

our, taking the place of law, as science takes over in the domain of social control. For science people are products of unseen forces and are not responsible for their actions. We are no longer in the realm of rationalism, voluntarism and acts of will that were at the basis of the enlightenment and law. To commit a 'crime' is a symptom that one is sick or crazy, antisocial or simply deviant. One becomes a criminal that must be redressed, re-educated and processed. Above all one must be held until one thinks, feels and acts 'correctly'. There are thousands of people in prisons in the UK, not for having 'committed a crime', but for breaking Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). This takes us back to our original discourse concerning the polarization of the present prison population and the differentiation and various degrees of confinement to the point of annihilation behind the prison walls.

The final aim of power is the elimination of prisons, and, for the irreducible outlaws, the determined, conscious lawbreakers, special units that need no longer offend sensitive souls by being referred to as prisons, that could more fittingly be defined as mental asylums.

Time is no longer on our side. We must act now, analytically, theoretically and above all in deed to attack and destroy the restructuring of repression and social control.

The struggle against prison can only be a revolutionary struggle whose aim is the latter's destruction along with the law, the judiciary, the technology of control and all the other structures of the State and capital. This means that we must look at the processes in act in depth but put them back into the context of the social clash in its entirety. Prison is everywhere and must be brought into whatever struggle we decide to undertake, where every destructive moment becomes a moment of freedom, in which all prison walls dissolve and we are at one with our beloved rebels and comrades.

Prison: abolish or destroy?



The plan is to empty the prisons of the great majority of prisoners and throw them back into the prison-society using the technology of isolation and control; and for the minority of irreducible rebels, keep them inside for ever. What is being presented as 'progress' is nothing other than the advance and spread of repression. This is what the abolitionists are really subscribing to: 'change everything so that everything remains the same'.

inside for ever.. And they need a great operation by all the fabricators of opinion to gain consensus for such a gigantic move in social terms. The technology is ready, minds are not.

This is where the abolitionists can play their part. Many of them are recycled militants from the struggles of the sixties and seventies, and some have known the inside of the prison walls themselves. They have convinced themselves that they 'lost the war' and capitalism is no longer in crisis, so nothing remains but to change it from within, smoothing out the most distasteful and ugly sores such as prison. For them the underlying basis of prison, the judiciary and the law, are not put in question. Even less the repressive social institutions of the State that will be called to readjust their role from sentencing to negotiating sanctions with offended parties, those affected by the 'crimes'. Clearly this is ultimately in the interests of the State that has already embarked along the road of prison abolition, without calling it such for reasons of consensus. Already in the US and the UK thousands of prisoners have been released before the end of their term on the condition that they submit to electronic tagging and curfews. There is a project underway in England to release about 60,000 prisoners and set them to do unpaid work while wearing fluorescent yellow jackets emblazoned with 'Community Payback'. In London the proposal is that they should work on preparations and buildings for the Olympic games in 2012. Offenders will be invited to sign a 'going straight' contract, and those who prove themselves trustworthy will be allowed concessions and supervision with tracking devices with global positioning satellite.

Science and technology therefore, along with penal reform and abolitionism, are paving the way for the new reality of control.

Wider and wider strata are becoming unpredictable and the law is not a suitable instrument for keeping them under control. Administrative rules are now being applied as moral codes of behav-

assessment of individual behaviour undertaken in the first place by that most iniquitous of all human beings, the screw. It takes little effort to imagine the effects of this dual power in the hands of such vile creatures. Not only do they hold the key to the cell, they can also directly affect the length of your sentence and the quality of your permanence behind bars. All prisoners have files, like hospital notes, and these are constantly updated and accompany them throughout their trajectory in the underworld. Prison authority is stupid and petty, enforced by stupid, petty cowardly individuals, mere cogs in the state machinery who are rarely taken to task for their actions. The slightest sign of noncompliance by prisoners is immediately signaled and the culprits are quickly singled out as rebels, agitators or troublemakers because the scum of the earth who are prepared to lock people up behind bars for years on end for a miserable wage are lazy bastards who want to have as little trouble as possible. They are also shit scared of the ever present eventuality of mutiny or insurrection. For this reason, and given that the new technologies make it possible, prisons, like all the great receptacles of human suffering, are destined to disappear. as such

In the meantime, the immediate project of prison is to change the culture inside the walls from one of resistance such as that experienced in the eighties in many parts of the world, to one of conformity and acquiescence. This is what the do-gooders are subscribing to when they campaign for improvements inside the prisons. TV in the cell, yes, but this can be used as the carrot to keep you in line, to keep you from showing solidarity to your fellow prisoners or rebelling to get your basic human rights.

Now the pressure is on to empty the prisons of the great majority of prisoners, isolating people and throwing them back into the ghettos that are the source of the illbeing that put them inside in the first place, and, for the minority of irreducible rebels, keep them

It has been said, not mistakenly, that those who do most harm in this world are those who try to do most good. Still today, with increasing isolation and atomisation of individuals, there are people around who decide to ruin their lives with excessive altruism. Always with the best of intentions, they set out to try to remedy the ills they see before them. They can even be paid by the State for doing so, and this is one of the great swindles of capital: it imposes conditions of untold suffering, and, through its ally the State, paves the way for it to be prolonged in time, rationalised and reformed.

Prison, a superlative weapon in the arsenal of the bosses of the planet for the past few hundred years, is a fine example of this marriage of repression and reform. From the time that reclusion became an arm of capital in dealing with its increasingly impoverished and dispossessed masses, there have been those who, unable to remain indifferent to the appalling conditions, rather than put their own privileges on the line and fight for the complete upturning of a world capable of such atrocity, dedicated much of their efforts to the description and rationalization of such infamy.

Erected in full view of the poor, the primary role of the prison was to threaten by its very existence. Deportation and public executions were surpassed by events (the end of the American colonies, the danger presented by the rabble who were supposed to reap moral benefit from the executioner's antics) giving way to great impenetrable fortresses, often in the centre of towns, to act both as a deterrent and place of separation. This led to a great army of social and religious reformers intent on redeeming the poor disgraced ones.

One of the great moral philosophers of England, Jeremy Bentham, was to mark his place in the history of repression as the inventor of the Panopticon, where all prisoners could be controlled by one guard, and were unable to know exactly when they were

being observed. A giant step for humanity. Social orthopaedics became the predominant aim of prison. The prisoner was not just to languish in inactivity, but must learn to appreciate the nobility of work and submission to authority.

However, by the very fact that they are receptacles of large numbers of people held against their will, and without the consensus of large areas of exploited outside who have nothing to gain from their existence, these great edifices of human cruelty were moved out to the most barren suburbs. Prison no longer needs to be seen, or even contemplated, in order to serve its function. With the advance of capital, religion and the work ethic, the majority of the exploited now live within the paradigms of the law, not through direct fear of going to prison, but because they believe it is 'right' for them to do so, and are able to see to their basic needs within the parameters of exploitation: work, pay, suffer, complain, but go back to work or receive State benefits and struggle to survive...

Law took the place of ethical choice... if something is legal, it is 'right', illegal, it is 'wrong'... and so the crimes of the State and capital—widescale plunder and mass murder—by falling into the domain of legality, are considered just the normal way of things. Needless to say, the boundaries between legality and illegality are not absolute. Many of the activities of the exploited come close to, or enter, illegality — the area defined as petty crime or delinquency. But the law could never be enforced in absolute without the whole machinery of capital drawing to a halt. At the same time, without the underlying threat of prison, the whole legal mystification would be a joke.

So, prison is not just an infamous building built of stone or reinforced concrete, an nauseating container of suffering where the most abject moments of humanity are lived out in silence and out of view, it is inseparable from other repressive institutions such as the State, the judiciary, religion, school. It is thus an indispensable

part of the whole relational flux the of the class war in act. And this is the only way to approach prison if we are anarchists, revolutionaries and social fighters. Woe if we were to extract this great monument to human misery from its whole context and consider it a 'thing in itself' in the vein of the sociologist, psychologist or social reformer. These people need prisons, we do not.

Of course, as we have said, prison is also an entity that has been constructed in the logic of impenetrability and absolute containment. Reinforced walls within walls, within walls; bars, keys, electronic circuits, armed guards, radio control, etc., all contribute to the existence of a structure (not by chance often referred to as 'another planet' by those inside) that has the sole purpose of keeping individuals separate from the rest of the world and, as far as possible, from each other.

However, in line with the development of the rest of postindustrial society, prisons and its supporting structures are now undergoing significant change. On the one hand they are opening up to the world outside for the prisoners who are prepared to participate in their own imprisonment, and closing down absolutely on those who choose to live against or beyond the law and continue to do so within the prison walls, preferring to preserve their dignity rather than subscribe to a promise of getting out before their time, groveling and on their knees.

Life on the outside is also becoming increasingly controlled through the extended use of cameras and curfews, breaking down the precise boundary that once existed between prison and the rest of society. Nevertheless, prisons are undoubtedly fortresses and the conditions for getting nearer to the gate are still long and protracted. Proof must be given of good behaviour and a desire to let oneself be recuperated into a situation of passivity and dialogue with the institution. But once undertaken, this path leads to an infinity of possibilities, each of which depends on a continual as-