

UNION | UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK



INSTITUTE FOR
pragmatic practice

CELL BLOCKS & BORDER STOPS

Transformative Activism in an Age of Dehumanization



SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM • OCT. 17-19, 2013 • NEW YORK CITY



INSTITUTE FOR
Pragmatic Practice

The Institute for Pragmatic Practice is a project of the Alliance for a Just Society. The program generates new ideas, analysis, and strategies for the social justice movement. Through holding community forums, publishing white papers and producing multi-media projects, IPP strives to connect key thinking with community organizers by providing a forum for a meeting of the minds. Our hope is to initiate provocative discussions on both social justice ideas and methods of action.

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The Center on Race, Religion and Economic Democracy is an Institute at Union Theological Seminary (UTS). As part of a tradition of national and global justice making, UTS is a place of scholarship on religion as a force for addressing oppressive structures and practices in society and promoting collective action for social transformation. Since 1863, Union has developed leaders who have played important roles in social movements for racial justice, gender justice, LGBTQ justice, workers' rights, eradicating poverty, peace work, ecological sustainability and more. The CRRED will draw upon these resources and bring to bear relationships with religious leaders, other scholars and community organizers across sectors to engage in a robust theological inquiry. This inquiry is one that is not only connected to and informed by organizing and activism for democratic action, but also able to move into action.

For more information on the CRRED: <http://utsnyc.edu/c-rred#sthash.QfjckS9C.dpuf>

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Cell Blocks and Border Stops
Union Theological Seminary, New York

AGENDA

THURSDAY

- 5:00-7:00 Registration: Light refreshments provided in Refectory
6:00 Viewing of "The House I Live In" followed by discussion, James Chapel

FRIDAY

- 8:30 Registration, Foyer (Continental breakfast served in Refectory)
9:30 Welcome from Union Theological Seminary and Alliance for a Just Society
with Felipe Luciano, Formerly of Last Poets, James Chapel

- 9:45-10:00 Opening:
• Reverend Dr. Brad Braxton
• Felipe Luciano

- 10:00-11:30 **Plenary**
Criminalization as State Violence, James Chapel
• Moderator: Gerald Hankerson
• Panelists: Joy James, Abraham Paulos, Jessica Black, Monami Maulik, Soffiyah Elijah

Criminalization of black and brown people, of immigrants, of those who challenge sexual and gender norms, and of dissidents, is a critical aspect of legitimizing state violence used to marginalize and punish racial "outsiders" in the name of protecting society from supposed predators. Panelists will explore different aspects of carceral control and militarization of policing and immigration, highlighting the ways in which criminalization affects different communities. While these manifestations of state violence may have different expressions, the underlying issues are similar across communities and experiences.

- 11:30-11:45 Break

- 11:45-12:30 **Plenary**
Beyond Punishment, a Moral Ethical Response to Incarceration and the Challenge to Being-ness, James Chapel
• Moderator: Dustin Washington
• Panelists: Theodore Jennings, Tiokasin Ghosthorse, Laura McTighe

The expansion of prisons and incarceration reflects multiple economic, political, cultural, and spiritual crises. These crises overlap in ways that devalue and dehumanize ever-expanding circles of people. However, within our various ethical and spiritual traditions there are seeds of resistance to expanding incarceration, and alternative understandings of how we can support thriving, flourishing humanity. Drawing from many faith traditions, panelists will explore theologies of liberation and discuss the counter-narratives found in different spiritual traditions.

- 12:30-1:30 Lunch (served in the Refectory)

1:30-3:00

Breakout sessions

Session #1 The Criminal Justice and Immigration System's Systemic Alienation

Room 205

**Spanish Interpretation Provided*

- Moderator: Fernando Mejía
- Panelist: Daniel Coates, Opal Tometi, Tongo Eisen-Martin, Akilah Kinnison, Huy

The criminal justice and immigration systems separate people from society, denying those caught in these systems everything from religious freedom to voting rights to access to food and employment. But the devastation goes even broader. In this session, we will look at how these systems also destroy the fabric of our communities and threaten our unrealized power. Finally, we will discuss organizing opportunities.

Session #2 Follow the Money: Criminalization, Finance, and Profits

Room 207

- Moderator: Gary Delgado
- Panelists: Bob Libal, Judy Greene, Jamie Trinkle

Criminalization harms communities but delivers profits to corporations. The most notorious of these beneficiaries is the Corrections Corporation of America. CCA, however, isn't alone in reaping criminalization profits, and it works in alliance with conservative and neoliberal forces, such as ALEC, to keep the dollars flowing. This session will examine the beneficiaries of criminalization and deportation practices and follow their money trail to electoral campaigns and the halls of statehouses and Congress.

Session #3 Organizing on the Horizon of Death

Room AD30

Moderator: Christine Ho

Panelists: Raul Alcaraz, Soffiyah Elijah

The death and imprisonment machine depends on a society that views some people as more worthy of death and state violence than others. This session will look at campaigns that challenge those views. Panelists will speak to organizing in the aftermath of police murders, to prevent murders along the US/Mexico border, and to end the death penalty and solitary confinement.

Session #4 Mining Scripture for Resistance (closed session)

Bonhoffer Room

3:00-3:15

Break



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3:15-4:45

Plenary

Capitalism, Neoliberalism, & Control, James Chapel

- Moderator: Daniel HoSang
- Panelists: Dr. Cornel West, Pramila Jayapal, Vincent Warren

The explosion of the prison industrial complex over the last thirty years has been tied to an equally dramatic transformation in the global economy: the triumph of neoliberalism, with its focus on deregulated markets, disciplined workers, free flow of capital, and austerity budgets.

The panel will explore the intersections of neoliberal political-economic forces, the expansion of prisons and immigration control systems, the ideas that legitimate increased state control over marginalized communities at home and increased military interventions abroad and the implications of this expansion for the future of democracy and the U.S. democratic enterprise.

4:45-5:00

Cultural Piece

5:00-6:00

Dinner

6:00-6:15

Performance, RTA Alumni Dance: Figures in Flight

6:15-8:00

Evening Plenary

Hypercarceration: Capitalism's Solution to Redundant People, James Chapel

- Moderator: Dorian Warren
- Panelists: Roberto Lovato, Kung Li, Jan Rehmman

What does the neoliberal state do when it has deregulated markets, outsourced quality jobs, and decimated the welfare state? It exiles an increasing share of "unneeded" people to prisons and detention facilities, replacing programs designed to promote the public good with hypercarceration: the network of bureaucratic institutions, from prisons to punitive social work systems, that control and confine the marginalized. Meanwhile, as neoliberalism drives cross-border migration, this logic of hypercarceration is driving more – and more punitive – border control mechanisms. This panel will explore these connections and opportunities for organizing.

SATURDAY

8:00-9:00

Continental breakfast served in Refectory

9:00-9:15

Opening Speaker

9:15-10:45

Plenary

Where Do We Go From Here, James Chapel

- Moderator: Danisha Christian
- Panelists: Linda Tigani, Ramon Ramirez, Richard Wolff, Alexis McGill Johnson

Now that we know that hypercarceration represents a tool of state violence and neoliberal control — drawing on historic criminalization of black and brown people, too-often bolstered by theological narratives — how can we bring this analysis to bear on our practice. This panel will

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bring the strands of our conversations together, exploring the implications for our organizing, activism, scholarship, and ministries. Here are some highlights of what we'll explore:

- Addressing these crises compels us to re-examine and re-think the ways we've been doing our work. How do we move beyond narrowly focused campaigns and use current organizing opportunities to move us on a path toward social transformation
- How can our various campaigns create openings for a new, moral, and inclusive economy
- What are the opportunities we see for building Black/Brown alliances, drawing upon and addressing the commonalities of our struggles, with a sense of shared strategy and long-term goals
- How can we use new kinds of alliances to help coordinate around these different areas of work, developing shared strategies and shared narratives

10:45-10:50 Spoken Word/Music

10:50-12:00 **Plenary**

Surveilled, Policed, & Controlled: Organizing in a Dangerous Time, James Chapel

- Moderator: Margaret Huang
- Panelists: Steven Renderos, Fahd Ahmed, Jose Vasquez

The climate in which we do our work is hostile and, at times, dangerous. The threats we face – whether as organizers, cultural workers, grassroots leaders, or ministers – are shaped by the trends we've explored in this conference: the rapid expansion of the carceral sphere, the militarization of immigration control, "war on terror" state violence, and new techniques for expanded surveillance. Panelists will explore the online surveillance meant to silence the left, as well as the uses of video surveillance in urban communities. We also will hear about the rise in political imprisonment and other risks involved in resisting and organizing.

12:00-1:00 Lunch (served in the Refectory)

1:00-2:30 Breakout sessions

Session #1 Innovative Campaign Case Studies

Room 207

- Moderator: Jill Reese
- Presenter: Tania Soto Valenzuela, Marco Saavadera, Tracy Pugh, Rukia Lumumba

This session will provide a sneak peek into innovative campaign strategies, such as using the Affordable Care Act to challenge the current prison-industrial complex, a police whistle-blower program, a fight to raise the age for juveniles to be tried as adults and new approaches to DREAM organizing

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Session #2 Framing and Messaging to Win

Room 205

**Spanish Interpretation Provided*

- Presenter: Makani Themba

This session will explore approaches for countering the right's "public relations strategy" of dehumanization, criminalization, and militarization of us and our communities.

Session #3 Case Study: Anatomy of the NYC Stop & Frisk Coalition

James Chapel

Moderator: Rinku Sen

Panelists: Linda Sarsour, Priscilla Gonzales, Jose Lopez, Lynn Lewis

This session will provide an up-close look at how New York's stop-and-frisk policy was successfully challenged using a strategy that brought together a diverse set of constituencies, each of which offered a unique set of skills and expertise.

Session #4 Bible Study 2.0: Re-Imagining Prison Ministry

Refectory

Janet Wolf, Leroy Jones, Charlene Sinclair

This session will explore the text of Mark 6 to challenge participants to move beyond a "ministry of presence" to one of "social movement building."

Session #5 Arts, Culture & Resistance

Room AD30

Moderator: Robert Sembler

Panelists: Michael Roberson, Katerine Vockins, Faron McClurkin

This session will explore the two-fold nature of art and culture as resistance: resistance to self-dehumanization and resistance to the structural forces that control and dehumanize.

Session #7 Democratizing the Workplace,

Room 207

Presenter: Richard Wolff

In our breakout session, we will focus briefly on (1) the major economic causes of massive unemployment as a root contributor to incarceration and then more substantially on (2) worker cooperatives as a solution for unemployment and thus alternative to incarceration. I would briefly explain the operations and financing that such a solution/alternative would require and how the federal government could support them without additional cost to the government. Italy's experience with its Marcora Law since 1985 would be offered as a successful example of such a plan. The bulk of the session would be general discussion.

SPEAKER BIOS

FAHD AHMED, ESQ.

Fahd is the Legal and Policy Director, running the End Racial Profiling Campaign, at Desis Rising up and Moving (DRUM), which organizes low-income South Asians to fight against the criminalization and policing of their communities. Having been an undocumented immigrant himself, and having family targeted by deportations and entrapment, he led DRUM's post 9/11 work with Muslim, Arab, and South Asian immigrant detainees by coordinating the detainee visitation program. He has been active in the Muslim community as an activist, and draws upon an understanding of Islamic theology that is committed to the ideals of social justice and to the spirit of liberation that lies at the center of Islam.

RAUL ALCAREZ OCHOA

Born in Jalisco, México to two loving parents, Raúl grew up in Richmond, California where his struggles as a migrant child fuel his passion for social justice and community power. Raúl has organized around educational justice, youth power, queer justice and migrant rights issues. After graduating from the Ethnic Studies Department at San Francisco State University in 2006, Raúl left life and work in the Bay Area to live in the desert/borderland of Tucson, Arizona where he organizes towards community and migrant liberation with families and youth. Evident through his work with the Southside Worker Center and Corazón de Tucson, Raúl imagines a world free of borders and oppression and continuously struggles towards creating "a world where many worlds fit.

JESSICA BLACK

Jessica Black is Gwich'in Athabascan from the village of Fort Yukon, Alaska. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Washington University in St. Louis and also works as a consultant for the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments in Fort Yukon, Alaska. Jessica's dissertation focuses on the intersection between tribal members' participation in governance and its relationship to well-being, both at the individual and community level. Prior to returning to Washington University in St. Louis Jessica served as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Department of Social Work. Part of her appointment including managing a State of Alaska Grant, which served rural Alaska students obtaining their social work degree through a cohort model. This experience, as well as her knowledge of existing political and social events occurring in her own home area led her to pursue a doctorate at Washington University in St. Louis. Jessica is in the final phases of collecting her dissertation data and upon completion of her PhD Jessica will continue to work with communities in Alaska to work on community-based projects as well as pursue an academic position within Alaska or the Western United States.

REV. DR. BRAD R. BRAXTON

Dr. Brad R. Braxton is the Lois Craddock Perkins Professor of Homiletics at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Texas. This is a historic faculty appointment since he is the first African American to come to Southern Methodist University in an endowed chair. In addition to his professorial duties, Dr. Braxton is also the founding Senior Pastor of The Open Church, a cross-cultural, radically inclusive congregation in Baltimore, Maryland. His regular commuting between Dallas and Baltimore is a reflection of his passionate commitment to being both a scholar and a pastor. Dr. Braxton is an ordained Baptist minister and a respected voice among today's progressive religious leaders. His speaking engagements have included appearances at institutions such as Yale University, Princeton University, Duke University, Emory University, and Morehouse College. In March 2007, Dr. Braxton preached at Westminster Abbey in London, England, joining a select group of American ministers to stand in that historic pulpit. He also has preached in Canada, Ghana, and South Africa. Dr. Braxton holds a Ph.D. in New Testament studies from Emory University, a Master's degree in theology from the University of Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and a B.A. degree in religious studies from the University of Virginia, where he was a Jefferson Scholar. Dr. Braxton's previous positions include professorships at McCormick Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt University, and Wake Forest University and pastorates at the Riverside Church in New York City and Douglas Memorial Community Church in Baltimore, Maryland. His wife, Lazetta, is a Certified Financial PlannerTM and CEO of her own financial planning firm, Financial Fountains. They are the proud parents of a daughter, Karis, an energetic, inquisitive elementary school student who loves to dance and draw.

DANISHA CHRISTIAN

Danisha began organizing as a high school student in 1993, taking on the state of Washington and City of Seattle around student concerns of disproportionality and curriculum reform, as well as the fight for police accountability and oversight of the Seattle Police Department. Since then, she has worked on a variety of campaigns at local, regional and national levels. In her current position, she works with state affiliate organizations to build organizational capacity, manages national campaigns, and oversees the Alliance's Institute for Pragmatic Practice Project, as well as the Native Organizing Network.

SOFFIYAH ELIJAH

Executive Director of the Correctional Association of New York, Soffiyah is the first woman and the first person of color to lead the nearly 170-year old organization in its mission to create a fairer and more humane criminal justice system. Ms. Elijah has dedicated her life to human rights and social activism, and is a frequent presenter at national and international forums on criminal justice policy and human rights issues.

SPEAKER BIOS

An accomplished advocate, attorney, scholar, and educator, Ms. Elijah has practiced criminal and family law for more than 30 years. Prior to leading the Correctional Association, Ms. Elijah served as Deputy Director and Clinical Instructor at the Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard Law School. Before moving to Harvard, she was a member of the faculty and Director and Supervising Attorney of the Defender Clinic at the City University of New York School of Law. Ms. Elijah has also worked as a Supervising Attorney at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, a Staff Attorney at the Juvenile Rights Division of the Legal Aid Society, and in private practice.

GARY DELGADO

Gary Delgado, Ph. D., is the founder and former Executive Director of the Applied Research Center (ARC), the Center for Third World Organizing (CTWO), and one of the original organizers of ACORN. His most recent work includes the establishment of a racial equity initiative at SEIU, a recent article on racial framing entitled "Kill the Messengers" in the 2012 anthology *Racial Formation in the Twenty First Century*, and the production of short films on race and public policy.

TIOKASIN GHOSTHORSE

Tiokasin Ghosthorse is from the Cheyenne River Lakota (Sioux) Nation of South Dakota and the bands of Itazipco/Mnicoujou and Oglala. He is the host of First Voices Indigenous Radio on WBAI NY - Pacifica Radio. Tiokasin has been described as "a spiritual agitator, natural rights organizer, Indigenous thinking process educator and a community activator." One reviewer called him "a cultural resonator in the key of life." Politics for the Lakota is spiritual and is not separate from the rest of life. Tiokasin has had a long history in Indigenous rights activism and advocacy. He spoke, as a teenager, at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Ever since his UN work, he has been actively educating people who live on Turtle Island (North America) and overseas about the importance of living with each other and with Mother Earth. He is a survivor of the "Reign of Terror" from 1972 to 1976 on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Cheyenne River Lakota Reservations, and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding and Church Missionary School systems designed to "kill the Indian and save the man." Tiokasin Ghosthorse is also a master musician and one of the great exponents of the ancient red cedar Lakota flute, and plays traditional and contemporary music, using both Indigenous and European instruments. He has been a major figure in preserving and reviving the cedar wood flute tradition and has combined "spoken word" and music in performances since childhood. Tiokasin performs worldwide and has been featured at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the United Nations as well as at numerous universities and concert venues.

JUDY GREENE

Judy Greene is an independent criminal justice policy analyst and a founder of Justice Strategies. Her areas of expertise include sentencing, and corrections policy, private prisons, police accountability and immigration enforcement. Judy began her prison privatization research over a decade ago as a Senior Research Fellow for the Institute on Criminal Justice at the University of Minnesota Law School. Prior to that post she was director of the State-Centered Program for the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. From 1985 to 1993 Judy was Director of Court Programs at the Vera Institute of Justice. Since completing the Minnesota privatization research, she has documented and assessed "best practices" in private prison oversight for the RAND Corporation under sponsorship by the National Institute of Justice, and has investigated human rights abuses in private prisons as a Senior Soros Justice Fellow of the Open Society Institute. Her most recent related publication is a Justice Strategies report, "Privately Operated Federal Prisons for Immigrants: Expensive. Unsafe. Unnecessary," available online at: www.justicestrategies.org/publications/2012/privately-operated-federal-prisons-immigrants-expensive-unsafe-unnecessary.

LEEANN HALL

LeeAnn Hall has been the Executive Director of the Alliance for a Just Society (formerly the Northwest Federation of Community Organizations) since its founding in 1993 and has over 28 years of organizing experience. She guides the development of campaigns and reports, and was at the forefront of designing testing models to address under-enrollment in public benefits programs. She has worked as the Director for Idaho Community Action Network and in that capacity she has overseen the successful campaign to cover farmworkers by Idaho's minimum wage laws. LeeAnn was the recipient of the prestigious Leadership for a Changing World Award from the Ford Foundation, the Advocacy Institute, and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University and the Prime Movers Award.

GERALD HANKERSON

At age 18, Gerald Hankerson was sentenced to a life sentence in prison without parole as the alleged accomplice in a murder to which he was falsely implicated. On April 9, 2009, at the age of 40, Gerald Hankerson was granted clemency by Gov. Gregoire and released from prison after serving 23 years. He now works as a Director for Main Street Alliance Small Business Organization and WA Community Action Network, and is Vice President of the Seattle-King County NAACP. He is also President of NAACP State Area Conference for Alaska/Oregon/Washington. He is a member of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Roundtable and serves on the Board of Directors at The Defenders Association as well as WA. State's Public Defense Advisory Committee. While in prison, Hankerson earned his high school diploma, studied the correlation between race, education and prison time and engaged in causes aimed at bettering inmates' lives and advocating for

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justice system reforms. Today he speaks locally and nationally about issues of the criminal justice system, including the school to prison pipeline.

CHRISTINE G. T. HO

Christine G. T. Ho, Ph.D. is an anthropologist from Trinidad and Tobago and Professor Emerita at Fielding Graduate University. Her scholarship on human rights, immigrant rights, racial, ethnic and gender studies and social change, as well as international migration and globalization, includes books, book chapters, journal articles and op-ed pieces in the media. Her vision of more humane migration policies and practices is contained in a recent book, with James Loucky, titled *Humane Migration: Establishing Legitimacy and Rights for Displaced People*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2012.

DANIEL MARTINEZ HOSANG

Daniel Martinez HoSang is an Associate Professor at the University of Oregon with a joint appointment in the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Department of Political Science. He is the author of *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (University of California Press, 2010), which explores the history of organizing campaigns around racialized ballot measures in California since 1945 and was the recipient of the 2011 James A Rawley Prize of the Organization of American Historians. He is also the co-editor (with Oneka LaBennett and Laura Pulido) of *Racial Formation in the 21st Century* (University of California Press, 2012). He received his PhD in American Studies and Ethnicity from the University of Southern California. Before graduate school, HoSang worked as a community organizer and trainer for ten years in the San Francisco Bay Area. He currently serves on the board of directors of Forward Together (Oakland, CA), the Alliance for a Just Society (Seattle, WA), and the Partnership for Safety and Justice (Portland, OR).

MARGARET HUANG

Margaret Huang, an experienced advocate for racial justice and human rights in the United States, is the Executive Director of the Rights Working Group (RWG). The RWG coalition was formed in the aftermath of 9/11 to restore civil liberties and human rights protections that have been eroded by national security policies. As a national coalition of more than 350 civil liberties, immigrant rights and human rights organizations, RWG seeks to ensure that the rights of everyone in the United States are respected regardless of citizenship or immigration status, race, national origin, religion or ethnicity. In 2009, RWG launched a campaign, *Racial Profiling: Face the Truth*, working with member organizations and allies around the country to enact legislation and win policy reforms that would ban racial and religious profiling by law enforcement agencies. Ms. Huang has spoken at a number of national conferences, and she has given testimony before the United Nations Commission on Human

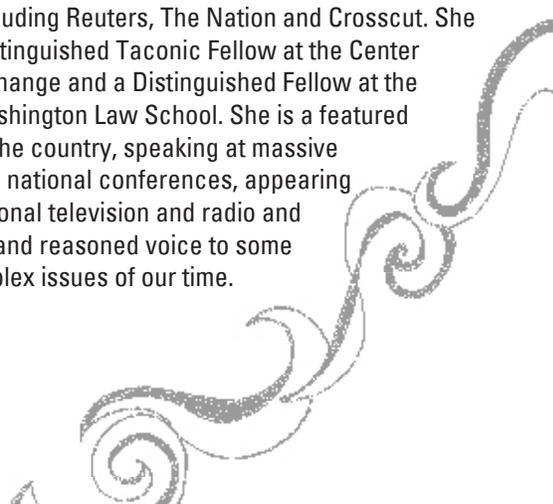
Rights and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. She has published articles and op-eds on human rights and RWG advocacy campaigns, and she authored a chapter, "Going global – Appeals to International and Regional Human Rights Bodies," in *Human Rights At Home*, published by Praeger Publishers in December 2007. Ms. Huang sits on the Steering Committee of the Human Rights at Home Campaign, which seeks to promote a domestic human rights agenda in the U.S. She serves on the Board of Directors for the US Human Rights Network, a coalition of more than two hundred and fifty organizational members dedicated to promoting U.S. government accountability to human rights standards. Ms. Huang's previous work experience includes serving as Director of the U.S. Program at Global Rights, as Program Director of the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, as Program Manager at The Asia Foundation, and as Committee Staff for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Ms. Huang received a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University, and a B.S.F.S. from Georgetown University.

JOY JAMES

Joy James is Oakley Third Century Professor, Humanities Program, Williams College. James is the editor of a number of anthologies on incarceration politics including: *States of Confinement*; *The New Abolitionists: NeoSlave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writing*; *Imprisoned Intellectuals*; *Warfare in the American Homeland*.

PRAMILA JAYAPAL

Pramila Jayapal is a leading national advocate for immigrant, civil and human rights. She is the founder of OneAmerica, Washington state's largest immigrant advocacy organization, where she served as Executive Director for almost eleven years. She is currently Co-Chair of We Belong Together, a national campaign to engage women in immigration reform. She also works with a number of national organizations on immigration reform, poverty and race; and writes regularly for numerous publications, including Reuters, The Nation and Crosscut. She is currently a Distinguished Taconic Fellow at the Center for Community Change and a Distinguished Fellow at the University of Washington Law School. She is a featured speaker across the country, speaking at massive rallies, keynoting national conferences, appearing on local and national television and radio and bringing a clear and reasoned voice to some of the most complex issues of our time.



SPEAKER BIOS

LEROY JONES

Leroy was born on March 29, 1979 to a 20-year-old mother of three, Leroy's father tried to convince his mother to name him "Trouble". He thought that one more mouth in the house to feed could only mean more trouble. Leroy's father was a known alcoholic and sometimes became very violent. During one very violent episode in 1986, his father beat Leroy's mother to near death. In fear for her life, she fled the house leaving her four children behind. Enraged that she had left him, Leroy's father told him that he had to find his mother and upon finding her, it was his job to shoot her. This six year old boy was given a .25 automatic and sent out into the streets in the dead of night, to look for his mother with siblings and father in tow. At the age of 8 Leroy and his family relocated back to Nashville, TN, it was at this point in Leroy's life that the effects of being reared by an abusive father started to manifest. Leroy had frequent run-ins with law enforcement and in his teens was convicted of one count of second-degree murder and two counts of robbery. He was given a 23-year sentence in the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC), where he went on to serve 16 years 9 months.

He was recently released on October 11, 2012. While incarcerated, Leroy was actively involved in many various programs including Anger Management, Alternatives to Violence, Substance Abuse, Stress Management, Cognitive Therapy (Thinking for a Change). He also participated in college classes such as Restorative Justice and Business Management.

Today, Leroy's life is a sharp contrast from the kid that Metro Nashville Public School System considered a nuisance, as well as unworthy and unable to be helped. Today you will find him lecturing delinquent and at-risk juveniles about the effects of criminal and gang lifestyles. He speaks in community centers, juvenile detention facilities. He can also be found lecturing in the halls of universities like Vanderbilt University, American Baptist College and other such forward thinking universities.

DR. BRIGITTE KAHL

Brigitte Kahl is an innovative New Testament scholar whose work has been groundbreaking in Pauline studies. She brings a new perspective to Biblical scholarship by analyzing the dynamic relationship between the New Testament and the Roman Empire. In her pioneering book, *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (2010), Dr. Kahl re-defines the traditional paradigm of Pauline interpretation and radically recasts justification by faith as a theology of resistance and transformation. See more at: <http://utsnyc.edu/brigittekahl#sthash.NMJcaH6N.dpuf>.

AKILAH KINNISON

Akilah Kinnison holds a J.D. as well as an LL.M. in Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy from the University of Arizona. She currently works as an adjunct professor of international law at Georgia State University College of Law and as an independent contractor and consultant in the fields of federal Indian law, international human rights law, and indigenous peoples law. Her work has included collaborating with the tribally controlled non-profit organization Huy (pronounced "Hoyt") to advocate, both domestically and internationally, for indigenous prisoners' religious freedoms. For more information about Huy, see www.huycares.org.

KUNG LI

Kung Li is a writer and investigator based in East Point, GA. As an attorney and then director of the Southern Center for Human Rights, Kung Li litigated a number of class action prison and jail cases in Georgia and Alabama. Kung Li's current research is focused on immigration enforcement, the criminal legal system, national security, and the interaction between these three systems.

BOB LIBAL

Bob Libal is Executive Director of Grassroots Leadership. He has worked for more than a decade on issues of prison and immigrant detention privatization. Bob is author or co-author of many reports and articles for Grassroots Leadership including *Operation Streamline: Costs and Consequences*, *The Dirty Thirty: Nothing to Celebrate About 30 Years of Corrections Corporation of America*, and *Progress or Profit Positive Alternatives to Privatization in Shelby County, TN*. He serves as chair of the national Detention Watch Network and edits the *Texas Prison Bid'ness* blog. Bob is regularly interviewed by national, regional, and local press on issues related to prison privatization, immigration detention, immigration enforcement policies, and the business of prisons. He has been interviewed for the *New York Times*, *Toronto Star*, *NPR*, *Business Week*, *Huffington Post*, *Business Insider*, and numerous other media outlets.

ROBERTO LOVATO

Roberto Lovato is a writer and commentator, a strategy consultant and a Co-Founder of *Presente.org*, the country's pre-eminent online Latino advocacy organization, with a membership of over 300,000 people. In March 2011, Roberto was awarded a crisis reporting grant from the Pulitzer Center and, a month later, readers of *AlterNet* voted him one of the country's "Most Influential Progressives" in media. His work explores the intimate link between the online and offline worlds, between storytelling and organizing and between the mediated and unmediated life. Roberto has produced programming for Roberto has written and spoken extensively about a number of critical issues including

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climate change, national politics, immigration, Latin American politics, national security, race and race relations, and other issues. He is also a frequent contributor to The Nation magazine and the Huffington Post and his work has appeared in numerous publications including the Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, Der Spiegel, the American Prospect, Mother Jones, Salon, Utne Magazine, La Opinion, and other national and international media outlets. He has also appeared as either a source or commentator in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post and Le Monde Diplomatique and in English and Spanish language network news shows on MSNBC, Univision, BBC, CNN, NPR, Radio Bilingue, Democracy Now and Al-Jazeera. Lovato was also featured on PBS, where he made an appearance on Bill Moyers Journal and figured prominently in the PBS documentary, 'Latinos 08.' Roberto's Juan Crow article, which analyzed the system used to isolate and control immigrants, has conceptualized and popularized the term "Juan Crow," which can be found on banners and websites, in protests and videos and other media across the country, including mention on a segment of the Colbert Report.

RUKIA K. LUMUMBA

Director of Youth Services for the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA), a non-profit agency that promotes reintegrative justice and a reduced reliance on incarceration through advocacy, supportive services and public policy development in pursuit of civil and human rights. Lumumba provides leadership and strategy development to CCA's four New York City youth justice programs and is the key liaison with juvenile justice coalitions, collaborative partners and New York City officials regarding changes to juvenile justice policies and practices. Lumumba has years of experience working in the social justice field to address the urgent need of marginalized and silenced people. Most notably, Lumumba can be credited for leading the national and social media campaign that help elect her father, human rights activist - Chokwe Lumumba, as Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi – the state's capital and largest city. Currently, Lumumba serves on the Leadership and Civic Engagement Project of BK Nation (Building Knowledge Nation), a resource bank that brings together people of all racial, economic and cultural backgrounds. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Voices Unbroken – an arts based non-profit that provides creative writing and poetry workshops to young people in foster care homes, detention facilities and adult prisons.

TONGO EISEN-MARTIN

Originally from San Francisco, Tongo Eisen-Martin is a movement worker who has organized against mass incarceration throughout the United States. He has taught in detention centers from New York's Rikers Island to California county jails. He is also a revolutionary poet who uses his craft to create liberated territory wherever he performs and teaches. He currently lives and organizes in Jackson, MS.

ALEXIS MCGILL JOHNSON

Alexis is a thought leader and a bridge builder whose work spans politics, academia, social activism, and cultural strategies. Throughout her work, Alexis has explored the shifting paradigms of identity and race-based politics in the post-civil rights era, increasing civic engagement among youth and people of color. She is also serving as Board Chair of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. She is a frequent commentator on FOX NEWS, CNN, MSNBC, and in press.

FERNANDO MEJIA

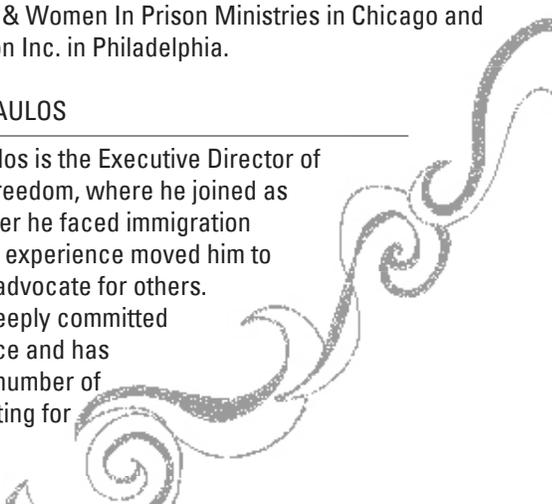
Fernando was born and raised in Cuautitlan Izcalli, Mexico. In 2001, Fernando migrated to Idaho where he attended Boise State University and majored in political science. While in Idaho, Fernando worked with the Idaho Community Action Network. One of the efforts that he led was the introduction of the Idaho Student Investment Act at the Idaho Legislature – a bill that would have enhanced the opportunities for immigrant students to pursue higher education. Currently, Fernando is fighting for immigrant rights and a fair economy as an organizer with the Alliance for a Just Society.

LAURA MCTIGHE

(M.T.S. Harvard Divinity School, Islamic Studies; B.A. Haverford College, Religion and Peace & Conflict Studies) is a third year PhD student in North American Religions at Columbia University. She comes to her doctoral studies through fifteen years of direct engagement with people in our country's prisons and jails and in the communities struggling to rebuild amidst perpetual dislocation. Her research centers on the historical and ethnographic study of religion and migration in this prison-created diaspora. Laura's writings have been published in *Islam and AIDS: Between Scorn, Pity and Justice* (2009), the *International Journal for Law and Psychiatry* (2011), *Beyond Walls and Cages: Bridging Immigrant Justice and Anti-Prison Organizing in the United States* (2012) and a variety of community publications. She also serves on the boards of Women With A Vision in New Orleans, Men & Women In Prison Ministries in Chicago and Reconstruction Inc. in Philadelphia.

ABRAHAM PAULOS

Abraham Paulos is the Executive Director of Families for Freedom, where he joined as a member, after he faced immigration detention. His experience moved him to aggressively advocate for others. Abraham is deeply committed to social justice and has worked for a number of years advocating for human rights.



SPEAKER BIOS

Before joining the staff, Abraham was a researcher at Human Rights First, focused on immigration detention. He also served as Program Director at Life of Hope, a community based organization in Brooklyn, which provides services to low-income immigrants. Additionally, Abraham has worked in media, reporting on urban policy and human rights as a writer and editorial assistant with City Limits, the civic affairs magazine that publishes investigative news on New York City politics and policies. Abraham is an Eritrean refugee, born in Sudan and raised in Chicago. He is a graduate of George Washington University with a degree in International Affairs and is currently finishing a Masters in Human Rights at the New School University.

DR. DIVINE PRYOR

Dr. Pryor is currently the Executive Director of the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions. The Center offers an alternative voice in the analysis of criminal and social justice issues, by including the combined lived and academic experience and expertise of people who have first hand knowledge of the social, judicial and economic systems that scar so many communities. Dr. Pryor is a social scientist who has extensive knowledge and experience in the criminal justice field having spent over half his career administrating youth development and juvenile justice, community based reentry, substance abuse and addiction organizations. He has been particularly interested in the issues related to mass incarceration and social concerns that are addressed by social service non-profit organizations.

JILL REESE

Jill Reese joined the Alliance staff team in April 2003 after serving three years with the Alliance's affiliate, Idaho Community Action Network. From 2009-2011, Jill directed the Health Rights Organizing Project, a coalition of 35 organizations in 23 states that was instrumental in winning inclusion of health equity provisions in the Affordable Care Act. She currently oversees the Alliance's policy department as well as its efforts to develop the leadership, skills and political analysis of affiliate staff and leaders. Jill has a degree in Economics and Political Science from the University of Texas.

DR. JAN REHMANN

Jan Rehmman, Dr. phil. habil, Visiting Professor for Critical Theory and Social Analysis at Union Theological Seminary in New York, lecturer at the Free University in Berlin; co-editor of the Historical-Critical Dictionary of Marxism (HKWM); books: Theories of Ideology. The Powers of Alienation and Subjection (2013); Pedagogy of the Poor (2011; together with Willie Baptist); Postmodernist Neo-Nietzscheism (2004), Max Weber's theory of Modernization (1998), The Churches in Nazi Germany (1986).

STEVEN RENDEROS

Steven Renderos is the National Organizer at the Center for Media Justice. He is passionate about the role of media and communications in building movements for social change. He's been a community organizer for the past 10 years leading campaigns for affordable housing, immigrant rights and most recently communications rights. He leads CMJ's advocacy and organizing efforts including the Campaign for Prison Phone Justice, a national campaign fighting to lower the high costs of prison phone calls. Previously, Steven led the Media Justice program at Main Street Project in Minneapolis where he helped jumpstart a local collaborative that will be applying for a community radio license in the fall of 2013. Steven is also the co-founder of Radio Pocho, a collaborative of Latin@ radio DJs in Minneapolis whose mission is to explore the musical roots of Latin@s raised in the United States. Now living in New York, Steven aka DJ Ren performs at venues throughout the city.

ROBERT SEMBER

Robert is a member of the international sound-art collective, Ultra-red, which has for twenty years investigated the contribution experimental sound art can make to political organizing. Ultra-red projects focus on concerns related to (im)migrants' rights, affordable housing, sexual and gender rights, and anti-racism and anti-poverty struggles. Robert brings to his work with Ultra-red training in cultural studies, medical anthropology, art, and ongoing involvement in national and international public health initiatives. Robert teaches in the art program at The New School's Eugene Lang College.

MARCO SAAVEDRA

Marco Saavedra is an undocumented poet and painter. Originally from Oaxaca, Mexico, he was raised in New York, studied in Massachusetts, Ohio, & Washington, D.C. Currently he works with the National Immigrant Youth Alliance, educating & organizing & helping in stopping deportations.

RINKU SEN

Rinku Sen is the President and Executive Director of the Applied Research Center (ARC) and the publisher of Colorlines.com. A leading figure in the racial justice movement, Rinku has positioned ARC as a national home for media, research and activism on these issues. Over the course of her career, she has combined journalism and activism to make social change. Rinku is the author of Stir It Up, a primer on best practices in community organizing, and The Accidental American, a book about Moroccan immigrant Fekkak Mamdouh, who co-founded the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York in the aftermath of September 11. Rinku lives in Queens, New York.

CHARLENE SINCLAIR

SPEAKER BIOS

CHARLENE SINCLAIR

Charlene Sinclair is the founding director of the Center for Race, Religion and Economic Democracy (C-RRED) at Union Theological Seminary. Prior to starting C-RRED Charlene served as Program Director for Engaging the Powers at Union Theological Seminary. Engaging the Powers is a program designed to train Black and Latino pastors in critical theory, policy and strategy relevant to the development and implementation of their social justice ministries. A community organizer for over 20 years, Charlene is committed to the development of lived theologies of liberation where questions of faith are engaged and articulated within struggles for justice. Charlene is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Social Ethics from Union.

DR. MARK TAYLOR

Mark Lewis Taylor is Maxwell M Upson professor of theology and culture, Princeton Theological Seminary. For over 25 years, he has been involved in prison activism in Christian communities and broader social movements, with public speaking focused today on “Decolonizing Mass Incarceration” and “U.S. mass incarceration and Christian Action.” He developed the first Christology for issues of mass incarceration, police violence and the death penalty with his 2001 book, *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*. His most recent book on political theory and theology, *The Theological and the Political: On the Weight of the World* (Fortress Press, 2011).

MAKANI THEMBA

Makani Themba is executive director of The Praxis Project, a nonprofit organization helping communities use media and policy advocacy to advance health justice. Makani has published numerous articles and case studies on race, class, media, policy advocacy and public health. She is author of *Making Policy, Making Change*, and co-author of *Media Advocacy and Public Health: Power for Prevention*, a contributor to the volumes *Community Based Participatory Research for Health, Prevention is Primary: Strategies for Community well Being, We the Media* along with many other edited book projects. Her publications have helped set the standard for policy advocacy work and contributed significantly to the field’s current emphasis on media and policy advocacy to address health problems. She has also co-authored with Hunter Cutting *Talking the Walk: Communications Guide for Racial Justice*. Her latest book, a collaboration under The Praxis Project with contributions from Malkia Cyril and others, is *Fair Game: A Strategy Guide for Racial Justice Communications in the Obama Era*.

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OPAL TOMETI

Opal Tometi is the Co-Direcor of the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) an organization which educates and advocates for immigrant rights and racial justice and is comprised of African-Americans, Afro-Latinos, African and Caribbean immigrants. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she is also responsible for coordinating the Black Immigration Network (BIN), a nationwide network of organizations and individuals uniting for racial justice and migrant rights.

As a 1st generation Nigerian-American activist originally from Arizona, she has been active in the migrant rights movement for over 10 years. Before working with BAJI she was movement building by doing strategic communications and grassroots organizing with the Puente Movement, the Alto Arizona campaign and with other migrant justice groups in Arizona. Opal was the 2012 recipient of the ‘Unsung Hero for Justice’ Award by the African American Legislative and Leadership Conference of Arizona. She is an advocate to end violence against women and a media maker. She holds a Masters of Arts degree in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Advocacy.

JAMIE TRINKLE

Jamie Trinkle is the Campaign Coordinator of the national Private Prison Divestment Campaign. The Private Prison Divestment Campaign was convened by Enlace in 2011 and aims to break the lobbying power of the private prison industry at all levels of government by pressuring investors to publicly divest from the industry. Jamie has a diverse background in law, community and student organizing, grassroots project development, and tracking dirty money. Prior to joining Enlace, she attended law school in Portland, OR, and is a dedicated member of the National Lawyers Guild.

TANIA SOTO VALENZUELA

Tania Soto Valenzuela is originally from Mexico and moved to the US with her family when she was nine years old. Her interest, volunteerism and work, are with the migrant community, racial justice, food justice, and education. Besides joining CPC as the Racial Justice and Civil Rights organizer, Tania is currently conducting research with the Right to Learn Project, advocating

SPEAKER BIOS

for the right of an educational space for every student. She serves on the Area Program Committee and Executive Committee of American Friends Service Committee. She also enjoys her time spent doing compost outreach with Denver Urban Gardens, reaching out to the Spanish-speaking community, and tutoring at the Bridge Project. If you don't find her out participating in an action, she will surely be spending time with her brother and sister, out dancing with her friends, or snuggled with a book somewhere.

JOSE VASQUEZ

Jose is the former Executive Director of Iraq Veterans Against the War. He served fourteen years in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged in May 2007 as a conscientious objector. Jose was a key organizer of Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan, Eyewitness Accounts of the Occupations and edited the testimony (with Aaron Glantz) for the book published by Haymarket. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at CUNY Graduate Center conducting research on the politics of veteran status in contemporary American society.

KATHERINE VOCKINS

Katherine left her successful international consulting firm in 1996 to form Prison Communities International – a nonprofit that works in five New York State maximum and medium security, men's and women's prisons. Its lead program, Rehabilitation Through The Arts (RTA) uses the creative arts to positively affect social/cognitive change building and expanding critical life skills within its participants. After 17 years in prison, RTA is launching its first community initiative – a theatre program for at-risk youth.

DORIAN T. WARREN

Dorian is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, the School of International and Public Affairs, and the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University. He is Co-Director of the Columbia University Program on Labor Law & Policy and also a Fellow at the Roosevelt Institute.

Warren specializes in the study of inequality and American politics. His research and teaching interests include labor organizing, politics & policy, race and ethnic politics, African-American politics, urban politics and policy, American political development, community organizing, social movements, and social science methodology. As a commentator on public affairs, Warren appears regularly on television and radio including NBC Nightly News, ABC, MSNBC, CNN, BET, BBC, NPR, Bloomberg, & NY1, among other outlets. In 2013, he was included on the list of NBC's

theGrio's 100 people making history today.

VINCENT WARREN

Vince is the Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a national legal and educational organization dedicated to advancing and defending the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

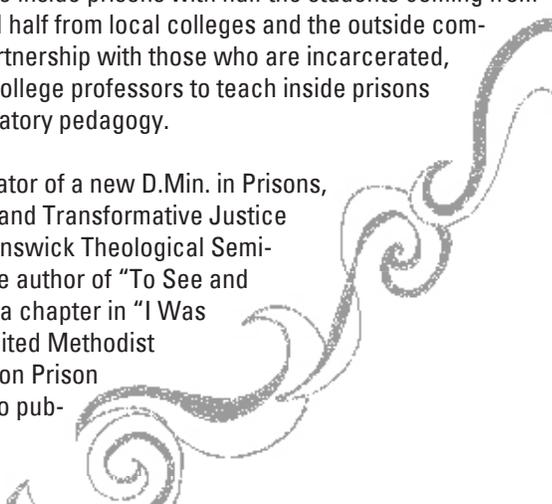
Vince oversees CCR's groundbreaking litigation and advocacy work which includes using international and domestic law to hold corporations and government officials accountable for human rights abuses; challenging racial, gender and LGBT injustice; and combating the illegal expansion of U.S. presidential power and policies such as illegal detention at Guantanamo, rendition and torture. Prior to his tenure at CCR, Vince was a national senior staff attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), where he litigated civil rights cases, focusing on affirmative action, racial profiling and criminal justice reform. Prior to the ACLU, Vince monitored South Africa's historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings and worked as a criminal defense attorney for the Legal Aid Society in Brooklyn.

REVEREND JANET WOLF

Rev. Wolf has worked as a poverty rights community organizer, public policy director for harm reduction/challenging the drug war, United Methodist pastor, and as a professor at the graduate and undergraduate level focusing on theology, biblical studies, preaching/prophetic witness, criminal/restorative justice, community organizing and movements for social change.

Janet is a partner in the National Inside Out Prison Exchange Program and in SALT: Schools for Alternative Learning and Transformation, a think tank inside a maximum security prison. She works to create undergraduate and graduate college classes that take place inside prisons with half the students coming from the inside and half from local colleges and the outside community. In partnership with those who are incarcerated, Janet trains college professors to teach inside prisons using participatory pedagogy.

She is co-creator of a new D.Min. in Prisons, Public Policy and Transformative Justice with New Brunswick Theological Seminary and is the author of "To See and To Be Seen," a chapter in "I Was In Prison": United Methodist Perspectives on Prison Ministry – also pub-



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lished in *And the Criminals with Him: Essays in Honor of Will D. Campbell* and *All the Reconciled*. Janet is married to Bill Haley, a public school teacher; they have five sons and five grandchildren.

RICHARD D. WOLFF

Professor of Economics Emeritus, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is currently a Visiting Professor at the New School University in New York. Books he has authored include *Democracy at Work: A Cure for Capitalism* (2012), *Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism* (2012), and *Capitalism Hits the Fan: The Global Economic Meltdown and What to Do About It* (2010). He hosts the weekly hour-long radio program *Economic Update* on WBAI in New York and 14 other stations across the US. His articles appear regularly in *The Guardian* (UK), *Truthout.org*, and the *MRZine*. His media appearances include the *Bill Moyers Show*, *Charlie Rose Show*, *Democracy Now!*, *Al Jazeera English*, *Thom Hartmann*, *RT-TV*, and *NPR*. His writings, lectures, media interviews, and archived radio programs are all posted at rdwolff.com. His major project is democracyatwork.info Wolff lives in New York with his wife and frequent collaborator, psychotherapist Dr. Harriet Fraad.

A special thanks to the volunteer interpreters: Krista Bustamant, Abraham Calderon, Karina Hernandez, Fernando Mejia, Ruthy Feliciano; our amazing intern Justina Jones-Savage; the phenomenal Danny Hosang; all of the speakers who donated their time to make these critical conversations possible; and all of you for taking time to attend this event.

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– Denis Martinez, Sing Sing Prisoner