This printing marks the fourth edition of The Abolitionist. We’ve finally growing into our skin a bit and feel better situated to make a real impact. We appreciate your submissions, support, patience, and encouragement through these fledgling issues and apologize for our inconsistencies. We’re acutely aware of them.

The purpose of the paper is to fine tune the theory and practice of our shared movement to dismantle the prison-industrial complex. So for the paper to be worthwhile, each edition must move us closer to our vision of mutual liberation in real ways. We must progress and develop together. Since the paper comes out quarterly, we choose pieces that weave deeper analyses and criticisms with ideas and strategies to build unity and movement. Collectively we have a pretty good understanding of how terrible the situation is, what we need are practical steps to overcome our weaknesses and divisions.

For the paper to continue we need you to be active partners in this collaborative by:

• letting us know you’re receiving the paper
• giving us feedback that we can include in Letters to the Editor
• debating political, strategic, and tactical differences
• sharing ideas, advice, and topics you’d like to see addressed in future editions
• identifying issues you think need attention
• getting your friends and families involved
• offering whatever resources you can to sustain it
• filling out the survey we’ve included in this issue

Although we can’t print or respond to everything we receive, each letter is a contribution that shapes the paper’s content. If a submission has potential, but is not printable as is, then we will work with you on it. Please also give us permission to pull quotations or use sections from your submission when you first send it in. This will give us the flexibility to include more perspectives. We want people to see this as a process that creates dialogue and generates collective purpose. Mostly, we desire the paper to be a principled beacon of solidarity that guides and honed us to victory.

We want the paper to be more inclusive of those who resist and inspire from inside so that we broaden our conception and practice of self-determination. We’re also very aware that the language can be dense and are working on making it more accessible without losing content. Regular columns can be dense and are working on making it more accessible without losing content. Regular columns that embody the struggles of women, youth, lifers, queer, and transgender political workers are in motion. Please write to us if you are interested in becoming more involved.

On the finance tip, over half of our papers are sent inside for free, so we must secure enough paid subscriptions to carry these costs. Please spread the word by sharing the paper and encouraging people to become subscribers or supporters in whatever way they can! We want to send a shout out to those who kicked down seed money to get the paper up and going, to our subscribers, and to those who were able to send us stamps. It all makes this thing go! Thanks!

In the following pages you’ll find the words of Stephanie Collins, Pablo Agrio, Mario Rocha, Ramsey Muniz, John Bowman, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Dylan Rodriguez, Viet Mike Ngo, Andrea Smith, Alexander Lee, PREAP RJ Maccani, and Liz Samuels.

From fiery lyrics to prophesies of the Sixth Sun drawing near, each and every voice speaks their refusal to disappear.

Together they touch upon land, torturous histories, divisions, disappearances, as well as heroism, refusal, the transgression of boundaries, resilience, and unity.

Word by word, brick by brick, until we’re all free!

Dear Friends and Allies,

Critical Resistance (CR) is a national grassroots organization whose mission is to end society’s use of imprisonment and policing as solutions to social, political, and economic problems. We work through ten chapters across the country in campaigns and projects that push us closer to this end.

CR always seeks to be guided and led by those most impacted by this crisis: people who are or have been in prison, family members, and survivors of police violence. That’s why we are asking you to respond to a confidential survey about the issues you see as most important, the issues you would like us to work on in the future, and the issues you would like to join us in working on.

CR hopes that this survey reaches as many people most impacted by these issues as possible. We would like you to share the survey (located on page 10) with your families, communities, and any other people who have been impacted by this crisis.

Obviously, we cannot work on every issue and the list below does not include everything we could take on. We also know that our allies are working on some of these issues already, so this survey may lead us to join existing work. We are also always happy to talk to you further about these ideas. You can call us at 510.444.0484. If you are in prison, you may call us collect. Finally, we need you to win! Please consider getting involved with your local CR chapter.

While we are not requiring you to share information about yourself in this survey, if you are willing to give us your name, and contact information, particularly where you live, that would be most helpful.

With much thanks and in solidarity,

One of Rodriguez’s key contributions is how he traces the current prison system to the Middle Passage, through which slaves were brought to the Americas, while consistently reminding us how imprisoned radical intellectuals have continued to call out and resist the “social truth” of those connections. This historical bond brings into sharp relief the primary function of the prison industrial complex: to produce theories and discourse about the reality of violence.

Rodriguez writes, “I’m interested in stretching both the historical reach and the conceptual boundaries of this genealogical tracing. This is to say that the prison is a ‘desirability’ that was elaborated on here, and that we should not challenge it. I’m interested in understanding the complexities of the current prison system, and how the contemporary race to incarcerate is part of a broader social and historical process.”

A misunderstanding of how the relationship between freedom and “unfreedom” is the basis for the prison industrial complex. This is why so many anti-prison activists reproduce those structures in their efforts to reform the prison system. Many of these reformist values and assumptions is the acceptance of non-white criminality and the unacceptability of non-white crime-humanization that underpins law and order.

Rodriguez uses imprisoned intellectual Antonio Gramsci’s idea of “war of manoeuvre” and “war of position” to differentiate between how the conditions people working for freedom face in the US have to do with the political struggles and tactical availability for resistance. A “war of maneuver” has the battlefield as its field of engagement, which means that we have to plan it covertly. We can’t let our captors know what we discuss in house or in our own offices. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited. We can’t let our captors know that we are going to lose and therefore our activities are going to be limited.
ATTAINDER IN CALIFORNIA: ALIVE AND WELL

Editor’s Preface: Public Agitator’s “Attainder in California” touches on the importance of understanding how victims’ rights groups fight for justice. All Crime Victims United of California and the Doris Tate Crime Victims Bar Association effectively lobby for increasing punitive parole terms, conditions of confinement, and “no parole” policies. Their support of highly emotional victim impact statements during sentencing and parole hearings remains universal.

Conservative victim’s rights groups have close working relationships with the Justice Department, district attorneys, police, and in the case of Crime Victims United of California and the Doris Tate Crime Victims Bar Association, direct-judgment dependence on the California Convictional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA). This translates into unchecked abuses of power and influence. For example, Crime Victims United California are the only opponents of Proposition 65, which would have reformed certain aspects of California’s Three Strikes Law and resulted in a smaller prison population. This directly counters the interests of the CCPOA.

Susan Feiner, the new chairwoman of the California Board of Parole Hearings (previously the Board of Prison Terms), was herself formerly the director of the Doris Tate Crime Victims Bar Association. The coaching of the Board of Parole Hearings on the Eighteenth Amendment goals of The Other Campaign (http://othercampaign.org) represents a pernicious and illegal campaign caper requiring the immediate termination of Susan Feiner from any public post, if she were to continue to engage in such activities.

As a consequence of these tactics, an entity is now set in stone forever for discussion for the sake of support for community and community accountability for survivors of interpersonal violence and ensure the safety and self-determination of all members of society. Otherkin’s lives are not sentenced to a death dealt by human hands.
“life in the County Jail!” Many brothers have come to learn about my unique situation, and, before I have even uttered a single word as to why my mere face reads like a front-page headline: “Young life returns to Los Angeles, hopes to overcome with odds.” Perhaps it is my casual smile – why would anyone be so happy to be inside the most miserable, violent, overcrowded jail in America? Unlike me, their original cases are for (the majority, at least) still pending, hence the uncertainty in their eyes when they come to me for general advice, or a sketch of what’s like in prison. Many will end up “catching the chain to the state” upon legal resolution. Many more will leave because the tribulations of prison life, and the void that I must honor it for bringing them into my path. For with every group of young people that I have shared space with during this ride of passage back to the place of my birth, I have received the greatest feeling one can experience when looking along the trail. Welcomed by our spiritual people, my friends have made me feel loved. They have enabled me to feel “at home” in the soil of this bullfighting, against the sacred, blessed by their sense of humor, moved by their anger, inspired by their resilience, and touched by their strength. In these unforgettable moments, we have exchanged laughter, tears, county-style-spreads, the bitter taste of op- eration, and the will to move forward despite the obstacles and pain. Lying here, at the dawn of a new year, this experience has given me not just knowledge, but rather a lasting sense of direction; for me to truly understand what needs to be colonized, to be stripped of self-determination; and now, with every bone in my body, I believe that I was born for this purpose: to help us break this cycle of enslavement and build something new, something needed, something now.

Though my future, too, rests in the hands of a judge, the time of my release will decide whether or not my petition for writ of habeas corpus has been granted or not. A few years out of this lobotomized persecution of my people disturbs me even more than the physical and the mental fadility that violates me innately. We are supposed to be presumed innocent ‘till proven guilty’, yet everyday the truth is that we transgress our human rights. Who said the holocaust never happened? Come to L.A. and see for yourself. I have always told myself that nothing would make me more happy than to see justice and freedom. It always appears that the only thing that would make me happier would be seeing the end to this reality, which imposes such affliction in my soul. Can it be that he struggles for liberation has subtly taken greater priority over my own personal fight for freedom? Or is it that the struggle for freedom has always been one? What is it that Che Guevara wrote to his mother, Celia, in the days before journeying to Cuba from a Mexican jail cell? “In those days of prison and the previous ones of training I identified totally with my comrades of the cause. . . The concept of ‘I’ disappeared totally to give place to the concept ‘us’. I was a communist molecule and naturally I seem to be an insurrectionary, but really it was (and is) beautiful to be able to feel that removal.”

Thus, even though studying Strickland v. Washington and the later elaborated efforts to refine my awareness of the legal causes of my plight, I consider it important to expose my brothers to the social and political causes of our plight, as a spiritual community, and as a colonized people. Detached from the "freedom files" and books I have consumed in prison during my almost 8 years of incarcer- ation, I can all do to advance their thoughts and feed their hunger is to speak freely from the heart; and, when the ‘I’ has disappeared to give place to the concept of ‘us’ I sing for them, I sing for myself, I sing for us . . . CONTINUED ON PAGE 11
BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Abolitionist caught up with former Black Panthers and recent Grand Jury resisters John Bowman, Hank Jones, and Richard Brown. Along with Ray Boudreaux and Harold Taylor they make up the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights. They’ve been traveling around the country sharing their story and educating people on COINTELPRO, torture, repression, and their use under today’s PATRIOT Act.

Recently, the UN Committee on Torture found the US in violation of the International Convention Against Torture at Guantánamo Bay and numerous other illegal US prisons around the world. The committee also stated that the $8.5 million investment into the torture of 192 Black men at the hands of former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and members of his department during the 70s and 80s is completely inadequate.

Drawing on their own experiences, John, Hank, and Richard show how harassment, torture, and imprisonment are systematically used against political activists working for social change. They expose torture for what it is: a tried-and-true method of social control that has been used throughout US history. They demonstrate how important it is to speak out and build communities of resistance and healing against State torture and repression.

The Abolitionist: How did you first be acquainted with the Black Panthers and what happened in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New Orleans in 1973?

John Bowman (JB): I was born and raised in San Francisco and that’s where I joined the Black Panther Party in 1967. When I got introdured to the Black Panther Party, in point of form I became interested in finding out more and I began to go into their office and listen to some of their programs and talk about the orientation of what they were doing. And I thought that this would be something I could get a lot of energy toward because that was an area where there was some need of the people in the community. I think I was 17 or 18.

We went to a place they called 15th Street and Lake which is where they eventually went all over the country explaining the Black Panther Party 10-point platform and program which included free breakfast, free medical clinics, organizing rent strikes, getting landords to upgrade the housing and networking with other people in different communities to get medical supplies and to get medical doctors to come into the clinics which we would set up.

In San Francisco they started the 15th Squad . . . an elite group of police officers whose only function was to harass, arrest, and disrupt the work of the members of the Black Panther Party who were in the community doing their work. Sometimes they would target people for a week or two, put them in jail, falsely accuse them of hav­ ing narcotics, of having weapons, and taking them for questioning about something that happened somewhere in San Francisco. This would cause disruption in the organizing efforts of the Black Panther Party. It also caused economic drain on the resources that the Black Panther Party in San Francisco and in Oakland had because hold money was three to four times a week for some people, some people were three and four times a week. This was a tactic that the San Francisco police depart­ ment in conjunction with the FBI had employed against all members of the Black Panther Party to disrupt their organizing rhythm. The Abolitionist: Tell us about what happened in San Francisco at the Ingleside Police Station and how that led to the arrests of members of the Black Panther Party.

Hank Jones (HJ): There was an incident at Ingleside where a police officer was killed out on the street and there were two kid detectives involved with that case. This has always been a point of contention that some Black radi­ cals were responsible for that and the fact that finally fell on members of the Black Panther Party as selling drugs to people from San Francisco, which led to the arrest of some of those members in New Orleans in 1973. That is where the torture element came in.

JB: In 1973 in New Orleans there was at least a dozen people arrested who were from the commun­ ity and they were hospitalized with. They were interrogated and questioned. Three people: myself, Harold Taylor, and Rubin Scott were separated from everyone, then from each other, and then each one of us was interrogated and tortured. We were interrogated and tortured. We were taken to separate places where we were (greeted by) police officer Frank McCoy and officer Edward Erdelatz who were investigating the Ingleside [case]. They were in New Orleans at the time we were arrested.

When the interrogation and the torture we would take place there [were] instruments of torture. There was a wood blanket that was soaked in hot water [that] was put over our heads. And then there was the cattle prod, which was used to electric shock our bodies in all the sensitive places: one’s penis, testicles, anus, under the foot, the [beh] arm, on the [beh] toes. This cattle prod was one of the consistent tools they would use beside their flats in places that don’t bruise like in the back of your neck, your stomach, and they would use a blackjack, which is a flat piece of iron pipe encased in rubber. They would use that on my ankles and across my shoulders and on my elbows and my wrist bones. This did not cause bruising and this was part of their torture preparing for interrog­ ation. This process went on for several days. Sleep deprivation and denial of food, sleep, court appear­ ences, and all the other things with other people. Each one of us went through a similar process.

Another instrument of torture they used was a plastic bag, such as a bag you get your cleaning out of. They would put that around your face and it would cause you to suffocate and lose consciousness. Once you begin to lose consciousness you would be taken off and then you would start the physical process again with the other instruments I mentioned.

HJ: They worked in tag-teams, these torturers. They would wheel in people in the tag teams over the course of 4 or 5 days. All the time the torture was taking place. They would take us and put our clothes on and get us in front of the inspectors. They would interrogate us. Those questions would come in the form of asking people’s names, addresses, phone numbers, and locations of people and wanting to know where people were who were fugitives and they wanted to know what our activities were in the Black Panther Party. When we did not collabo­ rate with their thinking then that would become a problem.

The Abolitionist: How long did this go on?

JB: The questioning could last for an hour or ten minutes. It all depends on how irritated the questioners had gotten with the answers we were giving them. Sometimes we would be in there for hours just going over and over again the [same] questions. And if we weren’t satisfied we would be taken back to the interrogation room, stripped naked, handcuffed to the chair, and the process of torture would start again.

JB: They worked in tag-teams, these torturers. They would wheel in people in the tag teams over the course of 4 or 5 days. All the time the torture was taking place. They would take us and put our clothes on and get us in front of the inspectors. They would interrogate us. Those questions would come in the form of asking people’s names, addresses, phone numbers, and locations of people and wanting to know where people were who were fugitives and they wanted to know what our activities were in the Black Panther Party. When we did not collabo­ rate with their thinking then that would become a problem. We would have to come back with some legal doc­ ument. After I was still being interrogated and finally up, had a subpoena to take my fingerprints or to have me appear before the grand jury. So I had an op­ tion. Now this was a federal grand jury and these two detectives were deputized as part of a terrorist task force. I submitted to give the prints rather than go before a grand jury. They took the prints and left. My prints were still on file. I have done some time in relation to my political activ­ ities and I’m a licensed real estate appraiser, so my only education people about what is going on with us and other political prisoners who are locked up. I want to try to expose everything that is going on.

The Abolitionist: The Panther Party had a program to address the conditions in the community, the problems in the community. We were being ignored and understudied and underprotected. But what the Party did was they came up with a 10-point pro­ gram and they instituted survival programs which included breakfast for school children, liberation schools and free medical clinics and free cloth­ing programs because we could not depend on this government to provide for us. Today we are spending all of our resources, wage and struggles in countries thousands of miles away and blinding the economy at home and people are suffering. People are not having their needs addressed.

JB: In the late ‘60s and early ‘70s other people who were concerned came together and supported us. We thought we could be kept silent. We knew the law would say no, and you’d go to jail if you ever had it done. But the people out there, the ethnic rights people, the people who are out there in the forefront of the struggle. So you know what they need to do is make sure people know what is going on.

JB: Today the activities that were illegal [in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s] are legal now because of the PATRIOT Act. Because of the actions of Homeland Security everyone is a target. It’s not just Black people, it’s not just Panthers. This is a country where at one time you had freedom of speech, and freedom of assembling and enjoying what say that. Non people are afraid because they happen to you. Our job is to stay ahead of them and get as many people as possible. We’ve been extremely successful. There is a momentum and no matter what happens to us I don’t think it’s going to stop. And that’s the main thing. There was a discipline, a dedicated-ness by the people in the struggle and we were sustained by that. You guys have been out

The Abolitionist: Did you have any concrete strategies that you had in mind or that you had worked through this before. We not only have the experience we have the discipline and we understand what has to be done and it has to be done. They don’t want us teaching our young people how to successfully resist. They don’t want us teaching them how to be an agency targeted against them and we as us and have moved on us as quickly as possible. And to send the message out that if you associ­ ate with these madmen the same thing is going to
Submission Guidelines for the Abolitionist

DEADLINE FOR FIFTH ISSUE IS: September 15, 2006.
The Abolitionist accepts:
- Reproducible artwork (desperately needed!)
- Letters (250 words)
- Short Articles (250-750 words)
- Questions you have about abolition
- Strategies for coming home (jailhouse lawyering or other)
- Useful resources with contact information and description
- Important legal and administrative news
- International, national, and local organizing efforts and prison news

Note that we WILL edit your piece for content, length and clarity unless you tell us not to! If you do not want your piece edited, write a note on your submission indicating that no changes should be made. In this case, however, it might not be used.

Also clearly note if you want us to print your full name and address, just your initials and city, or to simply have it remain anonymous.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to respond to or publish every submission we receive and will be unable to return them unless prior arrangements are made. What we can promise is that we will read everything that comes in and use it to inform our overall work.

Once again, the DEADLINE FOR THE FIFTH ISSUE IS: September 15, 2006.

Please let us know if you would like to be involved in producing the paper. OR if you have questions about what to write for the paper. Also, please forward family members and friends' mailing and email (this option is crucial for us) addresses who you want to receive the newspaper or who might want to get directly involved in working on it. We are still in the process of securing funding for this project. If you would like to contribute please send money or stamps to: CRITICAL RESISTANCE/JUSTICE NOW/ 1904 FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 504/OAKLAND, CA 94612.

In solidarity,

The Abolitionist Editorial Collective

"Currently CR does not have the capacity to provide legal services, job placement, or housing placement."

RESOURCE LIST

Organizations
- Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR)
- Trans/Gender Variant in Prison Committee
- California Prison Focus
- Transgender, Gender Variant and Intersex (TGI) Justice Project
- 1322 Webster St. Suite 210
- Oakland, CA 94612
- Voice: "NEW NUMBER:" 510-677-5500
- Fax: 510-839-7615
- info@tip.org
- http://www.tip.org

Readings
- To read more about the Black Panther Party
  http://www.tsabouthelppep.com/home/home.html
- From the Ricardo Flores Magon Brigade
- 2002 Interview between Viet Mike Ngo and Dylan Rodriguez
  http://www.brown.edu/Departments/African_American_Studies/wayland_fac_seminar/interview/viet_mike.html#interview

FORCED PASSAGES: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

it must have as its goal the apocalypse of the PIC and it has to come from in here. Studying the praxis of those who are captive may shed light on new ways and theories on how to combat this monster. There’s the camp that’s talking about revolution and the other camp that’s talking about reformism, which is trying to improve the PIC by bits and pieces and to me they are interconnected. The issue that we’re talking about with prison education is that educators who come in and teach get too embedded in the whole structure because for them to be able to teach they have to have rapport with the captors—the administration. For them to do that they have to compromise what they’re teaching because if they come in and teach things that make prisoners think critically of their situation and the historical and political context, it causes problems for the administrators.

Also, they get a lot of recognition for their work and ultimately it’s from their work. They bring in their college program, we get the degrees and then they get the pictures of us getting degrees and they say, ‘look what we did’: ‘there’s a contradiction there that I can’t reconcile: I’m trying to create mutiny, create crisis in here. And what they’re trying to do, whether that is their intention or not, is they’re bringing positive public relations to prison. Those two camps can’t be reconciled.

I think our positions are qualitatively different. I’ve told you [what] I think is the best philosophy to use in my position. But in your position on the outside you are much more mobile and you don’t necessarily feel the same type of mastery as we do, so you can sustain yourself in much more healing ways. So your work philosophy, your struggle philosophy shouldn’t be the same as mine. And I want to clarify that because I don’t want to mix that up. ‘Out there I have something to lose, so I have to be more intelligent in my activities…"

FORCED PASSAGES: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

you have your acquisitions to the rule, but that in general it wouldn’t necessarily apply. Similarly, Andrea Smith observes, "What I see is a lot of the organizing can be kind of patronizing and assume the voice of the voiceless. And we will speak on behalf of the voiceless prisoner. And I think prison organization is very white-dominated. I think that is one way whiteness gets replicated because white people often feel they lose their whiteness when working on these issues because they get to be speaking on behalf of the prisoner of color. So I think that is can be an issue. And I don’t think there’s a simple solution either. I don’t think you can say, ‘we do so X we will be perfect and not be co-opted’. So we just always have to be thinking. Something that works at one point may not work at another point, so I think this requires constant re-evaluation.

And I think that this logic of anti-Black racism then needs to be considered more carefully by other communities of color working on racial justice. Because the way that I see that logic come up in organizing is there is a sense we can be informed by the legacy of the civil-rights movements, we can be indebted to it because it helped spark our own movements, but we expect solidarity to them without any sense that we owe solidarity to Black communities. And we often hear, ‘get beyond the Black-White binary’ and I feel that is an issue of anti-Black racism that communities of color as we do, so we can sustain yourself in much more healing ways. So your work philosophy, your struggle philosophy shouldn’t be the same as mine. And I want to clarify that because I don’t want to mix that up. ‘Out there I have something to lose, so I have to be more intelligent in my activities…"

ENTER THE SIXTH SUN: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

At first, they look at me as if I am from a different world, as I launch the poetry from the top of my lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. In a way, I am from a different world – and I feel their desire to become part of it…to take a step into a new path and never look back; to join me in my endless walk towards that greater something that lies out there in the horizon of who we were, who we are…out there in the distance of our destiny as warriors; to raise the lungs, close my eyes, lift my hands, and search for their dreams in the harmony of my voice. 
Dismantling/Diminishing the System

This section is crucial for anyone working to build a world without prisons.

The authors urge us to always keep in mind the following: there is no alternative. In the face of the tactics we use to get to this goal, they are all equally reprehensible and indefensible and must be stopped.

We are not proposing a single model for prison change. We encourage developing many models based on the community in which the people imprisoned are located and available to communicate, arrange on goals, and support for each other's campaigns is crucial to developing a serious abolitionist movement.

While a vision for dismantling prisons will help to clarify our collective strategies, we want to expect that a proposed model will always be carried out in an orderly sequence. Various forces and dynamics undoubtedly will seek flexibility in our strategies. A good model can be remodeled and adapted to meet unforeseen opportunities for change.

We have structured an abolition model as one example of a long range process for abolition. "Attraction," which means either drawing or wearing down by friction, reflects the persistent and continuing strategy necessary to diminish the size of the existing system. To clarify our terms, the reforms we recommend are "abolishing-type" reforms that do not add improvement or to legitimize the prevailing system. We also call for partial abolition of the system: abolishing certain criminal laws, abolishing bail, not releasing people, abolishing indeterminate sentences and parole.

In this chapter we will briefly lay out the attraction model and identify several aspects of the attraction model. We test the model's consistency with abolitionist goals by asking the following questions: Does the attraction model move us toward the abolition of crime? Do we move toward empowering the persons most adversely affected by the present system, the prisoners themselves? Does our advocacy reflect and support the values of equality and freedom that characterize our community, concern for all victims and retribution, concern for all victims and retribution? Do the actions we advocate avoid improving or legitimizing the prevailing system? Does our support for changed campaigns move us closer to our long range goal of abolition?

The following will provide information, tools and resources to enable us to engage in the suggested campaigns proposed here.

The Attractions Model

Moratorium

Declare a moratorium on all new jail and prison construction. Say to all societies scientific and cultural forces (what they call "abolishing the prison") that we cannot build a movement to end imprisonment without a long term vision of abolition.

EXCARERE

Stop putting people in prison. Examine all alternatives to caging. Here are some strategies for making that happen:
- Absolve categories of crimes. Start by decriminalizing crimes without victims.
- Bail and pretrial detention. Create community dispute and mediation centers. Utilize suspended sentences to provide community probations. Create legislative standards and procedures for alternative sentencing.

The following will provide information, tools and resources to enable us to engage in the suggested campaigns proposed here.

In this chapter we will briefly lay out the attraction model and identify several aspects of the attraction model. We test the model's consistency with abolitionist goals by asking the following questions: Does the attraction model move us toward the abolition of crime? Do we move toward empowering the persons most adversely affected by the present system, the prisoners themselves? Does our advocacy reflect and support the values of equality and freedom that characterize our community, concern for all victims and retribution, concern for all victims and retribution? Do the actions we advocate avoid improving or legitimizing the prevailing system? Does our support for changed campaigns move us closer to our long range goal of abolition?

The following will provide information, tools and resources to enable us to engage in the suggested campaigns proposed here.

The Attractions Model

Moratorium

Declare a moratorium on all new jail and prison construction. Say to all societies scientific and cultural forces (what they call "abolishing the prison") that we cannot build a movement to end imprisonment without a long term vision of abolition.

EXCARERE

Stop putting people in prison. Examine all alternatives to caging. Here are some strategies for making that happen:
- Absolve categories of crimes. Start by decriminalizing crimes without victims.
- Bail and pretrial detention. Create community dispute and mediation centers. Utilize suspended sentences to provide community probations. Create legislative standards and procedures for alternative sentencing.

This is the typical approach of well-meaning people who are not radical and who do not look beyond the problem. Charity rarely changes the situation of the charitable. Charity is not the way to help the prisoner.

The prisoner ally often has a stormy relationship with the bureaucracies, because s/he is the prisoner. The prisoner ally is not really a prisoner but for all people. Here are some ways to build the caring community.

Develop a network of community support services. Support co-prison and peer-assistant groups in prisons and centers. Develop victim compensation, restitution and compensation programs. Learn how to become an abolitionist working to insure constitutional rights in prison and upon release. Support prisoners' unions, voting rights and constitutional guarantees.

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Prisons make communities and people sick physically, mentally, economically, personally, and emotionally. They tear apart our bodies, our families, and our communities. Within prison walls, inmates’ health is in critical condition, and their health is inseparable from that of their communities outside. When people leave prison, they should come to deal with health problems that developed in prison. The current state of the medical care prisoners receive is reflective of how their lives are devalued by the state and prison system. This is unacceptable. Everyone being both in and outside of prison has the right to quality health care and part of what will ultimately make us safe is having community access and control over healthcare.

But challenging abuse, sharing information, and working for quality healthcare, is no small task. It is my hope that this new, regular column in The Abolitionist will provide a forum to challenge medical neglect and abuse in prisons and to share information about health resources available and how to get to and stay healthy. Future columns will focus on the contributions of current prisoners, former prisoners, prison health advocates, former medical professionals, RNs, and herbalists, future columns will feature a range of topics intended to address health related issues that affect prisoners and their families, such as:

- how to access health care while in prison
- prisoners’ legal and medical rights
- interviews with health care providers and educators
- disease prevention and detection

- health news and updates and more

On September 20th, 2003, a female prisoner at the McPherson Unit in Newport, Arkansas waited in labor for over twelve hours, legs shackled, before she reached Newport Hospital. Prison guards would not remove the restraints during the labor despite her pleas and the requests of doctors and nurses helping to deliver her child. The state put the entire labor chained and unable to move her legs until they were freed, by her doctor’s demand, in the final stage of her delivery. The only thing that separates women from those of other prisoners is that two and a half years later, it was printed in a newspaper. Every year, 2,000 babies are born in US prisons, and shackled labor and recovery is the norm. Only a handful of states prohibit the practice, and twenty-three states have explicit guidelines that disapprove of it.

Although underreported, medical neglect, abuse, and the spread of chronic diseases in US prisons is not news to anyone who has set foot inside a prison and closed its gates. Prisoners receive once they are seen is inconsistent and usually poor. Prisoners dealing with chronic diseases require regular medical attention and medication. Chronic health problems that develop in prison are only worsened by substandard living conditions and poor diet. Lack of access to contraception in prison also means that prisons are responsible for a large proportion of the pregnancies in the US each year. Chronic health problems that develop in prison are only worsened by substandard living conditions and poor diet. Lack of access to contraception in prison and closing prisons and

HEALTH CARE IN PRISON

In Solidarity;

Liz is a member of Critical Resistance Oakland and is a student going into healthcare.

Abolitionist Survey

Please check the boxes that apply to you.

☐ I am a concerned community member.
☐ I am currently in prison.
☐ I have been in prison, jail, detention, or the youth authority.
☐ I have or have had family members in prison.
☐ I am a survivor of police violence.

Where do you live?

State:

What issues are important to you? The following issues were chosen because prisoners, former prisoners and family members have reported them to us.

- Please check the top three that you feel are most important; issues that you would join in fighting for.

Parole:

- Gain parole for those serving long life sentences with the possibility of parole.
- Shorten lengths of parole.
- End barriers to employment for people with convictions.
- End policies that result in people in prison losing custody of their children.
- Increase support services for people coming home from prison. If you choose this, please check which services you believe are most important.
- End geographic restrictions on where people on parole can live.

Immigration:

- Fight the detention of immigrants.
- Fight deportation of those convicted of criminal offenses.

Sentencing / Decarceration:

- Reduce the number of people in prison through changes to sentencing laws or decriminalization.
- End the criminalization of self-defense related to intimate partner violence and gender-based violence.
- End the criminalization of drug use.
- Abolish “Three Strikes” Laws.
- End the criminalization of mental illness.
- Abolish civil commitment — imprisoning people after release under civil statutes.
- End the criminalization of homelessness.
- Close prisons.
- Stop the construction of new prisons.
- Close super max prisons.
- Make imprisonment a human rights violation.

Policing:

- Remove police from public schools.
- Stop racial, religious and transgender profiling.
- End prison practices that target and occupy low-income communities of color.
- Decrease local policies for public buildings and housing units.
- Youth:
- Ban the prostitution of youth as adults.
- Reinstate:
- Reduce prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and closing prisons and
- re-invest in funds in educational or social services.
- Other (Please feel free to add other issues that you think are most important.)
- Please tell us why you chose those issues?
- Please let us know if you are already working on these or other related issues?
- Please let us know if you do think you would be most effective in addressing the issues you identify.

Example:

- Education: Examples might include public education, coali-
- tion building, working with state legislators, building community empowerment networks, organizing, working with former prisoners or families of prisoners.
- Community organizing — improving people after release under civil statutes.
- Implementing new programs or policies.

Optional Information, you can give us if you choose to:

Name:
Organization:
Address:

How did you receive this survey?

☐ I am interested in becoming a Critical Resistance member.

For a world without walls: continued from page 5

Idealistic reason is that a core value in their campaign organizing and “other way of doing politics” has been to fight to guarantee that every voice of the oppressed that wishes to be heard will be sought out and listened to. The pragmatic reason is that as an anticapitalist movement that is building people’s power beyond the political party system there does not appear to be much of a chance for the struggle to be co-opted. Following this line of thinking, if the Mexican elites recognize that they cannot offer The Other Campaign “carrots” to make them less threatening to their interests, then what they will deliver are “sticks” and indeed, just over three months into Delegate Zero’s tour, The Other Campaign has already seen a great deal of repression, especially in Oaxaca.

A wave of state violence and repression swept Oaxaca after Delegate Zero’s visit in early February. In response to this, the state coordination of The Other Campaign has organized itself to build a statewide and national movement against police brutality, for the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and for the right of the people to self-defense and social justice. The most dramatic battle in this new phase of The Other Campaign in Oaxaca is taking place in the self declared autonomous municipality of San Blas Atzompa.

On New Year’s Day of 2005, the people of San Blas (a town of 14,000), after over a decade of single-party rule under political boss Agustina Acevedo Gutiérrez, removed her from City Hall with rocks and, eventually, fire. The people of San Blas have successfully mobilized a popular autonomous government and governed themselves without the Mexican police. That is, until the arrival of over 800 state troops and heavily armed police on March 1st, 2006. Less than a month after the people of San Blas joined The Other Campaign en masse, one of the most moving moments thus far in Delegate Zero’s tour, the Mexican State re-

THANK YOU!!

Email: crnational@criticalresistance.org

Please return this survey:

Address:

POD FROM THE WE THAT GETS IT PRODUCED BY JUSTICE

RFJ Maccart is a member of Critical Resistance NYC and helped to form the Ricardo Flores Magón Brigade, which is still reporting from Oaxaca, Mexico for The Narco News Bulletin. He can be reached at rj@riseup.net or C/O The Abolitionist, 1904 Franklin St, Suite 504, Oakland, CA 94612.
PRICKLY COALITIONS BY ALEXANDER LEE

Transgender and gender variant people have a lot to gain from the abolition of the prison-industrial complex, yet these communities currently have no choice but to rely on law enforcement for at least the appearance of protection from the daily threat of physical assault and murder. But as with other communities severely negatively impacted by the PIZC and also forced to rely upon it, the most consistent and strongest contradiction give us insight on what we must do to build a world that no longer needs cages and prisons as “cure-alls” for social ills.

Regional surveys and anecdotal evidence suggest that transgender and gender variant people (and especially trans and gender variant people of color) are grossly overrepresented in our nation’s prisons and jails. In the San Francisco Bay Area, with a population of over 20,000 transgender people, close to 1 in 2 transgender people have been in prison or jail. These rates of imprisonment are actually not surprising — with astronomically high poverty and unemployment rates, most transgender and gender variant people have had to resort to “survival crime” just to put food on the table. Furthermore, some of the most extreme incidents of violence and harassment occur within prison walls — abuse that is approved without question or openly committed by state and federal governments.

Trans and gender variant people imprisoned in the PIZC are denied all forms of self-determination on the basis of identity and expression. Legal name and gender marker changes are voided, physical genitalia is the deciding factor, transition-related health care is non-existent in most jurisdictions, and physical, sexual and psychological torture is the norm. Just as prison administrators manipulate and heighten tensions among racial groups by pitting racial gangs against each other, they reinforce rigid gender roles through negative stereotypes and policies that effectively place transgender and gender variant people at the bottom of prison social hierarchies. Transgender and gender variant people in prison are eventually released, they return to communities so weakened by discrimination that they are unable to access the social and health care services needed to heal from these traumatic experiences, and to find legal means to generate income — thereby setting the stage for the revolving door of imprisonment and the street. The PIZC is very much a plague upon our communities, and its destructive role in all our lives must be addressed if we are ever to reach full liberation.

At the same time, transgender and gender variant people in the “free world”, especially those on the male-to-female spectrum who are low-income and of color, live on the razor’s edge. Every day is a precarious balance between passing (life) and being unceremoniously “clocked” (death). Transgender teenager Gwen Araujo’s much-publicized murder by other youths is only the tip of the iceberg, the website “Remember Our Dead” (http://www.gender.org/re-member) keeps a running count of transgender and transsexual people murdered, sometimes by police, around the country. Most people have never heard of the people on this list (the publicity following Gwen’s death was very much an aberration), but each of their deaths, and the years of hustling against racism, poverty, sexism, and the gender binary system that preceded these tragic ends, reverberates profoundly in the bones of every transgender and gender variant person still hustling today.

The reality of ever-present danger forces many transgender and gender variant people, some themselves survivors of anti-transgender hate violence from law enforcement, to rely on the prison-industrial complex when they feel their lives are being threatened. But when one decodes, for example, the aggressively pro-death penalty rhetoric used by many transgender people and organizations following Gwen’s murder, what one really finds is a deep frustration and outrage against the rest of society’s assumptions that our communities’ rights to safety is not legitimate, that our lives have no more worth than a piece of trash on the sidewalk. These assumptions are not just reinforcing systemic and historical oppression are wiped out so that everyone’s basic needs are met, where child abuse and domestic violence are zeroed out, and where war is absolutely not an option to “protect” ourselves or to drain capital from abroad to initiate a decline of the American economy.

Ironically, the current prison abolition movement is neither the best suited nor strategically placed to create such a world. This is because the prison abolition movement is currently mostly being pushed forward by people like me — activists (whether they be prisoners, former prisoners, family members of prisoners, lawyers, students, paid or unpaid) who are primarily preoccupied with changing the way people are treated inside prisons, and preventing the injustices that occur there. Prison abolition requires creating a world where prisons are no longer needed, then the real work of abolition must be done away from prisons — in shelters, health clinics, schools, and in battles over government budget allocations. Prisons and the human rights violations that occur within them are merely symptoms of the real problems sustaining their existence.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

However, the sectors of society that are mobilizing to meet people’s basic needs outside of prisons are by and large not doing their work with the understanding that they too can be prison abolitionists. Most people working in these areas collaborate with law enforcement, both because of the lack of any other adequate options, or because government funding or “mandated reporter” laws require them to do so. Some of them would even consider themselves parts of the political right, like churches that operate soup kitchens and Christian missionary groups building houses for homeless people. Regardless of ideological orientation however, the vast majority of these services are offered to transgender and gender variant people anyway because of anti-transgender and homophobic discrimination and prejudice.

Yet because services that provide housing, health care and other essentials are the basis from which a world without prisons will be made possible, this is where the prison abolition movement must go next. We must break down the cages and prisons and the industrial complex in favor of descriptions that foster “prickly coalitions” with others who don’t see themselves as anti-prison, but who do believe in the sacred nature of human dignity, however imperfectly expressed in practice. This new language and these new alliances will and should transcend party lines and the same old tired political rhetoric. Thus, we may have to stop calling ourselves “prison abolitionists” in favor of new alliances that reflect the truly wide-ranging scope of our aspirations.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

The Abolitionist: For the first time at an event in Oakland you talked openly about the torture you endured and you have been reactivating the torture publicity right? I’d like to hear what it’s been like to react to the torture and what kind of healing, transformative process has gone on around looking at this.

RB: As it relates to healing from this process of torture, it’s been one tremendous mountain to climb in terms of publicly talking about this. It’s sort of like when you are sleeping and someone kicks your door in and the glass breaks and you know there is an intruder. That is how my spirit was as asleep when it came to the torture, when it came to the humiliation and degradation that was given to me and Harold and to Ruben. But sitting in front of a grand jury, 25 strangers, and hearing the same questions my torturers asked me just released a different kind of spirit in me that said I need to fight. I can no longer suppress this thing. But for years I’ve talked with psychiatrists. I’ve talked with family. I’ve had lots of emotional moments. Prior to 2003 my family was my healing, but I guess the community has to help in this healing process.

The Abolitionist: How can people get hooked up and support the work you are doing?

RB: If people are interested in having us in their community, church, or venue they can contact us. But we need assistance in traveling. We don’t have money.

Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR)
P.O. Box 90221
Pasadena, CA, 91109
626.345.4939
cdhr_right@hotmail.com
a Bill of Attainder. Article I, sections 9-10, of the United States Constitution prohibits Legislatures from singling out disfavored persons and meting out summary punishment for past conduct.

The head of the BPT is the Governor. His word is final and present and past Governors have declared: "zero paroles." A penalty, constitutional on its face, may become unconstitutional if applied in a particular manner. The penalty of death in prison is what all ISL prisoners in California have been meted out. "Zero paroles" has been allowed by the Courts for over a decade over the complaints of many and will not stop absent public outcry and media intervention.

In its March/April 2006 issue, MOTHER JONES magazine extolled the virtues of victims’ rights groups that advocate a tough-on-crime attitude. In its article "Vengeance is Mom’s" Diane Clements is praised for her pursuit of state-sponsored murder. The article also points out how victim’s rights groups have had "an enormous impact on courts, laws, and lawmakers. In many states and at the federal level, they have successfully lobbied for tougher sentences, harsher prison conditions, the registration of sex offenders, and the introduction of highly emotional ‘victim impact statements’ in trials." Lost in the praise is any consideration for justice. That's right, it is supposed to be justice for all.

I have heard of instances in which the parents of a victim have lobbied the BPT for the release of a particular offender after that offender had done twice as much time as that prescribed by law for his offense. The Board ignored the plea. Men who came into the system when they were teenagers and who are now turning fifty, who came into the system when they were teenagers and who are now turning fifty, who were convicted for lesser offenses, such as second degree murder, expect to do no more than 15 years in prison, only to find out much later that it was all a farce. That prosecutors, judges and everyone else involved with the system knew that death in prison was the actual sentence.

How can the United States criticize anyone for violating human rights when it is actively engaged in doing the same thing? Why aren’t more people upset about this course of events? Why does the general media turn a blind eye to this situation?

In California, media access is very limited to prisoners. And, unfortunately, when a news outlet takes an interest in a particular offender it’s usually to condemn him or her even more. They accentuate the past instead of focusing on the now and future. They refer to term to life offenders as "murderers." They never cover the rehabilitative efforts of the offender or the underlying cause for his offense. Where are justice, compassion, and forgiveness in all of this? Every year a slew of unqualified idiots, who know nothing of law or the law’s purpose, are appointed to the California BPT. They are there to make a mockery of the system and to earn a good living at the taxpayer’s expense. We need God loving and fear of God hated people to start voicing their concern with the present situation. Parole hearings should be open to the public. Taxpayers should see their tax dollars at work. The veil of secrecy must be terminated. Parole hearings should be open to the public. Taxpayers should see their tax dollars at work. The veil of secrecy must be terminated. Parole applicants should be allowed to present character witnesses just like victims’ relatives are allowed to make their statements and sentiments known.

Pablo Agrio is a law school graduate who is doing time for second degree murder in a California State prison.