

community peacemaker teams

If You Can Forget

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Letter from the editor

A year ago, CPT took the bold step of living into who we had become: a more profoundly inclusive and diverse organization. We were confident we were doing what was right, but we had doubts about how those who have stood with us and journeyed with us all these years might react. Would they walk with us down this unknown path, or would they decide who we had become was not representative of them? We took this step to live into the boldness and the requirement of our commitment to dismantling structures of violence and oppression.

To decide to move from the comfort of the name Christian Peacemaker Teams, with over thirty-five years of reputation, to a new name that questioned our identity required us to question our own solidarities. What partnerships must we reimagine to grow and live into our mission? The intersections of injustice, history, and reality force us to live in the tensions of sometimes unidealistic discomfort. In a recent speech, Arundhati Roy said, "Solidarity can never be pristine. It should be challenged, analyzed, argued about, calibrated." This is where we need to locate ourselves: in places where we live in the vulnerability of partnership that allows us to continuously engage and live in solidarity.

In April, CPT will receive the 2023 International Peace Award from the Community of Christ and the Shaw Family Foundation in recognition of our work founded on partnerships that transform our partners and us to create spaces for peace. We are proud to receive this recognition because it affirms our chosen path and our growth in further learning how to decolonize peace work. Awards aside, throughout last year, we received affirmations from readers and supporters acknowledging our evolution. We are grateful.

This year we're looking forward to exploring how to demilitarize, decolonize and reimagine our solidarity. We find ourselves in a crucial historical moment where reimagination is vital to mounting movements against oppression and injustice and where we can build coalitions, grow and evolve with you. We look forward to learning and collaborating with you to support partners in Kurdistan, Palestine, Colombia, Lesvos, Turtle Island, and the Borderlands who challenge the militarization of their streets while sorting and resisting the legacy of colonization in their communities. Would you join us in growing our solidarity?



In kindness, Caldwell Manners Communications Coordinator

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CPT INTERNATIONAL

Adriana Cabrera in conversation with CPT partner Carlos Morales, a leader of CAHUCOPANA.

When paths merge: Adriana's story

You may have heard Adriana's name before, and that's because Adriana is not new to CPT— she has served in several capacities with CPT over the past decade. So what brought Adriana to this work, and what brought her back after all these years?

It was as a Divinity student at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana, that Adriana first heard of CPT. A fellow classmate was part of the CPT Steering Committee and would encourage Adriana to get involved with the work. But it would be a number of years later, after graduating from Earlham, working at a Quaker House in Boston and returning to her home country of Colombia, that Adriana would start to think about why this classmate had thought her a good fit for CPT.

So in 2009 Adriana decided to join a CPT delegation to Colombia—taking the opportunity to get reacquainted with the country and what was happening politically and socially. Adriana loved the work CPT was doing and upon her return, applied to do the CPT training, which she completed in 2010.

Adriana's wish was to join the CPT Colombia team, but unfortunately there were no openings. Months passed, and Adriana focused her attention on other work, until she found out that someone had nominated her to be part of the CPT Steering Committee. That 'someone' remains a mystery, but their nomination sparked the next chapter of Adriana's relationship with CPT.

Twice a year, the CPT Steering Committee would meet in the US. It was on this second

visit that Adriana was told by then Director, Carol Rose, that there was soon to be an opening for Personnel Coordinator and she thought Adriana should apply. And so she did, filling the position in March 2011.

The next few years saw Adriana traveling back and forth between the US and Colombia a fair bit. Adriana was now married and the travel was becoming difficult to sustain. She decided it would be best to resign her position and take the opportunity to focus on other projects.

After resigning her position with CPT, Adriana and Chivi moved to a small cabin in the rural town of Paipa, just north of Bogota. Paipa is an area that a lot of bicyclists frequent and upon their arrival, Adriana and Chivi noticed that the majority of these bicyclists were men and it got them thinking. They decided to use the bicycle as a tool to empower women and began to build their own NGO around this idea.

It was now 2020, the year of the pandemic, when Adriana was dealt a massive blow her wife Chivi died suddenly from a stroke. Adriana tried to continue the work they had started together, but found it unbearable to do without her. And so She made the difficult decision to close the project.

Adriana asked herself the question, "what now?" and decided to approach CPT as a translator. Some months passed, when a wish Adriana had all those years ago—to work with the CPT Colombia team—could finally

cont'd on page 11



lf you can forget

Words and image by Loius Bockner

If you look to the west of al Khalil/Hebron's old city, across the once-bustling Shuhada Street (where Palestinians can no longer walk) and above the Muslim cemetery with its marble headstones inscribed in Arabic, there is a grove of ancient olive trees. They are planted on terraces, formed by old stone walls, that look out over the winding, narrow streets and pale, tightly packed buildings of the city. They face east, like the cemetery's headstones, welcoming the morning sun that illuminates the gnarled trunks of the trees and pierces through their muted green leaves.

This place was my refuge during my time in al Khalil/Hebron. Sitting under a tree, with its twisted, primeval roots beneath me and a new day's sun on my face, I would feel momentarily at ease. At that time of morning, there are no yells from the men selling produce or honks from impatient drivers, just the faint rush of cars on still-empty streets. A dog barks, roosters call and respond, the street lights switch off in unison.

From here, amid the twitter of birdsong, one could feel this is a place of peace, but it would be a feat of living in the moment or a supreme exercise in amnesia. A masterclass in forgetting. You would have to forget the glare of white security lights behind you where Israeli soldiers overtook a building once used to teach Palestinian youth about their culture; forget the checkpoint, with its one hundred eyes and steel face you had to pass through to get here; forget the remote-operated machine gun, newly mounted at its gates, that can fire rubber-tipped bullets or live ammunition; forget the turning iron bars you had to push through once you were beckoned forward



by soldiers dressed for combat and barely out of high school; forget placing the creased photocopy of your passport up against the bulletproof glass so they could record the number, see who you are and where you are from.

Beyond this morning, you must also forget what you have witnessed in your short time here: primary school children being detained and searched on their way to school, settler children spitting at their Palestinian counterparts, Israeli soldiers firing tear gas at Palestinian boys who throw rocks out of boredom, frustration and anger towards a system that has forced them to keep their head bowed in submission since they were born. You must forget the hundreds of Palestinian businesses whose doors were welded shut after the city was segregated in 1997 and the hundreds more that were closed by their owners because they were no longer viable. When the coronary arteries of a city, the streets that once thrived with both Jewish and Arab activity, are blocked with cement walls and impassable gates, its heartbeat weakens, the pulse of life becoming harder and harder to detect as time goes on.

If you can forget about the apartheid state this occupation has created and the over 200 Palestinians, including 50 children, killed by Israeli soldiers in 2022 alone; if you can forget all this and a thousand things more, then maybe, just maybe, you might be fooled into thinking this olive grove, with its ancient, sentient, silent witnesses, is a place of peace.

In another time, I imagine it was. In another time, I imagine it could be once more. ■ Loius Bockner is a CPT Volunteer.

We won't see peace, we'll dream her

By Muriel Schmid, Administrative Director

I didn't know Chicago well at all as I found my way around the city and up to a house in the West suburbs of Chicago, belonging to Chicago First Church of the Brethren, for the beginning of our CPT training on January 4, 2013. I remember walking up to the door and knocking. Sandra, one of the other participants in the training, opened and let me in. I dropped my bag in our dorm and met my cohort, an unusually small group of seven trainees. We sat in a circle, went through the initial round of introductions and there we were, ready to spend an entire month together! What a crazy way to start the new year...

January 2013 was a cold month in Chicago. A few of us walked for 40 minutes every morning to the training center, all bundled up in the dark and snow. It was good though, the 7am walk energized us and got us ready for the day. CPT training is intense and the days are long; most days, we would not get back to the house before 9pm.

A lot has happened for me and around me in the past 10 years and it is really strange to think that my CPT training happened a decade ago! One thing is clear: over these past 10 years, my life has slowly changed and everything in it has been reoriented around and because of my CPT training. Did I know that when I arrived in Chicago that day of January 4, 2013? I don't think so! And if I had known, would I have stayed or run away when Sandra opened the door?

It turns out, I never really left CPT after I walked through that door.

The world is a much bigger place. I grew up in a small farming village in Switzerland and came to the U.S. later in life, met my wife, moved around, and reinvented my life in this new context. I thought I had expanded my world a lot. Yet with CPT, my world got much bigger. I have learned about so many communities across the globe and their fight for justice. I visited our teams and met the partners we accompany. My colleagues are located in many places, speak all kinds of languages, and all bring to the work a unique story and perspective. During the COVID years, the pandemic had

dropped day, with my colleagues, I am learning how whort, an to de-center myself and rethink the world nees. We and its power dynamics. CPT made me ial round work hard at decolonizing my ideas and my

> taking responsibilities for the oppressions we witness, trying to undo them as much as I can. Anger is still strong; over the past 10 years the world has not become a better place! On the contrary, violence, injustice, and unrest have grown. Are we contributing to a change at all? I get angry often, discouraged and tired. However, CPT teams do a fantastic job at supporting and witnessing the necessary struggles of those who are fighting for their rights.We do not even have 30 people working for the organization (as paid staff) and yet, we're making a lot of noise. I am in constant admiration for what our teams do and share!

the face of all of them and their realities

reminded me of how we are dealt different

My own world is much smaller. Growing

up white and European, the history of the

world I was told was very much centered

around my story and my privileges. Every

references, at addressing my privileges and

hands when facing a global crisis.

The work of justice is hard. CPT training is about resilience and has been designed to evaluate participants' ability to stay in the struggle. It was hard and amazing and challenging. It helped me find my balance and my strength. I often think that I am not an activist, I am the one behind the scenes, modestly having the back of those in the front. I found my contribution to the work when I became Administrative Director in 2019. The way I envision my role is in holding together a structure so that the work can be done again and always.

We won't see peace, we'll dream her. The truth is, peace will probably not happen—at least not in my lifetime. It is sobering. And yet, it doesn't mean we can't keep our dreams alive and see small, powerful changes here and there. CPT has been instrumental in bringing to light some of those changes and we will continue. Who knows where we will be in 10 years!



Communities protest coal mining in Yariguíes mountains

On 9 January, people from the municipalities of El Carmen and San Vicente de Chucuri mobilized to protest the mining concession given to the COLCCO mining company to exploit coal in the Yariguies mountain range. The Chucuri communities are principally cocoa growers and are located near the Yariguies Mountain Range National Park.

Colombia has several large coal mining operations in the northern region that have destroyed the environment and its surrounding communities, deviating vital drinking water sources for mining operations and causing severe skin and respiratory diseases from coal dust contamination.

In response to the protests, the paramilitary group AGC sent out death threats against the protesting communities and their leaders. Colombia is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental activists, leading the charts in 2021. Global Witness reported that 33 of a total of 200 environmental activists were assassinated in Colombia.

On 27 January, representatives of the national government and the protesters reached agreements that allowed the blockades placed on a highway to be lifted. One of these agreements was that the Ministry of Mines would challenge the environmental license that was authorized for the COLCCO mining company.

We are grateful and inspired by the communities that resist and protect the environment and its resources such as water—a source of life. And we celebrate the commitment of the recently elected government of the Historical Pact in August 2022 who seeks to mitigate climate change and place more restrictions on multinational companies. ■

PRAYER AND ACTION

As Title 42 ends, a larger border crackdown begins

There are two women seated on a bench, wrapped in blankets and staring at their feet where there are a few bottles of water. Are these women border crossers, fleeing violence in their own country? Are they waiting to ask for asylum at a US Port of Entry? Are they planning to make an unauthorized entry into the US to request asylum after they are apprehended? Or have these women been returned to Mexico from the US, under Title 42 of the health code? Whatever these women's circumstances may be, the reality of migration along the US/Mexico border will soon change again.

May, Covid-19 emergency In protocol will end and Title 42-a draconian policy that forcefully removed migrants from the US under the auspice of health and safety concerns-will no longer apply. As a result, the Biden administration has enacted several new measures to discourage migrants from attempting to enter the US-especially to seek asylum. Specifically, in January of this year, the US began sending more Venezuelans, Nicaraguans, Cubans, and Haitians back into Mexico rather than allowing them to remain in the US to pursue their case, while also increasing opportunities for people to apply for asylum from their home countries rather

than at the border.

Meanwhile, the US proposed the toughest policy yet to discourage a surge of border crossers when Title 42 ends: anyone who enters the US unlawfully would not be eligible to request asylum. This would be a significant change in the traditional policy toward people fleeing persecution in another country. Only migrants who use the already overworked 'CBP On' phone app to schedule asylum hearings would be allowed into the country.

- Pray that these particular women have the courage to continue their quest for a safer life and that they will be supported along their journey.
- Grieve for those who are forced to return to a life of danger.
- Repent the economic forces that cause people to migrate.
- Ask that organizations and individuals who help migrants will be sustained in their work.
- For US citizens, work for just immigration policies.
- Support an asylum seeker by being a sponsor.
- Pray that the US government is able to implement humane treatment of migrants. ■



Women activists increasingly targeted in Iraqi Kurdistan

Taking a stand for LGBTQ+ and women's rights comes with a price in Iraqi Kurdistan

Women activists and CPT partners have received sexualized threats and threats to their lives because of their activism and stance against homophobia in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Gender-based violence is widespread in Iraq, including Iraqi Kurdistan. Unfortunately, the threats and insults that activists, especially women activists, receive in Iraqi Kurdistan are increasing at an alarming rate.

Dr Choman Hardi, a Kurdish poet, civil who do not fit into a traditionactivist, and one of CPT's partners, has or heteronormative society. recently been targeted by social media hatred rights for people of different for her activism. She founded the Center for accompany them in obtaining Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) at violence and oppression.

the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani, in 2015. Hardi is one of several female activists in Iraqi Kurdistan who have received threats for her activism in women's rights and genderbased violence.

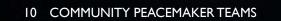
Gender-based violence is a human rights violation. We, as CPT, believe that genderbased violence is deeply rooted in harmful stereotypes against women or other people who do not fit into a traditional gender binary or heteronormative society. We support equal rights for people of different genders and accompany them in obtaining a world without violence and oppression. ■



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Dear White Supremacist

By Ahmad Abu Munshar

Dear White Supremacist,

Please refrain from instructing Palestinians on how to engage with settlers and stop labelling Palestinians who refuse to do so as terrorists.

You started the conversation with a comment about my colleagues and me wearing hoodies, which you then repeated at the end of the conversation. Maybe we didn't meet your stereotype of what Palestinians should like or what we should wear.

I brushed it off, but the conversation turned when you said, "I don't trust you or your organization." You were concerned that CPT focuses on highlighting the injustices committed by the Israeli occupation against Palestinians rather than praising the Israeli government for its positive actions towards the LGBTQ+ Arab community. We explained the Israeli government's practice of pinkwashing, a tactic of highlighting LGBTQ+ support and inclusion as a way to distract and cover up their crimes, like the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Masafer Yatta and the occupation army's mistreatment of Palestinian children.

Despite this, you insisted that Palestinians recognize settlers' humanity and blamed us for not doing so. You conveniently forgot that settlers would also need to see the humanity in Palestinians.

As a Palestinian and a member of CPT, I believe that we cannot bring settlers and Palestinians together until Palestinian human rights are restored, put simply, we are not equal. We cannot have a fair conversation when there is unequal power, where settlers have freedom of movement while Palestinians are subjected to checkpoints and must prove our innocence. I reminded you that Palestinians have suffered for more than 70 years, sharing our stories without seeing any progress. We support Palestinian-led, nonviolent, grassroots resistance, where CPT works with an Indigenous community against systematic oppression.

Despite our explanations, you persisted in your demand that we bring settlers and Palestinians together. When we refused, you accused us of supporting violent movements like Hamas. We clarified that we support non-violent resistance through advocacy and solidarity. However, you had already made up your mind.

No one has the right to tell Palestinians what to do, especially when they are not the ones suffering. They are not the ones losing family members, waiting for their sons to be released, passing through checkpoints, or fearing soldiers entering their homes at night. They do not have to ask for permission to buy things for their homes, nor do they have to worry about their homes being demolished at any moment. To truly stand for human rights, one must stand with the Palestinians in their fight for their rights.

As we concluded our conversation, you closed your computer in a safe place while my community continues to live in danger every minute. Would you have said the same things if you were meeting with a settler organization?

I finished the meeting with anger, as the words "I don't trust you or trust your organization" stuck in my mind. I felt humiliated and disrespected, but also empowered because I was able to speak up and point out the disrespectful way we were treated. Not only must we deal with occupation, but we also have to deal with Zionists and supremacists around the world. How much hope is left for us?

Sincerely, Ahmad

cont'd from page 3

be realized. A position opened up for the role of Program Support Coordinator (PSC) for the CPT Colombia team and Adriana knew this was the opportunity she had waited for. CPT welcomed Adriana as the new PSC for the Colombia team in September.

Adriana's story is a reminder of how our own stories and unique experiences serve to enrich this work. While we are all on our own life journey, it is this CPT community and the pursuit of justice and collective liberation that brings us together.

Reporting a trial that never started: 'ERCI and others'



The case of 'ERCI and others' is part of a series of prosecutions happening in the Aegean and the Mediterranean Sea that aim to criminalize solidarity and the rescue of migrants. However, this particular case stands out in that the defendants are seeking to stand trial in every way possible, and the court, five years later, is denying it. As one of the defendants says:

"This trial was and remains a farce. If we were the dangerous criminals they portray us as, they managed to leave us unpunished and free for over four years, during which we could have continued to commit the horrible crimes they accuse us of. Crimes, that occurred severe enough to them, to lock up people in pretrial detention. Among them, two young students, to make sure they would not evade their responsibility, while in the end, one of them was banned from entering the country and therefore from attending their trial. Well, fortunately, we are not criminals and not guilty of any crime we are accused of-so there was no danger for society or the Greek state at any time."

The judicial process:

In August 2018, three rescuers from the NGO ERCI¹, Sara Mardini, Sean Binder and Nassos

Karakitsos, were arrested in Mytilene. The three of them were detained for approximately three months in a Greek prison and were then released on bail. These three arrests were followed by criminal charges brought against 21 additional people. Some of them had ties to ERCI, while others had no connection to the organization. The criminal charges span a period of about two years (2016-2018) and contain both misdemeanours and felonies. The case was divided into two sub-cases for trial, one involving the misdemeanour charges while the other involved the felony charges, so as not to miss the statute of limitation for the misdemeanour charges.

The felony charges being prosecuted are, among others, the charges of

I) establishment and participation in a criminal organization;

2) money laundering; and

3) facilitating the illegal entry of foreigners (commonly known as smuggling).

To date, five years after the indictment, the 24 defendants have not been summoned to trial for the felonies, as the case is still at the investigation stage.

With the statute of limitations on the misdemeanour charges looming, the case reached court for the first time on 18 November 2021. However, the trial did not start because the court declared itself incompetent, as one of the defendants is a practicing lawyer, and therefore the case must be tried in a higher court (court of appeal), according to the code of criminal procedure. The defence lawyers raised a series of objections for all the legal errors that had been committed to that point, but the court did not take them into account as it had already declared that it had no jurisdiction. The prosecution for the multiple misdemeanour charges, in this case,

I) espionage;

2) forgery;

3) possession of radio frequencies; and

4) facilitation of a criminal organization continue, referred to the court of appeal. The accused, in turn, insisted that they wish to be tried.

This is how we have arrived to January 2023, where all the extensive errors, procedural irregularities, and illogical leaps that are included in the case file and which are the basis on which the defendants have been dragged from hearing to hearing for five years, were revealed in the courtroom—without even starting the trial. To name just a few:

► One of the charges, possession of radio frequencies, is no longer a criminal offence and cannot be prosecuted.

► The beginning of the case file refers to 24 defendants, but at the end of the case file, there is a reference to 25 defendants. The time of the offences committed is also not mentioned in some cases. As a result, neither lawyers nor defendants can understand for which acts which person is accused and when these acts supposedly took place.

► For the charge of espionage, there is no mention (as defined by law) of what classified information the accused should NOT possess

► For the charge of facilitating a criminal organization, it must first be proven that a criminal organization exists. This has not been done as the investigation in the felony case has not been completed, and the felony charges have not been confirmed by the three-judge council.

► The court is obliged to notify the defendants of both the charges and the summons to court in a language they understand, which was also not done.

On Friday, 13 January 2023, the court sustained all the above objections, and the proceedings were declared null and void. It also acknowledged that the statute of limitations had passed for the offences allegedly committed prior to five years prior to that date (i.e. offences up to 13 January 2018). Finally, it separated from the 24 defendants two Greek defendants, who will be tried alone.

The practical effect of all this is that the whole case was cancelled and returned to an earlier stage procedurally. That is, it will have to be corrected, rewritten, translated, and sent to the defendants before the other offences are time-barred, which is unlikely.

Reflections on a trial that never happened

As another defendant mentioned,

"On the one hand, I feel satisfied that the court acknowledged all the mistakes and irregularities made in our case. On the other hand, we were preparing for a battle, we wanted to be heard, and that didn't happen."

All the above confirms that the aim of all these prosecutions was not to enforce the law, neither to bring the defendants to trial, nor to get them convicted. After all, the prosecuting authorities, with five whole years at their disposal, were unable to carry out their task. These prosecutions, as well as other similar ones in the Aegean and the Mediterranean, which have been underway since 2016², aim to ensure that there are no witnesses left to watch what is happening in the seas and on the coasts. Unfortunately, this objective has been largely achieved. After multiple criminal prosecutions, vilification in the media, and a slew of attacks on members of civil society, there is currently not a single rescue ship or mission in the Aegean.

This brings us to today, where the Turkish and Greek coastguards and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency FRONTEX are operating in the Aegean. Where the murderous and illegal practice of pushbacks has become the main tool of "migration management." Where, because of the fear of pushbacks, migrants are being pushed down increasingly dangerous routes, travelling from Turkey to Italy in rotten boats. Where in the Aegean, we count more dead people day by day.

The criminalization of migration and the criminalization of rescue and solidarity are now facts of the European reality and are inseparable from each other. The trial of 'ERCI and others,' because of the publicity it has—rightly—received, has illuminated aspects of this phenomenon of tragicomedy. But in many other trials, especially when the defendants are migrants, the judiciary does not hesitate to violate itself. It does not hesitate to sentence people to tens of years in prison, in trials that are far from being called fair. In a way that is simply tragic, without any comic element. ■

¹ In Lesvos, the humanitarian organization Emergency Response Center International (ERCI) was active in search and rescue, providing medical services inside Moria's Reception and Identification Centre (RIC), etc. It was registered with the NGO registrar, and they often cooperated with the Greek authorities and the Greek Coast Guard.

² It is worth noting that at that time and until 2019, the centre-left Syriza party was in government, which had adopted both pro-immigration rhetoric and anti-immigration practice.

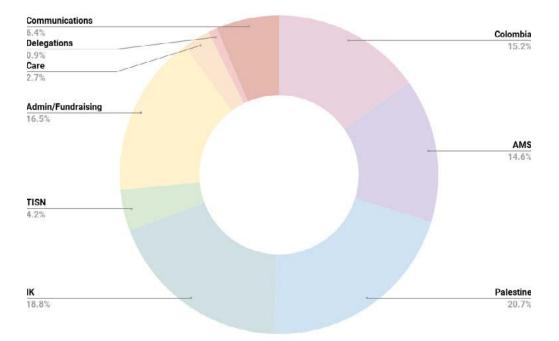
Annual Report 2022

This last year could not have been possible without your generosity. Even when the world felt uncertain, you, our community, kept showing up for us.We couldn't be more grateful.Thank you.

Access the full annual report at cpt.org/about/annual-report

Revenue

Individual Contributions Congregational Contributions Grants Delegations Special Gifts Others	662,444 94,841 184,925 8,340 152,867 20,257
TOTAL Revenue	1,123,674
Expenses	
Iraqi Kurdistan Colombia Palestine Turtle Island Solidarity Network US/Mexico Borderlands Aegean Migrant Solidarity Delegatioans Care Undoing Oppressions Training Communications Admin/Fundraising	232,048 186,925 242,865 56,643 147,440 11,123 23,224 9,439 3,382 54,190 199,739
TOTAL Expenses	1,167,018
TOTAL Net Income (Before Other Income/Expense) Investment Unrealized Gain (Loss) Bottom Line	(43,344) (120,265) (163,609)
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CPT's financial model focuses on equipping, training, and building a volunteer base of peacemaker corps. These full-time, part-time, and reservists volunteers are our primary resource.

The peacemaking work of CPT is profoundly human in its coalition-building and physical/ political accompaniment, which is fully staffed by a corp that receives stipends and healthcare.

Balance Sheet as of October 31, 2022

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents Investments Prepaids, receivables, deposits Fixed asset, net	396,387 802,004 67,894 13,504
TOTAL ASSETS	1,279,789
LIABILITIES and NET ASSETS	
Liabilities (accounts payable) Net assets (unrestricted)	44,278 1,235,511
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1,279,789

Decolonize Solidarity

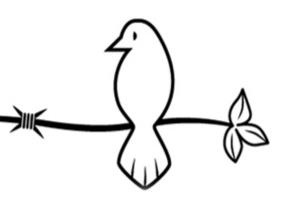


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Building Partnerships to Transform Violence and Oppression

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