

*If death is the realm of freedom,
then through death I escape to freedom*

Freedom?



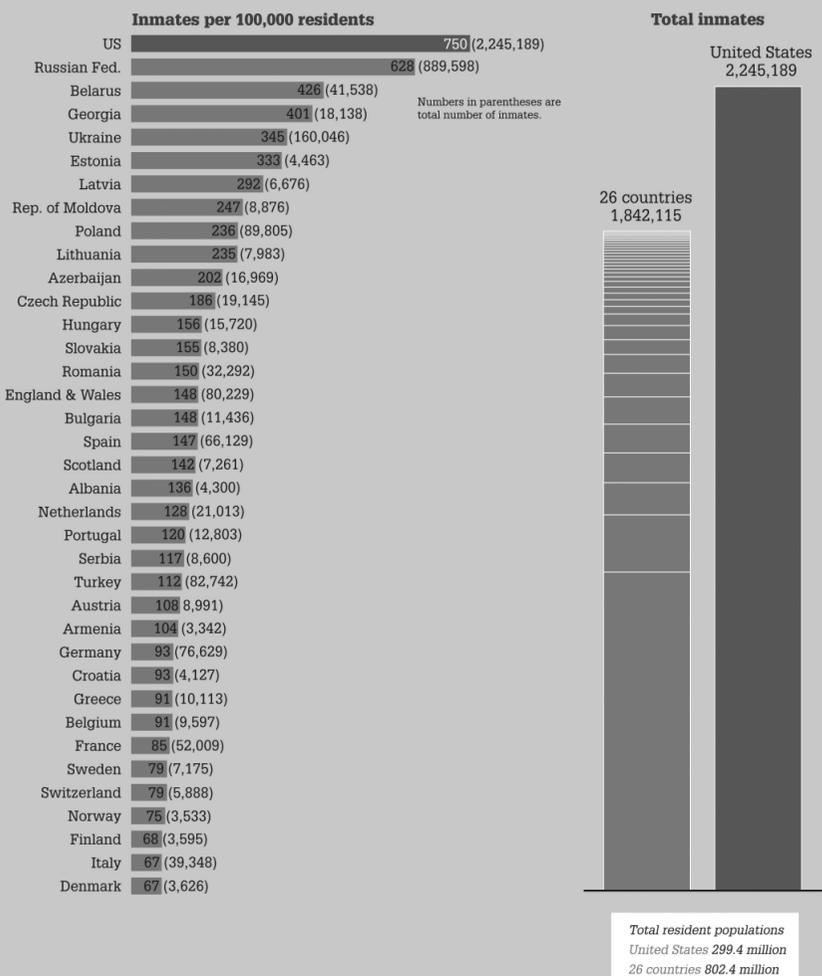
Capital punishment was abolished in Canada and Western Europe

in spite of public opinion, not because of it.

1 in 100 Americans are in prison

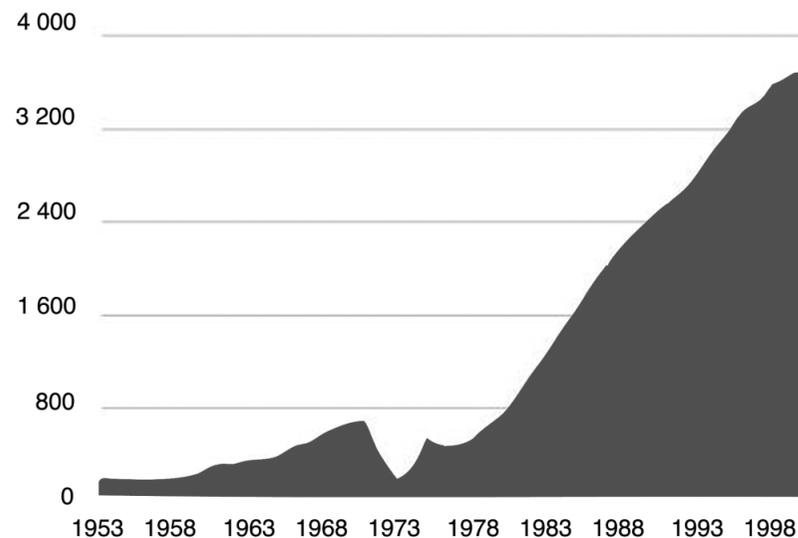
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

The U.S. inmate population compared to the 26 largest European inmate populations (years vary).



SOURCE: International Centre for Prison Studies at King's College, London, "World Prison Brief." Data downloaded January 2008.
 NOTE: Rates are for total number of residents, not just adults. Figures in this chart may not align with others due to differences in counting methods.

Number of prisoners under sentence of death, 1953 - 2001



Data from Capital Punishment 2001, Spreadsheet Figure 1



10 Reasons to Oppose the Death Penalty

Innocence and the Death Penalty

The wrongful execution of an innocent person is an injustice that can never be rectified. Since the reinstatement of the death penalty, 126 men and women have been released from Death Row nationally.

The High Cost of the Death Penalty

It costs far more to execute a person than to keep him or her in prison for life.

Victims' Perspectives on the Death Penalty

Many family members who have lost loved ones to murder feel that the death penalty will not heal their wounds nor will it end their pain; the extended process prior to executions can prolong the agony experienced by the family.

International Views on the Death Penalty

The vast majority of countries in Western Europe, North America and South America—more than 135 nations worldwide—have abandoned capital punishment in law or in practice.

Inadequate Legal Representation

Perhaps the most important factor in determining whether a defendant will receive the death penalty is the quality of the representation he or she is provided.

Deterrence

Scientific studies have consistently failed to demonstrate that executions deter people from committing crime anymore than long prison sentences.

Arbitrariness in the Application of the Death Penalty

Politics, quality of legal counsel and the jurisdiction where a crime is committed are more often the determining factors in a death penalty case than the facts of the crime itself.

Religious Perspectives on the Death Penalty

Although isolated passages of religious scripture have been quoted in support of the death penalty, almost all religious groups in the United States regard executions as immoral.

Racial Disparities

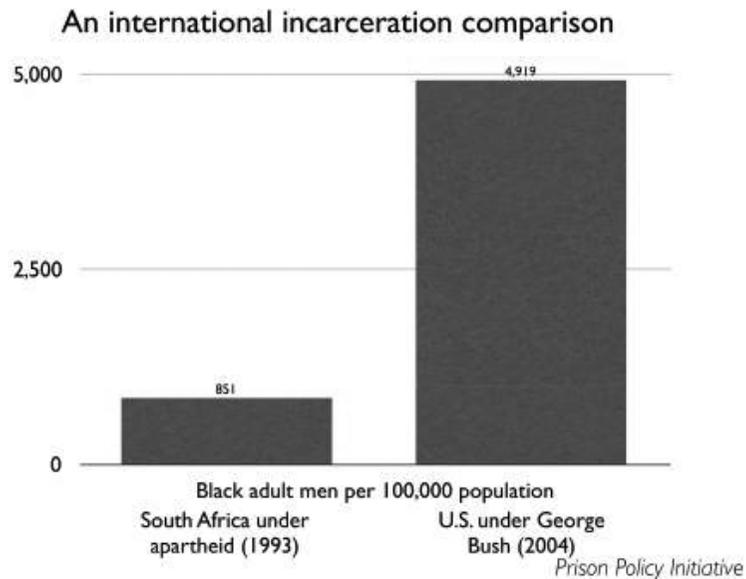
The race of the victim and the race of the defendant in capital cases are major factors in determining who is sentenced to die in this country. In 1990, a report from the General Accounting Office concluded that “in 82 percent of the studies [reviewed], race of the victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder or receiving the death penalty, i.e. those who murdered whites were more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered blacks.”

Alternatives to the Death Penalty

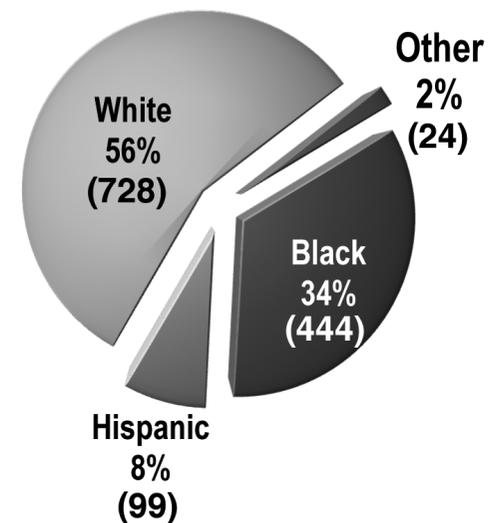
In every state that retains the death penalty, jurors have the option of sentencing convicted capital murderers to life in prison without the possibility of parole. The sentence is cheaper to tax-payers and keeps violent offenders off the streets for good.

From <<http://www.deathpenalty.org/article.php?list=type&type=24>>

1 in 9 African American men in prison



Race of Defendants Executed



CRITICAL RESISTANCE

BEYOND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Critical Resistance (CR) was formed in 1997 when activists challenging the idea that imprisonment and policing are a solution for social, political, and economic problems came together to organize a conference that examined and challenged what we have come to call the prison industrial complex (PIC).

Held in Berkeley, California, in September 1998, the conference brought together over 3,500 activists, academics, former and current prisoners, labor leaders, religious organizations, feminists, gay, lesbian and transgender activists, youth, families, and policy makers from literally every state and other countries. The three-day event featured nearly 200 different panels and workshops. The conference also included a number of cultural events and a film festival.

While the conference was a huge success, CR recognized that its work had only begun. The goal of CR was, and continues to be, building a movement to eliminate the prison industrial complex.

VISION

Critical Resistance's vision is the creation of genuinely healthy, stable communities that respond to harm without relying on imprisonment and punishment. We call our vision abolition, drawing, in part from the legacy of the abolition of slavery in the 1800s. As PIC abolitionists we understand that the prison industrial complex is not a broken system to be fixed. The system, rather, works precisely as it is designed to— to contain, control, and kill those people representing the greatest threats to state

power. Our goal is not to improve the system even further, but to shrink the system into non-existence. We work to build healthy, self-determined communities and promote alternatives to the current system.

Critical Resistance is building a member-led and member-run grassroots movement to challenge the use of punishment to “cure” complicated social problems. We know that more policing and imprisonment will not make us safer. Instead, we know that things like food, housing, and freedom are what create healthy, stable neighborhoods and communities. We work to prevent people from being arrested or locked up in prison. In all our work, we organize to build power and to stop the devastation that the reliance on imprisonment and policing has brought to ourselves, our families, and our communities.

MISSION

Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex 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.

From <<http://criticalresistance.org/about>>

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Facts on Post-Conviction DNA Exonerations

There have been [289 post-conviction DNA exonerations](#) in the United States.

- The first DNA exoneration took place in 1989. Exonerations have been won in [35 states](#); since 2000, there have been 222 exonerations.
- 17 of the 289 people exonerated through DNA [served time on death row](#).
- The average length of time served by exonerees is 13.5 years. The total number of years served is approximately 3,800.
- The average age of exonerees at the time of their wrongful convictions was 27.

Races of the 289 exonerees:

180 African Americans
82 Caucasians
21 Latinos
2 Asian American
4 whose race is unknown

- The true suspects and/or perpetrators have been identified in [139 of the DNA exoneration cases](#).
- Since 1989, there have been tens of thousands of cases where prime suspects were identified and pursued—until DNA testing (prior to conviction) proved that they were wrongly accused.
- In more than 25 percent of cases in a National Institute of Justice study, suspects were excluded once DNA testing was conducted during the criminal investigation (the study, conducted in 1995, included 10,060 cases where testing was performed by FBI labs).
- About half of the people exonerated through DNA testing have been financially compensated. 27 states, the federal government, and the District of Columbia have passed laws to compensate people who were wrongfully incarcerated. Awards under these statutes vary from state to state.
- 22 percent of cases closed by the Innocence Project since 2004 were closed because of lost or missing evidence.
- About 80 percent of wrongful conviction cases overturned through DNA testing were single perpetrator crimes. Nearly 75 percent of the single perpetrator crimes involved eyewitness misidentifications, and about 75 percent of them were non-homicide cases. In about half of the single perpetrator cases, the real perpetrator has been identified.

Leading Causes of Wrongful Convictions

These DNA exoneration cases have provided irrefutable proof that wrongful convictions are not

isolated or rare events, but arise from systemic defects that can be precisely identified and addressed. For more than 15 years, the Innocence Project has worked to pinpoint these trends.

Eyewitness Misidentification Testimony was a factor in nearly 75 percent of post-conviction DNA exoneration cases in the U.S., making it the leading cause of these wrongful convictions. At least 40 percent of these eyewitness identifications involved a cross racial identification (race data is currently only available on the victim, not for non-victim eyewitnesses). Studies have shown that people are less able to recognize faces of a different race than their own. These suggested reforms are embraced by leading criminal justice organizations and have been adopted in the states of New Jersey and North Carolina, large cities like Minneapolis and Seattle, and many smaller jurisdictions. [Read more.](#)

Invalidated or Improper Forensic Science played a role in approximately 50 percent of wrongful convictions later overturned by DNA testing. While DNA testing was developed through extensive scientific research at top academic centers, many other forensic techniques – such as hair microscopy, bite mark comparisons, firearm tool mark analysis and shoe print comparisons – have never been subjected to rigorous scientific evaluation. Meanwhile, forensics techniques that have been properly validated – such as serology, commonly known as blood typing – are sometimes improperly conducted or inaccurately conveyed in trial testimony. In other wrongful conviction cases, forensic scientists have engaged in misconduct. [Read more.](#)

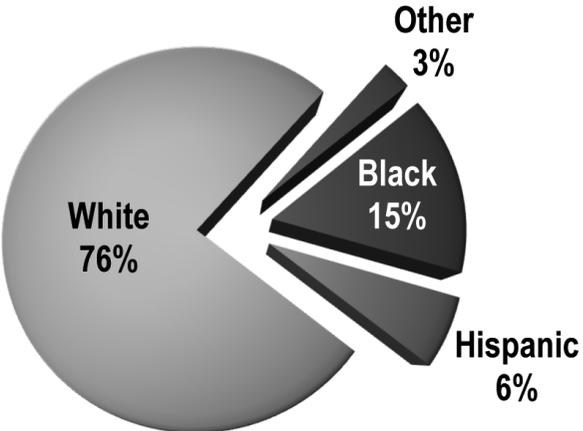
False confessions and incriminating statements lead to wrongful convictions in approximately 28 percent of cases. In 35 percent of false confession or admission cases, the defendant was 18 years old or younger and/or developmentally disabled. Twenty-eight of the 289 DNA exonerees [pled guilty](#) to crimes they did not commit. The Innocence Project encourages police departments to electronically record all custodial interrogations in their entirety in order to prevent coercion and to provide an accurate record of the proceedings. More than 500 jurisdictions have voluntarily adopted policies to record interrogations. State supreme courts have taken action in Alaska, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. Illinois, Maine, New Mexico, and the District of Columbia require the taping of interrogations in homicide cases. [Read more.](#)

Informants contributed to wrongful convictions in 19 percent of cases. Whenever informant testimony is used, the Innocence Project recommends that the judge instruct the jury that most informant testimony is unreliable as it may be offered in return for deals, special treatment, or the dropping of charges. Prosecutors should also reveal any incentive the informant might receive, and all communication between prosecutors and informants should be recorded. [Read more.](#)

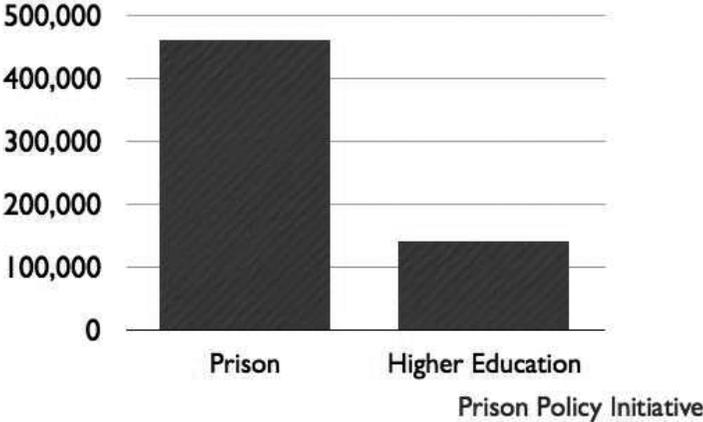
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More than seven million children have

Race of Victims in Death Penalty Cases

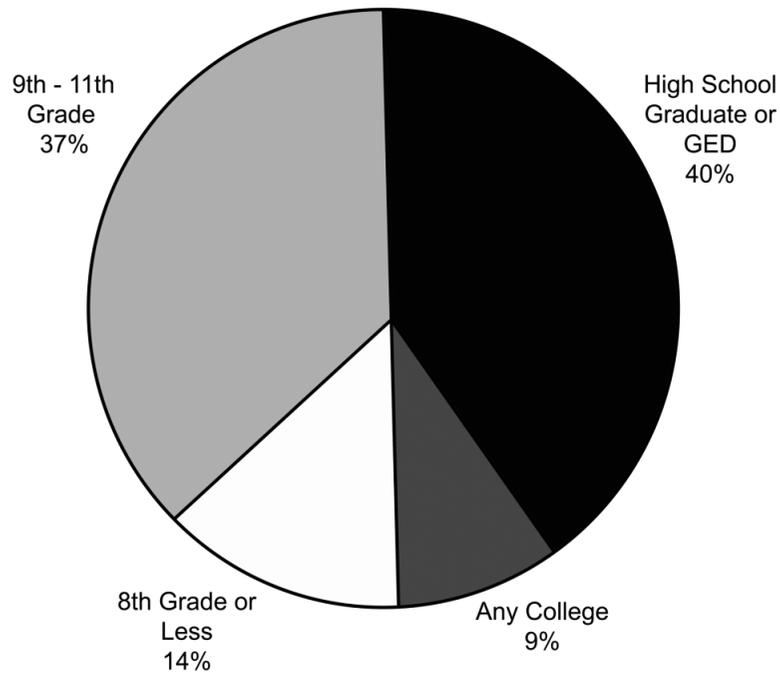


Increases in the African-American male populations, 1980-2000



a family member incarcerated, on

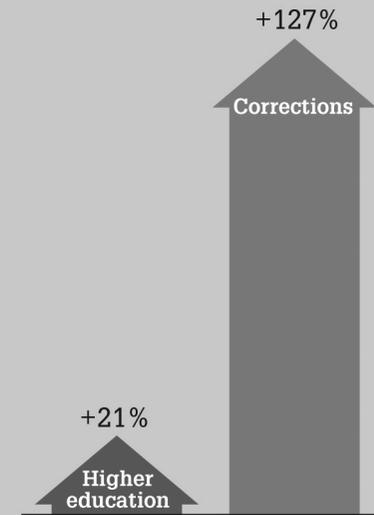
Education Level of Death Row Inmates
as of 12/31/06



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics,
Capital Punishment

OF BOOKS AND BARS

Between 1987 and 2007, the amount states spent on **corrections** more than doubled while the increase in **higher education** spending has been moderate.



SOURCE: National Association of State Budget Officers, "State Expenditure Report" series; Inflation adjusted general fund figures are based on a reanalysis of data in this series.

Stop the School-to-Prison Pipeline

“Every man in my family has been locked up. Most days I feel like it doesn’t matter what I do, how hard I try - that’s my fate, too.

—11th-grade African American student,
Berkeley, California

This young man isn’t being cynical or melodramatic; he’s articulating a terrifying reality for many of the children and youth sitting in our classrooms—a reality that is often invisible or misunderstood. Some have seen the growing numbers of security guards and police in our schools as unfortunate but necessary responses to the behavior of children from poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods. But what if something more ominous is happening? What if many of our students—particularly our African American, Latina/o, Native American, and Southeast Asian children—are being channeled toward prison and a lifetime of second-class status?

We believe that this is the case, and there is ample evidence to support that claim. What has come to be called the “school-to-prison pipeline” is turning too many schools into pathways to incarceration rather than opportunity. This trend has extraordinary implications for teachers and education activists. It affects everything from what we teach to how we build community in our classrooms, how we deal with conflicts with and among our students, how we build coalitions, and what demands we see as central to the fight for social justice education.

What Is the School-to-Prison Pipeline?

The school-to-prison pipeline begins in deep social and economic inequalities, and has taken root in the historic shortcomings of schooling in this country. The civil and human rights movements of the 1960s and ’70s spurred an effort to “rethink schools” to make them responsive to the needs of all students, their families, and communities. This rethinking included collaborative learning environments,

multicultural curriculum, student-centered, experiential pedagogy—we were aiming for education as liberation. The back-to-basics backlash against that struggle has been more rigid enforcement of ever more alienating curriculum.

The “zero tolerance” policies that today are the most extreme form of this punishment paradigm were originally written for the war on drugs in the early 1980s, and later applied to schools. As Annette Fuentes explains, the resulting extraordinary rates of suspension and expulsion are linked nationally to increasing police presence, checkpoints, and surveillance inside schools.

As police have set up shop in schools across the country, the definition of what is a crime as opposed to a teachable moment has changed in extraordinary ways. In one middle school we’re familiar with, a teacher routinely allowed her students to take single pieces of candy from a big container she kept on her desk. One day, several girls grabbed handfuls. The teacher promptly sent them to the police officer assigned to the school. What formerly would have been an opportunity to have a conversation about a minor transgression instead became a law enforcement issue.

Children are being branded as criminals at ever younger ages. Zero Tolerance in Philadelphia, a recent report by Youth United for Change and the Advancement Project, offers an example:

Robert was an 11-year-old in 5th grade who, in his rush to get to school on time, put on a dirty pair of pants from the laundry basket. He did not notice that his Boy Scout pocketknife was in one of the pockets until he got to school. He also did not notice that it fell out when he was running in gym class. When the teacher found it and asked whom it belonged to, Robert volunteered that it was his, only to find himself in police custody minutes later. He was arrested, suspended, and transferred to a disciplinary school.

Early contact with police in schools often sets students on a path of alienation, suspension, expulsion, and arrests. George Galvis, an Oakland, Calif., prison activist and youth organizer, described his first experience with police at his school: “I was 11. There was a fight and I got called to the office.

The cop punched me in the face. I looked at my principal and he was just standing there, not saying anything. That totally broke my trust in school as a place that was safe for me.”

Galvis added: “The more police there are in the school, walking the halls and looking at surveillance tapes, the more what constitutes a crime escalates. And what is seen as ‘how kids act’ vs. criminal behavior has a lot to do with race. I always think about the fistfights that break out between fraternities at the Cal campus, and how those fights are seen as opposed to what the police see as gang-related fights, even if the behavior is the same.”

Mass Incarceration: A Civil Rights Crisis

The growth of the school-to-prison pipeline is part of a larger crisis. Since 1970, the U.S. prison population has exploded from about 325,000 people to more than 2 million today. According to Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*, this is a phenomenon that cannot be explained by crime rates or drug use. According to Human Rights Watch (*Punishment and Prejudice: Racial Disparities in the War on Drugs*, 2000) although whites are more likely to violate drug laws than people of color, in some states black men have been admitted to prison on drug charges at rates 20 to 50 times greater than those of white men. Latina/os, Native Americans, and other people of color are also imprisoned at rates far higher than their representation in the population. Once released, former prisoners are caught in a web of laws and regulations that make it difficult or impossible to secure jobs, education, housing, and public assistance—and often to vote or serve on juries. Alexander calls this permanent second-class citizenship a new form of segregation.

The impact of mass incarceration is devastating for children and youth. More than 7 million children have a family member incarcerated, on probation, or on parole. Many of these children live with enormous stress, emotional pain, and uncertainty. Luis Esparza describes the impact on his life in Project WHAT!’s Resource Guide for Teens with a Parent in Prison or Jail:

After [my dad] went to jail I kept to myself a lot—became the quiet kid that no one noticed and no one really cared about. At one point I didn’t even have any friends. No one talked to me, so I didn’t have to say anything about my life. . . . Inside I feel sad

and angry. In this world, no one wants to see that, so I keep it all to myself. (See Haniyah’s Story and Sokolower.)

Revising the Curriculum

As we at Rethinking Schools began to study and discuss these issues, we realized the huge implications for curriculum. Many of us, as social justice educators, have developed strong class activities teaching the Civil Rights Movement. But few of us teach regularly about the racial realities of the current criminal justice system. Textbooks mostly ignore the subject. For example, Pearson Prentice Hall’s *United States History* is a hefty 1,264 pages long, but says nothing about the startling growth in the prison population in the past 40 years.

Mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline are among the primary forms that racial oppression currently takes in the United States. As such, they deserve a central place in the curriculum. We need to bring this all-too-common experience out of the shadows and make it as visible in the curriculum as it is in so many students’ lives. As Alexander begins to explore in our interview, it is a challenge to engage students in these issues in ways that build critical thinking and determination rather than cynicism or despair, but a challenge we urgently need to take on. Aparna Lakshmi, a Boston high school teacher, offers an example.

‘Accountability’ and Criminalization

The school-to-prison pipeline is really a classroom-to-prison pipeline. A student’s trajectory to a criminalized life often begins with a curriculum that disrespects children’s lives and that does not center on things that matter.

Last spring Federal Policy, ESEA Reauthorization, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline, a collaborative study by research, education, civil rights, and juvenile justice organizations, linked the policies of No Child Left Behind and the “accountability” movement to the pipeline. According to George Wood, executive director of the Forum for Education and Democracy:

By focusing accountability almost exclusively on test scores and attaching high stakes to them, NCLB has given schools a perverse incentive to allow or even encourage students to leave.

probation, or on parole.

A FairTest factsheet cites findings that schools in Florida gave low-scoring students longer suspensions than high-scoring students for similar infractions, while in Ohio students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended out of school than their peers. A recent report from the Advancement Project noted that, since the passage of NCLB in 2002, 73 of the largest 100 districts in the United States “have seen their graduation rates decline—often precipitously.

Of those 100 districts, which serve 40 percent of all students of color in the United States, 67 districts failed to graduate two-thirds of their students.”

The more that schools—and now individual teachers—are assessed, rewarded, and fired on the basis of student test scores, the more incentive there is to push out students who bring down those scores. And the more schools become test-prep academies as opposed to communities committed to everyone’s success, the more hostile and regimented the atmosphere becomes—the more like prison. (This school-as-prison culture is considerably more common in schools populated by children of color in poor communities as opposed to majority-white, middle-class schools, creating what Jonathan Kozol calls “educational apartheid.”) The rigid focus on test prep and scripted curriculum means that teachers need students to be compliant, quiet, in their seats, and willing to learn by rote for long periods of time. Security guards, cops in the hall, and score-conscious administrations suspend and expel “problem learners.”

Schools without compassion or understanding occupy communities instead of serve them. As our society accelerates punishment as a central paradigm—from death penalty executions to drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen—the regimentation and criminalization of our children, particularly children of color, can only be seen as training for the future.

Linda Christensen describes the dangerous pull of high-stakes testing on even the most seasoned teachers, and the powerful role of student-centered curriculum as resistance.

Education Activists and the Pipeline

As teachers and education activists, many of us are active in the fight to save and transform public schools—building campaigns to end standard-

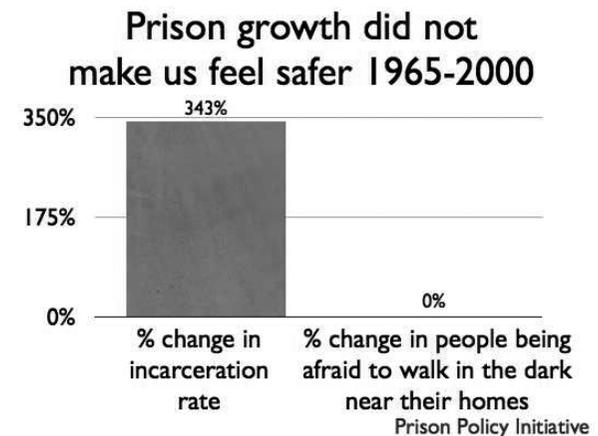
ized testing, to protect our union rights, to prevent the privatization of the public school system. At education conferences, there are often well-attended workshops on the criminalization of youth or related topics.

But the movement to end the school-to-prison pipeline and the movement to defend and transform public education are too often separate. This must be one movement—for social justice education—that encompasses both an end to the school-to-prison pipeline and the fight to save and transform public education. We cannot build safe, creative, nurturing schools and criminalize our children at the same time.

Teachers, students, parents, and administrators have begun to fight back against zero tolerance policies—pushing to get rid of zero tolerance laws, and creating alternative approaches to safe school communities that rely on restorative justice and community building instead of criminalization. (See Haga.) A critical piece of that struggle is defying the regimen of scripted curriculum and standardized tests, and building in its place creative, empowering school cultures centered on the lives and needs of our students and their families.

Some of the most exciting work with youth is being built around campaigns to stop police harassment in schools and on the streets, stop gang injunction legislation that criminalizes young people on the basis of what they wear or where they live, and increase budgets for education and social services instead of law and order. Youth provide leadership in these movements in ways that are different from what we often see in classrooms. Learning from these campaigns and making the critical connections to our own work will enable us to build a viable, principled movement for public education.

Our resistance grows from classrooms that are grounded in our students’ lives—academically rigorous and also participatory, critical, culturally sensitive, experiential, kind, and joyful. When combined with a determination to fight the school-to-prison pipeline at every level, that resistance has enormous capacity to build and sustain true social justice education.





Mission and History

The Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) is working to build a youth-led movement to challenge race, gender and class inequality in the Los Angeles County juvenile injustice system. We are working to transform a system that has ensured the massive lock-up of people of color, widespread police violence, corruption and distrust between police and communities, violation of youth and communities' Constitutional rights, and the build-up of the world's largest prison system. We use direct action organizing, advocacy, political education and activist arts to mobilize youth, and their allies – both in the community and within government – to bring about change.

In the spring of 2002, the YJC held three countywide meetings and engaged a total of 62 people – 48 of whom were youth – in identifying 13 areas of the system needing significant change as well as in proposing policy demands for the Coalition.

From this initial work, the membership prioritized four organizing campaigns:

- Challenging the lack of due process and community input in the implementation by police, sheriffs and the courts of gang suppression tactics including gang injunctions and gang databases;
- Improving conditions of confinement for youth at LA County juvenile halls, County Jails, State Prisons and the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ – formerly California Youth Authority), including organizing for the shut down of DJJ and its replacement by community based youth development and rehabilitation centers;
- Reducing the County's use of detention and incarceration by 75% within 10 years, particularly given the massive lock up of youth of color, including challenging the transfer of youth into adult court and the sentencing of youth to Life Without Parole and other extreme sentences; and
- Pushing the County to develop community-based, owned and operated alternatives to arrest, court, detention and incarceration.

In the fall of 2007, the YJC founded Free L.A. High School to build stronger leadership, train youth in organizing, media and public policy development and to support the youth development needs of our members. The school serves as one of the county's few community-based, owned and operated alternatives to detention and incarceration for youth.

As part of its educational justice work, the YJC added campaign development and direct action organizing to challenge the School-to-Jail track in traditional public schools and charter schools. We also participate as active members in the Dignity in Schools Campaign, both in the L.A. chapter and nationally.

From <<http://www.youth4justice.org/about-the-yjc/history>>

FINANCIAL FACTS ABOUT THE DEATH PENALTY

In Nevada, defending the average capital murder case in Clark County cost \$229,800 for a Public Defender or \$287,250 for appointed counsel. The additional cost of capital murder cases was \$170,000 to \$212,000 per case compared to the cost of a non-capital murder case in the same county (“Estimates of Time Spent in Capital and Non-Capital Murder Cases: A Statistical Analysis of Survey Data from Clark County Defense Attorneys,” Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, February 21, 2012).

Since reinstating the death penalty in 1978, California taxpayers have spent roughly \$4 billion to fund a dysfunctional death penalty system that has carried out no more than 13 executions (Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review, July 8, 2011).

In California, the cost of a system which imposes a maximum penalty of lifetime incarceration instead of the death penalty would be \$11.5 million per year (Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice, June 30, 2008).

The California death penalty system costs taxpayers \$114 million per year beyond the costs of keeping convicts locked up for life. Taxpayers have paid more than \$250 million for each of the state's executions (L.A. Times, March 6, 2005).

In Kansas, the costs of capital cases are 70% more expensive than comparable non-capital cases, including the costs of incarceration (Kansas Performance Audit Report, December 2003).

In Indiana, the total costs of the death penalty exceed the complete costs of life without parole sentences by about 38%, assuming that 20% of death sentences are overturned and reduced to life (Indiana Criminal Law Study Commission, January 10, 2002).

The most comprehensive study in the country found that the death penalty costs North Carolina \$2.16 million per execution OVER the costs of sentencing murderers to life imprisonment. The majority of those costs occur at the trial level (Duke University, May 1993).

Enforcing the death penalty costs Florida \$51 million a year above what it would cost to punish all first-degree murderers with life in prison without parole. Based on the 44 executions Florida had carried out since 1976, that amounts to a cost of \$24 million for each execution (Palm Beach Post, January 4, 2000).

In Texas, a death penalty case costs an average of \$2.3 million, about three times the cost of imprisoning someone in a single cell at the highest security level for 40 years (Dallas Morning News, March 8, 1992).

Architects/Designers/Planners for Social
Responsibility

adpsr

Originally launched in 2004 as the Prison Design Boycott, ADPSR's Prison Alternatives Initiative calls on architects, other design professionals, and the public to support community-based alternatives to incarceration. This website communicates the painfully stunning facts and figures associated with U.S. prisons.

It is time to stop building prisons

Our prison system is both a devastating moral blight on our society and an overwhelming economic burden on our tax dollars, taking away much needed resources from schools, health care and affordable housing. The prison system is corrupting our society and making us more threatened, rather than protecting us as its proponents claim. It is a system built on fear, racism, and the exploitation of poverty. Our current prison system has no place in a society that aspires to liberty, justice, and equality for all.

As architects, we are responsible for one of the most expensive parts of the prison system, the construction of new prison buildings. Almost all of us would rather be using our professional skills to design positive social institutions such as universities or playgrounds, but these institutions lack funding because of spending on prisons. If we would rather design schools and community centers, we must stop building prisons.

Please join members of Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) in pledging to not participate in the design, construction, or renovation of prisons. We also invite you to learn more about the prison system, to join us in envisioning more just and productive alternatives to incarceration, and to work towards a society that treats all its members with dignity, equality, and justice.

Pledge

"I believe that too many people are being incarcerated and that our society must immediately develop and implement alternatives to incarceration. I believe in creating a society with real security and social justice for all, and I will not contribute my design to the perpetuation of wrongful institutions that abuse others. In recognition of the deep injustice of the present prison system, I pledge not to do any work that furthers the construction of prisons or jails."

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From <http://www.adpsr.org/home/prison_alternatives_initiative>

**CALIFORNIA
PRISON
MORATORIUM
PROJECT**

PRISONS DON'T BENEFIT ANYONE

Prisons don't benefit anyone | FAQ about prison expansion | New Forms of Prison Expansion

The false claims that are made to justify more prison construction—prisons make us safer, prison keep violent criminals off the street—are mirrored by false promises made to California's many prison towns. "Prison towns"—the places where prisons are built - are usually struggling rural towns, which are promised jobs and economic development as a result of the new industry in their town.

CPMP's work is guided by a few, simple ideas: no one really wants new prisons, and prisons don't benefit anyone. People want jobs, more money to improve road conditions, decent schools to send their kids to, just like people want to feel safe in their homes. And often times, prisons seem to be the one form of development that can provide these things. Wanting jobs and a decent quality of life is separate from wanting a prison, and in reality, a prison actually harms the potential for achieving these other things.

The business of locking people up isn't profitable for those who live inside or next to the prison. Instead, small towns have seen have watched precious city dollars go down the drain developing roads and services for the new, massive infrastructure needs of a prison facility. High unemployment rates, promised to be alleviated by new prison jobs, often actually rise after prison construction - most prison jobs require certain educational levels that cut out many rural residents, or are simply set aside for current prison employees. Prisons make other forms of development hard to attract. They are environmentally 'dirty' industries, polluting the air, water and land.

CPMP has seen these realities play out time and time again in small towns throughout California's Central Valley. These experiences have formed the beliefs that guide our work:

Prisons don't benefit anyone | Building prisons wastes money that could be used on things that actually make us safe | Prisons are not about safety

From <<http://www.calipmp.org/prisonsdontbenefitanyone>>



Death Penalty Moratorium Implementation Project

Working to Obtain a Nationwide Moratorium on Executions

What We Do

In 2001, the ABA created the Death Penalty Moratorium Implementation Project to carry out the ABA's goal of a nationwide moratorium unless and until problems within the administration of capital punishment are rectified. Through research, outreach, and education, the Moratorium Project encourages jurisdictions to undertake a comprehensive examination of their capital punishment laws and processes in order to eliminate identified flaws and to suspend executions while undergoing this process. The Moratorium Project serves as the ABA's voice and resource on death penalty moratorium-related issues.

Why should there be a moratorium on capital punishment for those who commit the worst crimes?

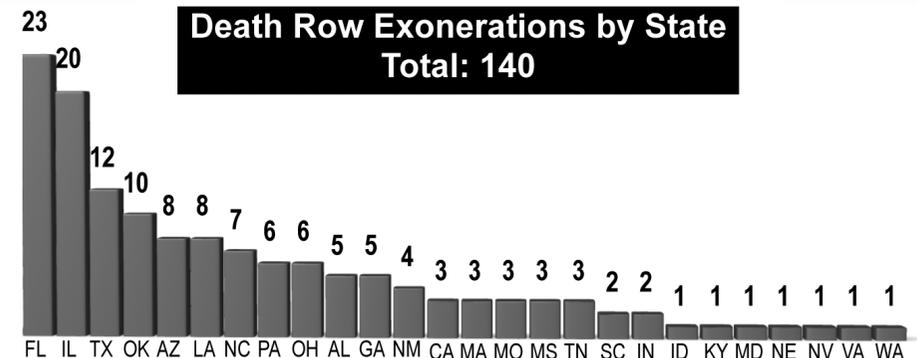
A moratorium on executions is necessary because the system by which convictions and death sentences are handed down is so badly flawed in many states that we currently cannot have confidence in the outcomes of the trials or review processes, even for the most heinous of capital offenses. When the trial is conducted fairly and the accused is represented by a lawyer who properly prepares and presents mitigating evidence at the penalty phase, jurors have the information necessary to decide whether to impose a death sentence or to impose, for example, a sentence of life without parole, depending upon the circumstances of the case. It is important to note that numerous people who spent many years on death row, in some instances coming very close to being executed, were found to be innocent long after their trials.

As of September 15, 2008, 130 people in 26 states have been released from death row because of evidence of their innocence. In some cases, the crimes of which the individuals were convicted were especially horrible, a fact that may have contributed to erroneous convictions. And in many of these cases, the errors were discovered not by the justice system, but by journalists and law clinics. We cannot continue to execute persons knowing that some may be innocent. We need to fix the system so that cannot happen.

Moreover, the fact that a crime is particularly egregious does not necessarily mean that the defendant, although guilty, will be sentenced to death. Numerous examples, such as the "Hillside Strangler" case, show that life without parole may be the verdict instead. Accordingly, ensuring a properly conducted capital sentencing proceeding, with effective advocates on both sides, is also vital.

Since 1973, over 130 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. (Staff Report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil & Constitutional Rights, Oct. 1993, with updates from DPIC).

From 1973–1999 there was an average of 3:1 exonerations per year and from 2000–2011, there was an average of 5 exonerations per year.



Since 1976, more than 100 people have been wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death in the United States. The most comprehensive study of capital trials ever conducted found that nearly seven of every 10 death sentences handed down by state courts from 1973 to 1995 were overturned. Most cases were overturned due to “serious, reversible error,” including egregiously incompetent defense counsel, suppression of exculpatory evidence, false confessions, racial manipulation of the jury, “snitch” and accomplice testimony and faulty jury instructions.

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