproject.org

web. <http://www.westernprisonproject.org>