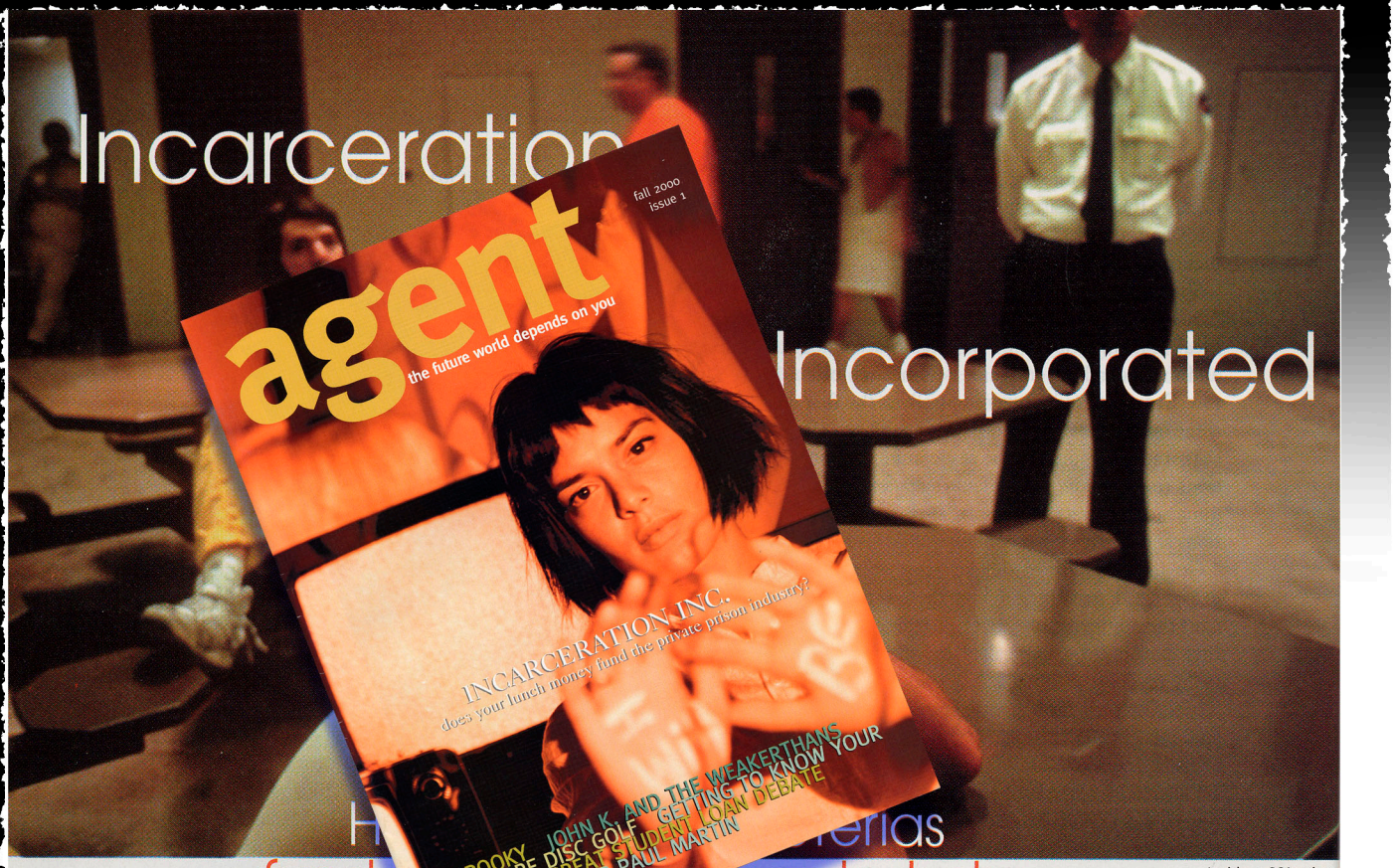


Inside a CCA prison
photo by Andrew Lichtenstein,
Open Society Institute

by Ariel Troster

Alex Friedmann counted himself as lucky when he first entered Tennessee's South Central Correctional Facility. Convicted of armed robbery, assault and attempt to commit murder, Friedmann found brand new facilities, a lenient staff and educational and vocational programs to keep him busy. The prison, privately owned and run by a company called Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), beat the austere decor and tough restrictions of state-run facilities as far as he was concerned.

"It was pretty wild, inmates could get away with just about anything," he says. "You could pretty much do what you wanted."

But after watching the conditions deteriorate and experiencing the effects of deep cuts to health care and other essential services, he became the company's harshest critic.

Students lining up for cafeteria food in Canada might be unknowingly supporting the company that had Friedmann lining up for prison food. Sodexho Marriott Services, which has contracts with 60 universities and colleges in Canada and 500 in the US, is partly owned by Sodexho Alliance, one of the leading investors in CCA and its sister company Prison Realty Trust.

Kevin Pranis, an activist with the Prison Moratorium Project in New York, is trying to convince students to oust the food provider from their campuses. While Pranis acknowledges that Sodexho Marriott may have no direct control over the prison industry, he's willing to exploit the connection between Sodexho Alliance and CCA.

"The ultimate goal is to shut down the private prison industry," says Pranis. "But the immediate goal is to get Sodexho Alliance to divest its interest in private prisons."

In the US, prisons are big business. The country's prison population stands at 1.875 million people and continues to grow by five per cent per year thanks to tougher sentencing, tighter parole restrictions and new anti-drug laws. As jails quickly became overcrowded in the early 1980s, cost-cutting federal agencies started looking to the private sector. Kentucky became the first state to award a prison contract to a private company in 1984. Soon after, the federal government started signing deals with companies like CCA.

Today, CCA/Prison Realty Trust own 50 per cent of the private prison market in the US, managing 82 prisons and 73,000 beds.

Canada has been slow to jump on the prisons-for-profit bandwagon, but Ontario Premier Mike Harris is set to privatize a so-called "superjail" in Penetanguishene. According to Stephen Nathan, editor of Prison Privatization Report International, CCA is pursuing the Penetanguishene contract.

At a public meeting in Penetanguishene last April, residents hissed and shouted at the mention of private prisons, but Rob Sampson, Ontario's Minister of Corrections, remains firmly convinced that a private company will offer cheaper, more efficient service. "Change is tough," he told the *National Post*. "My responsibility is to fix the system. I believe it is the right thing to do."

Friedmann was incarcerated in 1992 and became a guinea pig in Tennessee's first private prison experiment. The state built three prisons of the same basic size and design, and contracted one, the South Central Correctional Facility, to CCA.

Friedmann describes his first year in prison as "wide open." The guards didn't interfere with him too much and he served

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

CELLTHERAPY newmusiccallsforahalttoprisondevelopment

Because the "Prison Industrial Complex" has become a multi-million dollar industry for virtually all of the 50 states, Boston-based Raptivism Records is crusading overtime to stress the message that it is far better to educate than incarcerate. Two years in the making, Raptivism introduces their independently released *No More Prisons*, a searing wake-up call about the statistical, societal and human toll prisons exact on us.

No More Prisons is a jarring, head-noddin' exhibition of MC and vocal talent. Sister Asia sings about doing time on "Dedicated" with Steele of the Cocoa Brovas and Top Dog of OGC. Political hard rhymers Dead Prez weigh in with two joints including the blistering ragga-rhythmic "Murda Box." Others like the Coup, hip-hop pioneer Grandmaster Caz and rhyme titans the Last Poets all get down with the hope that through music, a larger audience will get involved. "The prison system itself is criminal, and we wanted to resist in a proactive manner," says Rishi Nath, co-executive producer of the album.

Proceeds from *No More Prisons* support the Prison Moratorium Project, a national campaign organized to stop further state spending on prisons. Pri The Honey Dark, a much-celebrated underground MC, heard about the album and cut her track the following week. "My seven-year old son will have to live with people who come out of prison. This was something I had to do."—***Thembisa S. Mshaka.*** *No More Prisons is available nationally at major retail outlets.*

esy raptivism records; mario testino

bag lady

CHILLI's chillin' with COACH

oach, the classic leather company that offers phat bags in all flavors, tapped Rozanda " Thomas, one third of pop girl LC, to represent them. eclectic Fall '99 national ng campaign, shot in black by famed photographer tino, continues what it calls Legends" crusade. lli's light include *Allure* Creative Director Polly model Carolyn Murphy, andace Bergen. oach, the faces campaign showirit of the brand. r came as a comough, she says, my favorite bag ith simplicity." s truly unique rakoff, execuor Coach. the subjects ically genuine, but the advertising and modern products truly illustrate where we are taking the Coach brand."—*Quohnos Mitchell.*

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

interview

Double Injustice: Rape of women in prison

When looking at the issue of rape, it is crucial to include our sisters inside prison walls in the discussion because they often are allowed no voice to speak out about the gross injustices that happen every day. off our backs *staff womyn Sheri Whatley conducted this interview with Chino Hardin, a youth organizer for The Prison Moratorium Project based in New York City. Chino is the point person for the "No More Youth Jails" campaign. She has been arrested sixteen times, and incarcerated on over eight occasions, so has first-hand information to share about the issue of women being raped in prison.*

oob: The mainstream is aware of the high rate of rape that men experience inside prison walls, but is largely ignorant of the fact that it also happens to women who are incarcerated. Could you give me an idea of how common it is for women prisoners?

CH: I think it's very common for women to get raped. It's not talked about as openly as it is about men (on the inside). The rates for women being raped vary from prison to prison. But when I was locked up I knew three girls who were raped by boys who actually broke out of their cells. The boys were locked in the same facility with the girls—this was in a juvenile facility. Also, when I went to an adult facility I knew about women being assaulted by guards and other inmates.

I personally think you got a 50/50 shot. It's depending on what you go into prison for, and what prison you go to and how you present yourself when you're in that prison. In my experience with the older females, they tend to kind of look down on child abusers and child molesters.

oob: So it's about punishment?

ca-
an
of not getting
ges or making it harder for
them throughout their course of time in
sentencing. And little things, like promising the prisoners candy or cigarettes from the outside world [if they have sex with the guards]. Also, other women who are prisoners, as well as male prisoners [are raping incarcerated women].

oob: Are all these guards (who are doing the raping) men, or are some of them women?

CH: I never heard of any female guards attacking any female inmates.

oob: Do these people target certain prisoners to rape? For instance, lesbian or transgendered women?

CH: Lesbians and transgendered women are at the top of the list to be raped, because of things like homophobia and no programs for guards and prisoners to help [them] deal with issues that come up on daily basis. Guards use rape as form of punishment and it is the lesbian and transgendered community that receives this type of punishment for just being who they are.

If you're in a gang and, for example, they put you in the Blood house, and you're a Crip, then you'll be

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

DAVEY
THE GREA[T] COMMUNIC[ATOR]

WHY HIM? He's a house of hip-hop p always knows who, where and how thing

EXHIBIT A: Despite case of Carpal Tunnel year Davey launched th *Hip-Hop Political*, a supp Friday Night Vibe. Boast subscribers, Davey's free vide commentary, news, re announcements. (If you mi be on Daveyd.com.)

EXIBITS B–D: Weekdays, Da hosts the top-rated "Hard Kn Radio" show on San Francisco KPFA-FM. He also pens a new for the *San Jose Mercury News* just started doing *The Davey D S* a video and public affairs TV prog

DAVEY D SPEAKS: "We're all part of a team," says the humble Bronx native. "My particular job is media advocacy."

KATE RHEE:
THE LIBERATOR

WHO SHE BE: Director of the Brooklyn-based Prison Moratorium Project, widely known for its *No More Prisons* rap compilations.

WHAT SHE DOES: Everything from "taking out the garbage, to making sure the dough flow is steady."

EXHIBIT A: In 2002, Rhee and her staff helped pressure the Department of Juvenile Justice into yanking $53 million from a plan to build additional cellblocks in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

EXHIBIT B: PMP recently co-launched "Stop the Disappearances," a post-Sept.11 campaign to expose unfair detention of Arabs, South Asians and Muslims.

BONUS FACT: This summer, Rhee traveled to Isreal/Palestine with a group of local activists. "The methods employed by the Israeli government to control the Palestinians are so reminiscent of those used by prison guards here," she declares. "Palestinians essentially live in one big prison."

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

For the soundtrack to his long-awaited *Thicker Than Water* flick, Mack 10 invites every hip-hop artist whom he's ever shook ha... Everyone f... ma... te... on... dra... *Th...* with a... pristine... basslines... With 28 t... needn't wo... your hard-ea... going to was... found here far... misses. Highlig... DJ Crazy Toones... lead single "Let It... which has Mack ba... with his Westside C...

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Thicker Than Water Soundtrack
Hoo-Bangin'/Priority

pals, while the Terror Squad banger "*Thicker Than Blood*" is just off-the-fucking-hook.

Lesser known heads also make their mark. On "They Wanna Be Gangstas," the Comrads relate perfunctory tales of gangsta rationalism. And Canadian MC Choclair's invigorating "Flagrant" makes a serious attempt to steal the entire show. Beyond the overkill on senseless violence throughout the LP, *Thicker Than Water* certifies that the Mack-dime is one to be taken very seriously in the upcoming millennium. **—CLEON ALERT**

The world has m... necessar... ...

...ous, is ...nd's toughest, ...streamlined and focused recording to date.

Entirely written and produced by the band, *Life's Aquarium* finds Mint Condition in a frisky, sexual mood. This is most notable on the rugged synco-pated opening cut, "Touch That Body," the jittery bump-and-grind that forms the foundation of "Who Can You Trust," and the soft wet kisses of "Pretty Lady," featuring The Gap Band's Charlie Wilson. MC has also grown more self-assured as a performing unit. *Life's Aquarium* chucks the musical showboating of past efforts and sticks to simple but effective songwriting. Led as always by Stokley, a fluid singer whose Stevie Wonder-isms have never stopped him from staking out his own territory, *Life's Aquarium* is satisfying and soulful.

—AMY LINDEN

Tommy Boy's *Get Crunk!* *(Da Album)* compilation is a ...eat to the career of any ...thern house-party DJ. It's ...erfect soundtrack to ...crowded, smoke-filled ... the wall below the ...ixon.

...based trio L.G.'s ...nts) open with ...ctive debut, ...None," featur-... and Chyna ...hem doesn't ...classics like ...o-hop mosh ...thafuc-... G's musi-... ...e ... Skull-... ...P ...k,"

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Get Crunk! (Da Album)
Tommy Boy

featuring Pimp C of UGK puts brakes on the tempo with the slow-down grooves of Run-DMC.'s "Rock Box." Then Lil Ke Ke's "Southside" and Mystikal's "Here I Go" gradually get the crowd hyped all over again.

The disc has the flavors to make you wanna twerk something, but the majority of the tracks are old and need to be accented by new tunes. There's nothing on there by Luke or the Cash Money crew. Nevertheless, it's solid material and sure to blow the roof off the joint by the end. *Get Crunk!* is a CD which lives up to its name. **—CARLTON WADE**

The Prison Moratorium Project is a New York-based campaign to redirect prison dollars into education and community-based organizations through a five-year moratorium on the construction of new prisons. In order to raise awareness of the project in the hip-hop community, Raptivism/LandSpeed Records presents No More Prisons, a 23-track compilation, teaming everyone from old-school vets to subterranean backpackers.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
No More Prisons
Raptivism/LandSpeed

On "Rich Get Rich," Chubb Rock, Edo G., Paw Duke, and Lil Dap from Group Home indict capitalism over a Y2K-stramental mix of guitar and Buck Rogers-sounding effects. "Hold The Key" marks the last appearance on wax of Boston's late underground stalwart Scientifik who, along with L Da Headtoucha, God Wize, and K-Slaughta, dips in and out of a gritty Edo G.-produced track with rhymes of self-sufficiency. On "Behind Enemy Lines," dead prez, the real PE 2000, recount emotional tales of incarcerated comrades. The inspirational , and the soulful "Evolution" with Vinia Mojica and Last Emperor is as entertaining as it is insightful. Billed as a "sonic revolution for the people," No More Prisons is a musically and conceptually impressive project that sheds light on a worthy cause.

—JONATHAN "GOTTI" BONANNO

AsianWeek

Demonstrators Insist 'Let Our People Go'

NYC groups gather on MLK day to protest federal detentions

January 25 - January 31, 2002

By Adrian Leung
Special to AsianWeek

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in New York City, a group of protestors gathered in Union Square, unhindered by the recent snow, the downpour of rain, the freezing cold, or the months of injustice they were working against. They met to publicize and decry the detentions of over 1,400 people — immigrants who've been locked in prisons indefinitely without charges, if not minor visa violations. Afterwards, they mounted buses to protest at the Passaic County Jail in New Jersey.

Organized by members of Desis Rising Up and Moving, the Coalition for Human Rights of Immigrants and the Prison Moratorium Project, the demonstration began to gather momentum at 11:45 a.m. under the canopy of the subway entrance on the southwest side of the park. The protest's prospects seemed blighted by the rain, but by noon the rain had stopped. Eventually, some 300 people showed up in support, accompanied by a number of television, Internet and newspaper reporters.

The event's facilitator, Monami Maulik, a DRUM organizer, opened the conference by "calling out the injustices" faced by thousands of detainees. She said, "The Department of Justice and the INS are not willing to say how many people are locked up, let alone what their names are and how they can be contacted. We're here to say we want an immediate end to the disappearances of our family members. These are fathers. These are brothers, these are husbands. And they deserve a right to due process. Their families deserve to know where they are."

Maulik then introduced Uzma Naheed, a Pakistani resident of Bayonne, N.J., whose husband and brother are both in prison as detainees under maximum security.

Naheed spoke of how the FBI came to her home to arrest her, after her already detained cousin had used her address on a form.

"My husband said, 'She just had a baby. She can't go with you. You can take me if you want.' So they arrest my husband. And they told me that he would be able to come home after three or four days, and that they would call me after four or five hours. But after that, nobody contacted me, and no one tells me where my cousin is or my husband," Naheed recounted.

Her husband was arrested on Oct. 23 and her cousin was arrested on Sept. 27. She has not spoken to either since their disappearances, and there is no other breadwinner in her household.

Nancy Chang, an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, explained the legal happenings behind the detentions. She first pointed out that all people, more than just United States citizens, were covered by the fifth amendment's right to due process. However, since Sept. 11, some of "the rules changed." For example, she said the time allotted to charge an individual with a crime was changed from 24 hours to 38 hours. But a loophole was also created to allow an uncapped amount of time in periods of "emergency" and "crisis."

Chang said: "[The Justice Department] has apparently taken this rule to heart because we have learned that two people were detained for 47 days without charge and an individual of Israeli nationality was held for 66 days without charge. This is unacceptable."

Due process also requires access to an attorney. "We've heard horror stories of individuals being kept from making phone calls to attorneys and families who've been concerned about them," Chang said.

After Chang, Mansoor Khan from Help and Hope, a Pakistani community-based organization, told of the community's experience. He said many families were coming to them asking for information about their missing relatives. "Some people are going to the Pakistani embassy and the consulate and asking a lot of people what they know about the Pakistanis who've been detained. They don't have any answers for them. Even the Pakistani consulate doesn't have that list to satisfy those families."

Subhash Kateel, another DRUM organizer, took the bullhorn after Khan. "This is a very specific message to the INS, the FBI and the Justice Department. Please do me a favor. Do not tell us that you are not targeting South Asians, Arabs or Muslim people. Do not tell us that you're not targeting immigrants and immigrants of color, when we are seeing our families detained and deported, when we are seeing our family members over here impoverished because of INS detention, because the breadwinners of the family are currently locked up in detention," said Kateel.

He also spoke about the fact that Passaic County was not the only jail with detainees. "Our people are locked up all over the country," he said. Kateel praised the productive discussions with sheriffs and prison officials, but he reminded everyone, "At the end of the day, the bottom line is that our people are still locked up, our people are still deported. Our family still can't eat. It's the husbands, the brothers in some cases, the wives the mothers, the sons. So regardless, we want good conditions for people inside, but they mean nothing if you're still locked up."

Lastly, Kate Rhee from the Prison Moratorium Project spoke on the role of the prison industrial complex in the detention of immigrants. Rhee said, "There are contacts being made right now between your government, the INS and the FBI, and corporations out there. There is a marriage of public and the private sector to target communities of color and immigrant communities under the umbrella of the U.S.A. Patriot Act and the prison industrial complex as well. The private prison corporation is salivating over the prospect of immigrants being detained at the rate it is going on right now."

In a brief, entitled "In Their Own Words," DRUM collected statements of detainees at Passaic County Jail. Some of the statements detail beatings and poor conditions. One statement says, "All I can say about this jail, is that it is the lowest standard of treatment a human being can get. After having been here for almost three months, I can face any kind of torture in the world. People are beaten here quite frequently — they are beaten for nothing. Many are beaten for refusing to eat food that's not halal because they are Muslim. Others are beaten and charged for praying by using their bed sheets as prayer rugs."

Before walking to the buses parked in front of Beth Israel hospital on Broadway, Maulik explained the feelings of the people DRUM was working with in Passaic County. She said, "The folks we've been working with know we're coming, and they're waiting for a sign of support and solidarity. Many of them feel like no one in the public is concerned, that no one knows. So we're going out there to show support and solidarity."

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

COALITION SAYS CHILDREN FIRST — PRISONS LAST

A coalition comprised of child advocates, environmentalists and rural farmers handed Pataki a stunning defeat of his proposing to build a new juvenile prison in the upstate communities of Bainbridge and Walton New York.

As part of his 2002-2003 budget, Governor George Pataki proposed a building, a new juvenile prison at a cost of $74.5 million.

While articulating oppositions to this new juvenile prison, Assemblyman Green urged that the overall drops in juvenile crime, including a 38% reduction in federal arrests created an opportunity for the state government to establish "a more enlightened policy towards juvenile delinquency."

Assemblyman Green, working in alliance with the coalition comprised of students and youthful advocates belonging to an organization entitled The Prison Moratorium Project lobbied the state legislature and organized grassroots opposition to this juvenile prison. Speaking before residents of the rural communities of Walton and Bainbridge in upstate New York. Assemblyman Green said, " For far too long our state government has allowed the creation of prisons to become a perverse economic stimulus package. I urge you to join with us in creating a coalition of conscious, consisting of our rural communities and our urban centers. We must fight to ensure that our tax dollars are directed toward schools, child care and higher education services. We must put children first and prisons last."

" For far too long our state government has allowed the creation of prisons to become a perverse economic stimulus package. I urge you to join with us in creating a coalition of conscious, consisting of our rural communities and our urban centers. We must fight to ensure that our tax dollars are directed toward schools, child care and higher education services. We must put children first and prisons last."

As a result of an active petition and letter writing campaign and through the leadership of Assemblyman Green, the Governor withdrew his proposal to build the juvenile prison in upstate New York.

Empowered by the activism of the emerging prison moratorium coalition, Assemblyman Green introduced an alternative to the juvenile prison. The Assemblyman proposed redirecting the $74.5 million which was originally slated for a prison, to the creation of sports, recreational and educational facilities at those armories under the control of the state or city government.

At the conclusion of the budget negotiations of May 16, 2002, Assemblyman Green disclosed that he had secured language in the state budget that would direct the state to spend a portion of its capital budget towards converting armories into sports and recreation facilities.

Assemblyman Green is currently working with representatives from the 77th precinct council, the Bergen Street Block Association and Community Board #8 towards the conversion of Bedford and Atlantic armories into a comprehensive sports and education facility.

Green speaks out on education.

Assemblyman Roger L. Green

Albany Office: **Room 622 Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248 • (518) 455-5325**

District Office: **Kings County State Office Building, 55 Hanson Place, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11217 • (718) 596-0100**

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

Kate, Rhee

'LIBERATION WITH INTEGRITY'

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATE RHEE

NAME: Kate Rhee
AGE: 30
EMPLOYER: Prison Moratorium Project, New York City
JOB TITLE: Executive Director
YEARS IN POSITION: 3.5 years

"Basically, it's about changing relations of power and building power. And the best part is working with youth wisdom, which is like none other."

Describe what you do.

I work as an executive director at the Prison Moratorium Project (PMP) in New York City. PMP works to stop prison expansion and reallocate funds to education, social services and community-based programs critical to building a real democracy. We do this by developing and implementing innovative educational tools and community initiatives that work with youth and adults from communities most targeted by the police and the prison system — primarily African American and Latino communities. Some of the highlights of our work and victories [include]:

- we launched a massive public education campaign called "Education Not Incarceration," which was successful in helping to restore funding for public higher education in New York;
- we forced a multibillion corporation that is headquartered in France (Sodexho-Alliance) to divest from one of the largest private prison companies in the world (Corrections Corporation of America);
- we stopped the state of New York from spending $73 million to build a maximum-security juvenile facility in upstate New York;
- in March 2000, in partnership with Raptivism Records, we released a hip-hop compilation CD that aims to raise awareness about the Prison Industrial Complex among the hip-hop generation.

This summer, we will be launching a Community Media Resource Center that will train a group of formerly incarcerated youth to develop media and technology skills.

Do you consider your job a passion?

More than a passion, a vision.

What do you find most fulfilling about your work?

The people I work with, and breaking new ground in terms of our campaign wins, not just because we won, but because of who is doing the winning: people of color coming together — immigrants and non-immigrants as well — to fight for social justice and youth. Basically, it's about changing relations of power and building power. And the best part is working with youth wisdom, which is like none other.

Describe your path here? What other jobs have you held?

My path here … hmm, from being an immigrant from Korea (came here when I was 10), to studying political philosophy and ethics, to having two mentors (as far as my political consciousness) who are African American, to working as a juvenile justice counselor in New York City, to becoming a staff member at PMP.

Other jobs: mainly teaching positions and a juvenile justice counselor position; also plenty of temping to survive, including at Goldman Sachs.

What are some challenges that you might not have expected?

What it takes to build an organization and what it takes to be a leader.

What are the perks, if any?

I don't ever have to dress up to go to work.

What skill of yours has proven to be one of the most useful to your job?

Ability to analyze to death, think critically. Public speaking skills. Leadership skills.

What's the best euphemism you've heard for your job title?

Mother.

How do your parents feel about your career choice?

Supportive, but feel I take care of everything and everyone else (including stray dogs) but me.

What is your favorite worktime pick-me-up?

When I get to bring my dog to work — walking my dog.

What is your work philosophy?

Liberation with integrity.

Do you have a personal theme song?

I don't share theme songs — too revealing.

— Rose Kim

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

activism

Concrete Poetry

William "Upski" Wimsatt makes the sidewalk a soapbox for his anti-prison message.

The sidewalk scrawl "No More Prisons" has been arresting walkers in downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn since late October. In Fort Greene, Brooklyn, for example, the graffiti occurs nearly every block along a five-block stretch of Fulton Street. It's reportedly equally prominent in Washington, D.C., and Chicago, two other cities frequented by William "Upski" Wimsatt, the unabashed graffiti artist and the author of a book called *No More Prisons*. Since initiating this unusual marketing campaign through his late-night spray painting and his Web site (www.nomoreprisons.net), Upski has received welcome reports of imitators in Seattle, Vancouver, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Cleveland, and even Berlin.

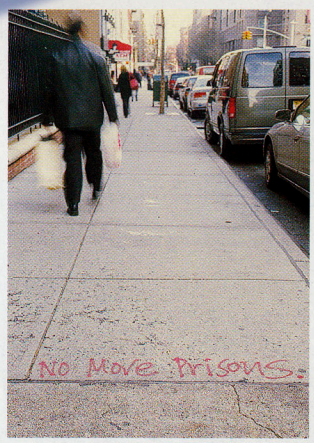
Despite his book's title, Upski didn't invent the phrase. No More Prisons is in fact an arm of the nonprofit Prison Moratorium Project (PMP), which is calling for a halt to new prison construction, a more than $7-billion-a-year industry. (The United States puts more people behind bars than any other country and has a rate of incarceration second only to Russia's.) *No More Prisons* is also the name of a record released in March by Raptivism Records, a small Brooklyn-based label run by Rishi Nath and Vincent Merry, who is also on the board of PMP.

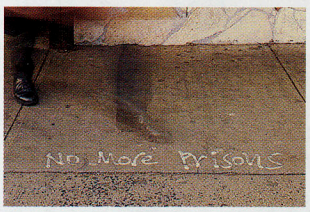
Nath and Merry, both in their mid-twenties, grew up together in Boston. As kids, they admired activist rappers such as KRS-One, who mixed social issues into their music. Later, as a continuing-education math teacher in Chicago, Nath became increasingly frustrated that minor offenses were putting many of his students in prison for what seemed unjustly long periods. "It was hard for me to accept that my job was receiving interference from the justice system," says Nath. At the same time, he and Merry were working with PMP, which offered a sophisticated analysis of the prison-construction boom but wasn't reaching kids in cities, a key demographic of future inmates and activists, according to Nath. Through hip-hop, Nath and Merry think they can create more activists than inmates, hence the album and a yearlong, 40-college tour that the No More Prisons group—including Upski—embarked on in late November.

Nath and Merry had known Upski from the hip-hop scene in Chicago. "At some point," says Nath, "Upski called saying, 'I'm writing my book and I want to do something with your record. I want to change the name of my book to *No More Prisons*.'" For Upski, an unconventional writer of politically minded straight-talk whose first book was *Bomb the Suburbs*, the title change "was making use of the fact that this book is about so many things, it doesn't matter what I call it," he says. "I may as well do something that advances a record and a political statement I believe in." He sees the graffiti, too, as a chance to reclaim space and use it for the creative marketing of both politics and product. Nath and Merry, meanwhile, disavow any concrete, so to speak, connection to the graffiti. "Our honest response is: It's not something we [at Raptivism] are doing," Merry says.

Marc Mauer, assistant director of Washington, D.C., policy-reform group the Sentencing Project, thinks the record, book, and graffiti could be a very effective way to reach the under-30 crowd that No More Prisons targets. "Some of the methods we and others use might be less relevant," he explains, referring to research reports directed at the media and politicians. "Any creative method to encourage more young people to be involved is welcomed."

Though it's illegal, Upski says he doesn't think there's anything wrong with sidewalk graffiti. "I don't consider myself an outlaw," he says. "I consider myself a citizen who cares about his country and who has serious ethical objections to spending $30,000 a year to lock up a nonviolent first-time offender."—Carly Berwick





William "Upski" Wimsatt's sidewalk scrawl has become as familiar to New Yorkers as their own handwriting.

Annie Schlechter

("Rubber Doll"), Chris Vrenna ("Pussy") and Joey Beltram ("Rough Sex"). Unfortunately, none of those artists did the Lords' any justice. Instead, about half of the remixers on *Expand Your Head* tried to go the cool, even esoteric route — a silly ambition when the subject is the fantastically uncool Lords.

Still, not everyone failed to embrace the tongue-and-cheek magic of such songs as "Spank My Booty" and "Let's Get High." Robbie Hardkiss, for example, manages to kick out a sensuous revision of "Marijuana in Your Brain" that cascades and slides as sweetly as your first bong hit. God Lives Underwater are also due mad props for a phenomenal and funky remake of the classic "I Sit on Acid" that goes lustfully deeper than the original while still maintaining Jade 4 U's awesome vocals. Other exceptional remixes come from KMFDM, Luc Van Acker and Rob Swift. Yet the real gems are those tracks produced by the Lords themselves, including the go-go glitter of "Am I Sexy?" and a kind of feminist "Firestarter," titled "As I Am." Ultimately, *Expand Your Head* should prove to be a fair introduction to the Lords of Acid for the *Dawson's Creek* generation that's still figuring out who killed James Brown. **Mateo Segade**

MARBLES VOLUME ONE

(Marble Bar/UK) One of the more consistent labels to emerge in the past year, London's Marble Bar quickly gained a reputation for individual tunes with soul as well as a healthy smattering of humor. Less obvious and more genuinely funky than what comprises most big beat sets, the Marble Bar crew achieve what countless producers are failing to realize with their stale, lazy beats.

The lighthearted tone is set immediately, from the playful *Sesame Street* samples that pepper the opener "Dogs' "And The Letters S... worry, it doesn't "Sesame's Treet.", "Shoot the Moon" massive, defining th set. What makes it m don't care *who* they breakbeat avenging; che "The Old Hit Shed" cheeky summary of some ites. A fun collection wor and a good teaser to the leases from these talented are hopefully forthcoming. **T...**

MINUS 8 PRESENTS

SCIENCE FICTION JAZZ

(Mole/GER) It takes keen producers to put the soul into sampling, particularly when the bits and pieces they're borrowing come from old jazz records. It's hard for even techno to improve on the genre that first defined urban cool, and few producers do it with finesse.

Science Fiction Jazz Vol. 4 presents a selection of tracks that half-step in the direction of fusion, while taking the tropes of the jazz genre quite liberally indeed. Only the double-bass on Ian Pooley's late-night house jam "What's Your Number" hints towards its origins. Diablo's snappy drum & bass workout "Don't Fret" is a quirky cross between live and digitized sounds; perky pianos and sliding bass point towards musicians of the past, while crisp, computer-tweaked snares make it sound utterly new. Though this new-jack jazz may lack some of the pressure of the original, its purloined licks and hooks certainly add up to swanky music. And on *Science Fiction Jazz*, DJ Minus 8's smooth blend of tracks — from Squarepusher's kinetic "Don't Go Plastic" to Audio Lotion's sleepy "Balm Beach" — ensures that 21st-century cocktail parties won't be without a soundtrack. **Vivian Host**

MONOLITHIC MINDS 1 & 2

(Primal Music) The UK drum & bass scene of 1999 has little time for tracks that don't sound like a mechanical monster coming to tear you limb from limb. That is to say, if it ain't dark, bangin' and 170 bpm, top DJs and tastemakers like Grooverider and Andy C don't want it. But though today's techno-influenced tracks come equipped with plenty of roaring drums and bass, attack tunes don't always work for home co... tion. That's where fri... Squarep...

GENASIDE II

AD FINITE

(Durban Poison/Never Records) In 1991, Genaside II were responsible for what is considered among the first of techno's ... est hits, the unforgettable ... unlike many ... Gen...

µ-ZIQ

ROYAL AST...

(Astralwerks) ...ghettes that pla... postmodern *Nu*... Mike Paradinas ... album full of n... turbed children. *A*... album full of danc... drums and shrill n... "The Hwicci" and ... almost hear the tiny f... marching.

But as charming as ... may sometimes be, mor... his keyboard manipulatio... as querile, or just plain an... cher" and "Motorbik... at drum & bass, thou... is ruined by a ser... As funky as "Domo... plagued by absurd f... ind bleeps. Ultimately ... at make *Royal Astro*... y also make it difficult ... mark of a true avar... the stamp of a two-... ayer. **Vivian Host**

NO MORE PRISONS

(Raptivism) Social justice enacted through a beat, Raptivism Records' *No More Prisons* tone is set by the words of Steele from the Cocoa Brovaz: "*You can lock my body, but my mind is free.*" Each song is a chapter in the exploration of the oppressive dynamics of the prison-industrial complex as a whole, managing to incorporate militant raggafied anti-police tirades of Dead Prez featuring Hedrush with the academic flows of Prof. Cornel West. Vinia Mojica and Last Emperor shine on "Evolution," Daddy-O makes a welcome allegorical return on "Voices," and Boots gets right to the point on The Coup's "Drug Warz:" "*Wouldn't be no dope slangin' if McDonald's paid right.*" Chubb Rock's attack on "Rich Get Rich" is no less vicious: "*How the fuck can street crack rule the NASDAQ?/That's like a rap nigga getting a check from ASCAP.*" Even the Last Poets get down for the cause. Too often of late conscious rap has failed because it missed 'the beat' but *No More Prisons* avoids this trap, presenting a solid 74 minutes of social commentary laced with enough boom-bap to nod your head as your intellect gets fed. Keeping it real on the books as well, all profits from the compilation go to benefit the prison activists at the Prison Moratorium Project.

Steve 'Flash' Juon

...C NAVARR... ... GERMAIN

...T TO ST. GERMAIN

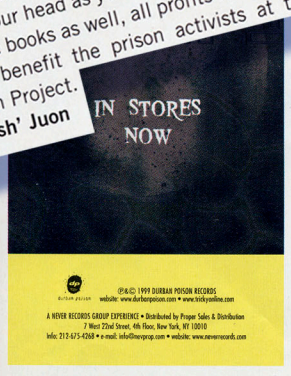
...ons/FR) Under various ...h as St. Germain, Sub ...ndi and Deepside) and ...neers Laurent Garnier ...as one of the origina... ...tronic music scene. ...'s a perfect cross... ...a "best of," if you ...like a rap nigga getting a check from ASCAP." Even the Last Poets get down for the cause. Too often of late conscious rap has failed because it missed 'the beat' but No More Prisons avoids this trap, presenting a solid 74 minutes of social commentary laced with enough boom-bap to nod your head as your intellect gets fed. Keeping it real on the books as well, all profits from the compilation go to benefit the prison activists at the Prison Moratorium Project.

Steve 'Flash' Juon

...ORK-NU SKOOL 2: ...COAST DRUM 'N' REVELATIONS

...e got to roll with the illest of the ill to make ... So don't think for a Manhattan minute that ...ass emanating from the environs of NYC ...han the best. Okay, so the scene's leading ...is Irish; his energy and his attitude are ...age. That's why Dara gets a couple of ... the opening "Polaroid," in this collec... ...ose cuts exhibit his trademark fluidity ...gainst diamond-hard breaks.

DJ Kazimir's pop-jungle treatment of the Beatles' "Dear Prudence" is interesting but incongruous as the rest of the set takes a stricter approach to drum & bass. DJ Ani's "King of Style" brings a ghetto-tech vibe, while Joe's "Distortion" offers creatively crispy minimalism. Ras' "Sigg One" is driven by contrasts of dark (its kick drum) and light (a flute, female vocals and distant bells). Veterans Trace and Jamie Myerson round out the set, the former with some floor-shaking soul and the latter with a downtempo remix of the track that opened the first volume of this series. *Nu York-Nu Skool 2* represents a well-focused snapshot of stateside jungle, Eastern Division. **Benjamin Diaz**



OM LOUNGE 2

(Om) While the subtitle says "A Stereophonic Parlor of Global Rhythms and High Performance Atmospherics," the press sheet sums this compilation up more accurately as "futuristic easy listening." Because while too many artists (and their labels) conflate their mild-mannered downtempo as some kind of "jazz," the music neither swings nor displays a hint of improvisation. Instead, easy listening is just about right: so many modern rhythm tracks that aren't meant for the dance floor are really just lounge music.

But in a post-ironic world, "lounge" doesn't have the old, lightweight connotations of Muzak-y froth. Now that stuff is hip, and Om is obviously in on the gag. While the tracks here are mostly surface sheen — background sounds for better boutiques and bohemian bars — there are several truly pleasant tunes in the mix. Callisto's "Humid" has some real energy in its drum & bass beats, and Ian Pooley's now classic "What's Your Number?" is a genuine song. A few other familiar contributors, like Fila Brazillia and Ming & FS, kick in pieces, though most of this disc blends together in one placid, chilled-out, "atmospheric" groove. **Benjamin Diaz**

THE OUTFIT

THE SOUNDTRACK TO LIFE

(Oblique Recordings) The Outfit are tough to pin down. There are shades of the Pharcyde, The Roots, Jurassic 5 and maybe even Camp Lo here. While the album may not be as resilient as all these groups' debuts, it's still a great piece of work. *The Soundtrack to Life* boasts seven MCs (two of whom double on production), plenty to keep things fresh through the twelve tracks.

The mellow production weighs heavily on thick keyboard and bass, while rhyme topics range from kicking back with friends at night ("Insomnia") to *Jet Magazine*'s "Beauty of the Week" column. There's even a dope soul clap session on "Conniptions." And though occasionally the Outfit MCs drop less-than-stellar lyrics, much more often they are witty and insightful. This combined with jazzy, laid-back production that consistently impresses? This soundtrack deserves a sequel. **Lyfestyle**

RENNIE PILGREM

EXPLICIT BEATS

(City of Angels) Mr. Pilgrem doesn't want you hopping around the cuts of this funky bag o' breaks — the disc is programmed as one, long hour-plus track, forcing you to listen to it from beginning to end. And Pilgrem's not one of those DJs who wants to impress you with the breadth of his taste. Instead, he finds a groove he likes and lives in it. So while nearly all of these pieces are obscure exercises in rhythm — derived from the vaults of Pilgrem's UK label, Thursday Club Recordings (TCR) — their fundamental similarities create an enveloping atmosphere of big beat funk.

...VOL. 1

...With offices in both Paris and London, Distance have ...plored various electronic genres in their five-year history. Since placing a particular emphasis on championing quality house music, however, they have risen to the top as one of the world's finest, most reliable imprints. *House Proud Vol. 1* culls the label's favorite singles from the first half of the year, which was packed with stellar tunes, and will soon be followed by *Vol. 2* to round out the year.

Their educated ear for house music leads them directly to the source: America. Producers like Kings of Tomorrow, Kevin Yost, Bernard Badie, Alton Miller and Larry Heard ensure a no-fail set. The exuberant piano and swinging lyrics of "Thinkin' About Your Love" by Lenny Fontana Presents The Exclusive Club is fine ...ower-packed with uplifting vocal tunes and spirited instrumental jams. ...d by a second CD of tunes from most of the same artists, mixed by Harry ...z (aka Constipated Monkeys). It's their own remix of Danny Rampling's ...aucous slice of disco, that steals the show — cheeky monkeys. Distance ...a Palmer

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

Jail Breaker

Kate Rhee, 29

New York, New York

Imagine a society with fewer prisons: That's the dream of activist Kate Rhee, director of the Brooklyn-based Prison Moratorium Project (www.nomoreprisons.org). A juvenile justice counselor who moved back to New York City after studying philosophy at the University of Chicago, Rhee joined the project in 1999, four years after the group was forged out of a meeting of young ex-prisoners and their allies. The youth-led project—demanding "education, not incarceration"—has convinced politicians to reduce unnecessary prison expansion and sparked successful campus campaigns to get shareholders to divest stock in the controversial Corrections Corporation of America. With Raptivism Records (www.raptivism.com), the organization put out the "No More Prisons" CD, considered one of the most successful alliances between a social movement and rap artists.

—Chris Dodge

citystate

Youth Jail Funding Detained

Will Remaining Millions Be Unchained as Well?

by Dasun Allah

July 24 - 30, 2002

Youth activists had cause for celebration last month when $53 million of a proposed $65 million allocated for the expansion of juvenile correctional facilities was removed from the city budget proposal. While activists and elected officials have worked long and hard to cut the funding from the budget, the move is mainly seen as a first step in the journey to completely reform the city's juvenile justice system. Activists are now gearing up to get a remaining $11.4 million in juvenile justice funds put into prevention rather than detention.

As previously reported in The Village Voice, a group of young activists and grassroots organizations calling themselves the Justice 4 Youth Coalition mobilized around the issue of juvenile justice reform and lobbied city politicians to fight against the proposed funding. The coalition alerted the public and local officials to the folly of spending $65 million during a fiscal crisis to expand youth facilities when existing ones are operating below capacity and youth crime rates are falling.

The coalition and its political allies see the funding slash as a major victory but are not taking time to pop corks or pat backs. At the offices of the Correctional Association of New York and the Prison Moratorium Project, both coalition members, it was business as usual, as the effort to revamp New York's juvenile justice system continues.

"Nothing's really changed here," says Mishi Faruqee, a spokesperson for the Correctional Association of New York. "We're gratified that the city did take out the money, but we're really focusing on what the next steps are. We're working with a whole coalition of young people around the larger issues of criminalization of youths in New York City, trying to reduce the number of kids who go into the juvenile justice system and creating positive alternatives for young people in the community."

The current effort is for the reallocation of the $11.4 million remaining in the Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) capital budget. "For us the campaign goal has always been definitely beyond canceling the money allocated for jail expansion," says Kate Rhee of the Prison Moratorium Project. "It always has been about reallocation. How do we get the money back into the community? How do we reroute the money to a juvenile justice agenda determined by the youth?"

The $11.4 million in the DJJ capital budget is designated for the maintenance and upkeep of existing youth detention centers such as Crossroads in Brooklyn and Horizons and Bridges (once Spofford) in the Bronx. Instead of expanding reactive measures to youth crime such as detention facilities, reformists advocate using the funds for more proactive prevention initiatives and rehabilitation-focused alternative programs.

"The fact of the matter is, prisons are just not working," says Rhee. "The reason is because rehabilitation is not taking place, and especially when it comes to juvenile crime, we see the recidivism rate is very high for kids coming in contact with DJJ. But recidivism rates are much lower when kids get a second chance and go to alternative-to-incarceration programs."

A fear that the funds will ultimately be used to expand correctional facilities in lieu of more constructive options troubles both the activists and their elected supporters. City Councilman James E. Davis, one of many council members working with the coalition, wants the $11.4 million to fund construction for alternative-to-incarceration programs.

"That's winning to me," says Davis. "That $11 million is not going for them to sneak through the back door and expand youth jails anyway and say, well, since we couldn't expand it on this scale, we'll expand it on another scale."

Wherever the journey takes them, the coalition and its allies pledge to carry on the protracted struggle for juvenile justice reform. The coalition is weighing strategies to capitalize on the momentum the $53 million funding cut has brought to their movement, and Councilman Davis promises more hearings and official action on the issue of the remaining $11.4 million.

"Until the DJJ has a serious effort to prevent incarceration, until they have a serious effort to build lives and not jails, it's not over for us," says Davis. "It's not over for me."

the village VOICE

TOP STORY

Youth Advocacy Group Protests Program That Puts Police In Public Schools

DIAL UP BROAD BAND

FEBRUARY 18TH, 2004

A youth advocacy group rallied at City Hall Wednesday to argue that the city's new policy of putting police officer in violence-plagued schools won't make them safer.

The Justice for Youth Coalition is made up of teachers, students, parents and advocates. They are protesting Mayor Michael Bloomberg's decision to place uniformed officers in 12 of New York's most dangerous schools.

The mayor's office claims the officers are necessary to create a safe environment for learning, but the coalition says the police presence just fosters more violence.

"You don't bring a policing solution to an education problem," said City Councilman Charles Barron.

"Our message is simple today: the fact of the matter is, cops and increased police presence in schools does not make schools safe," said Kate Rhee of the Prison Moratorium Project.

"Right now our mayor is willing to put a cop next to every student in every school in New York City. But what this mayor is not willing to do is put a book next to every student in New York City, [or] willing to put a teacher next to every student in New York City," added Chino Hardin of the Prison Moratorium Project.

The coalition says having officers in the schools helps create a school-to-prison track for African-American and Hispanic students. They'd like to see the mayor put more effort into violence intervention and conflict resolution programs.

PRINT-FRIENDLY VERSION

"No queremos policías en las escuelas"

Estudiantes protestan frente a la Alcaldía por el plan anti violencia escolar implementado el mes pasado por el alcalde Bloomberg

MAXY SOSA
ALCALDÍA

El mensaje fue directo y transmitido ayer desde las escalinatas de la Alcaldía, en palabras y en cánticos, por estudiantes del sistema de escuelas públicas de la ciudad: "la militarización no es la solución para acabar con el problema de la violencia escolar".

El malestar del grupo estuvo incitado por la nueva política de seguridad, ordenada el mes pasado por el alcalde Michael Bloomberg y por el canciller de educación Joel Klein, que incluye la identificación de las 12 escuelas más peligrosas de la ciudad, la colocación de 150 policías en estos planteles y la implementación de un estricto código de conducta que permite la remisión de estudiantes violentos a centros de suspensión.

Para Chino Hardin y Kate Rhee, de la organización Prisión Moratorium Project y Justice 4 Youth Coalition, la solución del Alcalde y del Canciller es la fórmula ideal para que ocurra un desastre.

"Poner más policías en las escuelas es crear el camino perfecto de la escuela a la prisión, especialmente entre la juventud afroamericana y latina", declaró Hardin poco después de que un grupo de los participantes presentara una coreografía en la que se fueron despojando, primero de la bata de graduación que los cubría dejando al descubierto un uniforme color naranja como el que usan los presos el que abrieron hasta la cintura exponiendo una camiseta color negro en la que se leía "Justice 4 Youth".

UNO DE LOS ACTIVISTAS ESTUDIANTILES cuando se dirigía a la prensa para expresar su oposición a la presencia policial en las escuelas de la ciudad.

INCIDENTE DESAFORTUNADO

Poco antes de que se iniciara la conferencia de ayer, los policías que custodian la entrada a la Alcaldía confiscaron un cuchillo que portaba uno de los participantes.

El arma fue descubierta cuando el joven pasaba por la máquina detectora de metales.

El muchacho no fue detenido pero los policías se negaron a devolverle el cuchillo, la incógnita sobre por qué fue armado a la Alcaldía quedó sin respuesta.

Los jóvenes fueron apoyados en sus reclamos por el concejal Charles Barron quien insistió que la solución del problema consiste en "asignar más profesores experimentados a las aulas, los recursos y programas necesarios para mantener la atención de los estudiantes en su educación y más orientadores".

El grupo de estudiantes también tiene su listado de recomendaciones para la Administración Bloomberg: "Se necesita una reducción del número de estudiantes por aula, profesores titulados, programas para la resolución de problemas y la intervención en casos de violencia y escuchar las voces de la comunidad", señaló Rhee.

El doctor Lester Young, director en jefe de la Oficina de Desarrollo Juvenil y Servicios Comunitarios en las Escuelas dependencia del Departamento de Educación, dio la cara por la Administración: "Padres, estudiantes, profesores y empleados han dado la bienvenida a los positivos y convenientes pasos tomados y al apoyo adicional provisto en las escuelas Impact (el grupo de las 12) para crear un ambiente seguro para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje".

HOY, Thursday, February 19, 2004

PRISON MORATORIUM PROJECT

Students unite to rip patrol

Want cops out of schools

By ELIZABETH HAYS
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A coalition of youth groups from across the city is calling on Mayor Bloomberg to remove the armed cops he has sent into the so-called "dirty dozen" dangerous schools.

The group, called the Justice 4 Youth Coalition, charges the mayor should spend the money on teachers, computers and better facilities instead of on more cops to patrol city schools.

The activists also charge that adding more police to city schools breeds an atmosphere of violence instead of learning.

"Schools are learning facilities and not miniprecincts and minijails," said Chino Hardin, an organizer with the Prison Moratorium Project in Brooklyn, which is coordinating the coalition of some 10 groups throughout the city.

"We want him to take the money that goes to locking up young people and put it into investing in them," Hardin said.

The group plans to hold a rally on the steps of City Hall today to protest the mayor's school safety plan.

Councilman Charles Barron (D-Brooklyn), an outspoken critic of the plan, is slated to join the protestors, whose slogan is "Teach Us, Don't Cuff Us."

"This is a tragic mistake. We need to move the cops out of our schools immediately," said Barron, whose district includes Thomas Jefferson High School, one of the 12 out-of-control schools targeted by Bloomberg last month.

"This is a bogus attempt by the mayor to bring down crime stats and not bring up the level of instruction in our schools," added Barron, who has announced plans to run for mayor.

Under the mayor's school safety crackdown, uniformed cops were sent to each of the 12 schools to patrol alongside school safety agents. This month, the schools also were flooded by a special task force of 150 armed cops.

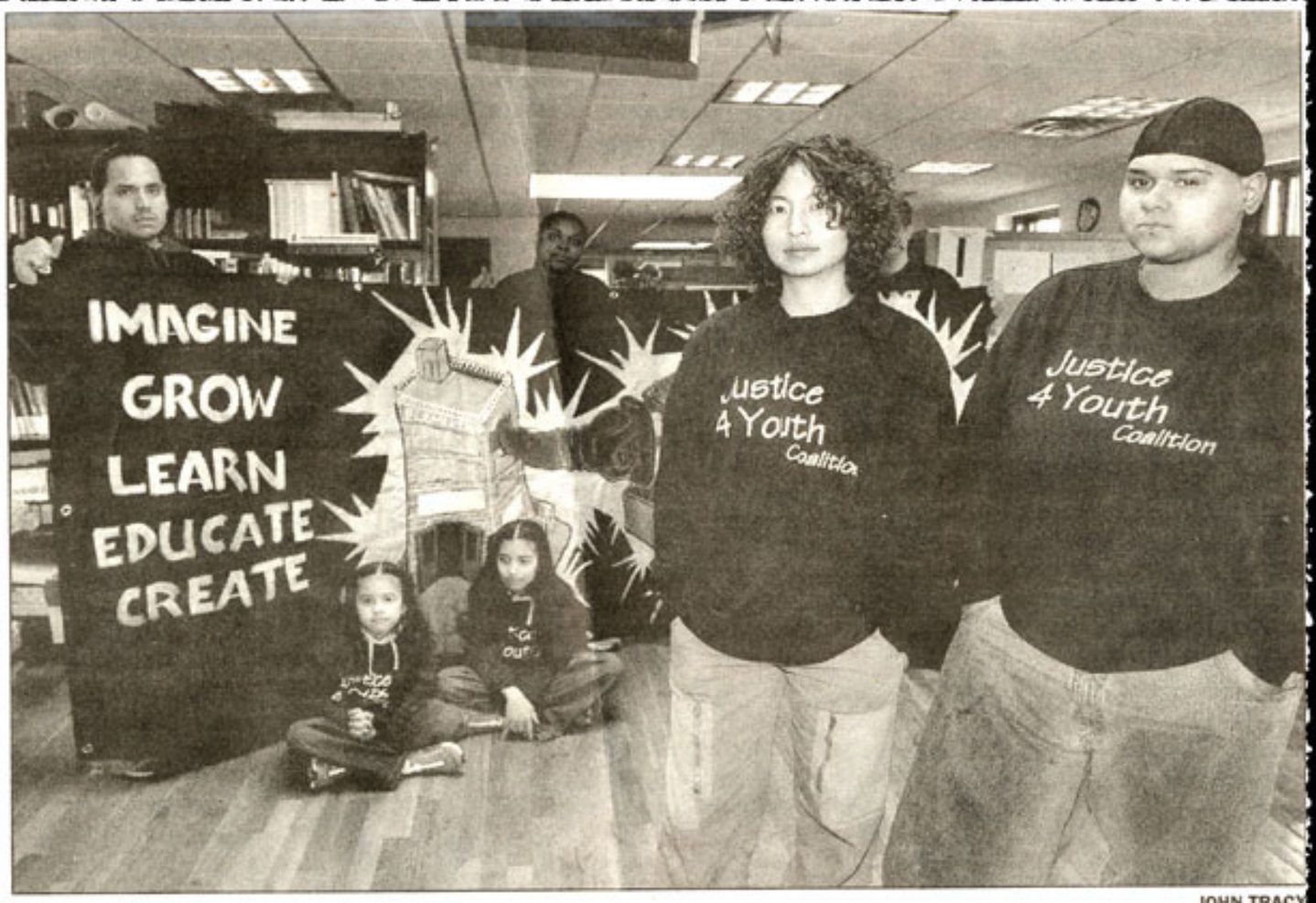
Bloomberg spokesman Robert Lawson defended the policy.

"Regardless of what mayoral candidates say, our goals are to provide a safe environment so that teaching and learning can take place in all of our schools," Lawson said.

Along with Thomas Jefferson, the mayor's list of dangerous high schools includes South Shore, Canarsie, Sheepshead Bay and Franklin K. Lane in Brooklyn; Evander Childs, Adlai Stevenson and Christopher Columbus in the Bronx; Washington Irving in Manhattan, and Far Rockaway in Queens. Two Bronx middle schools also were included: Junior High School 22 and Intermediate School 222.

Alex Diaz, executive director of Youth Force, a South Bronx community group, said the plan is a short-term Band-Aid for school problems.

"Long-term, it's not going to make a difference," said Diaz. "When the cops leave, what's going to happen?"



JOHN TRACY

'TEACH US, DON'T CUFF US' Justice 4 Youth Coalition members Kate Rhee (c.) and Chino Hardin (r.) helped organize City Hall rally today to protest mayor's school safety plan.

Daily News, Wednesday, February 18, 2004

S&F Online
The Scholar & Feminist Online, published by bcrw The Barnard Center for Research on Women

Volume 2, Number 2, Winter 2004 Elizabeth A. Castelli, Guest Editor

Reverberations: On Violence

Issue 2.2 Homepage

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- The Panelists
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- Daphne Wysham
- Kate Rhee
- Cheri Honkala

Printer Version

Elizabeth A. Castelli, "How?: What Can We Do about the State of the World? - A Panel of Activists" (page 4 of 5)

Kate Rhee

Kate Rhee from the Prison Moratorium Project followed Wysham, refocusing discussion on the forms of violence represented by the penal system in the United States. The Project, which she directs, promotes the abolition of prisons and "the prison industrial complex." Rhee emphasized that the work of the Project, a good deal of which is devoted to educational and organizational workshops, has to do with changing how participants view and understand prisons as institutions. "When we talk about the prison industrial complex," she observed, "[we argue] that the prison industrial complex is about everything else but prisons."

Rhee's analysis of the prison system emphasized the interconnectedness of practices of incarceration with a range of other historical and contemporary social institutions and practices. "You can't talk about prisons in this country without talking about slavery and how . . . prisons have continued the conditions . . . of slavery." The economic element of the prison system is not only reducible to its mobilization of unfree labor; the very logic of the criminal justice system is predicated on an argument about exchange: "You do the crime, you do the time. Think about it for a second. . . . You do the crime, you do the time, and somehow the crime is cancelled out. [As if] crime and time [were] fixed units." Such thinking effaces the fact that "crimes happen out of a certain context, out of certain social and economic conditions."

Rhee urged the audience to consider the social function of criminalization - and crime - in the history of U.S. society. Rhee joked a bit at the expense of some earnest college students

concerning the influence of *Discipline and Punish*, the now-classic work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, on the emergence of the prison as a modern social institution. "A lot of people, especially college students, . . . come to us and say, 'You guys really remind me of Foucault. And like, so how have you really applied Foucault in your work?'" After reminding the audience of the context in which Foucault wrote, and of the need to pay attention to local contexts in thinking about criminalization, Rhee turned to the current situation in the state of New York, a situation that increasingly criminalizes young people in schools. In New York State, this process of criminalization is embodied in the SAVE (Schools Against Violence in Education) Legislation (Chapter 180 of the Laws of 2000) signed by Governor George Pataki in July 2000. (For a summary of the legislation in a gubernatorial press release, see http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/year00/july24_00.htm.) Rhee explained how parts of the legislation elevate certain acts of fighting in school from being classified as a misdemeanor to a D felony. The process of criminalization tends to move in a unidirectional trajectory, including more and more acts under the category of "the criminal." "Ten years ago that would not have been a crime," Rhee observed. "Now it is."

The Prison Moratorium Project promotes an activist agenda organized around themes such as "schools not jails," "education not incarceration." In doing so, the Project emphasizes the connections between intensified criminalization of sectors of the population, on the one hand, and claims about the purported interests of public safety, on the other. Stereotypes and threatening specters help to generate and sustain these connections. Rhee pointed to "the welfare mom" and "the superpredator" as products of policymaking research, as two sides of the same ideological coin, and as imaginary figures that help society rationalize concrete practices of social control and political constraint. Illustrating the point of how these two figures operate in both practical and ideological realms, Rhee gave two examples. In the first, a pregnant African-American welfare recipient was convicted of child abuse and was subsequently given a choice by the judge in the case between accepting Norplant (a form of contraceptive that is implanted under the skin) or enduring a longer prison sentence. Here, Rhee pointed out, a woman's reproductive rights became dangerously entangled in the machinery of law enforcement. The second example comes from academic research produced by the University of Chicago and Stanford University. According to the study in question, the researchers correlated the drop in crime rates in the 1990s with abortions by poor women of color. The study claimed that the rise in abortions by young, poor women of color during the 1970s had prevented the birth of unwanted children who would have gone on to commit crimes 15 to 25

years later. Rhee went on to speak about social-scientific studies that seek to project the potential for incarceration from various early indicators, such as fourth-grade reading levels. The role of academic research in the service of the prison industrial complex invites further critical analysis and engagement.

Rhee then cited some stark statistics: In the 1970s, there were 200,000 people behind bars in the United States. Currently, there are approximately 2 million people locked up. There are also 6.6 million people under the supervision of the criminal justice system, a number that reflects the ever-extending reach of the system itself and that also invites one to consider how many more people's lives are therefore touched indirectly by that system. She went on to argue that the prison system is a failure, its failure reflected in the high levels of recidivism (according to the Department of Corrections, between 50 and 75 percent). The recidivism rate, Rhee argued, shows that parole and probation are a set-up for reincarceration. By contrast, the recidivism rate for alternative-to-incarceration programs, which are primarily community-based programs, is between 5 and 25 percent.

Thematized throughout her presentation was the recognition of the racialized dimensions of the prison industrial complex, the construction of African-American and Latino communities as criminalized communities. The racist impulses that drive law enforcement have intensified in a post-September 11 environment, drawing on the enforcement powers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the extended reach of law enforcement under the U.S.A. Patriot Act and, more recently, the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003. Rhee emphasized the stark parallels between the representations of "the criminal" and "the terrorist," and the racialized character of both of these specters of "the enemy." The so-called war on terror, according to Rhee, is simply an escalation of an already existing war against communities of color and immigrant communities.

Rhee closed with a rallying call to "stop the building of prisons." But, as she pointed out, "If we are really going to talk about a world beyond prisons, society without prisons, we really have to think about the community strategies to build within and the community resources [for effective alternatives] so that we don't always depend upon the police and the prisons. So that's my last word."

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Tools 2.2 Online Resources Recommended Reading S&F in the Classroom

DRUM MAJOR INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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February 9, 2005

Latest from DMI Fellow Kate Kyung Ji Rhee

NYC's School-to-Prison Pipeline

by Kate Kyung Ji Rhee

The New York Sun

To the Editor:

Readers of the *Sun* article ["Education Department Seeks to Fight Crime Using System like NYPD's Compstat," Geoffrey Gray, February 2, 2005.] might applaud the DOE's new approach to address crime in our schools, but cops, surveillance cameras and Compstat system get us nowhere near an understanding of why schools have become unruly and unsafe.

Our First Aid Kit for School Safety should include smaller classrooms, teachers with ample support, counselors and innovative school programs that promote self-reflection, self-esteem, respect and problem solving skills.

Right now, New York City spends over $140,000 a year to incarcerate a young person and only $9,000 to $10,000 a year to educate them. We are, in fact, creating a school-to-prison pipeline when we invest in cops rather than teachers, surveillance cameras rather than counselors, Compstat system rather than community partnerships.

What you put in is what you get: let's not prepare our students for a future in the state penitentiary.

KATE KYUNG JI RHEE
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LOCKDOWN HIGH: INSIDE THE CITY'S 'IMPACT SCHOOLS'

New report calls for less policing and more resources. > By Dan Bell

A year and a half after Bloomberg sent armed police officers into some of the city's most dangerous public high schools, a new report has found that these same schools lack the resources to properly serve their students.

"Impact Schools," as they are known, are often the largest, most overcrowded and the least funded, according to the report, released Thursday by the Drum Major Institute (DMI), a progressive think tank.

Drawing on data from the Department of Education's Annual School Reports for the 2002/2003 school year, the report found that spending on direct services—such as classroom instruction and building maintenance—was $10,519 per student in the average city high school, and just $9,037 in Impact Schools. Similarly, the average increase in spending on direct services between 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 was $1,217 for regular city high schools, but only $609 for Impact Schools.

But money is being spent on security. Since the initiative started, Impact Schools have been fortified with armed officers patrolling the hallways, metal detectors and I.D. cards to access the bathroom and lunch hall. Yet advocates say these measures do more to increase tension than create a secure learning environment.

"Let's really use this as an opportunity to examine the real problem, which is a systemic failure on the part of the education system," said Kyung Ji Rhee, executive director of the nonprofit Prison Moratorium Project, and a DMI fellow, whose work as an organizer in inner city schools led to the institute's report.

Opponents say that officers often exacerbate situations that educators would otherwise see as minor disciplinary infractions. In one recent case, a Bronx principal was arrested for interfering with a police officer who had walked into a classroom and was attempting to arrest one of his students.

"Using a profanity, I'm not supposed to suspend a child for that," said the principal, Michael Soguero. "Yet an officer can issue a summons for that and even put a child in cuffs and call it disorderly conduct."

Not everyone is against having police patrol schools. “It’s been very successful,” said Lisa Maffei-Fuentes, principal of Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx, one of the Impact Schools. “We’ve had a terrific decrease in incidents. It has been a very nice end to the year.”

Maffei-Fuentes attributes the success of the initiative in her school to the effort that was made to build relationships between officers and students. “I think Christopher Columbus was special because we had the NYPD actually going into the classrooms; they weren’t just [there] to enforce the rules,” she said of the six-member task force that has worked in her school over the past year. “They’ve created relationships with our students.”

Robert Lawson, a spokesperson for Mayor Bloomberg, also hailed the program as a success. Major crime in Impact Schools dropped 38 percent since last year and overall crime is down 40 percent, he said. “Overall, schools are less disruptive and schools are becoming safer places to learn,” he said.

DMI withheld judgment on those figures. Malik Lewis, director of communications, offered an alternative view: “Whether or not the program is effective in reducing crime,” he said, “we think it is better to treat an educational issue with an educational solution."

—Dan Bell

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Jail Spin

An interview with activists at the Prison Moratorium Project

BY ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN

21 Jun 2005

Khaleaph Luis (left) and Prince Serna.

Say "criminal justice" and very few people think of the environment. But in reality, there's a complicated relationship between the work of environmentalists, who are trying to encourage a more responsible attitude toward our planet and everything on it, and those moving in and out of the prison-industrial complex, who are fighting for a little space in this world and struggling to survive in severely under-resourced communities. These days, rural prisons provide the only experience many urban youth have with a non-urban environment.

The Brooklyn-based Prison Moratorium Project is one organization starting to think about how best to integrate these two seemingly disparate issues. The idea of a prison moratorium came about in response to the jail-building boom of the 1970s; PMP itself was founded in 1995 by Eddie Ellis, Raybblin Vargas, and Kevin Pranis. Since then, the organization has been working with young people who have been in a juvenile detention center or jail, and with the communities those youth call home. As a key player in the Justice 4 Youth Coalition, PMP is largely credited with the 2002 victory that stopped $64.6 million from being spent on new youth jails in New York City.

Recently, the PMP team launched a 12-week intensive internship program called PMP Academy, where eight young people ages 18 to 23 who have been through the juvenile-justice system receive political education and skills training. Adrienne Maree Brown recently sat down with Khaleaph Luis, who created and implemented the academy, and Prince Serna, who handles PMP's design and technology needs, to talk about their work and its connection to environmentalism.

Q. What kind of environment do most of your constituents live in?

A. Luis: Most of our young folk are dropping out of high school. They're in underdeveloped communities -- liquor store on every corner, bodega, maybe a community center they don't know about. So our average youth lives in the concrete jungle, in projects. These are mini-jails with police-type headquarters in the projects, detention centers in the projects, police on every block. So when a young person comes outside, immediately they see police patrolling their block, especially through federally funded programs that put fresh-out-of-the-academy police on the block who have no cultural training. Metal detectors, bag searches -- this is how we frame the school-to-prison pipeline.

Q. The school-to-prison pipeline?

A. Luis: The school-to-prison pipeline is the direct relationship between school and prison -- the disinvestment from schools coinciding with the investment

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in juvenile detention centers and the prison-industrial complex. You have a high-school dropout rate of 33 percent in New York City -- 14-, 15-, 16-year-olds who are literally in the street. You have a 50 percent unemployment rate [for those youth]. There's a direct relationship between young people being in prison and not having a diploma or a job.

Q. And the environment in prisons?

A. Serna: You know, I was incarcerated. I spent four years upstate. They would use the outside against us; it's all about privileges. They would remove the privilege of going outside. When I went up, there were riots going on all the time -- there was so much tension, so they were locking things up much more. So the majority of time is spent in your room or the common room. Everything's gated. You could see into the parking lot. Your cell is a bed, a cubbyhole, a desk, closet, door.

Q. How would you compare your home environment versus the prison environment?

A. Serna: My neighborhood was considered an industrial park, a lot more so during that time. Now it's become more vibrant, a lot more trees, the neighborhoods are strong. When I went upstate [to prison], looking out through your window, technically it was gorgeous, 'cause it was more green than down here [in New York City]. In that sense, there was beauty. If you look at the new detention centers, they're gorgeous compared to some of the high schools. It doesn't mean that they're better; it's a forced environment. For some reason, even when you're outside, it feels gray when you're behind the gates.

Q. In your artwork for PMP, the world where young people are imprisoned looks like a nuclear wasteland, like the aftermath of an environmental catastrophe. Is that intentional?

Image: Prince Serna.

A. Serna: It is intentional. When you're in prison, on the other side of the gate everything looks beautiful and warm, while on the prison side everything stays dark.

Q. Did being in prison affect your views on the environment? Where do you see environmental justice fitting into your personal life and in PMP's work?

A. Serna: I always talk to people like: environment is like self. I do it through self-knowledge. I eat organic food as much as possible and try to educate on that as much as I can. I build on, "What does it mean to be a vegetarian?" With our PMP constituents, I ask -- like when I see them eating McDonald's -- I say, "Do you know where that comes from?" Not even where the meat was constructed, but the workers in that place. Basically, I just get at whatever they're dealing with at the time.

Luis: Yeah, I'm still coming to understand it for our academy. I come from the concrete jungle myself. Seeing natural environments, for me, is rare. It takes me a while to feel like I can be a part of it. I'm from the Caribbean. I went back a month ago and in my uncle's yard he has coconut trees, mango trees -- it amazes me to this day that I can go outside and drink water, eat the coconut. No matter how many degrees I get, I'm still in awe of that, humbled by that process. Our young people, on their route, they barely even see a tree. If they do, it's planted on the block, ends up dying every year -- the tree almost looks out of place. Most of us go to the grocery store and get our meat in slices, don't know where any of the produce comes from. Does broccoli grow in a tree, underground? Tomatoes, where are they from? We have no direct connection to anything we eat.

Q. The usual suggestion for how to bring more nature into urban youths'

lives is to take them to that environment, but I wonder if that doesn't just perpetuate a dynamic of nature as something to visit, something that belongs to someone else. How would you suggest increasing the exposure to nature for your constituents -- by greening jails?

A. Serna: I think that's something that should be done, but it's a Band-Aid. It's a good idea, but it can't be the only solution.

Luis: Yeah, I think of when I visit my parents who live in more natural environments -- it's like time slows down, I can take a deep breath, walk, it's like a different world. I almost feel at peace. So right off the bat I think that [greening jails] is a great idea. But it depends on how you do it. Early on, they used to do convict leasing -- using prison labor to work farms. Basically [the prisoners] were slaves. They would grow crops, till the land, not get paid. They were an isolated community being exploited to produce crops to profit ...

Q. **The white man?**

A. Luis: You got that. It shouldn't be done like that. And if you're gonna green the jail, remember: it's still a jail. It's still an isolated space with no freedom. A few trees, some plants in the cell, it's a start. But if you're really trying to transform someone and get rid of these things you deem crimes, isolation is not the key. Imagine 23 hours in a small room and how that plays on your psyche, your body -- not being able to walk more than five or six steps in any direction. Outside isn't outside, it's a caged concrete basketball court. That's your reality. When you're exploring transformation, you have to explore what it means not to be isolated, what it means to reintegrate someone back into the community. The recidivism rate goes down for prisoners who experience a community. There needs to be a constant relationship between the prisoner and the community they're from.

Q. **Yeah, you've mentioned that friends and family should be considered part of the PMP constituency.**

A. Luis: Especially when you're talking about environmental justice, your environment includes your constant surroundings: your home, school, the street, places where you spend your time. It's important that you connect with young people through all of those, because they are whole people.

Q. **Other than greening jails, what are other ways to increase exposure to nature for your constituency?**

A. Luis: Part of the [PMP] academy is taking people upstate for retreats. Some young people never leave their neighborhood. They know nothing outside that, other than the relationship to TV; that's their world. We show them there's more than just concrete.

Q. **But doesn't that continue the idea that nature belongs to white folk or rich folk, if you have to go out of your world to see it?**

A. Luis: Always going to other people's communities is not the answer. We have to have our own. But some of the environments we live in have been set up not to be healthy environments. To produce something out of nothing is very difficult. We've been forced into places that have little to nothing. If you look at indigenous folk in this country, they were forced onto land where you can basically grow nothing. The soil can't produce anything conducive to living off of. It's the worst land in North America. We're forced to do what my mother did -- with very little, she fed our family, gave us something that sustained us.

Q. **How about the long-term effects of not being around nature? Does that contribute to the higher prison rates for urban youth?**

A. Serna: Yeah, I actually think it does. We pretty much live on top of each other, especially in the projects. One of the best examples is in Brooklyn: projects right across from each other can't stand each other. They become little

countries.

Q. But even in the face of that kind of animosity and the crime that can result, the mission of PMP is to stop building prisons, right?

A. Luis: To build a future beyond prisons is our catchphrase -- to create an alternative to the default of prisons.

Q. So what will you do with all the criminals?

A. Luis: What is a criminal? Your language shapes the conversation.

Of course you don't immediately let everyone out [of jail]. People are doing these long bids and coming back to the communities they left, underdeveloped communities. If we don't address the root problems, then you're right, what do we do? The system makes youth disappear so we can feel secure. It punishes them for things we could do.

Q. What are some of the alternatives to prisons as you see it?

A. Luis: Any conversation on alternatives is just the start of many conversations that need to be had. We have to address why young people are being locked up. We have to have real conversations about it -- about why young people are there in the first place. And we have to understand who we are. It sounds so cliché to say "let's talk," but really that's the first step. We're constantly being attacked and defending ourselves, so we don't have time to develop that self-determination.

Q. Yeah, and that resentment builds up. Then on top of that, I think there's resentment from those who work with oppressed human populations when approached by environmentalists. It's like, extinction is an issue when its owls, but what about when it's your sister, lover, father? How would you suggest addressing that resentment?

A. Luis: This goes back to knowledge of self. Original people -- black people -- you can never be extinct. This world cannot exist if you don't exist. You are the universe. We are dying, we are being imprisoned in alarming numbers. But if you know who you are, you will have a direct relationship to the environment. The stars, the flowers: all of that is you. The periodic table: that's all you. The atom, nature: you are a part of all that. To not care about nature is to not care about yourself. In destroying yourself, you're destroying nature. It's one and the same.

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Adrienne Maree Brown is a writer and singer living in Brooklyn, N.Y. She is coeditor of the League of Pissed Off Voters' How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office: The Anti-Politics, Un-Boring Guide to Power *and program director for the* League of Young Voters.

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The Real School Security Problem
by Kate Kyung Ji Rhee
13 Jun 2005

Some of New York City's public schools now house "sweep rooms" for students cutting class, "holding cells" in the basement, and dozens of police and security guards. Unnoticed by many, these new additions are part of an unprecedented expansion of the criminal justice system into the educational domain.

In doing this, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has received inspiration from his predecessor. He has adopted the same "broken windows" theory that shaped former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's approach to fighting crime in New York City neighborhoods. The theory holds that minor signs of disorder, such as a single broken window, send a signal that no one cares, creating an opening for more -- and more serious -- offenses. So, to prevent crime you fix the broken window.

Thus, the Impact Schools Initiative, which takes its name from another police department program, Operation Impact, that put more police officers into high crime areas. Impact Schools is a joint effort by the police department, the Department of Education, and the mayor's office. Launched in January 2004, it targets middle and high schools with high levels of reported crime, and employs aggressive policing strategies to reduce violence and disorder.

But in light of new data profiling the Impact Schools, one must ask, "Which came first -- broken windows or broken schools?"

Impact Schools have more economically disadvantaged students and more black students than other city schools. They also tend to be more overcrowded, and less well funded than schools throughout the city, according to new research (in pdf format) by the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy. These problems existed before the launch of the mayor's Impact Schools initiative; only time will tell if conditions are changing. Looking back, we have to ask ourselves whether these schools had already been crying out for special attention -- not in the form of cops, security cameras, and "sweep rooms", but teachers, books, and computer rooms.

The facts speak for themselves. According to Drum Major Institute, the current 22 Impact Schools are operating at 111 percent capacity -– making them five percent more crowded than the average New York City public high school and seven percent more overcrowded than schools the Department of Education describes as similar. The worst of the Impact Schools, Walton High School and Christopher Columbus High, both in the Bronx, were at more than 180 percent capacity in 2004.

The city spent an average of $1,482 less for each student at an Impact School than it did at the average city high school in 2003. Furthermore, while the city increased spending on direct services in high schools by $1,217 per student between 2002 and 2003, average spending on students at the 22 Impact Schools rose by only an average of $609.

More than six in ten students at the 22 Impact Schools serving the lowest income families are poor enough for a free lunch (a benefit available to families whose incomes are up to 130 percent of the poverty line). This compares with about five in ten at the average city high school. At the six poorest Impact Schools, more than eight out of ten students are eligible for free lunch. At Walton High School -- also among the most crowded of the Impact Schools -- that number reaches nine in ten.

Additionally, the Impact Schools have a higher percentage of students of color and significantly fewer white students than the average city high school. More than half of students at the Impact Schools are black, compared with 35 percent in the average city high school. And there is also a slightly greater proportion of Hispanic students in the Impact Schools. At the same time, Impact Schools have a substantially lower share of white students -- 4.6 percent, as opposed to 14.2 percent.

Finally, ninth and tenth graders at Impact Schools were far more likely than their counterparts elsewhere in the city to be over age for their grade. By the time they reach high school, these older students, many of whom have had a difficult time in school, require additional resources to improve their academic performance. Getting extra help is made all the more difficult when a school is packed to the rafters and stretched to the limit, as is the case in the 22 Impact Schools.

Mayor Bloomberg seems eager to point to numbers showing crime falling at the Impact Schools this year over last.

But a recent analysis by the National Crime Victimization Survey has shown that putting police officers in schools does not stem violence. In fact, the opposite seems true: Schools using security measures such as law enforcement agents and surveillance cameras were associated with increased reports of school violence and disorder, while schools relying on more participatory efforts to educate youth on school rules and appropriate conduct were associated with less reported school crime.

The city has chosen to respond to the headline-grabbing visible symptoms of school disorder rather than treating the root causes, a complex social and education problem. If the city took a more thoughtful look at the 22 Impact Schools it would find they have much more in common than high rates of crime. Addressing those problems, and bringing the chronically resource-poor and overburdened Impact Schools up to the level of the rest of city schools, could go a long way toward making those schools safer, better places of learning.

The question for New York City now is not whether we fix the broken windows, but how?

Rhee, a fellow of the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, is executive director of the Prison Moratorium Project

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