



DON'T FORGET THOSE ON THE INSIDE

# DON'T FORGET THOSE ON THE INSIDE:

Introductory notes on Prison Abolition and the Prison Industrial Complex.

Dedicated to the prisoners I've worked and struggled alongside with over the past five years, many of whom have suffered irreversible life-shattering trauma on the inside, some of whom have been killed in custody either by others or from their own hands.

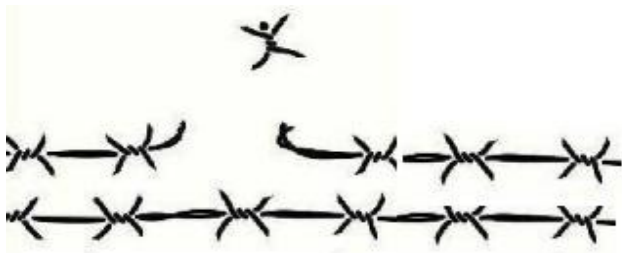
And to *Barry*, who is still inside. His crimes: intergenerational trauma, foetal alcohol syndrome, poverty, loss of family and culture, homelessness, grief and trauma from his experiences in prison and the self-medicating alcoholism once he was released (and the revolving door which put him back inside).



*We acknowledge our existence on land occupied by genocidal force without any form of compensation or semblance of justice.*

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# WHAT IS THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX?

“Prison Industrial Complex” (PIC) is a term used to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to what are, in actuality, economic, social, and political “problems.” It parallels the earlier term “military-industrial complex,” to describe weapons proliferation that satisfied the interests of the government, by increasing military and thus state power, and also satisfied corporate interests, by funnelling billions of dollars of public funds to corporations profiting off military contracting. By the nature of the military-industrial complex, there was no peace dividend after the Cold War; instead the military budget necessarily continued to rise even in the absence of an enemy, real or fabricated. Similarly, the Capitalist prison-industrial complex will not and cannot see an end to crime.

Though the term Prison Industrial Complex is used less widely than other phrases such as “criminal justice system,” it is more useful and accurate in describing the complexity of our current system of punishment. Using the phrase prison industrial complex rejects the State's loaded terms “criminal” and “justice,” while highlighting the

fundamental relationship between punishment and commerce. Additionally, the term helps us broaden our analysis of who and what are involved in the system.

Abolition of the prison industrial complex is a political vision with the goal of eliminating prisons, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment. Think you might be an abolitionist? You're not alone! You are part of a movement that stands on the shoulders of revolutionaries throughout history; people who have given their blood, sweat, and tears in the struggle for a day where we do not rely on the violence of the prison industrial complex to solve our problems.

From where we are now, sometimes we can't really imagine what abolition is going to look like. Abolition isn't just about getting rid of buildings full of cages. It's also about undoing the society we live in because the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and controls millions of people. Because the PIC is not an isolated system, abolition is a broad strategy. An abolitionist vision means that we must build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future. It means developing practical strategies for taking small steps that move us toward making our dreams real and that lead us all to believe that things really could be different. It means living this vision in our daily lives.

Abolition is both a practical organising tool and a long-term goal.

When prison abolition is raised as a topic, we often hear of people trying to imagine society as it currently is (a Capitalist one), just without prisons. Imagining alternatives to prison is difficult precisely because it requires a re-imagining of our entire social and economic system. This is why the ‘Prison Industrial Complex’ term is so important – it shows that capitalism can’t be picked apart piece by piece; it needs to be understood as an entire interlinking *industrial complex*. Similarly we are increasingly hearing more and more of an ‘NGO industrial complex’, the ‘Military Industrial Complex’ etc.

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons? Put another way, there is a place that is prison, and then there is a tendency, a way of managing life, that is prison. The place and the tendency are not two, but one. Macrocosm, microcosm. To speak of prisons as if they were separate from the rest of society is to mystify the issue entirely.

*Prison cannot be abolished without the abolition of the entire system of law, production, control, and so forth. If we define prison in its totality, the argument stands not only as true but as a truism, since prison includes all of those – we cannot treat it as if it were a blot on a perfect society, a cancerous tumour that could be cut away. Prison is a totality—something that one cannot escape from, but only shift positions within.*

# what's wrong with prison?

One of the greatest flaws in the prison system is that apart from isolating from society the select few who's crimes are truly pathologic, it does not achieve any of the ends which it sets itself. To begin with, **the number of offences against existing laws neither increases nor diminishes, no matter what the system of punishments is.** The cruelty of the judges grows or lessens, the cruelty of the penal system changes, but the number of acts designated as crimes remains constant.

Crime cannot be divorced from the society within which it occurs and prisons relieve us of the responsibility of seriously engaging with the problems of our society, especially those problems which are specific to a system based and built fundamentally on the ruthless accumulation of profit, inequality, hierarchy, coercion and violence. Capitalism is based upon a vision of humanity as isolated individuals with no connection other than that of money and contract. Such a vision cannot help but institutionalise anti-social acts.

**Pyotr Kropotkin, on prisons, once wrote:**

“On the one hand, there is the fact that none of the prisoners recognise the justice of the punishment inflicted on them. This is in itself a condemnation of our whole judicial system. Speak to an imprisoned man or to some great swindler. They will say. “The little

swindlers are here but the big ones are free and enjoy public respect.”

What can you answer, knowing the existence of great financial companies expressly designed to take the last pennies of the savings of the poor, with the founders retiring in time to make good legal hauls out of these small fortunes?

Or this man, imprisoned for robbing a till, will tell you, “I simply wasn’t clever enough, that’s all.” And what can you answer, knowing what goes on in important places, and how, following terrible scandals, the verdict “not guilty” is handed out to these great robbers? How many times have you heard prisoners say, “It’s the big thieves who are holding us here; we are the little ones.”

Who can dispute this when he knows the incredible swindles perpetrated in the realm of high finance and commerce; when he knows that the thirst for riches, acquired by every possible means, is the very essence of bourgeois society. When he has examined this immense quantity of suspicious transactions divided between the honest man (according to bourgeois standards) and the criminal, when he has seen all this, he must be convinced that jails are made for the unskilful, not for criminals...”

Capitalism teaches you to not get caught, and even so, laws are iron chains for the poor but mere cobwebs for the rich.



# ‘corrective services’

Enshrined in the inherent character of prisons are inequality, dehumanisation, revenge, violence and disdain for the most marginalised, vulnerable and fragile peoples in society. The damaging aspects of prisons as we currently know them– The isolation from family and support networks, the violence, the risk of further institutionalisation, the health risks and the frequently devastating processes of dehumanisation make rehabilitation and any sense of reparation , transformative or restorative justice almost impossible inside the prison environment. The very nature of prisons requires brutality and contempt for the people imprisoned, and erodes the qualities needed to adapt to community life. Prisons are not and cannot be healing centres.

“My brother told me to prepare for it, putting the word on you and you’ll become a bottom feeder, bottom of the chain. Sure enough they came – asking for my shoes. I made sure I stood in a way so only one could get in my cell at a time, I told him he could have the shoes, as soon as one went to grab em I gave him all i had, elbows, knees, everything, with the intent to kill him. No more dramas.” –

**Andrew, on Parole in Kangaroo Point**

“C8 in RnR was called the Bronx unit – you fight over your Tim Tams, you’ve got 7 guys jumping you!” – **AJ, on parole in Goodna**

Despite attempts to inject supports, rehabilitative and treatment programs, they remain what they were always designed to be: places designed to punish and hide away from the rest of the community those who we decide are the scapegoats for society's ills. Instead of accepting band-aid attempts to patch up our increasingly net-less social safety net we must organise for fundamentally different constructive approaches that do not presume the most dispossessed people are all potential criminals. Prisons act as a means of social control for the State – as a means to limit rebellion, control the populace who are not in prison with the constant threat of this sanction and to perpetuate a society based on hierarchy and class division.

Prisons are used mainly to punish those of the working and dispossessed classes, including the poor, the marginalised, the vulnerable and the ill, and has become a black hole into which the detritus of contemporary capitalism are deposited.

“I’d say 90% of people go into mainstream – the small percentage that go into protection because they’ve told someone in or they’re in fear of their life are labeled as dogs and liars. Once you’re in a unit you’ll get bashed, if you get moved again – word will get around – you’ll get bashed again, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. You can either stand your ground – stab, maim pour hot water on people – or you can leave. Being in there slowly changes you, you just gotta adjust to the culture to survive. If they want to get you they’ll get you. They’ll transfer in. I seen a young guy in for car theft get his eye dug out after he was spreading rumours – he

was in protection. He told the screws that he fell over! People ask – why didn't you or he tell someone? You have to understand that you just can't tell the screws anything or you're risking serious trouble; no one knows anything and no one saw anything.

– **John, on parole in New Farm**

“Most of the time everyone will know what you've done before you even get in – The best way to avoid rumours is to walk in slap your papers down and say if anyone's interested read this I don't care. Unless you can back up what you say with paper – a statement signed from your attorney – people don't appreciate people spreading rumours. It's encouraged y'know – read my paperwork and read yours mate front up. And if you don't you'll get sorted out, especially the rock-spiders (child-sex offenders).”

– **Steve, on parole in Kangaroo Point**

## Dropping the Soap:

The culture of total domination, hierarchy and violence inherent to the prison structure is a logical extension of the institutionalised hierarchy, authoritarianism and violence inherent in wider society. One aspect of those wasting away in prison which is overlooked is the amplified rape culture which already exists in society.

*“In C7 there was a hermaphrodite [SIC], she was raped all day long – even fellas who looked feminine with long hair. Even though single cells make things a bit safer, you can still get dragged into*

*the toilets or small laundry. Lifer's don't give a fuck either.*”—

**Gary, on Parole in Riverview.**

We don't know the figures around sexualised violence in prisons precisely because Corrective Services departments' don't ask and sweep the issue under the carpet. Adding to this prison culture ensures silence and guarantees that sexual assault (and regular assault) is rarely reported. What we do know is based on an interview based study involving 140 male prisoners, which conservatively estimates that roughly 14% of prisoners have been raped behind bars. Any figure will inevitable underestimate the scale of the problem, but what this means is that in the 93 prisons across Australia, approximately 4-5000 out of every 30,000 prisoners have been raped. Unfortunately the following won't give any real idea into the impact on gender variant, trans\* and female prisoners.

*“I felt like taking me own life, that's how down I was.”*

This study indicates that the majority of men sexually assaulted in prison are not powerful, violent criminals. They are young and vulnerable, like the man with cerebral palsy who tells his story of being raped after going to prison for driving without a license

*“After being raped, Ken spent 4 years in the same unit as the men who raped him – “I was beaten and he made me do it again...You feel like the lowest bit of shit on earth, it's what led me to a couple of psych places...You're in jail – who gives a fuck about you?”*

The majority kinds of people targeted are young not violent short sentenced prisoners and rape victims return to communities carrying the damage.

*“He was really angry about the degrading rape he experienced – he was raped in the toilet and became so resentful – he couldn’t achieve intimacy in his marriage, turned to alcohol and drugs, hated himself and ended up abusing two of his daughters. It’ll present itself as drugs, self harm, suicide, murdering other people, revenge.. but wont present as someone saying I’ve been raped.”*

This mentality that says if you go to jail you deserve to be raped and we’ll use rape as a disincentive for crime is really part of a revenge culture where society says we will reject and devalue you – we’re actually feeding the power base that generates the rape.

*“Remand and Reception jails are the worst.. you’re awaiting your trial and meanwhile you’ve got all types of prisoners mixed together..Traffic offences mixed with total predators. There was a common toilet and an empty cell – no camera you see and that’s where people get flogged.”*

**—Shane (on parole in Kangaroo Point)**

*“Alan, another prisoner victimised inside, was released and left prison homeless– he managed to secure accommodation at a boarding house in South Brisbane where others in a similar situation to him – ex prisoners, those with disabilities, chronic homeless and other difficult behaviours – were crammed into (at*

*\$240/week!). Alan quickly began to run the boarding house just like he ran the prison – he kept other tenants in fear and used the survival tools he had learnt inside to get what he wanted, keep others in line, stay on top and stay in control. Social services suggested Alan visit an anger-management class.”*

## The Expansion of the Prison \$ell

Increasingly prisons are being run by private companies around the world. The old idea of a government prison is far from the emerging reality of the modern, for-profit facilities that are becoming the norm. The larger the prison population, the longer the sentences, the larger the payout under government contracts; the more prisoners, the more prisons, the more growth. Cheaper facilities and fewer services mean more profit. Privatised prisons rely on a steady rate of occupancy to ensure that 'human resources are utilised optimally' - for example, as 40 'graduate' from one stage of production, there needs to be another 40 ready to take their place in the production line.

The companies operating in Australia are the same global behemoths providing their services in the US and UK, in what is a multi-billion dollar industry. The major ones are as follows:

**GEO Group:** GEO, headquartered in Florida and boasting operations across the US, celebrates 20 years in Australia as of 2013. Run Arthur Gorrie (QLD) Gatton (QLD), Fulham (VIC) Victoria and Junee and Parklea Correctional Centers (NSW).

**Serco:** Serco run Australia's immigration detention centres (IDC). As of 2010 it also runs Immigration Residential Housing and Immigration Transit Accommodation in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane. Serco also runs two private prisons: Acacia Prison (WA) and the new Southern Queensland Correctional Centre.

**G4S:** The largest private corrections provider in the world, G4S has numerous correctional and prisoner transport contracts in Australia. Among other operations, it runs Port Philip Prison in Victoria and Mount Gambier Prison in South Australia.

People would be shocked to learn how much in Australia is actually produced by prisoners. In Queensland for example, prisoners are subcontracted to do abattoir work, cleaning, upholstery, furniture, welding and fabrication, textile work and production, component assembly, commercial laundry (eg for hospitals), baking, concrete, powder coating, agricultural work etc.

*“Arthur Gorrie [Wacol] for example does furniture. The prison is billing Queensland health for cleaning sheets while paying the prisoners fuck all for washing them – this means big profits for the prison. I did zoo cages, spa baths, canvas, industrial sewing...8*

*hours a day 7 days a week for \$4.70 a day.”*

**— Tony, on parole in New Farm.**

An ever larger prison population will become increasingly instrumentalised as a reserve of labour whose low costs of exploitation, as with those on workfare programmes, further depresses the wages of the entire working population. This is already the case in the US where prison labour has been described as ‘outsourcings best kept secret’.

This process is unfolding rapidly across the world. Let's take a look at the UK for example. Having previously stated in 2010 that all UK prisoners should be working 40 hours a week the Kenneth Clarke government similarly announced plans to double the prison workforce from its current 8,700 to 19,000 by 2020, increasing revenue generated in the sector to £132 million in the process. One already existent working prison is HMP Featherstone in Wolverhampton where every prisoner is in full time employment and paid £17 a week to produce beds and cabinets for the prison estate. The prison hopes to win more contracts from the private sector going forward and represents something of a model.

Rather than speaking in the usual rhetoric of using such programmes as useful in cutting re-offending rates Clarke even chose in 2010 to deploy the vocabulary of resource allocation referring to the current prison population as a “wasted resource” within the national economy. To compound this released prisoners are increasingly put on workfare programmes the moment they are

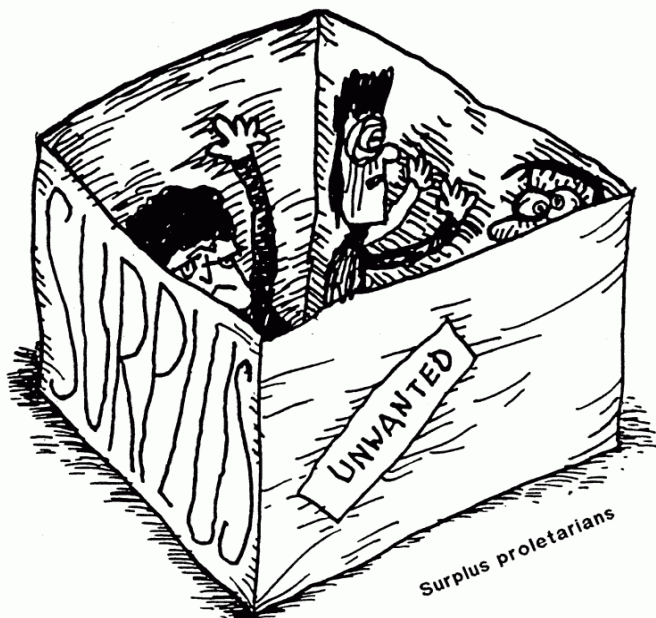


released from prison with unpaid labour becoming, as with the US, an integral part of the prison-industrial complex. Even if one believes that the incarcerated have a debt to repay to society surely such a debt does not include diminishing the wages of everyone else?

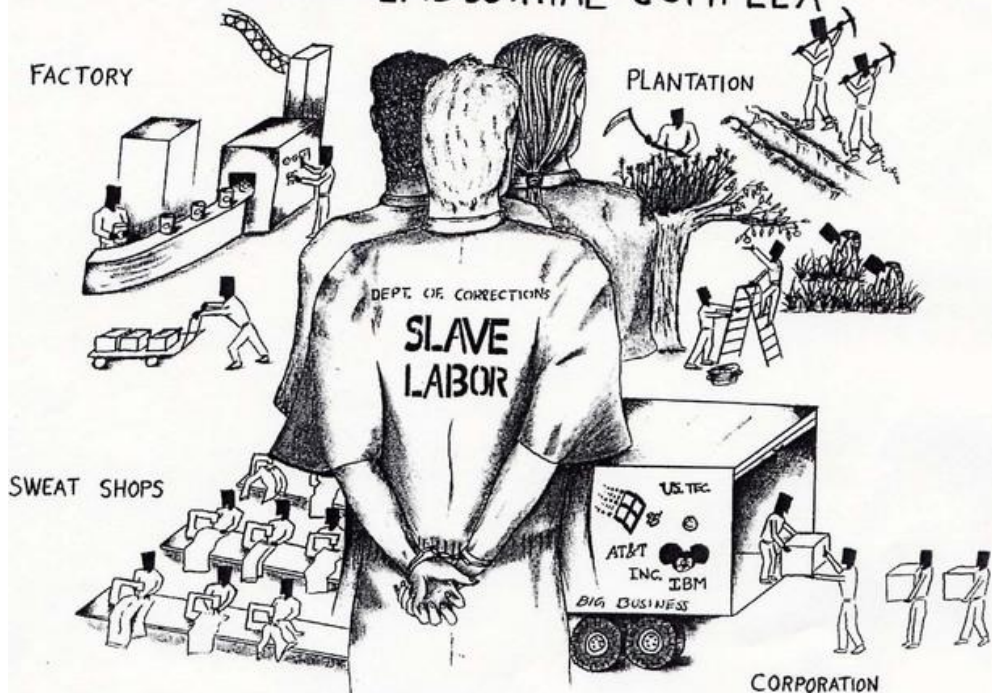
A key element of the coalition government's plan is to depreciate the costs of labour as much as possible. By doing this, as well as creating a favourable investment climate for primarily foreign capital by reducing corporation tax and facilitating a climate of tax avoidance, the government hopes to eventually revivify growth and job creation. Growth for 'who' and 'what' kinds of jobs seem to be entirely inconsequent to our political masters.

“We got a message one day saying that ... [the company] was going to start hiring prisoners...Everyone was pretty miffed because at the end of the day there's no way you can compete with [£3 a day].”

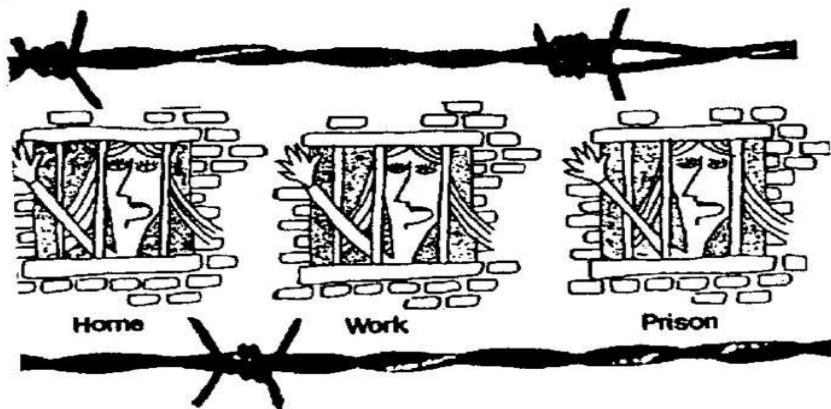
— **Becoming Green Call Centre Worker,**



# PRISON-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



- 19 CENTS AN HOUR
- NO BENEFITS
- NO MEDICAL
- NO VACATIONS
- PENALTY FOR REFUSAL TO WORK-
- \*SOLITARY CONFINEMENT
- \*LOSS OF PAROLE
- \*LOSS OF PROGRAMS



*"The modern slave is convinced that there is no alternative for the organisation of the world and finds this kind of life sufficient because they think there can be no other. And here lies the power of today's dominance: the conservation of the misconception that this system that has colonised the whole earth is the end of history."*

The Ivan Millats of the world don't just fall from the sky.

In an early intervention program located in Queensland, there was a fellow named Adam. Adam was living on the streets and was a ticking time bomb ready to explode. If he hadn't moved into a building with on-site support workers who he learnt to trust and could use as an emergency tool to defuse and let out his emotional state he himself admitted that he would have committed some horrific act a long time ago. When Adam was younger he tortured animals and was obsessed with gore, particularly the torture of women. His parents would force him to kneel on rocks while they beat him on the daily and they eventually booted him out onto the streets at the age of 15 (without any consequences mind you). He is an example of one of the 'truly disturbed' who could potentially become one of the few labelled 'pathologically anti-social'. A victim of intergenerational private violence, but deeply disturbed nonetheless. Even though these incidents make up a such a tiny

percentage of the prison system, they are frequently brought up as a justification for the entire Prison Industrial Complex.

In our ruggedly-individualist society, with our gated suburbia's (*the public pursuit for a private life*) these types of situations repeat themselves ad-nauseum behind closed doors without notice or consequence regardless of the harshness of the prison system. The few people I've met that have been labelled 'pathological criminals' by the justice system for example were part of the Forgotten Generation, where thousands of children in Australia were systematically sexually and physically abused (see: Nightmare at Neerkol for a good example). They carry these experiences into society and are only discovered when (and if) they finally explode (and if they're caught). This isn't saying that people who go through horrific events go onto perpetuate it themselves. The point is that social life cannot be regulated effectively by criminal law, but only through a fundamental change in our social structure.

## Deaths in custody:

***“Indigenous peoples are either inherently bad – a view which is consistently reinforced and perpetuated by the media – or our system and dominant culture is more in need of correction than its prisoners.”***

**The beginning cause of deaths in custody initially starts in the minds of those who allow it to happen.** There has been an

Aboriginal death in custody somewhere in Australia every month for the last 18 months. For each Aboriginal death in custody there are around 8-10 non-Aboriginal deaths in custody. There are more non-Aboriginal deaths in custody than Aboriginal deaths, but the rate of Aboriginal deaths in custody is higher than in South Africa during the peak of apartheid. Australia has one of the world's worst deaths in custody records. Aboriginal people are vastly over-represented in the prison system, yet are under-represented in community alternatives. The obstacles that prevent access to community sentences for Indigenous populations require immediate redress. A common cry at protests around Australia, including the recent deaths in custody picket called by Aboriginal communities across Brisbane, is that it's still legal for police to kill Indigenous people – prison as a continuation of a long line of genocidal practices against Indigenous peoples.

The murder of Mulrunji Doomadgee\* is a perfect example of how a group of armed thugs can take you into a room, walk out with you dead and not face any consequences. The murder of Mulrunji Doomadgee – fuelled by the siege mentality of the police – was overshadowed in the media by riot and the supposed violence of Lex Wotton.

*“A white police officer admits he caused an Aboriginal man’s death, yet he walks free. A black man, who can’t be connected to anything except that he was on Palm Island on the day, is fitted up for jail. There is no justice for Aboriginal people within the courts of Queensland.” – Lex Wotton*

While police claim part of the monopoly of defence, they also claim the monopoly over violence. We are taught that any violence coming from the top of the hierarchy is legitimate and doesn't warrant any notice or questioning — but when indignation erupts from below we are barraged with a media campaign that demands us to express disgust, outrage and horror.

### **The 2010 Deaths in Custody Watch Committee Reports:**

Aboriginal peoples continue to fill the prisons. Take Western Australia for example – Aboriginal peoples are 20 times more likely to be in prison than non-Aboriginal people and around one in 15 Aboriginal men in Western Australia will be in prison at any given time. On the 8th October 2009 of the 4,750 prison population there were 1,909 Aboriginal peoples in the State's Prisons. Of them, 1,732 were men and 177 women. The total number of Aboriginal peoples in prison had more than doubled in 7 years from 800 in mid 2002 to over 1900 in 2009– An increase of 137% Australian prisons are full not because the criminal justice system is functioning better, or because there are more crimes and criminals out there to avert, but because prison is being used excessively.

*The unhealthy system of prison is foreign to this land. Apart from the colonial conquest for greater domination of the world and the need to open new markets (a process of unimaginable world-shattering violence), one of the primary reasons for the British settlement of Australia was the establishment of a penal colony to alleviate pressure on their overburdened correctional facilities – in*

*turn a result of class based society. More than 165,000 convicts were transported to Australia over an 80 year period.*

There are tens of thousands of people in prison in Australia, and a lot more on probation or parole, and the numbers just keep going up. The number of Aboriginal peoples in prison in particular is so staggering that the likelihood of prison time is simply a fact of life.

In March 2014 an ABC led investigation revealed that many Aboriginal people with disabilities are being kept in prison indefinitely because of a lack of proper healthcare facilities. “At the moment this outcome is almost entirely reserved for Aboriginal, Indigenous Australians,” the report said. “We’ve had situations where following the ordinary process someone might be looking at three months in prison. We’ve had people in jail for four to five years, just waiting for an outcome.” Many with histories of abuse carry such labels as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Effect (FAE), as well as “borderline personality”, “psychotic”, “schizophrenic”, et cetera. There is no doubt that too many are entering prisons with significant needs. Prisons are ill equipped to meet any of their cognitive and mental health needs. The result is that people with mental and cognitive disabilities are difficult for the prisons to manage, so they tend to be confined in the most isolated conditions, often in segregation. Such conditions of confinement only serve to exacerbate pre-existing and/or create new mental health issues. Certainly, extensive periods of isolation and the consequent sensory deprivation tend to create additional mental health issues for many prisoners.

Ironically, the reflex of prison authorities to develop mental health services in prisons, is only serving to magnify the trend to increasingly criminalize women with mental and cognitive disabilities. Developing such services in prisons at a time when they are increasingly non-existent in the community is already resulting in more women being sent to prison in the hopes that it will allow them to access services in prison that are not available in community settings. We are not interested in continuing to replicate what Human Rights Watch documented in the US in 2003 – that is, that more people with mental health issues are in prison than in mental health facilities. Indeed, we should question who benefits from the billion dollar correctional services and why? Even as we work to deinstitutionalize and decarcerate, we are fearful that “treatment” will be the next colonial control of choice.

*“You can do 13 months in RnR (remand and reception) and not have it counted as time served by the time you get to bail- the police prosecutors jump up and down in the court.”*

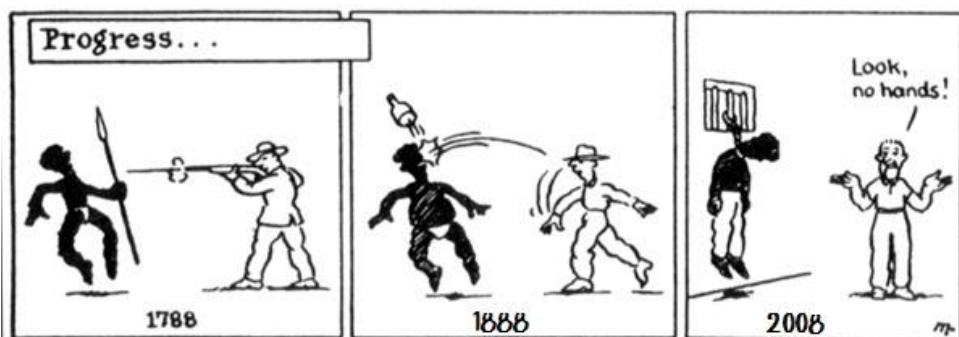
— **Jethro, on parole in Kangaroo Point.**

Presently 30% of women in prison are Aboriginal. Aboriginal women are 40 times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to experience violence and 77% of Aboriginal women will return to prison after release. Between 1993 and 2003 the women’s prison population increased by 110 %, as compared with a 45 % increase in the general male prison population. However, over the same time period the Aboriginal women’s prison population increased by 343%. At March 2004, Aboriginal women were



imprisoned nationally at a rate 20.8 times that of non-Aboriginal women. These are absolutely horrendous statistics and an appalling indictment of the entire system.

The NT shells out over \$100 millions per year for overcrowded prisons and has the highest rate of imprisonment in the country partly due to cuts to legal aid, mandatory sentencing laws, and the growing industry based around the incarceration of Indigenous peoples. Aboriginal youth make up 98% of the 'juvenile justice system', most (over 60%) are in for unserious offences less than 6 months.



Some notes from the 2010 Australian 'Build communities Not Prisons' & 'Sisters Inside' conferences.

This is merely an introduction, much has been left out. For example the situation of gender rebels and trans\*folk who fight not only degradation and denial of self on the inside but also the prison

of social-binaries and narrow conceptions of life. The role of the prison industrial complex in enforcing the gender binary and gender conformity, along with systems of oppression based on racism & misogyny has become even more apparent as growing numbers of trans\* and gender non-conforming people are subjected to violence in the criminal legal system worldwide, in large part as a result of discrimination in employment, housing, and virtually every aspect of society. Trans\* and gender variant people have a lot to gain from the abolition of the prison industrial complex (PIC), yet these communities currently have no choice but to rely on law enforcement for at least the appearance of protection from the daily threat of physical assault and murder. But as with other communities severely negatively impacted by the PIC and also forced to rely upon it, the root causes of this contradiction give us insight into what we must do to build a world that no longer needs cages and prisons as “cure-alls” for social ills.

Who says there is no war against the most dispossessed, especially the poor? We must stop criminalizing poor women for welfare fraud, prostitution, drug trafficking, and other things that they choose or may be forced to do in order to survive in increasingly inhospitable surroundings. Criminalizing poor women stamps them as somehow dangerous to the general public, but the fact is, if we are truly interested in addressing actions that harm others, then politicians and policymakers who mandate unsustainable welfare rates should be our targets. Those responsible for and/or complicit in the destruction of our social safety net are in the greatest need of “correction.” In addition, the so called “war on drugs” has become a

war on the dispossessed, especially women who use, sell, or otherwise deal in legal or illegal drugs in order to cope with everyday life and/or to gain the financial resources they need for survival. Our public policies demand that women and girls avoid one of the few behaviours that allow them to diminish the pain of poverty, abuse, and disabilities, in the face of profoundly inadequate income, housing, medical, educational resources, and other supports. Imagine if we chose to reject current theories of crime and criminality and instead chose to focus on trying to prevent-and, when unsuccessful punish-those who perpetrate the most harmful behaviours: those who wage war. Why hasn't Bush been indicted for war crimes or crimes against humanity? What about those who hoard essential goods, make excess profits, irresponsibly and negligently handle toxic cargo, crimes against social harmony, economic and/or even governmental order? What would the system look like if we prosecuted and sentenced people for lying while running for office, wrongful use or access to government power and public resources?

By creating criminally low welfare or social assistance rates, renaming it as mutual agreements, many poor people are immediately relegated to the criminalized underclass. There are no jurisdictions in this country where social assistance rates are actually adequate to support the poor. In order to survive, most people, especially poor mothers who are the sole supports of their families, are required to obtain income by means that would be considered fraudulent if welfare authorities become aware of it.

Some such behaviour is also considered criminal in and of itself. For example, if someone engages in sex work to make ends meet, they risk being charged with 'prostitution or living off the avails of prostitution'. Similarly, if they agree to carry a package across the border, across the country, or across town, they may also face trafficking, importation or other similar sorts of drug charges. In addition, if they fails to report any additional income received, including debts owed to them (only people on welfare are required to declare debts and then have them counted as income), then they may also face fraud charge(s) as a result of investigations by Centrelink of the taxation department into such activities.



curtin Detention centre burns as inmates riot 2013



# The Function of Prison



*Peter Gelderloos*

In modern republics, the function of prison is said to be correction. When individuals break laws that uphold the common good, the conventional wisdom goes, they need to be punished or otherwise taught to be more socially cooperative and generous. In my experience with incarceration, however, the only thing that prison teaches is obedience. A “corrected” citizen is one who internalizes prison bars even on the streets.

Prison serves as a constant threat against all who would oppose what governments and corporations do with our collective resources. A critic might point out that prison is only a threat to dissidents who break the law, but what it comes down to is that there are no legal means to fundamentally change the government. Elections are simply a Darwinian means of weeding out representatives (of the elite) whose populist rhetoric is less convincing. If all you want from your government is some new gun law or corporate accountability standard, you may find your democracy fulfilling (provided you can muster about a hundred thousand person-hours of volunteer work, two hundred thousand dollars of donations, and provided the corporations or resident

religious fundamentalists in the government don't put up too much of a fight, and also provided you don't mind that these new rules will be bent occasionally for the rich and powerful). But if what you want is a society that values human and environmental interests over Machiavellian state and corporate interests, and most people do at some level, then you're out of luck; your government will not represent you. There is no consent of the governed; we were all born subjects, whereas the government is not born out of our initiative or participation. In fact, it functions best without us. If the only option you have is to consent, that's not consensus: it's submission.

Our hypothetical critic might also mention that we have freedom of speech, and that is all we need to ensure we can make an impact on our society. Leaving aside the particulars of the fact that respect for free speech in this country is arbitrary and subject to restriction, I would prefer to relate an observation I made while incarcerated. Locked away in a maximum security cell, I had more "freedom of speech" than I did while in minimum security prison, and I could certainly criticize, even cuss at, my guards more than I could get away with against police or other officials on the outside. What it comes down to is that words cannot bring down the walls of power; in "the hole" you can yell all you want. It is most instructive that as inmates descend the security levels as they get closer to release, they are trained increasingly not to speak out. On the outside, "super-minimum security" as it should be known, people are trained not to resist, and they are trusted to remain outside of prison so long as they demonstrate they are not a threat to the established order.

Of course, suppression of dissent isn't the only function of a prison, and in the U.S. it's actually a minor function because so few Americans engage in dissent. At least in the middle class, there is almost no concern for such intangibles as freedom, as long as gas is cheap and luxurious cars plentiful. Being the most consumerist, U.S. citizens are more inclined towards fascism and totalitarianism than any other people I know. Americans will buy anything, whether it's the latest politician's lie or the newest bit of cheap plastic crap from Wal-Mart. One lie that has been bought for much too long is that prisons perform a service for society, when in reality they serve to disempower Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities by locking away what often amounts to a majority of certain age groups from these communities, and generally for offenses as harmless as drug possession (which in the U.S. has the potential to bring a life sentence).

Prisons also provide cheap, coerced labour; for less than a dollar an hour (often not enough to cover the expenses of prison life), prisoners work making products for government agencies and the military. In fact, the Constitutional amendment that outlawed slavery specifically and intentionally opened a loophole that allowed forced labour in the event of incarceration. In the time it takes the world's "civilized peoples" to relearn how to live and interact at a level higher than that of trained dogs, responding only to immediate reward and punishment, I hope we can all extend a greater degree of solidarity and support to the millions of people whose lives are being incrementally eaten by the world's prisons.

# Alternative Justice case Study: Guerrero

Since mid-2013, as a result of the violence inflicted by the Authorities and drug cartels, civilians in the predominantly indigenous state of Guerrero, Mexico, have armed themselves, kicked out the State and Federal police and started their own brand of community justice. As a result, the entire state of Guerrero is becoming one comprised of 'self defence territories' in what has been termed The Popular Movement of Guerrero .

*Our aim is to move from Self Defence to Justice.*

The community police began a trial against 54 people detained in the municipalities that set up self defence check points. Those people safeguarded are brought forward in front of open community assemblies and their crimes are read out to the entire neighbourhood regions. Those who are detained spend time in each one of the towns that are part of the communal system. During this time they have to perform community service, live with and confront the communities they have affected openly, taking into account the needs of both the victim and perpetrator. If they achieve this they receive a certificate.

*We don't allow state or federal police because they're accomplices of everything that's been happening here. Our weapons are*



*hunting weapons owned by farmers; they are used to safeguard homes and land.*

Delegates are voted in and set up to be “community police” accountable to the Peoples Popular Assemblies, a form of citizen consultancy controlled from the bottom up. Officers of the defence groups are promoted through the assemblies. Weapons are brought by the community. Any defence groups that emerge are appointed by their assemblies to avoid any risk of them becoming paramilitary groups working for the government, political parties, drug traffickers, powerful landowners, religious groups etc. Historically, community defence and neighbourhood assemblies have been part of the way indigenous communities have organised themselves and this is what is re-emerging.

*“The people need to have control over them (community defence groups). If the people are unable to control them and they end up being controlled by the government they can end up serving those in power and in the worst case scenario working for the government (ie: over and above the people) which would be terrible. Since we started there hasn’t been a single kidnapping, murder or rape. There are no extortions and no one is charging for protection. These are the results we are getting.”*

Everyday more and more towns are forming these defence groups and joining this communal system. The key message from communities of resistance such as the Zapatistas and the popular movements in Guerrero is that they draw on their history of

struggle; their history of alternative ways of organising society; their communal ties which create fertile ground for the development of real solidarity in the forms of community, workplace and neighbourhood assemblies, directly-democratic forms of self-management in which decision-making power is locked down at the base, with assembly decisions implemented by rotating, recallable delegates.

## *Community & Solidarity:*



*Cures for all social and  
political issues*

When movements like that in Guerrero speak of community & solidarity, they don't mean them in the way the ruling class uses them. The word 'community', just like 'violence', 'crime' and 'peace' are not class-neutral terms.

When the ruling class speaks of community, they are speaking of people who are connected by nothing more than their credit transactions. Community for our political masters is the sum of all the individuals and relationships in a social milieu— that is to say, none of them in particular; therefore, at worst, the abstraction for which any of them may be sacrificed. For example, one way to create the illusion of community when people share no real connection or common interest is to establish a boundary and accuse outsiders of violating it. This blind nationalism is the basis for a lot of people's idea of 'solidarity' and 'community'.

Solidarity and community for us is summed up in the phrase "an injury to one is an injury to all" - it is an expression of grassroots mutual-aid and shared interest, and an understanding of the forces in society which dominate us from above both in our workplaces and in our neighbourhoods. Community and solidarity mean the end of isolation and alienation. As alienation is a product of wage-labour and also of the State, real community must entail the abolition of wage-labour, the dismantling of the State as a social relationship and an end to money as master and mediator.

The Waiters Union (West End) speak of this need to rebuild community and outline the studies on the impact of community on anti-social activity as follows:

**Community networks affect honesty:**

Through density, frequency and continuity of connections and the accountability that those connections require, community encourages honesty.

**Community networks affect safety:**

Through connecting, checking, mentoring and supervising inherit in healthy communities impacts on safety. An absence of trust between neighbours and an unwillingness to intervene when people cause trouble increases the violence in neighbourhoods.

**Community networks affect generosity:**

The most common reason for giving is being asked and the most common reason for not giving, not being asked. People are not likely

to be asked if they are not in genuine contact with others. People are more likely to help others if they receive help, and more likely to receive help if they are connected.

### **Community networks affect health and happiness:**

Because of the encouragement of healthy norms, assistance in ill health and advocacy for proper health care, people who are connected in networks are healthier and happier. The best single indicator of happiness is connectedness.

### **Community networks affect Equality and Democracy**

Community networks of reciprocity enhance equality, on the other hand disparity undermines solidarity. Community and Solidarity therefore create the culture to destroy disparity and lays the foundation for popular control and challenging class society.

*“..But there are many kinds of prison, many kinds of cells and cubicles. Some have barred windows, others more subtle restraints. Disorderly inmates get handcuffs and solitary confinement; docile ones get carpal tunnel syndrome and lives of quiet desperation. Which do you prefer?..”*

Why have we come to associate community safety and personal security with the degree to which the state exercises violence through policing and criminal justice? The way things work now most people who deliberately cause the deaths of others are not called murderers, and punishing them is never even spoken of. States and proto-states kill millions every year warring over resources and profits. 100,000 people are killed every day from

starvation or preventable diseases – when enough food is produced to feed the whole world’s population. But the profit motive means that in the West we destroy surpluses while millions of others starve. Meanwhile pharmaceutical companies put huge premiums on cheap drugs so that many people can’t access them, while the companies spend more money on marketing than on research and development. On top of that, employers disregard their workers safety, and millions of people are killed by their work, to make profit for their employers, every year. Right now, all of these tens of millions of preventable deaths, which are caused by the actions of other people, business as usual, and go completely unpunished. Quite the opposite in fact, those that cause them are rewarded with huge riches and power. Compared to this, the up-figured 500,000 interpersonal murders per year worldwide pales into near-insignificance. So I think it makes more sense to turn it around and challenge supporters of the capitalist system and say how do they propose to deal with those who cause the deaths of tens of millions?

# MODERN DAY SLAVERY

## **1. Personal Debt/Credit Cards**

How many people are in debt-bondage and will be for the rest of their lives? Were we really meant to live in this kind of rat race? “The borrower is servant to the lender.”

## **2. Prisons**

One of the most concealed forms of modern-day slavery is the emerging Super-Prison for profit. The absurd amount of over-reaching government laws and regulations being created against its citizens are exploding and jails are filling up quick, thanks to many backwards immigration and drug policies.

### **3. Sexual Slavery**

Sexual slavery is an epidemic and can be found on every corner of the globe. From the richest neighbourhoods to the poorest, Sexual slavery has found new and clever ways online to promote the services of kidnapped women from Russia, Mexico, South America, South East Asia and countless others. Many of these women are being promised regular jobs if they would leave their country and come make some quick cash elsewhere.

### **4. Illegal Immigrants**

Many of these people come from 3rd world countries looking for a better life, and many do find work that pays them far more here than in their own country, but the amount they receive indicates that many employers take advantage of the situation, economically.

#### ***Time Magazine noted last year:***

“Despite more than a dozen international conventions banning slavery in the past 150 years, there are more slaves today than at any point in human history. Slaves are those forced to perform services for no pay beyond subsistence and for the profit of others who hold them through fraud and violence. While most are held in debt bondage in the poorest regions of South Asia, some are trafficked in the midst of thriving development.”

Sixty years after Article 4 of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights banned slavery and the slave trade worldwide, there are more slaves than at any time in human history -- 27 million. Today's slavery focuses on big profits and cheap lives. It is not about owning people like before, but about using them as completely disposable tools for making money. Yes, we mean real slavery. People held against their will, forced to work and paid nothing.

Sometimes the slave holder 'pays' a few grains of rice to keep the

slaves alive, or uses a bogus payment that the slave holder reclaims at the end of the month. But the end result is what slavery is today and has always been—one person controlling another and then forcing them to work. Slavery has existed for thousands of years, but changes in the world's economy and societies over the past 50 years have enabled a resurgence of slavery. This new slavery has two prime characteristics: slaves today are cheap and they are disposable.

## EXTRACT: A small study in policing and drug mishandling in Brisbane.

### **Forward:**

This study was conducted informally in the tradition of a '*workers inquiry*' between the years 2009-2013 in Brisbane, during which I worked for a large NGO where I would regularly come into contact with newly released prisoners and those experiencing homelessness. This looks at drug misdealings in the Queensland Police Force. The term 'Drug' in this study is applied in a loose sense, being a general term for controlled or illegal substances (marijuana, cocaine, opioids such as heroin, suboxone and buprenorphine etc).

### **Data Collection and Development of the study.**

During the rapport building stage with service users, I noticed discussions would frequently lead to issues regarding corruption both within the police service and in the prison system ('screws'). When I noticed drug mishandling repeatedly came up as a theme, I decided to start keeping a tally as well as a loose record of the stories people shared with me. Data was collected informally through

people I came into contact with that brought up the topic of police harassment or misdealings.

This moved towards intentionally asking questions to get a response. The question most often asked was something similar to "have you had any experience with police dealing drugs". Data was eventually organised into two categories, according to themes most frequently cited. Both qualitative data (anecdotal evidence) and quantitative data (tally) were collected. Though much of this data was lost due to my negligence (losing scraps of paper with people's stories), enough quantitative data remains for this to be a significant study.

The two most common broad themes noted were

### **Category One (1): Drug mishandling.**

This is where police confiscated drugs, typically marijuana, cocaine and heroin, but then come the court hearing the accused would be charged with a significantly less amount. Most people who reported this were under the impression that the drugs were kept, although we cannot rule out that the police were being generous in not charging for a higher amount.

and;

### **Category Two (2): Bargaining with drugs or dealing drugs.**

The most common experience involved police officers offering drugs (typically heroin) to users in exchange for information which would aid them in an investigation.

### **The results:**

Over the four year period **category one** received a total tally of 148

Over the four year period **category two** received a total tally of 276

Now, even if we assumed that half of those questioned were lying, it's still a pretty substantial number. Interestingly during this period 7News reported on drug use within the Queensland Police Service in an article titled '*Police officers resign over drug investigation*'

(Dated December 5, 2012):



*Three police officers have resigned after an investigation by the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) into drug use within the Queensland Police Service (QPS). As part of a CMC investigation into alleged cocaine use, listening devices were installed in several police stations on Brisbane's Southside. 7News understands three policeman from across the city resigned almost immediately after they were ordered to give evidence at the CMC."*

In releasing this modest study I hope other workers will start to jot down some of the daily generalised experiences that would be of interest to those organising in social movements.

## A STUDY IN POLICE POWERS

***Several key findings from “No Vagrancy: An examination of the impact of the criminal justice system on people living in poverty in Queensland..”***

1. People experiencing poverty and homelessness endure extraordinarily high levels of police harassment and interference in their lives.
2. People experiencing poverty and homelessness report being frequently searched, often unnecessarily and sometimes unlawfully.
3. Many people experiencing poverty and homelessness report suffering physical brutality at the hands of police officers.
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians living on the streets are particularly vulnerable to police interference and harassment.
5. The court system is often experienced as intimidating and confusing by people experiencing poverty and homelessness.
6. Many people experiencing homelessness and poverty have been supervised by community corrections, and/or have been housed in a correctional facility.
7. Some people experiencing poverty in Queensland report having

insufficient income to provide themselves with the necessities of life, including food, shelter, clothing and access to amenities.

8. Many of those experiencing homelessness and poverty report feeling looked down upon, discriminated against, and excluded by mainstream society.

9. People experiencing homelessness and poverty are generally of the belief that they have no human rights, and/or that they are not capable of ensuring that the rights they do have are respected.



*“In a world run by criminals the only final sin is not being a member of the most powerful gang. In a closed society where everybody’s guilty, the only crime is getting caught. In a world of thieves, the only final sin is stupidity.”*

### ***Coupled with this was a survey of criminal justice and related professionals;***

Some of the key findings were:

1. Many of those working within the criminal justice system alongside people experiencing poverty answered that police discriminate against people experiencing homelessness and poverty, particularly Indigenous Australians.
2. Adverse outcomes are attributed by related professionals as a result of a lack of access to legal advice and advocacy.
3. Many criminal justice and related professionals believe that the court system is inordinately intimidating and complex, and that people experiencing poverty are more likely to be adversely impacted by this than others.
4. Agree that people experiencing poverty are more likely to have convictions recorded against them, and are more likely to end up in prison.
5. Many of those who work with people experiencing poverty observe the extraordinary strength and resilience that their clients demonstrate despite the multiple layers of disadvantage they are faced with.

**For the benefit of those reading, presented here are details of police powers extracted from the *Queensland Police Service First Response Handbook*.**

**GENERAL QUESTIONING**

Police can require you to state your correct name and address; you can be arrested if you refuse. The police officer must supply their details. Police may not enter your dwelling unless they have your consent.

**SEARCHING**

**Police may, without a warrant:**

- Stop and detain a person
- Search the person and anything in the person's possession for anything relevant to the circumstances for which the person is detained

**IF the police suspect that:**

- The person possesses a weapon, something prohibited under a domestic violence order, an illegal drug, a graffiti instrument, tools primarily used for illegal activity or stolen or unlawfully obtained property.
- The person possesses an antique firearm and are is not fit and proper to be in possession of the firearm because of a domestic violence order/the person's mental and physical fitness or the person has been found guilty of an offence involving the weapon. The police may also seize anything for the above reasons.

**WHEN BEING SEARCHED:**

The police must:

- 1) Ensure as far as reasonably practicable, the way the person is searched causes minimal embarrassment to the person
- 2) Take reasonable care to protect the dignity of the person
- 3) Unless an immediate and more thorough search of a person is necessary, restrict to search of the person in public to an examination of outer clothing; and
- 4) If a more thorough search of a person is necessary but does not have to be conducted immediately, conduct a more thorough search

of the person out of public view, for example, in a room of a shop or, if a police station is nearby, in the station.

If this is the case, the person conducting the search must be either:

- 1) A police officer of the same sex as the person to be searched; or
- 2) If there is no police officer of the same sex available – someone of the same sex acting at the direction of a police officer; or
- 3) A doctor acting at the direction of a police officer.

Before taking a person to another place for a search, the police must consider:

- 1) Whether the thing sought may be concealed on the person
- 2) Whether, for an effective search, the search should be conducted somewhere else; and
- 3) The need to protect the dignity of the person.

***If the police have obtained lawful power to search someone involving the removal of clothing – they may remove the clothes from:***

- 1) If the person is female – the upper OR lower part of the body; or
- 2) If the person is male – the lower part of the body.

The police must tell the person:

- a) They will be required to remove clothing
- b) Why it is necessary to remove the clothing;
- c) Give the person the opportunity to remain partially clothed eg: covering the top half while the bottom clothing is removed.

The search must be conducted:

- 1) In a way providing reasonable privacy for the person; and
- 2) As quickly as reasonably practical and the person must be allowed to dress as soon as the search is finished.
- 3) The officer must not make physical contact with the genital and anal areas of the person searched, but the officer may require the person to hold his/her arms in the air or to stand with legs apart and bend forward.
- 4) If the person to be searched is a child, or a person with impaired capacity the search must be conducted in the presence of a support person unless:
  - 1) The police suspect that delaying the search is likely to result in evidence being concealed or destroyed; or

2) An immediate search is necessary to protect the safety of a person.

- Police may search vehicles without a warrant.

- While in custody, the police may not use force likely to cause GBH to a person or the person's death.

- The police must provide you with their name, rank and station.

### **NOISE COMPLAINTS:**

If a noise complaint has been received, police can enter your premises and can seize any property contributing to the noise.

### **MOVE ON POWERS**

**Officers may give a move-on direction to a person at or near a regulated place if they reasonably suspect the person's behaviour or presence is or has been:**

1) Causing anxiety to a person entering, at or leaving a place

2) Interfering with trade or business at the place (only if the occupier complains about the persons behaviour)

3) Disrupting an event, entertainment or gathering at the place.

**Move on powers also apply to prostitution in a regulated/prescribed place.**

A decision to use a Move on Power interferes with a person's right to free movement and should be able to withstand public scrutiny. Officers should consider the following before giving a move on power:

1) Any reason the person offers for being in or near the place

2) The nature of any complaint made about the person;

3) The nature of any anxiety the person is allegedly causing and whether this has any factual basis

4) The effect of the persons presence or behaviour on anyone else in or near the place.

***When can police move you on?***

Firstly, you must be at or near a "prescribed place". This includes a shop, school, ATM, licensed premises, railway, shopping mall.

NB. If you are soliciting for prostitution, you can be moved on from **any public place** including a road or park.

Secondly, your behaviour or presence must be:

- Making people anxious who are coming or going from the place;
- Interfering with business by obstructing others from coming/going from the place;
- Disrupting an event, entertainment or gathering at the place;
- Offending or threatening people coming/going from the place.

Example: you are sitting in the doorway of a shop **OR** you are making a loud noise in the Queen St Mall **OR** you are disrupting a staged event, a police officer can direct you to “move on”.

### **Where must I move to?**

A police officer can direct you to leave the place for a set period of time (maximum 24 hours) **OR** move a certain distance in a stated direction for up to 24 hours.

### **What else must the police officer do?**

A police officer **must** give you:

- reasons for why you are being moved-on; and
- a reasonable opportunity to comply with the direction.

You should ask the police officer for reasons if he/she doesn't explain why you are being moved-on. The direction **must be reasonable**. Parks and roads are **NOT** prescribed places. **King**

**George Square, New Farm Park and Kurilpa Point Park** recently became “prescribed places” and move –on powers can be used in those areas.



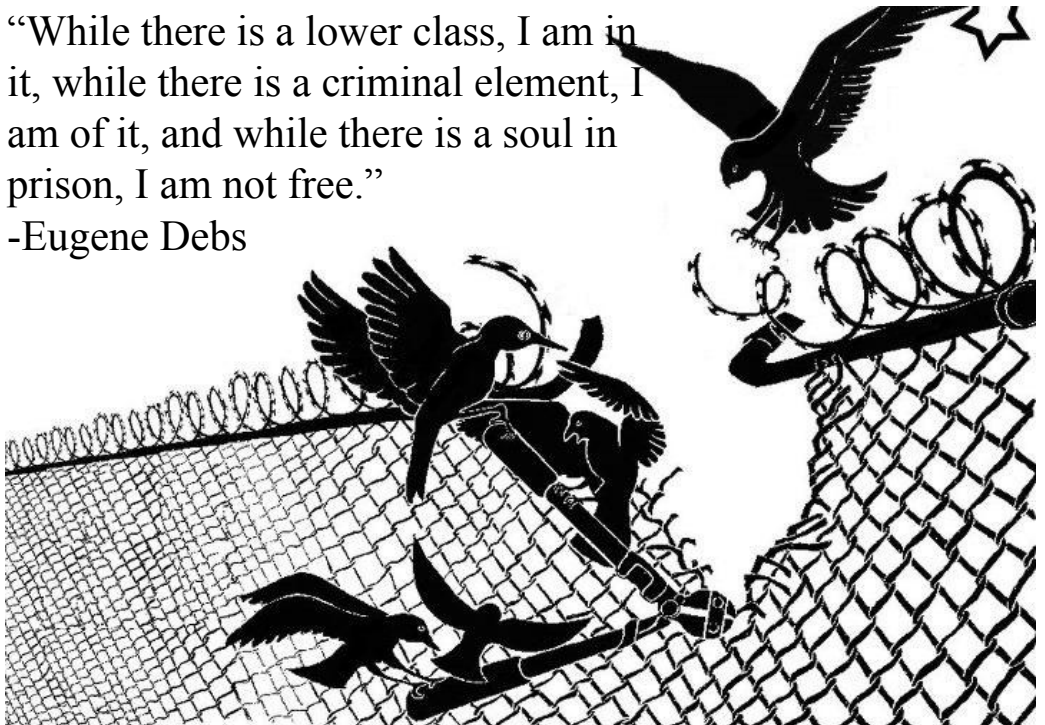
*“..To protect and serve who though? Look I know that you do some important work and often do make a huge difference in everyday people's lives - but seriously, let's be honest about who the cops ultimately 'protect and serve' - a slogan no more ridiculous than 'ACAB'. Firstly, who are the police accountable to? When developers and speculators divvy up neighbourhoods and gentrify communities, when landlords raise the rent and evict families, when bosses attack working conditions and workers go on strike - it's the police that enforce these things regardless of what the people want. When Mulrunji Doomadgee was murdered in police*

custody, the police protected officer Chris Hurley and promoted him to the Gold Coast. When there were riots and rallies in response the police squashed them and jailed participants. Look at any social revolution in history and it's the police that uphold, defend and find satisfactory without question the existing order more than any other section of society.

*It's not by chance that the current social upheaval in Greece is united by slogans like 'Police are not the children of the people, they are the dogs of the bosses', and 'Cops, Pigs, Murderers!'. The police, like always, are the ones carrying out the will of the bosses and capitalists, and quelling the mass of peoples attempts to meet their own needs and transform society for the better. It's a few years back now that the Queensland Police Union held a march - and what was it for? a helicopter and more effective tools of repression. That's who the police are ultimately accountable to; the politicians, the rich, the G20, the bosses; not the people..."*

“While there is a lower class, I am in it, while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free.”

-Eugene Debs





# ABOLITION:

## post script

**Humanitarian aid is self defeating if it does not seek to alter the conditions which produce its need.** Humanity has seldom ventured to treat its prisoners like human beings. The call for prison abolition urges us to imagine and strive for a very different social landscape. Thinking about transforming the prison complex and prison abolition is radical precisely because it implies a transformation of our damaged society and requires the development of new relations around life and work and each other.

The capitalist organisation of social life creates a constantly renewed crisis in every aspect of human activity. Everywhere the capitalist structure imposes on people an organisation of their lives that is



external to them. It organizes things in the absence of those most directly concerned and often against their aspirations and interests. As a result of this very fact, most people experience their own lives as something alien to them. It is nonsensical to seek to organise people, either in production or in politics as if they were mere objects, ignoring systematically what they themselves wish or how they themselves think things should be done. More than any other social order capitalism has made of work the centre of human activity and more than any other social order capitalism makes of work something that is absurd.

This degree of fragmentation of society signifies the almost total demise of community as we have known it. The logic of the market has now become universal, the ideology not just of neo-liberals, but of us all, the criterion we use not just about our job or when shopping, but about our innermost selves, and our most intimate relationships. Our relationships may be more cosmopolitan but they are increasingly transient and ephemeral. Our social world has come to mirror and mimic the rhythms and characteristics of the market, contractual in nature.

How do we respond to this state of affairs? We can either rationalize the current conditions – *changing the ideal of who we are meant to be so it is closer to the reality of who we already are*. The other option is action – *changing the reality of who we are so we are closer to the ideal of who we are meant to be*.

Our pain may be different but our hope is the same; the signs are already beginning to emerge of the desire to pay more attention to

personal relationships, to reconnect with each other, to re-establish the sense of belonging to a neighbourhood and to develop *communality*. As we become more alienated, with consumerism coming at the fore of our identities, there is a growing recognition of the need for us to rebuild our world.

*“So long as the immense majority of the populations are dispossessed of property, deprived of education and condemned to political and social nonbeing, so long as labour continues to be the slave of private property, the State and of capital, so long as human society continues to be divided into different classes as a result of the hereditary inequality of occupations, of wealth, of education, and of rights, there will always be a class-restricted government and the inevitable exploitation of the majorities by the minorities, with all the social dysfunction that this entails.”*

-- Mikhail Bakunin

The endless drive by Capital for profit increasingly turns society itself into a prison, and destroys the basic bonds of society—namely human solidarity. Democracy and dignity are now concepts buried under market demands as cultures, languages, histories, memories ideas and dreams are all wiped out or reduced to the quantifiable exchangeability of the global capitalist economy.

In the name of profit the system and the tiny minority ruling/owning class who benefit from it commit numberless atrocities as a matter of routine daily functioning, and continue to ever-increasingly threaten us with the destruction of the entire

planet – yet we continue to be barraged with a propaganda campaign that says the poor are getting too much and should be subject to greater surveillance and more control.

The *Zapatistas* refer to Capitalism as *The Empire of Money* and see the process of Capital accumulation as a *War on Humanity*. The main objectives of this war waged by the *Empire of Money* are; First, the capture of territory and labour for the expansion and construction of new markets; second, the extortion of profit, and third, the globalization of exploitation. It is a war for the imposition of a logic and practice (of capital), and therefore everything that is human and opposes capital is the enemy; we are *all* at *all* times potentially the enemy, thus requiring an omniscient and omnipotent social policing. *It is the first truly Total war; not a war on all fronts – a war with No front.*

*Throughout the world, two projects of globalization are in dispute: The one from above that globalizes conformity, cynicism, stupidity, war, destruction, death, and amnesia. And the one from below, that globalizes rebellion, hope, creativity, intelligence, imagination, life, memory, building a world where many worlds fit.*

To have endless expansion and profit as the guiding principles of society necessitates a prison industrial complex; to counter this we need to struggle from below for a society based on fundamentally different values: Solidarity, mutual-aid, co-operation and popular control. Where work is performed because it is useful, not because it makes money. A society that ecologically sustainable. A society where the heart of our decision making lies in popular power from

the bottom up, not above us inside the hierarchies of grand capitalist bureaucratic orders. *To bring back life in all its completeness, a society where we don't just survive, but flourish.*

Whether the twenty-first century will be the most radical of times or the most reactionary—or will simply lapse into a grey era of dismal mediocrity—will depend overwhelmingly upon the kind of social movement we create out of the theoretical, organisational, and political wealth that has accumulated during the past two centuries of the revolutionary era. The direction we select, from among several intersecting roads of human development, may well determine our future for centuries to come.

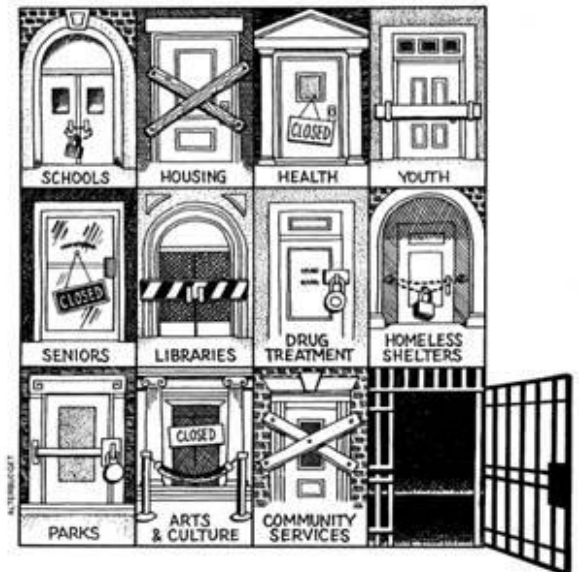
“*The important question is not whether such a society is possible or not, but whether we can so enlarge the scope and influence of libertarian/anarchist methods that they become the normal way in which human beings organise society. Anarchism is a means; it has no end. The choice between libertarian and authoritarian solutions is not a once-and-for-all cataclysmic struggle; it is a series of running engagements, most of them never concluded, which occur, and have occurred throughout history.*

*We have today the technical and material resources to meet the needs of humanity and the earth. We have not developed the cultural and moral resources - or the popular/democratic forms of social organisation- that make possible the humane and rational use of our material wealth and power. These ideas are achievable,*

*but only by a popular revolutionary movement, rooted in a wide strata of the population and committed to the elimination of repressive and authoritarian institutions, State and Private.*

*To create such a movement is a challenge we face and must meet if there is to be an escape from contemporary barbarity. The problem of how to organise society on truly popular lines, with popular control in the workplace as well as in the community, should become the dominant issue for those who are alive to the problems of contemporary society. – Noam Chomsky.”*

NO JUSTICE: NO PEACE.  
There is no JUSTICE:  
JUST US.



Other pamphlets  
Available from  
BSN:

- An introduction to neighbourhood and workplace organising.
- Crisis: Ipswich—Brisbane  
“A homelessness handbook”
- Queensland Squatter’s Handbook.
- Fighting for Ourselves: Anarcho-syndicalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- An Introduction to Class-Struggle Politics.
- Anarchism & the Black Revolution (Lorenzo Komboa)

**Brisbane Solidarity Network (BSN):**

[HTTP://WWW.SOLNET.CO.NR](http://www.solnet.co.nr)

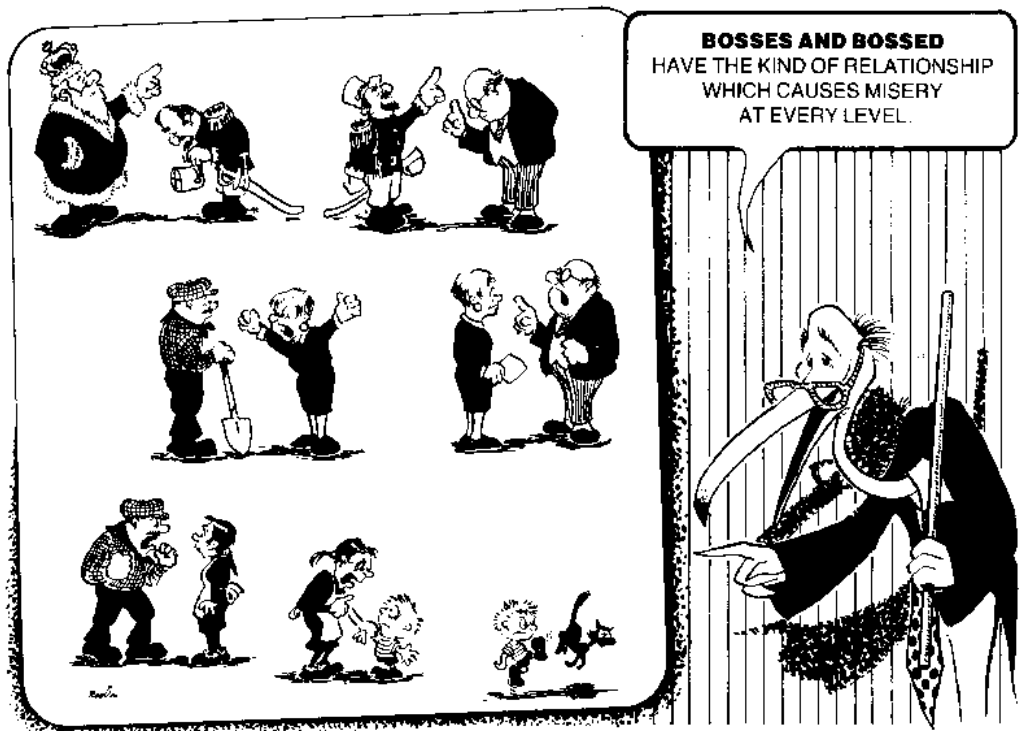
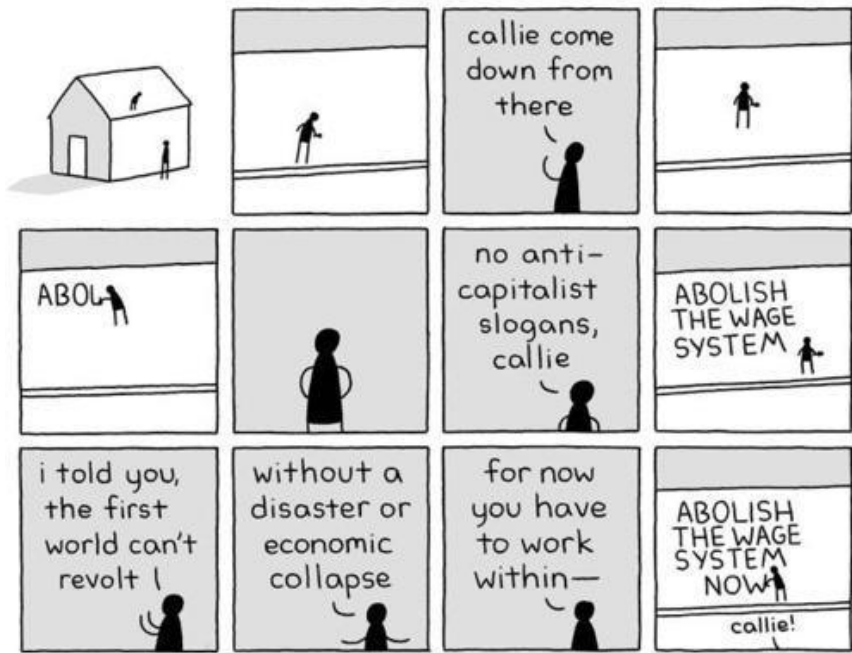
**Support the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC):**

Resources on prisoner support & more:

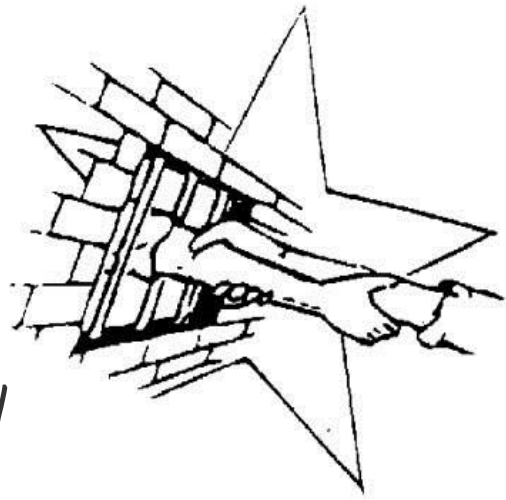
[HTTP://ABCF.NET](http://abcf.net)



All prisoners are  
political prisoners



DON'T  
FORGET  
THOSE ON  
THE  
INSIDE:



Introductory notes on Prison Abolition and the  
Prison Industrial Complex.

*“The prison house that is the market  
society, with its constraints demanding  
subservience to profit and hierarchy,  
is intent on locking us all down.”*

