

Why are we against all prisons?



They say that prison is necessary to punish those who break the ‘rules of society’. But do ‘rules’ really represent the will of the people? Do the poor agree happily that their work makes the rich wealthier?

Considering the way this society works, we can only decide what to do following laws that a government has imposed on the majority of women and men. Therefore, before asking whether or not it is right to punish those who break the rules with imprisonment, one must ask: who decide – and how – the rules of this society?

They say that prison protects us from violence.

But is it really like that? How does it come that the worst violence (let’s think of wars and famine inflicted on millions of people) is perfectly *legal*? Why do people end up in jail if they rebel or steal in shops but they make a career or even become heroes if they bomb entire populations?

Prison only punishes the violence that annoys the State and the rich or the violence that they want to consider revolting. In fact, it is the *structural* violence of society and the State that is protected by the prison every day.

They say that the law is equal for everybody.

Nevertheless prisons are full of semi-illiterate women and men, immigrants or working class children, who have been imprisoned for ‘crimes against propriety’, that is to say actions strictly connected to this society and its need: the need to find money. Not to mention the fact that a great number of prisoners would be out of jail if they had the money to pay for a good lawyer.

They say that prison help offenders to redeem themselves and integrate into society.

But most prisoners, once out of prison, find the same conditions as, or even worse than, those they faced when they first entered prison.

What good can come from being kept away from one’s loved ones for years, from doing nothing interesting, condemned to the passing of time, compelled to pretend with social workers and psychologists, getting used to submit oneself to the jailers?

Finally: is this society so virtuous, is it based on such enlightened values and equalitarian relations that it is recommended to integrate oneself into it?

They say that prison, if it doesn’t redeem, it is a deterrent to ‘criminal behaviour’.

Why, then, the prison population is constantly growing? Why law makers tend to criminalize more and more behaviours? Obviously this is part of a well defined social programme: they want to take the poor and rebels away from the streets and at the same time they want to invest in the big business of prison (let's think of all the companies that make money from prison labour or by building, furnishing and supplying prisons).

We are against prison because it was born and has developed in order to defend the privileges of the rich and the power of the State.

We are against prison because a society based on freedom and solidarity (and not on profit) does not need it.

We are against prison because even the most heinous crime is a mirror of our fears and our weakness and there is no point in keeping it hidden behind bars.

We are against prison because the worst criminals are those who hold the keys of a cell.

We are against prison because nothing good can come from coercion and submission.

We are against prison because we want to break the laws of this society, and we do not intend to integrate pacifically in its towns, factories, barracks and supermarkets.

We are against prison because the noise of a key turned in the keyhole is daily torture, isolation is abomination, the end of a visit is suffering and the time spent inside is an hourglass that kills slowly.

We are against prison because jailers are always ready to defend all abuse and violence, and are dehumanised by their habit of obedience and spying.

We are against prison because it took away from us too many days, months or years, and too many friends and comrades.

We are against prison because those we met inside are no better or worse than those we met outside (in many cases they are better).

We are against prison because the news of an escape warms up our heart more than a sunny day.

We are against prison because if you look at the world through a keyhole you only see malicious and suspicious people.

We are against prison because the sense of justice can never be found in the penal code.

We are against prison because a society that needs to lock up and humiliate is itself a prison.

Fire to all prisons!

Anarchists



