

BUILDING AN ASIAN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

visioning towards abolition



ASIAN AMERICAN
RESOURCE WORKSHOP

ABOUT US



We are a political home for pan-Asian communities in Greater Boston.

We are a member-led organization committed to building grassroots power through political education, creative expression, and issue-based and neighborhood organizing.



www.aarw.org * IG [@aarw.boston](https://www.instagram.com/aarw.boston)

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NOTES + CREDITS (CONTINUED ON BACK)

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definitions

ABOLITION

a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment.¹

PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (PIC)

the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems.²

TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE

a liberatory approach to violence which seeks safety and accountability without relying on alienation, punishment, or State or systemic violence, including incarceration or policing.³

Transformative justice centers healing, agency, and accountability for survivors.

1,2 What is the PIC? What is Abolition? 3 Generation5, via PrisonCulture via Critical Resistance

WHAT IS, SO TO SPEAK,
THE OBJECT OF
ABOLITION? NOT SO MUCH
THE ABOLITION OF
PRISONS BUT THE
ABOLITION OF A SOCIETY
THAT COULD HAVE
PRISONS, THAT COULD
HAVE SLAVERY, THAT
COULD HAVE THE WAGE,
AND THEREFORE NOT
ABOLITION AS THE
ELIMINATION OF ANYTHING
BUT ABOLITION AS THE
FOUNDING OF A NEW
SOCIETY.

—Ruth Wilson Gilmore

naming the moment

WHAT KIND OF JUSTICE?

It's July 2021, and Derek Chauvin has been convicted. What does this mean for George Floyd? For Breonna Taylor, Philando Castile, Daunte Wright, and other Black folks who were murdered by law enforcement?

These are not random violences; anti-Blackness is the central motivating force of all of these systems. Chauvin's conviction happened within the same carceral system that empowered Chauvin to kill Floyd in the first place. The same can be said for "Breonna's Law", which bans no-knock search warrants and required police to wear body cameras. These responses emphasize that punitive justice, in the end, could keep us safe.

How do these responses contradict what abolitionists are calling for?

STOP ASIAN HATE?

After the Atlanta shootings, states and cities are denouncing hate crimes towards Asian people. But what does it do to focus solely on acts of individual "hate"?

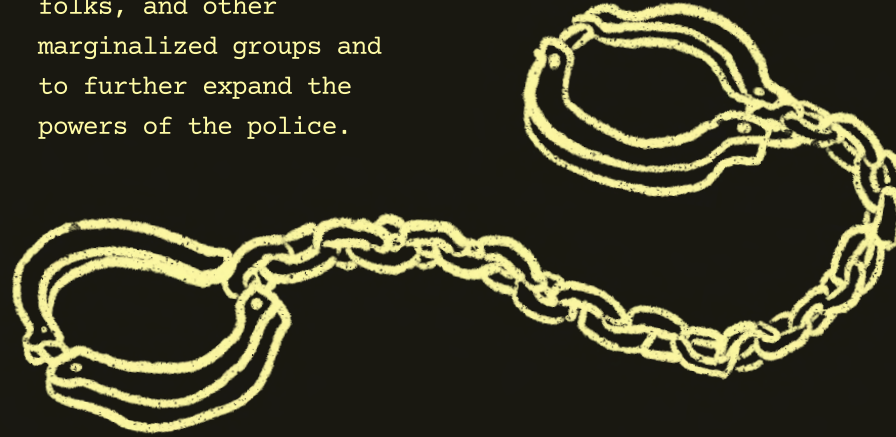
We have seen time and time again how language like TERRORISM and HATE CRIME have been used to bolster police and military power. We know that criminalizing surface behaviors only allows the state to justify carcerality—while continuing to ignore the structural violence it enacts everyday on communities of color, poor people, queer and trans people, people on the margins.



policing in the US is rooted in slavery

Today, through new technology and strategy, state violence continues to evolve under new programs and innovations to further criminalize Black folks, Indigenous folks, and other marginalized groups and to further expand the powers of the police.

For more, go to Critical Resistance's policing timeline: <http://criticalresistance.org/policing-timeline/>



1690

South Carolina, a law was passed which allowed white people to capture and punish runaway enslaved people. These laws are based on Jamaica's 1684 Slave Act that renders slaves unqualified for any rights under the state. Those that catch and punish enslaved people, known as slave patrols, are the predecessor to modern-day police enforcement.



1700s

Southern cities formed paramilitary groups that included slave patrols and militias who were the forerunners of the modern police forces. These groups were tasked to control enslaved people and to prevent and repress the rebellion.



1866 - 1877

During the reconstruction, formerly enslaved people began to build self-determined communities, acquire land, and hold public office. As a response to this, the Ku Klux Klan and police forces were formed to maintain white supremacy.



1865

The 13th amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude in the U.S. - except a punishment for criminal convictions. This loophole led slavery to continue in the criminal justice system through today. Incarcerated people work in dehumanizing conditions, while their labor turns a profit for state and prisons.

🌸 timeline of asian americans & the PIC 🌸

"We cannot fully understand Asian American history without asking why Asians arrived in the Americas, and what relationship their arrival had to the global conditions affecting people across racial and national boundaries at the time.

Viewing Asian migration to the Americas in this context starts to erode the myth of the United States as a benevolent land of immigrants." ([A Different Asian American Timeline](#))

1875

The Page Act was the first federal immigration law that prevented specific people (esp. East Asian women involved in prostitution, people convicted of felonies, forced laborers) from entering the U.S.



1942 1945

Japanese American Incarceration camps are isolated in deserts and swamplands were a way to surveil and restrict Japanese Americans during WWII.

After the war, the popular perception of "model minority" was attached to Japanese Americans.

1996

Clinton passes two key laws which increased the criminalization of migrants:

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)

Antiterrorism And Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA).

2001



President Bush signed the Patriot Act three days after 9/11. This bill permitted law enforcement to surveil civilians via wiretaps, email, web searches, in the name of counter-terrorism.

1882, 1924

The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first law to explicitly restrict immigration based on race and class.

It set precedence for The Immigration Act of 1924, through which the border patrol was created.



1982

Chinese-American Vincent Chin was beaten to death by two white men in Detroit.

This event gave a heightened media visibility to anti-Asian violence in the US that Asian Americans hadn't seen before.

FOR DISCUSSION

1% of all Patriot Act searches were classified as "terrorism related," and 76% of cases were "drug-related." Which communities did this bill impact?

Can you think of other examples of "anti-drug" enforcement in the name of counterterrorism?

☀️ *timeline of asian americans & the PIC* ☀️



2002

The Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEAFN) is formed in response to the U.S and Cambodian governments' agreement to deport refugees with criminal convictions.

Today, over 16,000 SEA Americans have received final orders of deportation, some which are based on decades-old criminal records.

"Part of the carceral logic of the model minority myth is the claim that cultural or ethnic values explain crime rates and

that some racial or ethnic groups have value systems allowing them to "self-police" while other groups purportedly need outside forms of social control." (Tamara K. Nopper)

FOR DISCUSSION

Because our accountability is central in abolitionist movements—

What are ways non-Black Asian communities contributed to and strengthened policing of Black communities?



2014

Countering Violent Extremism is piloted to cities nationwide in an attempt to surveil Muslim communities. CVE encourages "soft surveillance" for social services like healthcare, schools, religious organizations, and more.

2003

Following 9/11, ICE is established under the Department of Homeland Security, replacing an existing agency hosted under the Department of Justice.

By 2015, the ICE detention system had grown by 75%, with over 200 facilities, most of which are privately owned.



2017

Red Canary Song was formed as a grassroots collective of Asian and Migrant Sex Workers in response to worker Yang Song's death during a police raid.

2021

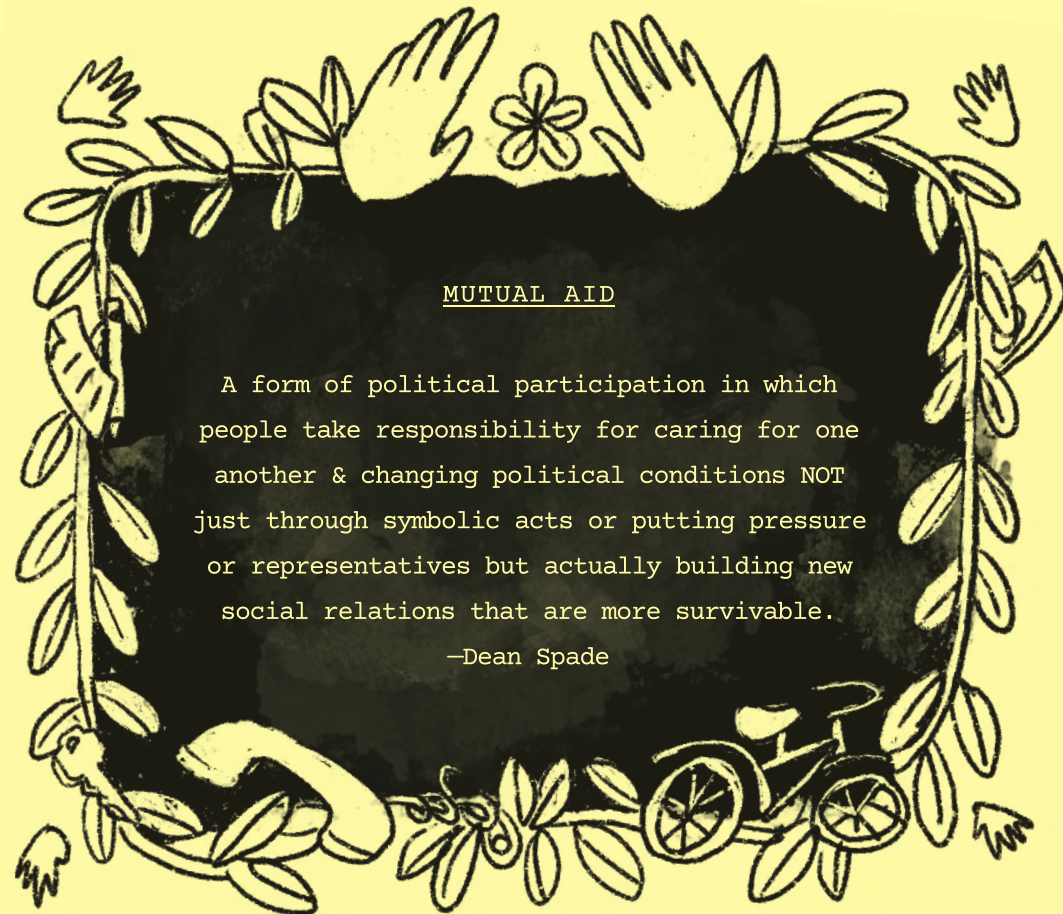
8 people, 6 of them Asian, were killed at a shooting across three massage parlors in Atlanta.

Following this act of white supremacist violence, police patrolling increased at similar businesses across the city.

[TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE]
IS A MILLION DIFFERENT
STRATEGIES,
INTERVENTIONS AND
PRACTICES — FROM BAD
DATE LISTS THAT SEX
WORKERS HAVE CREATED
[TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMATIC
CLIENTS] TO A CIRCLE
PROCESS HOLDING SOMEONE
ACCOUNTABLE TO WHEN
I SEE SOMEONE HASSLING
A WOMAN ON THE BUS...

—Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

transformative justice



MUTUAL AID

A form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another & changing political conditions NOT just through symbolic acts or putting pressure or representatives but actually building new social relations that are more survivable.

—Dean Spade

KEY POINT

Abolitionists believe in meeting the basic needs of community instead of criminalizing people in need.

what might care mean?

GROCERY RUNS
DELIVERIES
COMMUNITY
FRIDGE
COMPANIONSHIP



GIVING
FOOD AND
SUPPLIES
HELPING WITH
APPLICATIONS
TRANSLATING
COOKING
WATCHING KIDS
TEMPORARY
HOUSING

FOR DISCUSSION

What are some forms of transformative justice & abolition work happening in your communities right now?

What about moments of TJ that happen in the everyday?



POD MAPPING

"Your pod is made up of the people that you would call on if violence, harm or abuse happened to you; or the people that you would call on if you wanted support in taking accountability for violence, harm or abuse that you've done; or if you witnessed violence or if someone you care about was being violent or being abused." (Mia Mingus)

alternatives to 9-1-1





SOMERVILLE +
CAMBRIDGE, MA



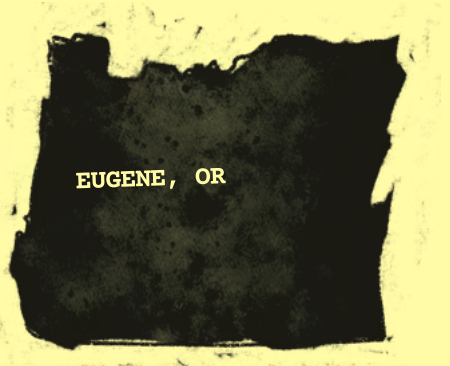
Scan for
MA-specific
resources

CAMBRIDGE HEART PROGRAM

- Conflict resolution through restorative and transformative practices
- Non-violent support for people who are unhoused, intoxicated, in crisis.

SOMERVILLE PEOPLE'S BUDGET

- Sourced proposal from residents to cut SPD budget by 65% this year



EUGENE, OR

CAHOOTS

A.K.A. Crisis Assistance
Helping Out on the Streets
Mobile crisis intervention
service integrated in public
safety system
Responds to non-violence
crisis



AURORA, CO

VICTIM ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT

- Remote and mobile advocacy for direct service
- Referrals to legal aid, mental health services
- Political education programs and safety planning

SAFE OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM (SOS)

- Training and toolkits focusing on community based strategies against violence
- Wellness and Safety Planning
- Violence Intervention Safety Tips
- Safe Space Training for Homes
- Safe Party Toolkit



BROOKLYN, NY



Scan for
more national
alternatives

KEY POINT

We want to avoid **co-response**, in which police are working together with alternatives.

These situations can create conflict in roles, and logistical difficulties in classifying the type of crisis. In many cases, most of the funding still goes to policing and surveillance. (Morabito, Savage, Sneider & Wallace)

PIC ABOLITION IS A
COLLECTIVE PROJECT...

I WANT TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER
PEOPLE, TO LEARN FROM THEIR
IDEAS TO REFINE MY OWN AND
TO CHANGE MY MIND, WHICH
I THINK MORE PEOPLE SHOULD
BE OPEN TO. I LOOK FORWARD
TO DOING THAT: TRYING TO
THINK TOGETHER AS WE WORK
TOGETHER TO BRING INTO
FRUITION THE WORLD IN WHICH
WE WANT TO LIVE.
PREFIGURING THAT WORLD.

—Mariame Kaba

RESOURCES

Run this a workshop in your own communities!

tinyurl.com/aarwabolitionworkshop

MA 911 Alternatives: tinyurl.com/maalternative

National 911 Alternatives: tinyurl.com/nationalalternative

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Thanks also to MIJENTE’s PIC abolition workshops, which seeded inspiration and content.



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