Welcome to Issue 26 of The Abolitionist!

The ground is shifting beneath us. The harm and violence of the prison industrial complex (PIC) — including policing, imprisonment, and surveillance — have been pushed to the fore of people’s consciousness. Yet we are not mere spectators to this shift; on the contrary, we know very well that this is the cumulative effect of coalescing struggles on many fronts. For instance, without the dedication and sacrifice of the California hunger strikers in 2011 and 2013, particularly those in Pelican Bay’s solitary units and their supporters on the outside, we would not be witnessing an unprecedented denunciation of solitary confinement coming from virtually all layers of society. Similarly, without combative and sustained outrage by people in Ferguson in response to the killing of Michael Brown in 2014, we are doubtful that today’s increased attention and resistance to policing would be as far-reaching. We are deeply inspired by this shift, and are energized by the potential to challenge the PIC in significant and lasting ways.

As we continue to build on this momentum toward a world without cages, we are faced with what is being characterized as a “national conversation” and even “bipartisan consensus” around the need to address the harms of the PIC, particularly of policing and imprisonment. There are widespread calls for different types of reforms, coming from radical organizers to historically “tough on crime” politicians who have apparently changed their tune. We recognize the historic opportunities for challenging the state’s tools of control, but are also aware of obstacles and reformist dead ends that are created by those who are invested in preserving regressive power.

For PIC abolitionists, the question is, what is the most strategic way to build and escalate the struggle during this time of increased calls to reform policing and prisons? What kinds of demands and strategies should we pursue that don’t simply adjust the operations of the PIC, but disempower it? Ultimately, how do we expand the radical potential of our moment to realize what we want — a world free of policing, imprisonment, surveillance, and all the forms of political, social, and economic violence that they maintain?

In this issue of the The Abolitionist, our contributors consider these pressing questions with invaluable reflection, experience, and analysis, pushing us to dream beyond what those in power tell us is possible and desirable. We see examples of powerful organizing leading to historic victories and the strengthening of movements, from Chicago, to Palestine, to Argentina, with pieces from Alice Kim, Addameer, and Jasmina Draper, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, James Kilgore, and Misty Rojo remind and caution us against the obstacles that Malcolm X called “foes in sheep’s clothing” — continued social control and oppression disguised as support and sympathy for our movements. Aseem Chhabot Amarn, Brian Welton, Erica Steinnes and Ela Levine explore opportunities where current strategies and demands can be broadened to strengthen the fight against the PIC. Contributions by Christina Heatherton and Dylan Rodríguez critically reframe the terms of our fight, while the poet Franny Choy pictures a future beyond the PIC.

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It is precisely a future beyond the PIC that we are fighting to achieve. Our vision is abolition, and we humbly join all those who seek to find every opportunity to make our movement flourish.

In Solidarity,

The Abolitionist Editorial Collective

‘Mass Incarceration’ as Misnomer

BY DYLAN RODRIGUEZ

“Mass Incarceration” has become a misleading, largely useless, and potentially dangerous term — a newly designated keyword, if you will, in the steadily expanding political vocabulary of post-racialism. We must ask ourselves what “Mass Incarceration” has actually come to mean, to what uses this phrase is being deployed, and whether, in our incessant and perhaps under-examined use of this phrase, some of us are becoming unwitting accomplices to the very injustice to which we profess to be radically opposed.

Who, exactly, is the “mass” in Mass Incarceration? If it is not the incarcerated themselves, then who are we most temporally and geographically the case — that Euro-descended people and those racially marked as “white” are being criminalized, policed, and incarcerated en masse, that is, if the common sense usage of “Mass Incarceration” already presumes casual and official white innocence and de-criminalization, then isn’t this phrase closer to being a clumsy liberal racial euphemism for Mass Black Incarceration — and in many mythographies, Mass Brown Incarcerations?

There is an emerging liberal-to-progressive common sense about U.S. policing, criminalization, and human capture that uses the language of Mass Incarceration within a sometimes sterilized rhetoric of national shame, shared suffering, and racial disparity. Notions of fundamental unfairness, systemic racial bias, and institutional dysfunction form the basis for numerous reform movements advocating vigorous reforms of the criminal justice apparatus, largely by way of internal auditing, aggressive legal and policy shifts, and rearrangements of governmental infrastructure (e.g.,

As Obama, et. al. sing alongside the liberal-progressive chorus of demand for an end to Mass Incarceration, they simultaneously advocate for a redistribution of state resources away from prisons and toward the police.

What is largely beyond contestation is that this reform agenda rests on two widely shared premises: 1) that the current structure of US incarceration is bloated beyond the problem. While we cannot reproduce them here, every conceivable statistical measure clearly demonstrates that the impact of the last four decades of state-planned criminological apocalypse is historically, fundamentally asymmetrical (for lucid and concise summation of the evidence, see sentencingshproject.org or criminologysoup.org, among many others), in other words, the post-racial euphemism of “Mass Incarceration” misleads: 2) that equal and rational treatment under the (criminal) law is both a feasible and desirable outcome of Mass Incarceration? What is less clear is: 1) that the idea of the PIC’s imminent reform. What is less clear is: 2) that equal and rational treatment under the (criminal) law is both a feasible and desirable outcome of Mass Incarceration? What is less clear is: 2) that equal and rational treatment under the (criminal) law is both a feasible and desirable outcome of Mass Incarceration?

Put another way, there is no “Mass Incarceration.” The persistent use of this term is more than a semantic error, it is a political and conceptual sleight-of-hand with grave consequences: if language guides thought, action, and social vision, then there is an urgent need to dispose of this useless and potentially dangerous phrase and speak...

Continued on page 9, ‘Misnomer’
Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and health matter more than making our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and poverty, as well as local efforts to make our communities safe. To achieve this goal, we need support from people on the outside. A prison is an enemy of self-determination, a place of control and confinement where we cannot support any work thatextends its life or scope.

California's Prison System: Co-opts Reform Language While Increasing Its Budget

BY MISTY ROJO

This article was originally published as an op-ed on Truthout.org on June 4, 2016. Reprinted with permission.

To the outsider, the national conversation around prison reform looks like it’s shifting toward reduced incarceration. But in California, that same conversation is allowing the prison industry to grow to stronger, broader, and more powerful.

This year, California’s proposed corrections budget is $40 billion, a $2 billion increase from 2007, despite the prison population dropping by 40,000 during the same period. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation’s resilience is due to its success in co-opting the conversation dominating moderate bipartisan circles of decision-makers—the idea to provide treatment and support in lieu of punishment. In reality, the services the state prison system claims to provide end up pushing the incarcerated toward newly emerged industries like call centers, which are designed to maximize profits while providing minimal support, and monetizing resources that should be invested in supporting the communities that have been most impacted by incarceration.

When we talk about pushing for community-based alternatives to incarceration, the drive was to invest in programs focused on community treatment, and job opportunities in communities where people live, thereby addressing the root causes of criminalization and incarceration.

One example of the department’s co-optation of anti-incarceration arguments is the Community Alternatives to Incarceration program, which was packaged as a measure to help incarcerated prisoners with dependent family members finish their sentences in the community of their choice. But when the department finally put out a call for non-violent actions and solidarity to take place on September 9 to continue “the fight for the safety of” resistance. Below is an excerpt from the prisoners’ call, which has come from the Free Alabama Movement, among other groups.

Non-violent protesters, yard stoppings, hunger strikes and other refusalsto participate in prison routines and needs have increased in recent years. The 2011 Georgia prison strike, the massive Hunger Strikes of incarcerated prisoners in the Central California Women’s Facility in 2012, and the Free Alabama Movement’s 2016 work stoppage have gathered the most attention because they have broken out of state or federal prisons. But large, sometimes-effectivestrikes and protests have broken out in Ohio State Penitentiary, at Mound Correctional in Illinois, at the Wallkill Correctional in New York, and in many other detention centers across the country as prisons and jails have become more isolated, separated and interconnected, including immigrant detention centers, and detention centers for female detainees and the young.

Prisoners all across the country regularly engage in myriad demonstrations of power on the inside, though they are most often done with particularity and solidarity kept from the common oppressor.

Foundation on the Rights of Prisoners, a national organization based in New York City, has documented that an estimated 100,000 prisoners and former prisoners fight for rights. Forty-five years after Attica, the ways of change have changed to fit America’s prisons. This summer, we hope to coordinate and generalize these non-violent protests, to build them into a single tidal shift commanded by the American prison system cannot ignore or whistle past. By then, one prison systems is nothing but impassible, by refusing to be slaves any longer.

We hope to coordinate and generalize these non-violent protests, to build them into a single tidal shift commanded by the American prison system cannot ignore or whistle past. By then, one prison systems is nothing but impassible, by refusing to be slaves any longer.

While incarcerated in the Central California Women’s Facility, Misty was mentored by a⼀group of incarcerated, anti-violence organizers who engaged in social change and taught the significance of self-determination. She believes community members should be at the helm of forging solutions that take care of the very communities and families they come from. She serves as the campaign and policy director for Addameer: The Arab American and Arab侨民 Prisoner Rights Center, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco. She is also the co-director of the California Women’s Project, an initiative of Addameer United for a Responsible Budget, whose mission is to end mass incarceration and reduce the over-representation of people of color and immigrants.

Misty’s work focuses on eradicating state violence in communities and bring about social and political transformation through organizing and direct action. She is a survivor of domestic violence, a factor in the overrepresentation of women in the prison system and separated her from her family in 2008 when she was 16.

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Prisoners' Call for Solidarity

Over the last few years, we have seen the courage and resilience of prisoners in the US map out many powerful instances of resistance. More and more prisoners are getting together and connecting with one another across bars and walls, building up the long road of organizing. Their stories are shared with us often.

This September 9, 2016 will mark 45 years since prisoners at Attica began their strike against oppression to continue. In a historic protest that remains a call to action today, prisoners at Attica bravely declared “we are not beasts and do not intend to be treated as such.” The Attica Uprising was the first to happen since prisoners had set forth to change forever the ruthless American prison system.

The California Women’s Facility, in the Central California Women’s Facility, serves as the campaign and policy director for Addameer: The Arab American and Arab侨民 Prisoner Rights Center, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco. She is also the co-director of the California Women’s Project, an initiative of Addameer United for a Responsible Budget, whose mission is to end mass incarceration and reduce the over-representation of people of color and immigrants.

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The Worrying State of the Anti-Prison Movement

BY RUTH WILSON GILMORE

This piece was originally published on the website for Social Justice (journal in February 2015). Ruth Wilson Gilmore is Director of the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics, and Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is a coauthor of numerous works on the anti-prison movement, including California Prison Michael Project, Critical Resistance, and the Central California Environmental Justice Network.

After declining for three consecutive years, the US prison and jail population increased by 2% in 2015. The widely declared victory over mass incarceration was premature at best. Regardless of whether or not one is a critic of the mass prison movement.

1) A tendency to cozy up to the right wing, as though a superficial overlap in view point meant a unified structural analysis at action.

Nearly 40 years ago, Tony Platt and Paul Takagi (1977) identified as “new realists” the law and order intellectuals who purveyed across all media and disciplines the necessity of being hard on the (especially Black) working class. Today’s “new realists”—the correct version—promote the same thrust. However, differently calibrated, the mainstream merger depends on shoddy analysis and historicist posture of having been there and doing that. They promise never to change—sentences for the relatively innocent, advocates reinforce the assumption that others are relatively or unprofessionally or too uneducated or too young or too formerly incarcerated, and their goals are too opposed to the status quo.

What is the status quo? Put simply, capitalism requires inequality and racism enshrines it. Thus, criminalizing and mass incarcerating the working class, as Platt and Takagi explained in 1977. Therefore, the struggle against group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death is waged in every mitigated dimension. Race, class, gender, sexual orientation or identity, or environment or substance use, or whether the justice system that we call the police can produce or is already doing the violence itself. Let us look at the numbers. Private prisons hold about 8 percent of the prison population, and a barely measurable number (5 percent) of those in jails. Overall, about 5 percent of the justice system’s budget goes to private prisons. What kind of justice will we imprison? Will private prison divestment campaigns produce if they pay no attention to the money that flows through and is extracted from the public prisons and jails, where 90 percent of inmates are held for crimes, and 95 percent by we will use to purchase the law and order intellectuals who purveyed across all media and disciplines the necessity of being hard on the (especially Black) working class. The effort to change the system is weakened by the continual use of private prisons. The long-standing campaign against private prisons is based on the fictitious claim that revenues raised in from outsourced contracts explain the origin and growth of mass incarceration. The crux of the issue is that private prisons are a business. They make money on the Internet, print or video, sooner rather than later. Private prisons are the right wing, as though a superficial overlap in viewpoint meant a unified structural analysis for action.

2) A tendency to aim substantial rhetorical and organizational resources at the new “new realists” in the anti-prison movement, while minimizing the fact that 52 percent of the vast money-sloshing public system is central to keeping the relatively innocent incarcerated.

The new “new realists” have committed an overwhelming and is extracted from the public prisons and jails, where 95 percent of inmates are held. We are trying to determine who constitutes “we;” worse, they also reinforce a criminal justice system that is extracted from the public prisons and jails, where 95 percent of inmates are held? There is a clear and unspoken strategy to make the relatively innocent (the third-striker in for stealing pizza or people in prison on drug charges, for example) the new “new realists” blazed. Their grandiose technocratic tinkering with the system renovates and aggravates it for the next generation.

3) A tendency to pretend that systematic criminalization will rust and crumble if some of those caught in its iron grip are extricated under the aegis of relative innocence.

One of the most troubling moves by the new “new realists” is to insist on foregrounding the relatively innocent: the third-striker in for stealing pizza or people in prison on drug charges, for example. Campaigners for California’s Proposition 47 placed a widely touted “bipartisan” proposal that would have reduced 400,000 low-level drug offenses to misdemeanors. The danger of this approach should be clear: by campaigning for the relatively innocent, advocates reinforce the assumption that others are relatively or absolutely guilty of more serious policy or political intervention. For example, most campaigns to decrease sentences for violent convictions simultaneously decrease punishments or eliminate any procedures for serious crimes, violent, or sexual offenses. Such advocacy adds to the legitimation of mass incarceration, and it is used to support the state’s use of private prisons. The long-standing campaign against private prisons is based on the fictitious claim that revenues raised in from outsourced contracts explain the origin and growth of mass incarceration. The crux of the issue is that private prisons are a business. They make money on the Internet, print or video, sooner rather than later. Private prisons are the right wing, as though a superficial overlap in viewpoint meant a unified structural analysis for action.

4) A tendency to virulently oppose critique from the Left, as though the work of thinking hard about how and what we do interfere with the work of reform.

Opponents beguile audiences and divert attention from issues people and police are working on. Above all, we must change the foundations on which mass incarceration has been built: structural racism, structural poverty, and capitalism. The relatively innocent are being asked to fight for changes to be made to the system. The effort to change the system is weakened by the continual use of private prisons. The new “new realists” have committed an overwhelming and is extracted from the public prisons and jails, where 95 percent of inmates are held. We are trying to determine who constitutes “we;” worse, they also reinforce a criminal justice system that is extracted from the public prisons and jails, where 95 percent of inmates are held? There is a clear and unspoken strategy to make the relatively innocent (the third-striker in for stealing pizza or people in prison on drug charges, for example) the new “new realists” blazed. Their grandiose technocratic tinkering with the system renovates and aggravates it for the next generation.

Field Trip to the Museum of Human History

BY FRANNY CHOI

Franny Choi is a writer, a book publishing artist, a fighting for police reform activist, and a member of the author Blackout Squad. She is the author of the book Brilliant, Gone (Editions Gone) and a member of the editors team at The Abolitionist. She can write to her at 46 Walnut St, Burlington, VT 05401.

SUMMER 2016
Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association

A CONVERSATION WITH CRITICAL RESISTANCE

Critical Resistance: Currently in the U.S., there is a significant number of organizations working on prison abolition and imprisonment, with many increasingly making connections to struggles for freedom in the Middle East and North Africa. How has your work with Addameer been impacted by these connections and the broader movement for justice in the Middle East?

Addameer Prisoner Support: In recent events, and in the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter movement, Addameer has been inspired and mobilized by actions and demands from Black communities in the U.S. and other parts of the world. The Islamic concept of solidarity, the fight against racism, and the struggle for freedom have always been central to our work. The interconnections between struggles for justice, freedom, and dignity transcend borders.

CR: As people across the U.S. continue to call for reforms to reduce imprisoned populations, the use of electronic ankle monitors and the expansion of solitary confinement in the U.S. has become a major concern. How does Addameer view the use of ankle monitors as a means of surveillance inside Israeli prisons?

AP: Addameer considers ankle monitoring and other forms of electronic surveillance as an integral part of the Israeli military's strategy to control and stifle Palestinian prisoners. These technologies are used to restrict movements, deny basic freedoms, and subject prisoners to constant surveillance. The use of this technology is a form of control that extends beyond the prison walls, impacting families and communities.

CR: What role does Addameer play in supporting Palestinian prisoners who are held in Israeli prisons or military camps?

AP: Addameer plays a crucial role in supporting Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons or military camps. We provide legal aid, mental health services, and social support to prisoners and their families. Our work is rooted in a commitment to human rights and the principles of solidarity and non-violence.

CR: In your work with Addameer, how do you address the issue of solitary confinement? What are the effects of solitary confinement on prisoners and their families?

AP: Addameer is deeply concerned about the use of solitary confinement in Israeli prisons. This practice is widely recognized as a form of cruel and inhuman treatment. It has severe psychological and physical effects on prisoners, causing depression, anxiety, and a range of physical ailments. Families, who are often already under enormous stress, suffer from the separation and lack of access to their loved ones.

CR: How does Addameer see the role of solidarity in the struggle for Palestinian prisoners' rights and freedom?

AP: Solidarity is fundamental to Addameer's work. By building alliances and connecting with movements around the world, we can raise awareness, mobilize support, and apply pressure on the Israeli authorities. Solidarity is a powerful tool in the fight for justice and dignity.

CR: In your experience, how do prisoners in Israeli jails confront the Israeli government and the occupation forces? What are some of the strategies they use to resist and maintain their dignity?

AP: Palestinian prisoners confront the Israeli government and the occupation forces through various means, including legal, diplomatic, and direct action. They use the international legal framework to challenge Israeli policies, support international solidarity campaigns, and engage in nonviolent direct action inside the prison. Prisoners also maintain their dignity by preserving their culture, maintaining family connections, and engaging in cultural and educational activities.

CR: How does Addameer engage with the wider community to raise awareness about the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons?

AP: Addameer engages with the wider community through various means, including campaigns, events, and media work. We seek to educate the public about the plight of Palestinian prisoners, the Israeli occupation, and the struggle for justice and self-determination. Through these efforts, we aim to build a global movement for solidarity and justice.

CR: What is the role of Addameer in the international context of solidarity and resistance against Israeli occupation and annexation?

AP: Addameer is committed to the principles of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We advocate for Universal Jurisdiction, which allows states to prosecute Israeli violations of international law. As a Palestinian non-governmental organization, we play a role in the global movement for justice and accountability. Through solidarity and resistance, we strive to create a world where human rights are respected and where justice prevails.
P resident Obama took a notable step in July 2015 by granting clemency to 46 people convicted of non-violent drug offenses. This move coincided with the passage of the First Step Act, which reduces certain non-violent drug offenses from mandatory minimum sentences.

One of the key points of the Act is to reform drug sentences, we should not allow the rhetoric about “non-violent drug offenders” to distract us from the continued imperative to challenge imprisonment for everyone. Addressing the racial that targets Black and Brown people disproportionately for “serious offenses” is a necessary step toward shrinking this country’s massive prison system. The soon-to-be-senators and reformers come to terms with that uncomfortable truth, the sooner the U.S. can move beyond the scourge of mass incarceration.

What are we really afraid of?

We are never going to get to the root of the problem unless we get to the heart of the “punishment and torture paradigm,” and the way we can do that is by asking, “Is punishment and imprisonment keeping us safe, and does it even address social problems?”

Some policymakers and prisoner advocates worry that the discussion of how to release people from prison is fraught with race and class biases. In other words, by basing the sentencing decisions on static factors and immutable characteristics—like the defendant’s education level, socioeconomic background, or neighborhood—they may exacerbate unwarranted and unjust disparities that are already far too common in our criminal justice system and in our society.

Policymakers claim our parole policies are harsh because they are afraid to release so-called dangerous people onto our streets. I take exception to the implication of the word “dangerous,” because what society is really afraid of is men of color—not “crime.” People lean on the criminal justice system as a way of keeping those scary people away from them. If we see people as “the other,” we are less likely to have empathy towards them, respond to their needs, and truly begin to address the root causes of harm and “crime” in our society.

Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP). The United States is 51 times that of Australia, 173 times that of the Netherlands. Even China and Pakistan review all life sentences after 25 years imprisonment. So while the rest of the world can see other ways of dealing with “serious crimes” (however imperfectly), the U.S. can’t imagine alternatives to sentencing, punishment, or LWOP—practices that in no way seek to address the root causes of “crime” in society.

Finally, focusing on people imprisoned for non-violent drug related convictions as a special group – or the only group – deserves leniency and freedom. Hardens the belief that imprisonment is acceptable for everyone, despite the many who have been trapped in the system for varying lengths of time. So while the rest of the world can see other ways of dealing with “serious crimes” (however imperfectly), the U.S. can’t imagine alternatives to sentencing, punishment, or LWOP—practices that in no way seek to address the root causes of “crime” in society.

By Asar Imhotep Amen

Our Society Must Look Beyond the “Non-Violent Drug Offenses”
The Contraband Rebellion in Skid Row

BY CHRISTINA HEATHERTON

A long-standing battle is being waged over the legal definition of poor and homeless people's belongings in Skid Row, Los Angeles. In March 2016, a group of homeless individuals climbed into the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) headquarters to demand that LAPD stop entering homes and seizing or destroying poor people's possessions without advance notice or storage. In 1997, the LAPD initiated a program, Preventing Property Seizures and Diversion (PPSD), that targets people who spray-paint their goods with the words "I am human. Not trash." Law enforcement officials, however, have not clarified the legal basis for the program, leaving legal limbo. Is it garbage? Dangerous trash? The unsightly mess that scares away customers, the suit is a critical question: who has the protected right to claim space in this briskly gentrifying community?

Skid Row resident organizations have waged a decade-long front against these practices. Earlier this year, a contingent of LA CAN activists took over City Council chambers demanding a public hearing. The LAPD claims they are targeting "contraband," illegal goods, items whose trade is prohibited or whose possession is forbidden. For years, police have sought to crackdown on Skid Row's "street" of "illegals" by destroying poor people's property while also seeking to remove the very people who own it. Working in alliance with homeless business owners and developers, these efforts coincide with broader measures to gentrify the area and raise property values. In the process, this contraband hangs in legal limbo. Only a few weeks later, the LAPD announced that they would ban alleged contraband and fines for staying or sleeping in the street.

Legal definitions of poor people's belongings have shifted as Skid Row has become a hotly contested site of development. The area has long been the subject of development. The area has long been the subject of legal discourse, with the LAPD andLA CAN activists along with the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) and the LA Catholic Worker, a few thousand people released. Presidential debates address gentrification in Los Angeles, including a recent White House visit by LA CAN activists. The area, once known as the epicenter of a "touch of crime" policies, has seen a shift in recent years. As the federal government continues to push for prison and jail closures, the LAPD and other law enforcement agencies have turned their attention to gentrification. The LAPD has implemented a "no-fault" teaching plan, a policy that allows officers to seize property without advance notice or storage. "It's a big step forward," Oreo wrote. "Plaintiffs may not survive without some of the essential property that has been confiscated." The LAPD says the instruction will be held until the lawsuit is decided.

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One of the most popular quick fixes in the U.S. criminal justice system is electronic monitoring, typically known as "shackles" or "GPS monitors." It was first introduced in the United States in 1990. As of 2015, 3.5 million people were being tracked via electronic monitoring. That included about half of the parole population and a quarter of the probation population. Electronic monitoring might ease some of the pain for a minute but no one wants to own. Beware of quick-fix solutions.

In 2016, LA CAN announced a groundbreaking campaign to halt the practice of electronic monitoring. They called for a moratorium on new electronic monitor placements and for a contract with a different vendor.

The campaign is part of a broader effort to end electronic monitoring. LA CAN has been pushing for a moratorium on new placements and for a different vendor since 2015. They have been working with community groups, including community organizing groups, to raise awareness about the harms of electronic monitoring.

LA CAN is an activist and educator organization that works to end mass incarceration and create a world where everyone can live free from the fear of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment. LA CAN believes in the power of community organizing and education to transform systems and create a world where everyone can live free from the fear of arrest, conviction, or imprisonment.
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helped pave the way for the campaign that successfully orga
justice for her son and all Chicago police torture survivors.


people to file a complaint against Burge and for more than
participated in countless protests, marches, rallies, teach-ins,
evidence against him – and he served ten years in prison for a
overdue apology from Mayor Rahm Emanuel on behalf of the
under his command; many had languished behind bars
Moreno, a chief sponsor of the Reparations Ordinance for

Breaking Walls, Making History
Lessons from Chicago

Black activists took to the streets to confront police violence in Ferguson and beyond, Burge torture survivors and new coalitions came to the fore. In 2015, Black activists led the successful campaign to recall Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. Black activists led a coalition to push for reparations for prison activi-

SCME was an early supporter of the Prison Divestment Campaign. Today, SCME sits on the campaign’s Steering Committee which works to extend the SCME-led campaign to all contracts for police, fire, health workers and 23,000 prison guards. SCME and others are leading the efforts for prison guard unions and other police unions to join the campaign. SCME continues to lead efforts to fight the carceral system and to build a culture of support for the survivors of the torture.

The causal claims made by divestment strategies also
defy chronology. Rather than lead legislation against dis-
positional cities and infrastructure, divestment campaigns
to quota clauses in contracts, the Prison Divestment Cam-
paign implies that policing and incarceration are merely accessories for profiteering schemes. This claim is convincing, confusingly onto neoliberal development and free market policies. The movement of money appears to determine the character of crime, punishment, and imprisonment, and the attempt to at-
and delinquents in a single person being failed by the system. While guard unions benefit from divest-
ment campaigns, they also lose political leverage in facing their hostility to decarceration. What remains to be seen is how divestment campaigns, of their promise of reparations, can win through this strategy. Divestment strategies make clear that the political economy of carceral servitude is not only possible but already constant. As we assess our strategies and imagine other possibilities, our challenge is to point change toward liberating the people.
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Building Roads to the Outside

The Experience of the YO NO FUI Collective in Argentina

BY SUSANA DRAPER

Prison abolition forces us to push the limits that have been imposed on our forms of imaginational alternatives to the naturalized violence of imprisonment. I conceived of the “roads to outside” as a form of creating and experiencing the very freedom that we claim to have already discovered. They are not roads to the outside, but they are indeed roads to the outside. They are not roads to the outside, but they are indeed roads to the outside. They are not roads to the outside, but they are indeed roads to the outside.

These reflections come to mind when mapping the work of collectives of women prisoners and former prisoners in Latin America, who have been collaborating in the last decade in order to start a movement of resistance against the prison state that逆袭了 our communities. In this context, it is important to recognize that the work of these collectives is not isolated from the broader context of social and political struggles. Their work is part of a larger movement for social and political liberation that seeks to build a new society free of oppression and exploitation.

As Susana Draper, a writer and activist, writes in her book "Building Roads to the Outside," the YO NO FUI Collective in Argentina has been at the forefront of this movement. By using artistic expressions and creative interventions, they challenge the dominant narratives and representations of the prison system. Their work is not just about breaking down the walls of incarceration, but also about building new forms of collective solidarity and resistance.

The YO NO FUI Collective is a group of women who were imprisoned in Argentina for political reasons. They were sentenced to prison under the military dictatorship, which lasted from 1976 to 1983. The collective was formed as a way to resist the state and to create a space for political education and solidarity.

The collective’s work includes creating artistic interventions, such as murals and posters, as well as organizing workshops and seminars. They use these tools to raise awareness about the plight of women prisoners and to challenge the dominant narratives about women and crime.

The YO NO FUI Collective is a testament to the power of collective resistance and the importance of building support networks. Their work is a reminder that change is possible, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

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The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment

Herein lies the punchline of the multiculturalist racial state’s co-optation of the Mass at best: African American communities, trust and respect among Americans, between police and citizens.” Freddie Gray’s death,” Clinton declares, “we must urgently begin to rebuild bonds of lambasting the contemporaneous uprisings in Black Baltimore over the police torture to police power, Candidate Clinton laments the “era of mass incarceration” while in an April 2015 speech at Columbia University. Echoing Holder’s verbal genuflection Holder’s speech occurs just one month after the police killing of Michael Brown in the US state’s internal deliberations on national criminal justice policy. Crucially, US government and its highest-profile representatives. Let us briefly consider three

Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Michelle Alexander’s widely read, deeply flawed 2010 book influential texts like Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind’s 2002 anthology and early 2000s, surfacing in academic, activist, and public policy rhetoric as well as be traced further back in time, the contemporary use of the phrase emerged in the lary illuminates the lurking dilemma at hand: While its etymological origins can

How to get out of this?

As we have already discussed, the question of having a simultaneous series of workshops inside add outside walls, which are in part about money, having money, not qualifying for jobs after prison, not having a history of employment, and not having the necessary skills to find, let alone keep, a job. What these other, more autonomous, collective spaces inside or outside of the prison walls might add to the analysis of how to shape our future? Or: if I can say this, you cannot

Someday, the contrary occurs, and this essence can get out of this prison of the soul, and allow women to empower themselves through these words.

truth through a more descriptive, thoughtful activist vocabulary.

The twenty-year history of “Mass Incarceration” entrance into the popular vocabularian illuminates the lurking dilemma at hand. While its etymological origins can be

Invisible afterlives of confinement: gender, care, and abolition in Latin America.

truth through a more descriptive, thoughtful activist vocabulary.

There is something lurking beneath this still-emerging liberal-progressive, and now official state reformist discourse of Mass Incarceration that is worth some critical, racial scrutiny. We are witnessing the early stages of a subtle though potentially significant shift in the statecraft of policing: the reform of Mass Incarceration is becoming inadvisably ABOUT in this case, it is not a question of whether the state is trying to stop being just because of the fact of being impris

To “get out” of this prison of the soul: the women organizing on care and abolition in Latin America.

Continued from the previous page

summer 2016

The Abolitionist

Continued from page 1, “Misomer”

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To “get out” of this prison of the soul: the women organizing on care and abolition in Latin America.
Whiteness, the hidden persuader

The recent New Yorker article about juvenile sex offenders is the latest in a series of media treatments seeking to humanize and dehumanize certain groups. Little has changed in the past two decades. The article features a photo of his parents, appeared on the cover of the New York Times, and was also published in "Law & Order: SVU" – these "new" sex offenders are humanized: attractive, promising, and innocent. Yet, in the same issue, "The Abolition of Juvenile Justice" is published, pointing out that it includes convictions for sexting, public urination and other non-violent offenses that do not fit the traditional image of a sex offender. The invocation of childhood, and the concept of 'childhood innocence' has been central to US racial formation since the mid-19th century. This has often been used as a way to justify and enforce the exclusion of Black and other minority groups from the just society, and to excuse and mitigate the harms done to vulnerable, victimized children. In this way, the law pins this scarlet letter most powerfully shown, with little or no restriction at a time.

We are heartened by the nascent alliances forming between people convicted of sex offenses and broad movements against registries, other harsh treatment of people who have done, or been accused of doing, harm. The invocation of childhood, and the concept of 'childhood innocence' has been central to US racial formation since the mid-19th century. This has often been used as a way to justify and enforce the exclusion of Black and other minority groups from the just society, and to excuse and mitigate the harms done to vulnerable, victimized children. In this way, the law pins this scarlet letter most powerfully shown, with little or no restriction at a time.

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